

The Proverbs

Lesson 32

Proverbs 29

Chapter 29 is the last section of the proverbs attributed to Solomon but added to the collection in this book during the days of Hezekiah.

Proverbs 29:1 A man who hardens *his* neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.

Because of Solomon's previous proverbs that follow this same theme, the "reproof" in this passage is righteous and correct; therefore, the "man who hardens his neck after much" righteous "reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy." Refusing to repent once righteous correction is provided ultimately shows stubbornness and leads to a place where no remedy is available.

Proverbs 29:2 When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, people groan.

Righteousness and wickedness are polar opposites; the first brings rejoicing, the second brings groaning. In American life, the citizens have had the opportunity to live under the leadership of both the righteous and the wicked. Fortunately, every four years the population has the opportunity to vote for a new leader and a new leader is guaranteed at least every eight years.

Proverbs 29:3 A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad, but he who keeps company with harlots wastes *his* wealth.

This proverb seems fairly straightforward; however, a revealing secret hides within the words "he who keeps company with harlots wastes *his* wealth." The Hebrew actually says, "he who feeds the harlots shall utterly destroy his character." Engaging harlots will destroy a person's substance!

Proverbs 29:4 The king gives stability to the land by justice, but a man who takes bribes overthrows it.

Justice can be overthrown and perverted when a leader takes a bribe. A lie is presented as truth; wrong is presented as right. Truth and right establish stability; the lie and wrong shatter stability.

Proverbs 29:5 A man who flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his steps.

Flattery means exaggerated and hypocritical praise intent on deception and personal profit. This proverb is a warning to the innocent to beware the man who spouts flatteries because his words are a snare to entrap the innocent man by putting him off guard.

Proverbs 29:6 By transgression an evil man is ensnared, but the righteous sings and rejoices.

A transgression is an invasion of territory that should be off limits. The word “ensnared” used in the NASB is more appropriately translated “vexation.” A sin of transgression may trap the evil man but the intent of this passage is to show that the sin leads the evil man to frustration, irritation, annoyance and anger, all elements of vexation. The righteous man does not need to fear vexation because it has no bearing on the holy and blameless. Rather, the “righteous sings and rejoices” relatively free from an invasion of his territory by an evil man.

Proverbs 29:7 The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor, the wicked does not understand *such* concern.

We must understand that many poor people are part of the righteous just as many wicked people are part of the poor! Righteousness and wickedness have no bearing on the economic status of a person. This proverb is addressing the needs of those who are poor whether righteous or wicked. Righteous people are compassionate toward the “rights of the” righteous poor and the wicked poor alike. Generally, wicked people care for neither!

Proverbs 29:8 Scorners set a city aflame, but wise men turn away anger. ⁹ When a wise man has a controversy with a foolish man, the foolish man either rages or laughs, and there is no rest.

Throughout history, scorners have set cities ablaze in anger over various issues. They have looted buildings in their own neighborhoods, burned the possession of their friends, killed the innocent that are children of their own people and made a mockery of the justice system because they have adopted a statement as truth that is in reality a lie. Protest marches have ended in tragedy and lives extinguished in their path. But if a wise man who knows the truth arises from within their ranks, the anger of these mobs can be quailed. Sadly, wise men are few and far between. Those who attempt to be wise but are not, invariably stir the anger of the scorners to greater heights and they snicker at all attempts to change their direction.

Proverbs 29:10 Men of bloodshed hate the blameless, but the upright are concerned for his life.

Murderers detest integrity! Even the LORD warned His followers that the blood-thirsty world would hate them. But even the murderers need the LORD and righteous people of God will be concerned about the soul of the blood-thirsty man to a point. Some cannot be turned from their wicked ways. Some engage in activities that put the innocent in harm’s way. Unlawful and wicked force imposed upon the innocent must be met with lawful and deadly force by the righteous.

Proverbs 29:11 A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back.

It is appropriate to transfer this Old Testament proverb through the portal of Christianity and make a real life application for today. Fools, even new Christians, lose their tempers and spout off when they should not, showing their immaturity in Christ. The mature Christian holds his tongue, gathers his facts and speaks the appropriate words at the appropriate time in the appropriate way; however, none are perfect and we all stumble at times. Both are Christians but

one is a babe in Christ and the other is mature in Him. Maturity in Christ comes with years of interaction with the LORD and His word, in prayer, in supplication and in study.

Proverbs 29:12 If a ruler pays attention to falsehood, all his ministers *become* wicked.

In 1920, the NAZI party was formed with fewer than 60 members. That name comes from the proper noun Ignatz, a German form of Ignatius and used to identify members of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei party (NSDAP) formed in Germany. The full title is the National Socialist German Worker's Party. The party wanted to be all things to all Germans. The word "Socialist" in the name tells it all. Socialism refers to a system of social organization in which private property and the distribution of income are subject to social or governmental control. In lay terms, the government steals from the rich, keeps most of the money for the profit of the few in power and distributes a little to the populous, even who have not earned what is being given to them. Although the NAZI party lasted from 1920 until 1945, it wasn't until the rise of Adolf Hitler that the socialist movement took power in 1930. Over the next 10 years, the party gained about 8.5% of the German population, enough to bring great vexation to the remaining 91.5% of the nation. When the war broke out, the socialist expansion ended as war efforts took over. However, in Sweden, the socialist establishment has had plenty of time to develop and engulf the entire country. For example, the government sets the salaries of the people in most socialist systems. In Sweden, all painters in the country make the same salary provided they paint their quota of gallons per month. All plumbers make the same salary provided they make their required quota of repairs. All doctors make the same salary as well as all priests, carpenters, car salesmen, etc. If the quota is met in the first week of the month, the worker does not have to work the next three weeks. He will receive the same salary as the worker who strings his quota out until the last day. If you need a doctor and he has already met his quota for the day, you will have to go to a different doctor who has not met his quota or wait until the next day for the doctor of your choice. Such is the socialist system in Sweden. Doctors are required to give everyone medicine at the end of the appointment, but the medicine does not have to be one that will help cure the ailment. Thus, the whole socialist system is built on lies. The quota cards are falsified and the government approves. The employers pay all the salaries to the government. The tax on all salaries is 75% and the government writes the employees a check for the other 25%, not the employer. What happens to the 75% the government keeps? Those in government make the largest paychecks and even though they are also taxed at 75%, their 25% is much larger than all the other working people in Sweden. In America, the leader in power in 2015 and his party want to steal from the rich, keep most of the money in the government system and give a little to the poor in the form of free phones and adjusted mortgage payments just to name two examples. The party wants to control the education of all children, unholy matrimony, determine scenarios in which medical insurance will or will not pay, and the salaries of everyone in the name of equality for all. It is all a lie and the leader surrounds himself with those who will agree and promote his lies. If they do not agree, they cannot be part of his team.

Proverbs 29:13 The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The LORD gives light to the eyes of both.

The eyes are the windows to the soul and to the world and the poor and the oppressor have both in common. The LORD is the maker of them both and each can see the doings of the other in the world. Each can see the external actions cultivated from deep within.

Proverbs 29:14 If a king judges the poor with truth, His throne will be established forever.

Once fully mature, capitalism has proven to bring equal opportunity to every person born under its domain. Socialism has proven to set barriers among the different classes of people that are extremely difficult to cross. Under capitalism, even the poorest people in its nation are wealthier than the wealthiest in many other nations. Socialism has proven in history to foster a very wealthy privileged class and an extremely poor lower class with very few in between. But one truth is found in both systems, if the president or king treats the poor with truth, justice, fairness and kindness, they will come to his defense in his time of need. In every system of government, the poor greatly outnumber the wealthy. When the wealthy attack the president or king, the poor will gladly respond.

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

The training of every person begins in childhood. In Hebrew, “the rod” reads “the rod of correction” which is a physical stick used to paddle a child when he performs a wrong deed. “Reproof” means a verbal correction as well. The child must hear and understand why the rod is being applied. Both are necessary to facilitate wisdom in the child. Not all children learn from the rod and reproof; evil dwells with them and they are stiff-necked. The parent must still direct the child in the way he should go. Children who control their mothers are a disgrace in the eyes of others. A child who must have his own way disgraces his mother by his actions, disgraces himself by his actions and disgraces those around him by his actions.

Proverbs 29:16 When the wicked increase, transgression increases; but the righteous will see their fall.

Evil begets evil. Evil crosses the boundaries that should not be crossed. However, evil will be punished in due time and the righteous will see it occur, even if it is not until the Great White Judgment.

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

Nothing brings more joy to parents than good moral children who have reached adulthood and live by the training invested in them during their growing years. Not all children will adhere to the correction of their parents; nevertheless parents must try. Sometimes the fruits of those lessons are not seen until the child has his own children!

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law.

This proverb is a poor translation of the Hebrew. It should say, “Where there is no prophecy, the people scatter.” In this translation the word “prophecy” means Divine revelation of God’s Word. It does not mean the telling of the future. The word “scatter” means that the people have little reverence for the Word of God and fail to attend the weekly worship of Him. Those who worship the LORD and listen to His Divine revelation will find a joy that passes all understanding. Worship of Him is a requirement.

Proverbs 29:19 A slave will not be instructed by words *alone*; for though he understands, there will be no response.

A servant who does not work at his job out of love for his master and his own family’s welfare is a wicked servant. Servants should work because they need to provide for their families and themselves rather than having to be forced to work out of fear.

Proverbs 29:20 Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Many men and women have said things in haste that they wish could be taken back. But wise people learn from those mistakes and learn how to control their tongues. The one who does not learn, the fool, has a better chance at obtaining the favor from the LORD because the hasty one will almost never learn!

Proverbs 29:21 He who pampers his slave from childhood will in the end find him to be a son.

Here the word “pamper” means to “delicately bring up”. Some commentators conclude that this proverb is negative, stating that the slave will become as worthless as a son. While that could be true, it is more likely that Solomon’s intent in this proverb is that the one who delicately raises a slave from childhood will in the end have an employee who is as close and loyal to him as a son.

Proverbs 29:22 An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.

The sins of the angry and hot-tempered man are numerous. Knowledge of these facts should cause the righteous man to run from both; he should rid himself of both.

Proverbs 29:23 A man’s pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor.

In this proverb, Solomon reveals one of the more ironic universal truths. Self elevation actually lowers a person’s status in the eyes of the people; self debasement actually elevates a person’s status in the eyes of the people.

Proverbs 29:24 He who is a partner with a thief hates his own life; he hears the oath but tells nothing.

Partners in crime come to odds when caught and brought before a judge. If he is put on the stand and sworn to tell the truth “so help me God”, he must lie to keep his loyalty to the other or say nothing. If he tells the truth, he may harm himself. Then, he must trust that his partner’s story will match his own when he is on the stand. If the testimonies conflict, the judge and jury will determine the truthfulness of what is heard and the result may lead to the verdict of “guilty”!

Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.

The word “fear” is not the word for the worship of God; it is the word that means to tremble. A person who is afraid of another person lives his life in a dreaded trap of his own making. It is far better to trust in the LORD. The word “exalted” is not a good translation. It should be the words “will be kept safe.” Living in safety is better than living in fear.

Proverbs 29:26 Many seek the ruler's favor, but justice for man *comes* from the LORD.

Lest we forget, the ruler could actually be the employer, the boss, the principal, the chairman or anyone else in a position of power. Anyone who has worked more than a couple of years has seen the “brown-nosers” who stay close to the person who has power hoping to gain extra favor by always being present when he is there. In truth, such actions do not guarantee the leader’s favor. In many cases, the seeker of praise is viewed as a slave by the ruler and treated as such. When that ruler looks to make a new assignment, he will look outside that circle to those who have carried on and proven themselves as self-starters. He will not diminish his personal slave circle because that would hurt him. The one who trusts in the LORD will find the real favor from the Ruler of rulers.

Proverbs 29:27 An unjust man is abominable to the righteous, and he who is upright in the way is abominable to the wicked.

An abomination means a stench in the nostrils. The unjust and wicked man versus the righteous and upright man is covered in this proverb. Both sides detest each other; both sides are an abomination to the other; both sides are worlds apart; each side is a stench in the nostril of the other.