

Proverbs 11-13 • Money and Possessions

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Proverbs chapter 11. Open your Bible there. Proverbs chapter 11. We're going to be looking at the Proverbs and I'm going to start off with a theme for you that we're going to use to go through about 3 chapters, across 3 chapters, and we're going to talk about money, finances, possessions, wealth.

What is God's Word, or what is God's wisdom, have to say about money? I think of a lot of Christians who were asked, what does the Bible say about money? They'd probably say, well, it says in the Bible that money is **the** root of all evil, which isn't completely true. Paul said that money is **a** root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10), but it is not **the** root. It is **a** root is one of them, can be one of them potentially.

The Word of God has a lot to say about money, and possessions, and wealth, and the acquisition of the above named. We're going to be looking at those things here and we're going to go through the next 3 chapters and just look thematically at money. And then we'll go back and try to take up some of the rest of them.

Verse 1 of chapter 11. It says, *“A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight.” (ESV)*

Now this is one of those verses that you have to understand in its context because we don't use balances and weights anymore when it comes to the making of deals. Well, we do, but not in the way that they did. It isn't a mechanism like it was for them.

A balance was basically two trays with a way of measuring things and it became a very important method of measuring out the deal between two particular parties. And what's interesting is you hear a lot about a shekel in the Bible. Well, what's interesting is that the word, shekel, actually comes from a verb that means, to weigh. Meaning to weigh something in the balance and weights and measures played a huge role in ancient commerce. Well it didn't take very long, men's sinful natures being what they are, for men to learn that with just a little slight adjustment to the mechanism by which you measure things, that I could

benefit by making whoever is buying my goods think that they're getting a better deal than they really were. And this was called, a false balance; to basically rig the balance, rig the device in such a way as to favor me.

Well, Solomon said it's an abomination, an abomination. That's a strong word to talk about something as an abomination and it carries the idea of a sense of disgust or deep seated hatred.

God hates dishonesty and that's how it translates to you and I, even though we don't use weights and measures anymore. If I'm selling you something, I don't get out my little measuring device.

But basically, what God's Word is telling you and I is that God loves integrity and honesty in all of our dealings, and He wants you and I to have integrity and honesty in the way that we deal with one another.

If you said you're going to sell it for so much, sell it for so much. Don't waffle. If that's the deal, then that's the deal. Your word is more important than your pocketbook. That's essentially what we're being told here.

Now skip down to verse 4, if you would. It says, "*Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.*" Here in this verse, we have one of those common comparisons in the scripture about money, and how it can help us, but it only goes so far.

Don't ever tell somebody the money can't help them because it can. But on the day of wrath, it can't do thing and that's what Solomon is saying here. So something else on the day of wrath is going to be more important than your money.

You can work, and you can work, and you can work, and you can work to gain money, but on the day of wrath, all that work is going to avail you nothing. Because something else is important on the day of wrath, and that is righteousness. In other words, right standing with God. How do you and I get right standing with God? Well, it isn't by being a good person.

We get right standing with God by accepting what His Son did on the cross of Calvary. Alright? When we accept what He did on the cross, we are then in right standing with Him. That can deliver you on the day of wrath. Money can't. You can't pay off God. There's no possible way. Don't think that you can throw a couple of 50s down on the table and God's going to go, oh, all right. It's not going to happen.

Skip down to verse 7. *“When the wicked dies, his hope will perish, and the expectation of wealth perishes too.”* And although this is a challenging verse to translate, the essence of it, essentially is saying that, when the wicked man dies, his expectations of labor die along with him. Which, of course, was to be wealthy.

His expectation was to be have wealth and to be at ease with life but when he dies, it's not going to have any effect. And whatever hope and whatever expectation he had in the acquisition of wealth will not be able to follow him to heaven. Whereas the contrast for you and I would be the opposite. What we bank with the Lord will, in fact, follow us.

Verse 15, skip down to verse 15. Remember, we're dealing with the theme of wealth and money and that sort of thing.

Verse 15 says, *“Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm, but he who hates striking hands in pledge is secure.”* We've addressed this before. Putting up security is what you and I would refer to as cosigning on a loan, perhaps, and the Bible considers it a fairly foolish thing to do, particularly in uncertain times.

But you have to understand that defaulting on a loan back in biblical times was much more severe than today. I mean, it can ruin you financially today, but it could put you in prison back then. They had a thing called debtor's prison and today it could land you in bankruptcy if you were to do that.

Well, the bottom line is, don't sign on the line for anything you can't afford to pay for, that's the basic idea. I mean, this is a rule of thumb, and it's not saying that a parent should never cosign on a loan for their child. We've talked about this before, because I've seen parents do it on many occasions, and I don't think there's any problem with it.

Particularly if a parent has the ability to take over the loan if the child should default, that's the key. If I've got, if I've got lots of money, and I cosign on a loan for somebody, and it's just no big deal. Well then there's obviously not a real danger that's connected to that.

But this is using a general rule, sort of an idea. It's really not a good idea to put up security for your neighbor. When you just don't know how he's going to respond to the debt.

Verse 16, “*A gracious woman gets honor, and violent men get riches.*” Okay, now we have, again, two contrasts set out aside alongside one another. You have the “*gracious,*” or your Bible may say, “*kind hearted woman,*” and you have the ruthless, or the, “*violent men.*” And the idea here seems to be that a person could take hold of wealth through violence even though they haven't earned it but honor is something that is earned by a woman as a reward for her graciousness or her kindness, so forth.

Verse 18, “*The wicked earns deceptive wages, but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward.*” All right, the key words in this verse are, “*deceptive,*” which describes the wicked, the wages of the wicked, and, “*sure,*” which defines the reward of the righteous.

In other words, what this verse is saying is that, for the wicked he thinks that what he is getting is going to bring him security, but it's deceptive, and that means it could change at any time. It is unable to produce long lasting expectations for the wicked man.

On the other hand, the reward of the godly person is a reward that comes from God and that is sure. It is expected and it brings what it is expected to bring and more.

These are basic truths from God's Word. It's like, hey, if your reward is in this life, good luck. It might happen. It might not. It probably won't. If your reward is from the Lord, if you're expecting a reward from the Lord, that's a sure reward. That's basically what these Proverbs are saying.

Skip all the way down to verse 26. “*The people curse him who holds back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it.*” Now, here we're dealing with... God's Word wants to address the issue of how you do business. And this is making reference to the man who withholds the sale of his grain. Presumably to drive up the price, versus the one who is, cares more about people than making money.

It says of the first man who withholds, he becomes a curse to the people. They literally start using his name like a curse word. But there's a great blessing for the man who cares about people more than he cares about, a dollar, earning money.

Sue and I had a wonderful opportunity to see just a little glimpse of this when we were in Minnesota this spring. We took our travel trailer to Minnesota, which was dumb. Sue told me ahead of time that it was dumb, but being the

adventurous/dumb person that I am, I thought it would be fun. I overruled her, and we took it and it was, well, let's just say this. I got a chance to see what winter camping is like, and I didn't like it by the way.

It's really, really cold. I mean, you move, turn over in bed, and you go from hot to cold. Anyway, we ran our heater so much that we ran out of propane and I didn't realize we had run out of propane. Because during the summer months, which we normally camp in, I can fill up my propane tanks, and they'll last all season long. I mean, just easy.

Well, we expended our propane tank in, like, what was it, Sue? Like, 7 days or something like that. In like 7 days, it was gone. And so we got to the trailer one evening, turned on the heater, and no heat came out. I got my coat on and I went out and I felt the propane bottles out there and I was shocked to find out they were both just totally empty. And it's like sundown, we're in this little Minnesota town, one horse, Minnesota town.

And I went over to a business that sold propane, and the guy was like, sorry, there's nobody here. The place was open, but he said, the guy, the people that sell propane are gone for the weekend. You can come back on Monday. And I looked at the guy like, I can't believe what you just said. Well, I went back to the trailer and I called some of my relatives and started to cry on their shoulder and my brother in law called this guy from this little farmer's co-op in another, it was a little town.

You got to understand, in Minnesota, there's a town every three and a half miles. Just like..., and there's a lake more frequently than that. He called this guy from, that he'd known probably all his life. It's probably now, I don't know, 9, 10 o'clock and the guy's like, come on out, we'll fill up the propane tanks.

And I wanted to kiss that man on the lips. I didn't, but I wanted to. And he was just so nice and it's after hours for him. And he's not going to make a bunch of money. I didn't even end up, my brother and I didn't even end up paying the thing because the guy couldn't even take money. It was late. There's no way to take money. The store's closed and this and that. And my brother in law was like, don't worry, he said, put it on my tab so. But it was just, it was so nice just the way you do business makes such a difference when someone's in need.

When somebody needs something, that's what this proverb is about. When the people are in need, the man who is willing to give and take care of those needs is going to be blessed, there's a blessing. But there's going to be a curse on the person who's like, no, sorry, we're closed, come back Monday. Oh, we'll take

care of you on Monday. Hope you don't freeze to death. Doesn't say that here, but goes with my story.

Anyway, skip down to verse 28. *“Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, (again, this is what we've been hearing) but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.”* Very self-evident statement or observation by Solomon.

Verse 29, *“Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.”* This is a great verse. It speaks of the man who doesn't bring blessing to his family, but only brings trouble. And it says that rather than giving them blessing, he brings trouble and therefore his inheritance in the family is wind. And that's the Bible's way of saying something you can't lay hold of. You can't go out and catch the wind. Try as you might, you can't grab for the wind and hold on to it.

And that's the idea behind this biblical idea of he inherits only the wind. You'll notice you don't have a contrast in this verse, it just simply goes on to speak of the foolish man who's going to spend the rest of his days serving the wise, or literally being the servant to the wise.

Chapter 12, we go on with the theme of money and possession, skip down to verse. 9. *“Better to be lowly and have a servant than to play the great man and lack bread.”* That's an interesting verse. And the point of this proverb seems to be that some people attempt to live beyond their means or appear to live beyond their means or whatever to show themselves prosperous in the eyes of others and they end up actually just wasting their money.

But if they just simply learn to live wisely, learn to spend their money wisely, they could have had some of the things of life that we consider conveniences. It speaks of having a servant here. And I think there's a lot of insight that we can gain from this verse although Solomon is basically just making an observation, there's still some smarts.

I remember this show one time I was watching on TV, it was set in Britain, but this guy and this woman wanted desperately to convince her friends, everyone she knew, that they were well to do and they had plenty of money. But the fact is, their air conditioning in their car had broken and they didn't have the money to fix it. Every time they passed someone they knew, she made her husband roll up the windows, even though he desperately wanted to have them down, because let some air in. But she wanted to roll them up and wave to people as if they're enjoying the cool inside of their car. When, in fact, it's blistering hot in

there. Anyway, it's this whole idea of playing the great man, and yet lacking and not being wise about the way that you spend your money.

Now what Solomon doesn't do here in this verse is he doesn't give specifics on how to manage your money wisely. He's not getting that deeply into it. He's simply making an observation of the thing on the surface of the matter but obviously there's more to be said on the issue of being wise.

Verse 11, it says, *“Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.”* We've probably all known people who have followed worthless pursuits and that's like those constant, I got an idea, I got this great idea. It's only going to take 10,000 and then, there's going to make millions and it never happens. Worthless pursuits.

I like how the Bible simply commends the virtues of hard work. It says, he who works his land he's going to have enough. In fact, he's going to have plenty, but the person who's constantly running after that all elusive butterfly of fortune, if I just catch it, I know that I can have it and possess it and so forth.

And by the way, the Book of Proverbs, and in fact, the whole Bible, easily extols the benefits of hard work far more than any other means of acquiring wealth. Hard work is seen as the way to do it.

Skip down to verse 14. It says, *“From the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied with good, and the work of a man's hand comes back to him.”* Again, extolling the fruit of a man's labors, comparing it to the fruit of his mouth, which can do the very same thing.

Skip down to verse 27. *“Whoever is slothful (and that of course means lazy) will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.”* Now, you need to understand that this reference to roasting his game, or in this case not roasting his game is not just a literal statement. It doesn't simply mean that he goes out hunting and instead of building a fire, he just eats it raw.

It's more of a metaphorical kind of a statement. It came to refer to an individual who didn't have the patience to see a project through, or the patience to bring something to its fruitful end, as the prudent man did or the diligent man was able to do. He simply just rushes into things and yet never finishes what he starts, and therefore since he tries to satisfy himself in the moment rather than the long term, it doesn't produce any kind of satisfaction.

Proverbs 13, skip down to verse 7. *“One pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.”* People may not be what they appear to be.

I remember when I was growing up, there was a guy who lived right across the street from my friend, my friend Mike and this guy was a, I think he had just been a farmer, but he had been a very successful farmer. And I don't know if the man had ever married, he lived alone at least at that time, and he was quite old. But he lived in this really run down looking house that, it looked like it hadn't been painted since the Civil War. And he himself was just..., he dressed very simply, just wore bib overalls which a lot of farmers did.

I found out from my friend that he was very wealthy and he purchased a brand new off the showroom car every year, whether he needed it or not. Well, he never needed it, but he just had, he had a lot of money. But when you look at the guy, you would think he was poor as a church mouse.

But that's what this proverb is saying. And you'll notice that Solomon, this is again one of those proverbs where Solomon really isn't connecting a moral to the statement. He's simply making an observation.

One person pretends to be rich, another person pretends to be poor, and they're actually the opposite of what they appear. And who knows, maybe it's just a reminder not to judge a man by what appears on the outside, but ultimately Solomon is just making an observation.

Skip down to verse 8. *“The ransom of a man's life is his wealth, but a poor man hears no threat.”* I got to tell you, I've always loved this verse. And the reason I love it is because it highlights the fact that there are advantages to being poor, and disadvantages to being wealthy.

And it says here basically, the rich man, he's got enough money to pay the ransom but the poor man never hears the threat. He's too poor to anybody, for anybody to make demands on his money because he didn't have any. And so he lives his life peaceably with nobody really bothering him about that sort of a thing, right? So, a win on his side.

Verse 11, skip down there. It says, oh and here's a good one for people in America. *“Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.”* This is the biblical formula for gaining wealth. Little by little, hastily is bad.

The Bible doesn't give cred, or credence, to this instant amassing of wealth, which we Americans seem to think is so cool, if somebody wins the lottery, or gets a surprise inheritance uncle Chuck from Kentucky passed away. And he was like my third uncle once removed, and, I didn't even know the guy, but apparently he took a liking to me, and he left me all this money. Woo hoo!

Well, the fact of the matter is, that usually doesn't serve people very well at all. In fact, I was reading an article that appeared in Time magazine just last fall, and it referred to a study of people somewhere between 5 and 20 years after they had won a large sum of money or gained a large sum of money quickly, such as in a lottery or something like that.

There were 2 results that really stood out in this article from Time magazine. And the first one was, people who win big lottery jackpots blow their money in just a few years. They have not learned discretion. They've not learned discipline when it comes to finances. And what they do is they get this big wad of money and they just blow it.

And then the second thing this article brought out from this research of looking at people's lives who gained money quickly is that all that money makes a miserable. Isn't that interesting? And, okay, Time magazine, you can look it up if you want. If you search for it on Time magazine, you'll probably find it online. I actually found this article online.

But I just thought it was fascinating. They blow their money in a short period of time, and they're miserable in the end. The Bible isn't just whistling Dixie here when it says that to gain money quickly it's not going to be a good thing. It's going to dwindle and so forth.

Skip down to verse 18. *"Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored."* I brought that one into our discussion because of the word, poverty, and what it implies related to wealth. And, of course, the key in this verse is just very simply that instruction plays a huge role in whether or not someone is..., how their life is going to play out and their willingness to receive it.

It says here that poverty and disgrace is going to come to the one who ignores instruction. People who bring instruction, but the person ignores it. But there is honor for the one who heeds reproof or correction.

Verse 22. *"A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous."* Now you got to understand when

you hear this verse that the whole idea of leaving an inheritance for your children was biblically considered to be a very big deal and it was again the sign of a good man. You and I may not see it that way, Solomon did.

But the contrasting picture here is that the ungodly man's wealth is simply destined to be handed over to those who are in right standing with God, whereas the good man leaves his money to his children.

And then the very next verse 23, it says, *“The fallow ground of the poor would yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice.”*

Again, this is another observation without giving a whole lot in the way of a moral, but Solomon is saying that the land of a poor man has the ability to take care of him. It can yield enough to be plenty for food, were it not for greed and injustice.

Were it not for the sinful heart of mankind, which tends to pounce upon the poor man, and steal his ability to accomplish with his land what God would have otherwise intended.

Verse 25, it says, *“The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, but the belly of the wicked suffers want.”* And this is one of those statements that the Bible makes repeatedly that godliness produces satisfaction, but the opposite of that, the contrast is that for the ungodly person, they're never satisfied, and they're never content with what they have.

And I believe it's one of God's greatest desires to see his children content and satisfied with what we've been given. Godliness with contentment is great gain, we're told in the New Testament. (1 Timothy 6:6)

And I believe the Lord wants to bestow blessings upon His children to the degree that we are satisfied with the blessings that God gives. But again the ungodly person is seen here as never ever being satisfied. All right.

We've covered the theme of money and possessions and wealth and that's what the Bible has to say, at least in those 3 chapters. Now, there's a great deal more that can be said related to these topics from the other chapters, and we'll certainly run into them.

I want to go back over these chapters now and pick up the verses we didn't read, and we won't comment a great deal on them, but I want to cover them.

Go back to chapter 11 and we're just going to read through some of these other verses.

Verse 2, *“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.”*

Verse 3, *“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.”* Simple contrast.

Verse 5, *“The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight, but the wicked falls by his own wickedness.”*

Verse 6, *“The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the treacherous are taken captive by their lust.”* Their own lust, and of course, Jesus told us that he who sins is a slave to sin. (John 8:34) And that is the same sort of an idea.

Let's get down to verse 8. *“The righteous is delivered from trouble, and the wicked walks into it instead.”*

Verse 9. *“With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbor, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.”*

Verse 10. *“When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness.”* Observation, right?

Verse 11 and following. These speak of words and their power. *“By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown.”*

Verse 12, *“Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent.”*

Let me just say that being a good neighbor is considered a big deal in the Bible. Being a good neighbor, a faithful neighbor. And so godly people are expected to be good neighbors, and that means, not speaking badly of your neighbor behind his back. Considered to be a very dumb thing to do.

Verse 13. *“Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.”* Contrasting their gossip and the faithful man who knows how to hold his tongue.

Verse 14. *“Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”* Have you heard this verse before? In the *“abundance of counselors there is safety.”*

And what this verse is advocating here, and this is important, if you come up against decisions, and you're like, I don't know what to do. I don't know, and maybe it's one of those gray areas. There are those gray areas in the Bible where the scripture doesn't specifically speak to the decision you need to make. There's not a chapter in a verse that says it, so you just really need to walk in wisdom, and you don't really know what that wisdom is.

Well, the Bible says that there is safety in an abundance, your Bible may say, a multitude of counselors. And the idea here is getting advice and not just seeking it from one perspective. But getting a rounded sort of a perspective related to the advice that you're seeking and so forth.

But obviously this proverb assumes that the counselors that you are talking to are wise and worthy to speak in your life, right? Do you get it? Many times people are listening to those who really don't have the right to speak into their life. And yeah, I was talking to some of my buddies we were playing softball the other night and, well, here's what they told me to do and what he's not telling you is that his buddies that play softball have each been divorced 3 times, they've gone through bankruptcy, and their kids hate their guts. And it's like, but I'm going to tell you what here's my advice.

It's like, okay that's a problem. There may not be safety in the abundance of those kinds of counselors. Again, the whole idea is, finding somebody whose life, whose experience shows that they're worth listening to.

Verse 17, *“A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself.”* This is interesting. This is contrasting two different dispositions, kindness and cruelty. And it, but it's not just telling you how it affects the other people. It says how it affects the man himself. It says that, a kind man is actually going to benefit himself. Why?

Because as he sows the seeds of kindness to others, he's going to reap it back. And it says that a cruel man is going to end up hurting himself. Why? Because he's sowing seeds of cruelty, and he's going to reap a harvest of cruelty. It's the law of sowing and reaping, or what we call the law of the harvest. Simple observation, but important to remember.

Verse 19, *“Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but he who pursues evil will die.”*

Verse 20, *“Those of crooked heart are an abomination to the Lord, but those of blameless ways are his delight.”*

Verse 21, *“Be assured, an evil person will not go unpunished, but the offspring of the righteous will be delivered.”* That's an important thing to remember when life is being scary.

I love verse 22. This is a great verse. *“Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.”* Doesn't that just conjure up all kinds of cool pictures in your head? It's really a great proverb. Particularly for our day and age where beauty is seen as an end in itself, as the goal to be beautiful.

But it's basically saying that you can't change a pig by putting a gold ring in its nose. It's still a pig, because that is its essence, that is what it is. And in the same way, a woman may be visually beautiful, but if she lacks discretion, which is another way of saying she lacks good sense. And she does really stupid things that are immoral, and illegal, and ridiculously dumb.

It's basically saying that, it reveals for everyone to see that her beauty is only skin deep and that there isn't a beauty of heart or anything that goes deeper than just simply what you can see in a mirror so that's a great proverb.

Verse 23, *“The desire of the righteous ends only in good, the expectation of the wicked in wrath.”*

Verse 25, *“Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”* Again, not a contrast in that verse, but the principle of harvest seen once again. What a man sows so also shall he reap.

Verse 27, *“Whoever diligently seeks good seeks favor, but evil comes to him who searches for it.”* Yeah, you search for evil you'll find it.

Skip down to verse 30 because we covered the other verses in our theme of money. Verse 30 says, *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.”*

Now, I got to tell you that this idea of capturing souls isn't what you and I would think of as evangelism necessarily. I suppose you could apply it that way. The idea of capturing souls really means to influence people with wisdom and win

them over to the side of wisdom, and prudence, and right ness, and that sort of thing.

Verse 31 says, *“If the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!”* And so this proverb uses the, how much more argument to compare. The point being that if God meets out justice to His children, what's He going to do for his enemies? How much more will He judge his enemies, right?

Chapter 12, verse 1. *“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.”* It's hard hitting, isn't it? You know what's interesting about it? It's just the way you and I hear the word stupid. That's what makes it hard hitting. Because, frankly, the Hebrew word that is translated stupid here, it means, brutish. And you wouldn't say that to somebody, would you?

Oh, he's just being brutish. You would just laugh if somebody said that. But the word brutish means, like a brute beast. In other words, without reasoning or without intelligence. Stupid, right? That's what that's what we're talking about. When someone acts without reasoning, without engaging their sense of reason, it's like they're acting like an animal. And that's the way animals act, right? It's talking about someone who's more animal like than human.

What's interesting is that, we've taken the word brute, we've given it a positive connotation. You hear somebody talking about brute strength. Man, that was just an example of brute strength, and we look at it as really good. But that means animal like strength.

Now, back in Solomon's day, to call somebody a brute was to say, was to call somebody stupid so it had a very hard hitting connotation in his day to refer to someone that way. But the translators know that brute isn't going to do it for you and me and so it throws that word stupid in there because you and I read it and go, ooh, wow, it just smacks you a little bit.

What's the bottom line? If you hate discipline, you're dumb. It's really what it's saying. But if you have come to a place in your life of realizing discipline is what saves my life, then you're a smart person. You've hit the intellectual lottery in this life.

Anyway, verse 2, *“A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of evil devices he condemns.”*

Verse 3, *“No one is established by wickedness, but the root of the righteous will never be moved.”* And this is such an important truth. It's basically saying that no stability is ever going to come to a home, a family, a city, a nation, through what it refers to here as wickedness. You're not going to bring stability into your life through ungodly means. And if wickedness doesn't do it for you, just put ungodliness in there.

Because we think of wickedness as being like the wicked witch of the west sort of a thing where you're just evil. Well, it doesn't necessarily mean the person is all evil, it just means they're just not acting in, conjunction with godliness or godly wisdom. And it's saying here that you will not establish your life in any stability outside of God's Word.

Have we seen that to be true in our country as it relates to like home and marriage and family? Have we brought more stability into our home families and marriages by getting away from the Bible? Or have we decreased our stability? We have decreased it, haven't we? We've decreased the mortality rate of marriage. We've increased the mortality rate of marriage is what I should have said by getting away from godly principles and godliness.

We know that, and that's what this proverb is saying. It's not a earth shattering truth, but it says the root of the righteous will never be moved. And it means that when you build upon the principles of God's Word, there is a surety and a stability that comes into your marriage, into your home, into your family, into your business, into your community, into your nation, and so forth.

Verse 4, *“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones.”* The contrast here of a crown or shame being brought by the wife depending on how she lives.

Verse 5, *“The thoughts of the righteous are just; the counsels of the wicked are deceitful. ⁶ The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the mouth of the upright delivers them.”*

Verse 7, *“The wicked are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous will stand.”* There's that stability again.

Verse 8, *“A man is commended according to his good sense, but one of twisted mind is despised.”* Boy, we see that in our culture. Unless they happen to be in the entertainment industry, in that which case we pay them lots of money and go and see their show.

Verse 10, *“Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.”* Fascinating verse here, says that compassion for animals is seen as an indication of a person's character. Isn't that interesting? It doesn't necessarily mean that you have to be a, that a godly person has to be an animal lover.

It just means they're not cruel to animals. It doesn't mean you have to have 14 cats and 17 dogs to be considered a godly person. I don't think your neighbors would consider you a godly person if you had that many pets. However, unless you live on your own little island, however, it's basically saying, cruelty is the way of the wicked, even to animals, and you can see it even in how they treat animals.

Verse 12, *“Whoever is wicked covets the spoil of evildoers, but the root of the righteous bears fruit.”* Actually, verse 12 is a pretty challenging verse to translate.

Verse 13, *“An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, but the righteous escapes from trouble.”* A reminder again, your words can either enslave you or liberate you.

Verse 15, skipping verse 14 there. *“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.”* I love this verse. What a great verse. Yeah, it's a great way. Do you know how to figure out a fool from a wise person? It's easy. A fool is smart in their own eyes. They're like, I'm smart and that's the way they see themselves. They've got it all dialed in and they don't listen to any advice.

The wise person is the one who values the opinions of others rather than just their own opinion. You can see a wise person. They're always going to other people and going, what do you think? What are your thoughts? Give me some feedback here. That's a wise person.

Verse 16. *“The vexation of a fool is known at once, (and vexation is basically, means irritation) but the prudent (man) ignores an insult.”* I guess I threw the word man in there didn't I? Here's another way to detect a fool from a wise person.

It's how they respond to an insult. If they immediately get upset. You're dealing with a fool. If they sit back and remain calm, you're dealing with a prudent man.

Verse 17, *“Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit.”*

Verse 18, *“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, (wow, what a picture) but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”* Rash words. We have a biblical example of rash words.

You guys remember in the Book of Judges? One of the judges, one of the men who led Israel in their victorious campaigns against their enemies was a man by the name of Jephthah, who vowed to the Lord that if God gave him success in the battle, he would offer as a burnt offering to the Lord whatever came out of the doorway of his home.

What an incredibly stupid thing to say. It's called a rash word, or a rash vow, or a rash promise. And the battle went his way, which, by the way, would have happened even if he hadn't vowed his vow. He still would have been victorious. God raised him up to be victorious, to be a judge. And yet, when he got home after the battle, the first thing out of his doorway was his daughter.

And people have looked at that passage in Judges and they go, well, I don't think he really sacrificed his daughter. Oh, yeah, he did. That's how ridiculously stupid it was. And what you see in the Book of Judges is, not only did the people of Israel become increasingly evil as time went on, as they were influenced by pagan idolatry, but even the judges got bad.

God used people to deliver them from their enemies, but that doesn't mean the judges were righteous people. They started off that way. But you get to the end, you got guys like Jephthah and guys like that.

Samson, what a paragon of virtue he was, right? The guy was immoral, as immoral as the day is long, and yet God used him, but talk about bad and rash words. Anyway, so the whole idea here is don't speak rashly. It says it's like sword thrusts, like thrusting a sword.

Verse 19, very dangerous, by the way. Verse 19, *“Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.”*

20, *“Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy.”*

21, *“No ill befalls the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble.”* This isn't an idea that righteous people or godly people never deal with problems, or

challenges, or difficulties. It's basically saying that the life of righteousness or the heart, the desire of righteousness brings no ill, right? God's wisdom brings no ill.

You might encounter all kinds of problems in life just because life is hard and you live in a very fallen world. But God's purposes don't bring about ill.

Verse 22. *“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, (He hates them) but those who act faithfully are his delight.”*

Verse 23. *“A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.”* And this is another interesting verse. It says, *“A prudent man conceals knowledge.”* He conceals it. Interesting. Now, and it doesn't mean that he doesn't speak up. Instead, he waits for the right opportunity to speak.

He's prudent about how he shares his words. He doesn't just spill. And what it says here about the fool is that he spills. The heart of fool, he just spills foolishness. But the prudent man waits and speaks effectively. The whole idea there is wait to speak. Right?

Verse 24. *“The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor. ²⁵ Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.”* Your words of encouragement can be pretty powerful to lift someone out of a very discouraged place in their life due to fear.

Verse 26, *“One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.”*

And then skip down to verse 28, *“In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.”* And again, this says, what I was saying a moment ago. The path of righteousness means that in God's way, God's way, does not produce death, right?

And then chapter 13, *“A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.”* We've heard that idea before.

“² From the fruit of his mouth a man eats what is good, but the desire of the treacherous is for violence.”

Verse 3, *“Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.”* The idea here is tight restraint over what you say again. Keeps you out of trouble.

Verse 4, *“The soul of the sluggard (the lazy man) craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.”*

5, *“The righteous hates falsehood, but the wicked brings shame and disgrace.”*

6, *“Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless, but sin overthrows the wicked.”*

Skip down to verse 9. *“The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.”*

Verse 10. *“By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom.”* We've heard that many times.

Verse 12. Here's an important verse for you. *“Hope deferred (and that means postponed or set aside) makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.”*

In our culture today, we've come up with lots of names for sick hearts. I mean clinical names. We have psychologically clinical names for sick hearts, long as your arm. And you go to see a somebody like that, an expert, and they'll give you a label, even though they say they don't, shouldn't, people shouldn't be labeled. They'll label you anyway.

And they'll tell you what your sick heart is from or, they won't tell you what it's from. They'll tell you what it is. You have a sick heart, but they'll give it a name. They'll give it a clinical name. Pretty interesting here. It says, hope deferred makes the heart sick.

It's probably not the only thing that makes the heart sick, but it certainly can. And so when you, when hope is not realized, In other words, when life is hopeless, the heart becomes sick, but a desire fulfilled. In other words, a hope fulfilled is a tree of life. This is really important, and the question, the bottom line is, this is all about hope, and the idea is, where's your hope?

And what is your hope? Is your hope in this life? Is your hope in something that can be deferred, or set aside? Do you know that the hope of the Lord can never be set aside? Can't be deferred. If you put your hope in the Lord, you will never, ever be disappointed unless your expectations go beyond his word, which happens from time to time, but that's not really truly putting your hope in the Lord, that's putting hope in your expectations.

And we do that all the time. And we get disappointed, and we're disappointed by God. People will say that sometimes, they'll say, pastor, I've just really been disappointed by God. And the more we talk about it, the more I'll help them to realize they have not been disappointed by God, they've been disappointed in their expectations of God.

Because their expectations went beyond His promises. It's like, God never promised you that. Really? Or maybe they were told that He promised that particular thing, when in fact He didn't. But the point is Hope is a huge and powerful thing, and when hope is lost what happens when people get hopeless?

Life is no longer worth living. Listen, a hopeful person never ever took their life. Never. It's hopelessness that causes a person to respond that radically to life. Here's my point. You put your hope in the Lord, and you'll never be hopeless, ever.

Because never has one of His promises ever hit the ground. They've never fallen to the ground. He's never, ever reneged on a promise. And so, if your hope is in Him, it'll never be deferred.

Verse 13. *“Whoever despises (and that idea of the word really signifies just teaching in general, but for you and I, it could obviously be a great reminder of the Word of God. Whoever despises) the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.”*

14, *“The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death. ¹⁵ Good sense wins favor, but the way of the treacherous is their ruin. ¹⁶ Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly. ¹⁷ A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful envoy brings healing.”*

Verse 19, *“A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul, (this is what was said just a moment ago) but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.”* In other words, they hate, they hate turning away from something they plan to do that is evil.

Verse 20, *“Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”* Again, the power of influence.

Verse 21, *“Disaster pursues sinners, but the righteous are rewarded with good.”* And by the way, that's a true statement. Disaster does pursue sinners, but just don't ever forget this, Job's 3 friends applied this incorrectly. Okay?

Job's 3 friends applied this incorrectly to Job so don't ever forget that. You got to be smart about how you apply those things.

Skip down to verse 24, “*Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.*” And this is the last proverb we're going to look at tonight.

And the Bible is clear on the subject of parental discipline. And, in fact, it says that love for a child is seen in how a parent disciplines that child. And, some of you old, I'm not going to say that, older, how do I say that nicely? Some of you people who are struggling with your gray hair, I don't know. Some of us don't struggle, we just let it go, right?

You'll remember a person by the name of Benjamin Spock. Some of you younger people might not. Dr. Benjamin Spock, no relation to the guy on the Starship Enterprise. This guy was a real person, he was a doctor, and he wrote a book. And for years and years and years and years, he told parents to be permissive with their children.

And, the thing is about this man, is that he lived long enough to see a generation raise up of basically bratty, undisciplined, pesky children. To the point where he admitted later on in his life that he was wrong. Can you believe that?

He actually recanted his earlier statements and he wrote, in fact, let me read you a quote from Dr. Benjamin Spock from later in life. “*The inability to be firm is, to my mind, the commonest problem of parents in America today.*”

I mean, talk about a reversal, right, of basically what he had said before. In fact, he went on, later on, to blame the experts, and he said, I'm one of them.

This is a man who had his eyes opened by simply living life and coming to the realization of what the Bible has to say related to discipline. That if you love your child, you'll train them. You'll train them in what is proper, and right, and good, and fair, and godly.