

Proverbs Chapter10 - John Karmelich

1. Well, we finally made to the proverbs of Proverbs. ☺
 - a) Remember what a "proverb" is: A biblical proverb is a two-part "saying". It is short so it is easy to remember. It is designed to teach us something about biblical wisdom.
 - b) The biblical proverbs are two thoughts where the first thought connects to the second thought. For example, it may say something in effect of, "A good guy does this, but a bad guy does that". Sometimes it is "A good guy does this, and here is what else happens to that good guy". The point is each of the two thoughts connects to the other thought.
 - c) If half of a two-line Proverb is confusing, study the other half. Since they are designed to be connected, one thought can help you understand what the other thought means.
2. I call this lesson, "behavior matters". The idea is we are to judge other's behavior and take inventory of our own behavior as we go through our lives. Often our behavior stems from some internal issue. For example, if we're angry, we may express it on the next person we meet. Our behavior is often reflective of our emotions. The goal of Christians is to be effective witnesses for God. To be such a witness, our behavior does matter. Therefore, we often have to look inside of us to deal with our "output". Most of these proverbs deal with behavior to model or avoid.
 - a) Remember wisdom is the application of biblical knowledge. It is God saying in effect, "You want to live a happy life that is pleasing to Me? Terrific, model this behavior".
Proverbs is God's way of saying "This is the way life is supposed to work. Deal with it!"
3. Let's do a quick overview of the whole Book of Proverbs. Chapter 10 begins a major new section.
 - a) Chapters 1 through 9 have a style that is a combination of narration and poetry. Those nine chapters are a continuous narrative on the benefits of wisdom.
 - b) From Chapter 10 through Chapter 29 we have a new narrative style: None. ☺ What I mean by that is other than the general topic of wisdom, each chapter does not have an overriding special topic. All of these chapters are simply one big discussion of wisdom.
 - c) Chapters 10 through 24 are proverbs by King Solomon. Chapters 25 through 29 are other proverbs written by Solomon but were not added to this collection until centuries later.
 - i) The final chapters, (30-31) are written by other authors and added to this book.
 - d) What we get in Chapters 10-29 is a collection of two line proverbs. The thought of the first line is somehow connected to the second thought. Sometimes the two lines compare similar themes and sometimes they contrast each other.
 - e) What is hard to do is summarize these chapters. There does not appear to be any particular organizational effort. The chapter breaks don't help either. The chapter breaks were added in the 12th Century AD. It as if somebody decided, "OK, about thirty proverbs is enough for one chapter, let's put a chapter break right here." ☺
 - f) Again, if a particular proverb is confusing, sometimes reading it in context of the previous and next proverb often helps. Even though each proverb is a two-line saying, the context of a proverb with the surrounding proverb often helps to explain the meaning. There is some organizational structure as often groups of proverbs are together in a cluster.
4. I want you to notice this chapter starts off in comparison to the way Chapter 1 starts off:
 - a) Chapter 1, Verse 1: "The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel".
 - b) Chapter 10, Verse 1a: " The proverbs of Solomon".
 - c) Chapter 10, Verse 1 essentially repeats Chapter 1 Verse 1. Chapters 1 through 9 are written as a dialogue from a father to a son. That is why King Solomon mentions his father David. It is as if Solomon is giving David much of the credit for the inspiration behind those first nine chapters.
 - d) From Chapters 10 through 29, it's "pure Solomon". It's his stuff. The only key difference is in Chapters 26 through 29, we had some other Proverb-writings that were never combined with Solomon's original "intended collection" of Chapters 10 through 25.

5. Chapter 10, Verse 1: The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.
- a) The basic idea of this verse is that if you live a life pleasing to your parents, you will make your parents happy. If you don't, you will cause them grief.
 - b) Just about all parents want to see their kids live out a happy and productive life. If a son or daughter turns to say, a life of crime, it becomes a grief and a source of disappointment to the parents. If a child goes bad all parents naturally think, "I must have done something wrong raising them. Look at the way they turned out". (The older I get, the more I'm convinced a good part of raising one's children is based on upbringing, but there is still some aspect of plain "random luck", for a lack of a better word. In other words, some people turn out really well despite a horrible upbringing and vice-versa.)
 - c) I thought about something else about this verse: Why put it first?
 - i) This verse essentially says, "live a good life, and it will make your parents happy". You would think the first proverb would be about obeying God or maybe about not killing too many people. ☺ Why have this proverb first?
 - ii) What occurred to me is this verse is a great transition from the previous section.
 - iii) The last nine chapters were written in the form of a dialogue between a father and a son with the main point being "get wisdom". So here we are in the first verse of the next chapter, and the first proverb is on making one's parents happy. In that context, the verse makes perfect sense.
 - iv) The other thing that occurred to me is that at any one time, society is always one generation away from messing up real bad. All it takes is one generation failing to teach good biblical values to the next generation, and society falls apart. Reading the Old Testament, the history of Israel had its difficulties due to such a failure. God had to send prophets if for no other reason, parents failed to pass on their religious traditions and teachings to the next generation.
 - d) The last thing to say on this, which is obvious to most adults, is children watch what their parents do far more than what they say. Children eventually think, "If this is not that important to my parents, why should I take it seriously?" This ties directly to Verse 1. If one wants to have a child that is pleasing to God, the parents have to "walk the walk". It doesn't mean the parents have to be perfect. It is essential to apologize to the children when you mess up. Even young children know the difference between parents who mess up but still want to do the right thing, and those who don't care at all when it comes to the issue of being pleasing to God.
6. Verse 2: Ill-gotten treasures are of no value, but righteousness delivers from death.
- a) We move from parent-to-children advice to dealing with money.
 - b) Let's take the second half of the verse by itself: "Righteousness delivers from death".
 - i) It's better to think of this Proverbs another way: Can one have long-term happiness from living a life of crime? There can be short-term material benefits, but in the end, the guilt eats one up or one is caught.
 - ii) The idea of "righteousness delivers from death" does deal with eternal salvation. Let's face it, if one is not sinning, one is heading in the right direction. ☺ I think this verse is more than that. It is about how to live a happy life.
 - c) Let's face it; if you do steal something and "get away with it", one can spend the money for a while. Most people eventually are caught, but some do get away with it. The underlying point is mainly about how to live a happy life.
 - d) Now let's look at the first part: "Ill-gotten treasures are of no value".
 - i) This is true in the sense of salvation. One cannot buy their way into heaven.
 - ii) I'll also argue that ill-gotten treasures do not bring satisfaction as well. Again, God designed us with an internal sense of right from wrong. One cannot satisfy a guilty conscious with material benefits.

- e) Most of us know, or know of people who appear to be getting away with something for the sake of growing rich. The only way I can sleep at night about this issue is to accept the fact there is a God, and He is fair. If this world was all there is to life, it would not be fair. One has to take comfort in the fact that eternity is a lot longer than this lifetime. God is a god of judgment as well as a god of love.
7. Verse 3: The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.
- a) One can read this verse and think, "Does this mean all I have to do is be born-again and I'll never starve to death? Woo hoo! Time to quit my job, God is going to feed me!" ☺
- i) There have been Christian martyrs who have died in jail of malnutrition. I don't believe that is what the verse is talking about.
- ii) Look at the King James Version of this verse: "The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to famish". The key word is soul. God does not let our soul famish. The verse does not say anything about our stomach.
- iii) Even here in the NIV version, one can see a hint that this verse is talking about spiritual nourishment and not food nourishment. Remember if the first half of the verse is confusing, look at the second half. The second half says "craving of the wicked". I don't think the wicked are craving about raiding a refrigerator! ☺
- b) This verse is a promise that if we seek God, He will satisfy our soul. What does that mean? It means God promises us comfort despite whatever our situation.
- i) Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-29 NIV)
- ii) I am convinced Jesus is talking about the same thing as this verse in Proverbs. It does not mean that if we are in physical pain, that pain will immediately go away. It means we can have comfort through whatever is the situation of the moment.
- iii) Let me give a prayer example of this situation: "Lord, right now I am in a lot of pain. It really hurts and I need Your help. I don't know how long this is going to last, but You do. You promised Me this would not last forever and I trust in that promise. Help Me to learn what You want Me to learn from this situation. Grant me Your peace through this process and help me to focus on You to give me strength, Amen.
- a) It is through that type of prayer that God gives us comfort in bad situation.
- c) Jesus also said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:3 NIV). That is a similar idea to "not let the righteous go hungry". The idea is that if we have a "hunger" to live a life pleasing to God, He (God) in turn, satisfies that "hunger". There is a sense of satisfaction and joy that comes with obedience to God. That is the idea being portrayed in these verses.
- d) Let me talk about physical hunger and the phrase, "The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry". David once wrote, "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread." (Psalm 37:25 NIV). That verse in the Psalm does imply that God does feed those who seek Him.
- i) Again, there have been Christian martyrs who have died of starvation. With that exception stated, I will argue the principal is generally true that one can count on God to feed those in need. Through the years, I have heard some tremendous miracles of people who have sought God and have been financially "down to nothing" and somehow, God got them through that situation and fed them.
- e) The second half of this Proverb says, "thwarts the craving of the wicked". The idea is that God will not let the wicked get away with it forever. Sooner or later, the wicked either goes to jail or dies. One can take comfort in this half of the verse. When somebody appears to be "getting away with it" for awhile, one can take comfort it's not for forever.

8. Verse 4: Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.
- a) Every now and then Proverbs gives a truth about "how life works".
 - i) People who are financially successful in life work hard at it. As my father used to tell me, "If getting rich was easy, everyone would do it."
 - b) This is a proverb that is self-evident. The question becomes why is this proverb here? What is Solomon's point other than success requires hard work?
 - i) First, it is a warning against laziness. Yes, it applies to the business world, but the theme of Proverbs has to do with wisdom.
 - ii) I'll argue the underlying point has to do with seeking God. To put it another way, you can't learn the bible by sleeping with the book on top of your head, hoping the words literally sink into the brain. One has to have the diligence to study it.
 - iii) To live a life pleasing to God requires effort and plain old hard work. One has to make an effort to study. One has to make an effort to pray. One has to make an effort to help others.
 - iv) My point is this verse is about "bringing wealth". Yes, the principal applies to the business world, but it also applies to our relationship with God. The "long term wealth" we gain is by living a life pleasing to God.
 - c) I can just hear people saying, "I've been busting my tail all of my life and I still don't have wealth. Where is my share of this proverb?" Think of it this way, if being a born again Christian is a guarantee of financial prosperity, people would convert for the material benefits and not for the need to be forgiven of one's sins. My point is being a Christian and even "working hard" is not a guarantee of financial success. That's why this verse is not talking about "work hard and one will be financially more successful than one's neighbor". It is talking about reaping spiritual blessings that last for an eternity.
9. Verse 5: He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.
- a) One has to remember that when Proverbs was written, society was primarily farming. When it came time to gather the crops, there was usually a short window of time before the crops would go bad. Every person in sight was needed to gather the crops. With that said, this verse is saying in effect, "A son who works hard during the harvest time makes the father happy. If the son is lazy during this time, the father will think the son is a worthless bum, and the father will be right!"
 - b) In other words, how do you know if a person is lazy? Watch their actions when it counts!
 - c) Remember one of the Ten Commandments is to "Honor one's father and mother". (Exodus 20:12). Therefore, if one is a farmer and dad runs the farm, would be a sin not to help out when one's father needs one's help.
 - d) Let's also talk about this from another perspective. The first part of this verse says, "He who gathers crops in the summer is a wise son". This verse is talking about farming, but the word-picture is much bigger than that. The idea is to take the opportunities when they come. To quote the Living Bible here, "A wise son makes hay when the sun shines!"
 - i) Need an example as it applies to our faith? Let's say you know someone who needs help. This verse is saying in effect, "Offer your help when the opportunity arises!" (The corollary is don't force yourself on this person, but offer help.)
 - ii) Remember the most valuable commodity one has is their time. A point of this verse is not to waste that time when opportunities arise.
10. Verse 6: Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.
- a) Let's suppose one is trying their best to live a life pleasing to God. Yes, we mess up, but when we do, we confess that sin and move on. We set goals for ourselves higher than our actions, but generally we live our life trying to please God. One can ponder, "Where is my blessing? I don't feel any crown on my head? Where is my reward?"

- i) My point here is that rewards don't necessarily come in this lifetime. Jesus said about His second coming, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." (Revelation 22:12 NIV)
 - b) The second part of this Proverb says, "Violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked".
 - i) The point here is to compare and contrast the first and second part of Verse 6.
 - ii) So what does "violence overwhelm the mouth of the wicked mean? Does it mean God punches them in the mouth every time that evil person sins? No, but I'm guessing might help. ☺ The general idea is that if one goes down the wrong path in life, eventually, one ends up either in jail or dead. At the least, that person is sent to hell for judgment. In that sense, it is like a "punch in the mouth".
 - iii) Again, it is best to see these two as a contrast: If the righteous person has this "invisible crown" on their head (in the sense that the saved will be rewarded for their efforts), so the wicked have this "invisible punch in the mouth" coming their way for their actions.
11. Verse 7: The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot.
- a) Remember much of Proverbs is about "This is the way life works". That is true for this proverb as well. If a person has a good reputation, that reputation will continue after they die, and if a person has a bad reputation, it will continue after they die.
 - b) A point of this verse is one's reputation lasts longer than one's lifetime. If one cares about one's legacy, one should strive to have a good reputation.
 - c) The underlying tone of this verse has to do with salvation and condemnation as well.
 - d) Let's pause from a verse-by-verse study for a moment and take all of this in: What is the big-picture being presented here?
 - i) Verse 1 dealt with passing on wisdom from father to son.
 - ii) Verse 2 is about not wasting time on "ill gotten treasures.
 - iii) Verse 3 is a promise that God satisfies the soul of the righteous.
 - iv) Verse 4 is about the importance of diligence in being wise.
 - v) Verse 5 is also about diligence in wisdom. It was about working at harvest time.
 - vi) Verse 6 is the promise about blessings on the head of the righteous.
 - vii) Verse 7 here says the memory of the righteous will be blessed.
 - e) What does all of this have in common? It is about motivating us to have wisdom. The underlying message is God is trying to motivate us with both positive and negative illustrations on the importance of seeking Him. The basic idea is if we seek Him we have wonderful eternal rewards in heaven and if we don't we suffer in hell. (Yes, there is more to the salvation message, but that's not my point here.)
 - f) These verses are God saying in effect, "I know living a life for Me (God) is difficult at times. It is easy to want to quit at times and walk away. I (God) am trying to teach you that it is worth it. You'll appreciate life more if you will follow these guidelines and it will affect your life after you die!" Like I said in the lesson title, our behavior matters!
12. Verse 8: The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.
- a) This verse is more fundamental. It is saying in order to act in a way that is pleasing to God, first we have to be teachable in the first place. If a person is not teachable, their life will eventually come to ruin.
 - b) Remember the definition of a biblical "fool" is one who doesn't care about being accountable to God and doesn't care if they sin or not. Whether that fool realizes it or not, their lives will eventually come to ruin. It may be financial ruin, social ruin or an eternal condemnation in hell. Remember Proverbs is about "this is the way life works". Just because one doesn't want to play by the rules, doesn't mean they can avoid the consequences of disobeying those rules.

13. Verse 9: The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.
- a) To paraphrase this verse, "If somebody doesn't have a guilty conscious, they have nothing to worry about. If someone goes down the wrong path in life, you can bank on the fact that sooner or later, word will get out about them."
 - b) Remember the motivation for these verses: To get us to act in a way that is pleasing to God. If it doesn't motivate us to have a clear conscious, then the motivation of knowing we will be caught eventually should motivate us to do the right thing.
 - i) I have heard from policemen that some criminals are actually grateful when they are caught. The guilt was eating up the criminals and there is a sense of relief when they actually get caught.
 - ii) The motivation of this verse is to understand that guilt is a powerful force. It is to be avoided. That is why confession is so important. We carry around guilt because we think we should have done better. Our big egos won't let us forgive ourselves because we mistakenly think we should have been better than that.
 - iii) God wants us to have a personal relationship with Him. Guilt over some issue blocks that relationship. That is why confession is so essential. Getting back to the verse, living a life pleasing to God alleviates that guilt. One can walk securely not be being perfect, but by accepting God's forgiveness for our lives.
 - c) As to "he who takes the crooked paths will be found out", take comfort in that fact. This world has a lot of injustice and many innocent people who get hurt. Again, if there was no God, I couldn't handle all the pain this world happens. One has to have faith that a god will "right the wrongs" of the world, if for no other selfish reason, than to have peace in our hearts and not let that anger block our relationship with God.
 - i) The corollary of this verse is not to be passive about the sin caused by others. Society is not to say to the criminal, "Oh well, God will punish you, we'll just let you go." There are times to get involved for justice sake. It is unloving to the victim if we don't get involved in punishing those who have done the crime.
14. Verse 10: He who winks maliciously causes grief, and a chattering fool comes to ruin.
- a) So far in Proverbs we've had pairs of good and bad people. So far, it is always, "the good person acts this way and the bad person acts that way". It is so we can recognize both types of behavior and know the final outcome of each type. Here in Verse 10, we have two "bad types" in the same verse. My point is not every Proverb will be a contrast of good and bad people.
 - b) My final point in Verse 9 was about not being passive when others sin. That in a sense is the same thing being said in the first part of Verse 10. The idea of "winks maliciously" is one who "winks" at sin when it occurs as if they concur or don't care.
 - c) A point is we as a society are to step in and not allow sin (i.e., crime) to occur. It doesn't mean the world is to live by biblical standards, only those laws that are on the books.
 - i) As for Christians, should we be the sin police in church? Matthew 18 lays out a model of how to approach sin. Essentially, we confront people one on one. If they don't repent, we come back with witnesses, so it is not one person's word against the other. The final act is ex-communication from the church group until that person is willing to confess that sin is wrong.
 - ii) Gee John, that's great. What does this have to do with Verse 10? ☺ The point of Verse 10 is those who "wink" at sin, causes grief to the world around them. They are subtly giving their approval to that sin.
 - d) The second part of this verse is a "chattering fool". Remember a fool is someone who lives their life in the sense they don't care if they are accountable to God. The idea of chattering fool (or "prating fool" KJV) is simply the idea that again, this person doesn't care about the consequences of sin.

- e) Putting both halves of the proverb together, we have two examples of a person who doesn't care about the sins of the world that exist around them. The ultimate point is that in either case, it causes grief to others around them and that type of person will suffer in the end for their actions and lack of actions.
15. Verse 11: The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.
- a) Notice the word "mouth" is used twice:
- i) The "good mouth" is a fountain of life in the first half of the verse.
 - ii) The "bad mouth" suffers from violence in the second half of the verse.
 - iii) This does not mean that Christians only speak beautiful things and God punches wicked people in the mouth. ☺ A better way of looking at this verse is we can judge people's behavior by what comes out of their mouth.
- b) Jesus had a similar thought: "But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. (Matthew 15:18,19 NIV)
- i) The point is what comes out of the heart (i.e., our thoughts, our inner most "being") is expressed by what we say and what we do.
- c) I'll also add that it never ceases to amaze me what I'll say in a situation after I have just prayed about it. The Holy Spirit can "do wonders" when we let Him take over.
16. Verse 12: Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.
- a) Verse 12 is another contrast verse. The verse says in effect if we are in a bad mood, and the person we're angry at is right in front of us, we'll stir up trouble. If we love someone, we're more likely to forgive them.
- b) As to the "hater", the verse is not about a good person having a bad day. It is about a person who is generally angry. To use another of my regular expressions, "hurting people, hurt people". People who are unhappy in life will stir up trouble around them.
- c) Imagine if our spouse has had a really long day and not much sleep the night before. We're more likely to overlook their snappy remarks because we love them. That's an example of "love covers over all wrongs". If we can see a person as someone we do love or someone who needs love, we're more likely to overlook wrongs.
- i) Does that mean we should "let love cover" when someone tries to punch us in the face? ☺ No. Self-defense is a separate issue. The issue is about giving the pain to God. Quick prayer: "Lord, this person really hurt me. Help me at this moment to give You that pain, as it is blocking my relationship with You. Give me the proper words to say when I see them again." With a prayer like that, you will be surprised how the "good part" of Verse 11 comes into play!
17. Verse 13: Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment.
- a) Here we have another "good guy/bad guy" comparison. The verse says the people who seek God's wisdom say wise things. (What comes out of us is based on what we put into us!) Those who don't follow God's commandments will get a "rod in the back". This was a common punishment for minor crimes in that culture.
- b) These verses are designed to make points, not to be taken very literally. It does not mean every Christian has good discernment in every situation and every unsaved person gets whipped in the back when they sin.
- i) These verses are also designed to teach us how to judge behavior. Do you want to know if one is wise? Watch what comes out of one's mouth. If we lack judgment and we commit crimes, sooner or later most criminals do suffer some sort of punishment, symbolized by the "rod in the back" statement.

18. Verse 14: Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin.
- Here's another sign whether you are a "good guy or bad guy". When you hear good biblical knowledge, do you ponder it and store it for future use? Or, do you laugh at that and ignore that advice? If you choose the latter, the text says you "invite ruin".
 - Yes, "invite ruin" does imply eternal condemnation, but it also means ruin of one's life on earth. Show me a person who has ignored God all of their lives and most likely I'll show you an unhappy and bitter person when they are old.
 - Notice it is the "mouth" of the fool that invites ruin. This is another example of one's behavior is usually the result of what one "is" on the inside.
19. Verse 15: The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor.
- Here is an unusual proverb that explains, "This is the way life is about money". What the proverb is saying is rich people depend upon their money in times of trouble. It is their security blanket. For the poor, not having money when they need it is their ruin.
 - One can read that and say, "Well, yeah. Of course, those who have money use it and those who are poor suffer. I need a bible to tell me this? ☺"
 - The problem with that interpretation is it doesn't fit the context of the surrounding verses. The subject is wisdom. The context of "rich" and "poor" is something else.
 - With that said, let me explain further. If we are "spiritually rich", that means for the Christian, we are trusting in Jesus for payment of our sins. It becomes a security blanket for us and a good one at that! It is something we can depend upon. It is also the "ruin" of the spiritually poor as they have nothing to rely upon at the moment of their death.
 - One can take this a step further and talk about having biblical wisdom. It makes one "rich" in the idea one can have a joyful happy life if one follows God's rules. If one turns from God, one becomes bitter in the end. In that context, Verse 15 fits in well with both the previous and next couple of verses.
20. Verse 16: The wages of the righteous bring them life, but the income of the wicked brings them punishment.
- First, notice the words "wages" and "income". The proverb is saying both the righteous and the wicked have wages and income. Yet each brings a different result.
 - To put it another way, whatever the "righteous people" do in life, it leads them to a good life and an everlasting life. Whatever the wicked does, it leads to punishment.
 - To state the obvious by now, we are not talking about cash flow. The verse is not saying only the righteous earn good livings. This verse wouldn't make much sense if that was the topic at hand. This verse is about rewards and punishment by God based on how one lives one life. If I were to write a paraphrase of this verse, I might say, "What one does with their income affects their life. It can bring good or punishment."
 - It doesn't mean all of our income has to go to say, our local church. What it does mean is that God calls on us to be responsible and good "stewards" of our financial blessings.
21. Verse 17: He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.
- Here's another proverb that is good, fundamental advice. What the verse is saying is when a godly person is corrected, they listen to the advice and learn from it.
 - One can say, "Can't a rotten person be disciplined at his or her rottenness?" Yes. ☺ The point is not discipline alone, but discipline toward ways that are pleasing to God.
 - Does this mean I have to accept all criticism about my lifestyle? No. Remember God is the final authority, not people. I listened to all advice with a grain of salt. When one gets fair criticism about one's actions, one should think about it and correct it as necessary. A point is not to let our ego's get in the way of listening to good, sound advice. That is the idea of wisdom as it applies to this verse.

22. Verse 18: He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.
- Here we have a Proverb with a double-negative. Both halves are bad things.
 - In the first half a "bad person" keeps telling lies. In the second half, the "bad person" spreads slander. Both slander (false accusations) and lying are not telling the truth. They are both covered under the sin of "bearing false witness". (Ref. Exodus 20:16).
 - What this verse is describing is "what is the inside comes out on the outside". The first half says if a person is lying, there is hatred in the inside. Putting both halves together, both are about lying in the sense of false accusation against another. The point is if someone has hatred against someone; that hatred might come out as a false accusation.
 - Remember a "fool" is one who doesn't care to please God with their lives. Spreading slander is a sin. If one does not care that they are making false accusations, they are being foolish (in the biblical sense of the word.)
 - The big picture idea is to watch our behavior and watch other's behavior. If one sees a person giving some sort of false accusation, most likely there is some sort of internal hatred issues behind it. It also helps us to discern the truth. If we know "Person A" hates "Person B", we should be less likely to trust "Person A" when they discuss "Person B".
23. Verse 19: When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.
- To paraphrase this verse, "Nobody is perfect. Let a person talk long enough and they are bound to say something wrong. Smart people speak sparingly to avoid bad things coming out of their mouths.
 - The second part of the verse says, "He who holds his tongue is wise". Does that mean we should be quiet all the time? No. James said, "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires." (James 1:19-20). I believe James point is similar to that of Proverbs 10:19, which is not to be silent, but wisdom is to be careful what one says.
 - Remember the theme of Proverbs is wisdom. The main point is that wise people think through what they say in life.
 - An underlying point of Verse 18 was that when we are angry with someone, we say things that we regret later. Verse 19 ties to that fact that it is wise to deal with that anger before we speak.
24. Verse 20: The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value.
- Let's take each half of these verses separately and then put them together.
 - The first half says, "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver". Obviously it is not saying a good tongue is made of metal. The idea is when we speak what is "right" it is like a valuable commodity.
 - The second half says, "heart of the wicked is of little value". The idea is "choice" silver is valuable, and a wicked heart is of little value.
 - Let's put this in context of the previous few verses: The last verse says in effect that wise people "think about" what they say. We've also had discussions of the fact that what comes out of the mouth is based on what is "inside" of us. If we are angry on the inside, that anger comes in ways that hurts others. If we are seeking God and His love for our lives and the lives of those around us, good things can come out of our mouths!
 - All of this ties back to my lesson theme of "behavior matters". The key is it starts with what we are thinking or feeling on the inside, and our behavior follows. Remember that God wants us to be witnesses for Him. How we "are" on the inside affects our ability to be a good ambassador for God with our behavior.
25. Verse 21: The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment.
- The first part of Verse 21 says, "The lips of the righteous nourish many". I don't believe that means we are to spit out food for others to eat. ☺ It means if we are seeking God's will for us "on the side" it will benefit what we say.

- b) The corollary is "fools die for lack of judgment". I don't believe it means a foolish person gets struck dead for saying the wrong thing. Remember a foolish person is one who doesn't seek God. If they don't change, they face hell. That is part of the idea of this verse. The other idea is their mouth "gives away" what they are thinking. In other words, how do we know if someone is a fool? Watch their behavior! Are they generally living a life that is pleasing to God in all that they do?
26. Verse 22: The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it.
- a) I've made it plain by now that God's blessings does not mean the born-again Christian gets to be more financially wealthy than one's neighbor. This verse is not saying, "Be wise, and you'll have lots of money with no strings attached!"
- b) What this verse is implying is that God wants to bless us and does promise there are "no strings attached" to those blessings. The "wealth" of God's blessing is our behavior.
- i) Let me explain; if one prays, "Lord, I want to make a difference to those around me. I want to be used by You to make an impact to the world around me. I want to be an effective witness for You." God responds by saying "Terrific. Follow My rules and I guarantee you will make that difference."
- ii) Seeking God and following biblical guidelines (as for example, laid out in these Proverbs) do get us God's blessings.
- c) The second part of this verse says "He (God) adds no trouble to it (His blessings)". What about spiritual persecution? What about others who put us down for doing what is right? What about my obnoxious neighbor? ☺ Notice the word "he". It says "He (God)" adds no trouble. That text doesn't say we will never have problems in our life. The point is God does want to bless our lives for obedience. Yes God allows troubles in order to test us, mature us and keep us close to him. That's a separate issue. The point here is His blessings comes without troubles.
27. Verse 23: A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct, but a man of understanding delights in wisdom.
- a) It might be best to explain this with an illustration: If we truly are in love with another person, we want to please them. We want to make that person happy and fulfill their desires. It should be the same with God. If we love God, we want to please Him.
- i) With that in mind, the second part of this verse says, "A man of understanding delights in wisdom". If God wants us to act a certain way, we should be saying, "All right. If that's what You want Lord, ok, then!" We should delight in it.
- b) The contrast is the first part of this verse: "A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct."
- i) Remember the theme of this lesson has to do with "behavior matters". A fool is someone a Christian is to avoid. How do we know if someone is a fool? A clue is here in Verse 23: A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct. We can't read people's minds, but we can watch their behavior and what they say. If they truly enjoy doing things that are not pleasing to God, they are a "fool".
- ii) Doesn't Jesus say we shouldn't call people fools? Yes He did. (Ref.: Matthew 5:22) Jesus was talking about the issue of deciding who is going to heaven and who is going to hell. We are not to judge people "eternally". That is God's job alone. At the same time, we are to judge people's behavior. Jesus did it all through his ministry. A big purpose of Proverbs is how to judge other's behavior and more importantly, how to judge our own behavior!
28. Verse 24: What the wicked dreads will overtake him; what the righteous desire will be granted.
- a) I was thinking, "If I was wicked, what would I dread?" Probably getting caught. Maybe going to hell, knowing instinctively that my actions were wrong. The point of the first half of the verse is the wicked will be caught. It's only a matter of time. The point to ponder is when considering some sort of "sin", think about the inevitable outcome.
- b) The second part says, "what the righteous desire will be granted". This does not mean if we seek God and ask for a new car, it will be in the driveway when we wake up. ☺

- i) The idea of prayer is to seek God's will for our lives, not our own. Often we don't know what that "will" is, so we pray what we desire. That answer is always on God's timing. Sometimes that timing is right after we pray about it!
 - c) Remember my prayer about "Let me be an effective witness for You?" God does answer that prayer. This half of the Proverb says the "righteous desire will be granted". To be "righteous" is about being "right with God", that is agreeing with His desires for our lives. God wants His will done on earth and He uses people to get that will accomplished.
- 29. Verse 25: When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever.
 - a) Let's start with what this verse does not mean: It does not mean if a tornado hits a town and say, fifteen people die, only the wicked gets killed and the believers in God survive this tragedy. Jesus sort of makes that point in Luke 13:4-5 when he talked about some recent event when a tower fell and killed some people.
 - b) In one context it could be talking about salvation. That would fit this verse. If the "storm" refers to death, the saved person is resurrected to be with God forever. The wicked are sent to hell, and from our perspective are "no more".
 - c) Time for another of my favorite expressions: "People are like teabags. You never know what flavor they are until you get them in hot water". I think that is true in life. Those who have a strong biblical foundation can have a good attitude through whatever live throws at them. Those who fear death (due to their wicked behavior) are scared of what might happen to them when things go wrong. Again, the fear of being "found out" about one's sin causes a lot of guilt and bad behavior.
- 30. Verse 26: As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sluggard to those who send him.
 - a) First, let's define a "sluggard". It means a lazy person. The visual picture is that they are slow as a snail to get anything accomplished.
 - b) The first part says, "As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes". These are both things that are irritating to our teeth or eyes. The idea is just as those two things are an irritation to be avoided, so is sending a lazy person to accomplish something for you.
 - c) The question becomes, what does this proverb mean in context of the surrounding ones?
 - i) The previous proverb was about good people survive the storms of life and bad people don't. The next proverb coming up says that "good people" have their lives extended and "bad people" have their lives shortened. Both the previous proverb and the next proverb are primarily about salvation.
 - ii) How does "avoiding using a lazy person" fit into that context?
 - iii) The answer (my opinion) is that this proverb is not just taking about the problems of having a lazy person around. I also think this is about being diligent in our efforts to please God in all that we do. Again, this proverb is surrounded by two other proverbs that deal with salvation. I think God is telling us the danger of not being a "sluggard" when we are a witness for Him!
- 31. Verse 27: The fear of the LORD adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.
 - a) Like Verse 25, one can see this as being about salvation. If one is trusting in God, He does "add years" to our live by resurrecting us to live forever.
 - b) The other aspect of this verse is that it is generally true that one who lives for God can live longer. Health experts will tell you that a guilty conscious causes stress and that stress does shorten one's life. Knowing that we are saved and forgiven does give one a sense of peace and alleviates the guilt that can shorten one's life.
 - c) I should also state again the wicked person's life can be cut short by other means as well. They could say, get killed while performing some sort of sin. They could be sent to jail. This proverb is more than just the physical length of one's life, but the enjoyment associated with one's life. It is a greater life to live if we seek God's will.

32. Verse 28: The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.
- a) It might be best to define the biblical term "joy" here. It is different from happiness. Happiness is based on one's circumstances of the moment. Joy is an internal sense of peace no matter what is happening around us. One can be in pain and still have joy. One can be hurting and still have joy. Joy is a sense of peace of knowing that God is going to work out whatever is happening at the moment.
 - i) With that said, if one is truly seeking God, "joy" comes with the territory! It is a promise made by God to us for obedience. There is an inner peace of knowing one is forgiven and one will love forever.
 - b) I was thinking about the "hopes of the wicked". What are their hopes? To get rich? To get famous? To have power? Often, they get those things, but at the most it only lasts a lifetime. I believe the idea of "come to nothing" is that it ends when they die.
33. Verse 29: The way of the LORD is a refuge for the righteous, but it is the ruin of those who do evil.
- a) Let's define "the way of the Lord". It is similar to Jesus' illustration of "narrow is the road that leads to life" (Matthew 7:14). The point is sin is always there. Sin is always a temptation away from turning away from God's will for our lives. At the same time, confessing that sin and turning back "on the right road" is a refuge as stated here in this verse. That "refuge" is the joy we have when we confess that sin as wrong.
 - i) People have a false idea that confession doesn't count if we sin again. Confession simply means we agree that "God was right and we were wrong" and it is our desire to avoid that sin. God promises forgiveness if we ask Him. (See 1st John 1:9). This is our "refuge" in the sense we don't have to carry the guilt of that sin.
 - b) The second half says, "It is the ruin of those who do evil". What is the "it" if this phrase? The "it" is the "way of the Lord". This is a colorful way of saying there is "hell to pay" for those who willfully turn from God all of their lives. It is about eternal damnation.
 - i) David pondered this one. He once asked God in effect, "How do you allow the wicked to get away with all that stuff? David then wrote, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end." (Psalm 73:17, NKJV).
34. Verse 30: The righteous will never be uprooted, but the wicked will not remain in the land.
- a) Here is another verse that is talking about eternal salvation and damnation. Obviously both good and bad people die every day. In that sense, it can't be talking about the normal events of human life. The only way this verse makes sense if it is talking about eternal life and eternal separation from God.
 - b) Notice the last few verses all deal with the issue of salvation and damnation. Remember that Proverbs is a book about having wisdom. Part of the reason God gave us Proverbs is so we can live a good, joyful life here on earth. The other part is to warn us about the next life. If nothing else should motivate us on why should live a life pleasing to God, it is the realization of that heaven and hell are real and they are both for eternity. Whether or not we like those entrance rules, they are rules God made and we can't change them!
35. Verse 31: The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be cut out.
- a) The first part of this verse brings up an issue we've already discussed: It is the idea of what is spoken begins with what is inside of us. The mouth does not initiate speech, but the brain does. If we seek God's will and are diligent to learn what is right, it is "natural" that our speech should follow.
 - b) The second part says, "A perverse tongue will be cut out". This is not literal. Wicked people don't have their tongues cut. It is a poetic way of saying that their lives will come to a bitter end one day and so will the words that come out of their mouth.
 - c) Putting these two halves together, the point is what is "good" will continue forever. The wisdom spoken by the good will eventually win over what is wicked. It is a poetic way of saying God's wisdom will eventually triumph over evil.

36. Verse 32: The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.
- a) Here we have one final verse of the "good person" speaking one way and the "bad person" speaking another way.
 - b) This proverb is saying that a wise person makes an impact with his or her mouth. If we are willing to be used by God, and apply godly wisdom to our lives, we "can't help" but saying things that will have a positive impact.
 - c) I stated early in this lesson that it never ceases to amaze me the good things that come out of my mouth after I've prayed about a good situation. I think in those times, "Did that come out of me? Where did that come from?" Those are the situations were God uses us for His glory. That is when "The lips of the righteous know what is fitting."
 - d) The final warning of this chapter says, "the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse". The idea is a wicked person couldn't say the right thing if they tried! Again, this is about judging behavior. If you want to know what is on the inside of the person, we can judge it by what comes out of the mouth.
37. This leads back to my opening theme of "behavior matters". We are to judge people based on what they say and what they do. The hard part is we are also to judge ourselves based on what we say or do! Often that is a clue to what is inside of us. The concept of "behavior matters" is not just about judging other's behavior, but to monitor our own.
- a) Paul said to "take every thought captive". (2nd Corinthians 10:5 NIV). The idea is we become wiser people by working on the "inside" so the "outside" behaves better. This lesson is about behavior. The key is not self-discipline as much as "God-discipline". The idea we let God work on us through the inside so what comes out of us (i.e., our behavior) is pleasing to God in all that we do, and we are good witnesses for Him.
 - b) This is a hard chapter to summarize in a few words. The overriding theme, which will continue through Proverbs, is how to live a life pleasing to God. It is giving in short sayings that give us examples of good behavior to model and bad behavior to avoid. The idea is for us to agree with God about what is right and what is wrong. The secret is not to try to do this through willpower, but let God work through us to make us the "wise" people He wants us to be.
38. Let's pray: Father Help us to have wisdom in our lives. Help us to make Your wisdom a priority over any other aspect of our lives. It is through Your wisdom that we can be pleasing to You. It is through Your wisdom that we can be effective witnesses for You. Help us today, to "have the right words come out of our mouth". Help us to remember that is You guiding those words. Help us also to give You the credit when that does happen! We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.