

The Proverbs

Lesson 12

Proverbs 11:1-15

False/Just

Proverbs 11:1 A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight.

Many years ago, a man asked for help in evaluating his business to see where he could increase his profits. Customers were simply not coming to purchase material from him and something needed to change. He sold mulch and his business was located on one of the busiest freeways in Houston, Texas. It did not take long to discover the problem. He would order 32 yards of mulch from his supplier but when a customer purchased a yard from him, he would not fill the one-yard bucket full; therefore, he would short the customer with a “false balance”. His intent was to stretch his 32-yard purchase of mulch into 40 yards of sales or more. Other mulch companies would give a little more than a yard to their customers just to make sure they were delivering a fair scoop of the product. Those companies were overrun with customers because they were delivering a “just weight”.

Pride/ Humility

Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom.

Pride is not bad in itself, but when pride becomes undue confidence in one’s skills, abilities, accomplishments, possessions or positions, it can lead to dishonor or what is better called disgrace. Here Solomon uses the form of the word pride that means to boil up and overflow which leads to arrogance. The opposite of arrogance is humility which in this context means a modest spirit in the presence of God and man.

Integrity/Falseness

Proverbs 11:3 The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the falseness of the treacherous will destroy them.

Integrity means blamelessness and it refers to the wholesome moral character of a person who is almost without blemish. That kind of integrity guides the life of a person in righteousness just as a shepherd guides and directs the sheep through the fields to food, water and safety. The word falseness is the contrasting word in this proverb and it is better translated to deceive which means to pervert, subvert or frustrate purposely. That kind of person will wander without provision and without protection both in this life and the next.

Riches/Righteousness

Proverbs 11:4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

The day of wrath refers to the day of death. All the money in the world cannot extend the day of death for anyone. For the wicked man, physical death leads to eternal death; for the righteous man, physical death leads to eternal life.

Righteous/Wicked

Proverbs 11:5 The righteousness of the blameless will smooth his way, but the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.

It is a fact that clean living causes fewer troubles and obstacles in this life. Add righteousness to clean living and crooked ways become straight and smooth. The rain will fall on the good and the bad and troubles will come to everyone, but the righteous, who are blameless, that is, without blemish in how they have acted and related to others and God, will come through the storms of life. Not so with the wicked; their every step creates a possible minefield that can potentially maim or destroy their work, intentions, decisions and eternity.

Deliverance/Trap

Proverbs 11:6 The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, but the treacherous will be caught by *their own* greed.

Simply put, Solomon states the polar opposites of righteousness and treachery. The righteous person will be delivered, the treacherous will not. Their own unfaithful evil desires will trap them.

Expectations/Hope

Proverbs 11:7 When a wicked man dies, *his* expectation will perish, and the hope of strong men perishes.

Obviously, death changes everything! Nothing can divert eternity from anyone's future. A decision must be made on this side of death that determines a person's destination on the other side. All the expectations and powers of a wicked person on this side cannot secure a place of eternal life on the other side. Unspoken here by Solomon, the logical contrast is that the righteous can put their full assurance in their expectations and hopes established on this side of death for their future eternal life.

Delivered/Restricted

Proverbs 11:8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, but the wicked takes his place.

As stated before in this lesson, righteous living avoids trouble. Eternally, righteous living avoids the trouble of punishment in the next life. The wicked cannot avoid trouble in the next life; they will be subjected to eternal punishment.

Mouth/Knowledge

Proverbs 11:9 With *his* mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.

The context of this proverb deals with what we know about our neighbors and how we use it. Gossip is ungodly and profane! It can destroy relationships in an instant. The godless man will use what he knows to destroy relationships; the righteous man will use what he knows as protection in relationships.

Rejoice/Perish

Proverbs 11:10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there is glad shouting.

In the history of America, the reason things have gone so well is that she was built on the godly principles of righteousness. Not so for the wicked countries of the world. Death and destruction run rampant in countries formed by godless notions. The blessings of America's past are a stench in the nostrils of those who are wicked. The slogan, "Death to America" is the wicked shout of those nations built on godless principles. When wickedness finally dies in a country, the righteous shout with joy. Conversely, when wickedness thrives, the righteous mourn.

Exalted/Torn Down

Proverbs 11:11 By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.

America is not without its past faults; however, through the years, the righteous have made changes in the customs and ways of doing business for those who came to America from other countries. Because of those changes, America has clearly been exalted above the other nations of the world. Those changes have caused people from other countries to seek life in America. Just as America suffered through the baggage of evil brought in during the early days its establishment, so too, some immigrants seeking life in this country are bringing with them some of the evil cultures and customs of their homelands. They have left their homes to come here because the evil there is tearing their lives apart. Many laws in their homelands make life difficult. America is not a new country; its laws have exalted it above all other countries for good; therefore, immigrants of today must leave their destructive cultures and customs behind which include their destructive religious laws that conflict with those established in America by the people and for the people and accept those of this country. They may worship here freely, but they must abide by the laws of this nation and not seek to bring their laws to this place.

Despise/Understand

Proverbs 11:12 He who despises his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding keeps silent.

People are people and we all have quirks and ways of doing things that are different from those of a neighbor. In some people, all the differences in thoughts and ways of doing things fester into animosity that is usually acted upon and causes difficulties in relations. A righteous man,

one who is prudent, will not act on that hostility in any way or at any time. He will learn to live with his neighbor in harmony at all times.

Talebearer/Trustworthy

Proverbs 11:13 He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.

The word talebearer is interesting; it means a walking busybody whose occupation consists of trading in scandal. Most talebearers cannot stand having nothing to say; therefore, they tell everything they know, even their own secrets. Talk, talk, talk, that is what a talebearer does. Anything they hear, they tell! They cannot keep a secret. Not so with the trustworthy; the things they know are shared only at the appropriate time and in the appropriate place with the appropriate people who have a reason and need to know.

None/Abundance

Proverbs 11:14 Where there is no guidance, the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory.

People must have leaders! Not everyone is leadership material. Without leadership, people struggle in daily tasks and deeds. In contrast, where good leaders are plentiful, the people succeed in this life, specifically in their daily tasks and deeds.

Suffer/Safe

Proverbs 11:15 He who is surety for a stranger will surely suffer for it, but he who hates going surety is safe.

Solomon first dealt with this topic in Proverbs 6:1. Surety is better translated today as cosign. The word “stranger” in this passage means someone who is not a member of this family. In this case, to cosign means to use one’s credit or funds to secure a loan for a none-family member. Solomon is warning Rehoboam that if he cosigns for someone, it will bring him personal heartache. The debt of the person who does not have the means to purchase what he wants on his own will become that of the cosigner’s. It is not indicated here, but wisdom dictates common sense. A person who wants to help someone should give that person a gift but he should never sign a legal document that binds him in a relationship whereby someone else is benefitting from his hard earned integrity.