

# The Proverbs

## Lesson 10

*Proverbs 10:1-14*

### **Proverbs of Solomon**

**Proverbs 10:1a** The proverbs of Solomon.

It is impossible to classify chapters 10 through 29 with titles or themes because each proverb is an observation of some truth that Solomon has observed throughout his life that is common among people and their behavior. Note that almost every proverb is separated by a conjunction which is used to redirect the thinking to the polar opposite thought. Some will show both sides of something that is good, others will show the differences between good and evil, and so it goes with love and hate, righteous and wicked, wise and foolish, defamer and diplomat. Following are the morsels of wisdom passed on from Solomon to Rehoboam.

### **Antithetical Sayings**

Solomon begins with his antithetical sayings that show certain parallel thoughts by constructing two lines which correspond to each other in opposite relationships and opinions.

#### **Wise/Foolish**

**Proverbs 10:1b** A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

In the first proverb of this chapter, notice how every word in the first part of the sentence is matched with an opposite word in the last part. The wise son is countered with the foolish son, gladness is countered with grief and the father is countered with the mother; each is the relative opposite of the other. It is a statement designed to show truth in as short a statement as possible. If we accept the proverb as true, wisdom and understanding will tell us that the mother is just as glad with a wise son as the father and conversely, the father is just as grieved as the mother by the foolish son.

#### **Ill-gotten/Righteous**

**Proverbs 10:2** Ill-gotten gains do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.

This proverb contrasts ill-gotten gains and righteousness. The statement drives home the truth that the ill-gotten gains, meaning treasures obtained through theft, are never part of a righteous man's way of doing business. The ill-gotten gain is never righteous and a righteous gain is never ill-gotten. Gains are not true gains if they are ill-gotten because they are never eternal. Conversely, the works of the righteous man are eternal in nature. Those who gain things illegally work in folly, the righteous work in wisdom.

### **Righteous/Hypocrite**

**Proverbs 10:3** The LORD will not allow the righteous to hunger, but He will thrust *aside* the craving of the wicked.

Here, Solomon speaks of the actions of the LORD toward the righteous and the wicked. In this verse “wicked” is better understood as hypocrite. What is the act of the LORD toward the righteous? He feeds them. All the provisions of His creation are at His disposal to feed the wise and righteous believer. The mainstay of His meal is the Bread of Life. In opposition, the hypocrite will ultimately starve without His help and He will not help the wicked fool. Even that which He has shared with the fool has been misused, abused and flaunted for ungodly purposes. The LORD will thrust away from Himself the “craving of the wicked” and pay it no mind.

### **Poor/Rich**

**Proverbs 10:4** Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

In the order of creation, in the design of the LORD, the natural consequence of a negligent worker is poverty. During His days on earth, the Lord stated that “the poor would always be with us”; nevertheless, His Word also states that a man who will not work will not eat. Poor people are poor because of how they work - poorly, with folly, with negligence. Yet, the LORD blesses those who work with wisdom and diligence. In the Scripture, the difference between poor and rich holds a different meaning from that of our culture. The Bible alludes to the poor who do not have enough and the rich who simply have what they need. We think of the rich as people who are much wealthier than others, but not so in the Bible; many were rich in the Scripture.

### **Wise/Shameful**

**Proverbs 10:5** He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, *but* he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

The timing of the work required to produce a crop is foreign to most people since the beginning of the industrial age in America. Therefore, this proverb is difficult to understand today without an explanation of the farming calendar. Skipping that process, the point made in this proverb is that when it is time to harvest the crop, the work must be done; it cannot wait or the crop will ruin. What a shame it is for a crop to ruin after all the work it takes to make that crop. The wise man does the work required when the time to work arrives; the shameful man sleeps when it is time to work.

### **Righteous/Wicked**

**Proverbs 10:6** Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

The contrast in the proverb is hard to see in this version. The Miles Coverdale translation of 1535 AD reads, “The mouth of the impious men wickedness covers.” The proverb contrasts the difference between that which is in plain sight and that which is concealed. The doings of the righteous man are as obvious as if they were written on his forehead; the dealings of the wicked hypocrite are concealed.

### **Righteous/Wicked**

**Proverbs 10:7** The memory of the righteous is blessed, but the name of the wicked will rot.

In this proverb, the words “memory” and “name” are synonymous. In Scripture, a good name represents the full embodiment of the person’s life, belief, morals and reputation. The person who is righteous will be remembered as a blessing to humanity, the wicked will be remembered as a stench in the nostrils of all people.

### **Wise/Fool**

**Proverbs 10:8** The wise of heart will receive commands, but a babbling fool will be thrown down.

The contrast between the wise and the fool is striking. Commands are given for the good of a person or entity; the wise person will accept those commands and integrate them into the heart of his soul. In contrast, the “babbling fool” will refuse the commands and try to explain why they do not apply to him. Rejection of the commands will result in his downfall.

### **Integrity/Pervert**

**Proverbs 10:9** He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out.

Let it be known here that the man who walks in the integrity of the LORD is eternally safe from all temporal and eternal dangers. Why? As the Apostle states in Romans 14:8, “for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.” The wise person walks securely in the ways of the LORD. Conversely, the person who corrupts his ways will not be eternally secure; he cannot hide his path from the LORD, neither can he justly account for his actions. The righteous man need never fear detection of straying from the path because he will not deviate from the road of integrity.

### **Troubler/Fool**

**Proverbs 10:10** He who winks the eye causes trouble, and a babbling fool will be thrown down.

The last part of this verse is the same as that found in Proverbs 10:8. However, in the Septuagint and Arabic translations it reads, “He who winks the eye causes trouble, but he who reproves with freedom, makes peace.” It seems that this difference may be the accurate rendering because it follows the pattern of all the proverbs before and after. In Solomon’s day, the wink of the eye indicated the presence of a secret, deception, undisclosed information, or clandestine intent, all of which cause trouble when discovered. Once the reason for the wink is discovered, wise counsel can reprove the sin and, if accepted, will release the person from the guilt and bondage of the wickedness and liberate them into peace. The rejection of that counsel will cast the babbling fool deeper into his eternal bondage of sin.

### **Righteous/Wicked**

**Proverbs 10:11** The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

This version uses the words, “fountain of life.” A better translation is the “vein of life.” Truly, the Hebrew word picture means the veins that funnel the fluid of life to the body; it is much different from the fountain that gushes with water which flows randomly with gravity. Here, the clause, “but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence,” is used to contrast the mouth of the righteous and that of the wicked. The first pushes life to the righteous person, the second conceals the deadly violence in the soul of the wicked.

### **Hatred/Love**

**Proverbs 10:12** Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions.

Hatred cannot lie silent! It will conjure reasons and occasions to incite conflict. Love never operates like hate; it finds a reason to shelter the righteous from all wrongdoing. Hatred attacks, love shields. Hatred assaults, love protects. Hatred breeds hate, love breeds love.

### **Wise/Fool**

**Proverbs 10:13** On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.

What is a rod? In the Bible, a rod is a slender, straight stick used for multiple purposes such as walking, defense, punishment, and measurement. The rod is synonymous with the staff and most were carefully cut to a precise length. Shorter rods were used for prophetic, priestly and royal use and were synonymous with power and authority. In this passage, we truly do not know to which rod Solomon refers. Nevertheless, in any case, the person who fails to use his lips with discernment will discover the purpose of the rod in his life, be it one used for defense against him, punishment upon him or the rule of law from the prophet, priest or king! The discerning person knows the standards that must be followed, a lack of understanding the severity of not following those standards will bring the rod of judgment quickly.

### **Wise/Fool**

**Proverbs 10:14** Wise men store up knowledge, but with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.

What does it mean for the “wise men” to “store up knowledge”? Knowledge comes in all flavors of good and evil. The “wise men store” them all up for later use. What is useful about the knowledge of evil? Knowing evil will allow you to make wise decisions when evil approaches. What is useful about the knowledge of good? It will allow you to make wise decisions when good approaches. The wise men store the knowledge of good or evil for later use. Conversely, the fool will not store up knowledge for later use. Evil learned today will be used by the fool today. It will never produce good even though the fool seeks good from evil. Most often, the fool will use all that is good immediately, even for evil purposes. Good can be used for evil and the outcome will always be evil. That which is good, when shared at the wrong time, spoils the message. Therefore, Solomon is correct. “Wise men store up knowledge, but with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.”