

Proverbs - Chapter 11

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[v.1](#) – All through Proverbs, the problem of deceit between people is mentioned as being an abomination to God (something He detests, something He finds shameful). On the surface, this seems to be dealing with people who do business with others in an unfair way. It's like someone asking for a pound of sugar, and the merchant only giving them a portion of what they asked for, but charging them the full price, because the scales are set in an unfair balance.

But this also goes directly to our behavior as Christians. We can proclaim ourselves to be Godly and righteous, but if we are not honest with each other, including those we do business with, God is not pleased.

God is merciful, but He is also a God of justice. In the story of Lazarus and the rich man, Lazarus only received suffering in this life, while the rich man had everything he wanted. Lazarus put his trust in the Lord, while the rich man put his trust in himself and his wealth. Most of us would say it's unfair for something like this to occur – a good and Godly person only experiencing suffering, while others ignore God and seem to have no problems whatsoever.

But God sees beyond today to tomorrow. Lazarus, as well as the rich man, received justice in the end, with Lazarus being comforted and the rich man experiencing the horrors of hell.

The scripture states that "...a just weight is His delight". In the end, God alone will hold the scales of judgment for all of us. We cannot tip the scale one way or the other when we stand before Him. Our lives and our deeds will speak for themselves.

[v.2](#) – Once again, pride is condemned in this book. We are reminded that pride ("a haughty look") is one of the things God states that He hates. Scripture tells us that "pride cometh before a fall" and it is something that we need to be careful not to allow into our lives or our churches. When we realize that everything we have, everything we are able to accomplish, and even the very air that we breathe comes from God, none of us have reason to be proud or exalt ourselves above anyone else. The worst sinner we can imagine is still one of God's creations whom He loves.

What a contrast is made between the prideful and the lowly. While pride brings shame, meekness brings wisdom. Jesus even said that the meek will inherit the earth in His Sermon on the Mount. As Christians, we can be bold in sharing the good news of the Gospel message, but we need to always remain humble in doing so. Meekness is not a sign of weakness, but rather a symbol of our dependence and reliance on Almighty God.

v.3 - Integrity has been called, "doing what is right when no one is looking." Someone who is a person of integrity will have their every step guided by what is right, what is honest, and what is truthful. They have values and principle that guide the decisions they make. They do what's right, even if it is hard for them. They do what is right because it is right, not for what someone may say for or against them.

We expect our leaders, whether in a church, politics, or business, to be people of integrity. We expect them to do what's right – and we hold them accountable. But God expects us all to be people of integrity – and He will hold us accountable for our actions.

Psalm 25:21 "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee."

In this verse, our God of justice is seen once again. People of integrity are promised guidance, but it is also said that the ones who pervert honesty and truthfulness will eventually be destroyed. Their own character will eventually show through and they will meet their end.

v.4 – It's been said, "you can't take it with you". The Bible says that we brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it with us. This could not be more true than with money or possessions.

God blesses each of us in different ways. Regardless of our blessing (material, financial, family, friends, etc.), all will be left behind when the last breath leaves our body.

No matter how much someone has in this world, it cannot stop the judgment of God, nor can it add one more day to their life. It can't be used to buy their way into Heaven, or to make up for sins we have committed.

Jesus said that He was the way, the truth, and the life and no one would enter into Heaven except through Him. People who put their faith, hope, and trust into money or material possessions will one day

find themselves lost forever if they don't have Christ in their lives – first and foremost.

This verse goes on to say that righteousness will deliver us from death. This is not the earthly death we are acquainted with. The Bible says that we are all appointed to die once, and then the judgment will come. The faith, hope, and trust of a righteous person will be rewarded with a mansion in Heaven – something we did not and could not earn, but something that has been prepared for all of God's children.

v.5 – v.6 – These two verses say essentially the same thing. It also relates back to v. 3 where integrity was shown. The fact that the benefits of righteous living as well as the destruction of the wicked are mentioned 3 times in the first 6 verses show that this is such an important fact that it needs to be understood by all who read Proverbs.

Honest and truthful living is the best avenue for us to take in any circumstance, although it may not always be the easiest way. Satan will always try to entice us to take the easy way instead of the right way. Scripture even tells us of this fact:

Matthew 7:14 “...Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth into life, and few there be that find it.”

The ways of the wicked are dangerous and destructive. We need never forget that. Living a Christian life isn't always easy, but the reward at the end of our road makes it worthwhile.

v.7 – One who constantly strives for riches, fame, and wealth in this world with no regard for God will one day end up with nothing. Nothing they are able to accumulate in this world will matter. Without God, they are actually poor – they have nothing that is lasting. Without God, they have no hope. Job, who lost everything he had, including his family, realized this.

Job 27:8 “For what is the hope of the hypocrite, although he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?”

Even in his misery, Job realized that wealth, possessions, and even his health were nothing without God in his life.

As Christians, we have a hope that there is more. We have a sure hope of a home in Heaven one day. And the hope of the reward we

have does not even compare to what it will actually be. Wicked and evil people who put their trust in things other than Christ will die without any hope and be lost forever.

v.8 – We know this for sure, that God always delivers. It may not be in our time or even in our way, but God always comes through. There are numerous accounts in the Bible where God is shown to have been a Deliverer to His people.

Psalm 66:12 **“Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.”**

Psalm 34:19 **“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.”**

God always seems to come on the scene in our lives at the right time, on time, and every time.

The second part of this verse is also illustrated in scripture. It states that “...the wicked cometh in his stead.” There are several examples of this in the Bible.

* In Esther, Mordecai is saved from being hanged, but the one who conspired against him, Haman, is the one who is hanged.

* Daniel is spared by God in the lions’ den, but the ones who conspired against him were thrown into the den and torn to pieces before they ever hit the floor.

* The Israelites passed on dry ground through the Red Sea, but when the Egyptians tried to follow them, the waters closed in around them and they were drowned.

God delivered them and He will deliver us from anything we face.

“He may not keep you from the fire, but He’ll keep you through it.”

v.9 – We can easily harm others with our words. Jesus commanded that we love our neighbor as ourselves. People normally do not intentionally harm themselves. Yet this verse speaks of someone who actually destroys their neighbor with their words. This could be enticing them into something they should not be involved in, or

flattering them in some way so that they could be taken advantage of – tempting them.

The Bible tells us that every time temptation comes our way, God will make a way of escape for all of us – but it's up to us to take that way out or ignore it. This verse states that knowledge will deliver the just person from this type of evil.

What knowledge is this speaking of? Knowledge of God, His Word, His tenets, and the teachings of scripture – in other words, wisdom.

[v.10 - v.11](#) – These verses speak to the character of righteous and wicked people. It shows the contrast between the two and how they are perceived by others.

We all know people who are good, Godly, and ones whom we generally respect. Others, who have similar values and principles, usually think highly of them. But even those who live wicked lives apart of God many time recognize that these are people who are “different” than anyone else, and will even speak kindly of them (although their values and principles are worlds apart).

However, it usually does not work the same way in reverse. We all know people who live their lives recklessly and apart from God. As Christians, our values and principles do not align with theirs. We love the sinner, but are saddened by their sins. We want to see them turn their lives over to the Lord – but we usually do not hear good things said about them.

This verse is even a little coarse, stating that there is actually shouting and joy in the city when the wicked perish. This may be a little bit of “getting what they deserve”. While no one likes to see good people suffer, there is little compassion for people who are wicked. I don't think anyone in the United States shed a tear the night it was announced that Osama Bin Laden had been killed. In fact, there were probably shouts of joy.

[v.12 - v.13](#) - Sometimes, we just need to be quiet. Instead of saying what we want to say, or instead of saying anything at all, we need to remain silent. For me personally, this is hard to do.

The first part of this section specifically talks about an unwise person using their mouth to talk about their neighbor in an unkind way. But it

goes on to say that one of understanding, or someone who is wise, remains quiet. This in and of itself shows self-control.

The next section speaks about lying and gossiping, referred to as a talebearer. This talebearer picks up information on everyone they can, and spreads it around, whether it is true or false, and doesn't worry about the consequences that may result.

But the one with the faithful spirit keeps confidential items to themselves. They hold the trust of others firm, and do not betray that trust by spreading secrets or gossip.

We need to be careful when someone has shared something with us in confidence. We need to hold that confidence dear, and honor the request for confidentiality.

v.14 – This is a great passage for any pastor and any church. The pastor is the spiritual leader of the church – but not the head of the church. The pastor is the leader and guide of a church – but not the director of everything that is done.

Counsel from many different areas is needed for a church to be successful. No one person, or group of people, have all the answers – but together, seeking God for His wisdom and guidance, a better decision can be made when there is more input and counsel.

Here at our church, we have a Board of Deacons that provide counsel. We have a Youth Director that provides counsel. We have a Sunday School Superintendent that provides counsel. We have a Building and Grounds committee that provides counsel. We have trustees that provide counsel. We have a Finance Committee that provides counsel. If any one of these tried to handle it all, it would be a nightmare. In contrast, we have divided responsibilities and oversight, which means counsel on decisions come from many different sources. As a result, we usually end up with a better decision as a group than anyone could have arrived at alone.

Where there is no counsel, people divide into factions, do not get opportunities to provide input, and tend to feel left out.

Our first source of counsel should always be the Lord – ALWAYS. As a church body, we should seek God's guidance to make all of our decisions.

v.15 – To be a surety, someone must pledge that they are responsible for another, and that they secure a debt or obligation of someone else. A good example would be godparents.

The godparents pledge that if something happens to the natural parents of a child before they are old enough to take care of themselves, the godparents will raise the child as their own, fulfilling all obligations that a parent has, including all of the expenses involved.

When we think about this in those terms, this verse has real meaning. It states that whoever enters into a surety agreement with a stranger will, in the end, be hurt because of it. The reason for this is due to the trust and confidence involved in making this type of arrangement. People asked to be godparents for a child are undoubtedly known very well by the parents. They feel confident that the child will be raised in a good home by people who will love and treat that child as their very own. That can be expected of someone known well and trusted in full.

This would not be the case for a stranger. None of us would hand the future of our child over to someone whom we did not know. That would seem ridiculous to us.

In the same way, this verse states that when we enter into relationships and agreements with people we do not know, making promises that we may not be able to keep, in the end, it will hurt us, and possibly many of those closest to us.

Similarly, marriage is a type of surety arrangement. The two pledge that they will become one – all of the joys are shared, as well as all the heartaches. In light of this, marriage is not to be entered into haphazardly. One of the questions I always ask couples is, "How long have you known each other?" I think it is important for them to know each other well so that the marriage has a better chance of lasting. If they enter into this too quickly, what they thought was love becomes dislike at the first sign of problems.

The greatest of all surety examples was shown on Calvary when Christ paid our debt. He did so while we were sinners and strangers to Him in our own eyes.

Romans 5:6 "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

He paid our debt and took the obligation of our punishment, even while we looked at Him as a stranger. However, we were not strangers to Him – we were His creation – we were His friends.

John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

v.16 – The word "gracious", especially when used in connection with a woman, brings to mind an old-fashioned Southern Belle – pleasant, kind, courteous, etc. For a woman with these traits, it would stand to reason that they would take care to preserve their reputation and make sure that their conduct is above reproach.

In contrast with this, the scripture shows that a strong or ruthless man may get rich, as they prey on the ones who are weaker.

The woman seeks to maintain her reputation of honor, while the man doesn't care about his reputation – only what material wealth he can accumulate.

I don't think this is a blanket application to every man, or even every woman. I think the verse is designed to show the difference in character between two people – one who is gracious, and one who is ruthless in their dealings with others.

v.17 – The first part of this verse speaks of a merciful man. This is someone who shows kindness, compassion, or favor on someone else – friend or enemy. When we show compassion or charity to others in the name of the Lord, we are showing the same type of mercy and compassion He had for us as He died on the Cross.

In Matthew 25, Jesus is sharing how we need to show this quality to others.

Matthew 25:40 "...Verily I say unto you. Inasmuch as ye as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

But we know that all people are not always merciful. Some can be outright cruel. The scripture says that he troubles his own flesh. No one really wants to do this, but the consequences of cruel actions have this effect.

Ephesians 5:29 "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it..."

Do you want to be around cruel people? Do you want to have anything to do with them?

It reminds me of Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Scrooge is a greedy, stingy, cruel businessman who has no place in his life for any type of love or compassion. He ends up spending Christmas Eve alone, where he has a realization that he will end up alone forever if he does not change his ways.

v.18 – This verse states the obvious – wicked people are deceitful. And they seem to trust in their deceit. They are like the man who built his house upon the sand, and when the storms came, it fell because it had no firm foundation.

In much the same way, the deceitfulness of the wicked causes their heart to trust in their own strength, plans, and devices to get them through. But as we have previously seen in this chapter, their end is only destruction.

The contrast is made to one who sows righteousness – one who does good everywhere they go. They go through this life, knowing that their reward is not here, but in Heaven.

Galatians 6:8 "For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

v.19 – One day, those who are righteous will end their journey in a place of everlasting life – Heaven. A life that is righteous is one that is full, with God leading every step we take, and having Jesus as our friend that will always remain closer than a brother.

In this way, righteous living leads us toward an eternal life with Jesus Christ.

In contrast, ones who pursue evil will do so to their very death. It almost paints the picture of one who is so engrossed in doing evil that they rush headlong toward their own death – both physically and spiritually.

However, we must never forget that, although accepting or rejecting Christ is a personal choice, it may be that the evil ones are saved by looking at the lives of the righteous.

"We may be the only sermon some ever see / hear."

v.20 – When we love someone, and we know what they like, we enjoy pleasing them. Ginger loves the Outer Banks (specifically, The Sunset Grill) and I enjoy taking her there. She hates whitewater rafting. She went with me one time, and I doubt I will ever get her back on a raft again.

With God, we need to know what He loves and what He hates and considers to be an abomination. The things He loves, we should strive to do – we should stay away from the things He hates.

Here, the scripture states that He considers a froward heart (one that is willfully contrary) to be an abomination – something that He despises and considers to be shameful. In essence, the scripture is saying that God despises someone who is willfully disobedient, and who acts directly in contradiction to His word. This is more than acts of omission and commission – it is actually knowing what is right and making a conscious decision to do what is wrong. God says that He hates that type of person.

However, the Lord gets joy from those who are upright and walk in His statutes. Job was called an upright man, and God even spoke to Satan about how proud He was of this man.

I wonder if God ever brags on us as being one of His delights?

v.21 – There is an old saying mothers used to tell their children – "If everyone were jumping off the bridge, would you do it too?" Of course not. But moms were trying to make a point. The wrong thing to do, is the wrong thing to do – no matter how many people are doing it.

This scripture states that although there are many doing evil, joined hand-in-hand, thinking there is strength in numbers, that will not save them from the punishment and judgment to come.

Too many times today, we see people commit crimes that get blamed on their parents rather than holding the individual accountable for their actions. We seem to want to put the blame somewhere other than where it belongs – on the person themselves.

This is nothing new. It started in the Garden of Eden when Eve blamed the serpent, Adam blamed Eve, and then even blamed God for giving him Eve in the first place. The reality was that their fall into sin was no one's fault other than their own. And this hand-in-hand approach to blaming someone else for our sins has continued to this day.

We will all one day give an account for our own actions – not those of our family or anyone else.

The scripture does say, however, that the children of the righteous man shall be delivered. Does this mean that if a child is born into a Christian home, they are automatically saved after reaching the age of accountability? Absolutely not. But what it does imply is that a solid Christian foundation in a home where righteousness is practiced gives the children good moral, ethical, and Godly tenets to follow.

Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

v.22 – I am sure all of you growing up on a farm have seen hogs going around with gold jewels in their noses! You haven't? Neither have I! After all, what good would it be for a pig to have an expensive piece of jewelry in their snout? It would be useless.

In much the same way, a woman, no matter how beautiful she might be, is filthy and dirty as a pig without discretion. A woman can be beautiful on the outside, but if she has questionable moral and ethics, she is ugly on the inside – and that exterior beauty is as much displaced on her as a gold jewel in the snout of a pig.

What matters most to all of us is what's on the inside. Jesus told the Pharisees that although they practiced their piety in public and wore their religious superiority on their sleeve, they were dead on the inside – they were whitewashed tombs – the outside looked good, but the inside was full of death and filth.

We may not be the most beautiful people in the world – but if we have Jesus in our hearts and are one of His children, we are one of the most beautiful things He's ever seen.

v.23 – The desire of the righteous is only good. They want things to go well for themselves and those they care about, they do not want to

hurt anyone intentionally or unintentionally, they want to have a clean conscience, and they want God to be pleased with them.

Psalm 37:4 "Delight thyself also in the Lord. And He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

On the other hand, the expectation of the wicked is wrath. Note the difference in the words used here: *desire* vs. *expectation*. The wicked expect the wrath of God to take out those who oppose them and clear the way for them to continue their evil work. That's what they expect. What they will receive is knowledge (too late) that the wrath of God will be imposed on them as well.

They want the wrath of God on others not on themselves. While the righteous desire something (to wish or long for, to crave), the wicked expect something (something looked forward to). The righteous crave good, while the wicked look forward to their opposition being destroyed. In the end, the righteous will gain their desire, while the wicked will not receive the end they are looking for.

v.24 – This verse shows two types of people. The first one scatters good about during their lives, and gains an increase. This may refer to a material increase in substance, or it could refer to an increase in spirituality. Either way, doing good during this life is actually in response to bearing the title of being a Christian. We are Christ-like. He went about doing good everywhere He went, and so should we. We will be rewarded for this.

2 Corinthians 9:10 "Now He that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness."

The next type of person tries to gain solely earthly material riches by fraud, deceit, or keeping back more than is acceptable. Tithing is a good example of this. Folks, we can never outgive God. I have seen how God has blessed on many occasions where people gave of their means to His work. The tithe is a tenth of our income, our time, our talents, anything we can offer. Our offerings are above that amount. Keeping back more than is rightfully ours will result in our poverty, both material and spiritual.

When we give to God, He always blesses us.

v.25 – Again, this verse is talking about giving. The reference to a “liberal” soul is not speaking about religious or political viewpoints. It is speaking about a character trait that we all should desire. A liberal soul is one that prays for those in needs, blesses others whenever they have a chance, gives of their time and talents for the upbuilding of God’s kingdom, and shares the gospel whenever the opportunity arises. Whatever they share will be more than returned to them, making their souls fat – more blessings of God, more grace shown by Him, a fuller and happier life.

Likewise, the one that “waters” others, sharing with them the blessing that God has bestowed upon them, tends to receive even more blessings from God.

Malachi 3:10 “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house. And prove me now herewith saith the Lord of host, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall be not enough room to receive it.”

When we can’t contain all the blessings God bestows upon us, it’s time to make room – and we do that by sharing God’s blessings with others. It starts by faith with our giving – it is multiplied by Almighty God as a reward of our faithfulness.

v.26 – In Old Testament times when there was a famine in the land, grain was stored in advance in times of plenty to ensure that the people could be fed in times of need. It was distributed to those who needed it. Can you imagine someone having a storehouse full of grain, more than they could ever use, and keeping it away from people who were hungry and were willing to buy it to survive – just because they were selfish?

That’s what this verse really gets down to – selfishness. The scripture states that people will curse those who are selfish, but will bless those who will help them get what they need, even if there is a cost involved.

Likewise, we have something precious – the love of Jesus. And there is a lost and dying world that is hungry to know about Jesus. If we fail to share the good news of the Gospel, we are simply hoarding this wonderful news for ourselves.

Can you imagine how many people we could save from Hell if we made a concerted effort every day to share Christ with just one person who was lost?

v.27 – We've spoken about people with good reputations earlier in this chapter. Those who diligently (a constant effort to accomplish something) seek to do good gain favor of people around them.

Notice, however, that the same word "seek" (to go in search or in quest of) is used for good and mischief. One is constantly striving to do good, while the other is constantly striving to do mischief.

Those who constantly search for opportunities to do good are favored. Those who constantly search for opportunities to do mischief will have their own plans ruin them in the end.

v.28 – As mentioned previously, riches mean nothing when we come to the end of our lives. Keep in mind that this was written by one of the richest men in the history of time. Riches by themselves are not evil. But when we put them above our faith and trust in the Lord, they become our god, and God has already told us that He will have no other gods before Him.

In the end, riches, if trusted, will fail. They will do no one any good.

In contrast, the scripture states that righteousness shall flourish as a branch. Righteous Christians are grafted into Christ, the "true vine". From here, we are constantly watered by a well that will never run dry, and we can be fruitful Christians.

In the hot summertime, young trees and plants need water or they will wither and die. But when tended properly, they will flourish and grow, and will become beautiful plants to give us enjoyment and pleasure. In much the same way, Christ wants us to flourish and grow. And we can, as long as we remain rooted and grounded in Him.

v.29 – This verse basically shows that one who brings trouble on himself or his family by carelessness or by wickedness will never be able to enjoy what he gets. It is like he is trying to grab hold of the wind, which is impossible.

There is an implied fact here of a man's primary obligation to be a blessing to his family, not a stumblingblock. The best way for a man

(the head of the household) to do this is to live a Godly and righteous life before his wife and children.

v.30 – This verse actually deals with leading others to Christ – winning souls for Him. The first part of this verse deals with what the righteous produce, called here “a tree of life”. This sounds similar to the tree found in the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Knowledge. While that tree was forbidden to be touched by Adam and Eve, the knowledge borne as fruit of the righteous is to be shared.

As we share our knowledge of Christ with others, the Holy Spirit convicts and saves. This scripture states that we are wise if we sin souls for Christ.

v.31 – Above all, we serve a God who is just and fair. God is fair with everyone. The righteous will receive good things in this life, and God will continually provide for them. God is also fair with the wicked and with the sinner, and they will receive a fair punishment from God.

As Christians, we certainly trust God in all we do. And He’s always more than fair with how He blesses us, keeps us, and answers our prayers.

Solomon is reminding us here that the wicked and sinners will also receive a fair punishment for their deeds.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”