

## Proverbs Chapter 15 - John Karmelich

1. I call this lesson, "The heart and the mouth".
  - a) All of us want to live happy and joyful lives, unless of course, we're in a bad mood. ☺  
One of the underlying themes I see in these two chapters has to do with our perspective on the inside affecting our lives on the outside.
    - i) For example, the first few psalms in this chapter are about speaking. The common idea is that if we are obedient to God, "good things" just come out of the mouth.
  - b) The underlying point gets back to what is common in Proverbs: It is full of short, two line sayings that help us learn how to live a happy life.
  - c) The main theme of Proverbs is about Godly wisdom. The reason one wants to study and learn these proverbs is that in general, it will lead to happy life. So, other than those moments when we want to grovel in our grumpiness, Proverbs is a good thing. ☺
  - d) I call this lesson the "heart and the mouth" because what happens inside of us (which is biblically called "the heart" affects what happens to us on the outside. We will speak good things and we will smile more, because we are happier.
  - e) Most of these proverbs can be applied at any given moment in our lives. We can say the right or wrong thing in any situation and learn from those moments.
2. Verse 1: A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
  - a) Speaking of happy versus, I present to you Verse 1. ☺
  - b) The verse is essentially saying if you want to calm a potential argument, speak gently. In the rare occasions of my adult life when I remember to apply this proverb, I have to admit it works well. Let's say we are in a situation where the person next to us is getting angry. The key is to respond softly, but at the same time, not talk down to that person.
    - i) If we speak softly, the other person has to strain to listen.
    - ii) When one is angry, one is rarely "truly" listening to the other person, unless it is to collect ammunition to use against them. ☺ Speaking softly and calmly helps to defuse the tension.
  - c) Like most proverbs, this is a generalization. It doesn't always work, but it works a lot.
  - d) The last part of this proverb is the opposite. If one speaks loudly, it adds to the tension.
  - e) Remember my theme is about living a happy life. Argument adds to the stress and in order to defuse the stress, a good strategy is to speak softly.
3. Verse 2: The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.
  - a) The verse is simply saying that if one is wise, than wise things will come out of the mouth. If one is foolish by nature, than foolish things will come out of the mouth.
  - b) If one is seeking God and trying to live a life pleasing to God it is positively amazing the "good things" that come out of our mouths. It is one of those euphoric moments where we think, "Wow, that was good. Did I say that?" ☺
  - c) Obviously even the best people say the wrong things at time. This verse is not about the occasional mistake, but one's "lifetime attitude". The idea is if we are seeking God regularly, and have a healthy fear of accountability, then "just naturally" good things will come of the mouth, and vice versa when we are not seeking God.
4. Verse 3: The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.
  - a) Verse 3 simply says in effect "God sees everything". In other words, even if one doesn't care if they are speaking good or bad things, one should care that a judgment day is coming based on our behavior in this lifetime.
  - b) OK, so why is here? The previous two verses are about speaking wise things. The next verse is about speaking wise things. Proverbs smuggles in the middle of those "good tongue" proverbs that idea that we are accountable to God.

5. Verse 4: The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.
- a) I've stated in previous lessons that a "tree of life" is associated with healing in the bible. I believe it was a literal tree in the Garden of Eden (Chapter 3) and it is mentioned again in the last few chapters of Revelation. The point is when someone of "Jewish thought" reads of a tree of life, it refers to a tree where one can eat of that tree for rejuvenation.
  - b) With that knowledge of "tree of life" in hand, it says the "tongue" can bring healing to someone like a tree of life. That same tongue can also crush someone's spirit.
  - c) Most of us who have lived a while have experienced both of these situations. We have said the right words to someone close to us and it rejuvenated their lives. We've also said the wrong things and it depressed the person we were speaking to.
  - d) The point of this proverb is what we can help or harm people. Now think about God's command to "Love one another". The point is the tongue should be used to help and support one another as opposed to putting one another down.
  - e) Now one can see why this proverb is in the same neighborhood as "God is watching us" (Verse 3) and speak softly to calm wrath (Verse 1). All of these proverbs are teaching us how and why we should use our tongue for good.
  - f) What if we say the wrong thing? Apologize.
    - i) I have also found my best speaking moments is when I shoot up a quick prayer prior to speaking or answering a question.
    - ii) "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer." (Psalm 19:14, NIV).
    - iii) A former pastor of mine would open every one of his sermons with that line!
6. Verse 5: A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.
- a) Part of a job of a good parent is to discipline their children. A good summary of raising one's children is to teach them to do what is morally right as opposed to what "feels" right. For example, it may feel right to fart at the dinner table, but it is not appropriate. Teaching children is all about getting them to understand right and wrong and then teaching them how to apply it to their lives over and above their feelings.
  - b) With that said, a fool is one who lives a life that doesn't care whether or not they are accountable to God. Since we can't read people's minds, we can only judge their actions. A "sign" of a fool is they don't listen to their parent's discipline.
  - c) The older I get, the more I realize that some kids turn out bad even when they come from good homes and some kids turn out morally good even though they come from bad homes. Training one's children up right is essential, and it does improve the odds tremendously of one's children coming out right, but my point is it is not a guarantee. That principal ties to this proverb. It is describing a godly parent trying to teach the child what is right, but the foolish one ignores the parent's advice.
    - i) This is a good proverb to put on the fridge for kids to read. ☺ The hard part of course, is living the good example for our kids to learn from.
7. Verse 6: The house of the righteous contains great treasure, but the income of the wicked brings them trouble.
- a) As I've stated in earlier lessons, the book of Proverbs doesn't offer a recipe on how to have financial success. Christianity never teaches that if you become born again, that guarantees financial prosperity. If that were true, people would give their lives to Christ for the money and not for the fact they need the blood of Jesus as payment of their sins.
  - b) With that said, the point of this proverb is if we live a life pleasing to God, it does bring us "spiritual treasure". In other words, God is trying to teach us how to have a happy life. It doesn't mean we will be deliriously happy when we stub our toes, ☺ but we live with an internal sense of peace that no matter what, we are saved and going to heaven.

- c) There is a wonderful sense of satisfaction when one understands the purpose of life. That is the fact that God created us and we live for Him and not vice versa. The purpose of Christianity is to "build up the body of Christ". (Ephesians 4:12) That includes bringing in new members, but it also includes helping to minister to other believers and help each other mature in their faith. That is where the "treasure" is for Christians. Once one has that realization, it truly makes life worth living for.
  - d) On the opposite end, the wicked is someone who purposely does things that are not pleasing to God. The wicked live for sin. The proverb says that type of lifestyle leads to trouble. Inevitably, this proverb is speaking of damnation. In the meantime, it is also speaking of emptiness. Living a life for anything other than God always leaves one longing for more. That desire for more is usually what gets the wicked into trouble.
8. Verse 7: The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools.
- a) Here's another verse that says in effect if we are wise, then wise things come out of our mouth. Notice the verse does not say we have to force wise things out of our mouth. The implication is that it "just happens". If one is foolish by nature, then wise things won't, as a general rule come out of our mouths.
  - b) This is another "good input equals good output" type of proverb. The idea is if we seek God regularly and study His word for the purposes of trying to live our lives to please Him, then "good output" will naturally happen.
  - c) Most of us want to have the reputation of saying the right thing at the right time. What proverbs is teaching us is to spread wisdom, we have to be wise. In other words, work on the "input" and the "output" will take care of itself.
9. Verse 8: The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.
- a) Imagine a person who is wicked by nature. They sin regularly and don't think twice about it. Then they do some charitable deed, partially out of guilt and partially so people can applaud them. This proverb reminds us God detests this action.
    - i) The King James Version uses the word "abomination". It would be like tasting a food that is so disgusting you immediately want to spit it out and wash the taste of one's mouth. That's the general idea behind how God "detests" in this action.
  - b) On a related note, when it comes to charitable organizations, I believe the Christians primary responsibility is to get involved in Christian based ministries as opposed to secular (a.k.a., non-God based) charities. There are wonderful non-Christian charities out there. My personal view is God calls the church to primarily (that's a key word) work with the church first. Remember our duty is to "build up the body of Christ".
  - c) The second part says, "The prayer of the upright pleases Him". Remember the purpose of the Christian life: To glorify God in all that we do. God likes to work through people. One purpose of prayer is for us to get involved in God's "program". It is for us to seek His will and to give us the strength and boldness to do what God wants us to do. We don't always know what God wants of us, so it's ok to ask. The point of the second half of this proverb is that in contrast to the sacrificial actions of the wicked, God "delights" when those who truly seek Him are praying to Him.
10. Verse 9: The LORD detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness.
- a) In Verse 8, it says God (i.e., "The LORD") hates the sacrifices of the wicked.
    - i) In Verse 9 here, it says God hates the "way" of the wicked. In other words, it's not just their hypocritical prayer life, but their actions as well.
    - ii) What about when a person sincerely wants to turn to God? Back in Verse 3, it said in effect, "God knows all things". The point is God knows the difference between a person sincerely trying to turn to God and those who are faking it.
  - b) People always wonder if God is approving of our lifestyle. Verses like this remind us that God "delights" in those who pursue Him. "Righteousness" means right with God.

- c) To be right with God does not mean we have to be perfect all the time. It does mean we primarily focus on trying to please God the best we can. When we are abiding close to Jesus, we are making our “heart” right toward Him. The outside naturally follows. Whether we realize it or not God delights in this.
  - d) How does God delight anyway? Does God have a face so He can smile? Doesn’t God know all things? The word “delight” helps us to understand God is pleased with our actions. Since we will all be judged by our actions, one can see this as part of a judgment day action. I’m not positive what it means for God to delight in me, but I can tell you for sure it brings joy to my heart. I certainly don’t want God to “detest” me!
    - i) I don’t think humans can ever fully comprehend God and “emotions”. That isn’t the point. The point is we should have peace in our hearts knowing that God is delighting in us, whatever that means from God’s perspective.
11. Verse 10: Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path; he who hates correction will die.
- a) Every now and then we get a “bad guy/bad guy” proverb. This is one of those proverbs. Both halves of the proverb are about those are displeasing to God.
  - b) The proverb is essentially saying, “Those who turn from God are going to suffer in this lifetime. If they keep it up and don’t change in this lifetime, they are going to hell.”
  - c) People wonder, “Does God “reach out” to those who turn from Him? The answer is yes in the sense that God “allows” the consequences of sin to exist, if for no other reason that it may “discipline” some to turn to God.
  - d) Another way to look at this proverb is “God loves us too much to leave us alone”. When we do stray from God’s will, we do suffer. Those “consequences” draw us back to God.
12. Verse 11: Death and Destruction lie open before the LORD-- how much more the hearts of men!
- a) Here’s another proverb that says in effect, “God knows all things”. God can see all those who are in hell. God knows what we are thinking which is to say “He knows the hearts of men”. In other words, we can’t fool God with our actions.
  - b) So why is this proverb here? We’ve had a bunch of proverbs indirectly encouraging us to speak wise things by sticking close to God. We’ve had proverbs warning us of the danger of turning from Him. The bible therefore sticks in another proverb here about the fact we are all accountable to God and He is aware of our every action.
  - c) The idea of “Death and Destruction” refer to hell and the suffering of hell. People in hell are still visible to God, they just can’t do anything about that situation. Whether or not those rules are fair is not our problem. If God created the world, we play by His rules and not ours. Our job is to accept those rules and live by them!
13. Verse 12: A mocker resents correction; he will not consult the wise.
- a) Time to define a mocker again: A mocker is one who doesn’t want to be accountable to God. When they are confronted by someone who wants to correct them, the mocker makes some sort of flippant or sarcastic comment in their passive anger toward God.
  - b) The point of this proverb is, “this is the way life works” for the mocker. They resent being told right from wrong and they won’t seek Godly counsel.
  - c) Again, we can’t read people’s minds, only judge actions. If we see someone, or ourselves acting this way, we know at that moment, this person (or us!) is not pleasing to God.
14. Verse 13: A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.
- a) Remember my title for this lesson was "The heart and the face". The point is what is going on the inside of us affects our emotions on the outside. Assuming we want to be happy in life, we work on our attitude toward God and toward others.
  - b) Let me lay out a sample prayer here: “Lord, I can’t control the world around me, but I can control my attitude. Help me to life a joyful life, if for no other reason, than to please You and be an effective witness for You. Help me to remember that You are in charge of my life and You want the best for me. You deal with the situation, Amen.”

- i) I'm not asking in this prayer to be oblivious to my problems, just to have a joyful attitude during this time. It is about having the internal peace that God is watching over us, and the fact we have the ultimate victory in the end.
  - c) All of this ties to this proverb. The point of this proverb and this lesson is that God not only wants obedience to Him, but He wants us to have a happy life. It doesn't mean only good things will happen to us. It means we can have inner peace no matter what is going on around us. God doesn't want "things" to block our relationship with Him. We have to give those "things" to God in order to have that peace.
15. Verse 14: The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.
- a) In order to do the right thing, we have to know what is the right thing to do in the first place. In other words, we can't apply wisdom unless we know what is wise in the first place. The Christian life requires the time to regularly study God's word and to pray for God's wisdom in order to have the discernment to make good decisions.
    - i) That's why this proverb says, "The discerning heart seeks knowledge".
  - b) The contrast is those who don't care about God, "feed on folly". In other words, such foolish people don't take the time and trouble to seek God and spend their time seeking things that in the end, are a waste of time.
  - c) I mention every now and then that everybody has a "god". Find out how a person spends their spare time and extra income and you'll find their god. For the foolish person, these "timewasters" are called "folly". Think back of all the time in one's life that is wasted in that it never made a difference for God. That is the idea of "folly".
16. Verse 15: All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.
- a) Let me give you "The Living Bible's" paraphrase of this proverb: When a man is gloomy, everything seems to go wrong; when he is cheerful, everything seems right!"
    - i) In other words, when one is miserable, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. When one is focusing on "everything will go wrong", it will.
  - b) The second half says, "The cheerful heart has a continual feast." It does not mean life is to be one big party for Christian people. Don't confuse what is going on around us with our attitudes. Good and bad things happen every moment. There are times to grieve and times to celebrate in life. This proverb is dealing with an inner sense of having peace through all circumstances. Getting back to my lesson theme, our attitude within us then affects how we act in life.
  - c) An underlying point of the Book of Proverbs is God wants us to live a happy life. Yes, God wants us to live for Him and make a difference for Him. With that said, God does not want us to be pessimistic and complaining all the time. He wants us to be happy as to enjoy our life more and make the people around us happy. At the least, we owe it to the people around us to be happy. Both good moods and bad moods are contagious!
  - d) Here's another way to look at it: We only get one chance to live out life. It is better to live out being happy than miserable. That may sound obvious, but think how much time we waste being grumpy and worrying about things that are beyond our control.
    - i) The famous "serenity prayer" would be appropriate here: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference." Amen.
17. Verse 16: Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil.
- a) This verse is saying in effect it is better to be financially poor and live a life pleasing to God than to have great wealth and lots of problems that go with that wealth.
  - b) God is not requiring us to be either rich or poor. The issue is our attitude toward God and our attitude toward life. If material things cause us to worry or cause us to focus on the stuff more than God, its better not to have it in the first place.

18. Verse 17: Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred.
- Let's start with the assumption that those reading this lesson like a big steak dinner. With that said, this proverb is saying it is better to have a "dull, tasteless" dinner with love in the air than a big wonderful meal where everybody is angry at each other.
  - The proverb has nothing to do with what type of food we eat. The point is about our attitude. Nobody wants to eat in tense situations where everybody is angry at each other.
  - The lesson of this proverb is that it is better to have a loving attitude to those around us than to have lots of "stuff" and be angry all the time.
  - Again, God wants to be happy and live happy lives. That's the underlying message.
19. Verse 18: A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.
- People who are a "hot head" seem to enjoy stirring up debate. In other words, people like to argue need to create an excuse to argue in the first place. In contrast, those who seek peace make efforts to calm things down. This ties to the first proverb in this chapter about how in order to calm a situation, it helps to speak in a soft tone.
  - I know that when I'm in a bad mood, I will "stir up dissention". Remember the phrase, "hurting people hurt people". Again, we're back to the concept of how to be happy in life. When we are in a bad mood, we want to "spread it around". What God wants us to do is give Him our problems and not spread it to those around us.
20. Verse 19: The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.
- A sluggard is associated with a snail. A snail is known for being slow. The idea is a sluggard is lazy to accomplish anything.
  - The contrast in this proverb is that the "good guy" has a life with a smooth, paved road, while the "bad guy" has a road with lots of thorns that can hurt his feet.
    - The "good guy" of this proverb is called "the upright".
    - The "bad guy" of this proverb is called "the sluggard".
  - The point of this proverb? Life is better when we are not lazy. The point is hard work for God pays off and gives us a happier life. The reason this proverb is here is to remind us that in order to live this happy life, we have to constantly work at it. It doesn't come natural. The "natural" thing is to complain and worry. Making the effort to give our situations over to God takes away our worries and gives us the happy life we desire.
21. Verse 20: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.
- Every now and then we get a proverb saying in effect that good kids make the parents happy and bad kids make the parents miserable. This type of proverb seems logical.
  - The question to ask is, "Why is this proverb given here and now?" Here we are talking about attitudes, happiness and diligence. Now out of the blue comes a proverb about having good kids brings happiness to the parents and vice-versa. Why mention it?
    - The answer (in my humble opinion ☺) is about the importance of teaching passing on these principals to our children!
    - Children grow up modeling their parents. If parents are worriers, odds are, the children will be the same way. If parents are generally happy, the kids turn out the same way.
  - I believe this proverb is written to parents, not children. The idea is to make every effort to pass on wisdom to one's children. There are no guarantees in life how children turn out. With that said, "odds are good" that if we make every effort to pass on wisdom to our children, they will eventually see it is the right way to live when they grow up.
    - Radio talk show host Dennis Prager has a great theory on this, "I think when our children are about 13, aliens come down and replace their brains with alien brains. The children then think their parents our idiots. The good news is the aliens return one day and bring back the original brains so the kids one day think, "You know, my parents weren't so dumb after all". ☺

22. Verse 21: Folly delights a man who lacks judgment, but a man of understanding keeps a straight course.
- Here is another “good guy/bad guy” proverb. It starts with the “bad guy”.
  - The idea of the “bad guy” is a person doesn’t care about pleasing God, they seem to delight in doing the wrong thing. The “good guy” cares about pleasing God and makes regular effort to stay on the right path in life.
  - The moral of this proverb is for us to keep making the effort to do the right thing. If we are doing something sinful and even enjoying the moment, we need to stop and contemplate our actions and the consequences of our actions.
23. Verse 22: Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.
- Every now and then, Proverbs gives us a proverb that says in affect, “Hang around other wise people. Their wisdom will rub off on us”.
  - This proverb is teaching us when it comes to making big decisions, it is best to talk it over with several wise people. Listen to a few different opinions and then make the best decision possible. The first part says plans often fail when we avoid counseling.
  - The moral of this proverb is about not taking on life alone. God intended for Christians to work as a team, not a bunch of solo efforts. I have learned the hard way in life that the best way to handle tough decisions is to talk them over with a few people I respect, pray it over, and then make the best decision possible. Sometimes those decisions still end up being bad and in those cases, I try to learn what I can from them, and then move on.
24. Verse 23: A man finds joy in giving an apt reply-- and how good is a timely word!
- There is something gratifying about saying the right thing at the right time. It feels good to make someone else’s day by our words.
  - The question is how do we do that on a semi-regular basis? ☺ That gets back to my lesson theme: If we work hard to please God on the inside, the “outside” will take care of itself. In other words, good input makes for good output. Seeking God makes us happier people and we can be more useful to those around us. That’s the message of this proverb!
25. Verse 24: The path of life leads upward for the wise to keep him from going down to the grave.
- Here’s another proverb that sounds obvious, but has a point to it. The concept of this proverb is that if we regularly do the right thing in terms of seeking God, it keeps us from hell. The proverb is giving us a motivational tool to keep on seeking God.
  - The important point of this proverb is the “here and now”. Obviously, how we live our life whether we go to heaven or hell. I believe the point of this proverb is that if we seek a life of wisdom, it gets better and better in that we grow in our maturity toward God and live a happier life. It doesn’t mean we sin less as we get older. It means our relationship with God grows as we understand Him more and we grow in our understanding of His requirements for our life. In other words, better obedience leads to a happier life.
26. Verse 25: The LORD tears down the proud man's house but he keeps the widow's boundaries intact.
- This verse does not mean God owns a demolition ball. ☺ The idea is if a person has so much pride that they refuse to live a life accountable to God, they eventually go to hell.
  - The interesting part is to contrast that with the second part: "He (God) keeps the widow's boundaries intact". The idea is that somehow, someday, God protects those who are less fortunate in life. Remember in that culture, a widow often had nowhere to turn.
  - Does this mean somehow God miraculously takes care of the say, the widows and orphans? Let's say if God is perfect, then God judges people perfectly and takes into account their situation. The main idea is that God works through history to somehow "do a little more" for the unfortunate. Usually it is through acts of charity by others.
  - The point of this proverb is God is teaching us who to help and who to avoid. The idea is to help the unfortunate and stand clear when God "hits" the proud. ☺

27. Verse 26: The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him.
- Back in Verse 8, the proverb said God hates the sacrifice of the wicked. Here in Verse 26, it goes one step further and said God hates the thoughts of the wicked. Speaking of "standing clear" from people, I would stay clear from this type of person as well. ☺
  - How does one reconcile that with the fact that God is love? A God of love wants everybody to turn to Him. A God of love offers the cross as payment for all sins. For those who reject it, God turns and "detests" those people. That is our way of understanding God's inevitable judgment.
  - What does that mean for us? Besides teaching us who to hang out with and who to avoid, it is about our behavior. If we care about pleasing God, wickedness is to be avoided.
28. Verse 27: A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live.
- It's sort of an interesting fact of life that those who are greedy rarely end up rich. I have found most people who are rich are mainly interested in accomplishing some great goal, and riches are a byproduct of their accomplishments.
  - The term "greed" as it is used here is someone who doesn't think twice about sinning in order to accomplish their goal, which is usually some financial thing. The point of the proverb is the greedy doesn't care who they hurt, including their own family.
  - The contrary is "those who hate bribes will live". It doesn't mean this is the only requirement for salvation. It means that those who are honest in their dealings in life usually enjoy life more. Remember my theme for this week has to do with one's attitude on the inside and how it affects one's speech. Honest is a key trait.
29. Verse 28: The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.
- The first part of the proverb is about "thinking about" questions before one answers. It doesn't mean one has to pause over every question, but when it is a big decision or one that can have consequences, it is best to ponder the question in terms of right and wrong.
  - The contrast is the wicked person never thinks twice about right and wrong. They just speak the first thing that comes in their head.
30. Verse 29: The LORD is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous.
- The point of this proverb is that if the thoughts of the wicked are disgusting to God (Verse 26), then it would follow that God is "far from them" in terms of helping them. Can God do miracles for a wicked person? Of course. There may be some other purpose for God answering such a prayer or maybe God wants that person to repent. For what it is worth, there is a biblical principal of a "point of no return" with God, but we as people don't know what that point is.
  - The positive aspect of this proverb is God hears the prayers of the righteous. How do you know if you are righteous? If one is trusting in Jesus' blood for the payments of sin and one is living a life trying to please God, then one is righteous. The bonus prize is God does hear our prayers. ☺ Why doesn't He answer every one? God does answer every one, but sometimes the answer is no or wait.
31. Verse 30: A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.
- Now we're back to "what's in the inside affects the outside". Notice this proverb is "backwards" in that a cheerful look (outside) brings joy to the heart (inside). The idea is to make the effort to have joy and it will effect the inside.
  - The second part is "good news gives health to the bones". Obviously, if we are cheerful and happy, we are less stressful. Here's a good way to apply this proverb: A grateful list. When we are felling down, make a list of things we are grateful for, including our salvation. That is good news, and that too, positively affects us on the inside.



32. Verse 31: He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. <sup>32</sup> He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.
- a) To paraphrase, "If we are willing to put our egos aside and listen to someone we respect tell us when we are doing wrong, if we take their advice, we are wise. Enough said.
  - b) Verse 32 is the contrast. If we ignore discipline, we "despise our self". God loves us too much to leave us alone. Therefore, God disciplines us. How does God do that? Usually God speaks through the people around us. Sometimes it is through direct communication with us.
  - c) If we heed correction, gains understanding. The point is we don't learn until we are first willing to listen and then follow the advice. How do we know if that advice comes from God? First of all, it will be biblically based. I often find that when it is something important from God, the message gets repeated from more than one source.
33. The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom and humility comes before honor.
- a) Let's take the first part, the fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom." As I've stated a handful of times through these lessons, having the "fear of the lord" has nothing to do with being afraid of anything created by God. Fearing God is the realization that all people will be fairly judged based on how we lived our lives.
  - b) To fear God's judgment gets us to focus on what is important in life. Which leads us to the second part of this proverb: In order to have wisdom before god, first we have to learn and constantly practice humility before God. Before God can raise us up to some position of honor in society before Him, first we have to practice humility before God.
    - i) It doesn't mean everybody raised up in society first has to be humble before God. Let's face it, lots of people are in power that have no concept of humility before God. The point of this proverb is in order to have both in society. That is to have humility before god and be raised to some position of power, first we have to learn to walk humility before God
34. Let's get back to my theme for this lesson: Many of the proverbs in this chapter deal with the heart and the mouth: The idea is our attitude on the inside affect what we say to others. It even affects our smiles which is why I used the term mouth.
- a) The point is our attitude about God on the inside affects our behavior. Along the same line of thinking, how we treat others around us and even our attitude about our own personality affects what we say to others.
  - b) What Proverbs is trying to get across in this lesson is to care about what we think as it has a major effect on what comes out of our mouth.
35. Another repeated theme in this chapter has to with God's attitude toward sin and sinners. Yes we all sin before God. The distinguishing factor is some people care about the fact we are sinning before God, confess it and move on. Others don't care about their relationship with God and if one does not repent, that leads one to hell.
36. With that said, I'm going to keep my promise and wrap up this lesson a few pages lighter, especially after last week's long lesson. Let's pray: Father, thank you for these lessons on wisdom. Thanks for taking the time and trouble to reach out to us. Not only to teach us how to be saved, but how to best live out our lives hear on earth. Help us to comprehend what you want us to learn from these proverbs and more importantly, help us to apply them to our lives. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.