

# The Proverbs

## Lesson 31

### *Proverbs 28*

**Proverbs 28:1** The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion.

The wicked person must always be on the lookout for the lawman, even though the lawman may not have him in his sights. The righteous need not fear the lawman because he has done nothing wrong.

**Proverbs 28:2** By the transgression of a land many are its princes, but by a man of understanding *and* knowledge, so it endures.

To “transgress” means to cross over land that does not belong to you. Greedy and eager rulers often see neighboring lands and transgress them in order to become their rulers. They, too, in turn will be overrun by another prince and the people of the land must endure the neverending change of leadership. When a good prince reigns with wisdom, he sees the invading prince and protects the land and his kingdom endures.

**Proverbs 28:3** A poor man who oppresses the lowly is *like* a driving rain which leaves no food.

This proverb should read, “a strong man who is destitute and hungry oppresses the lowly”. The strong man brings harm to those who are less fortunate than he is when he oppresses them just as the strong rains destroy the crops in the fields by breaking off the fruit before it is mature.

**Proverbs 28:4** Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law strive with them.

A great disparity exists between the wicked and the righteous. Law breaks the wicked who are constantly at odds with the righteous as the righteous are with the wicked.

**Proverbs 28:5** Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand all things.

The LORD is the perfection of justice. Because evil people do not have a relationship with the LORD, they do not understand or appreciate justice. Those who have a relationship with the LORD not only have an understanding and appreciation for justice but their wisdom also allows them to understand all the qualities of the LORD’s creation.

**Proverbs 28:6** Better is the poor who walks in his integrity, than he who is crooked though he be rich.

Neither poverty nor wealth makes any difference in the eyes of the LORD; however, integrity and crookedness are paramount. The world says you are better when you are rich but the LORD says it is better to have integrity. The world says you are cursed because you are poor but the LORD says it is better to be poor than to be crooked.

**Proverbs 28:7** He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but he who is a companion of gluttons humiliates his father.

Both sides of this proverb speak of the honor or humiliation that a son can bring to a father. Law abiding sons bring honor; gluttons and their friends bring dishonor.

**Proverbs 28:8** He who increases his wealth by interest and usury, gathers it for him who is gracious to the poor.

Ill-gotten wealth acquired by charging the poor an exorbitant interest rate will not last long. The LORD will gather it in due time and distribute it back to those who are gracious.

**Proverbs 28:9** He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

The wicked may pray as they wish but their prayers are a stench in the nostrils of the LORD until they enter into a relationship with Him and obey His Law.

**Proverbs 28:10** He who leads the upright astray in an evil way will himself fall into his own pit, but the blameless will inherit good.

Ungodliness leads to misery! Godliness leads to good! Trying to lead a godly person astray will result in the ungodly being trapped by his own devices.

**Proverbs 28:11** The rich man is wise in his own eyes, but the poor who has understanding sees through him.

Wealth does not buy or provide automatic wisdom. Many of the wealthy are far more ignorant than the poor. Many poor people recognize the shortcomings of the boastful rich man.

**Proverbs 28:12** When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, but when the wicked rise, men hide themselves.

The difference between righteousness and wickedness is as vast as day and night and easily recognized by both sides. Righteousness brings great joy whereas wickedness brings great fear.

**Proverbs 28:13** He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion. <sup>14</sup> How blessed is the man who fears always, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

A person will conceal his sin when he wants no one to know about it. Most of the time he does not want to rid himself of the sin because he still enjoys the activity despite the fact that he would be embarrassed if someone discovered his secret. When a sin is brought out into the open, conviction sets in and the heart aches. The sinner then knows that the sin is wrong and he must make the decision to change or remain in his sinful ways, exposed to his family and friends. Sin confessed and forsaken brings compassion; sin continued brings judgment.

In most of the Proverbs, the Hebrew word for “fears” means reverence. However, here the Hebrew word for “fears” means to be afraid. Man should be afraid of the consequences of sin. Once a sin is exposed, if the sinner hardens his heart, great trouble will come to him. For the man who hardens not his heart and confesses his sin, troubles will be few and far between.

**Proverbs 28:15** *Like* a roaring lion and a rushing bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people. <sup>16</sup> A leader who is a great oppressor lacks understanding, *but* he who hates unjust gain will prolong *his* days.

Wicked leaders are no different from raging animals; their very presence strikes fear in people. Most of the time they are set in their ways and no other opinion can sway them. This attitude shows their lack of understanding. The righteous leader will not do these kinds of things to his people.

**Proverbs 28:17** A man who is laden with the guilt of human blood will be a fugitive until death; let no one support him.

The conscience of a killer will literally haunt him until he dies. Further, to give help to a criminal who has not been judged for his crime is a mistake.

**Proverbs 28:18** He who walks blamelessly will be delivered, but he who is crooked will fall all at once.

The original implies something different from what we read here on the surface. It implies that he who walks blamelessly will rise with many resources, but he who is crooked will fall for a lack of resources. With that correction, the passage is much clearer.

**Proverbs 28:19** He who tills his land will have plenty of food, but he who follows empty *pursuits* will have poverty in plenty.

The same thought is in Proverbs 12:11. From the time of the ousting from the Garden of Eden until the industrial revolution, the two chief occupations of the world were farming and herding.

Both require hard work; both represent a hard life; both epitomize honest labor; both can return a bountiful blessing. One of the secrets of each year's success for the farmer begins with the tilling of the land. The old dried crop must be turned under to rot; later the soil must be turned again to continue the decay; before planting, the farmer must turn the land to form the rows. Each year the process is repeated. Each year the farmer has bread on his table. The farmer who fails to till his land but chases after efforts that return no farming value will cause his land to fail to provide bread for his family. For every job, a time exists to work and a time exists to play. When it is time to till, the farmer should let nothing distract him.

**Proverbs 28:20** A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 13:11 says, “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 may lose their fortunes 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.

**Proverbs 28:21** To show partiality is not good, because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.

A wise person understands that showing partiality to one person over another is never good. In such cases, a bribe can override the facts and evidence that must tell the tale in every case and decisions must never be influenced by a payoff.

**Proverbs 28:22** A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth, and does not know that want will come upon him.

This verse is addressing a stingy man. Although there are a few who are wealthy because of their stinginess, most stingy people lust after wealth, yet they end up in poverty.

**Proverbs 28:23** He who rebukes a man will afterward find *more* favor than he who flatters with the tongue.

Truth is truth in all situations and in most instances, the truth may hurt a person's feelings today but as the days pass, that truth becomes a stark reality to the hearer. Solomon's use of the phrase

“flattering tongue” is not a positive reference in this passage. The flatterer is a liar who says what is politically correct yet ultimately wrong and hurtful.

**Proverbs 28:24** He who robs his father or his mother, and says, "It is not a transgression," Is the companion of a man who destroys.

A son or daughter will rob from a parent for many reasons. In general, the theft is done in order to do something with a companion in desperation or perhaps for show. The companion may be a human or it may be something else such as the desire for drugs that controls a person's life in devastating ways. Although the child may eventually inherit that which he is stealing, it is not his until it is legally passed to him at death or as a gift.

**Proverbs 28:25** An arrogant man stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.

An arrogant man is an uncontrolled and selfish man. Selfishness leads to strife in relationships and distrust. Things do not come easy to the arrogant man but to one who trusts in the LORD, blessing will pour out of heaven.

**Proverbs 28:26** He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered.

Because Solomon uses the word fool in the first part of this passage in reference to “his own heart”, Solomon is obviously saying that a fool trusts in the desires of “his own heart” rather than trusting in the LORD with all his heart. Trust in the LORD will give deliverance, trust in oneself leads a person far away from the LORD.

**Proverbs 28:27** He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.

The beginning of this thought is also found in Proverbs 19:17, “He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.”

As a general rule, poor people are poor because they continue to do what poor people do, no matter how much money they earn in a lifetime. In other words, poor people remain poor because of how they use and waste the resources that come to them. Nevertheless, there are a few poor people in this world who neither waste what comes to them nor ask for help in any situation. When we see these people stumble and are gracious to them, helping them get along in life, making their road a little easier to travel, we will always be blessed by the LORD. Conversely, the person who refuses to help when he comes in contact with the truly poor will face trials of his own.

**Proverbs 28:28** When the wicked rise, men hide themselves; but when they perish, the righteous increase.

The first part of this proverb is like the last part of Proverbs 28:12, “but when the wicked rise, men hide themselves.” In many ways, the last part of this proverb is like the first part of Proverbs 28:12, “When the righteous triumph, there is great glory”. Obviously, one of the greatest glories that comes from the perishing of wickedness is the increasing of righteousness. Moreover, righteousness thrives because the righteous do not have to hide themselves from the wicked any longer.