

Lesson 15

Proverbs 12:14-28

Words/Deeds

Proverbs 12:14 A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his words, and the deeds of a man's hands will return to him.

This proverb does not follow the pattern of the previous ones; however, its message is extremely true. We accomplish good both in words and deeds. We can labor to help someone in need, yet most often, the best help is found in the use of words to tell someone how to help himself or herself. Therefore, godly words must accompany godly deeds; both are important.

Foolish/Wise

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

This theme is so important to Solomon that he says the same thing in three different ways. Here Solomon explains to Rehoboam that the foolish person cannot see anything wrong with what he is doing or saying as opposed to the man who stops to seek counsel in everything he does. In Proverbs 3:7, Solomon says, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil." For Solomon, it is evil for a person to thinks he is always right and every person should seek the counsel of the LORD in what he is doing. Later in Proverbs 21:2, Solomon says, "Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts." In this proverb, Solomon explains that the LORD will make His judgment about the actions of a man by the intent of his heart and only the LORD knows what a man thinks in his heart!

Fool/Prudent

Proverbs 12:16 A fool's vexation is known at once, but a prudent man conceals dishonor.

Solomon compares vexation with dishonor. Vexation means annoyance, frustration or worry; dishonor means shame or disgrace. The fool lets his attitude be known at once; however, the prudent man will never let his annoyance, frustration and worry be seen by the public because it will result in his shame and disgrace.

Truth/Lie

Proverbs 12:17 He who speaks truth tells what is right, but a false witness, deceit.

Solomon continues the theme of truth versus a lie in this proverb. Right is right; truth is truth; they go hand in hand. What is right never includes a lie; truth should never contain a lie. Yet, a liar will purposefully fill his sentences with lying words.

Rashly/Wise

Proverbs 12:18 There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Two kinds of people are compared in this proverb, the rash and the wise. Both can seek or have the same experience and each will respond differently. One will respond with words that kill and the other with words that heal. People who use their words like swords to hurt others will usually do so in every interaction of their lives. Likewise, the wise person will carefully use his words to bring healing in every circumstance of life, especially those in which he was intentionally being attacked. The godly will carefully use appropriate words to attempt to bring healing even when dealing with evil, harsh people.

Truth/Lies

Proverbs 12:19 Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment.

Addressing the truth versus lies again in this proverb, Solomon adds the facet of eternity to the theme. Truth is truth and a lie is a lie. A truth is eternally true and lives forever, a lie only exists in the minute it is spoken and then it dies forever.

Deceit/Peace

Proverbs 12:20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but counselors of peace have joy.

Deceit is the action or practice of concealing or misrepresenting the truth. To have peace in the Scripture means to be whole or to be completely sound. We want our bodies to be whole so we can live in good health. We want our relationships to be whole so we can live in harmony with family, friends and neighbors. The evil person does not desire peace; rather, he seeks to deceive and lie about that which is true. Godly people will lead people to true wholeness in every aspect of life.

Safety/Trouble

Proverbs 12:21 No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble.

Even though evil attacks from all around, the righteous person should never fear. Conversely, the wicked are not protected from the evil that surrounds them. This theme can be found throughout Scripture. For Job 5:19, the LORD says, “From six troubles He will deliver you, Even in seven evil will not touch you.” Solomon says in Proverbs 12:13, “An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, but the righteous will escape from trouble.” Isaiah 46:4 says, “Even to your old age, I shall be the same, And even to your graying years I shall bear you! I have done *it*, and I shall carry *you*; and I shall bear *you*, and I shall deliver *you*.” Daniel 6:27 says. “He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has *also* delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” David says in Psalm 91:3, “For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper, And from the deadly pestilence.” Paul says in 2nd

Timothy 4:18, “The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.” This proverb should bring great comfort from the LORD because He will protect those who belong to Him. It should also bring great dread to those who are wicked.

Truth/Lie

Proverbs 12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.

This proverb does not use the word truth, but it is clearly the point of its content. Lying lips are a stench in the nostrils of the LORD. Solomon regularly addresses the problem of the liar in his proverbs. In chapter 6:7, he mentions the problem of “Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.” In chapter 11:20 he says, “The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, but the blameless in *their* walk are His delight.” However, the LORD continues the importance of this theme, including it in many passages in the rest of the Scripture including a powerful warning presented in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible. Revelation 22:15 says, “Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.”

Prudent/Folly

Proverbs 12:23 A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.

“A prudent man” is caring and thoughtful about the future. A fool is a person who acts unwisely, lacking good sense or judgment. To conceal means to keep something hidden. Solomon’s intent in this proverb is to stress the importance not telling all we know all the time. Conversely, the fool cannot keep even the most important secret quiet for minute.

Diligent/Slack

Proverbs 12:24 The hand of the diligent will rule, but the slack *hand* will be put to forced labor.

This proverb follows the usual construction pattern of the majority of the proverbs. Although it deals with a theme addressed in previous proverbs, it mentions an almost hidden truth about leaders and followers, employers and employees, and possibly the difference between the godly and ungodly. Solomon offsets the difference between the words rule and labor. The person who diligently does the required work as instructed and as expected holds a higher position in the eyes of the leaders, employers and the LORD than the one who carelessly does his work. The slacker will often think of his work as punishment and forced labor. The diligent will do his work with delight and joy.

Anxiety/Gladness

Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.

No one is exempt from the heavy weight of anxiety in this life. Anxiety is fear or nervousness about something that has happened or might happen in the future. It can crush a person mentally, emotionally and spiritually. However, the LORD has given everyone the ability to rise above all

anxiety by seeking good counsel where good words facilitate a wholesome healing. In Proverbs 15:13, Solomon says, “A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.” He will say in Proverbs 17:22, “A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.”

Wicked/Righteous

Proverbs 12:26 The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

Some people have real neighbors living next to them and some people have predators. What is the difference? A real neighbor is a person who seeks the best interest of those living around him. A predator is a person who looks for ways to harm, control, betray or destroy those living around him for personal profit. One will help the person next door but the other will hurt. One is godly but the other is ungodly.

Slothful/Diligence

Proverbs 12:27 A slothful man does not roast his prey, but the precious possession of a man *is* diligence.

Food is vital to life! The slothful man looks for handouts. Slothful means habitually lazy or averse to work. In 2nd Thessalonians Paul says, “If a man will not work he shall not eat.” He will not roast his prey because he does not have a prey to roast. He has not done that which is necessary to prepare a meal; he intends to be fed by others with no work on his part. In contrast, the righteous man takes care of feeding his family by doing that which is legally necessary to put food on the table. The slothful beg; the diligent work.

Life/Death

Proverbs 12:28 In the way of righteousness is life, and in *its* pathway there is no death.

This chapter ends with a proverb that holds a truth taught by the Apostles John and Paul. In John 3:36 John says, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” John 4:36 says, “Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.” John 8:51 says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” John 11:26 says, “and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” Paul says in 1st Corinthians 15:54, “But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.” He also says in Galatians 6:8, “For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.” Let it be said here that a person becomes righteous by entering into a relationship with the LORD. That relationship promises eternal life.