

Proverbs - Chapter 10

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August 2011

Overview

This chapter is slightly different than many of the rest. In some of our prior chapter studies, Solomon paints a picture of the difference between Godly wisdom and foolishness (i.e., [Chapter 7](#), where we discussed how Solomon saw a foolish man wandering through the streets, only to be seduced by a prostitute because he did not discern the difference between the consequences of this sin and just walking away).

In this chapter, however, Solomon has basically composed a number of wise sayings or adages that reflect the difference between making wise decisions and foolish ones. Although all of these hold very practical advice for our daily living, we find that when we look beyond the first message that the passage implies, we tend to find Christ. After all, He is the Wisdom (and the source of wisdom for us) that Solomon speaks about in this book.

For that reason, this chapter may go a little slower than the others as we take a look at many passages individually to gain a better understanding of what Solomon is saying through the inspiration of God.

[v.1](#) – Here, Solomon speaks about the effects a wise son has on his parents. Although he specifically references a male child (son), I believe this could apply to a male or female child.

The comfort and contentment of parent depends a lot on their children. We all want them to be healthy, prosperous, well-behaved, and above all, Christians. Above anything else, we as parents should desire that our children have a personal relationship with God. A large part of that responsibility lies at our feet as parents.

We need to teach our children about God.

We need to bring them to church with us.

We need to pray for them and let them see us praying for them.

We need to tell them that we love them but that God loves them more than anyone.

We need to encourage them to read their Bible and learn more about Christ.

We need to tell them that not only is Heaven real, but that Hell is real also.

Our passage states that a wise son makes his father glad, but gives his mother a heavy heart. Why did the scripture differentiate between the two parents? When a child is good, certainly both parents feel joy, just as when a child goes astray, both parents feel sadness. I think this refers back to the fact that childbirth is a time of not only happiness, but stress and pain for the mother. When a mother sees that child for the first time, all the pain and stress of the last nine months seems to melt away. To them, it was worth going through all of the hardship they experienced just to bring this child into the world. So when this child goes astray, it certainly affects the father. But it seems to bring more pain and sorrow to the mother who, in pain and sorrow, carried and gave birth to this child.

We need to constantly keep our children in our prayers. Let's never forget to pray for them everyday.

[v.2 - v.3](#) – In the world today, money seems to be the driving force for many people. All they care about is “one dollar more” and many times, they will do whatever they have to do to get it, even if it involves something unethical or illegal.

Solomon is saying here that wealth (treasures) achieved in this way will, in the end, profit them nothing. They will not buy them one more second of life. They will not cure all of their problems. They will not keep them from ever getting sick. They will not bring them true happiness. They will not save them from God's judgment.

[Matthew 16:26](#) **“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?...”**

The reason all of this wealth gained in ungodly ways will not profit them is because “...he casteth away the substance of the wicked” ([v.3](#)). God is the final judge and jury for all things, and He will not allow wickedness to continue forever. On the contrary, Solomon states that God will not only “...deliver the righteous from death” ([v.2](#)), but will also not allow “...the soul of the righteous to famish...” ([v.3](#)). The word famish literally means “to starve to death.” He is saying that

God will uphold the soul of the righteous and not allow it to spiritually die. The righteous are kept alive by God's Word and faith in the promises He makes to us in His Word.

Proverbs 28:25 "...he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat."

v.4 – I have heard that car salesmen and insurance salesmen are in the same boat – no one trusts them. Undoubtedly, we have all dealt with people who we originally thought were honest business people, only to later find out their true colors. When this occurs, a couple of things usually happen. First, we vow never to do business with them again. Second, we tell everyone we can about how we were cheated, and recommend that no one do business with this person/company.

This verse is saying that people who seek to achieve their wealth, power, or position by fraud or deceit will, in the end, bring about their own demise, not only from God's judgment of their wickedness, but also in terms of their reputation in the community.

In contrast, Solomon points out that those who are diligent in their business (honest, hardworking, fair, upright) will be blessed.

This is also true in our Christian walk with Christ. We cannot expect to be the people (individually and collectively as a church) that we are called to be when we don't spend time in prayer, associate ourselves with a Bible-believing church and become involved, share our witness with others, or spend time studying God's Word. Being lazy in each of these areas lead us into being lax about our Christianity

v.5 – In the Bible, harvest time is used on several occasions to reflect the urgency with which we need to be about God's business while we have the opportunity.

Jeremiah 8:20 "The harvest is passed, summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Matthew 9:37 "...The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few."

John 4:35 "Say not ye, there are yet four months and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white (ripe) already to harvest."

When Dad was farming, we all knew that when the crops were ready to be brought in, they wouldn't wait until we got around to it – when they were ready, there was work to be done. That meant getting up early, getting to the business at hand, and staying with it until the job was complete.

Part of the reason we worked so hard in these times was that summer was usually the season when the crops would be ready for harvesting, and this was a time of preparation for winter when there would be no harvest. It was a time to get vegetables in the freezer, hogs in the smokehouse, and cotton and tobacco picked and sold so there would be food for the winter and money in the bank until the next harvest.

Again, the reference is made here to a son who, getting out of bed to work in the fields of his father, is a wise son. By doing so, he brings a good reputation to his family and to himself. This is contrasted with a son who sleeps (loves to be idle, neglects the things that need to be done, and doesn't prepare himself for what is to come) as a son who causes shame on himself and his family.

We are called to be sons and daughters of God. As a result, this verse can easily be applied to our service for Christ each day. Would Christ characterize us as "wise" because we realize there is a harvest of those who don't know Christ as their Savior, or are hurting and looking for something in their life to fill an empty space, and we are taking steps to reach them for the glory of God? Or, would Christ characterize us as someone who causes Him shame because we choose to remain idle, procrastinate about things that need to be done for the kingdom of God, or do not see the urgency about spreading the Gospel of Christ to a lost and dying world?

[v.6](#) – In reading this verse, it reminds me of a crown being placed on the head of a king. A crown is something that distinguishes the wearer from anyone else. It is something that sets them apart.

Solomon states that people who are just will be blessed. It seems to indicate that this will be the blessings of both God and man. People will be able to see this and distinguish the fact that these people are just – there is something different about them.

[1 Peter 2:9](#) "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. That ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

[v.7](#) – Scripture tells us that all of us will die. This applies to both the just and the wicked. In that sense alone, the just and the wicked are similar. Although there is no difference on the outside, there is a world of difference on the inside and in what awaits them after death.

When good people die, the memories of what we shared with them live on. We speak about the good times we had with them and, more importantly for Christians, their faith.

This verse brought to my mind, among others, Vicky Bagley. Vicky, who was a young woman stricken with cancer in this church, fought her battle with grace, determination, and a faith in God that left an impression on all who knew her. While the cancer took her mobility and her life, it had no effect on her spirit and her testimony about her faith in God. All you had to do was be around her for a short time to know that this woman had a personal relationship with Christ.

Since her death, I have heard her name mentioned many times, most often associated with the Tree of Hope that has been done in her memory. Powhatan became involved in Relay for Life for all of those within our congregation who suffered through this disease, but Vicky's illness was one of the catalysts that generated interest in this cause.

To this day, her name and memories of her bring smiles to our faces – not because of all of the suffering she went through, but because of the faith she exhibited. That's the essence of what the just show to the world – faith.

Even in the "faith chapter" of the Bible, [Hebrews 11](#), we are told that though faith "...the elders obtained a good report". This chapter goes on to reference patriarchs and others in the Bible such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Samson, David, Samuel, and others. All of them are dead, but the faith they exhibited in their lifetime (even though all of them sinned, by the way) cause them to be remembered for that very reason.

In contrast, those who are wicked will have a name and reputation that is not spoken of nearly as favorably. We recognize names like this in our history – Adolf Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden. We still speak of them because of the roles they played in our history. But when we speak of them or hear their names, we do so with disdain. We detest what they did and what they stood for.

What a difference between the memories of those who were good and those who were evil.

Proverbs 22:1 "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver or gold."

The next several verses deal with the traits of those who follow Godly wisdom and those who act foolishly. As we'll see, there is a marked contrast between the two.

v.8 – God gave us rules, tenets, and guidelines to follow. The rules He gave to Moses for the Children of Israel as well as for us were the Ten Commandments. They were not suggestions, ideas, sayings, or thoughts. They are standards that God expects us, as His children, to uphold.

Israel, as do many today, felt that these commandments and standards were too difficult to follow or unimportant. As a result, they rebelled against God and suffered the consequences for their actions.

Solomon points out that those who receive commandments (of God) are wise. They view it as a privilege, they are willing to be led by a Higher Power, and they understand that there are consequences for not adhering to these commandments.

In contrast, ones who do not accept God's commandments or leading are called "prating fools". Prating means "empty or foolish talk". In other words, he is saying that those not willing to follow God's commandments will speak foolishly about God's will, making every excuse in the world as to why it doesn't apply to them.

He states that they will fall – into sin and into trouble – because they failed to follow God's commandments. We must realize that we serve a God who loves us, even when we do wrong. His rules and His standards are meant to protect us and keep us from harm and from engaging in thing which we will later regret.

"Those that are full of tongue seldom look well to their feet, and therefore they stumble and fall." - Matthew Henry

v.9 – This verse is speaking about integrity (walking uprightly). He is speaking about how a person of integrity that goes about their business honestly and uprightly before God and man will go through this life on solid ground. This type of person knows that God holds tomorrow and will keep them through any trials that come their way.

This type of person knows that there is more than just this life – there is an eternal home that is awaiting. This type of person has that “peace that passes all understanding”, knowing that not only is God in control of everything, but that He sees and knows everything we do. Therefore, this person walks through this life following God, leaning on Him for guidance and protection, and having faith that God’s promises are true.

Isaiah 32:17 “And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.”

In contrast, Solomon points out that people of perverted ways will suffer the consequences of their actions as well. This is speaking of someone who willingly turns away from the path they know is right. They may get away with it for awhile, but sooner or later, they will show their true self and their dishonest ways will be known. Even if they go through this life unscathed, there is a judgment day coming where all actions and deeds will be laid bare. They may escape this world with no one ever knowing their dishonest acts – but these will all be disclosed at God’s judgment.

v.10 – This verse is somewhat unique because Solomon usually uses something good and something bad to contrast the good and bad consequences of their actions. However, in this verse, he compares two actions, neither of which are Christlike. The difference he is trying to get across here is that one only affects the person engaging in the action, while the other has an effect on possibly multiple people.

In the first part of this verse, he states that “He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow.” Did you ever get ready to play a joke on someone and you winked at those around you to get their attention to let them know that something was about to happen? Most of the time, we do that in fun. What Solomon is speaking about here is a person who is about to do some evil deed to someone else, and he winks at his friends (or perhaps accomplices) around him to get them in on the joke. Solomon is not speaking of something that is just good-natured fun or a harmless prank. What he is speaking of here is something that is designed to hurt someone else. He says that he not only causes sorrow to the person this is done against, but he had also brought sorrow on himself as well as everyone else he involved in the deed.

It reminds me of peer pressure at school. Groups of people will sometimes “gang up” on others to play some cruel joke to ridicule them. One is usually the leader, but with a wink of their eye, they involved many more in their actions. Solomon points out that this type of behavior hurts many people with one single act.

The second part of the verse states the same thing about a “prating fool” that we looked at in [verse 8](#). Still, this is wrong. But when looked at together with the first part of the verse, we see what Solomon was trying to get across. This type of person is the less dangerous of the two. They bring judgment on themselves, not on others.

“The dog that bites is not always the dog that barks.” - Matthew Henry

There are some foolish actions we engage in that hurt more people than just ourselves.

[v.11](#) – The Bible has a lot to say about the tongue and its effects on us as well as others.

[Psalm 34:13](#) “Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile.”

[Proverbs 15:4](#) “A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.”

[Proverbs 18:21](#) “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”

[James 1:26](#) “If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his own tongue but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is in vain.”

[James 3:6](#) “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. So is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature. And it is set on fire of hell.”

[1 Peter 3:10](#) “For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile.”

In our scripture, I find it interesting that Solomon refers to the mouth of a righteous man as a “well of life.” Putting that in perspective with the verses we read above talking about the evils of the tongue can only mean that a righteous person has learned to control their tongue and their speech to such an extent that their words build up, bless, and benefit others.

In contrast with this, we have seen that the mouth of the wicked results in violence. This is directly speaking about people who may appear to want friendship only to serve some need or desire they may have. This is evidenced by the way Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, a typical sign of friendship, but used in this case to betray the very Son of God. We know his death was a violent one, as he committed suicide after realizing what he had done.

Our mouths and our tongues can build up or tear down. May God give us wisdom to think before we say things that could bring shame on our testimony.

v.12 – Hatred is a terrible word. Nothing good comes from it. And yet, it exists. I believe one of the greatest weapons that Satan has against the Church of Jesus Christ today is hatred among believers. If he can get that started (or stirred up), he can just sit back and watch churches and lives disintegrate.

Hate is a very strong word, and carries with it a connotation of being much more than just having a disagreement with each other. Scripture even tells us that it is OK to be angry, but we are not to sin in doing so ([Ephesians 4:26](#)). Hate crosses the boundary between an argument or disagreement into an area that Christians need not go.

When used in relationships, the word hate tends to be used to describe someone that we not only want nothing to do with, but that we also wish they would get the consequences we feel they deserve as soon as possible. The problem with this attitude is that it takes our focus off God and puts it on ourselves and our desires, it causes strife among people as they choose which side they are going to support, and finally (but most importantly), it causes us to forget that we are all sinners – and that God HATES sin. In the Old Testament, we see that wherever there was sin, blood had to be shed to cover it. When His Son Jesus Christ was dying on Calvary, bearing the sins of all mankind, God the Father looked away. We cannot hate our brother or sister and truthfully say that we love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and body.

1 John 2:9 “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.”

The opposite of hate is love. Where hate stirs up strife, love covers all those sins and emotions. As Christians, we are called upon to love everyone, even those who may hate us. In this world today, there are people who commit terrible crimes and are very vocal in their opposition to Christians and Christianity, and yet if they will accept the free gift of salvation that Christ offers to them today, His love will cover all their sins. That’s grace – that’s unmerited favor. As Christians (people who are Christ-like), it is that characteristic that we are to show one to another.

1 Peter 4:8 “And above all things, have fervent charity (love) among yourselves. For charity (love) shall cover the multitude of sins.”

If we live this passage, it does not mean we will never have disagreements or even arguments. What it does mean is that our love one for another will quickly cover these disagreements and peace and harmony will be restored. Good words to live by.

v.13 – The first part of this verse once again speaks of wisdom and how this will not only be evidenced in our actions but also our speech. It is that type of wisdom that we love to hear coming from the lips of those who are older and wiser than we are. Not only does wisdom give a person honor and a good reputation, but there is also a benefit of the person sharing that wisdom with others to make them wise as well (just as Solomon is doing through the inspired words that have been left to us).

The second part of this verse refers to a rod being used for discipline for someone who is not wise. All of us have likely experienced the “rod of correction” at sometime in our lives – and we usually remember it and what the correction was for. It brought to mind Michael Fay, a young man who at the age of 18 years old in 1994 was sentenced to caning in Singapore after he was arrested for theft and vandalism. He was sentenced to 6 stokes but it was reduced to 4 after the US appealed to Singapore for leniency. I have no doubt that this left an impression on the young man, possibly even marks that would be visible today.

For those who do not follow after wisdom, correction through having to deal with the resulting consequences will be made – and many times

lasting impressions are made. These may be emotional scars that take a long time to heal, or physical scars due to their actions. However, it is better to be corrected now and become a wise follower of Jesus Christ than to make it though this life only to hear “Depart from me; I never knew you” on judgment day.

[v.14](#) – This verse speaks about wise people laying up knowledge for themselves. I feel we are doing just that going through this study of Proverbs. Certainly we may not recall everything we have studied at this very moment, but there will likely come a time in our lives where what we have learned in these meetings will prove to be beneficial to us, helping us to discern between right and wrong or making the right choice. We must seek after wisdom, and hold onto it as the precious treasure that it is.

In contrast, the foolish pay no attention to knowledge or wisdom, but are constantly involved in some type of mischief toward others or even toward themselves. The Psalmist describes them best.

READ Psalm 52

[v. 15](#) – I have heard people say that “money is the root of all evil”. But that is not what the Bible says.

1 Timothy 6:10 “For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

Here, Solomon points out that just because someone is rich does not necessarily make them evil, but it can put a strain on their faith. In much the same way, those who are poor can struggle with the same faith questions as the rich.

The ones who are rich may think that they are happy because they are rich. They depend on their wealth for everything – it is their “strong city”. However, all of the money and wealth they have will not protect them from sickness, death, pain, sadness, or God’s final judgment. It’s OK to be wealthy – I think God wants us to be as blessed as possible. But money and wealth cannot become our god.

The ones who may be poor have similar challenges. The poor may allow their poverty to become their destruction. They get down on themselves, compare what they don’t have to what others do have, and it takes away their comfort and joy in this life.

No matter what we are blessed with in this life, it is all temporal – it will all pass away one day. As wise Christians, we must learn to say with the Apostle Paul, “...**for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.**” ([Philippians 4:11](#))

[v.16](#) – Solomon’s father, King David, had written the following:

[Psalm 37:16](#) **“A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.”**

A man who is righteous may have no more than what he works hard for and earns. He does not pursue after money alone, but wants to make sure that his family is cared for. If he is blessed, he may have some of what he earns to give to others that need it.

[Ephesians 4:28](#) **“Let him that stole steal no more. But rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”**

This may even refer to the work that a righteous man does with regard to his own salvation. He works hard to stay within God’s will, knowing that the end result is eternal life.

The wicked person, however, gets whatever he can by dishonest ways and it serves as a means for them to sin. Instead of laboring to earn what is rightfully theirs, they let the pursuit of wealth become their passion. Whatever they are able to attain, they keep it for themselves. In doing so, they lose their ability to trust completely in God.

Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus

[v.17](#) – Go back to the time when you were in school. You sat in a class and the teacher taught. They gave us instruction, most of the time that could be beneficial for us on a test in the classroom or even in our daily lives. They did their jobs – they taught us – they gave us homework they expected us to do to learn more about the subject matter. Did you ever have times where you were daydreaming in class and never heard a word that was said? Did you ever have times where you showed up in class without doing the homework that was assigned? Sure we did, we all did. When we did these things, we failed to listen or retain the instruction the teacher was trying to give to us.

We have a Bible composed of 66 books of the inspired word of God. Inside this Bible are instructions for wise, Godly, daily life that we are to adhere to. We are called upon to attend class.

Hebrews 10:25 “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. But exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

We were given homework as well:

2 Timothy 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Are we assembling together to learn about Christ’s will for our lives in Sunday School, Worship, Bible Study, Prayer Meetings, and other services we hold? Are we regularly studying the scriptures to gain more knowledge and wisdom about how to live a life that is pleasing to God?

We must not only receive instruction, but we must keep it as well. When we do this, we are “in the way of life” – we’re on the right pathway that leads to our eternal home in Heaven.

There are others, as pointed out in this verse, who do not receive instruction but actually refuse it. They don’t want anyone, including God, to tell them what to do. So they go about their own way and they err from the truth and fall into sin.

One reason they may refuse God’s instruction is that it points out the faults we have in our lives. No one is perfect, and as we read and study God’s Word, we realize how short we have fallen from the glory of God.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the Word of God is quick (living) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

It is like one who is travelling and is headed in the wrong direction, who continues down the wrong way even when given the right

direction to go. There will be no excuse for this when they come face to face with Almighty God.

[v.18 – v.21](#) – The next few verses in this chapter deal with the tongue. We have briefly touched on this earlier.

There is an old joke:

Question – How can you tell when a politician is lying?

Answer – His lips are moving.

The punch line of this joke is actually a good example of what Solomon is speaking about in [v.18](#). We have already spoken about hate and how we as Christians should not have this trait in our characters. Here, Solomon is speaking about someone who actually hides their hate for others with lies from their mouth. Lying about someone is bad enough, but it seems even more malicious when it hides the hate that one person has for another. We must remember that NOTHING is hidden from God. When people engage in this type of behavior or even speak untrue, slanderous things about other, the scripture calls them fools.

It is important to note here our notes from [Chapter 9](#), specifically [verse 8](#), where we are told not to reprove a scorner lest he hate us. The first thing we want is revenge, justice, to give them back what they deserve. It is in these times, and they will come, that we need to rely on God's Word:

[Romans 12:19](#) "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written, vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord."

We are also told that there is a time to speak, and a time to hold our tongue. We are told that one who refrains his lips is wise. This is one who thinks before they speak, and then speaks with Godly wisdom.

[James 1:19](#) "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

The final two verses of this section ([v.20-v.21](#)) contrast the just / righteous and the wicked / fools.

A wise person learns God's Word, relies on it, and keeps it hidden in their hearts to keep them away from sin. When they speak, they

speak from the heart, which is (and should be) centered on God. The words from their mouth reflect their wise and Godly character and are called "choice silver" (not usual silver, but the very best that can be found) in scripture.

Psalm 12:6 "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

The words of the righteous are also referred to as food that will feed many. They enrich all those who hear them because they reflect the Word of God, which is the Bread of Life. Just as Jesus fed the 5,000 on the hillside, the character of one righteous person can go a long way toward showing Christ to a lost and dying world.

In contrast, the heart of the wicked is said to be worth very little. Just as the Word of God, stored up in the heart of the righteous, came though in their character and their speech, so too the words of the wicked come from a heart that is worth very little – and so is their character and their speech to others.

Whereas the words of the righteous "feed" others by glorifying God, the wicked and fools perish and die for desiring the wisdom they do not have.

"While the righteous feed others, fools starve themselves." – Matthew Henry

v.22 – When God blesses us, we should rejoice in it. God's blessings carry no sorrow or regret with them, as long as we realize where our blessing come from, and give God the glory for all.

Whether they are financial, material, personal, or spiritual, we must realize that our blessings come from God Almighty. Even if we work hard to earn a good financial living, it is God who gives us the health, strength, and knowledge to do the job.

We earn our living by hard honest work, but we must always give God the glory for His blessing and grace that allow us to enjoy all that He allows us to obtain.

v.23 – We cannot fool around with sin without being affected. As Christians, we are called upon to be set apart from the world – there should be a visible difference in terms of our actions, our speech, and our character.

Solomon speaks of someone who willingly engages in sin as a fool. This is speaking of someone who knows better, but does it anyway. They make sin a laughing matter instead of life-and-death matter. To them, it is a game, a sport. When they sin, they feel no remorse, but rather go on about their business as if nothing had happened.

Proverbs 14:9 “Fools make a mock at sin...”

They live without any fear of consequences, repercussions, or results of their actions. They don't care who gets hurt, not even themselves. This is a dangerous place for one to find oneself, and Solomon refers to these as fools.

On the other hand, the wise person knows right from wrong, and always seeks to do the right thing. True, they will make mistakes, when they fail to “hit the mark” of Christian living – but they do not willingly sin. When they do make mistakes, they feel remorse, come to Christ and ask for forgiveness, and have an assurance within themselves that Christ's love will “cover a multitude of sins”.

v.24 - v.25 – As Christians, we should not fear death. Certainly, we all want to live and enjoy this life as long as God allows. But if God tarries, we know that death will come to all of us one day. The good news for us is that we know that this world is not our home, death is not the end, and we're going to a place where we can spend eternity with the One who loved us all enough to make a way for us to be with Him. We can look forward to that day.

For those who do not know Christ, the thought of death should (and does, in many cases) bring fear upon them. They too realize that their days are numbered, and soon they will also face death. I think most people know there is a God, although they may live their lives without giving their hearts to Him. As the days pass and they get older, thinking about the time when they will take their last breath, fear tends to grip their heart. They may be too old and stubborn to change, and they realize that all they have done will one day come under the judgment of God.

The righteous long for the day when they can see Jesus face-to-face. They go through this life with their faith firmly planted on the foundation of God's Word and His promises.

Look at the contrast the Psalmist makes between these two types of people:

Psalm 37:9

Wicked – **“For evildoers shall be cut off...”**

Righteous – **“...but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.”**

Psalm 37:10

Wicked – **“For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be.**

Yea, thought shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.”

Psalm 37:11

Righteous – **“But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”**

Psalm 37:35-36

Wicked – **“I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away and, lo, he was not. Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.”**

Psalm 37:37

Righteous – **“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright. For the end of that man is peace.”**

v.26 – This verse is speaking about a lazy worker, someone who is a sluggard. The scripture states that they are an aggravation to their employer. In all likelihood, these are people that would quickly be fired from their jobs. If they are lazy, they are not dependable, cannot be trusted to accomplish any job set before them, and are not devoted at all to the one who blesses them with a paycheck.

I think we can all agree that someone like this would not last in most work environments. But what about if we apply this same test to us as Christians, working for our Master, Jesus Christ?

Are we workers for Christ? Are we an aggravation to Him because of our laziness? Can Christ depend on us? Can He trust us to spread the Gospel as He commanded in the Great Commission? Are we completely devoted to the One who gives us our health, our blessings, even the very air we breathe?

The scripture states that this lazy worker is like vinegar that sets teeth on edge or smoke getting in someone's eyes that brings tears streaming down their cheek.

There was once a southern gospel song titled, "Who Put the Tears in the Eyes of the Lamb?". I wonder if we put tears in the eyes of our Savior because of failing to live according to His Word? I fear that we do.

May God give us all a strong desire to serve Him to the best of our abilities each and every day.

[v.27 – v.28](#) – Once again, Solomon tells us that the fear (respect) of the Lord will prolong life. In Chapter 9, we learned that the fear of the Lord was also the beginning of wisdom.

[Proverbs 9:10](#) **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..."**

We are told that the hope of the righteous will be gladness. The hope of the righteous is not what they have right now, but what they will have one day in Heaven. They long to hear **"...Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."** ([Matthew 25:21](#))

For the wicked, the picture is bleak. Their wicked lifestyle shortens their lives and they have no hope. The years that they have are spent in sin, and in the end, it all amounts to nothing. Whatever they expected from their wicked actions will only result in sorrow.

[v.29 – v.30](#) – In these two verses, the happiness of Godly people and the misery of those who are wicked are laid side-by-side. People who follow God walk in "the way of the Lord". This can refer to multiple attributes of God – His providence toward us, the way He works in our lives, the way we ourselves walk before God. All of these are said to be our strength. All of these serve to help us in our daily walk with the Lord, impressing upon us the duty we have to God and others as Christians, as well as being our shield and supporter when trials or discouragements come our way. The closer we walk with God, the more in His way we will be and the more strength we will have to overcome the obstacles of life.

Job 17:9 “The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.”

The closer we walk to God, the better our pathway of life will be. The joy of living a Godly life will be strength to us.

Nehemiah 8:10 “Then he said to them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. For this day is holy unto our Lord. Neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Solomon states that the righteous shall never be removed. Just as [verse 25](#) spoke about the solid foundation of the righteous, this verse speaks of the joy, peace, and happiness that are found in serving God that cannot be taken away from us.

Ruin and destruction, however, are the consequences of wickedness. Even though the wicked may accumulate much here on this earth, they will not inhabit the earth – God Himself will root them out, just as illustrated in the parable of the wheat and the tares. We may live and grow together in this world, but in the end, the wicked will be sentenced to Hell forever.

v.31 – v.32 – By the words we say, we are judged.

Matthew 12:37 “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

A wise person speaks wisely, not only for their own benefit but also for the benefit of others. God is the One who grants wisdom, and the wise person, in thankfulness for this wisdom, does good with it and not only brings upon themselves a good reputation but also benefits others.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 “For God giveth to a man that is good in His sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy...”

In contrast, God is not pleased with the “forward” tongue. This word “forward” means obstinate, willful, disobedient, wayward, and difficult. While the Godly person speaks wisely, the person described here is also speaking things that are contrary or willfully disobedient to God. While God is pleased with us when we utilize the wisdom He grants to us in our speech, He is not pleased with wicked conversation.

Psalm 12:3 "The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things."