

The Proverbs

Lesson 16

Proverbs 13

Wise/Scoffer

Proverbs 13:1 A wise son *accepts his* father's discipline, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

In this proverb, Solomon compares the difference between a wise son and a rebellious son who scoffs at the counsel of his father. It is the wise son who listens to the nurturing counsel of his father. The rebellious scoffing son does not listen to the father's counsel. In the Scripture, discipline means training, it does not refer to a form of punishment. Rebuke means to correct, specifically to try to put something back in line where it should remain. Scoffing sons rarely want to be put in line by their fathers.

Fruitful/Treacherous

Proverbs 13:2 From the fruit of a man's mouth he enjoys good, but the desire of the treacherous is violence.

Solomon is comparing the difference between fruitful and treacherous words used by a person. Good will come back to the person who uses fruitful words to help others as a blessing. However, the person who uses treacherous words toward others will receive only strong reactions from others in return.

Life/Ruin

Proverbs 13:3 The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; the one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.

The mouth can be the most deadly and destructive part of the human body. With it, one can bless or one can curse, one can heal emotional hurt or one can cause emotional pain, one can give a person his heart or one can break the heart of another. Words can be gracious and edifying or heart-wrenching and evil. What comes out of a person's mouth will determine the success of his livelihood, relations and eternity!

Sluggard/Diligent

Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard craves and *gets* nothing, but the soul of the diligent is made fat.

Once again, Solomon compares the poverty that comes to the sluggard and the gain which comes to the diligent. A sluggard is a layabout, do-nothing, idler, loafer or ne'er-do-well. He does nothing and he gets nothing in return. Solomon uses this same thought in Proverbs 10:4, "Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich."

Righteous/Wicked

Proverbs 13:5 A righteous man hates falsehood, but a wicked man acts disgustingly and shamefully.

A falsehood is an untruth. Godly people detest untruths whereas wicked men revel in them. For the godly people, an untruth is disgusting and shameful.

Righteous/Wicked

Proverbs 13:6 Righteousness guards the one whose way is blameless, but wickedness subverts the sinner.

Righteous living protects the godly person. Solomon uses the word blameless in this proverb. To be blameless means to be innocent of wrongdoing and righteous living means living blamelessly. Nothing can be more difficult than living a blameless life. Every moment of every day requires habitual righteousness in every situation to be totally blameless. A person who reaches the age of accountability, the time when he or she can understand why something is right or wrong, must think about every act and choose the righteous thing to do or say. Nevertheless, tomfoolery often seems easier than determining and understanding why something is right or wrong and as such, evil overtakes the person in that sin.

Rich/Poor

Proverbs 13:7 There is one who pretends to be rich, but has nothing; *Another* pretends to be poor, but has great wealth.

Never be fooled by the dress or lifestyle of a person! The poor pretend to be rich while the rich seek to keep their money quiet. The poor have nothing to lose by flaunting a fictitious presentation of themselves as being wealthy, spending hundreds of dollars that they should be saving just to put on appearances. The wealthy have much to lose and carefully spend pennies on what they need to live and rarely worry about putting on appearances. The truly wealthy owe nothing to any lending institution. The truly poor owe money to lending institutions for almost everything they possess. The truly poor may look wealthy, but they are not. Jesus uses this same theme with an eternal meaning in Luke 12:20-21 when he says, "But God said to him, 'You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?' 'So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'"

Riches/Rebuke

Proverbs 13:8 The ransom of a man's life is his riches, but the poor hears no rebuke.

People who have true wealth are the targets of those seeking financial gain. Often, the wealthy person will give predators money just to go away. Rarely will a poor person be sought by a predator. A wealthy person is always in danger of a potential fraudulent lawsuit, but rarely is a poor person sued because there is nothing to gain in doing so.

Righteous/Wicked

Proverbs 13:9 The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked goes out.

When all is said and done, righteousness wins and wickedness loses.

Presumptions/Counsel

Proverbs 13:10 Through presumption comes nothing but strife, but with those who receive counsel is wisdom.

Presumption is the act of accepting something to be true or false or adopting a particular attitude toward something without the presence of facts to confirm the assumption. With extensive experience, a person can rely on the past to lead him to a fairly safe presumption. Even with extensive experience, a person should confirm his presumption with rock-solid facts and good council. Holding to a presumption that is false will soon lead to trouble.

Fraud/Labor

Proverbs 13:11 Wealth *obtained* by fraud dwindles, but the one who gathers by labor increases *it*.

In this life, most people rise financially to a level of wage earning that will basically hold steady until they retire. Even when a job is lost and every penny of savings is exhausted, most people are able to obtain new employment and recover to the same financial level as before because they have the skills and knowledge to earn a living at that pay scale. A few people reach the millionaire status, but like all others, they too lose their fortune in troubled times. However, they too will recover to the millionaire status because they know how to earn a million dollars. This is not the case with thieves; they can steal a million dollars but they do not know how to earn a million dollars; therefore, when they spend their stolen funds, they cannot replace them without ill-gotten gains.

Deferred/Fulfilled

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

In the Scripture, hope is not something that a person wishes will happen; it is something that will happen! Therefore, once a person embraces that which is good, just waiting to obtain it often sickens the heart. Nevertheless, once that good is finally obtained, it is like a tree of life to the person. Waiting is hard! Salvation is a perfect example of what Solomon is illustrating. Salvation is secured here on earth but it is not completely finished until the LORD comes to take the saved person to be with Him.

Despise/Fear

Proverbs 13:13 The one who despises the word will be in debt to it, but the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded.

Solomon compares a person who despises the word to the one who fears the commandment; therefore, the word and commandment are two ways of saying the same thing. Solomon is probably speaking of the word or commandment of the king or possibly the laws of the nation

but in the context of eternity, this proverb is speaking of God's WORD, His commands. To despise means to feel contempt or deep repugnance. To fear means to have regard or reverential awe. In the Scripture, fear of the LORD is synonymous with worship of the LORD. To despise or fear the word holds the same meanings in this passage. Having a deep repugnance for the WORD of God will cost a person his eternal life, whereas, having a reverential awe for the same will lead to eternal life, the greatest of all rewards.

Life/Death

Proverbs 13:14 The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, to turn aside from the snares of death.

This English version uses the word fountain when it should use the word vein. A fountain spews forth water that disperses in various directions but a vein channels the fluid to a specific place for a specific purpose. By accepting wise teaching, that wisdom is a channel to life just as the heart pumps blood through the veins to give life to the body. The knowledge of the wise channels a person away from traps that lead to doom and death, away from the tempter, away from the lawbreakers. Why the translator uses the fountain is unknown because the Hebrew uses the words *mekor chayim* which means the great aorta.

Favor/Hardness

Proverbs 13:15 Good understanding produces favor, but the way of the treacherous is hard.

Favor means a gracious kindness. Hard means difficult. In all of the ups and downs of a godly person's life, in the end, there is the gracious kindness of the LORD to which nothing can be compared. Conversely, the ungodly live with one pain and heartache after another, difficult days produced in unfaithfulness to the LORD.

Knowledge/Folly

Proverbs 13:16 Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool displays folly.

Knowledge and prudence go hand in hand. A person who has knowledge usually acts in a prudent manner; conversely, a prudent person usually has knowledge, especially in the form of good sense. In other words, the true character of a person directs his conduct; conversely, the conduct of a person exhibits his true character. He is shrewd in a good and godly sense. Fools and folly go hand in hand also. Folly means a lack of good sense, specifically doing that which is inappropriate, disruptive, or destructive. A person who is foolish will display his character in the conduct of folly.

Adversity/Healing

Proverbs 13:17 A wicked messenger falls into adversity, but a faithful envoy *brings* healing.

Adversity means misfortune or difficulty. Healing means growing sound, obtaining wholeness, getting well. In this proverb, the words messenger and envoy mean the same thing, one who brings news or runs an errand for another by conveying or dispatching a specific communication. The English translates the word *malach* for messenger, which in Hebrew refers to a government official. Therefore, it is easy to understand that Solomon is indicating that the message of the

wicked government official will bring great difficulty upon the people whereas the faithful government official will bring soundness and wholeness.

Neglect/Regard

Proverbs 13:18 Poverty and shame *will come* to him who neglects discipline, but he who regards reproof will be honored.

Solomon repeats this theme regularly through the proverbs, each time adding something new. In this proverb, he adds the idea of poverty and shame to those who neglect godly training. Poverty is a deficit in that which is necessary for daily needs. Shame is the feeling arising from doing that which is dishonorable, improper or ridiculous. Neglecting proper godly training will ultimately result in a lack of daily needs and the shame of being looked down upon by others.

Sweet/Abomination

Proverbs 13:19 Desire realized is sweet to the soul, but it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.

This proverb repeats the theme of Proverbs 13:13. Here Solomon adds an interesting insight to the thinking of fools. Solomon points out that for a fool, it is an abomination to stop doing evil! It is a stench in a fool's nostrils to become righteous! A fool cannot become righteous and taste the sweetness of the soul if he cannot be persuaded to leave evil behind.

Wise/Fool

Proverbs 13:20 He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Bad company fosters bad company! People seek to be with people who think, look and act like they do. A parent may be able to keep a child from following the path of a certain social group, but the child will still seek to be a part of the group and choose to befriend those who are able to express their lives in that culture freely. When a child is running with the wrong crowd, it is because that child wants to be part of that way of thinking; HE IS the wrong crowd in his heart and it usually brings heartache to family and friend, sooner than later. For the wise who run with the wise, the outcome is very different; it is void of harm. The LORD says it through Isaiah like this, "For a fool speaks nonsense, and his heart inclines toward wickedness, to practice ungodliness and to speak error against the LORD, to keep the hungry person unsatisfied and to withhold drink from the thirsty."

Adversity/Prosperity

Proverbs 13:21 Adversity pursues sinners, but the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity.

Adversity means unfavorable fortune or fate, catastrophe, disaster, trouble or misery. Does it occur on purpose? Probably so! The result of the deeds of the sinner is always the same, trouble, because the LORD will make sure the sinner acquires misfortune.

Good/Sinner

Proverbs 13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, and the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.

A godly man leaves a godly inheritance to his children and his children's children. Make no mistake, a godly inheritance will never make it to a grandchild if it has not gone through a godly child. What kind of inheritance can a man leave to his children and grandchildren? Wealth is one thing, righteous living in another, and a love for the LORD God is the best thing he can pass on - a holy heritage, a sacred inheritance, a blessed relationship with the Creator. Also notice that Solomon has lived long enough to notice that even the wealth of sinners eventually filters into the hands of the righteous and beloved of God. It all belongs to Him and He can give it to whomever He pleases.

Poor/Injustice

Proverbs 13:23 Abundant food *is in* the fallow ground of the poor, but it is swept away by injustice.

Fallow refers to plowed or unseeded land for a season or more, uncultivated or unused. Here, Solomon says that even the uncultivated land is covered with food for the poor, for those who have little or no money, goods or other means of support. Then why are the poor hungry? The abundant food is swept away by injustice, a violation of the rights of others by treating them unfairly. Poverty arises in most cases out of the lack of desire to do what is needed to provide for one's needs. Work is out there in abundance to provide, but the poor have a difficult time holding on to it. Once a poor person gains a little extra, it is quickly swept away by the desire to spend. The poor are constantly in a state of feast or famine. The injustice does not come from without, it comes from within; it comes from the desire to have that which he cannot afford and cannot maintain.

Spare/Discipline

Proverbs 13:24 He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

No greater disservice can a parent do to a child than to fail to correct him when he blatantly sins. It shows a lack of caring and concern. It may show the evil that reigns supreme in the heart of the parent too. This theme is a favorite topic for Solomon who later says the following.

Proverbs 19:18 Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

Proverbs 23:13 Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you beat him with the rod, he will not die.

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

Proverbs 29:17 Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul.

The sinful passions of a child or a teen must be dealt with immediately when the obstinate or disobedient act occurs. Parents often say, "They will grow out of it," but that is not always true. Tempers, unhealthy pride, indulgence of sin, pugnacious attitudes, and evil responses must be corrected quickly and new habits must be formed in the early years to mold each young life for adulthood. The child's lifelong livelihood depends on it; the child's eternal relationship with the LORD depends on it.

Enough/Want

Proverbs 13:25 The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, but the stomach of the wicked is in want.

Solomon turns this theme around to focus on the righteous being extremely satisfied in life. He ends this chapter by contrasting the satisfied life of the righteous with the want of the wicked. What is want? It is a craving, demand or desire for something that a person does not have. The wicked will never have enough.