

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 34.2%

Weekly Readings will cover: Proverbs 8 through 16

Sunday: Proverbs 8

Monday: Proverbs 9

Tuesday: Proverbs 10

Wednesday: Proverbs 11 & 12

Thursday: Proverbs 13

Friday: Proverbs 14

Saturday: Proverbs 15 & 16

Current # of email addresses in the group: 617

Happy Sabbath. Last week was a pause and catch-up week and I hope those who were behind were able to get caught up. If you are too far behind, it may be better to just jump back in with us today and go back when we are finished to those sections who missed. Either way, it's up to you.

This week next week is a great study. You will see many Proverbs that you've quoted and referenced in your life. I hope you will take the time each day to truly consider these Proverbs and how they impact your life. If we read through the entire book of Proverbs and we don't find anything we should grow in and work on, we are likely missing something.

I hope you enjoy the week!

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 57

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 372 - SUNDAY: February 25th

Proverbs 8

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Chapter 8 is the second appeal of wisdom in the prologue, following Proverbs 1:20-33, in the form of a hymn extolling its value and importance. Recall that the adulteress was "loud" and "outside, at times in the open square, lurking in every

corner” (Proverbs 7:12) to waylay the simple. Wisdom is also to be found crying out all over town and wherever people might be found. But what she speaks is right (verses 8-9). And what she offers is priceless blessings far greater than any physical possessions or pleasures (verses 10-11, 18-21; compare Proverbs 3:14-15). She may seem undignified in hawking her wares everywhere, so to speak, but the point is that wisdom is not restricted to the higher echelons of society. She is available for everyone who will love her and seek her. Of course, wisdom is also vital for rulers. It is wisdom, skill in how to live and behave, that enables proper governance (Proverbs 8:15-16). Solomon understood this when He asked God for wisdom to rightly govern the nation of Israel.

We must not only love what God loves but also hate what He hates (verse 13).

God Himself made use of His own wisdom in creation (Proverbs 8:22-31; compare Proverbs 3:19-20). The personification of wisdom here has led some to believe that the preincarnate Jesus Christ is the One speaking as Wisdom in these verses. However, we must consider that Wisdom here speaks of having been “brought forth” before anything else (verses 24-25)—and this is not true of God the Word who always existed. Again, we must understand in this passage a personification of a quality that is not in actuality a person. While there are some parallels here with Jesus Christ, who served as the agent of God in creation and was the embodiment of divine wisdom, we should not make the mistake of equating Him with Woman Wisdom.

Still others see a parallel between the personification of wisdom and the Egyptian concept of Maat, though this is unlikely. The *NIV Archaeological Study Bible* explains: “In ancient Egypt Maat was the abstract principle of truth, order, justice and harmony—as well as the name of a goddess who personified those virtues. Kings were enjoined

to practice Maat in order to ensure a long reign.... Scholars naturally wonder to what degree the Egyptian concept of Maat influenced Israelite thinking on justice and order in society. Specifically, the feminine personification of Wisdom in Proverbs 8 has been suggested to have been derived from the Egyptian goddess Maat.... It is difficult to posit a direct line of influence from Egypt to Israel on the subjects of order, justice or Maat. Both Israel and Egypt understood that justice and harmony are necessary for life to function smoothly. But Wisdom, in Proverbs 8, is a personification—not a goddess. She exemplifies the order and justice God has built into creation. Lady Wisdom appears elsewhere in Proverbs; for example in Proverbs 1:20-33 she calls upon people to heed her teachings and so to find life. The embodiment of wisdom as a lady who invites people to follow her is a distinctively Israelite idea, with no analogy in Egyptian teaching” (“Maat and Lady Wisdom,” sidebar on Proverbs 8, p. 971).

Wisdom’s direct appeal here ends with the assurance of life and blessings to those who find and heed her—and death to those who reject her (verses 32-36).” [END]

Verse 12 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “Prudence is defined, wisdom applied to practice; so wherever true wisdom is, it will lead to action, and its activity will be always in reference to the accomplishment of the best ends by the use of the most appropriate means.” [END]

Verse 13 – The “Fear of the Lord” is a big topic worth deep consideration. Here we are told that “hating evil” and “fear of the Lord” go hand in hand. We can’t have a proper relationship with God without hating what God hates (evil). We must examine and hone where we allow evil in our lives, and then with God’s help, actively pursue a shift in mindset toward those things.

Verse 18 – While exercising wisdom may come with physical blessings resulting out of wise decisions, the author has the greater spiritual blessings as the main focus. As we seek and exercise wisdom, we are guaranteed to gain spiritual wealth, righteousness and treasures in heaven. Which is far better than anything physical we may obtain.

Verse 36 – God’s wisdom is meant to help us have a good life, therefore to go against God’s wisdom, is bad for us.

Day 373 - MONDAY: February 26th

Proverbs 9

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “The prologue of the book of Proverbs closes in chapter 9 with the choice of two paths represented by the two figurative women, Wisdom and Folly—each here described as making an appeal.

The NIV Application Commentary notes on this chapter: “These descriptions and quotations of Wisdom and Folly are a study in similarities and contrasts. Both Wisdom and Folly call out from a house situated in the highest place. Both begin with the same invitation: ‘Let all who are simple come in here,’ adding an invitation to a meal. Both Wisdom and Folly use proverbs; Wisdom’s speech concludes with a series of proverbs, ending with, ‘If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer’ (Proverbs 9:12). Folly has only one proverb, but it is revealing: ‘Stolen water is sweet; food {bread} eaten in secret is delicious’ (Proverbs 9:17). However, the teacher shows these similarities only to point out the glaring differences. Wisdom works at building and preparing in order to have a sumptuous banquet to offer her guests while Folly sits at her door, loud [as was the adulteress in Proverbs 7:11], undisciplined, and without knowledge. The meals are different, Wisdom offering wine and meat [along with bread], Folly offering only bread and water. There are the

differences in outcome. Wisdom offers a future, a call to maturity, and in a word, life. Folly only offers the immediate pleasure of good things enjoyed outside their intended boundaries, hiding the fact that such pleasure brings death.”

Wisdom’s house is supported by seven pillars (Proverbs 9:1)—perhaps merely signifying complete stability, as seven is the number of perfection and completion. Some, however, see a parallel with the creation of the previous chapter standing through the seven creation days of Genesis. Some, on the other hand, take the book of Proverbs as a whole to be the house of wisdom, especially given its seven attributed sections (see Proverbs 1:1; Proverbs 10:1; Proverbs 22:17; Proverbs 24:23; Proverbs 25:1; Proverbs 30:1; Proverbs 31:1).

Wisdom’s banquet, with slaughtered meat, is sumptuous. Mixed wine here may refer to wine mixed with spices, as in Song of Solomon 8:2, or to wine mixed with water, as was common for wine drunk at meals. Joining Wisdom in her house could, as in former parallels, signify marrying her in a sense—dwelling with her in perpetuity.

“The section that follows Wisdom’s invitation [i.e., verses 7-12] appears to intrude, interrupting the contrast with the invitation of Folly. While most interpreters conclude that the section is secondary and therefore unrelated, it is possible to observe an intention behind the inclusion of this discourse. This section not only repeats significant terms from the prologue, it also summarizes the theme of receiving or rejecting instruction that carries throughout the rest of the book (Proverbs 13:1; Proverbs 15:5, Proverbs 15:12; Proverbs 16:20; Proverbs 17:16; Proverbs 18:15; Proverbs 19:8, Proverbs 19:25; Proverbs 23:9; Proverbs 27:22). The structure of the section begins with the responses of the mocker and the wise person (Proverbs 9:7-9) and ends with their rewards (Proverbs 9:11-12). In the central position of this frame, ‘the fear of the Lord’ links response and outcome” (note on verses 7-12).

This being defined as the beginning of wisdom shows chapter 9 as closing the frame opened in the book's initial instruction in Proverbs 1:7, which said that the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge.

Verse 12 lays out the choice between two ways one last time. Then the final section, the appeal of Folly, shows the worthlessness of her offer and where the wrong choice will lead—to the “depths of the grave” (verse 18, NIV). Whose invitation will you accept? If you desire wisdom and the abundant life that results, then you are ready to enter the main part of the book.” [END]

Verse 3 – John Gill states: “for since Wisdom is represented as a lady, a princess or queen, it is proper that her attendants should be maidens, or that she should employ such in inviting her guests;”

Verse 7 – Wisdom teaches us that there are times to correct someone and there is times not to. Often wisdom teaches us no good will come from correcting some people and will only make the situation worse for us and others. Other times, there are situations where for the protection of others, we must correct.

Verses 8 & 9 – How do we respond when someone comes to us and even corrects us? Do we hear them and grow more as a Christian?

Day 374 - TUESDAY: February 27th

Proverbs 10

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “ **1. Subheading (Proverbs 10:1a)**”

The subhead of Solomon's major collection, containing the attribution, is found in Proverbs 10:1. Of this core section of the book (10:1–22:16), the first part (chapters 10–15) is made up mostly of antithetical

proverbs, highlighting the choice between the way of wisdom and the way of folly.

2. A Diligent Son and a Lazy Son (Proverbs 10:1b, Proverbs 10:2-5)

“Type: Thematic, Inclusio.... Verses 1b-5 form a collection marked off by the inclusio [a section that begins and ends similarly] of ‘wise son / foolish son’ (v. 1) and ‘wise son/disgraceful son’ (v. 5). The theme of the collection is that a family will thrive if the children are diligent in their work but collapse if they are lazy or resort to crime” (NAC).

It is interesting, after the nine-chapter prologue presented as a father’s counsel to his son to choose wisdom over folly, that the first compact saying in Solomon’s major collection concerns the impact a son’s decisions in this regard has on his parents. Actually, “son” here can be understood as “child,” whether son or daughter. “The tense of the verbs suggests that *time after time* a wise child gladdens parents, and *time after time* a foolish child brings distress to parents” (Nelson Study Bible, note on Proverbs 10:1).

Verse 2 is very similar to Proverbs 11:4. Righteousness delivering from death should be viewed in light of the whole of scriptural revelation. This is generally applicable to life in the here and now, in that wise choices promote physical longevity (see also Proverbs 3:2; Proverbs 10:27; Proverbs 12:28)—but of course, as noted previously, the verse should not be read as a rule or promise that righteous people won’t die or won’t die prematurely. God may decide to allow His faithful followers to die at a relatively young age. Jesus Christ, after all, died at 33. Yet in an ultimate sense, the verse, and others like it, can be understood to speak of deliverance from the second death—and thus the inheritance of eternal life.

In Proverbs 10:5, laziness characterized by oversleeping when there is work to be done is shameful (compare Proverbs 6:9-11; Proverbs 19:15; Proverbs 20:13). Our time is our life. We must make good use of it.

3. *The Mouth of the Wicked (Proverbs 10:6-11)*

“Type: Inclusio, Parallel.... Verses 6 and 11 form an inclusio as indicated by the repetition of the line, ‘But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence’ [NIV]. Within this inclusio vv. 7-10 are arranged in parallel (A B A B); v. 7 and v. 9 parallel each other (the fate of the righteous versus the fate of the wicked), and v. 8 and v. 10 parallel each other (both contain the line ‘a chattering fool comes to ruin’ [NIV]). The repetition of two lines in this section, both of which concern the mouth of the wicked, points to the major emphasis of the collection” (NAC).

Adding to the poetic parallelism, the Hebrew verb for “will fall” (verses 8, 10) or “comes to ruin” (NIV) comes from the same root as the verb translated “will rot” in verse 7 (Nelson, note on verse 8).

The one who “winks with the eye” in verse 10 denotes a person acting slyly with a hidden agenda. Thus two wrongs are contrasted here—rather than a right and a wrong as in most proverbs of this section. The silent deceiver is able to succeed in his schemes for a time while a chattering fool will get nowhere. This signals no approval of the deceiver—marking only the fact that he at least knows to choose his words carefully (compare Proverbs 12:23). Eventually, as other passages show, he will meet judgment as well.

4. *Seven-Proverb Collection (Proverbs 10:12-18)*

“Type: Inclusio With Two-Proverb Pairs.... Verses 12 and 18 form an inclusio...and vv. 13-14 and 15-16 are proverbial pair; catchwords are also used [“destruction” (“ruin” or “terror”) in verses 14-15 and “to life”

in verses 16-17]. Themes include wealth and poverty, wisdom and folly, and contentiousness” (NAC).

The apostle Peter essentially quoted from Proverbs 10:12 in 1 Peter 4:8. Some have taken “love covers all [or a multitude of] sins” to mean that showing love to others covers one’s own sins before God. Yet in context, the clear meaning is that love is shown to others *by covering their* sins—that is, burying their past mistakes and not bringing them up, either to them (generating strife) or to others. Proverbs 11:13 speaks of not airing secrets (which include private past mistakes) as an act of faithfulness. Implicit in covering sins is forgiving them, as God does in Psalm 32:1. Of course, in the sense used there, only He can *completely* cover sins.

Proverbs 10:18 has caused some confusion. It is usually understood as synonymous parallel. In that case, however, all the proverbs of this section are in antithetical or contrasting forms except this one. It should be noted that the “and” here could be rendered “but,” so that this proverb would be contrasting as well. In that case, as with Proverbs 10:10, two negatives would be contrasted. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* takes this view, saying in its note on verse 18: “In this comparison two errors are given, the second being climactic: hypocrisy is bad enough, slander is worse. At least in the first one—the ‘lying lips’—one keeps hatred to himself.”

5. On the Tongue, Personal Security, and Laziness (Proverbs 10:19-32)

“This section is a chiasmus [i.e., concentric arrangement] made up of four separate collections with a single proverb standing at the center as a somewhat humorous ‘bridge.’ The structure is:

“A: On the tongue (vv. 19-21)

“B: On personal security (vv. 22-25)

“C: On laziness (v. 26)

“B’: On personal security (vv. 27-30)

“A’: On the tongue (vv. 31-32)

● “Three-Proverb Collection. *Type: Thematic, with One Proverb Pair (Proverbs 10:19-21)*... The use of the tongue is the theme of this collection, and each verse is merismatic [or antithetical in form]. Verses 20-21 closely parallel each other and can be regarded as a proverb pair. Verse 19 then is an ironic heading to vv. 20-21: Although the wise person gives sound advice, wisdom is found more in those who are silent than in those who are verbose!...

● “Four-Proverb Collection. *Type: Thematic Parallel (Proverbs 10:22-25)*... Only through righteousness and wisdom can one attain real security in life. The righteous can have wealth without the trouble that often goes with it (sycophants, legal problems), whereas the wicked will ultimately be brought down by the disaster they fear (vv. 22, 24). And while the wicked find great amusement in their crimes, they will not withstand a real calamity when it comes (vv. 23, 25). Verse 25 may be behind Matthew 7:24-27....

● “Single Proverb. *Type: Tricolon (Proverbs 10:26)*” (NAC). The comparison here involves things that are unpleasant and irritating.

● “Four-Proverb Collection. *Type: Thematic Parallel (Proverbs 10:27-30)*. The four proverbs of this collection all deal with the theme of long life for the righteous and destruction for the wicked. In addition, the proverbs are in an *A-B-A-B* pattern. This pattern is found in vv. 27 and 29, which are parallel with each other linked by the motif of *the Lord*, while vv. 28 and 30 are linked by the motif of *the righteous*. All

four verses are linked by the motif of the fate of the *wicked*...and those who do *evil*" (NAC).

As with Proverbs 10:2, verse 27 about righteous living prolonging life and wickedness shortening it should be understood as: (1) a general principle of physical life, all else being equal (recognizing that circumstances in God's purview sometimes allow the opposite to occur in this world); and (2) in the context of eternal life for the righteous versus eternal death for the wicked, which is the most important context to bear in mind.

Next observe the similarity of language in Proverbs 10:28 and Proverbs 11:7 nearby.

- "Two-Proverb Collection. *Type: Thematic, Parallel (Proverbs 10:31-32)*.... The theme of this pair is the use of the tongue. The cola are in an *A-B-A-B* pattern, but note the inclusio using 'mouth' in v. 31a and v. 32b" (NAC)." [END]

Verse 4 – This proverb compares one with a "slack" hand versus the diligent. The word translated in Hebrew to "slack" means "deceit, false, idle, treachery". The JFB commentary states: "literally, "deceitful," failing of its purpose"

Instead of the hand doing what it's supposed to do, it fails in that purpose and betrays the body in a sense. Where a diligent hand will benefit the body/person.

Verse 8 – Regarding the "prating" fool. JFB states regarding "prating": "or, "fool of lips of wicked language."

Verse 9 – There are people who do things the right way, and there are people who don't. Eventually it becomes evident when someone is doing things the wrong way.

Verse 30 – We all look forward to the day when this will be fulfilled. The righteous will live forever with God and the wicked will be gone forever.

Day 375 – WEDNESDAY: February 28th

Proverbs 11 & 12

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “**6. What the Lord Abhors (Proverbs 11:1-21)**”

"In Proverbs 11:1-21 a group of proverb collections are held together by the inclusio formed by 'the Lord abhors' and 'he delights' in vv. 1, 20 [NIV].

- "MORAL INTEGRITY AND GOD'S JUDGEMENT. *Type: Chiastic (Proverbs 11:1-4)*....Verse 1 describes God's abhorrence of fraud, and v. 4 answers it with the promise that the wrongfully gained wealth of the wicked will do them no good in the day of judgment. Between these verses vv. 2-3 assert that humility and integrity, rather than their opposites, are the best guides in life" (NAC).

In its note on verse 1, *The Bible Reader's Companion* says: "Leviticus 19:35-36 forbids the use of 'dishonest standards,' weighted to favor the merchant rather than the seller [he buys from] or buyer [to whom he sells]. The Jewish Talmud calls for meticulous efforts to keep this command, decreeing that 'the shopkeeper must wipe his measures twice a week, his weights once a week, and his scales after every weighing,' to keep any substance from throwing them off. We can't be too careful trying to be fair with others."

As previously noted, the language of Proverbs 11:4 is similar to that of Proverbs 10:2.

- "SALVATION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS. *Type: Thematic, Parallel Proverb Pair (Proverbs 11:5-6)*....These two proverbs parallel each other and describe the respective fates of the righteous and the wicked...
- "DEATH OF A SINNER. *Type: Inclusio, Proverb Pair (Proverbs 11:7-8)*....As the text stands, these two proverbs are bound by the inclusio of the word 'wicked' in v. 7a and v. 8b.... In addition, these verses assert that God brings utter destruction to the wicked and imply a promise of eternal life to the righteous" (NAC).

As earlier noted, v. 7 contains language similar to that of Proverbs 10:28.

- "DESTRUCTIVE LIPS. *Type: Chiastic, with an Afterward (Proverbs 11:9-13)*....Verses 10-11 are an obvious pair in parallel, whereas vv. 9, 12 are bound by the theme of the slanderous gossip of the wicked against restrained silence of the righteous....Verse [13] is an afterword on the subject of the tongue" (NAC).

Verse 10 may seem odd in light of the unpopularity of God's servants among the nations of the world. However, despite persecution, it does make sense that others rejoice when the righteous are doing well: "Why should the community rejoice in the prosperity of the righteous? Because both the way a righteous man gains his wealth and the way he uses it benefits society. The righteous businessman employs others, supports schools and government with his taxes and in the O[ld] T[estament] tradition, shares generously" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 10-11). And often people enjoy seeing justice where the good guy wins.

- "NATIONAL AND PERSONAL PRUDENCE. *Type: Parallel (Proverbs 11:14-15)*....Both proverbs here follow the pattern 'imprudent action

brings disaster / prudent action gives security,' but the first involves national matters where the second concerns personal business" (NAC).

Verse 14 explains that it's vital to get counsel from a number of sources than can be weighed together in making important decisions (see also Proverbs 15:22; Proverbs 20:18; Proverbs 24:6).

Proverbs 11:15 should also be read in light of the next listed proverb in verse 16. "These two proverbs balance each other. The first warns against rashly giving surety or a pledge for a stranger. The second praises generosity [as being 'gracious' or 'kindhearted' (NIV) surely includes]; generosity begets honor" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verses 15-16). Verse 16, discussed next, should also be read in the context of the next verse, with which it is parallel.

- "KINDNESS AND CRUELTY. *Type: Parallel (Proverbs 11:16-17)*....The pattern of these two proverbs is 'kind woman / cruel man // kind man / ruthless man.' By itself v. 16 could be read cynically ('A kind woman gets respect, but a cruel man gets rich'...to justify unscrupulous behavior. In conjunction with v. 17, however, the self-destructive nature of the 'hard-nosed' approach to life is apparent....
- "THE WAGES OF SIN AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. *Type: Chiasmus (Proverbs 11:18-19)*....This pair has the chiastic pattern [in this case *a-b-b-a*] 'wicked man / he who sows righteousness / righteousness / he who pursues evil'....Note that this pair has links to vv. 16-17. The wealth of the cruel man corresponds to deceptive wages as the honor given a kind woman is genuine. Also the health/self-inflicted pain of v. 17 corresponds to the life and death of v. 19.
- "DIVINE JUDGMENT. *Type: Parallel (Proverbs 11:20-21)*....God's attitude toward individuals (disgust / pleasure) in v. 20 corresponds to

the outcome of their lives (inescapable trouble / deliverance) in v. 21"—which also impacts their children (NAC).

7. *Beauty Without Discretion (Proverbs 11:22)*

"TYPE: INDIVIDUAL PROVERB"(NAC).

8. *Generosity and Selfishness (Proverbs 11:23-27)*

"TYPE: INCLUSIO....Verses 23, 27 closely parallel each other and form an inclusio around vv. 24-26, all of which center on the theme of generosity and selfishness. The inclusio states the general truth that one receives back according to one's own behavior while vv. 24-26 deal with the concrete issue of hoarding [and refusing to sell currently at a fair price]" (NAC).

The picture of the one who scatters abroad increasing more—the generous person being made rich—is similar to Ecclesiastes 11:1: "Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days." The good we do will be returned to us in different ways. Just on a human level, a selfish, stingy person will likely make enemies, a factor that will probably hurt him later—even financially perhaps. The generous person will make friends who will be there to contribute to his prosperity and well-being later. But there is more to the universe than that—as there is a real God who blesses generosity and curses greed and selfishness.

Jesus likewise taught: "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

Of course, the passages here are not a promise of material wealth in this lifetime in return for being generous. The greatest riches are

spiritual ones—though this does include the promised hope of possessing the entire universe as co-heirs with Christ.

See also Proverbs 13:7.”

9. *The Source of Life (Proverbs 11:28–12:4)*

"TYPE: INCLUSIO....The structure of this collection is complex. Proverbs 11:28 has a close parallel in Proverbs 12:3; both concern the flourishing of the righteous and failure of the wicked to establish themselves through wealth and cunning. Proverbs 11:29, which concerns a son's behavior in the family (see Proverbs 17:2), is answered by Proverbs 12:4, which deals with the wife's contribution to the family. Proverbs 11:28-29 and Proverbs 12:3-4 thus form an inclusio around Proverbs 11:30–12:2.

"Proverbs 11:28-29 and Proverbs 12:3-4 teach that a man cannot provide for the security of his family through any means that violate basic principles of right and wrong. Rather than focus his attention on making as much money as possible, a man should give thought to the choice of a good wife and then to the spiritual nurture of his children. Above all else, he must conduct his own life with integrity if he expects the same from his family.

"The two pairs—Proverbs 11:30-31 and Proverbs 12:1-2—each deal with behavior (Proverbs 11:30; Proverbs 12:1) and its reward or punishment (Proverbs 11:31; Proverbs 12:2). The collection is thus structured as follows.

“Aa The true source of life (Proverbs 11:28)
“Ab Family life (Proverbs 11:29)

“Ba Behavior of righteous and wicked (Proverbs 11:30)
“Bb Divine judgment (Proverbs 11:31)
“Ba’ Behavior of righteous and wicked (Proverbs 12:1)
“Bb’ Divine judgment (Proverbs 12:2)
“Aa’ The true source of life (Proverbs 12:3)
“Ab’ Family life (Proverbs 12:4)” (NAC).

The reference to "winning souls" as a wise course of action in Proverbs 11:30 is to "to capturing (*loqeah* 'to lay hold of, seize, conquer') people with ideas or influence (2 Samuel 15:6)" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on Proverbs 11:30).

Verse 31 in the NIV reads: "If the righteous receive their due on earth/how much more the ungodly and the sinner!" *Expositor's* notes on this verse: "Retribution for sin is certain, for the righteous and especially for the sinner. The proverb uses a 'how much more' argument—if this be true, how much more this (argument from the lesser to the greater). The point is that divine justice deals with all sin; and if the righteous suffer for their sins, certainly the wicked will. The LXX [Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures] introduces a new idea to the verse: 'If the righteous be scarcely saved'; this is recorded in 1 Peter 4:18." We will consider this further when we come to this New Testament verse.

Proverbs 12:1 in the KJV and NKJV appears to state the obvious: "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge..." Yet the word for

"instruction" can be translated, as in other versions, as "discipline"—paralleling the "correction" in the latter part of the verse.

The Hebrew words in verse 4 translated "excellent wife," or by some as "noble woman" or "virtuous woman," are the same as those used in the well-known ode of Proverbs 31:10-31.

10. Plans and Schemes (Proverbs 12:5-7)

"TYPE: THEMATIC....The unity of this collection is indicated in the Hebrew structure. These three proverbs follow a logical progression: the righteous make plans that are just, but the wicked scheme with deceitful counsel (v. 5); the wicked attempt to ambush the righteous with their lies, but the righteous are delivered by their integrity (v. 6); the wicked are totally destroyed, but the righteous stand secure (v. 7)" (NAC).

11. Earned Respect (Proverbs 12:8)

"TYPE: INDIVIDUAL PROVERB" (NAC).

12. On Providing for One's Needs (Proverbs 12:9-11)

"TYPE: INCLUSIO....The well-earned prosperity of the righteous contrasts with the feigned wealth, the acts of exploitation, and the idle plans of the foolish and wicked" (NAC).

The Jewish *Soncino* commentary notes on verse 9: "The interpretation of the verse depends on the way this phrase [*and hath a servant*' (KJV)] is understood. One possible reading is: Better to be held in low social esteem by not living beyond one's means, and yet possess a slave to do the menial work and so have a comfortable life, than make a pretense of wealth, mixing with the rich and spending what is necessary for food

on maintaining a place in such society. This yields a satisfactory meaning and a sensible admonition which many need today. On the other hand, the words *and hath a servant* may signify 'and is a slave to himself,' i.e. he does for himself the humble tasks which are usually relegated to a slave, and spends the money on feeding his body well. In either case, the point is the futility of inflicting [de]privations upon oneself to preserve an outward show of affluence which does not correspond with reality."

Verse 10 shows that the consideration and care of a righteous man extends to not just other people, but to his animals as well. Cruelty to animals—or cruelty in any form, for that matter—is totally contrary to God's will.

13. On Fruit and Snares (Proverbs 12:12-14)

"TYPE: THEMATIC....This collection employs two metaphors of gathering food: hunting with snares (symbolizing the wicked) and laboring to raise crops (symbolizing the righteous)" (NAC). The wicked trap themselves, and the righteous, through proper words and acts, receive blessings in return. This is another way of expressing the principle of reaping what one sows (see Galatians 6:7).

14. Able to Take Advice (Proverbs 12:15)

"TYPE: SINGLE BICOLON PROVERB" (NAC).

15. The Use and Abuse of Words (Proverbs 12:16-22)

"TYPE: LINKED PARALLELISM AND CHIASMUS....These seven verses are made up of four verses arranged in parallel (vv. 16-19) conjoined by a common verse to a four-verse chiasmus [i.e., concentric arrangement] (vv. 19-22). The structure is as follows:

"A: Thoughtless reactions (v. 16)

"B: Honesty and lying (v. 17)

"A': Reckless words (v. 18)

"B': Honesty and lying (v. 19)

"C: Plotting evil and promoting peace (v. 20)

"C': Trouble to the wicked, not the righteous (v. 21)

"B'": Honesty and lying (v. 22)" (NAC).

16. A Wholesome Life (12:23-28)

"TYPE: PARALLEL....This text is structured as a six-verse parallel as follows:

"A: Caution and incaution (v. 23).

"B: Diligence and laziness (v. 24)

"C: Anxiety and joy (v. 25)

"A': Caution and incaution (v. 26)

"B': Laziness and diligence (v. 27)

"C': Life and immortality (v. 28)

"The six proverbs of this section do not have a single theme but describe types of activity that may promote or undermine a wholesome life" (NAC).

Proverbs 12:23 shows the importance of being careful in what one reveals to others and of not making a show of knowledge.

Verse 24 is ironic in that a lazy person, lacking diligence, fails to advance in life and ends up having to do the menial labor he wants to avoid. In verse 27, the lazy man is humorously portrayed not roasting the food he went to the trouble of catching—and thereby letting it go to waste and failing to benefit from it. The idea is that he doesn't complete tasks—and loses out because of it.

Verse 26 makes it clear that we can choose who our friends are—and that it's important that we do and that we choose wisely. Compare with Proverbs 13:20.

In Proverbs 12:28, we again see the future of life for the righteous—and, indeed, of "no death." According to *Soncino*: "To reproduce the original [Hebrew], the words should be hyphenated 'no-death.' This can only be an allusion to immortality which follows the ending of a righteous life upon earth" (note on verse 28). The NIV here has "immortality." [END]

Proverbs 11:

Verse 4 – This is the reason that righteousness is far greater than gaining physical wealth. Spiritual wealth will last forever, physical wealth will not.

Verse 22 – John Gill clarifies “or, "has departed from taste"; from a taste of virtue and honour; lost all sense of modesty and chastity”

Verses 24 & 25 – I have known those in life who are very generous, and they seem to always be growing in wealth and gaining much more. Some even call these individuals “lucky”, but they are blessed. They

understand that all wealth comes from God and they use their wealth in ways that please God.

Proverbs 12:

Verse 11 – This is a powerful verse that I think we all understand but sometimes fail to fully implement. Those who put in the hard work of life, such as doing the difficult work of breaking up soil to make it even more useful, will ultimately have a good crop of grain and bread on the table, however, we can use our time on things that don't matter, don't amount to anything, and have no real value, if we spend a bunch of our time on these things, especially putting them before what we need to do, we can't expect blessings to follow.

Verse 18 – Do our words do harm or build others up?

Verse 26 – Do our friends help us to meet our goals of being righteous, or harm that process? At teen summer camp, we talk to them about how surveys and statistics have shown that young people become the average of their inner circle. What about us? If we became more like our inner circle of friends, would we be even better people or worse?

Verse 27 – Do groceries go to waste? Do we sit things outside and they get rained on and ruined? Or do we use what God blesses us with wisely and fully? This Proverb teaches us about doing our very best in even small ways, which will only lead to even more blessings. Being wasteful and lazy has an impact.

Day 376 - THURSDAY: February 29th

Proverbs 13

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "**17. The Use of the Mouth (Proverbs 13:1-4)**"

"TYPE: CATCHWORD....A number of words and concepts bind this text together. The 'mocker' corresponds to the one who 'speaks rashly,' while shutting one's mouth corresponds to receiving instruction (vv. 1, 3). Verses 2-3 refer to the mouth, and the *nepes* [or *nephesh*, referring to one's physical being] is mentioned in vv. 2-4" (NAC).

Proverbs 13:1, concerning a wise son heeding his father's instruction, harkens back to the first of the compact sayings (Proverbs 10:1) and the book's prologue (chapters 1–9).

18. Action and Reaction (Proverbs 13:5-6)

"TYPE: PARALLEL, CATCHWORD....These two proverbs are set in parallel on the basis of 'righteous' and 'wicked' in v. 5 and 'righteousness' and 'wickedness' in v. 6" (NAC).

19. The Ambiguity of Riches (Proverbs 13:7-11)

"TYPE: THEMATIC....The acquisition, possession, and use of money dominate vv. 7-8, 11. Verses 9-10 do not refer to money, but the overall context throws new meaning on these proverbs as well" (NAC).

Proverbs 13:7 is often interpreted to refer to a poor person pretending to be rich and a rich person pretending to be poor. But that is not what is meant here. *The New American Commentary* rightly states: "There is more to v. 7 than that some people deceitfully pretend to be rich or poor. More profoundly, things are not always what they seem. One person may appear rich (and may or may not have money) and yet on a more fundamental level have nothing, and the reverse is true as well. This is illustrated in v. 8, in which the point is made that although the rich have some protection from their money, the poor have little need for such protection since they have nothing worth stealing [—and they 'hear no threat' (NIV)]. Wealth is thus a prison, and the one who

appears rich has nothing enviable. Similarly, if one has not acquired wealth properly, that wealth will soon disappear (v. 11). The apparent wealth of those who acquired money without learning the lessons of financial prudence is fleeting" (note on verses 7-8). Also compare verse 7 with Proverbs 11:24-25.

Pride has been called "the mother of all sins." It certainly leads to contention, as verse 10 tells us.

20. A Hope Fulfilled (Proverbs 13:12-19)

"TYPE: INCLUSIO....The Bible goes beyond the secular wisdom of relating success to hard work [and trustworthiness] and more fundamentally ties it to the development of a mature, virtuous soul by submission to wise teachers....This text has a general inclusio pattern, but there are many cross-connections.

"A: 'Hope deferred' (v. 12)
"B: 'He who scorns instruction' (v. 13)
"C: 'Teaching of the wise' (v. 14)
"C': 'Good understanding' (v. 15)
"D: 'Prudent man / fool' (v. 16)
"D': 'Wicked messenger / trustworthy envoy' (v. 17)
"B': 'He who ignores discipline' (v. 18)
"A': 'Longing fulfilled' (v. 19)

"Other cross connections include 'tree of life' (v. 12) and 'fountain of life' (v. 14) as well as 'healing' (v. 15). Also 'rewarded' (v. 13), 'wins favor' (v. 15), and 'honored' (v. 18) indicate that the concrete benefits of wisdom are in view. The peculiar bicolon of v. 19 is also significant. By itself v. 19b has nothing to do with v. 19a, but in the context of vv. 13, 18 it summarizes the attitude of the obstinate. Surrounding the whole text is the idea of having one's desires fulfilled (vv. 12, 19); the point is that the deepest longings of the soul are filled only by integrity and wisdom, not by treachery.

"The structure of the text produces a coherent message. Verse 12 gives the premise that everyone rejoices to see their hopes and aspirations fulfilled. This sentiment is restated in the companion verse, v. 19a; but the second colon, v. 19b, asserts that fools will not turn from evil. The implication is that fools will not see their desires fulfilled. The intervening verses develop the thesis that life and happiness can only be obtained by wisdom.... The whole text [verses 12-19]...teaches that by learning from the wise, one can enjoy a life of fulfilled aspirations" (NAC).

21. Choice Companions (Proverbs 13:20-21)

"TYPE: CHIASTIC....Note...the chiastic structure [—in this case *a-b-b-a*—] of 'wise' (v. 20a), 'fools' (v. 20b), 'sinner' (v. 21a), and 'righteous' (v. 21b)" (NAC).

Proverbs 13:20 highlights the importance of picking the right friends—as they influence the way you think and act and, therefore, the outcome of your life (compare Proverbs 12:26; 1 Corinthians 15:33).

22. Provision for the Family (Proverbs 13:22-25)

"Type: Parallel....This text deals with providing for the needs of one's family and is structured as a parallel text.

"A: A material inheritance (v. 22)

"B: Hunger because of injustice (v. 23)

"A': A moral heritage (v. 24)

"B': Hunger because of divine displeasure (v. 25)" (NAC).

The inheritance left to children and grandchildren involves much more than material wealth and possessions. As *The New American Commentary* states: "All people desire to leave a good heritage for their children, and vv. 22, 24 speak, respectively, of providing for the material and moral needs of one's descendants. Proverbs regularly keeps these two in balance. It emphasizes the need for moral training without deprecating the physical needs of family life.

"Verse 23 and v. 25 describe two reasons a family may be impoverished and hungry. On the one hand, it may be injustice in society (i.e., it is not the family's fault, and their hunger points to a need for changes in the system). On the other hand, poverty may be a result of sin in the family. Addiction to alcohol, indolence, and financial irresponsibility are all potential causes of poverty, although the terms 'righteous' and 'wicked' imply divine favor or disfavor as well. Proverbs takes a balanced position: it neither dehumanizes the poor on the grounds that they are to blame for all their troubles nor absolves the individual of personal responsibility" (note on vv. 22-25).

The NIV Application Commentary makes these poignant comments in its concluding summary of chapter 13: "The proverbs of this chapter make clear that we are not called to leave an inheritance of wealth but a legacy that includes so much more, a way of life: 'The righteous eat to

their hearts' content, but the stomach of the wicked goes hungry' (Proverbs 13:25). But there is a caution: As we read, we may take the many contrasts of the chapter too lightly, putting ourselves on the path with the righteous too readily. These polarities are a teaching device, exaggeration to make a point, but we will miss the point if we fail to appreciate the various repetitions that we too are 'prone to wander' and can be tempted to take little shortcuts in order to preserve our accounts or our reputations. To the sages, outright rebellion is not the enemy so much as compromise. The fact that wisdom writers worked so hard to make these contrasts stark and clear shows that human nature often loses sight of their clarity and makes fuzzy choices."

This is important to bear in mind as we read all the chapters of the book of Proverbs." [END]

Verse 4 – Most people who have material possessions have those things by lots of hard work and wise decisions. Some who envy and desire what others have, haven't put in the same level of work, etc... The same is true spiritually. Many of the people we may admire for their spiritual character and Bible knowledge have put in hours and decades of study and hard work; overcoming wrong desires, enduring tests, etc... Proverbs teaches us that there are no lasting shortcuts. We have to be willing to work hard and exercise Godly wisdom, physically & spiritually, to reach our goals.

Verse 7 – We see in the news all the time someone who on the surface appears to have everything (money, possessions, etc...) but inwardly feel empty, alone, etc... God gives all of us access to true wealth and fulfillment.

Verse 11 – Someone may be able to jump ahead in this world by dishonest means, but without character, it will not last. But hard work over a long period of time is something that grows and endures.

Day 377 - FRIDAY: March 1st

Proverbs 14

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "**23. Self-Protective and Self-Destructive Behavior (Proverbs 14:1-3)**

"TYPE: INCLUSIO" (*The New American Commentary*). "Verses 1 and 3 go together as signaled by the repetition of 'wise' and 'fool/foolish'; the difference between the two [types of people] is explained in verse 2" (*The NIV Application Commentary*, note on verses 1-7). Verses 1 and 3 show that the wise will ultimately benefit from their right choices but the foolish ultimately hurt themselves and those close to them. Verse 2 shows that what makes the difference is one's attitude toward God. It also makes clear that how one lives shows whether one properly reveres God or not.

Verse 1 is paraphrased in the New Century Version (NCV) as: "A wise woman strengthens her family, but a foolish woman destroys hers by what she does."

In the NIV, verse 3 opens with the words, "A fool's talk brings a rod to his back...." The NCV has "Fools will be punished for their proud words...." However, the Jewish *Soncino Commentary* points out: "The word [translated 'rod'] is found again only in Isaiah [11:]1, where it signifies a new branch growing from the trunk of a tree. If rod was intended, as a symbol of punishment, another Hebrew word, *shebet*, would have been more appropriate. It is better, therefore, to translate: 'a branch (producing) pride.' From the fool's mouth issues haughty speech which has the effect of getting him into trouble" (note on verse 3). In either case, the implication is that the emergence of pride is ultimately self-destructive—especially given the

contrast in the verse in which the wise are preserved by their own carefully chosen words.

24. A Worthwhile Investment (Proverbs 14:4)

"TYPE: SINGLE BICOLON PROVERB" (NAC). Where the KJV has "crib," the NIV has "manger" and the NKJV has "trough"—the object here being the feed-trough for oxen. *Soncino* comments: "This animal was employed for ploughing and threshing the corn [i.e., grain] (Deuteronomy [22:]20, [25:]4). The point of the verse is neither the importance of agricultural work...nor the value of work as opposed to slothfulness.... As sometimes happens with a proverb, the abstract thought is presented by means of a concrete example. So here, the ox is used as an illustration. Having no ox is, from one point of view, an advantage because a man is then freed from attending to its care; but as against that there is the great advantage of having an ox for the provision of essential food. Consequently, the disadvantage of having to look after the animal is far outweighed by the benefits which accrue from its employment in the field" (note on verse 4).

The New American Commentary takes it a step further: "The point is that one must make an investment (obtain and feed the oxen) to get a large return" (note on verse 4).

25. Look Who's Talking (Proverbs 14:5-7)

"TYPE: THEMATIC....One should evaluate what a person says on the basis of his or her overall credibility (v. 5). Similarly, one should not expect to get sound advice from a person who shows no respect for the precepts of wisdom (vv. 6-7). In short, the character of the speaker serves as a warning about whether his words are true or wise" (NAC).

Verse 5 is similar to verse 25.

The counsel in verse 7 does not mean we must immediately leave a room if a foolish person is in it. The point is that we should not associate with foolish people as much as is reasonable—and certainly not look to them for guidance. "Once again, the proverbs recognize that the company one keeps will have its influence. Taken together [with related proverbs], one can learn better alone than with the help of a fool" (*NIV Application Commentary*, note on verse 7; compare Proverbs 13:20).

26. Appearance and Reality (Proverbs 14:8-15)

"TYPE: CHIASMUS....Life is often deceptive, and the text here implicitly exhorts readers not to be taken in by appearances [or how things might seem]...This series of proverbs is a carefully balanced chiasmus [or concentric arrangement]:

"A: The prudent and the fools (v. 8)
"B: Making amends for sin (v. 9)
"C: Secrets of the heart (v. 10)
"D: Destruction of the wicked (v. 11)
"D': The way to death (v. 12)
"C': Secrets of the heart (v. 13)
"B': Being repaid for sin (v. 14)
"A': The simple and the prudent (v. 15)

"The meaning of 'the folly of fools is deception' (v. 8 [NIV]) is not immediately evident, but the parallel in v. 15 implies that the naiveté of fools is in view" (*NAC*). Verse 15 shows that the simple are gullible while

the wise proceed cautiously—to borrow from a modern proverb, they look before they leap. On the word in verse 8 translated "deceit" or "deception" (NIV), *Soncino* notes: "The verb from which this noun is derived, means 'to mislead'" (note on verse 8). The NRSV renders the verse this way: "It is the wisdom of the clever to understand where they go, but the folly of fools misleads." The wise know that things are not always as they seem.

"Verses 10, 13 likewise observe that no one knows the inner life of another's heart and that the appearance of happiness can be deceptive" (NAC).

Verse 9 is somewhat difficult to translate and the King James and New King James are probably incorrect here. The NIV has a likelier rendering: "Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright." Thus, "verse 9 states that the wicked believe they can avoid making restitution, but v. 14 [in concentric parallel] gives assurance of divine retribution. In other words, the appearance of getting away with a crime is belied by a justice that is not obvious or quick but is certain.

"In vv. 11-12, at the heart of the chiasmus, the apparent success of the wicked is short-lived.... The message of the whole is to avoid a superficial analysis of the lessons of life" (NAC).

Verse 12, repeated in Proverbs 16:25, is crucial to always keep in mind. People the world over often act according to what they personally think is right—but not according to the way of life God reveals in His Word. Thus they all march headlong down the broad road to destruction (compare Matthew 7:13)—in dire need of true education and God's salvation. We must be sure to always look at things through the godly lens of Scripture and not mere human reason, living by faith and not by sight (compare Proverbs 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:7).

27. A Patient Spirit (Proverbs 14:16-17)

"TYPE:...THEMATIC" (NAC). As pointed out in verse 15, a wise man thinks before he acts. Contributing to his reasoned patience is, as verse 16 notes, a healthy fear of the consequences of evil. This contrasts with the foolish self-confidence behind rashness and impulsive anger.

28. A Crown of Wisdom, An Inheritance of Folly (Proverbs 14:18-24)

TYPE: INCLUSIO, CHIASMUS, PARALLEL PROVERBS. "This text promises that the righteous will be crowned with wisdom and see fools bow before them. The passage also gives a few specific guidelines for right behavior, including compassion and personal diligence" (NAC).

Verses 18 and 24 are tied together through the wise receiving a crown or reward and the foolish inheriting only folly. The NIV captures the sense of verse 24: "The wealth of the wise is their crown, but the folly of fools yields folly." This is not a promise of wealth for the godly in this age. It merely expresses the principle that wealth is gained and sustained through wisdom and prudence, while the foolishness of fools leads to an outcome of more foolishness. Of course, the godly will be richly rewarded in the ages to come.

"Verses 20-23 fall between these verses and are themselves bound together in a complex manner. Verses 20 and 23 both deal with wealth and poverty, and vv. 21-22 both contrast those who are kind with those who plot evil. Viewed in this manner, vv. 20-23 are in a chiastic pattern. On the other hand, vv. 20-21 both concern the different ways a 'neighbor' is treated, and vv. 22-23 both concern the respective gain or loss that comes to the good/diligent as opposed to the evil/lazy. Viewed in this manner, vv. 20-23 are two sets of parallel proverbs. Both the chiasmus and the parallel pattern may be viewed as follows:

“A1: The crowns [or inheritance] of wisdom and folly (v. 18)
“A2: The evil bow to the wise (v. 19)
“B1: The poor and rich (treatment of a neighbor) (v. 20)
“C1: Scheming and benevolence (treatment of a neighbor) (v. 21)
“C2: Scheming and benevolence (reward for kindness) (v. 22)
“B’2: Wealth and poverty (reward for diligence) (v. 23)
“A’: The crowns [or inheritance] of wisdom and folly (v. 24)

"The full text deals with the recompense that accompanies wisdom or folly. Ethical issues here [that impact the outcome] include concern for the poor, diligence in work, and integrity in dealing with others" (NAC, note on verses 18-24).

Treatment of the poor (verses 20-21) is revisited in verse 31. In verse 20 the many friends of the rich are not true friends that can be counted on. Thus the New Living Translation rendering: "...the rich have many 'friends.'" These are mostly parasitical, seeking handouts, personal advancement or notoriety through association.

29. An Honest Witness (Proverbs 14:25)

"TYPE: SINGLE BICOLON PROVERB" (NAC). As earlier noted, this verse is similar to verse 5.

30. The Fear of the Lord (Proverbs 14:26-27)

"TYPE: THEMATIC" (NAC). These proverbs focus on the fear of the Lord—the proper reverence and awe of God in His holiness and power through which the whole book of Proverbs is to be viewed and comprehended (compare Proverbs 1:7). This perspective will protect us and our loved ones we influence, preserving us through various trials and keeping us from falling away to ultimate destruction. We will note more about this when we come to Proverbs 19:23.

31. National Security (Proverbs 14:28-35)

"TYPE: INCLUSIO [POSSIBLE CHIASM]....The health and well-being of a nation depends upon both the ruler and the governed. A ruler must be fair and above all must respect the rights of his people. The people, on the other hand, must have virtue in their lives or they will bring society into chaos. No government can succeed without the people, and no people can thrive if corruption and evil abound. The inclusio here is formed by v. 28, which describes a king's need for a sizable populace, and v. 35, which obliquely asserts a king's need for capable servants" (NAC).

In its note on verses 28-35, *The NIV Application Commentary* sees a possible chiasm here, based on the terms used:

"A: v. 28 <i>King's</i> glory
"B: v. 29 <i>Exalt</i> {root <i>rwm</i> } folly
"C: v. 30 <i>Heart</i> at peace gives life
"D: vv. 31-32 Sayings on treatment and reward
"C': v. 33 <i>Heart</i> a home for wisdom

“B’: v. 34 *Exalt* {root *rwm*} a nation

“A’: v. 35 *King’s delight*”

Verse 31, similar to verse 21, warns the powerful, such as national rulers, from oppressing the poor. To oppress the poor is to reproach God, since He has commanded that the poor be treated well. Those who honor God will obey Him in proper treatment of those in need. There may even be a hint here of Jesus' later teaching that as we treat people, so we treat Him (compare Matthew 25:31-46)—a principle more evident in Proverbs 19:17. See also Proverbs 17:5. Verse 29, which contrasts impulsiveness with patience, is followed by verse 30, which contrasts a sound heart or "a heart at peace" (NIV) with envy. Both verses show reasoned calm to be superior to uncontrolled emotion. In the latter verse, this calm is healthful while negative emotion is actually destructive to the body—facts borne out in modern medical science.

Proverbs 14:32 says that the righteous has a refuge in death. Note again the refuge in the fear of the Lord in verse 26. While the wicked are swept away when calamity comes, the righteous ever have the refuge of God—even in death, showing hope beyond the grave (compare Isaiah 57:1-2). This is true in both an individual and collective sense.

The first colon of Proverbs 14:34 is inscribed above the entrance to a prominent American building—Los Angeles City Hall. That great city, and the nation at large—indeed all the world—would do well to heed this saying on the importance of the citizenry living according to God's standard of righteousness and not descending into sin. Verses 34 and 35 are both linked by the theme of shame among those governed. "A people may wish for good character qualities in their leaders, but they ought to hold themselves to the same high standards. This may be a job

at the common assumption that honest and forthright character is always a good idea for someone else" (*NIV Application Commentary*, note on verse 35). Indeed, every person's character contributes to the character of the whole community, so we should each take this as a personal responsibility." [END]

Verse 12 – What a great memory verse. One we should always keep close in our hearts and minds.

Verse 28 – The Matthew Henry commentary states: “Here are two maxims in politics, which carry their own evidence with them: - 1. That it is much for the honour of a king to have a populous kingdom; it is a sign that he rules well, since strangers are hereby invited to come and settle under his protection and his own subjects live comfortably; it is a sign that he and his kingdom are under the blessing of God, the effect of which is being fruitful and multiplying. It is his strength, and makes him considerable and formidable; happy is the king, the father of his country, who has his *quiver full of arrows*; he *shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with his enemy in the gate*, Psa 127:4, Psa 127:5. It is therefore the wisdom of princes, by a mild and gentle government, by encouraging trade and husbandry, and by making all easy under them, to promote the increase of their people. And let all that wish well to the kingdom of Christ, and to his honour, do what they can in their places that many may be added to his church. 2. That when the people are lessened the prince is weakened: *In the want of people is the leanness of the prince* (so some read it); trade lies dead, the ground lies untilled, the army wants to be recruited, the navy to be manned, and all because there are not hands sufficient. See how much the honour and safety of kings depend upon their people, which is a reason why they should rule by love, and not with rigour. Princes are corrected by those judgments which abate the number of the people, as we find, 2Sa 24:13.” [END]

Day 378 - SATURDAY: March 2nd

Proverbs 15 & 16

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “**32. Two Collections (15:1–16:8)**”

"TYPE: A-B ENVELOPE SERIES....This text is, in effect, random repetition...but with recognizable clusters of proverbs. It is composed of two collections, Proverbs 15:1-17 and 15:18–16:8, which parallel each other not structurally so much as in content. Each major collection begins with a word on patience versus the provocation of wrath (Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 15:18), and each ends with 'better sayings' on apparent versus real prosperity (Proverbs 15:16-17; Proverbs 16:8). Between these markers the two collections (here referred to as 'I' and 'II') contain teachings that correspond to one another in remarkable detail. In the following chart, collection I is set forth in its normal order, while units in collection II are set out in an order that corresponds to those in collection I. This does not imply that verses in collection II need to be transposed; it is done merely to make the comparison clearer.... Similarly, this analysis does not dispute that there are other parallels and ties among these verses other than those mentioned here.

COLLECTION I	COLLECTION II
15:1 gentle verses harsh answer; calming versus provoking anger	15:18 hot-tempered versus patient man; calming versus provoking anger
15:2-4 chiasmus: use of the tongue (2,4) and divine retribution (3)	15:24-27 chiasmus: life and death (24,27) and divine retribution (25-26)
15:5 foolish son; heeding admonition	15:20-22 wise/foolish son; need for advisers

15:6 income of righteous/wicked	15:19 way of sluggard/upright
15:7 speech of the wise/fools	15:28 speech of the righteous/wicked
15:8-9 Lord rejects sacrifice of the wicked	15:29 Lord rejects prayers of wicked
15:10-11 severity of the Lord's dealing with people	15:33–16:7 the Lord's ways of judgments
15:12-15 accepting/rejecting correction (12,14); cheerful face and heart	15:30-32 cheerful look and heart correction (30); accepting/rejecting correction (31-32)
15:16-17 better sayings on true prosperity	16:8 better sayings on true prosperity

"Collection II (twenty-four verses) is not only longer than collection I (seventeen verses) but it also contains one verse that has no parallel in collection I (Proverbs 15:23). On the other hand, 15:23 concerns the ability to give an appropriate answer and thus obliquely relates to the lead verses, Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 15:18" (NAC).

Verse 1 concerns not only what we say, but how we say it. It is important to maintain calm in most situations, for peaceful dialogue is usually much more effective in a dispute than screaming. This need not convey weakness for, as Proverbs 25:15 says figuratively, a gentle tongue can break a bone.

Regarding the chiasms (concentric arrangements) of the second section here, *The New American Commentary* states: "In the first series (vv. 2-4) a single proverb on God's [omniscience serving His perfect]

administration of justice (v. 3) falls between two proverbs on the use of the tongue (vv. 2, 4). In the second series (vv. 24-27) two proverbs on divine justice (vv. 25-26) fall between two proverbs on behavior that leads either to life and prosperity or to the grave (vv. 24, 27). In both sections the middle proverbs reveal that the moral principles that govern the world are not mere abstractions but are actively maintained by God's intervention" (note on verses 15:2-4, 24-27). In verse 24, "grave" (NIV) rather than "hell," as it is commonly defined today, is the proper translation of the Hebrew *sheol*.

The verses of section 6 (Proverbs 15:8-9, Proverbs 15:29) show the importance of proper attitude and manner of life in the worship of God. He will not accept a mere pretense of piety (see also Proverbs 21:27). The *Soncino Commentary* notes on Proverbs 15:9: "As a pendant to what precedes [in verse 8], this verse is of the highest importance, because it clearly defines the final test of a man's religion. The criterion is not his scrupulous performance of rites such as sacrifice and prayer, but the *way* of life he treads and his ardent (the form of the verb is intensive) pursuit of *righteousness*" (note on verse 9).

In verse 11, "Hell [*sheol*, the grave] and Destruction" represent the fate of all people, the coming of death and what lies beyond being a great mystery in ancient times, as it is to most today. If this inscrutable mystery is "before the LORD"—that is, laid out before Him as within His purview and understanding—how much more is He able to discern the inner heart of human beings, which is not so hidden as the greater mystery.

Verse 20 is similar to the opening proverb of Solomon's major collection, beginning with an identical first colon (10:1). Proverbs 15:22 recalls Proverbs 11:14.

In verse 30, where the KJV and NKJV have "the light of the eyes" (which rejoices the heart), the NIV says "a cheerful look" (that is, from someone else). The Contemporary English Version paraphrases this as "a friendly smile." Compare the "light of the king's face" in Proverbs 16:15.

The verses of what is marked above as section 7 of collection II (15:33–16:7), linked by their focus on how the Lord deals with people, bring to a conclusion the first half of Solomon's core collection. In fact Proverbs 16:4, as the *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* points out, is "the middle verse of this section of Proverbs (10:1–22:16), aptly summarizing the Lord's sovereignty over every human thought and action. The verse also occupies the central position in a series of seven verses (1-7) at the beginning of ch. 16—the middle chapter in the book of Proverbs. Each of the seven verses features the name Yahweh [typically represented in English translations as "LORD" but meaning "He Is Who He Is"—the Eternal or Self-Existent One], again stressing his supreme position as Lord over all" (note on verse 4).

While Proverbs 15:28 shows the importance of studying how to answer, Proverbs 16:1 balances this with the fact that human preparation has its limitations. Having done what we can, we must rely on God to enable us to always say what we need to. And He will help us in what we need to say in critical situations (compare Mark 13:11; Luke 21:12-15).

Proverbs 16:2 shows that human beings are prone to self-deception when it comes to our own motives. "The interaction of the two lines in this proverb suggest that Yahweh is better able to discern our motivations than we are, hence the need for wisdom and instruction in standards outside ourselves" (*NIV Application Commentary*, note on verse 2).

Verse 4, the central verse noted above, has seemed to some to say that God has created the wicked to destroy them. The point, rather, is that God has made all to fulfill His purposes and that even those who choose wickedness do not thwart His plan but fit within His purposes, in their case meeting the judgment He has already determined. Of course, God did predetermine that some would meet with destruction in this life (see Romans 9:14-24)—but this does not mean they are ultimately lost. (For a full discussion of this matter, see our *Beyond Today Magazine* article ["Predestination: Are You Just a Pawn?"](#)).

Proverbs 16:5 uses some of the same wording as Proverbs 11:20-21.

Proverbs 16:7, which tells us that God causes the enemies of the righteous to be at peace with them, conveys a general principle. Scripture gives us some examples (see Genesis 20:15; Genesis 26:27ff; Genesis 33:4; 2 Chronicles 14:6-7; 2 Chronicles 17:10). A measure of peace allows God's people to live their lives in service to Him, to their families and to each other. Of course, there are often times when God allows enemies to be actively antagonistic against His people. The proverb must be considered as applying over the long haul of life—and it will find ultimate fulfillment in the age to come.

Continuing in Solomon's core collection (10:1–22:16), we may observe that the second part (16:1–22:16) is made up mostly of synonymous proverbs.

33. Three Collections (Proverbs 16:9–17:1)

"TYPE: A-B ENVELOPE SERIES....[These] proverbs are in a three-fold A-B envelope series, as follows:

"COLLECTION I

"A: Human plans and divine providence (16:9)
"Nine proverbs (16:10-18)
"B: Better saying on humble circumstances (16:19)
"COLLECTION II
"A': Prosperity through careful decision making and faith in God (16:20)
"Eleven proverbs (16:21-31)
"B': Better saying on patience (16:32)
"COLLECTION III
"A": Casting lots and divine providence (16:33)
"B": Better saying on humble circumstances (17:1)

"The verses marked 'A' (Proverbs 16:9, Proverbs 16:20, Proverbs 16:33) all concern divine providence over human affairs. The issue in these verses is wisdom in the decision-making process. Whether one makes detailed plans or resorts to casting lots, events and circumstances are all in God's control. As such the wise are cautious but above all put their faith in God and not in human plans.... The verses marked 'B' (Proverbs 16:19, Proverbs 16:32; Proverbs 17:1) all imply that a peaceable attitude makes the position that is apparently lower or less aggressive preferable to one of power. All are 'better' sayings. Set in context with the 'A' sayings, these texts imply that success is not necessarily to be measured by the size of one's bank account. The intervening verses in texts I and II do not correspond to one another (unlike Proverbs 15:1–16:8), but several discrete groups...are apparent in these collections. Collection III has no intervening verses at all" (NAC).

Verses 10-15 "concern righteousness in government and are organized as a thematic collection. Also the catchword 'king' occurs in every verse except 11, which nevertheless plainly deals with justice in government" (note on verses 10-15).

Expositor's notes on verse 10: "This first one teaches that kings must speak righteously in their official capacities.... The first part states that when the king speaks officially, it is as if it were 'an oracle' [NIV]. The word *qesem* is used throughout the Bible in the negative sense of 'divination' [as the NKJV renders it here]; here it seems merely to mean his words from an oracular sentence, as if he speaks for God (see Numbers 22:7; Numbers 23:23...). The effect of this is that his mouth 'should not betray'...justice."

Regarding Proverbs 16:11, mentioned above as the only proverb in verses 10-15 that doesn't include the word "king," *Soncino* notes: "This verse is misunderstood by the modern expositors who hold it to refer to honest weights and measures [as in Proverbs 11:1]. If so interpreted, it is out of place and has no connection with the group which deals with the subject of a king's obligations, and preference should be given to the Jewish commentaries which related the verse to the Divine origin of justice. [The phrase] *a just balance and scales* [is] an unlikely translation, since *tsedek* [righteous or fair] would have been used instead of *mishpat* [judgment] if the meaning were *just balance* (cf. Leviticus [19:]36). The correct rendering is: 'the balance and scales of justice are the Lord's,' i.e. they are not something arbitrary which each king can manufacture to suit his convenience. They are fixed by God and delivered into the kings keeping to administer fairly.... [Regarding] *weights of the bag*...the weights to be used on the scales, like the scales themselves, are made by God; the king may not provide his own" (note on Proverbs 16:11).

The "latter rain" in verse 15 refers to the spring rain in Israel. "The spring rain was essential for the full development of barley and wheat; it was therefore a sign of good things to come. Cf. the 'dew' of Proverbs 19:12" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Proverbs 16:15).

Verse 18 shows that pride and arrogance are short-lived. This should be an encouragement in the face of the apparent prosperity of the proud. But it is also meant as a warning to us against self-exaltation (compare 1 Corinthians 10:12).

Verse 21 says that "sweetness of the lips increases learning." The sweetness here corresponds to verse 24: "Pleasant words are like a honeycomb..." The point of verse 21 is that the wise will carefully choose appealing language in teaching others so as to promote learning (see also verse 23).

Verse 25 repeats Proverbs 14:12. We can't just go by what seems right. We must listen to what God has to say. Here "following the proverbs on teaching, this saying also states our need for an external reference point by which we set our course" (*NIV Application Commentary*, note on Proverbs 16:25).

"Verses 27-30 describe the man who has evil schemes and are another thematic unity. Verses 27-29 concern the evil machinations of the scoundrel, the perverse man, and the violent man, and v. 30 is a conclusion or commentary on those three descriptions. The winking eye and pursed lips of v. 30 may be taken either as signals among conspirators or as a general statement of shiftiness in the facial mannerisms of scheming people" (*New American Commentary*, note on verses 27-30)—or possibly "as friendly but deceptive signs; perhaps they are a form of the enticement mentioned in verse 29" (*NIV Application Commentary*, note on verse 30).

In verse 32, mastering the self, such as in controlling one's temper, is a far greater achievement than external conquest.

The "lot" of verse 33 is thought by some to refer to the use of the Urim and Thummim by the high priest. Yet it probably refers to the casting of lots in a more general sense, with appeal made to God to determine the outcome. The *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* comments: "Here the lot may have been several pebbles held in the fold of a garment and then drawn out or shaken to the ground. It was commonly used to make decisions" (note on verse 33). Jesus' disciples used the casting of lots to make an important decision prior to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:26)." [END]

Chapter 15:

Verse 10 – When we step off the path, God can provide gentle correction to help us get back on the path. If we respond, our Loving Father doesn't need to be harder on us. However, for our good, the further we are off the path, God's strong correction of love to return us to the path is necessary. But ultimately, eternal death lies ahead to those who choose to willfully walk off the path.

Verses 16 & 17 – I love the principle these two verses are driving home. You can have a good life full of love, happiness and contentment, living a life in obedience to God, and have very little by what man considers a successful life, or you can have all that this world offers and have a life that is full of strife, emptiness and be unsatisfied with what you have. What do I value, and what do I prioritize?

Verse 19 – Adam Clarke's commentary states: "Because he is slothful, he imagines ten thousand difficulties in the way which cannot be surmounted; but they are all the creatures of his own imagination, and that imagination is formed by his sloth." [END]

Verse 28 – One of the principles we have been seeing over and over through the Proverbs is that the way we do and say things matter. We might say something that is true, but in the way we say it, it may be difficult for others to hear and accept. Our approach matters.

Verse 32 – Instruction and advice is typically for our good. If we aren't willing to listen to wise instruction and advice, we likely are harming ourselves.

Chapter 16:

Verse 4 – John Gill's commentary has this to say regarding "even the wicked": "this is added to illustrate the general proposition in the preceding clause, and to obviate an objection, that might be taken from the destruction of the wicked, against all things being for the glory of God; for even the destruction of the wicked, which is under a divine appointment, is for his glory. It is not the sense of this text, nor of any other passage of Scripture, that God made man to damn him; nor is this to be inferred from the doctrine of predestination:" [END]

God's plan is perfect, and He will be glorified!

Verse 9 – How comforting that in spite of our own efforts to make plans and try to move forward, that those who love God and fear Him, that God works to direct and lead us.