

Proverbs Chapter 12 -- John Karmelich

1. I call this lesson, "results". Let's read the lesson and see what are those results. ☺
 - a) This is one of those lessons where we are not going to read anything earth-shattering. Most of the proverbs in this lesson are good common sense concepts. The main idea is that if one works hard, tells the truth, and lives a life by biblical principals, then God is saying in effect, "I'll guarantee the results are good".
 - b) Most of the proverbs in this chapter can be summarized as "A good person acts one way with good results and a bad person acts another way with bad results". These proverbs teach whether we do good or bad things, there are usually consequences to those actions.
 - c) My point here is that many of the proverbs in this lesson are saying in effect, "If you do "this", I (God) promise the result will be "that". Count on it! Yes, most of the proverbs are generalizations, but that also means the results will be true most of the time.
 - d) The underlying point is God wants us to live a happy and joyful life. God is saying in effect, "I want good for your life. In order to accomplish that, do these good things and avoid these bad things. With that said, I promise the "results" of one's actions will be based on one's behavior."
2. An idea I want to develop in this lesson has to do with what we think affects how we act. Our values and ideals shape our behavior. In other words, what is inside of us in terms of our attitude and moral outlook affects what happens in our life. Our attitude toward God affects the "results", which is how we live our life.
 - a) Jesus said this as well. "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) What Jesus is saying in effect is when we do bad things, it is because we first have bad thoughts inside of us.
 - ii) The results of bad thoughts, when they are carried out, are called sins.
 - b) In this lesson, most of the proverbs deal with the rewards of good behavior and the consequences of bad behavior. One has to read both types of "results" as promises made by God for both good and bad behavior in life. God is saying in effect, 'If you act this way, you can count on the results that I express in these proverbs!'
3. On that scary note, ☺ welcome back to the study of Proverbs!
 - a) From Chapters 10 to 29, Proverbs is written in two line sayings. All of these chapters are one big collection of "sayings" that about living a life pleasing to God.
 - b) Therefore, my theme's for each of these lessons are just "mini-sermons" that I want to bring up with each lesson. Chapter 12 is not on the topic of "results", but an application of some of the proverbs seen in this chapter
4. Much of what we are going to read in this lesson is good, common sense. With that said, it is surprising in life how often these fundamental laws of life are violated.
 - a) Think of it this way: A good musician or a good athlete constantly practices the fundamentals. They can avoid "dumb mistakes" by constantly practicing the basics.
 - b) The same idea can be applied to many of these proverbs. Sometimes just reading and thinking about these fundamental proverbs can help us avoid making dumb mistakes.
5. Verse 1: Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.
 - a) A big part of the Christian life requires some discipline. The idea is to train oneself to have the willpower to make good decisions. Jesus called us to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). The word "disciples" and "discipline" has the same root word.

- b) The first part of this proverb says, "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge". What that means is, if one wants to be disciplined to live a life pleasing to God, one has to "love" knowing right from wrong. One must have a love of studying God's word to know what to do in the first place.
 - i) To "love knowledge" does not mean we have to hug our bibles. ☺ Love is about giving priority to someone or something other than our own desire. In this case, it is the "love" to take the time to learn what God wants from us so we can live in a way that is pleasing to God.
 - c) The second part of this proverb says, "He who hates correction is stupid".
 - i) The verse is not saying that if you hate being corrected, one is not intelligent. Remember the main theme of Proverbs is "wisdom". The idea of wisdom is how to apply God's knowledge (i.e., His desire) for our lives.
 - ii) This part of the verse is saying in effect, "If our ego's our so big that we won't listen to what is right, than (at that moment), we are foolish in that we are not living the life that God desires for us!"
 - iii) This part of the proverb is not about the one-time mistake; it is defining the person who habitually and willfully turning from God. The point is such a person hates to be corrected and wants to proceed with their sinful plans.
6. Verse 2: A good man obtains favor from the LORD, but the LORD condemns a crafty man.
- a) The first half says "A good man obtains favor from the LORD." (When the word "LORD" is in all capitals, it refers to the most holy name of God, which is transliterated "Jehovah".)
 - b) Let's discuss what is a "good man". Since the main topic of Proverbs is wisdom, it is describing a person that is concerned with seeking God's will for their lives. It is not about a perfect person, but one who understands they are accountable to God and makes their best effort to do what is right.
 - c) The verse says a good man "obtains favor" from God. How does God show favor? Doesn't God love everyone? Do only "good men" win the lottery? ☹ No. Remember to help understand a proverb, one compares the first and second halves. They are always on the same topic. Let's move on to the second half of the verse and then tie it together.
 - d) The second half says the LORD condemns a crafty man. My point here is in the second half, this "bad person" is condemned. The first thought is that it refers to eternal condemnation. If that is the case, then when it says the LORD "finds favor", it would refer to salvation and whatever rewards come with that salvation.
 - e) Let's talk about how God "finds favor" in our lives: I believe God intervenes in our lives. Most adults who believe in God can testify to at least one miracle where they have seen God intervene in their lives when all other options have failed.
 - i) At the least, it refers to the fact if one lives a life pleasing to God, one is less likely to get in trouble by going to jail or suffering violence from the consequences of a sinful act. Over the long term, one is blessed by living a good moral life.
7. Verse 3: A man cannot be established through wickedness, but the righteous cannot be uprooted.
- a) First, let's look at this verse in terms of salvation:
 - i) The first part says, "A man cannot be established through wickedness". The point as it applies to salvation is a wicked person cannot be saved into heaven based on the wicked deeds they have done.
 - ii) Suppose an evil person hurt a victim. That hurt victim pleads to God for healing and that victim was miraculously healed. The healed person then becomes a born-again Christian. My point is some good came out this evil deed. Despite that, the evil person cannot use that healing to justify their actions in judgment day. In other words, if some good comes out of an evil deed, God does not excuse the sin.

- iii) The second part says, "The righteous cannot be uprooted". In terms of salvation, if one is considered righteous, then one cannot lose one's salvation. The fact that one's salvation is guaranteed is the idea behind "cannot be uprooted".
 - a) It is essential at this point to define "righteous". The idea is it means "right with God". It does not mean one is perfect. It means the person is disciplining their lives to do what God desires for them. It means that person is making every effort to please God in all that they do. It means when that person sins, they confess it and move on.
 - b) Doesn't one have to declare Jesus as Savior in order to be saved? Yes, let's not miss that fact. One has to be "perfectly forgiven" in order to be saved. On a practical level, it is about applying that forgiveness to our lives when we become aware that we sin.
 - b) Let's define what "established" means in context of this proverb. The text says, "A wicked man cannot be established through wickedness". That wicked man may be allowed to have riches and power in this lifetime, but that's all they get. Further, the world around them usually knows this person is wicked. They may have power, but they don't have a good reputation. In that sense, they are never established as respectful.
 - i) I generally find such evil people rarely have full lives. For most cases, evil people are brought down in life as opposed to dying of old age.
 - c) Now let's contrast this with the "righteous". The idea is no matter what happens to the righteous, they cannot be "uprooted". Does that mean no bad thing will ever happens to saved people? Of course not. Does that mean good people never get a false accusation? No. It means if one has a good reputation toward God, that reputation cannot be uprooted by anything society does to them.
 - i) Let me give an example: Suppose a good person is falsely accused of a crime. They may have to spend money for an attorney and go through all sorts of trials. That false accusation may take away their time and resources, but not their innocence. That fact cannot be "uprooted" by whatever life throws at them.
8. Verse 4: A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.
- a) This is the first of many proverbs in this book on the topic of "good wife versus bad wife". We'll spend most of a chapter on this topic when we eventually get to Chapter 31.
 - b) The verse is essentially saying, "If a man has a good wife, it adds to his character and makes the man a better guy. If a man has a bad wife, it will make his life miserable.
 - i) The text says, "A disgraceful wife is like decay in the bones." It is an illustration.
 - c) There is an expression that applies here: "Behind every good man is a good wife". I have found that to be true. Bragging about my own wife, she has made me a much better person than I could ever be by myself.
 - d) In marriage, usually our spouse influences us far more than any other person in our life does. Therefore, if a man marries a "godly" wife, that woman will lift them up and make him grow closer to God as he matures through life. (The same applies to a woman as well!) If the wife has no interest in God and doesn't care if she sins or not, in the end, it drags down the husband.
 - i) By the way, this verse is not saying one has to be married. The point is a good husband or wife is a great benefit to have, not a requirement.
 - e) This verse is a reminder of what type of person a single Christian should marry. First of all, Paul urges Christians to only marry Christians (See 2nd Cor. 6:14).
 - i) I want my daughters to pick a husband who loves God more than they love my daughters. That is because God commands us to love our wife "like Christ loves the church". (Ref.: Ephesians 5:25). Jesus gave His life for His church. My prayer is to have son-in-laws with the same attitude toward my daughters one day!

- ii) A good prayer for a single person is, "Lord, help to change and mature me so that I could be a "crown" of my future husband or wife. Prepare me to be the type of godly person you want me to be so when my future husband (or wife) comes into my life, not only will I recognize them, but I will be the type of supportive husband or wife that You want me to be, Amen."
 - iii) This is also a good prayer for a married person, especially after a fight. ☺ Let God work on our spouse. He's bigger than our spouse! We should worry about getting right with God and know that He'll take care of the wife or husband!
 - f) A healthy marriage is one where each spouse puts the needs of the spouse over their own needs. A good marriage is where each spouse helps each other mature and grow in their relationship with God. That is why a good wife and a good husband "crown" each other in that each helps the other grow closer to God.
9. Verse 5: The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.
- a) The first part says, "plans of the righteous are just". The idea is that those who are seeking God make good plans in life.
 - i) Does this mean a Christian never has bad thoughts? Of course not. It means that as a rule, Christians understand they are accountable to God make their life plans accordingly. As a simple example, a God fearing person should never make plans to steal something or commit some grievous sin.
 - ii) This verse also does not mean that every plan the Christian makes is going to go well in life. The idea is simply that one who cares about God won't plan to do things that are not pleasing to Him in the first place.
 - b) The second part says, "The advice of the wicked is deceitful".
 - i) How does one know if another person is wicked? Listen to what they advise! The other idea is if you know a person is wicked, be careful what they say. Avoid their advice and consider doing the opposite!
 - ii) The "wicked" is someone who willfully sins. It is defining a person who doesn't care about the fact they are accountable to God and it never bothers them to sin. All they care about is their own self-interest and they don't care who they hurt.
10. Verse 6: The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the speech of the upright rescues them.
- a) I was thinking about the first half of this verse. It says in effect the words of a wicked person are waiting to kill someone.
 - i) It could apply to a false accusation. It could mean that a wicked person is planning to kill someone, say, so they could get their money. It could mean a wicked person plans to kill someone so that innocent person won't turn them in.
 - ii) The idea is this wicked person not only does evil, but also plans to do evil.
 - b) The second part of this proverb says, "The speech of the upright rescues them".
 - i) This does not mean that if the evil person plans to kill someone "upright", then the upright will be rescued out of that situation because of their speech. Many innocent and upright people have been killed through history. There have been millions of Christian martyrs who died simply due to their belief in Jesus.
 - ii) It means what is inside of us will save us on the outside. The idea of "rescue" refers to rescue from eternal damnation. Again, we are back to the topic of "results". The result of the speech of the godly person will save them.
 - iii) Does this verse mean a good person can be rescued out of a situation based on their speech? Of course. If someone asks you to sin and we say no, we are being rescued from the consequences of acting out that sin.
 - iv) I'll take this proverb one step further and say we can "rescue" others with our speech. If we talk in a way that encourages others to do the right thing, we are rescuing others as well.

11. Verse 7: Wicked men are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous stands firm.
- a) The first way to see this verse is in terms of salvation. The idea is when the wicked die, that's the end of all enjoyment they get for their lives. They are eternally damned and are "no more". It doesn't mean they are extinguished in terms of their existence. They are simply "no more" in terms of their ability to hurt innocent people.
 - i) When we see wicked people get away with stuff, one can take comfort in verses like this. The idea is to remember there is a God, He is perfect and will judge people one day. That gives comfort when we see people get away with sin.
 - b) The second part says, "The house of the righteous stands firm".
 - i) The basic idea is one of salvation. It means that no matter what life throws at a righteous person, their faith in God sees them through the situation.
 - ii) Jesus said, "I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. " (Luke 6:48-49 NIV)
 - iii) Jesus words teach the same principal as this proverb. The idea is that no matter what life throws at the committed Christian, the "results" will always be good.
 - a) Let me explain: Even if the Christian is killed by a disaster or some wicked person, they are still saved for eternity. Even during hard times in the Christian's life, God promises us peace and security to face whatever situation is thrown at us. Our house can "stand" bad weather because we are built on a good spiritual foundation, which is Jesus Christ.
 - iv) I'm fascinated by the word "house". That term can also mean one's "household" is positively affected with a righteous person. Let me put it this way: Show me a godly father and husband, and I'll show you a godly household. Whenever I see a home where the leader of the house is a good, god-fearing man, then the family will usually follow along.
12. Verse 8: A man is praised according to his wisdom, but men with warped minds are despised.
- a) The first half says, "A man is praised according to his wisdom".
 - i) Does that mean every day people will walk up to us and say, "You know, I've always admired you and your lifestyle! Keep it up!" ☺ I don't think so.
 - ii) A Christian may occasionally get such praise, but it is rare. More likely, it will be said about us at our funeral. A pastor will often be thanked for giving good biblical advice after a sermon, but that's usually about the extent of it.
 - iii) With all of that said, if one tries to live a life pleasing to God and does their best to avoid sin, one can expect some praise sooner or later. God uses people to draw others to Himself. It may be "something we said" or "something we did" that leads another person to Christ. In many ways, we get praised by others whether we realize it or not.
 - b) The second half says, "Men with warped minds are despised".
 - i) Instead of "warped", the King James Version says, "perverse heart". That latter expression is closer to the original intent of the language. The word "warped" today is associated with "weird" and it misses the point.
 - ii) The idea is similar to previous proverbs in that people who don't care about their relationship with God end up being despised. Think of wicked people and what they end up doing in life. That is the general idea of this phrase. The idea is people who "think sinfully" end up being despised by society.

13. Verse 9: Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food.
- a) It's best to paraphrase this one: It says in effect, "It's better to take a job one is ashamed of, and have enough money to hire a servant than to pretend to have money but are really flat broke." The idea is a warning against pride when it comes to income.
 - b) First, let's describe what it means by being a "nobody". It means it is better to have a job that society considers "low" and have enough money to have a servant than to claim one is "somebody" but really have no money at all.
 - c) The underlying message of this proverb has to do with pride and money. God desires we work hard and if possible, financially support ourselves. The proverb is saying in effect don't let one's pride stop us from earning a living. It's better to take a job that society dreads than to not have a job in the first place.
 - d) OK, John, that's neat and that's practical. So what? ☺
 - i) Another point is one is "more blessed" by God if they are taking a low-end job than one who claims (key word) they are "somebody" and have nothing. God is saying it is better to be working than to have pride and not be working.
 - ii) For men, one's work is associated with one's identity. When God cursed Adam in the Garden of Eden, God said in effect that man would have to work hard for a living. (Ref.: Genesis 3:17-19). I'm convinced God created males with a desire for work, as it helps give us an identity. It ties to this proverb in that it is better to do some sort of low-end job than to be too prideful to work and out of money.
 - iii) It ties back to my title for this lesson: Results. If one takes a job others wouldn't take and that job pays the bills, there are good financial results.
 - iv) The same applies in ministry. Like most professions, one has to start at the bottom and the pay isn't that great. At the same time, one has a job. It is better to get involved with some bottom-end ministry where one is making a difference than to brag about some major project, yet never get involved with that project.
14. Verse 10: A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.
- a) This verse is not saying only "saved" people are kind to animals and the condemned are cruel. This verse is a sign of what a righteous man is like. In other words, it is true that if a person is nice to others, they will also be nice to the animals under their care.
 - b) OK, time for a well needed deviation. ☺ I own two dogs. I love them and they are very loyal to my family. The only problem is they think they are prisoners of war and try to escape every chance they get. ☺ It frustrates me. I get angry when they do, as if that is going to make a difference in their behavior. This proverb convicts me of my need to be kind to my dogs, if no other reason it would encourage them to come back faster.
 - c) Remember the key to understanding proverbs is to compare the first and second halves.
 - i) The first half says a "good person" is kind to his or her animals.
 - ii) The second half says a "bad person" is still cruel even with their kindest acts.
 - iii) Notice the "bad person" is talking about their relationship with humans.
 - iv) The point is the wicked, in their best moments are cruel and they are still inferior to the "righteous" and how they treat those around them.
 - d) Are you saying even wicked people are incapable of being nice to others? Not exactly. I'm sure even the worst person at some moments of their lives can show some kindness. Remember these proverbs are generalizations. The point is if one looks at the overall life of the wicked, it is generally true they treat people pretty badly, or by definition, they would not be considered wicked. The same is true when one considers the overall life of the righteous person. Remember that "righteous" means "right with God".
15. Verse 11: He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

- a) Many years ago, I learned the expression, "Anything that sounds too good to be true usually is". What that means is "get rich quick" schemes do not work. To state another proverb I've learned along this line, "If getting rich is easy, everyone would be rich".
 - i) These expressions apply to this proverb. The essential idea is that for the farmer to grow crops, that farmer has to do the hard work necessary to plant and take care of the crops. If the farmer is busy chasing fantasies, the crops will never grow.
 - b) I want to distinguish between "fantasies" and goals". The second part of this verse condemns the idea of "chasing fantasies".
 - i) Goals are generally a good thing. Assuming the goal in life is not some of sin, usually people who set their minds and efforts to a goal accomplish that goal.
 - ii) There is also nothing wrong with fantasizing about accomplishing one's goals.
 - iii) The term "fantasy" as it is used here is more about avoiding what one is called to do in order to say, daydream. There is nothing wrong about fantasizing about what one wants to accomplish in life, as long as one is doing it on one's one time, not on the bosses time!
 - iv) The danger is the "get rich quick" type of fantasy. I've yet to meet one financially successful person in life who did it without years of hard work! Success at anything is achievable, if it is God's will and one puts in the time and effort.
16. Verse 12: The wicked desire the plunder of evil men, but the root of the righteous flourishes.
- a) This verse is a little difficult to translate from the original Hebrew. What the text is saying in there are good rewards for the righteous, but the wicked are dangerous and perhaps get caught in their own devices. (Source Bible Expositor's Encyclopedia).
 - b) The first half says, "The wicked desire the plunder of evil men".
 - i) A thief could say, "Hey, that guy over there stole a lot of money. I could use the same technique ". There is a police term called a "copycat crime". This is when someone learns of a certain crime and copies the same style. That is the general idea of this proverb: Those who are wicked desire to be like other wicked people.
 - c) The second half says, "The root of the righteous flourishes".
 - i) What is the "root"? In this context, it is our foundational relationship with God. It is our desire to "do good". This is a promise that blessings will come upon the life of those who seek to be right with God.
 - ii) One can read this as a promise of salvation or one can read this of the promise of the joy that God gives to the believer no matter what the situation in life.
17. Verse 13: An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk, but a righteous man escapes trouble.
- a) Most of us have heard the joke, "How do you when this guy is lying? When his lips are moving!" The idea is of a person who is so untrustworthy we assume they are lying. That is sort of the idea of the first half of this verse. The evil person "gives away" their sinful plans by the way they talk.
 - i) For most of us, our favorite topic is ourselves. We all have egos and like to talk about our lives, if someone is willing to listen. It therefore follows that if a person is "evil", they will share with someone their intentions or bad accomplishments.
 - ii) Another point is it is hard for an evil person to get away with sin in the long term if no other reason, that evil person will share with someone what they did. In that sense, they are trapped by their evil talk.
 - b) The second half says, "A righteous man escapes trouble".
 - i) Does this mean if one is right with God, they will never do anything wrong? No. It does mean if one is being honest, it keeps one away from trouble.
 - ii) The basic idea is about talk "before" sin. If one says, "This is wrong and I won't do it", that is how one can escape trouble before it happens.
18. Verse 14: From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him.

- a) Most of the proverbs in this chapter say in effect, "The good guy acts this way and the bad guy acts the opposite way". In Verse 14 we have "two good guy" sayings. Both the first half and the second half deal with the positive aspects of those who are obedient to God.
 - b) The first half says, "From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things".
 - i) The idea is that there is a personal satisfaction when one says the right words. Every now and then, I write something where I think, "Wow that was good. Did that come out of me?" ☺ There is a sense of satisfaction when "God speaks through us" or when we say the right words that are beneficial to us or others.
 - ii) Most of us know that if we eat healthy, the results are one's body is healthy. If we live only on junk food, it works against our health. The same applies to what we put in our body "spiritually". Anyone who spends the time to feed themselves a "healthy spiritual diet" of prayer and time in God's words will "naturally" have good things come out of their mouth as if they were eating healthy.
 - a) My point is this proverb is a promise of God that one will have good verbal things come out of the mouth if one has "good input".
 - c) The second half of the verse says, "As surely as the work of his hands reward him".
 - i) Most of us know that hard work on a project usually pays off. If we have the diligence and the discipline to stick through a project, it usually pays off.
 - ii) The point of this whole proverb is that if we have the diligence to put "good input" in our body (i.e., prayer and God's word), good things come out of our mouth the same way hard work produces generally good results.
19. Verse 15: The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.
- a) To paraphrase this verse, "A foolish person is only interested in his or her own opinion, while a wise person is willing to listen to the advice of others".
 - b) Let's remember the biblical definition of a fool: It is one who is not interested in pleasing God in any aspect of their lives. It is one who is interested in doing their own will even if it is in conflict with God's will (i.e., it's no big deal to commit some sort of sin).
 - i) The "results" of living like a fool is they don't listen to good advice from others. They don't want to feel any sense of guilt about some sinful actions.
 - c) How does the Christian apply this verse? If someone we normally respect tells us we are doing something wrong, we need to think about that! A sign one is heading in the wrong direction is when we don't listen to good advice from others.
20. Verse 16: A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.
- a) Another classic phrase to apply here is "consider the source". When one is insulted, consider the person giving the insult and ponder if one respects their opinion. If one is insulted and the accusation is false, one shouldn't let it bother them. If the person giving the insult is a known scumbag ☺ we shouldn't let it bother us if we are insulted.
 - b) The point of this proverb is to stop and contemplate when one is insulted as opposed to just lashing out in anger. Sometimes we just need to stop and think, "Is arguing here going to accomplish anything?" If that is the case, we might not respond as rashly.
 - c) Remember that one of the Christian goals is be aware that we are always being a living witness for God in any situation. If someone insults us, they expect us to lash back. If they see us shrug it off because we are rising above the situation, one becomes a good witness at that moment.
 - d) One of my favorite responses to a false accusation is, "I'm not going to dignify that comment with a response". That line can often calm a tense situation.

21. Verse 17: A truthful witness gives honest testimony, but a false witness tells lies.
- a) Here's a pretty blunt proverb. It says that a truthful witness gives honest testimony and a false witness lies. This proverb appears self-evident.
 - b) The point of this proverb has to do with our reputation. If we are truthful, we will state the truth, even if it hurts people. Yes, we can use tact, but we should tell the truth.
 - c) Let me use an illustration when my wife asks my opinion on new clothes. When I don't like something, I tell her something like, "that outfit doesn't compliment you very well". If I lie and say I love everything she tries one, she wouldn't respect my opinion. This way, when she does wear something I like, she respects my opinion more. By stating the truth of what I don't like, it cuts down on the shopping expense. ☺
 - d) I make a living giving my opinion of value. (I am a real estate appraiser.) Through the years, I have been pressured, threatened and attempted to be bribed to lie about the market value of a property. None of those things are worth the reputation of being a liar. I can make mistakes, but that is a separate issue from deliberately trying to deceive.
22. Verse 18: Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- a) What I suspect is Verse 17 and Verse 18 are meant to be put together:
 - i) Verse 17 is about telling the truth. Verse 18 is about telling the truth "tactfully".
 - b) Grant it, the verse is more than that. The idea is the "bad person" speaks recklessly of others, whether or not the accusation is true. The "good person" speaks in ways that heals people. In other words, as a general rule, God wants us to speak in ways that is encouraging and healing to others.
 - c) I want you to think about Jesus' life in a different manner. I don't think Jesus stood out from the crowd based on His looks. At the same time, He attracted people with his words. He had followers based on what He said. The only people Jesus ever put down were the religious leaders because He held them accountable for that knowledge. My point here is to look at the gospels from the sense of how Jesus "used his tongue". More often than not, it was situations of encouragement and healing.
23. Verse 19: Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.
- a) The idea of this proverb is that eventually, the truth comes out about a situation. When lies occur, eventually, they are exposed.
 - b) This is why I'm not a big fan of conspiracy theories. A conspiracy is when two or more people agree to lie about a situation and keep quiet about it. I have found in life, over the long run, people can't keep their mouths shut. The truth eventually comes out. That is the basic idea of this proverb.
 - c) Let's get back to my theme of this lesson: Results. This verse is a promise that if one tells a lie, more often than not, the truth will come out eventually.
 - d) Does this mean I can't lie to my kids about Santa Claus? God commands us to tell the truth, but one can make exceptions to small children if done tactfully. Some things are beyond their understanding. I've yet to see one adult who carries around emotional scars about the lies their parents told about Santa Claus! Besides the proverb is true: The "lie" about Santa Claus effectively lasts "only for a moment".
24. Verse 20: There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil, but joy for those who promote peace.
- a) Let's start with the first half: "There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil".
 - i) The key is to compare it to the second half: "But joy for those who promote peace".
 - ii) The idea is to compare the personalities of the evil versus the "peacemakers".
 - iii) The point is each type of person has a different intent in their hearts. One has joy in their life and the other has deceit. Personally, I'll the joy. ☺
 - b) The trick of this proverb is to see how it applies to our own life. Most of us have moments when we are angry and we are plotting at the least, how to insult someone back and at the worst, how to harm someone.

- c) A point of this proverb is to use our tongues to verbally "heal" not hurt.
 - i) This reminds me of another proverb coming up: "It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel." (Proverbs 20:3, NKJV)
 - ii) Both Proverbs 12:20 and Proverbs 20:3 are encouraging us to make peace as opposed to keep arguing away in a situation.
 - d) At times of anger, it is best to try a quick surrender prayer. Here's a sample. "Lord, I am really angry at this person right now. They've really hurt me and it's painful. Help me to give You that pain and see that person as someone You love. Give me the wisdom to deal with them peacefully and wisely. That person is now Your problem. Give me the strength and wisdom to treat them as You want me to treat them, Amen."
 - i) We all know someone who is difficult to get along. Cases like that often require regular prayer. I've found it helps to remember Jesus said to pray for our enemies. (Matthew 5:44). I have found it is healing to the emotional wounds inflicted upon us when we stop and regularly pray for that person who did the harm.
 - e) Remember the purpose of the proverbs is for us to live a happy and joyful life. Let's face it; bringing peace to a situation is a lot less stressful and more joyful than to continue arguing. That too, is an underlying idea behind this proverb.
25. Verse 21: No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble.
- a) Let's start by saying the obvious: Being a Christian is not a guarantee to avoid harm. This verse is not saying one will live a "harm-free" life if we give that life to God.
 - b) The first application is salvation. It is another reminder of the guarantee of salvation for those who commit their lives to Jesus and let their behavior follow that commitment.
 - c) The last few proverbs deal with the issue of telling the truth. This proverb should be read in context of those truth-telling proverbs. The underlying idea is if we tell the truth and live honest lives, we shouldn't have to live in fear of being caught. In other words, one can have a clear conscious if one is doing what is right.
 - d) Again, these verses are generalizations. The verse does not mean the righteous person is perfect all the time and never has harm. I'm sure the "wicked" have their moments of pleasure in life in well. The point is in the end, God is going to judge everyone. The wicked won't get away with their lifestyle forever. Usually some sort of judgment comes in this lifetime as well as "the" judgment day.
 - e) The application of this verse is to be a truth teller as often and as much as possible. One should have the goal of trying to please God with our lives even though it is impossible to perfectly live up to that standard. There is nothing wrong with setting goals higher than reality. It reminds us what to strive for and what to confess when we do sin.
26. Verse 22: The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.
- a) Here is another verse where we read of God's "personality": It says the Lord "detests" lying lips and He "delights" in men who are truthful.
 - i) Does this mean God has emotional feelings? Doesn't God know everything? The answer is God does know all things, but still "reacts" to our behavior. The point is God does care how we act in life and that is why He intervenes in our lives.
 - ii) If God desires us to tell the truth, it would make sense that He gets "emotional involved" in the process!
 - b) If God "detests" lying, how does that affect us? Well, there is the judgment day thing, ☺ but there is more to it than that. If we get caught or trapped on our lies, I would argue that somehow, someway, God is working "behind the scenes" to allow it to be caught.
 - c) At the same time, we are blessed by being truthful in life. It keeps our conscious clear. People will respect what we have to say and trust our words. In that sense, we can comprehend God is behind the scenes delighting in our truth telling.
 - d) God wants us to be truth tellers. We should be motivated by the fact God detests lying. I'm not exactly sure what "God detests" means, but I don't want to find out. ☺

27. Verse 23: A prudent man keeps his knowledge to himself, but the heart of fools blurts out folly.
- a) The first half of the verse says a prudent man (i.e., one who is applying biblical wisdom) keeps knowledge to himself. What does that mean?
 - i) It means nobody likes a show off. You may know the bible better than your neighbor does, but your neighbor does not want you to rub it in their face.
 - ii) I think of this proverb this way: If someone asks for advice, then you can give it. If someone doesn't want your advice, we are not helping them by "nagging".
 - b) The second part says, "The heart of the fool blurts out folly".
 - i) In other words, those who don't care about being accountable to God brag about the sins they plan on committing. The verse also implies such people "put on display" their acts of foolishness.
 - c) Now let's put this whole proverb together. The point is if one does things that are pleasing to God, we shouldn't be broadcasting our plans but just do as we are supposed to do. Those who willfully sin do broadcast their intentions publicly.
 - d) One can also compare this proverb to Jesus point of when you do charitable things, don't make a big public display, just do it as quietly as one can. (Paraphrase of Matthew 6:2-3).
 - i) Again, "The prudent man keeps knowledge to himself". The "knowledge" means knowing right from wrong and knowing how to do the right thing. The proverb is teaching against bragging about one's good deeds.
28. Verse 24: Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor.
- a) Here is another proverb teaching on the importance of hard work. The underlying point is that if one is lazy at work, they'll end up being "forced" into work. For most cultures in history that meant slave labor. In American society, it might mean a low-end job because that person was too lazy to apply him or herself to something better.
 - b) The first half says, "the diligent hands will rule". It does not mean all hard working people will be the President one day. It does mean if one works hard, generally one gets ahead and will have people under their command. In that sense, they "rule".
 - c) This is one of several proverbs in this chapter that deal with the benefits of hard work.
 - i) Also notice we've had a lot of proverbs dealing with telling the truth.
 - ii) It's no accident that both "hard work" and "telling the truth" are mixed in with each other. One concept to get out of this lesson is one has to constantly keep working at being a truth teller. One has to constantly work at living the life pleasing to God. The point is hard work and biblical wisdom go hand in hand.
29. Verse 25: An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.
- a) Verse 25 is another "good guy/good guy" verse. Both halves deal with the same type of person. The first half is saying that if a person is worried or stressed about something it emotionally weighs them down. The second half says a kind word cheers them up.
 - b) Whenever I get worried about life, there are two great prayer strategies I have learned:
 - i) The first is a "grateful list". (I credit my wife with teaching me this.) The idea is one is feeling down, make a list of things one is grateful for. One needs to pray to God for the things for which one is grateful for at the moment. Those become the "kind words that cheer one up" as mentioned in the proverb.
 - ii) The second is plain old encouragement. If no one is available to do it for you, one has to do it themselves. Pray something like, "Lord, I don't know how you are going to get me out of this situation, but I know You will. I don't know the results, but You do. Help me to learn what you want me to learn from this situation and apply it to my life. Help me through this problem so I can be a good witness for You and to others around Me, Amen."
 - c) An underlying point of all of this is that we can't always control the situation around us, but we can always control our attitude about any situation. Worrying and stress blocks our relationship with God and others as we are wrongfully focusing on those worries.

- d) One can also apply this verse as we help others. Everybody hates the words, "I told you so". When one is down, encourage them. Ask them what they are grateful for the moment. At the least, simply offer the words, "How can I help?"
30. Verse 26: A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.
- a) The first half says a righteous man is cautious in friendship. The idea is one chooses their friends carefully. One wants to have close friends who also care about their relationship with God as much as you or I do. Such friends help us with accountability and also give us good advice. God often "speaks" through our friends to help us out.
- b) The contrast is, "way of the wicked leads them astray".
- i) The topic is picking the right friends. The idea of the second half is if we get close to someone who doesn't care about God, they are likely to tempt us to lead us away from God for some sin of the moment.
- c) Think of this verse in context of the last one:
- i) The last verse is about encouragement when one is down. Here the verse is talking about the importance of picking the right friends. One can see how these two proverbs go hand in hand.
31. Verse 27: The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions.
- a) Here we have another verse on laziness. The first half uses the illustration that a lazy person when hunting, just starts to eat what they have caught without even bothering to cook it first. The diligent man savors the moment and cooks the food first.
- b) This verse is more than just lessons in proper hunting and proper cooking. It is about the benefits of hard work and learning to enjoy the benefits of hard work.
- i) There are two dangers involved in hard work: One is never working hard in the first place and being lazy. The other is to work so hard that one never takes the time to enjoy the "wages" of one's hard work. Both are implied in this proverb.
- c) Think about some of the repeated themes in this chapter: Hard work, telling the truth, being accountable to God and associating with good people. The combination of all those are guaranteed to live a life pleasing to God. Proverbs is teaching us positive results will happen from living a life this way.
- d) The second half of this proverb has the expression "prizes his possession". This is teaching us to make the most of every opportunity.
- i) The hunter in this illustration is taking the time to prepare the food that was caught instead of rushing to eat it. That short sentence teaches us the importance of diligence, hard work, and simply enjoying the moment.
32. Verse 28: In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.
- a) This verse is back to the "two paths to choose in life" concept. The idea is one can take the right road that leads to everlasting life and one can deviate at anytime and go sin. Jesus gave a similar illustration when He said in effect there is one "narrow" road leading to heaven and a wide road leading to hell. (Ref. Matthew 7:13-14). The implication is that most people are on the wrong road in life.
- b) The first half says, "there is life" for living a life pleasing to God. This refers to salvation and eternal life. I say that because the second half of the proverb focuses on immortality, which is about eternal condemnation.
- c) Let's get back to my theme of this lesson: "Results". This verse is another promise that how one lives their lives will result in how they spend eternity. We've had proverbs on hard work, truth telling, diligence, and having good godly friends. These are all some of the ingredients that are summed up with this final proverb of "the way of the righteousness".

- d) Remember what righteousness is: It is about being "right with God". It starts by accepting Jesus payment for our sins. That is the beginning, not the ending. From that point, it is about living a life that is pleasing to God in all that we do. Out of gratitude for the forgiveness of sins, we change our behavior. We "work hard" at it, like the proverbs teach us. We become truth tellers in life. It is about striving to be a good witness for God in all that we do.
 - i) God is promising that if we make the effort the results will happen. He is also promising that if we are lazy, other bad results will happen. Both are implied promises in these proverbs.
 - e) With that said, let's pray for God's help in order to achieve those results.
33. Let's pray: Father, help us to realize that without Your help, we can achieve none of the things that You desire for our lives. Helps us to have the diligence to live a life pleasing to You in all that we do. Help us to have the boldness to tell the truth, especially in situations where it is difficult to do so. Help us to say the right words through the day. To say them tactfully. Help us to say the right words so that we may encourage others. Bless our friendships as well. Help us to work with our friends and family so that we all may grow closer to You. Finally, help us to remember that the results are certain, based on our actions. May we realize our accountability to You and be pleasing to You in all that we do. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.