



## "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 11

Wow, what a great chapter this is! When I read it through the first time, I sure found some zingers! You know what zingers are, right? Those verses that go straight through the heart! This chapter has a lot to say about the tongue, the heart, and the importance of receiving counsel. Proverbs chapters 1-9 identified for us who exactly the wise man is; he's the one who fears the Lord and is committed to walking with Him. Chapters 10-15 have shown us how that man should live, day by day. Next week, starting in chapter 16, the style will change a bit. Whereas chapters 10-15 emphasize by contrast, using the word "but," chapters 16-22 will emphasize by repetition and addition, using the key word "and." Remember to pray before you begin, asking the Lord to cleanse your heart, and reveal His truth to you as you study His precious Word.

#### First Day

1. Read Proverbs 15:1-33. Do you see any repeated themes running through? Group them up by verse, according to theme or topic.
2. Eric Lane wrote, "There are more direct references to *the Lord* in this chapter than in any previous one." Can you list the verses? What do you think is the significance of this?

3. Some believe this chapter shows us that we serve a God who is "All-Seeing" and knows us inside and out. How does this chapter remind us of that truth?
  
4. Read Galatians 1:10 and 1 Thessalonians 2:4. How do these verses support what Solomon is trying to say to us in Proverbs 15?
  
5. What are the references in this chapter to the "fear of the Lord"? How do they add color to the definitions we have already studied about in Proverbs?
  
6. How does Proverbs 15:1 relate to 14:35?
  
7. Which verses specifically spoke to your heart today as you read through chapter 15? What practical lesson do you see for yourself?

We'll end here for today. May we be reminded that we should live our lives according to what God thinks and approves of, not to please or impress others. God's opinion is what matters. Do I hear an Amen?

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility." Proverbs 15:33

## Second Day

**Work on your memory verse. Repeat it to someone! ☺**

1. Read Proverbs 15:1-33 again, focusing on verses 1-2. What kinds of words does *God* like to hear? How does verse 18 tie in with verse 1?
  
2. How does a "soft answer" turn away wrath? What's an example of this? How is self-control needed for this to happen? (Galatians 5:22)
  
3. How can harsh words destroy relationships? Are there any relationships in your home, with your friends, or at work, that words have destroyed, or are destroying?

"Soft" in verse 1 can also be defined as "gentle," denoting the quality of being "tender, soft, and delicate in substance." "Harsh" literally means painful, or refers to speech that inflicts much pain. A gentle answer can diffuse a potentially volatile situation. In verse 2, the word "pours forth" means to "bubble forth." A fool's words just come bubbling out, revealing how much of a fool he really is.

4. The same word meaning "bubble forth" is used in verse 28. What is bubbling forth in that verse?

5. Time to ponder. Does your choice of words in a situation usually turn away, redirect or calm wrath, or do you stir up the heat? Are there any changes you need to make?
  
6. Read Proverbs 15:3. Explain this verse in your own words. How can this verse bring both warning and comfort? How does it strike you today?

Waltke has an interesting observation. He writes, "The unseen but not unseeing God probes and penetrates insightfully into every situation and distinguishes between good and evil people to regulate history by rewarding the former and punishing the latter, thus guaranteeing the moral order (5:23, 15:11; 16:2; 17:3; 21:2; 24:12). The proverb teaches that no small act of goodness is too trivial, no peccadillo too commonplace, to catch His eye and earn His blessing or His condemnation."

7. What are your thoughts on the above quote?
  
8. Proverbs 15:4 talks about a "wholesome" tongue. How would you define that? Does it describe yours?
  
9. Read Proverbs 15:5, along with verses 10, 12, 31-32. Put all those verses together and give the contrast between the wise and the wicked.

10. We've previously discussed the issue of receiving instruction or reproof, but let's think about it again. I like the phrase "ear to hear." Are your ears ready to hear what God has for you, even if it's in the form of correction from someone else? Are you humble enough to receive or do you "disdain" instruction? This includes when it comes from your spouse ...

See you tomorrow, my friends. Let's spend time rejoicing over the fact that our God is omnipresent (everywhere), and omniscient (all-knowing). He knows everything about us, yet loves us anyway! There is nowhere we can go without Him; He is present in all of our comings and goings. Oh, what a wonderful God we serve!!

### Third Day

**What's your memory verse?**

1. Read Proverbs 15:6. What other verse in this chapter talks about "treasure and trouble"? How do they relate to each other?
  
2. How does verse 7 relate to 6?

Walkte wrote, "The house of the righteous accumulates great wealth that also profits others, and the hearts of the wise accumulate and store knowledge in order to dispense it broadly and generously. By contrast, the wicked by their trade ruin one and all, and fools, who lack receptivity for the distributed knowledge, are neither right nor profitable."

3. How can we "dispense knowledge" generously?
  
4. Read Proverb 15:8-9, and 29. Why do you think God abhors the sacrifices of the wicked? What would be an example of a sacrifice by the wicked in today's world?
  
5. What does He think of the prayers of the righteous? Why does He love one and hate the other?

Offerings and sacrifices that are given by the wicked are given hypocritically. You can't "give" God something to obtain His blessings, or manipulate Him to gain His favor or His mercy. Offering sacrifices is no substitute for living a life of righteousness and fear of God.

6. I love how Solomon says the "prayers of the upright are His delight!" Why do our prayers bring Him so much pleasure? How is your prayer life? How does this verse speak to your heart?

Verses 10-12 are interesting. As you read, notice that the second line of each expands the thought of the first line.

7. According to verses 10 and 11, what happens when one leaves the path of righteousness?

When a fool rejects God's path, he will receive stern discipline (vs 10), and if he refuses correction (vs 5, 12, 10:17; 12:1) altogether, he will pay for it (13:13) with poverty, shame (13:18), and death (15:10). These are heavy verses. Many commentators remind us that if God can see into the realm of the dead in the depths of the earth (vs 11), surely He can see into people's hearts, which are transparent to Him.

8. Read Proverbs 15:13 and explain this in your own words. How can the state of your heart reflect your outward appearance?
  
9. How does verse 15 explain the source of the joy found in a merry heart? How does walking in wisdom lead to an inner gladness?
  
10. How's your countenance? Is your countenance cheerful? Read John 15:11. Does your outward appearance reflect the inner joy you have in Christ?
  
11. Let's end with Proverbs 15:16-17. Explain the principle being taught. What's being served at the table of the wise?

There are 19 "better than" verses in Proverbs, and verses 16 and 17 are 2 of them. A wealthier man would have meat at his table rather than only vegetables. These verses show us that love is better than wealth. A cheerful heart feasts on love rather than food. This proverb reminds us that love, during the worst of circumstances, is better than good circumstances when coupled with hate. A wise man knows what's important in life. Brian says this verse means we should "eat beef with love," but I'm not really believing that!



12. Take a look at what's important in your own home. Are you more concerned with what you "have" than the love that's there? What are your priorities in your home?

See you tomorrow, friends. These last few verses are making me hungry!

### Fourth Day

**Work on your verse. Ponder the character trait of humility today.**

1. Read Proverbs 15:19, along with 22:5. The "hedge of thorns" is speaking about an impassable obstruction that pricks and causes pain. The wise walk on a "highway." What's Solomon saying with this contrast?
  
2. Read Proverbs 15:20-21. Solomon is saying that a wise man brings joy to his parents, but a fool finds joy in his folly. What does that mean?

It is said that a wise person brings joy to his parents (vs 20) and future joy to himself (vs 21). A foolish person despises or "brings grief" to his mother. *What kind of child have you been?*

Throughout the Proverbs, Solomon is assuming that most of a child's spiritual training comes from the home, through his parents. What sets "Christian" parents apart isn't that they send their kids to Christian school, or simply pray before meals. "Christian parenting" is parenting that is based on knowing the Word of God, and applying it to how you raise your children. It's training the kids to know God's Word for themselves and teaching them

how to have a Christian worldview. It's teaching them to look at people and situations through *God's eyes* rather than their own. It's teaching them to love *God* with all their heart, soul, and mind, and love others more than themselves. Solomon is "assuming" this is happening in the homes of his students. It's the parent's responsibility, not the church's, the school's, or their friends'.

3. Are you parenting your children in a way that reflects the love and heart of *God*? Are you choosing His way rather than the world's? Let me give you three thoughts to ponder:
  - A. We are called to parent our children the way *God* parents us. How does He forgive? How does He discipline? How does He love?
  - B. We are called to model *Christ* for them. Can we say to them, like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate *Christ*?"
  - C. Parenting can be an act of worship that we offer to *God*. How pure is our worship?
4. Read Proverbs 20:7. How does this verse relate?
5. Read Proverbs 15:22. This verse could go with the verses on receiving correction, but I wanted to take it alone. Explain the principle in this Proverb. What's the difference between receiving counsel from many, and being a man pleaser and doing what everyone tells you to do? How can people's knowledge and experience help to shed light on things?
6. What must our attitude be, though, to not only ask for advice, but to follow it?

7. Read Proverbs 15:23. Have you ever had a word spoken in "due season"? Why is saying the right thing at the right time so beneficial to both the one speaking and the hearer?
  
8. Does someone need a "good word" from you today? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you give some "timely" words to people as you go through your day. Make note of their reaction.
  
9. Read Proverbs 15:24-29. According to 25 and 26, how does God react to man's prideful character?
  
10. What will God do for the widows? (Read Psalm 68:5-6)

At that time, widows were especially prone to being exploited by those who were "greedy for gain." A widow refers to "a woman who has been divested of her male protector, as in husbands, sons, or brothers." She needed protection from the proud who often would come like thieves and move the boundaries on her property, stealing from her because of her vulnerability. In this proverb, the widow seems to represent all those who are vulnerable to arrogance and greed. "When they were too weak to have a voice, God spoke for the poor and needy through Moses (Deut. 19:14; 27:17), the prophets (Hosea 5:10), and the sages (Job 24:2; Proverbs 15:25; 22:28)." (Waltke)

11. Do you take extra care of those in your life who are vulnerable and needy? How?

Tomorrow we'll finish up this great chapter. I pray that you are taking time to stop, pray, and meditate on all the application questions, rather than speeding through them. That's the important part of the study, so make sure you ask the Holy Spirit what He wants you to see and hear!

### Fifth Day

**Write out your verse by memory.**

1. Today let's finish up by reading the rest of chapter 15. Read verses 28-33. We've actually looked at most of these verses, so let's jump down to verse 33. There is an honor that accompanies wisdom. Why do you think that is? What kind of honor? (Read Proverbs 18:12 and 22:4.)
2. Why do you think the "fear of the Lord" is connected to "humility"?
3. Read Luke 14:7-14. What do we learn about humility from these verses?
4. Read 1 Peter 5:5-7. Peter had learned a lot about humility as he got older. What does he tell us?
5. What does Isaiah 57:15 say about humility?

6. What can we learn about humility from the following people?

A. Abraham: *Genesis 18:27,30*

B. Jacob: *Genesis 32:10*

C. Moses: *Exodus 3:11*

D. Joshua: *Joshua 7:6*

E. David: *1 Samuel 18:18-23*

F. Daniel: *Daniel 2:30*

G. Elizabeth: *Luke 1:43*

H. John the Baptist: *John 3:29-30*

I. Jesus: *Matthew 11:29*

7. In what areas of your life do you need to grow in humility?

8. From this chapter, what are some of the most significant things the Lord showed you?

**See you next week!**