



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

PROVERBS LESSON 10

Today we will continue contrasting the wise with the foolish. Yes, we will observe some repeated themes, but Solomon will be adding a little more information to each, or showing us another side. Bruce Waltke titles chapter 14, "Living in Wisdom." Hubbard titled it, "Fear of the Lord and control of Self." Our chapter will remind us who needs wisdom, who has wisdom, ways to identify the wise and the foolish, the difference between wisdom and folly in the home, in our words, in our workplace, and in our personal life. Let's try not to read through these with the attitude of, "Hey, we already heard this!" But let's ask the Holy Spirit to expose yet another area of our heart in which we can surrender more fully to Him. Have a wonderful week studying God's Word!

First Day

1. Read Proverbs 14:1-35. Write down any repeated words, thoughts, or phrases.
2. Look for themes or topics that have been discussed. Put them into "categories" such as speech, anger, etc. List the verses that talk about each topic.

3. If you had to give chapter 14 an overall title to summarize it, what would it be?

4. What specific verses specifically spoke to your heart? Why?

That's it for today. Now that you have an overall picture of chapter 14, we'll get more specific tomorrow. Be asking the Lord to show you two things this week ... What does He want to teach you about Him, and what does He want to teach you about yourself?

Memory Verse of the Week: "In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge." Proverbs 14:26

Second Day

Work on your memory verse. How does it speak to your heart?

1. Read Proverbs 14:1 and the contrast between a wise and foolish woman. How can we, as women, pull our house down with our hands? What is Solomon saying?

2. Do you think neglect can have anything to do with it?

3. What are some practical ways a wise woman can "build" her house? How can a woman cause her home to flourish?

4. As a woman, are you following the path of the wise or the foolish? Are you on the construction crew or the demolition crew? What changes can you make?

5. Read Proverbs 14:2, 26-27. What theme do they share? How does it add color or insight to what has already been discussed on the topic?

A person's attitude toward the Lord is reflected in his behavior. We either "fear" or "despise" the Lord. No one can say they believe in God (fear the Lord) when they live unrighteously, for God despises that. If you love and fear the Lord, why would you do what He hates? The fool is devious; claims to be something he's not, failing to take sin seriously.

6. Why does a healthy fear of God bring confidence? How does it build security?

7. Why does Solomon refer to it as a "fountain of life?"

I think my favorite verse in this chapter is verse 26; that "His children will have a place of refuge." I love it! I need that fact today. I need a place to run to, to feel secure, to know I'm safe. I need a place to run when I'm afraid, when I'm alone, or when I need help. To know that He is my place of refuge is such an amazing blessing!

8. Have you made the Lord your place of refuge or do you run to other things or people first? In what do you find your confidence and security?

9. Read Proverbs 14:3. What do you make of it?

The phrase "the rod of pride" is an interesting one. Some commentators seem to think that it means a fool blurts out everything that comes into his mind and gets himself into trouble, whereas the wise are much more restrained in their speech. Others think it may mean that in his pride the fool lashes others with his tongue, always accusing and condemning any who don't go along with him, but the wise protect the victims of their lashing.

10. Read Proverbs 14:4. What is Solomon trying to communicate about investing time and effort into work? How does this relate to what he's already said about having a strong work ethic?

11. To end today, let's take a look at 14:5 and 25. What is he saying about "court behavior"?

See you tomorrow, my friends!

Third Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Read Proverbs 14:6-8. A scoffer seeks wisdom, but does not find it. He doesn't recognize its value, nor does he look for it in the right place. In what kinds of places or things might he be looking?

2. In verse 7 we find our first "imperative" statement, which comes with a sense of urgency. What is Solomon urging or commanding them to do, and why?

3. What is so dangerous about reasoning with a fool? (Matthew 7:6)

4. Verse 9 is linked to verse 8 by the word "folly." How do they tie together?

Fools mock guilt and refuse to make amends for their actions. They don't really care, whereas the upright try to avoid sin, but when they are found guilty, they take responsibility and make things right.

5. From the above description, who do you most resemble? Are you quick to Take responsibility for your sins?

6. Read Proverbs 14:10. Solomon seems to be reminding them that no one else can really know exactly how you're feeling or be fully experienced by someone else. Why do you think he'd be sharing this while contrasting wisdom and foolishness?

I think this is such an interesting verse. Everyone has private feelings and emotions that we experience that are individual to us. Verse 10 is such a great reminder of two things. First, if you're wise, you'll remember that when someone is sharing their feelings with you, don't say something hurtful or inappropriate, such as, "I know exactly how you feel." Or, if you're the one hurting, you'll understand that no one else can fully understand what you're going through and you should not be frustrated when someone doesn't "get it." In context, Solomon is admonishing the wise to be sensitive with their words.

7. Have you ever had someone do this to you? While expressing your pain, they seem to turn it towards them and how they felt rather than trying to sympathize with you? How did it make you feel?

8. When you are ministering to someone who is hurting, do you try too hard to identify with them and maybe talk about yourself and how you can relate to them too much? What's the balance between identifying with them and making it about yourself?

I'm not sure if I've ever seen this verse before. It's such a great reminder of the individuality we all possess and how to keep that in the forefront of our minds. Solomon, you're pretty smart! 😊 I mean wise ...

9. Proverbs 14:11-12 talks about specific destinies. What is Solomon reminding them of?

10. Verse 13 seems to relate to verse 10 because it's talking about our emotions. Sometimes what someone looks like on the outside doesn't reflect the reality of what they're feeling. What do you think this Proverb means?

11. Do you ever try to cover up your aching heart with laughter? If you do, maybe others do as well. Why do we need so much wisdom when ministering to others?

12. Read Proverbs 14:13-14. What repeated word connects these two verses?

13. Again, verse 14 refers to their destinies. What is the reward of the good man?

14. Last question of the day. Whose ways are you "filled" with, yours or the Lord's? Are you "satisfied" with God's reward, or are you looking for something else to bring satisfaction? Think about it ...

Fourth Day

What's your verse? Are you seeking refuge in Him today?

1. Read Proverbs 14:15. What does he say is another mark of a fool?

The phrase "considers his steps" can also be translated "looks where he's going." He is careful about what he does. Paul says the same thing in Ephesians 5:15-17; "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Peter said pretty much the same thing in 1 Peter 5:8; "be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking him whom he may devour."

2. How careful are you as you journey through this life? Are you watching carefully and considering your steps? The consequences of your actions? Your testimony to the world? Your obedience to the will of God? Do you walk circumspectly? How closely do you watch your steps?

3. Read Proverbs 14:16-17, along with 29. What's another mark of a fool? What are some of the results of being quick tempered and impulsive? What can happen?

4. What do the following verses say about this?
 - A. Proverbs 27:4
 - B. Proverbs 30:33
 - C. Proverbs 29:11
 - D. Proverbs 29:22
 - E. Ecclesiastes 7:9
 - F. Ephesians 4:26
 - G. Ephesians 4:31

5. What do these verses say about God's anger?
 - A. Psalm 30:5
 - B. Psalm 103:8

6. Are you quick tempered? Do you anger easily? Can your spouse, kids, or friends attest to this? What changes do you need to make in this area?

7. Read Proverbs 14:18-21. Explain verses 18-19 in your own words.

Solfrid Storoy suggests that verses 20-21 are designed "to stimulate thought about how one should respond to those who appear inferior or peculiar in some way." This text warns the reader not to be the kind of person that looks down on his poor or less fortunate neighbor. We will receive favor from the Lord if we show kindness to the needy neighbor. We will receive future happiness and blessings if we literally "love our neighbor as ourselves." (Matthew 22:39-40)

8. Do you judge your neighbors, or others, by how they look on the outside or how wealthy they are? Do you tend to treat them differently? Do you have a critical heart towards those who are either less fortunate, or more fortunate than you?

9. Have you ever been looked at differently because of what you own, or where you live? How did it make you feel?

10. How does verse 22 tie in with 20-21?

11. Read verses 23-24. What do we further learn about the work ethic of the foolish? As for you, do you work hard, or merely talk about work?

Let's end here for today. We already looked at verses 25-27, so tomorrow we'll pick it up at verses 28-35. May we seek to be wise in how we look at others, in the choices we make, and the way we live our lives!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

1. Today let's finish by reading Proverbs 14:28-35. How are people a king's greatest resource and blessing? What happens if people stop following him?
2. From what we've learned so far in Proverbs, what, then, should a king's character be like? List some qualities or characteristics a king should possess.
3. The king in our Proverb can symbolize any leader, really, even the leader of the home. If you're a leader, are you becoming the type of person that others should follow? Are you being that kind of example to your kids?

4. Take a look at verse 30. (It makes me shudder.) Define envy. Why does it cause "rotteness to the bones"?

5. Read the following verses and write what they say regarding envy.
 - A. Romans 13:13
 - B. 1 Corinthians 13:4
 - C. James 3:16

6. Do you struggle with envy? If left unchecked, what will be the results?

We know that envy and jealousy can actually cause physical health problems. Meinhold wrote, "Inward excitation, a resentful mind, which cares only for itself and which gets worked up, is like bone cancer that rots the most firm components of the body and shortens a person's life." And that isn't even the result of what can happen spiritually in a person's heart!

7. Read Proverbs 14:31. In other words, if someone is taking advantage of the poor, what is he really doing?

God created all people. We are all His workmanship, His beloved creation, created in His image. To oppress or reject the poor, you are rejecting God Himself. Pretty heavy verse, don't you think? Proverbs 22:22-23 tells us that God Himself is the defender of the poor and needy.

8. What are some practical ways to "have mercy on the needy"? Are you bringing Him honor in the way you view and show mercy to the poor?

9. Read verse 32. Why is death a refuge for the righteous?

Verse 33 tells us that a fool's heart is made known to all. Instead of resting quietly like in the heart of the wise, the evil and folly of his heart is open for all to see. Verse 34 moves from wisdom in an individual to wisdom in a nation. Waltke wrote, "Ultimately a nation's exaltation depends on its piety and ethics, not on its political, military, and/or economic greatness. In its external affairs a sinful nation among other things breaks treaties, propagandizes, lies, and bullies weaker nations. In its internal affairs it allows its judicial systems to break down so that criminals and sluggards are rewarded and good citizens are overtaxed and intimidated." Solomon wraps up this chapter reminding us that if the people are not prudent, they will bring shame to the king. This principle is the same today in regards to employees and employers. If you are not honest and righteous, you will cause problems for your employer.

10. Let's broaden our application of verse 35 even more. God Almighty is our King, right? How are we living? Are we bringing Him shame by how we live? Just looking at the topics from our chapter this week, do we bring Him shame in how we view the poor and needy? In how hard we're willing to work? In how truthful we are when we retell stories? In how quick we allow ourselves to get angry? In how we relate to others in their pain?

11. Which verse or verses really spoke to your heart this week? Write a prayer to the Lord, asking Him to help you make any changes you need to make, do anything you need to do, repent from anything you need to repent of, etc.

"The Lord has established His throne in Heaven, and His kingdom rules over all." Psalm 103:19