

1. In this lesson, we continue and finish a five chapter section on the Proverbs of Solomon that were added to this book about two hundred and fifty years after Solomon was alive.
 - a) This section is also the last of Solomon's "general" proverbs. There are two more chapters left in the book after this. I'm going to write separate lessons on each of the last two chapters as they are both very different from the typical "one-line" proverb style that we've had through most of the book of Proverbs.
 - b) In the meantime, the proverbs in these three chapters don't cover a lot of new ground from most of the book, but repeat a lot of the same themes with different "twists" to them.
 - i) These last three chapters differ from the previous two chapters in that there is no "common theme". For example, Chapter 26 organized its proverbs in several groups of common themes. In these final three chapters, the proverbs jump all over the place, but at the same time covers familiar ground of most of the book.
 - c) With that said, this lesson is a little bit longer as we're going to cover the last three general chapters of Proverbs before we get into the "different" lessons of Chapters 30 & 31.
 - d) No special theme for this lesson, but just the final lesson on Solomon's "general" proverbs.
2. Verse 1: Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.
 - a) The idea here is we are never positive what will happen tomorrow or in the near future.
 - b) This verse is not against planning, but against being positive about the outcome!
 - c) The Book of James teaches on this same principal:
 - i) Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. (James 4:13-16)
 - d) The idea of this verse is we should plan for the future, then trust God with the results!
3. Verse 2: Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.
 - a) This proverb is not condemning praise, but self-praise. There is nothing wrong with congratulating someone for their accomplishments.
 - b) The biblical concept of "humility" is not about thinking lowly of oneself, but about not focusing on oneself at all.
 - i) Moses was stated to be the most humble man that ever lived (See Numbers 12:3). He didn't think lowly of himself; he was called humble as he constantly put the needs of the Israelites over his own personal needs. Did Moses still have time for his own needs? Yes, but you get the impression Moses dedicated his life after being called by God to serve the Israelite people as a priority over his personal life.
 - c) Let's look at this verse another way: Let's suppose we just accomplished something big. Is it ok to get together with friends and celebrate the event? Yes. Again, the point of this verse is to let others praise us for what is good, and not ourselves.
4. Verse 3: Stone is heavy and sand a burden, but provocation by a fool is heavier than both.
 - a) Now we're back to our favorite "bad guy" in the book: The fool.
 - b) The point of this proverb is that moving stones can be a problem and sand is a burden (think about living in the Middle East) and constantly having to clean sand out of the house. The provocation by a fool is worse than both dealing with stones and sand.
 - c) The biblical definition of a fool is one who doesn't care about the things of God. In this proverb the fool on the "war-path". The point is because a fool doesn't care about pleasing God, it is a problem when a fool starts causes problems to those around that fool.

5. Verse 4: Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?
 - a) Here is another proverb comparing different "bad things". The point is anger and fury are both bad things, but dealing with jealousy (be it true or false accusations) is worse!
 - b) So why is jealousy worse than plain old "anger" or "fury"? Often because jealousy can't be "settled" or stopped. Let's say another man accuses you of having an affair with his wife (or reverse it if you're a woman!). The accusation may be true or false. If the accuser is convinced he is right, there is no way to calm that anger due to jealousy.
 - c) Another point of the verse is that God is jealous when we turn from Him to other things. One can read this verse about the fact no one can stand before God and His jealousy.
6. Verse 5: Better is open rebuke than hidden love.
 - a) If we do something wrong, it is better if a loved one (at the right moment) rebuke us for what we did than just keep silent.
 - b) The idea of a "hidden love" is that it is too timid to say anything to the offending party.
 - c) One commentator (Toy) wrote, "A love that manifests no rebuke is morally useless".
7. Verse 6: Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.
 - a) This proverb follows well after the last one. The last one (Verse 5) was about if someone cares for us, they will openly rebuke us when we are wrong. This verse is saying "wounds" from a friend can be trusted. One can see how Verses 5 and 6 go together.
 - b) The main point of this proverb is that when a friend says something negative, we can trust that comment because we value that opinion. An enemy may give us a kiss, but their intent is something else. The classic biblical example is the fact Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. So, if we don't know a person very well, how do we know which category that person falls into? The answer is to watch their actions for awhile and find out!
8. Verse 7: He who is full loathes honey, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.
 - a) This verse has nothing to do with whether or not honey is a good thing. The point is if a person is very full, they will loath even something that is sweet. To a hungry person, even something "bitter" tastes good at that moment.
 - b) What the bible is trying to teach us in this proverb is not to be "overly satisfied" with the things of this world. This proverb is not advocating going hungry. This proverb is a subtle way of saying we should put our trust in God and not the things of this world.
 - c) The other point is that this proverb is saying we should live with a sense of "hunger" for life as we will appreciate it more and not overindulge in any one thing.
 - i) This verse is not condemning eating a big meal as much as it is condemning a lifestyle of overindulging in things of this world.
9. Verse 8: Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who strays from his home.
 - a) The obvious point of this proverb is that it is condemning a man straying from his home.
 - b) The question is, "What does that mean?" In earlier chapters, we've had lots of "mini-sermons" on the dangers of men leaving their homes for prostitutes or just "other women". I believe that's the main idea here.
 - c) In the broader context, it is about "being where one is not supposed to be". For example, I have always found it wrong for a male pastor to council a female alone. Many churches have a smart policy that their pastors do not counsel women without a second witness in the room at all times. Even if nothing bad is happening, it is the "appearance" of something inappropriate that is dangerous as well. The point is a man should not put himself in situations that look inappropriate, even if it is totally innocent.
 - d) The other aspect of this verse is simply that a man is acting "irresponsibly" by wandering away from his home. (The "home" refers to where his family and dependants live!)
10. Verse 9: Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.
 - a) Here is a verse that compares a "simple" pleasure in life to the positive aspects of having good friends that give good counsel.

- b) The first half of this proverb is about perfume and incense. The point here is that if those two are applied properly, they can bring a simple sense of joy to one's heart. This also reminds me of the expression, "Perfume should be sniffed lightly. Too much is bad for the soul". What that expression is about is the idea of compliments. We have to be weary when we are bathed in compliments, as too much is bad for the soul.
 - c) Onto the point of this proverb: One of the great advantages of having good friends are they can give good counsel in times of need. This is another reminder that I believe men and women need to develop healthy friendships with members of the same sex. This applies to single men and women as well as married men and women.
11. Verse 10: Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you-- better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away.
- a) The main idea of this proverb is that when rough times come, it is better to get help from a friend or good neighbor nearby than a family member who say, happens to live on the other side of the country. It doesn't mean you can't call your family and tell them about what is going on, ☺ but it is better to turn to good friends nearby ask family members to travel great distances to help.
 - b) Suppose one's extended family lives in the same community. There is nothing wrong with turning to family members in such situations. The main point of this proverb is simply to turn to those "near-by" than to have to rely upon family that is far away.
 - c) The first part of this proverb is also "interesting": Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father. One of the great advantages of "e-mail" is we can now stay in contact with old friends and friends of the family. One never knows when a "witnesses" opportunity arises, and therefore it is important to keep "open lines of communication" with old friends. As to my father's friends, I don't do enough of this, other than my uncle, who was always one of my late-father's closest friends.
 - i) The point of one's friends and one's father's friends as it relates to this proverb is one never where and when disaster will strike. The more "friends" one has, the safer one is in such disaster times as now one has a bigger network to turn to!
 - d) Again, the main point of this proverb has to do with the importance of having good friends nearby (that could be literal neighbors or say, friends from church). One never knows when disaster is going to strike and it is important to have a network of friends "nearby" if and when such things occur.
12. Verse 11: Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart; then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt.
- a) The focus here is on the "father" in this "father and son" proverb. The idea is that if a son is wise, it is proof that a father did a good job raising the child and the father doesn't have to explain his parenting ability to his critics.
 - i) A New Testament discussion of this point is in 1st Timothy 3:4 and 3:12. The qualifications to be a leader in the church includes the ability to manage one's household. The point as it ties to this proverb is if that issue is in "question", it can affect one's ability to be a leader in the church. That is why the father in this proverb is asking his son to "bring joy to his heart" by doing the right thing!
 - b) One can expand this concept to more than one's own children: It can be used when a teacher is helping a student grow as a person. Paul said, "For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy." (1st Thessalonians 2:19-20 NIV).
13. Verse 12: The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.
- a) A prudent person sees danger coming ahead, and "takes refuge" until the danger passes.
 - b) OK, need some examples? 1) The most obvious one has to do with traveling and let's say there is a big rainstorm on the horizon. A wise person seeks refuge until it passes.

- i) A less obvious example would be if there is major political upheaval on the horizon. If one was a Jewish person living in Germany in the 1930's, it would have been smart to make arrangements to move away, as many did at that time!
 - ii) What about something as simple as an encounter with a potential enemy? Again, the smart person, if they can seeks refuge until the danger passes!
 - iii) What if we're not sure if something is a danger or not? Then one has to a little more investigation to find out! The point is a smart person knows when to take refuge as opposed to the simple who keep going when there is danger afoot.
- 14. Verse 13: Take the garment of one who puts up security for a stranger; hold it in pledge if he does it for a wayward woman.
 - a) People must be held accountable for their obligations, even their bad ones!
 - b) The idea of this verse is if a person is likely to co-sign a deal and essentially put up security for a stranger, a way to help them is to take their garment (or some key possession) and hold it for them to either 1) encourage them not to do this or 2) to remind them they are obligated to fulfill that promise!
- 15. Verse 14: If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.
 - a) Not all people are "morning" people. If we like to do things early in the morning, a neighbor or a family member may not appreciate it, even if we meant it as a good thing!
 - b) The point is if we want to bless someone, it is best to do it at a time and place where the person receiving the blessing appreciates it, and not just when we want to do it!
- 16. Verses 15-16: A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day;¹⁶ restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.
 - a) Remember that Solomon had hundreds of wives and concubines. Yes that was wrong and that is a separate issue. The point here is that Solomon understood the problems of dealing with women who liked to argue a lot. My guess is that if he didn't have so many women, he wouldn't have this problem and mention it so often in proverbs!
 - b) The point is if one's spouse is constantly complaining, to restrain them is about as easy as restraining the wind or trying to grasp oil with one's empty hands.
 - c) If one's spouse is in a bad mood, it might be better just to separate oneself for a while until the "storm" passes. Again, go pray for them. I have learned through years of marriage there are times when to "be there" and try to help and times just to give my wife "space". I'm not claiming I'm perfect at this and I'm sure I'm just as bad to her, if not worse at times! The point is to have the wisdom to learn when to help and when to "back off".
- 17. Verse 17: As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.
 - a) There are ministries and Christian seminars that use this proverb as their title. (It is also translated steel sharpening steel as well.) The basic idea is just as iron is used to sharpen other pieces of iron so one man can help to improve another man with good words!
 - b) One of the best ways for people to grow in life is to get good advice from good people. That is the idea behind this proverb.
- 18. Verse 18: He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who looks after his master will be honored.
 - a) This proverb is not condemning eating figs, or taking care of one's own property. The point is all people "serve somebody" and honor comes from doing one's duty.
 - b) So who do we serve? All God-fearing people are supposed to be serving God and making Him the master of one's life. The proverb can be interpreted that way.
 - c) This proverb can refer to a person's boss, or his or her customers. The idea behind this proverb is not to ignore our duties in order to take care of our personal business. Take care of our duties first, and then we can take care of our "fig tree's".

19. Verse 19: As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.
- If we look over a smooth source of water, we can make out our own face. Along the same lines of thinking a person's "heart" reflects the true nature of a person! If we can discover what makes a person "tick" (i.e., discover the things they truly live for), we can pretty much figure out what that person is like.
 - While you and I may not have the ability to fully understand a person's heart, God does. Further, we can often learn what drives a person if we watch them for awhile.
 - There is a New Testament comment that sort of applies here: Paul said, Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (1st Corinthians 13:12). What Paul meant by that is we cannot fully comprehend God until we get to the next life.
 - Just as "only God" can fully understand a man's heart, so we can only fully comprehend God after we are saved and in the next life!
20. Verse 20: Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man.
- The idea of "Death and Destruction are never satisfied" is that it "never" comes to an end. As long as humans live on this earth, sooner or later we all die. There is no end to death.
 - The idea of "eyes of man" is our eyes are the most likely method to draw us away from God. The point here is that a person is never satisfied with the things he or she sees. We always want more or "something new". It is like death in that there is no end to this process other than the end of our lives. I was taught many years ago that when one spots a good-looking member of the opposite sex, it is not the first look that's a sin, but to keep watching is the sin.
 - The point is to watch out what we are drawn to with our eyes!
21. Verse 21: The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.
- The idea of "crucible for silver and the furnace for gold" is these are the method's used to purify silver and gold. The crucible and the furnace are used to test those metals.
 - Humans are often tested by the "praise we receive". Do we accept it and move on, or do we let it go to our heads? The point is we are tested in life by the praise we receive and what we do with that praise.
 - As I stated earlier in this lesson, "Praise is like perfume, it should be sniffed in small doses" and then we should move on from it!
22. Verse 22: Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding him like grain with a pestle, you will not remove his folly from him.
- This proverb is not meant to be taken over-literally. The idea with a fool is no matter how hard we try, we cannot remove his "folly" from him.
 - A biblical "fool" is one who does not in any way, shape or form care for the things of God. Therefore, it is part of a fool's nature to do things that are a waste of time to benefit that fool for anything behind this lifetime. Therefore, the actions of a fool are called "folly" as they are eternal time wasters.
 - The proverb is saying it is a waste of time to try to remove that "folly" from a fool!
23. Verses 23-24: Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; ²⁴ for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.
- The idea is to be aware of our financial status. It is important in life to keep track of our wealth as we have no idea how long it will last. The important point is to be aware of what resources we have as we may not be able to count on them tomorrow.
 - Sooner or later we all die, and we cannot take our money with us into the next life. Further, no family inheritance last forever. Even the riches of the wealthiest people ends after a few generations. The point is a wealthy family from a few hundred years ago does not continue more than a "handful" of generations. No matter what is one's financial status in life, one needs to be aware of that status and know one's resources.

24. Verses 25-27: When the hay is removed and new growth appears and the grass from the hills is gathered in, ²⁶ the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field. ²⁷ You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed you and your family and to nourish your servant girls.
- a) Verses 23-27 all form a little "poem" about being diligent to know the state of our financial affairs. These last three verses say in effect that when things "go wrong" and one cannot provide for one's family, then what we do own will sustain us through the "dark times".
 - b) These 3 lines say that when there is no grass to feed the flock, then one has to sacrifice from that flock to feed the family. The point again is about being diligent to know the size and state of one's "flock" as one never knows when bad times occur and one needs to be ready for such times.
25. Chapter 28, Verse 1: The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.
- a) The idea of this proverb is that wicked people get scared easily. A person who is wicked is fleeing out of fear of being caught and therefore easily gets scared.
 - b) A righteous person is bold in that they don't have any reason to fear being caught as they haven't done anything wrong. They can be bold as they have nothing to fear!
26. Verse 2: When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a man of understanding and knowledge maintains order.
- a) The idea is when a country or a community is going through a time of rebellion, there are many people vying for leadership. In such situations, leaders get assassinated or replaced quickly and the ones who replace them and don't last much longer.
 - b) Another way to look at this verse is that if a country is "rebellious" some people follow "Leader A", while others follow "Leader B" and there is conflict.
 - c) A man who rules well knows how to maintain order. For what it is worth, the second line is confusing in the original text. The English translations are "less confusing" and simply treat the second half as the opposite of the first half, by saying in effect a good leader maintains order!
27. Verse 3: A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops.
- a) The word "ruler" is translated "poor man" in other English translations. The point is when a person oppresses those even poorer than the poor leader it is harmful to all.
 - b) The idea of a driving rain that leaves no crops would be a like a heavy rain at harvest time that ruins the crops. The "oppressor" who attacks the poor of the country (let's say for the purpose of driving them out) does "nothing but damage" and doesn't win!
28. Verse 4: Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law resist them.
- a) The idea of this proverb is the type of person who forsakes God's laws joins forces with those who are wicked. Those who try to keep God's laws resist the wicked!
 - b) OK, what about Christians and the "law". The short answer is some laws still apply and some don't and the New Testament is our guide as to how to obey the law.
 - i) But doesn't the New Testament say in many places we are not under "the law"? The answer is yes. Our salvation is not dependant upon keeping the law. At the same time, we want to live a life pleasing to God, and that is all about obedience.
29. Verse 5: Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.
- a) The idea of this verse is that evil people only seek "justice" when it benefits them, as opposed to the issue of "what is right and what is wrong".
 - b) I have personally seen many people go to court just to get money and as far as the true issue of right and wrong, they have no interest.
 - c) Those who seek God understand that "justice" is about the right thing getting done.
30. Verse 6: Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse.
- a) The idea is it is better to be poor but at that the same time one is not guilty of any significant crime, than to be rich and having an earned reputation for being "perverse".

- b) This is not about being perfect, but about being guilty of some significant crime where one should be in jail. This verse is not saying we should be poor, but is saying it is better to be poor and have a good reputation in the community than to be rich with a bad reputation.
31. Verse 7: He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.
- a) The straightforward point of this proverb is that if a father has a son who generally keeps the law, the son is a "good son". If a son keeps company with a bunch of "gluttons", then that son is a disgrace to his father.
- b) The idea of "gluttons" is one who is focused primarily on eating. The underlying point of this proverb is a "good son" is mainly concerned with pleasing God in all that he does, while the "bad son" is one who is mainly interested in other things than God.
32. Verse 8: He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.
- a) Verse 8 is warning about a "loan shark". This is the type of person who makes loans to people who truly don't have the ability to pay it back and the loan-person charges exorbitant interest rates. The loan-shark ends up taking "just about everything" the victim owns in order to pay back the loan.
- b) The second point is the wealth accumulated by this loan-shark will eventually get into the hands of someone who is kind to the poor. This loan shark may lose all his money in some bad business deal or it may go to a relative when he dies. That relative does good with that same money.
- c) The point is the bad-guy doing the loan-sharking doesn't realize that eventually the wealth he (or she) is accumulating God will eventually use for some good.
- d) The Old Testament forbids charging interest to fellow Jews, let alone charging "exorbitant" rates. (Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:36 and Deut. 23:19-20). The topic is not directly addressed in the New Testament. Loans are acceptable, exorbitant interest is not.
33. Verse 9: If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable.
- a) If someone ignored "God's laws", God would in turn ignore their prayer requests.
- b) Obviously there has to be exceptions or else no one would ever be saved. The idea is more about a person who spends their life turning from God, and then when times get tough, God in turn, "Gives that person the same respect they have given God!"
34. Verse 10: He who leads the upright along an evil path will fall into his own trap, but the blameless will receive a good inheritance.
- a) Let's suppose an evil person sets a trap for a righteous person. That evil person leads the upright along the road to the trap. The point is God is watching and He will somehow turn it around for the "upright". The "evil" will fall in their own trap.
- b) The text may be describing eternal destiny in that the righteous will be saved for eternity and the evil will suffer for eternity. The other possibility is the situation is somehow reversed in this lifetime. The point is the only punishment the righteous ever receives is what they get in this lifetime.
35. Verse 11: A rich man may be wise in his own eyes, but a poor man who has discernment sees through him.
- a) Most people, rich or poor, think they are wise in their own eyes. With the rich, because they have wealth, they think they are "special". A wise but poor man can see past the material things and discern what that rich man is really like.
- b) As I've stated many times, proverbs are not teaching that one is automatically going to heaven or hell based on one's financial status. What is important is what we do with the resources entrusted to us by God.

36. Verse 12: When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to power, men go into hiding.
- a) Here's a very straightforward proverb. The point is when a good man triumphs people celebrate with that man, especially if that man is the leader. When a wicked person rises to power, good men go into hiding out of fear of "retribution".
37. Verse 13: He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
- a) Here is a biblical principal that is very consistent in the Old and New Testament:
 - i) God does not expect us to be perfect. What He does expect is that when we sin and realize it, we confess that sin and confess that "God was right and we were wrong". If a person becomes aware of their sin and tries to cover it up as opposed to confessing it, the proverb says that person does not prosper.
 - b) Let's say one is guilty of some sort of theft. Let's say we refuse to confess it and want to move on. The bible is promising we won't "prosper" as long as we hold it in!
38. Verse 14: Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.
- a) The Hebrew word "Yir'ah" meaning "fear" is usually associated with "Fear of the Lord". A different word for "fear" is used in this verse. While this proverb may still mean that, the idea of his proverb is more about "fearing sin" in that we fear God's judgment if we sin.
 - b) The idea of "hardening one's heart" is like the last proverb: One's life goes downhill when we try to "hold in" some sin as opposed to confessing it.
39. Verse 15: Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked man ruling over a helpless people.
- a) The word "helpless" is misleading here. A better word is "poor". Suppose a wicked person comes into power and makes lots of demands over a poor group of people. That group cannot pay those demands, at least not without working very hard and long hours.
 - b) That is why such a bad leader is compared to a roaring lion or a charging bear.
40. Verse 16: A tyrannical ruler lacks judgment, but he who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long life.
- a) A tyrannical ruler faces the risk of assignation and rebellion.
 - b) A ruler who "hates ill-gotten gain" will be respected by the people under him, and most likely will rule and reign peacefully, for a long time.
 - c) Let's say we are not any sort of great leader. How do I apply this? ☺ Well, if one wants their family or co-workers to respect us, one can apply this same principal.
41. Verse 17: A man tormented by the guilt of murder will be a fugitive till death; let no one support him.
- a) Is this verse arguing against witnessing to a person guilty of murder? No. The point is if such a murderer is carrying a lot of guilt and that person has no interest in confession, then we should not help that person, but let them "live on the run". The point is we are not to help that person live a new life until they are willing to deal with that issue. We should not "interfere" with such a murderer on the run!
42. Verse 18: He whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but he whose ways are perverse will suddenly fall.
- a) Here is a principal we've discussed a handful of times in Proverbs. The idea is that if a person is not carrying any significant guilt for any crime can "be safe" and is not in any danger of being arrested.
 - b) A person who is "perverse" always lives in fear of the authorities and can fall at any time.
43. Verse 19: He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty.
- a) Every now and then, we get a proverb dealing with the "lazy". The point is if one spends most of their time chasing fantasies as opposed to working for living, that person will end up in poverty.

- b) Let's suppose someone is born wealthy, and they can "chase fantasies" as they don't have to work. It is still a waste of their life as they have not used their resources for "good" but wasted his life chasing fantasies. This verse is not say, against dreaming about building one's own business. The point is to day-dream at the expense of wasting one's life.
44. Verse 20: A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.
- a) The first type of person is faithful in their obligations to God and other people.
- b) The second type of person is mainly interested in getting rich, to the point of ignoring God and ignoring their family and obligations.
- c) Again, the bible is not condemning working to "get ahead". The issue is our priorities. If we are working so hard to make a living that we ignore God and our family, it is wrong!
45. Verse 21: To show partiality is not good-- yet a man will do wrong for a piece of bread.
- a) The point is when one is "judging" one needs to be fair and not show partiality.
- b) The point of the second half is many people will perform injustices for even a small reward or bribe (symbolized as a piece of bread).
- c) This verse is another warning to be honest in our dealings with others.
46. Verse 22: A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him.
- a) This verse is describing someone so eager to get wealthy they commit some sort of sin or some series of sins to get the wealth they desire. The point is God does not let them get away with it forever. They will either be punished in this lifetime or sent to hell!
47. Verse 23: He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue.
- a) This proverb is saying in the long run, it is better to be the type of friend who gives a rebuke when necessary than one who just "flatters". Friends may not appreciate the rebuke at the time, but once they think about it later, appreciate it.
- b) One has to read this proverb in balance with the rest of the bible. If we spend all of our time rebuking a friend and never saying nice things, we will be resented. No one wants to be around negative people. The point is to learn when to say something and other times, it is better to keep one's mouth shut. May God give us the wisdom to know when to speak up and when to keep silent. ☺
48. Verse 24: He who robs his father or mother and says, "It's not wrong"-- he is partner to him who destroys.
- a) It's hard to imagine "robbing" one's parents. The idea might be to demand part of their inheritance while one's parents are still alive or take some of their finances without their permission.
- b) So who is this "parent robber" partners with? I would argue it is "Satan" in the sense the son or daughter is violating God's will by robbing from the parents. The other idea is the type of person who would rob from their parents would rob from just about anyone else as well! Thus such a bad child would start partnering with other bad people!
49. Verse 25: A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.
- a) The first type of person here is "selfish and greedy". The idea of "dissension" is that the community doesn't want to put up with someone like that and they cause friction.
- b) The person who trusts in God prospers in the fact they are building up rewards for themselves in heaven via their attitude. In many cases, such a person eventually prospers in this life as well. This is not necessary referring to money, but respect in the community.
50. Verse 26: He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.
- a) The point here is, as one goes through life, are we trusting in God's wisdom or "one's self" at any given moment or over any given issue. This is a simple proverb, but it requires self-examination every now and then over different issues of our life.
- b) I usually find that when an issue "comes to the surface" it means God wants me to deal with it and somehow change from how I dealt with it or ignored it in the past!

51. Verse 27: He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.
- a) Here's another proverb on the issue of doing "something" to help the poor. The verse is not calling on us to give everything we own, or we would be among the poor our self.
 - b) The verse is calling people to not turn a blind eye to those in need around us. Ever since the time of Moses, the bible has always called on the Israelites to do "something" to help the poor. When the harvest was done, the Israelites were not allowed to go harvesting the field twice, but were purposely suppose to leave something in the fields for the poor.
 - c) The issue is not specifically what we do, but the fact we do something. To the person who purposely ignores the poor, God will somehow "curse" them.
52. Verse 28: When the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding; but when the wicked perish, the righteous thrive.
- a) This proverb is talking about the danger of having wicked people in power. When that is the case, good people go into hiding to avoid the wicked. When the wicked perish, the same "righteous" people thrive in society.
 - b) Examples might include leaders who won't let people practice their religion. Another example is a government that is so demanding on people, the citizens can't have any time for personal joy in their life as they are always working for the government.
 - c) I just read an article how Christianity is starting to thrive in the big cities in China. While that country is far from perfect in its human rights records, the good news is some progress is being made and more freedom is being allowed and the "righteous" are beginning to thrive in ways that did not exist even five to ten years ago.
53. Chapter 29, Verse 1: A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.
- a) The idea of "stiff necked" refers to a person who refuses to change their ways for the better. Let's supposed someone has to be told over and over again to change, but refuses. Such a person will somehow be "destroyed". This mainly refers to being sent to hell. The other idea is eventually a society won't put up with this type of person, and somehow that person will either be destroyed or removed from that society.
54. Verse 2: When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.
- a) Here's a verse similar to one we just studied a few back: The idea is when "God-fearing" people are in power, the "people rejoice". When the wicked people rule, people "groan".
 - b) When a leader rules fairly in that they are not overly oppresses, a society cheers them on. Yes, there are always "grumbles" in a society, but most people will appreciate them.
 - c) The first part is not just about political leaders. The idea is when anyone "righteous" starts doing well in life, the people near that righteous person celebrates with them.
55. Verse 3: A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.
- a) In this "good/bad" comparison, a good son makes his father happy because the son turned out well in life and therefore the father can say he did a good job raising him.
 - b) If that same son spends his time and income on prostitutes, it is a shame to that person.
 - c) The application is God cares what we do with the resources He gives us. It does not mean that every dollar we earn has to be spent on necessities or given to the poor. This proverb is teaching us about being responsible in life and always doing the right thing.
56. Verse 4: By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.
- a) Here's another proverb on the importance of "good justice". A government that encourages good justice gives that country stability. When there are leaders who are greedy for bribes, so that proper justice is not done, it brings that country to "ruin".
 - b) Think of it this way: Would you want to live in a place where one can get robbed and then the robber could get set free due to "bribery" of the judge(s) in the trial.

57. Verse 5: Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his feet.
- a) The idea here is if one is spending too much time flattering their neighbor, that flatterer may be secretly setting up some sort of trap for them. The point is to be cautious about too much flattery, either to give it or receive it.
58. Verse 6: An evil man is snared by his own sin, but a righteous one can sing and be glad.
- a) An evil person has to be careful what they do in life or where they go, due to their own past sinful behavior. A righteous person has no fears and they can go through life with a glad heart knowing they can't get in trouble for their past actions.
 - b) The application is not only to avoid evil men, but to avoid actions that could cause us to regret our future as we are now guilty about some past action.
 - c) Remember God does forgive us of all sins we confess to Him. The problem is people are not as forgiving as God. Our "past sins" may hang over us the rest of our lives.
59. Verse 7: The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.
- a) Here's another verse about "justice". If one cares for the things of God, one should also care that the poor get "justice" in their court dealings. The essential idea is that in courtroom settings, the poor get treated just like everyone else. They don't get any special favors for being poor, but at the same time they are not mistreated as well.
 - b) One of the problems with our court system is that it tends to favor whoever has the best lawyers. "True" justice should be based solely on the facts of the case, not on which lawyers make the best argument. Grant it, sometimes those lines are blurred, but the point of this proverb is to have fair dealings in court, no matter what the financial status.
60. Verse 8: Mockers stir up a city, but wise men turn away anger.
- a) "Mockers" are those who don't care for the things of God and usually make some sort of sarcastic comment when the subject of God or godly-things comes up. They usually cause problems. Such people like to go out and stir up trouble.
 - b) The wise people like to calm things down to maintain peace.
61. Verse 9: If a wise man goes to court with a fool, the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace.
- a) The idea is that if a wise man has to go to court with a fool, the wise person cannot expect a reasonable solution. The fool will "rant and rave" in court. The proverb is saying that going to court won't settle the issue with the "foolish" person.
 - b) The moral of this proverb is that when one has dealings with a fool and things fall apart, the wise person may simply have to "accept his or her losses" and move on. If a wise person has to go to court against a fool, the wise person may simply have to accept the fact that he or she has to take some losses, even if the wise person was right in this case.
62. Verse 10: Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity and seek to kill the upright.
- a) People who are vicious and hate filled can't stand "upright" people. Such bad people want to kill the upright so they can continue their bad habits without fear of retribution.
 - b) This verse is given as a warning when such "bloodthirsty" men are around. If they are not dealt with, they won't keep to themselves and can make life worse and worse.
63. Verse 11: A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.
- a) The foolish person never holds back whatever anger is inside them. They lash out every chance they get. The wise person learns to control their anger.
 - b) Paul taught to "be angry and do not sin". (Ephesians 4:26). There are reasons to be angry in life, especially when injustice is done. However, just lashing back doesn't solve the problem. Paul's point is about learning how to properly handle bad situations and not to make them worse by our own sinful actions in response. Paul's other point in that verse is to give our anger to God and "don't go to bed angry", which means to let go of the anger!
64. Verse 12: If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked.
- a) When a leader listens to lies, those under that leader then learn "how the game is played" and end up being like that leader and also listen to lies to gain power. The point is when a leader becomes corrupt the government under that leader also becomes corrupt as well.

65. Verse 13: The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The LORD gives sight to the eyes of both.
- a) The "oppressor" is a person who oppresses (puts down) a poor man. The point here is God gives eye sight to both parties. Both are aware of what the oppressor is doing. There may not be justice in this life, but there will be justice in the next life time for such action.
 - b) Do I believe salvation is about accepting Jesus' payment for our sins? Of course, with that said, I do believe God judges' people fairly based on how they live their life and that includes how we treat other people.
66. Verse 14: If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure.
- a) A sign that a king's throne is good is based on how that king or leader treats the poor people. Show me a government that is "fair" to the poor, and more likely, that government is "God-blessed".
 - b) How does a government be fair to the poor? The essential idea is the poor are not repressed just for being poor and they have equal opportunity to succeed in life. The poor are not singled out for punishment just because they are poor.
67. Verse 15: The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.
- a) Here's an issue that comes up every now and then in proverbs: The issue of properly disciplining one's children. The idea of "the rod of correction" is about properly spanking a child when it is appropriate. The two rules to remember on this are 1) never do it in anger and 2) only hit a child on the bottom. I'm convinced if people can remember those two rules, children will come out better in the long run.
 - b) The problem with society today is we are obsessed with not hurting our children's feelings as opposed to doing what is right. I've also learned that every child is different. Some can be disciplined with "simple" actions and some require "rod of correction".
 - c) The last point is a child who is never disciplined ends up disgracing his mother.
68. Verse 16: When the wicked thrive, so does sin, but the righteous will see their downfall.
- a) When wicked people "thrive" in society, what naturally follows is more sin is publicly displayed. The idea here is when the wicked are running around, things like theft and even murder are more rampant and people get away with things.
 - b) How do the righteous see their downfall? At the least, on judgment day. Further, such wicked people are eventually brought to justice or simply a society doesn't want to put up with them.
69. Verse 17: Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.
- a) Let's face it, disciplining a child is never fun. It is often more painful for the parent than it is for the child. However, it is necessary, and in the long run it is beneficial to the parents.
 - b) This proverb is not saying the children will thank you for the disciplining! If anything, they might even regret you for doing it. However, the long term benefit for punishing a child is that kid will eventually "bring the parents peace" as the children are now growing up learning right from wrong.
 - c) As most parents will tell you, older teenagers and young adults are still rebellious. However, such children usually eventually realize their parent's way of looking at things were right after all and eventually change for the better.
70. Verse 18: Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.
- a) The verse is saying if a nation ignores God's laws, then "restraint" of bad things is stopped. A nation will start publicly doing everything and anything that feels good at the point of ignoring God's laws for their life.
 - b) The term "revelation" refers to God's word and the words of the prophets who regularly existed at the time of Solomon's writings. While I still believe one can have a gift of prophecy today, we primarily rely on God's words as our source.

- c) The second part of this verse states the same thing in a "positive". The idea is a country or a person is blessed if they do their best to keep God's law. For the Christian, one must study the New Testament as to proper interpretation of God's laws. While we are not under the law, the "law" has principals that apply to our lives today.
71. Verse 19: A servant cannot be corrected by mere words; though he understands, he will not respond.
- a) The idea is a servant must receive the same "type" of disciplined training that a son or daughter receives. The treatment must be age appropriate. It does not mean we "beat" our servants. It means we show them what has to be done and give hands on training. To just "say words" are usually not enough to train someone. Usually people won't understand what they have to do, unless they have hands on training.
72. Verse 20: Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- a) The idea is to avoid "speaking hastily". That means one should think before one speaks. Often to say something in haste is usually words we regret later.
- b) This is not a salvation issue. The idea here is if "anyone" speaks in haste, it is better to be a fool at that moment than speaking that way.
73. Verse 21: If a man pampers his servant from youth, he will bring grief in the end.
- a) Until the last few centuries, it was common to have servant children as well. The children of servants were often part of the same household. The idea here is that if we spoil a servant child, that children will bring us grief as they grow up.
- b) How do we apply this today? Let's say we have someone working for us who is still fairly young: be it a teenager or a young adult. If we don't teach them right from wrong and show them what they must do (as opposed to just saying it), that person will bring us grief in the long run.
74. Verse 22: An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.
- a) Both "types" of people in this proverb are the same. The warning is not only to watch our temper, but not to be around those who are angry all the time. People who are constantly angry stir up trouble and are more likely to commit sin.
- b) As I've stated, there are situations that make us angry. That is a natural part of life. The question becomes, "how do we properly handle that anger?" The wrong answer is usually to lash out to whoever is in front of us. The correct answer is usually to give that anger to God and ask His help on how to deal with it! I have also found that if I can wait until I calm down about an issue, and then approach the source of my anger, it usually turns out much better!
75. Verse 23: A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.
- a) Too much "pride" is always a dangerous thing. When we are focusing on ourselves it is hard for us to learn and grow as we think "we know it all about the situation of the moment". If we just accomplished something "great", we should thank God, and enjoy the moment, and then let it go. That's "different" from thinking highly of oneself on a regular basis to the point where one is not teachable.
- b) The opposite in this proverb is a "lowly spirit" gains honor. A person of a lowly spirit is willing to learn and grow. I have found that before God can raise us up to a higher level, we usually have to learn to humble ourselves first.
76. Verse 24: The accomplice of a thief is his own enemy; he is put under oath and dare not testify.
- a) Somebody who helps a thief is actually an "enemy" to the thief in that if the thief is caught, the accomplice will not testify in court in order to protect himself.
- b) The point of this proverb is to avoid thievery and getting involved in thievery. The bigger application is to avoid being or having an accomplice to do something wrong.

77. Verse 25: Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.
- a) The question of this proverb is about who we "trust" first: God or people.
 - b) The application of this proverb is about when we are in situations where the bible says "it is wrong", but some person is trying to talk us into doing that wrong thing anyway. It could as simple as a practical joke and as complex as stealing. The point is to consider God's perspective in any given situation before joining in some action!
78. Verse 26: Many seek an audience with a ruler, but it is from the LORD that man gets justice.
- a) "Proverbs" hates the idea of depending upon mankind for justice as opposed to God. That has been a common theme all through this book. Does this mean one should not seek the government's help in times of trouble? Of course not. It means one looks to God first to deal with the situation and then go to the appropriate authorities.
 - b) In my handful of dealings with political leaders, a common theme I hear is, "Everybody is always asking me for something (as opposed to what can I do for you). You would be surprised how often politicians here from people asking for justice in their situation.
79. Verse 27: The righteous detest the dishonest; the wicked detest the upright.
- a) Solomon's proverbs end with the point that righteous and wicked people both detest each other's lifestyle. The question at any given moment is which "lifestyle" are we choosing and is our actions pleasing to God!
80. Since this is the end of a long section of the book, I want to give some wrap up thoughts:
- a) Many commentators don't teach Proverbs on a verse by verse basic, but a topic by topic basis. There is a good reason for that. You can rewrite proverbs by topic. For example, you could just study all the proverbs that deal with fools or the ones that deal with those that scoff or the people that are lazy.
 - i) The reason Proverbs repeats many of the same themes over and over again is that is the best way for us to remember the points of the moment.
 - b) Another way to study proverbs is not to think, "this proverb really applies to that person", but to think, "I really need to watch out for this in my life". The trick is learning to personalize the proverbs to show where one can improve one's life.
 - c) It's pretty rare when a person is "good" or "bad" all the time. More likely, the proverbs apply to all of us at different moments of our life. That's the idea. We are to study these and apply both the good and bad and to remind ourselves how God wants us to act!
 - d) One method of regular bible study (which I do myself) is to keep three bookmarks in one's bible: One for the Old Testament, One for the New Testament and One for Psalms and Proverbs. Each day I move all three bookmarks a little. One does not have to use this method, but it is a nice method. Given this method, I read through Psalms and Proverbs at least once or twice a year. My point here is I am constantly learning new things from Proverbs to apply to my own life. A proverb that may now apply to us today, may apply strongly the next time we go through that book.
 - e) May proverbs continue to convict us and guide us as we live for Him!
81. Let's pray: Father, thank for what Proverbs teaches us. Help us to learn from these proverbs and apply them to our lives. Help us to model the good aspects of the proverbs as well as confess the times we are acting like the one of the bad people of proverbs. Help us to be pleasing in your site in all that we do. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.