



"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 22

Thanks for joining us as we continue through the book of Proverbs. This week we'll be studying Proverbs 28:1-28, which is another one of Solomon's proverbs that was compiled by Hezekiah's men. The chapter has numerous contrasts, which we see by the abundant use of the word "but." This chapter refers to those who are righteous, which is another way to describe those who are wise and fear the Lord. Solomon continues to exhort those who claim to be "righteous" to pursue a life characterized by holy and righteous living. The way he uses contrast to describe how to live or not to live is ingenious, actually. Our very first verse paints a good picture of the contrasting lifestyles of the wise and the foolish, one being courageous and one being cowardly; one feeling secure while the other wants to flee. I pray that as we study this week, you continue to examine yourself and make sure you're headed down the right path.

First Day

1. Read Proverbs 28:1-28. As you read, jot down some of the topics you come across. Are they in any specific category or grouping that you notice? Is there any one subject discussed the most?
2. How many times is the word "but" used?
3. Do you see any other repeated words or phrases?
4. What contrast about "trust" do you see?

5. What verse or verses jumped out at you immediately and spoke to your heart?

6. Read verses 1-2 again. Why do you think the wicked flees when "no one pursues"?

When someone is living in sin or has a guilty conscience for some reason, they tend to look over their shoulder a lot, be haunted by bad thoughts, or live a life of paranoia. It's hard to have any peace, rest, or security when you feel guilty, right? It can also make you timid and cowardly, skittish and jumpy. When a person is living right before God and man, they can live in peace and have security, which gives boldness to the inner man.

7. Can you think of an example in Scripture of a man who could be described as one who "fled when no one was pursuing"? How about one who was "bold as a lion"?

8. How would you describe yourself? Do you live in a state of nervousness about your "sin" and behavior, or do you have a sense of inner peace? Are you skittish or secure?

9. Any idea of what Solomon was saying in verse 2? How does unrest or rebellion cause many turnovers in leadership in a nation? What brings "order"?

Jensen explains the "transgressions of a land" in verse two this way; "This proverb was pertinent in Hezekiah's day because he saw the Northern Kingdom of Israel taken into captivity (722 B.C.) for their sins." Constant civil wars and battles make a nation vulnerable to its foes. "The entire history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel illustrates the truth of these two proverbs. Stability is ensured in a country when those in power are willing to hear and heed the counsel of the wise, experienced statesmen."

**That's it for today. May you live boldly like a lion and live
courageously in Him!**

Memory Verse of the Week: "He who covers his sin will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." Proverbs 28:13

Second Day

What's your memory verse? Hiding anything?

1. Read Proverbs 28:1-28 again. Go back to verses 3-5. Why would a poor man, or "one who had been destitute or hungry," oppress the poor? (The "poor" in this context means, "one who is lacking strength, power, stamina, or resilience.")

2. A hard rain can sometimes destroy crops rather than nourish them. How does this phrase relate to the poor oppressing the poor?

Debbie Bryson, in her book *Wisdom for Women*, draws this interesting comparison. She wrote, "The picture given of a driving rain, one that just pounds the earth leaving no good result. When does this happen? It happened when

someone who is poor pushes down someone else who is already poor. Mothers, can you see that sometimes when a mom is at her lowest and weakest, she sometimes takes it out on her kids? A mom who takes out her frustration on her kids is like a cold, harsh, driving rain right in her own house. Children have no way of knowing why all of a sudden a harsh word or punishment is thrown their way." Instead of nourishing, we can be guilty of just "pounding the earth, leaving no good result."

3. If you're a mom, how often are you guilty of this? What are other examples of this? Are you guilty as charged?

4. In verse 4, "oppressing the poor" is an example of forsaking the law. When people are not obeying the Lord, why do they sometimes "praise the wicked?" Can you give any examples of this?

5. When people are disobedient, they also don't understand justice, because their sense of right and wrong is perverted, according to verse 5. What about those who are righteous?

Hubbard wrote, "Those who are righteous understand justice because they love the God from whom all justice flows. "Evil men" who ignore God's call, reject God's will, and follow their own savage impulses cannot grasp the ABC'S of the rights of others within the community. Selfishness has dulled their perception with a stupor akin to drunkenness. To know God, whose attributes alone are worth imitating, is the only sure way to know how to behave decently as human beings." With so much evil going on in the world and people's human rights being violated, I believe our only hope is to pray that "evil men and women" would turn from their wicked ways and come to know the God from whom all justice flows

6. Proverbs 28:6 is the last of the "better than" proverbs. What does it say?

7. Read 28:7. How can a "gluttonous son" bring shame to his family? What would a wise son do?

8. Read Proverbs 28:8-14. Solomon gives 7 illustrations of people who ignore God's Word, the result of it, and the contrast. Read and explain each of the following.
 - a. The **heartless** man (vs 8)

 - b. The **heedless** man (vs 9):

 - c. The **heinous** man (vs 10):

 - d. The **haughty** man (vs 11):

 - e. The **harmful** man (vs 12):

 - f. The **hypocritical** man (vs 13):

 - g. The **hard** man (vs 14):

9. Do you see yourself in any of the "men" above? Did the Holy Spirit reveal anything to you as you read through each?

Tomorrow we'll look at a few of these verses again, but for now, pray that you would be diligent in being the "contrast" and seeking to follow His commands. I pray that you would be the one listening, confessing, heeding, and obeying!

Third Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Let's spend some time on our memory verse in 28:13. Also read Psalm 32:1-5 and 1 John 1:8-10. What do you think "will not prosper" means? Explain why it's so much better to admit, confess, and repent. Why do we try to cover sins up so often?

2. Do you have trouble with the "admitting, confessing, and repenting" part? What keeps us obeying this verse sometimes?

3. Solomon's son David kept his sin secret regarding Bathsheba for about 9-12 months until God, through Nathan the prophet, busted him. Read David's response in Psalm 51:1-12. Did he admit failure? Did he take responsibility? What can we learn from David's repentance?

4. Are you holding on to some "secret" sin today? Do you think God doesn't know? Confess it and forsake it today and receive God's mercy!

5. Proverbs 28:14 tells us that if we are always reverent, our heart probably won't be hard. Why is that?

6. Verses 15-16 refers to the dangers of a wicked man rising to power, and also elaborates on verse 12. Why is he likened to a charging bear and a roaring lion?

7. According to verse 16, what is one "mark" of a good ruler? What will be his reward?

8. When someone is in power for personal gain, it hurts those under them, as well as grieves God's heart. There is great responsibility when someone is in authority. Are you in any type of authority, whether it be at work, school, or home? Do you ever abuse that authority to accomplish a personal agenda? Do you exercise that authority in a selfish way? How can we do that, even in our homes?

9. Let me ask it in another way. How do you rule? With a rod of iron? Growl orders like a bear? Become threatened easily? Bite peoples' heads off? Are you easy to work with or difficult? Perhaps ask someone that knows you ...

10. How can being extremely "task oriented" affect how you lead? Is it important to you to get the job done, at any cost? Is this you? What's the balance between being this kind of leader and the sluggard that Solomon keeps talking about?

11. Write your thoughts on today's lesson. Are you challenged? Convicted? Encouraged?

Fourth Day

Continue working on and living your memory verse.

1. Read Proverb 28:17-18. Although this proverb uses some pretty harsh words, how is it also an encouragement and a comfort to us?

2. How is Judas, Christ's betrayer, an example of this verse? (Matthew 26:3-5)

Although in the literal sense the verse is telling us that sometimes a murderer would rather die at his own hands than let someone else kill him, it also reminds us that we are accountable for our actions. Even if a murderer isn't caught and convicted by the courts, his own conscience may torment him. And ultimately, he will be held accountable by God Himself.

3. Read Proverbs 28:19. What contrast is Solomon using again?

4. Although this verse is written in the language of farmers, how does it translate practically for us today? Give some modern examples of this verse.

The NIV translates verse 19 like this, "He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty."

5. How does "chasing fantasies" correlate with this idea and attitude of "entitlement," which many people seem to have? Write your thoughts.

6. Are you guilty of "following frivolity" in any way, maybe even in a small area of your life? Are you chasing fantasies of some sort?

I read this and I just have to share it with you. A man named Charles Sykes wrote it and it relates to verse 19. I'd rather just quote him than try to rephrase, so here goes. He calls it, "Rules kids won't learn in school." Here are three points of one of the versions:

1. Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off, and very few employees are interested in helping you find yourself.
2. Television is not real life. In real life, people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.
3. Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life has not. In some schools they have abolished failing grades; they'll give you as many chances as you want to get the right answer. This does not bear the slightest resemblance to anything in real life.

Let's wake up and stop chasing fantasies, believing that life "owes" us anything! Let's be wise, responsible adults, work hard, manage our household, follow God's Word, and till our land!

7. Read Proverb 28:20-22. Why is it bad to "hasten to be rich"? What contrast do we see in these verses? Why does becoming "suddenly rich" always seem to be kind of fishy?

8. Have you ever been involved in any "get rich quick" schemes? What happened?

9. Why does Solomon seem to talk so much about the dangers of seeking after riches? (You are probably tired of discussing it!) Read Matthew 19:16-26. What is Jesus saying here? Also read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. What exhortation does Paul give to the rich? Does he say you have to be poor?
10. In America, we are considered rich, so let me ask you this: Are you haughty about what you have? Do you trust in your riches, or your possessions, or your bank accounts, more than you trust in God? Do you do good? Are you rich in good works? Are you ready to give? Willing to share? Storing up treasures in Heaven more than here on earth? Don't look at your neighbor; take a look at yourself. Where does your heart lie?

As we wrap up today's lesson, let's ask the Holy Spirit to continue to search our hearts and reveal to us those areas that we still need to bring to the Lord. Are we covetous? Are we haughty? Are we cynical? Are we lazy? Are we good stewards? May we never grow tired of learning how to walk down His path of wisdom and right living!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

1. Let's end our lesson this week by reading Proverbs 28:23-28. What other Proverbs that we've studied before are similar to verse 23?

2. How are we essentially hurting someone when we "gloss over" someone's faults and make him feel good about his wrongdoings? Why is flattery so dangerous?

3. Is there a situation in your life in which you need to apply this verse right now?

4. Verse 24 tells us it's shameful to rob your parents, disgracing them and robbing them of their reputation and peace of mind. This is kind of a strange verse to me because I think we all know that it's wrong to rob from anyone. But ... why do you think Solomon had to write this? (We've discussed this before.) How do you think this relates to the whole "hastening after riches" or "getting rich quick schemes" we've been talking about?

5. What did Jesus say about taking care of your needy parents in Matthew 15:4-6? How does it seem opposite today? Who is taking care of whom?

I read that often children tried to get ahold of their parent's property under some pretense, like saying that they were not capable of making decisions anymore, or they weren't able to manage their money, or it would be theirs eventually. They would also pretend that they didn't have any responsibility in taking care of their parents when they needed care.

6. Let's apply this to modern times, shall we? How do children "today" rob from their parents? Perhaps it's not labeled that, but let's think about it. How many kids try to spend all their parents' money on themselves? Do they rob them of the respect that's due them? Do they rob them of their time?

7. Do you take care of your parents when they're in need or do you still expect them to take care of you? Do you think they "owe" you somehow? Have you been robbing them of the "respect" that's due them? Think on these lines ...

Billy Graham said "A child who is allowed to be disrespectful to his parents will not have true respect for anyone." This is true of both young and old children, including us! Let's not be guilty of robbing from our parents. Let's love them, minister to them, encourage them, and take care of them, while they are still here to love, honor, and respect. I lost my mom years ago, and there's not a day goes by that I don't wish she was here for me to love. Let's not take them for granted!

8. Read Proverbs 28:25-26. Also read 29:25. We've come to our "trust" contrast. We know that pride prevents us from trusting God, correct? Do you have a "trust" issue? Is there an area of pride in your heart that is keeping you from trusting Him?

9. How does trusting the Lord keep us "safe"? (29:25)

10. According to verse 27, what happens when we ignore the cries of the poor? Read Deuteronomy 15:10-11. What happens when we give to the poor? Do you trust God's Word?

11. What verse or thought from Proverbs 28 specifically spoke to you? I had so many pierce my heart! Have you been challenged to any particular "action"? Can you share it with the group?

God bless you, my friends!