

Proverbs Lesson 12

Proverbs Chapter 12

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Introduction: In this chapter, the contrast between the wisdom of righteousness and the folly of sin is continued.

I. Love Instruction, Love Knowledge

Pro 12:1 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

The thought is here relatively simple. One who will kindly receive correction delights in learning to be better. But one who hates being corrected shields themselves from such. The question is: how do we receive criticism or correction?

Pro 12:2 A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.

Pro 12:3 A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

The principle is essentially, how that God will bless a good man. The word translated good (bwj towb) refers to moral and ethical goodness and is very close to the thought of one who is 'righteous.' In contrast, one given to wickedness will be judged. God blesses righteousness and judges sin. It is that simple.

Verse 3 teaches that there is no stability or security of life in sinful living. In contrast, a righteous man has deep roots and has a stable foundation in life. Again, there is great wisdom in righteous living and much foolishness in sinful living.

Pro 12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

Pro 12:5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.

The word translated as virtuous not only possesses the attributes of moral and pure but also has the sense of 'strong,' 'industrious,' or 'efficient.' Though the immediate context lends itself to moral virtue (which no doubt are in view), the greater thought is of a woman who is industrious, energetic, and hardworking. Truly such a woman is a help meet for her husband. She will complement and be

an effective partner to him.

In contrast, a woman who acts shamefully, is a deep embarrassment or frustration to her husband. Shameful activity is not so much described here, but likely refers to other than moral sin. Such was punishable by death. Rather, the contrast may refer to a woman who is lazy, sloppy, and unproductive.

The greater thought is how that the thinking of the righteous leads to right decisions in life in verse 5. In contrast, the advice of wicked men is often devious. The word translated as right (jpvm mishpat) literally means 'judgment' and by extension has the thought of 'right decisions.' The implicit warning is to beware of such individuals. They cannot be trusted.

Pro 12:6 The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.

Pro 12:7 The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.

The concept of the wicked is found throughout Proverbs. The thought here is of one who is hostile to God and or living in sin. In short, such a person is ungodly. The initial thought is how that wicked men lay traps in what they say. They are treacherous.

In contrast, a just man will deliver himself from trouble by the wise use of his mouth. Wicked men plan violent schemes. Just men are wise in what they say.

In due season, wicked men are overthrown, whether in their finances, their power, or their standing. Those that are not saved wind up in hell. Sinful living is inherently unstable. The world's crowd goes up like rockets and comes down like sticks. In contrast, the family of a righteous man is stable and strong.

Once again, the broader principle is that sinful living by nature leads to instability. Righteous living leads to strength and stability of life. There is a parallel in the Lord's parable about the man who built on sand versus the one who built on the rock.

Mat 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Mat 7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Mat 7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

Mat 7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Pro 12:8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.

Pro 12:9 He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.

Wise men are applauded, but shady operators are despised. That remains true to this day, even out in the world. The daily news is full of politicians or businessmen who are disgraced and diminished by shady deals. In contrast, wise men are promoted and honored.

In verse 9, a completely different word for despised is used here in distinction to the previous verse. There, a despised one was corrupt. Here, the thought is of one who is one who is of humble circumstance—one who is not of the elite or upper crust. Often those in the upper social classes look down their noses at common people.

The point here is that one who is in a lower class socially, but has enough resources to have an employee (i.e., servant), is better than some high roller who is bankrupt. The greater truth here is that there is virtue in a humble circumstance. Pride usually does not dwell there. In contrast, pride is never an asset in any situation.

II. Righteous Men Regard the Life of Their Beast

Pro 12:10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

Pro 12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.

Righteous people are kind to animals. In contrast, the wicked are cruel, even at their best. Witness Balaam and his donkey. There is a direct correlation between righteousness and kindness. Likewise, there is a correlation between wickedness and cruelty.

The simple truth is that there is profit in work verse 11 tells us. A farmer who diligently puts in a crop will be satisfied with its harvest when it comes forth. In contrast, one who follows foolish interests rather than productive work is an airhead. Hard and diligent work is productive. Pursuing the entertainment 'stars' of the world reveals an empty head.

How many youths of this generation emulate the worthless rock stars, entertainers, and athletes of the world to their hurt! These lack wisdom and understanding and will continue to be until they acquire such and put it into

practice.

Pro 12:12 The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.

In ancient times, nets were used to snare animals (and even on occasion, to catch men). Implicit is the idea of risky and corrupt schemes. The thought at hand likely is how that wicked men scheme on how to defraud or violate others. In contrast, notice the terminology used to describe the righteous: root and fruit. The one implies stability. The other productivity.

Wicked men seek to profit through corrupt practices. Righteous men are stable and productive. How much better and stable is righteousness than wickedness. One is corrupt and unstable. The other is just and productive.

Pro 12:13 The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble.

Pro 12:14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.

A person devoid of righteous character will eventually get into trouble by what he says (whether it is lying, cursing, or a smart mouth). In contrast, a righteous person tends to stay out of trouble. Implied is that a just person is discreet with his mouth. Again, the greater truth is that godless living brings all sorts of trouble. Righteous living keeps one out of trouble.

In contrast to the wicked fool described in verse 13, a wise tongue can bring much good—good which satisfies all involved. Moreover, there is a reward for what we do, whether for good or for evil. The simple truth is that there are consequences to what we say and do. Wise remarks and deeds bring good. Corrupt comments and deeds bring trouble.

Pro 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Pro 12:16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.

Fools do take criticism well. They bristle when corrected. They tend to be proud and self-righteous. In contrast, a wise person will listen to criticism and correction. The question remains, how do we receive criticism and correction? Fools do not receive it well. The wise do.

A fool loses his or her temper and doesn't care who knows it. In contrast, a prudent (or, sensible) person will control his anger and the urge to lose his temper. The greater truth is that fools lose their temper. The wise do not or at the least, they strive to do so.

III. Righteous Speak Truth

Pro 12:17 He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.

Pro 12:18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

Telling the truth demonstrates righteousness. In contrast, a dishonest individual will lie. The greater truth is that one known to be deceitful will lie, even under oath. A just man will tell the truth.

A sharp tongue can pierce like a sword. But the tongue of a wise person heals. The greater truth is that fools use their tongue like a sword. The wise seek to heal with their tongue.

Pro 12:19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

Pro 12:20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.

Honesty and truthfulness will produce a long-lasting reputation. However, a lying tongue brings only short-lived benefit. Whatever advantage which one might accrue from lying quickly evaporates as the truth is eventually made known. In contrast, truthfulness and honesty have long-term benefits.

Those who scheme evil plans are inevitably deceitful. In contrast, those who counsel peace find true joy. The two go hand in hand. Few things in life are more fulfilling than reconciling those who were at odds with one another. What a contrast! Schemers are devious. Those who seek reconciliation and peace find real joy. One is crooked. The other is just.

Pro 12:21 There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.

Pro 12:22 Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.

A profound principle of life is that righteous living tends to prevent trouble. In contrast, godless living leads to all sorts of bad things in life. In short, there is great wisdom in living uprightly and great ignorance in sin. Righteousness leads

to tranquility. Sin leads to endless trouble.

We find in verse 22 that God takes a very dim view of a liar. Because lying is the quintessence of Satan (John 8:44), it is particularly abominable to God.

Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

In Proverbs 6:16-17, lying lips are described as something which God hates. The word translated as faithfully (hnmw 'emwnah), in its most basic sense, has the sense of 'faithfulness' or 'faithfully.' Therefore, in contrast to those who are liars, God delights in those who are faithful and true. Once again, the contrast between honesty and dishonesty is at hand. God loves the one and hates the other.

IV. Prudent Men Conceals Knowledge

Pro 12:23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.

Pro 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

A prudent man keeps his mouth shut, but fools blab everything they know. There is virtue and wisdom in being discreet. There is folly in talking about some things, especially in haste.

Those who are diligent, industrious, and hard working will be promoted. Those who are lazy, who ignore schooling, who avoid work, or are 'gold bricks,' will always be in the underclass. The wise eventually become the 'boss.' Fools never advance very far.

Pro 12:25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

Pro 12:26 The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.

Burdens in life bring discouragement. They weigh on one's spirit. However, an encouraging word can lift another's spirit. There is wisdom in seeking to encourage others.

The thought is how that the righteous will check things out more than others might. He will investigate if a matter is right. The word translated as seduceth (het ta`ah in the Hiphil construct) literally means to 'lead astray.' Notice the contrast. While the righteous evaluate a matter, the godless run around trying to

entice others with their folly. One is wise. The other is foolish.

Pro 12:27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.

Pro 12:28 In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

The slothful man has nothing to eat because he was too lazy to go hunting. How many moderns are on welfare because they have been too lazy, undisciplined, or irresponsible to hold down a job? In contrast, the material substance (i.e., wealth) of a diligent person is substantial. The greater truth is that irresponsibility, laziness, and undisciplined living leads to poverty. Diligent work leads to prosperity.

All which has been described in this chapter is here summarized in verse 28. In righteous living is both quantity and quality of life. Moreover, the ultimate degree of righteousness in Christ produces life everlasting. Unrighteousness is sin which inevitably leads to death. One who finds righteousness in Christ will live forever.

Furthermore, righteous living in the meantime will produce a fullness and richness of life. God blesses righteousness and righteous living produces a far richer life.

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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.