



"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 15

We are now almost half way through the book of Proverbs! This week we'll be studying chapter 19, which has a lot of great spiritual "nuggets" to glean from. In chapters 19 through 22, there are over 100 miscellaneous maxims, or..... There are many scattered Proverbs that cover similar topics or thoughts, and this week's lesson is no different. It's difficult to try to group them together, but for chapter 19, we're going to try to take a stab at it. To help me while I read, I usually make the same little mark over the verses that deal with the same topic. For instance, whatever verse talks about communication, I might circle the number. If it talks about being a parent in some way, I put a box around it. This helps me pull Solomon's thoughts on specific subjects all together and get a broader picture. That's just a suggestion; do whatever works for you.

John Courson said, "A foolish man doesn't listen to the Lord, seek the Lord, or walk with the Lord; yet, when he ends up in trouble, who does he blame? The Lord." (Proverbs 19:3) I pray that we will not ever be, nor become, this person. Let's not point our fingers at God, or anyone else, for that matter. Let's be wise, take responsibility for our own issues, and make the changes that are necessary. This is the way of the wise!

First Day

1. Read Proverbs 19:1-29. Do you see any topics that have been previously discussed? Group them according to topics, if you can. List out the verses that go together.

2. Which verse is the exception to the two-line Proverbs we've been looking at? (It has 3 lines.)

3. How many references are there to things we should be "listening" to?
4. How many times is the word "fool" (or something equivalent) used?
5. There is a modern proverb that says, "Ignorance is bliss." What do you think Solomon, according to what you've been reading in the Proverbs, would have to say about that?
6. Have you been holding on to that modern principle in some area of your life? Perhaps you stay ignorant regarding your finances because you'd just rather not know. Maybe you don't turn on the *News* because it's just too upsetting and you'd rather stay in the dark. In what areas should you pray and ask God for wisdom and knowledge?
7. From chapter 19, which verse or verses specifically spoke to your heart? Was it a new thought, an old one you needed to be reminded of, or simply one that challenged you presently in your walk with Him?

Memory Verse of the Week: "Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days." Proverbs 19:20

Second Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Read Proverbs 19:1-29. The word "also" in verse two ties verses one and two together. How do they relate to each other? (Notice that verse one is the same as the first line of 28:6.)

The word "poor" in verse 1 is not suggesting that he is poor because he's lazy, but rather, he is destitute and/or hungry. Many scholars think the fool in verse 2 is referring to a rich man that obtained his wealth by perverse ways. In simple words, Solomon is saying that it's better to be poor and honest than to be perverse, dishonest, and foolish.

2. Verse 2 shows us another problem with being a fool. If you have an ambitious drive without knowledge, what can happen?
3. Have you ever made snap or hurried decisions before considering all the consequences? What was the outcome?
4. Read Proverbs 19:3. The word "twists" means "ruins" or "overturns." What does this verse tell us about the blame-game we often play? Who is responsible for our choices?

In Her new book, Wisdom for Women, Debbie Bryson wrote, "We cause trouble, get people upset, and burn bridges, but then we blame everyone else, including God. The blame game has no winners. There's no prize. No one feels

sorry for us. We just dig our own hole deeper. Personal responsibility is a true sign of wisdom and maturity. The day we stop blaming others -- our mothers, our ex-boyfriends or husbands, our mother-in-laws, our churches, and especially God -- we are finally growing up."

5. Do you tend to immediately blame others for the trouble going on in your life? Are you blaming someone right now for something that actually may be a consequence of your own decision or action? If so, stop and repent right now, and take personal responsibility. This, my friends, will make you wise.

6. Read Proverbs 19:4, 6-7. Why do we often not welcome the poor as friends or companions? Why is it "easier" to be friends with the wealthy?

The word "separated" in verse 4 means "divided," and "go far" in verse 7 means to "put distance between." I wonder if Solomon adds the third line in verse 7 to emphasize the problem of discriminating against the poor or those less fortunate. I wonder if we think the poor have too many "needs" or may place too many demands on us. Perhaps they make us feel "guilty" because we have more than they do. Verse 17 re-emphasizes what God thinks of the poor.

7. Read James 1:27, 2:1-17, and 5:4. What do these verses tell us in relation to this topic?

8. Ok, now the hard question. Ask the Lord to search your heart and show you if you tend "not" to befriend the poor, and if you don't, why not. Do you find it easier to be friends with the well off?

9. How does wealth and success make people susceptible to arrogance and self-sufficiency? (I guess being wealthy is all relative, but check your heart on this one.)
10. Jump back to Proverbs 19:5, along with verses 9 and 28. The wording of these verses appear to be speaking about lies in a "court setting" but we can relate them to life in general. What are their main points?
11. Honesty is obviously extremely important to God, as well as an attribute of the wise. How honest are you? Do you tend to tell the complete truth, or are you the type who holds back information to make things appear a different way? Do you tell white lies or shade the truth? Do you only tell part of the truth, or bits and pieces of it? Is honesty a word that would describe you?

That's it for today. May you walk with integrity, be honest in all your ways, and love others without prejudice or hypocrisy. See you tomorrow!

Third Day

What's your memory verse? Are you listening to counsel?

1. Read Proverbs 19:8-12. According to verse 8, how does having understanding benefit our soul?

The word "luxury" in verse 10 means "good or luxurious living, a life of pleasure." Often it's the fool who is living like a king while the wise man is

suffering. Nabal is a great Old Testament example of this (1 Samuel 25:2, 25, 37). But equally as upside down is an incompetent slave trying to usurp his power over his leadership. Both are really "not fitting."

Verses 9-12 refer specifically to having wisdom in a court or "national" setting, beginning with the one who is lying or "perjuring" himself, and ending with the king's wrath and favor towards everyone. Walkte wrote, "Verses 11-12 are a Proverb pair commending patience and forbearance with wrath. Verses 9 and 10 are linked together and pertain to three things that are not fitting: perjurers are not acquitted (vs. 9), fools do not live in luxury (vs. 10a), and indentured slaves do not rule princes." Verses 11-12 pertain to avoiding anger, both subjectively within ourselves, and objectively from the king.

2. According to verse 11, how are patience and prudence the mark of a wise man? What do they allow him to do?

"Overlooking a transgression" literally means to "pass over" or to "pass along by." It can also mean to "forgive" an iniquity. Our text doesn't say exactly who the sin was committed against, himself or others. It can mean he overlooks many irritating or offensive acts or attitudes as well.

3. Why is it "to his glory" for the wise man to overlook a transgression?
4. What does Jesus say about forgiveness in Luke 11:4?

Bruce Waltke wrote, "In this ability to overlook or forgive sin, the prudent person reflects the glory of Israel's God, who 'forgives iniquity' and who does 'not retain forever His anger because He is one who delights in unfailing love (Micah 7:18, Amos 7:8; 8:2)."

5. How quick are you to overlook others' transgressions? Annoyances? Irritating habits? Do you expect others to overlook yours? (That is, if you have any...☺)

6. Verse 12 contrasts the anger and fury of the king with the restrained patience of the wise man who forgives, from verse 11. What do you think verse 12 is advising us to do?

7. Read Proverbs 19:13-14, 18 and 26. What do these verses say about a foolish son? Do they give us any "advice"?

8. In verse 18, what do you think Solomon meant by the phrase "while there's still hope"? What's he saying?

9. Why is "lax parenting" so detrimental to children?

We need to make the most of the years we have with our children. If we are too passive, we can bring harm to our kids by the lack of instruction and discipline. We can be a major contributing factor in our child's foolish behavior if we don't invest time correcting them. If we wait too long, their bad patterns of behavior may be "set" or harder to change. Correction is a deliberate act of love, even if it doesn't always "feel" like it is. Hubbard wrote, "To withhold correction is to rob a child of all hope of change and blessing. Lax parenting is a virtual death sentence given the fact that we have only a handful of years during which we have "hope" of helping our children govern their habits, shape their values, and learn the joy of doing God's will. Once they have left our homes we surround them with prayer and ask God to send positive influences into their lives. But our opportunity to do what is needed ourselves flees all too quickly. We dare not waste an hour of it."

10. Reflect on your "training" patterns with your children, if they're still at home. Are you diligent or lax? Are you intentional or sporadic? What are your thoughts concerning this section? Are you challenged, encouraged, or convicted?

I think we'll take the second half of verse 13 tomorrow. But for now, spend some time reflecting on how you train your kids, but also, what kind of son or daughter you not only have been, but are today. Verse 26 admonishes us not to mistreat or chase away our parents. How do you treat yours? I know we covered this a few lessons back, but always good to reflect again. "Fatherhood" is a position and a role that is to be respected. Motherhood as well. We need to remind ourselves of this fact every so often. Many people have had "bad" and uncaring parents; parents who have abused, neglected or mistreated them. If that's the case, verse 26 is often hard to stomach. Perhaps you feel like they don't deserve your respect, or even your forgiveness. These issues are very personal and really not my place to begin to "tell" you what to do. But I do know this. God can give you the grace to forgive those who've wronged you, the grace to love the unlovable, and the grace to pray for those who have persecuted you. He can also be the Father and/or Mother you never had. You are one of His kids ... that makes you His prized possession; the apple of His eye. ☺

Fourth Day

Work on your memory verse today.

1. Read Proverbs 19:13, focusing on the second half of the verse. We're back to the "dripping faucet" verse again! The word "contention" means "argumentative, ready to pick a fight." What are some things we can do as wives that appear as a dripping faucet? How can continual dripping wear someone down?

2. How can constantly quarreling over something be counterproductive?

3. What are some specific things "you" do that may constantly irritate your husband?

4. What kind of wife are we called to be if we're wise, according to verse 14? How can we be more of a blessing to our husbands?

An old Arab Proverb says, "Three things make a house intolerable: the leaking of rain, a wife's nagging, and bugs." Hmm, very interesting!

5. According to Proverbs 19:15, how can laziness lead to hunger?

6. How is verse 16 a contrast to that?

7. Read Proverbs 19:19-21. What will happen to a "hot-headed" man, even if someone tries to help him?

8. Verse 20 exhorts us again about the importance of "listening" and receiving instruction. I read that "listeners have obligations." What do you think that means?

We tend to resist advice, don't we? We can do things ourselves. We think we know it all. This mindset was no different during Solomon's time. The wise teachers, including Solomon, understood that and tried their best to "counter" those thoughts. In their view, it was especially dangerous that the "younger" guys tended to resist correction. This is why Solomon talked about it over and over again in this Book. They believed that the failure to keep open ears was a badge of stupidity (Proverbs 12:1).

9. According to verse 20, if you were persistent in listening to correction, what would be your reward?

10. There is a cost to "being wise" in your latter days. Why would listening and obedience be considered a cost?

11. Read verse 21. What is Solomon saying?

12. What's better, the Lord's purposes or our plans? (Romans 12:2) What will ultimately prevail?

That's all for now. I can't help but to think about what it says in James 1:22, "But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only." I pray that we seek to "listen and do" all that God tells us to in His Word, through the Holy Spirit. Are you listening? Let's not be stupid ...

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

1. Today we'll finish up by reading Proverbs 19:22-29. We've already looked at some of the verses, but let's start with verse 22. What good trait is desired in someone?

7. How do you do when faced with "big" challenges in life? Do you rest in peace or proceed to panic? What's your first reaction? What changes can you make in this area?

8. Verse 24 gives us a bit of comedy, don't you think? The sluggard doesn't even have enough strength to do what?

9. In verse 25, we see that the foolish and the wise learn differently. How do each handle correction? How does verse 29 relate to this?

10. According to verse 27, if we stop listening to instruction, what will happen?

We probably all know people that once were following hard after the Lord, and then something happened. Maybe they were hurt, maybe they got busy, or maybe they stopped reading God's Word. Whatever happened caused them to push God aside for a while and get busy with "other things." This verse tells us that if we stop listening, we will get off the path. We have seen so far in Proverbs what temptation, in any category, can do to us. May we never neglect His Word. After all, how can we stay on His path and follow His instructions if we aren't seeking Him? May we always keep Him as the highest priority of our life. May learning to "fear the Lord" be our lifelong goal.

11. From chapter 19, what verse or thought specifically spoke to your heart this week, and why?

**"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it,
to him it is sin." James 4:17**