

Proverbs Chapters 16-17 - John Karmelich

1. The main topic of proverbs is still "Wisdom". My "subtopic for this lesson is "Things that are pleasing to God".
 - a) Since God's name is mentioned prominently in this lesson (via the title "The LORD"). I thought it would be good to discuss a little what is specifically pleasing to God!
 - b) For example, in the first few proverbs, it means how God can overrule our plans and take control of our tongue!
 - c) The proverbs also teach how God even takes control of the tongue of the wicked ultimately for His own purposes. Others can learn from the mistakes of the unsaved.
 - d) When a person's ways are pleasing to God, He even makes our enemies at peace with us.
 - e) This lesson also gets into proverbs about giving good instruction and making Godly wisdom a priority in our lives.
2. In this lesson, we're also going to have a lot of proverbs about being honest with others. There are both positive and negative examples in these proverbs about dealing with others.
3. Other proverbs deal with our relationships with leaders, including kings and judges.
 - a) If a king is dealing with wrath, it is better to try to appease it than face it.
 - b) Some of the proverbs in Chapter 17 deal with the importance of honesty in court. The point is, as much as possible to punish the guilty and let the innocent go free. This concept of fairness in court should be irrelevant as to the issue of who is and is not saved.
 - c) With that said, I'm ending my introduction here as we have a lot of ground to cover!
4. Verse 1: To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue.
 - a) The point of this proverb is that God will often put thoughts on our tongues for us to speak. We don't always realize what we say comes from God. This proverb is teaching that God gets involved with what we say, whether we realize it or not.
 - b) We as humans, often make plans in our hearts. God has the ability to over-rule those plans with the goal of getting His will accomplished.
 - c) Notice God's control of the human tongue is not limited to believers. God sometimes controls the mouths of nonbelievers, again to get His will done.
 - d) This verse is not saying God controls our tongue every time we speak. It means God is in control of our lives, and when God wants to interview, He does.
 - e) Let me stop for a second and define "LORD" quickly. When that word is in all capitals, it is based on a Hebrew acronym for the most holy name of God, which is "Jehovah". Jehovah is not the only title used for God, but it is considered the most holy title.
 - i) It is a reminder of just who is getting involved in our lives!
5. Verse 2: All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD.
 - a) Most of us go through life thinking what we are doing at any one moment is right. This proverb is reminding us that God watches and weighs our motivations. God watches our motivations to do things. In other words, we are not only judged for what we do in life, but our motivations as well.
 - b) Which leads to verse 3:
6. Verse 3: Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.
 - a) Does this mean if we plan to do something sinful and "commit it to God" it will succeed. No, this only applies to things that are pleasing to God in the first place.
 - b) Remember God's idea of success is often different from ours. This verse does not mean every business venture we undertake, will be successful on our timing! It means if we try to live a life pleasing to God, He turns around and blesses our plans. The idea is those plans somehow glorify Him. We may not be as successful as we want on day 1, but God is in charge, He is watching out for us and guiding us. That's the idea behind this proverb.

7. Verse 4: The LORD works out everything for his own ends-- even the wicked for a day of disaster.
- a) The goal of life is to get involved with God's game plan for the world and not our own. Even those that are being condemned for ignoring God all of their lives are somehow being controlled by God whether they realize it or not. The point is God works within the affairs of mankind to accomplish His will. At any given moment, we can choose to be doing things God's way or rebel against God with our own plans.
 - i) No matter what we choose, God's will, will eventually prevail. The only question is how much we choose to be involved in God's plans for the world.
8. Verse 5: The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.
- a) The point is those that spend their lives turning from God in order to pursue their own interest will not go unpunished.
 - b) Know that the saved are forgiven, but we the saved are still judged based on how we lived our lives. For those that never want to humble themselves before God, they will suffer eternal condemnation for that action.
 - c) Let me focus on the "saved" as we read this verse: One can read this verse as about salvation. It also applies to the "here and now" as well. We can be proud in our heart at any given moment toward God or someone around us. Notice how God never lets us get away with anything for very long. That too is a point of this proverb.
 - i) For example, if we don't repent, God often works on us to forgive and change. Yes this verse is dealing with those being sent to hell, but there is also a message to the saved reading it as well. The message is about watching our heart, as God is constantly watching it.
 - ii) Therefore, it is better to repent now, then face God's judgment later!
9. Verse 6: Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.
- a) Both halves of this proverb speak to the "saved person".
 - b) In the first half, Proverbs is talking about how to properly deal with sin. When we forgive those we hurt (both God and fellow people), we are dealing with sin. Being faithful to God is how we atone for sin. When we do mess up, we confess it and move on.
 - c) The second half of the proverb is about taking our relationship with God one step further: It is about avoiding evil in the first place: Our motivation to avoid evil is about wanting to avoid the wrath of God! Our desire to please God should be a motivation to keep us away from evil things in the first place!
10. Verse 7: When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.
- a) Notice that when we are pleasing to God, we still have enemies in this world. God never promises that the world will love us for loving Him. What God does promise is that if our lifestyle is pleasing to God, He in turn will make our enemies live at peace with us.
 - b) So what does that mean on a practical basis? Sometimes it will cause our enemies to leave us alone for the time being. Notice our fates with our enemies is in God's control and not ours if we are just willing to trust God in that aspect.
 - i) The secret is to focus on pleasing God and let Him worry about our enemies.
 - ii) Does the term our enemies refer to people, or demonic forces. The answer is both. Since we don't know what forces are behind those people we consider our enemies, our job is to pleasing God and let Him worry about that situation.
 - c) During the moments we are being attacked by our enemies, the point is to focus on God and ask Him what He wants us to do at that given moment. God may ask us to face them or run away at any given moment. The point is it is up to God and not us!

11. Verse 8: Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice.
 - a) This verse is related to the previous ones and it is best to read it in that context: The direct point of this proverb is that is better to only have a few material possessions in life and have "righteousness", (that is have a heart right toward God) then to have a lot of possessions, but there is injustice involved.
 - b) The point is we should focus on being right with God first and then material possessions second. What does that mean practically? It means we consider how God would react to any and all aspects to our lives. It also means we should take time out of each day for God. This verse does not mean we have to live a life of poverty. It simple means we consider God in all that we do.
12. Verse 9: In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.
 - a) Earlier, we had a proverb of how God "controls" our tongues even after we make plans.
 - b) Here is a similar proverb that says in effect, people make plans in our hearts, but God determines our course of actions whether we realize it or not.
 - i) What does that mean? It means God interferes in the affairs of man whether we like it or not. Might as well accept it and live our lives for Him.
 - ii) It means God directs our lives, whether we realize it or not. You and I may plan something, but God has the power and the will to overrule those planes.
 - c) Does this mean we shouldn't plan things? Of course not. We just have to accept the idea that God can overrule our plans at anytime.
13. Verse 10: The lips of a king speak as an oracle, and his mouth should not betray justice.
 - a) This is the first of many proverbs that deal with those in command.
 - b) The point of this proverb is that a king can command anything he desires, but that king should not betray justice in his life as a king.
 - c) Just because we don't live in a kingdom, does not mean this proverb no longer applies. It can apply to anyone in power including judges. The essential idea is one should be fair in dealings when it comes to situations that require justice.
14. Verse 11: Honest scales and balances are from the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making.
 - a) Speaking of being fair and honest, here is a proverb about having honest scales.
 - b) The idea is one who is fair and just also uses honest scales in their deals with others.
 - i) Since honest scales come from God, we should treat them well. ☺
15. Verse 12: Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness.
 - a) The bible condones human government. The idea is that a throne, or any place of leadership should be a place of honest dealings where righteousness is done.
 - b) For example, if someone goes to court or to the government to solve an issue, that person should expect the people in power to act fairly and not show any special favoritism.
 - c) The other concept is that those who are in power should rule fairly over the people.
16. Verse 13: Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value a man who speaks the truth.
 - a) If one is before a person of power, one should speak honestly as opposed to being a yes man or yes-women. The idea is those in power respect honesty and they respect those that speak the truth.
17. Verse 14: A king's wrath is a messenger of death, but a wise man will appease it.
 - a) The essential idea is that a king is in charge, and if the king is angry about something, people can die over the issue. A wise man will try to calm down the king so that king can make fair and right decisions and not be controlled by his anger.
 - b) This verse is written for the person facing the king and his wrath!
 - c) OK, most of us don't live in a kingdom. Still, there are judges and political leaders that occasionally require to be calmed so they don't punish the innocent, or over-punish the guilty in any given situation.

18. Verse 15: When a king's face brightens, it means life; his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.
- a) The idea of rain in the spring is a positive thing. It means the crops get needed rain.
 - b) The idea of this proverb is that when a king goes from angry to happy, it means good things for those who are in the king's presents.
 - c) This verse marks the end of the proverbs about being around kings.
19. Verse 16: How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver!
- a) Here's a proverb that we have already read. The essential idea is that getting biblical wisdom is more important than chasing after silver or gold.
 - b) So why have this proverb stated here at this point? It is a bridge of the last and next group of proverbs. We just had a bunch of proverbs about what to say when we are in the presence of a king or leader. At such times, one can focus on the leader and not God.
 - i) This proverb is reminding us about what is the primary issue of life at all times!
 - ii) This proverb is not against making money, but about getting our priorities right!
20. Verse 17: The highway of the upright avoids evil; he who guards his way guards his life.
- a) This proverb ties well with the previous one. Part of the concept of constantly seeking God's guidance is about avoiding what is evil. A person who is concerned with pleasing God in all they do is also going to do their best to avoid evil people.
 - b) The second part says in effect such a good person will "guard him or her self" from that type of evil person and bad behavior. In other words, we are to watch what we say and who we associate with in life!
 - c) Part of pleasing God is spending as much time as possible with others who think likewise.
21. Verse 18: Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.
- a) What usually brings us down is our pride. The point is having a lot of pride is usually the cause of one's downfall in life. The idea of a "haughty spirit" is very similar.
 - b) The essential idea is to watch our behavior and see if it is, or is not pleasing to God. A sign that we are going in the wrong direction is when we refuse to humble ourselves. In other words, our pride is often the cause of our downfall in a situation.
22. Verse 19: Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.
- a) This verse is not claiming that making money is bad. The point is it is better to be low in spirit among the oppressed than to share in ill gotten wealth among the proud.
 - b) The essential idea is to not get involved in financial behavior that is displeasing to God. This includes being involved in some plan to steal from others. The point is it is better to be poor than to be rich by some illegal gain.
23. Verse 20: Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.
- a) Here's a proverb where both halves are a good thing!
 - b) A "good thing" is to give heed to biblical based instruction. Think about that line in comparison to the last proverb: A person who heeds good instruction is not likely to get involved with plans to steal someone's wealth.
 - c) The point of this proverb in context is that a wise person will listen to God's council and live their lives accordingly. They are not driven to get involved with illegal schemes.
 - d) A person is blessed if they trust in God and not say, some scheme to steal from others.
24. Verse 21: The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction.
- a) If one is living a life where they are trying to be pleasing to God in all that they do? Such a person will be called discerning. It simply means such a person is willing to listen to God's advice as opposed to the world's advice in any given situation.
 - b) Well spoken words encourage others to also act in ways that are pleasing to God. The idea of well-spoken words is that they are said in a way that encourages others and said at the right time. One of the most common fears in life is not knowing what to say or when to say it. I'm not claiming to be perfect in this situation.

- c) The first step in giving advice is find out whether or not the other person wants to hear your advise or opinion. Next, turn it over to God and ask Him to help you with the right words in any given situation.
25. Verse 22: Understanding is a fountain of life to those who have it, but folly brings punishment to fools.
- a) Now we're back to a "good guy versus bad guy" type of proverb.
 - b) The good person has good understanding of a situation. The idea is such a person is interested in pleasing God and tries to live their lives accordingly.
 - c) The foolish person gets a lot of punishment in life essentially for turning from God in all that they do! The foolish person may not even realize they are being punished. The point is inevitably they will suffer for turning from God all of their lives.
 - d) Yes, everybody sins and no one is perfect. That is a different point from this proverb. This proverb is separating those who are interested in pleasing God with their lives from those who are not.
26. Verse 23: A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.
- a) A wise person is careful about what he or she says. They are interested in pleasing God in all that they (or we) do and we let that biblical knowledge guide what we say.
 - b) It does not mean we should be quiet all the time. In fact the second half of this proverb says in effect "good lips" promotes instructions. That means when we say wise things, it usually has a positive affect upon those who are listening. The words of the wise promote the good things taught by God to us!
27. Verse 24: Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
- a) When we do say the right words, it is sweet to the soul of those listening and especially to the one saying the words in the first place. It often has a healing affect as well.
 - b) The idea is on those occasions when we say the right thing, it is beneficial to both ourselves and those willing to listen.
28. Verse 25: There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.
- a) This verse is stating the opposite of the previous proverb. The idea is one can say or do things that seem right, but it can lead to death. The idea is one can say or think things that are not biblically based. Those ways may "seem right", but if they are not God based they lead to death.
 - b) The trick is to learn the difference between that which is acceptable and not acceptable to God. When in doubt, ask Him! The other related idea is to seek godly council when one is not sure whether one's plans are biblical based.
 - i) If one has done all of that and are not sure, sometimes, one can simple follow through and watch the results.
 - ii) Again, God is not against us earning a living. The condemnation is against us doing illegal or immoral things in order to get ahead in life!
29. Verse 26: The laborer's appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on.
- a) Let's face it, one who needs to work to stay alive, will be driven by that need. This proverb is not condemning either labor or hunger. It is just stating the fact that a person will be driven by their need to survive to look for work.
 - b) What about the person who has inherited wealth and doesn't have to work as hard? There is nothing wrong with receiving an inheritance. The question is what does one do with that inheritance and is one still living out a life pleasing to God.
30. Verse 27: A scoundrel plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire.
- a) The next four proverbs, including this one all deal with "bad" people in life. They all involve behavior to avoid.
 - b) The first says in effect a wicked person spends a lot of time plotting to do evil. We can recognize such a person by their speech. They speak in ways that are displeasing to God.

- c) The idea is not about the good person that occasionally plans the wrong thing, but about those who don't think twice about doing something "scandalous".
31. Verse 28: A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.
- a) Let's say a new person enters our group of friends, and that person is constantly stirring up debate and dissention. There is a time and a place for debate. This proverb is warning against those who stir up debate when it is not necessary.
- b) The second half is similar. It is saying the act of gossip can separate the best of friendships. The idea is gossip is to be avoided. When someone has done something wrong, the correct response is to go to the source, not to spread the rumors to others.
- c) A good idea is to ask God for discernment when a new friend comes in the picture.
32. Verse 29: A violent man entices his neighbor and leads him down a path that is not good.
- a) A person who is violent by nature wants others to join him or her, if for no other reason than to justify their behavior. The point is if we are that neighbor, we are to watch for this type of person and don't follow them in their violent path.
- b) If there is "violence" to be dealt with, then one gets the authorities involved and does it properly. This proverb is warning against the kind of person that just likes to stir up trouble when it is not necessary.
33. Verse 30: He who winks with his eye is plotting perversity; he who purses his lips is bent on evil.
- a) Here is another "pair" about evil behavior. The first half warns about the type of person who gives secret signals with his or her eyes in order to signal their partner in crime to commit a specific bad act.
- b) The second half is similar. The focus in the second half is on the lips. It refers to a type of person who speaks evil about another in order to commit some sort of bad act. In other words, they speak evil for the purpose of doing something evil.
- c) The purpose of these last four proverbs is to teach us what type of behavior to avoid and what type of people to avoid in life.
34. Verse 31: Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life.
- a) Most men if they live long enough will get grey hair. The act in itself is a normal function of a man getting up there in years. The point of this proverb is that "bad people" tend to die young because of the life they live. A person who lives a life pleasing to God generally lives a longer and healthier life. They get to see their grandchild as they get older and enjoy the later years of their life.
35. Verse 32: Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.
- a) In life, there is a time for war and a time for peace. The point of this proverb is that a patient man who controls his temper is better than a person who is quick to go to battle.
- b) Sometimes violence is necessary in war situations, but it should always be a last resort. This proverb is teaching the importance of patience. One should always look for peaceful situations first.
36. Verse 33: The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.
- a) This is similar to a proverb we had earlier that opened this chapter.
- b) Verse 1 said, "To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue." Here in Verse 33 it reads, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD". In both cases, it is saying God controls or overrules the decisions we make in life, ultimately for His own glory.
- c) Verse 1 is about making our own plans. Verse 33 is about when we make plans as a group. Both proverbs end with the point that somehow, God "intervenes" in our plans in life. This means God allows bad things and good things to occur for His own glory. The point is to be aware of the fact God can overrule our decisions at any time.
- d) This chapter dealt with dealings with kings and with bad people. It begins and ends with the reminder that God is ultimately in charge and in control whether we admit it or not.

37. Chapter 17, Verse 1: Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.
- a) This proverb has nothing to do with one's daily diet. The point is it is better to eat a simple meal in peace than to share a big meal with a bunch of fighting going on.
 - b) Most of us have experienced both of these in our lifetimes. Sometimes big meals with arguing cannot be avoided. The point of the proverb is the simple meal without the arguing is preferable to the big meal with lots of arguing.
38. Verse 2: A wise servant will rule over a disgraceful son, and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.
- a) It is rare in any culture for a servant to have equal or greater status than a son. The more common situation is a good servant will be treated better than an unfaithful son. In rare cases a good servant may even get some sort of inheritance benefit over the bad children.
39. Verse 3: The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.
- a) The point of this proverb is that silver and gold are refined via human methods, but the human heart is not refined at all. God tests our hearts by seeing how we act in specific situations. Since our heart cannot be separated and refined, the only thing that can be done is "test it".
 - b) God watches how we react in certain situations to see if we are, or are not trusting in Him for the outcome. Growth in God is based on how much we trust Him in any situation.
40. Verse 4: A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue.
- a) Here's another proverb where both halves speak of a bad person or just bad behavior.
 - b) Both halves are saying a person who is displeasing to God listens to the lips of other evil people. A sign that one is displeasing to God is that one is paying attention to another person who is also displeasing to God.
 - c) In other words, one way God judges us is by the company we keep.
 - d) So is this proverb for the saved or unsaved. It can be either. If one wants to please God and one finds themselves listening to advice from a wicked person, it is a sign that one is going down the wrong path.
41. Verse 5: He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.
- a) Verse 5 gives two examples of behavior that will be punished by God.
 - i) The first is showing contempt for the poor. We may not have the financial resources to fix every wrong in the world, but we should be involved in doing something. The first example is about mocking a poor person for being poor! At the least, we should not be picking on someone for being in that situation.
 - ii) The second is one who gloats over the disaster of others. Whether or not we caused the disaster is irrelevant to this proverb. The point is God does not want us to gloat over the misfortunes of others.
 - b) For both halves, the underlying point is we should care about the welfare of our fellow human beings. Even if we can't fix the situations, we should not be gloating over their misfortunes and suffering.
42. Verse 6: Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.
- a) One of the advantages of living a full life is one gets to see their grandchildren grow up. For a grandparent, their children are already grown up, so their focus is often now on raising up their grandchildren.
 - b) When children are young, their source of pride is their parents. Almost all parents want their children to turn out well in life. Children may love their grandparents, but they primarily look to their parents as a source of affection.
 - c) The point of this proverb is that while grandparents and parents may both be proud of the kids, the kids primarily look to their parents as their main source for raising them.

- d) Obviously this proverb is a generalization. It does not apply to bad parents who turn away from raising their children.
43. Verse 7: Arrogant lips are unsuited to a fool-- how much worse lying lips to a ruler!
- a) Here is a comparison of two bad things. The first half says when a fool has arrogant lips it is bad, but a ruler with lying lips is worse as the ruler can do more damage.
- b) A foolish person that speaks bad things is bad. It is "worse" when a ruler has lying lips as the ruler is in charge. This verse is not saying either one is acceptable only that a bad ruler can do more damage to society than an "every day" fool.
44. Verse 8: A bribe is a charm to the one who gives it; wherever he turns, he succeeds.
- a) This verse is not about doing things illegal. The idea is the person who gives gifts is likely to succeed in life as they understand the value of a nice gift. Notice the emphasis is on the giver of the gift, not the receiver. The idea is the person that knows how to give nice gifts in life succeeds.
- b) The point is not that gifts are necessary for success in life, but that the person who knows how to give nice gifts to others is on a road to success. Notice that the money value is not mentioned. A gift can be something that cost you a little bit of time, but not money as well. I'm trying to get you to expand a little on the image of a gift.
45. Verse 9: He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.
- a) A loving act is to forgive a wrong doing. To repeat the incident to others can separate the best of friends for a time being.
- b) I'm afraid that the idea of forgiving those around us tends to be a rare act in our society. It's always amazes me how we want God to forgive us of our wrong doings, but we are much slower to forgive those around us of much smaller offenses.
- c) The crime in the second half is made worse because instead of being quiet about an incident, we spread that story to other people. It doesn't matter if the incident is true or false, we have no business spreading it to others.
46. Verse 10: A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool.
- a) If a person has good knowledge of right and wrong, and one gives that good person a rebuke, that does more good than applying hundred lashes to a fool.
- b) There are some people who simply refuse to be told they are wrong about something. You can apply one hundred lashes to their back and it won't change them. There are other people willing to listen to correction and that makes a difference.
- c) The key is to go through life and be willing to listen to other opinions about a situation.
- d) It is preferable to be taught right from wrong via a rebuke than lashes to our body.
47. Verse 11: An evil man is bent only on rebellion; a merciless official will be sent against him.
- a) All of us say or do the wrong thing at times. That is different from a person who spends a lifetime turning against God. Almost everybody thinks their opinion is right. The point is the evil man constantly lives for rebellion against God and his or her fellow human.
- i) Sometimes such a person gets to a point where the only thing one can do is lock up that person for the sake of society. Such a society has to send a merciless official to arrest him or her and put them away. There are situations where one has to do what is best for society as opposed to having mercy for the one person.
48. Verse 12: Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly.
- a) Meeting a mama bear in the forest that just lost her cubs is a bad thing. The point is that is still less painful than dealing with a foolish person in the midst of their wrong doings.
- b) We've already had lots of proverbs so far in this book dealing with fools. The general idea is a person who doesn't care at all about pleasing God. Therefore, such a person is going to engage in activities displeasing to God.
- c) As humans we are far more likely to encounter a fool than a bear. We are more likely to see foolish behavior by humans than see a bear robbed of its cubs.

49. Verse 13: If a man pays back evil for good, evil will never leave his house.
- Supposed someone does something real good for you or me. We pay them back with some sort of insult. This proverb says evil will never leave the house.
 - The point is God is watching our behavior. When we do evil to others, God "pays it back to us". I usually find God's "pay back" is equal to the crime committed.
 - Remember we're not talking about accidentally saying the wrong thing. This is about a person who deliberately goes out of their way to do something bad to a person who just did something good for them. Why would a person pay back good with evil? The point is the bad person in this story must have such hatred for the good person that they don't even care about the good deed. This proverb is saying that if that is the way the person is in life, they will be stuck forever with bad behavior.
50. Verse 14: Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.
- I've yet to see one quarrel in life really make a difference. There is a big difference between a healthy discussion over a difficult issue and a quarrel where both sides are claiming the other is wrong.
 - It is better to drop a matter or separate for a while than plain old quarreling. This is common among couples who have been married a long time. They are so busy looking at the things they hate about their spouse, they aren't looking at their own short comings!
 - The proverb is teaching that it is better to drop the matter than trying to argue it out!
51. Verse 15: Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent-- the LORD detests them both.
- God wants justice in this world. That means as much as possible to not the guilty go free and not condemning the innocent. Sometimes we as a society make mistakes due to bad information. The point is as much as possible, both of these are to be avoided.
52. Verse 16: Of what use is money in the hand of a fool, since he has no desire to get wisdom?
- The issue is not money itself, but the fact that a foolish person has no desire to better themselves. The verse is not condemning a foolish person earning a living. The verse is saying such a person never uses the resources given to them to better themselves.
 - Such a person has no interest in drawing closer to God and thus, they are wasting the resources given to them.
53. Verse 17: A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
- Both a good friend and a good family member stick by us when difficult times come.
 - All people in life go through difficult periods at times. In such times it is important to be a good friend or a good family member. That is what this proverb is teaching.
54. Verse 18: A man lacking in judgment strikes hands in pledge and puts up security for his neighbor.
- Here is a proverb we have discussed in the early chapters of this book. Proverbs generally condemns the idea of being a guarantor of say a loan to someone else. It is one thing to help out one's one children. It is another to say, strike up a business arrangement with a neighbor.
 - Understand that this was a common practice in middle east culture. If someone wanted to borrow money and couldn't afford it, they looked for another person to cosign the deal. In the real estate world day, a cosigner is nicknamed, "a schmuck with a pen". The point is to be careful about who we partnership with.
55. Verse 19: He who loves a quarrel loves sin; he who builds a high gate invites destruction.
- Some people love to argue for the sake of arguing. This proverb is saying such a person "loves to sin" whether they realize it or not.
 - The second half of this proverb is saying something similar about the same person: The idea of "building a high gate" is that it is an invitation for a burglar. This verse is not condemning protecting what we own. It is condemning building an exceptionally high wall just to keep out burglars. It doesn't work.

- i) The underlying point is that a person who looks to exalt their own gate is looking for trouble.
56. Verse 20: A man of perverse heart does not prosper; he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble.
- a) Let's define "proper" as it is used in this context: This is not about financial success. Many a wicked person has money. The idea of prospering as it is used here is about achieving the things God is proud of. This includes having a heart for God. It also includes living a life where one lives for things other than oneself. This can include providing for one's family, but the picture is bigger than that. It is about having a caring heart where one regularly and consistently makes efforts to help others.
 - b) The second part of the proverb continues along the same line of thinking. The first part of the proverb condemns the person whose heart is wicked. The second part condemns those with a wicked tongue. Usually they go together, which is the point.
 - c) The idea of a deceitful tongue is one who says one thing, but is really planning something else. The idea is you cannot trust what they say.
57. Verse 21: To have a fool for a son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool.
- a) If one's son is a fool, it brings grief to the father who raised him. Remember the biblical definition of a fool: It is one who doesn't care about God at all in his life.
 - b) In most cases, children who come from religious homes, end up being strongly religious themselves. There are exceptions. Sometimes kids from good homes go astray and sometimes kids from nonreligious homes end up in close relationships with God.
 - c) The underlying point of this proverb is that it may or may not be the fault of the parent that the child went astray from God. The point is the child went astray and often, there is nothing the parents can do about it.
58. Verse 22: A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.
- a) If one is happy on the inside, it can cheer up whatever is happening in the world around us and also be helpful to those around us. Just the opposite can happen if we're all depressed on the inside.
 - b) As I've stated several times in the lessons, we cannot always control our circumstances, but we can always control our attitude and remember that God is always aware of our situation and always with us.
59. Verse 23: A wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of justice.
- a) This is about a person who accepts a bribe in order to influence the outcome of a court case. The point is justice does not get done due to this bribe. Notice that it takes two people to commit this act: One bad person to give the bribe and another to accept it.
60. Verse 24: A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth.
- a) A discerning man or woman cares what God thinks about any situation. A fool's eyes wander to the end of the world. In other words, the fool cares about him or herself and only "things of this world" and never God.
61. Verse 25: A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him.
- a) This verse is very similar to Verse 21. The main difference is that this verse also adds the mother to the picture. The foolish son is a grief to both parents.
 - b) So why repeat this point so soon? In between is a point of how a wicked man accepts a bribe and a fool's eyes wander away from God. If a parent wonders whether or not their son fits this description is simply a matter of reading some of the surrounding text.
62. Verse 26: It is not good to punish an innocent man, or to flog officials for their integrity.
- a) Back in Verse 23, the subject was injustice in the court system due to a bribe.
 - b) In this proverb, we have something similar: The topic is still the court system. The warning is against punishing those that are found to be innocent. The second half is similar, it is about making good people paying for the crimes of others.

- c) The term "official" refers to someone in charge. The idea is again about blaming the innocent for a crime as opposed to the guilty party.
- 63. Verse 27: A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered.
 - a) A smart person thinks carefully about what he or she says before they speak and don't just blurt out every thought that pops in their head. Along a similar line is that a man of good understanding does not lose their temper very easily.
 - b) In both cases, one is careful what they say in order not to offend people.
- 64. Verse 28: Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.
 - a) This proverb can be combined with Verse 27. The point is a foolish person can be perceived as wise if they keep silent and "hold their tongues".
 - b) One of the most common mistakes people make is to over-react to any situation without hearing all the facts first. That is the danger behind these last two proverbs.
- 65. OK, let me try to recap some key points of the last two chapters:
 - a) Chapter 16 opened with a lot of proverbs that deal with our relationship with God. The idea is to be conscious of the fact God is in charge of our lives!
 - b) The second half of the chapter had a bunch of proverbs on the importance of taking life seriously. This included having a good temperament and being aware that God is judging us and getting involved in our lives. This theme continued to chapter 17.
 - c) There were also warnings against spreading gossip! Others warned against splitting friendships over arguments. The main idea is self-control is better than physical control.
 - d) We've also had a number of proverbs dealing with ungodly children. The point is sometimes children go the wrong way despite good upbringing and sometimes good kids come from broken homes. It is still worth the trouble to raise kids with a fear of God. In most cases, the kids do come back to God when they grow up!
 - e) The last part of Chapter 17 dealt a lot with leadership. Not just at the top, but say at court level. The point is God wants only the guilty punished. Similar proverbs warned against officials taking bribes in court situations.
 - f) The last few proverbs talk about the fact that the smart way to act in life is to say "little" as opposed to blurting out every thought in one's head!
- 66. Let's pray: Father, Help us in our dealings with others to be aware of your presence. Help us to remember you are always watching us and always judging our behavior. Even as Christians, help us to remember that our rewards in heaven are based on our behavior here on earth! Guide our lives as we live for You and not ourselves. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.