

Lesson 13

Proverbs 11:16-31

Honor/Dishonor

Proverbs 11:16 A gracious woman attains honor, and violent men attain riches.

The Septuagint is different from this translation. It says, “A gracious woman raises up honor to the man, but she that hates righteous things is a throne of dishonor.” The Septuagint is the more accurate translation and makes the context clear. A good wife, full of grace, brings honor to her husband; however, a bad wife drags the husband down in his work and life.

Merciful/Cruel

Proverbs 11:17 The merciful man does himself good, but the cruel man does himself harm.

The word merciful describes how one person cares for someone in need. It is an outward acts toward others. A “merciful man does himself good” by what he does for others. In contrast, the “cruel man does himself harm” by what he does or does not do for others.

Wages/Rewards

Proverbs 11:18 The wicked earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness *gets* a true reward.

A wicked person puts his trust in all the money he has earned in vain. He is deceived by everything he has earned. He cannot buy eternity; he cannot buy health; he cannot buy happiness. His earnings reap no lasting rewards. Conversely, everything the righteous person does produces a lasting reward - that which is eternal, that which is healthy, that which is happy.

Life/Death

Proverbs 11:19 He who is steadfast in righteousness *will attain* to life, and he who pursues evil *will bring about* his own death.

Here is a repeated theme in Proverbs; righteousness leads to life and evil leads to death.

Perverse/Blameless

Proverbs 11:20 The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, but the blameless in *their* walk are His delight.

The LORD sees the hearts of all men. The bent, crooked and twisted heart is despised and rejected by the LORD. The innocent, spotless, guiltless heart is accepted by the LORD. Nothing is more hated than a hypocrite or more appealing than the upright.

Punished/Delivered

Proverbs 11:21 Assuredly, the evil man will not go unpunished, but the descendants of the righteous will be delivered.

The fact that an evil man has a child does not mean that the child will be evil. The one who sins is the one who will be punished. Likewise, the fact that a righteous man has a child does not mean that the child will be righteous. The one who sins is the one who will be punished. However, the descendants of the righteous man seem to have a better opportunity to live under the umbrella of the LORD rather than the dark cloud of the world. Evil people will be punished; righteous people will be delivered. It is better to be righteous than evil.

Swine/Discretion

Proverbs 11:22 As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, *so is* a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.

Miles Coverdale translates this verse as follows, "A fayre woman without discrete maners, is like a ringe of golde in a swyne's snoute." Solomon is teaching Rehoboam that a beautiful woman who has no modesty in her dress or distinction in her ways and manners is no better than a pig with a gold ring in its nose. Outward beauty goes only so far.

Good/Wrath

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

Once again, Solomon address this theme. The righteous want to perform and see only good; the wicked want to perform and see evil which will bring upon them eternal wrath.

More/Want

Proverbs 11:24 There is one who scatters, yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, but *it results* only in want.

Sharing one's resources always brings eternal increase in that person's wealth both here and in eternity. However, in this world, there are those who fail to pay their bills, holding their money for other purposes, while their debts grow larger! Why? Debts and payments that are justly due are due immediately. Failing to pay debts when due will always cost a person more in the long run.

Water/Watered

Proverbs 11:25 The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered.

A better translation exists which shows the proverb in its proper form for this section of the book; however, it does not change the intent in any way. Solomon wants Rehoboam to learn that the person who helps other will in turn be helped by others even when he needs no help. Generosity begets generosity. Small or large makes no difference. The return gift will add to the generous man's life both here and in eternity.

Withhold/Sell

Proverbs 11:26 He who withholds grain, the people will curse him, but blessing will be on the head of him who sells *it*.

People will curse a person who withholds food until all other resources are exhausted and then he sells his provisions at an inflated price. Nothing new has changed over the centuries! After the hurricanes in South Texas when supplies were low, prices were inflated because people were desperate and would pay anything for what they needed. However, the people will shower blessings on those who have and will share at fair prices when the time of need arrives; it is the difference between a wicked man and a righteous man.

Seek Good/Seek Evil

Proverbs 11:27 He who diligently seeks good seeks favor, but he who searches after evil, it will come to him.

This verse speaks to a repeated theme in Solomon's mind; good seeks good and evil seeks evil. The outcome of seeking good is good and the outcome of seeking evil is evil. Evil can never attain good by doing evil and good can never attain evil by doing good.

Fall/Flourish

Proverbs 11:28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like the *green* leaf.

Money cannot save or secure a person in this world; righteousness can do nothing but save and secure a person in this world.

Foolish/Wise

Proverbs 11:29 He who troubles his own house will inherit wind, and the foolish will be servant to the wisehearted.

When a person brings trouble to family members, he will often be disinherited. He will receive nothing that could have been his except the wind that he breathes. Having the potential of being an heir, he becomes a servant once disinherited. Those who live in harmonious relationships with family members will inherit both their parts and those of the disinherited.

Life/Souls

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls.

Like the "tree of life" in the Garden of Eden, righteousness acts like the fruit of its tree to nourish the needs of the body, soul and spirit of a person. In addition, those who are righteous will seek to share the "tree of life" with those who are still wandering in this world without eternity established in the LORD. It is the soul that needs to be fed; it is the soul that needs to be changed; it is the soul that needs salvation.

Righteous Rewarded/Wicked Rewarded

Proverbs 11:31 If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!

In 1st Peter 4:18, the Apostle says, “AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?” The Septuagint and Arabic translations say, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Because the righteous will be punished in this life, so too, the wicked will be punished. If the righteous are rewarded in this life, so too, the sinners will one day be punished. However, the reward of the righteous is eternal life and that of the wicked sinner is eternal death. The rewards are eternal but they are worlds apart in their outcomes. One is in the lake of burning fire and agony forever and the other is in the blessed presence of the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY.