



## "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 7

Now that we've finished chapters 1-9, or the "Wisdom Speeches," we move into the section (10:1-22:16) that's usually called the "Proverbs of Solomon." I'm not completely sure why, since the previous chapters were all written by him as well. (Solomon actually wrote 84% of the book.) This title attempts to mark off this section of Proverbs from the longer speeches. These are mainly observations of Solomon and how he viewed life, under the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit. At 22:17 we see many more commands and exhortations, challenging the reader to put into practice what he's been learning. This portion of the book contains 375 sayings. Each thought is usually one to two lines of the verse. There are no more extended arguments, lengthy poetic poems, no lengthy examples of the foolish. The "mode of service is a la carte; brief, detached snacks of wisdom, like a vast buffet of hors d'oeuvres." (Hubbard) Solomon changes from topic to topic frequently. Many think this was the author's intent; to force the readers to stop and meditate on the thoughts in one verse before they move to the next. Often there are common thoughts, topics, or phrases.

Most of the proverbs of chapters 10-15 are "*antithetic*," using the key word "but." In chapters 16-22, there are more *synonymous* "maxims," using the key word "and."

I love this section, although it does make my head spin at times. I'll do my best to attempt to group some topics together from one chapter. I do want to continue in order, though, even though many commentaries suggest breaking them all up according to topics. I tried to study that way and it confused me, so ... I'm still going to go chapter by chapter. And if we study a topic more than once, perhaps the Holy Spirit is trying to zero in on some part of our hearts. Have fun, ladies!

## First Day

1. Read Proverbs 10:1-32. Some call this chapter "Wisdom put into practice." After you finish the chapter, give it a title that you feel best reflects its overall thoughts. (That might be tricky!)
  
2. Can you identify at least four main themes?
  
3. What types of things do you notice in this chapter? Any repeated words? Any "ifs" or "thens"? How about "buts"?
  
4. Are there any verses that surprise you? Confuse you?

Notice how frequently the word "but" is used. You'll usually find it in the beginning of the second verse of the specific proverb. This signals a contrast is coming, which is important to note.

5. I read once that proverbs appear to "jump from one topic to another like scatterbrains in a living room conversation." Do you agree with that?
  
6. How many times do you find the words "wise" or "wisdom"?

It's interesting to note that Proverbs has more to say about our words than anything else it talks about regarding our lives. I read that there are more than 90 proverbs advising us how to use them.

7. In chapter 10, list the proverbs that specifically address our speech.
8. If you had to choose a verse from your first reading of chapter 10 that specifically spoke to your heart, which would it be, and why?

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins." Proverbs 10:12

### Second Day

**Work on your verse. Did anyone else choose this verse in question 8 from yesterday?**

The words "righteous" and "wicked" are used many times in the Proverbs, sometimes interchangeably with wise and foolish. David Hubbard describes it like this: "Righteous" speaks of loyal, reliable conduct based on a commitment to God and the covenant which God made with Israel. It is a term of relationship which describes a desire to live a life pleasing to God and fitting to the members of God's family. It means behaving toward God and His people with the same care, compassion, and integrity that the righteous God has shown them. Some synonyms are integrity, upright, blameless, and good.

Wicked is best defined as the opposite of all that righteous entails: disloyalty to the Lord, rebellion against the covenant standards, disregard for the welfare of the people. Some synonyms are perverse, workers of iniquity, unfaithful, evil, unjust, or sinner." Keep these definitions in mind as you read through the Proverbs.

There are so many ways to tackle this chapter, but I'm going to break it up into the four themes that Eric Lane does in his commentary. Thanks, Eric!



5. Our next theme is the contrast between *righteousness and wickedness*. Read the following verses and write a contrast between the two. Verses 2-3, 6-7, 9, 23-25, 27-30.

**Righteous**

**Wicked**

Solomon continually stresses that the righteous receive rewards and the wicked meet with disaster. I think his main point in doing that is to emphasize that there are long term effects of wickedness. We shouldn't live just for the "now" but constantly be counting the cost of our choices. And there are definitely long term rewards for living righteously which we need to always keep in mind!

6. Verse 9 depicts the righteous man as a traveler, walking through life with nothing to hide. A foolish man lives his life trying to deceive and hide things from God and man. Why is this just man "secure"?
7. How are you traveling down the road of life? Do you fear anything or anyone because of things that are hidden in your life, or are you able to live fear-free, open and transparent, before God and man? (Take time to search your heart on this one.)
8. Choose one of the verses from the question above that specifically spoke to you. How does it apply to your life? How did it speak to you?

9. Our third theme is *work, wealth, and poverty*. Read verses 4-5, 15-16, and 22 and answer the following questions.
- A. What do verses 4-5 teach us about the responsibility in providing by working?
  - B. What do verses 15-16 tell us about the reality of life and how possessions are acquired and used?
  - C. According to verse 22, although we are told to be honest, diligent, and generous, who is the one responsible for the increase?

What we do with our wealth really proves our righteousness or wickedness. The righteous earns his own money and uses it for good, while the wicked uses it for his own pleasures and luxury. Remember that Solomon isn't saying that the righteous aren't guaranteed to be prosperous. But the principle stands forth loud and clear: the righteous will be blessed by being diligent and honest, while the sluggard will not. The verse says; "He won't add sorrow to it," or "it won't be accompanied by trouble," referring to the problems that come with ill-gotten gain.

10. Last question of the day. Are you a hard worker or kind of lazy? Do you understand the principle of reaping what you sow and taking care of your own, or do you seem to think others should take care of you? How do you use your money?

### Third Day

**Work on your memory verse.**

1. Today we'll be looking at the last theme of chapter 10. Our topic will be words and their use, or abuse. Read verses 8, 10-14, 18-21, 31-32. Again, contrast the words of the righteous versus the wicked.

**Righteous**

**Wicked**

Often the best use of our tongue is to keep it quiet! ☺ We should practice listening more, I think. James tells us to be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19). But sometimes we need to watch out for those not talking, like the one who "winks" in verse 10 because his intentions may still be evil. Matthew Henry said, "The dog that bites is not always the dog that barks."

2. How are the words of the righteous like a "fountain of life"? What does that mean?

3. Briefly explain the concept of verse 12. How can hatred stir up strife?

Verse 11 and 12 reveal the same truth of Matthew 12:34, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." We speak what we think and feel. If you have hatred in your heart, you'll use words that stir up a fight, but if you have love, you will not be provoked. Lane said, "Even where the other offends him by word or deed he will not retaliate but will excuse, overlook, and forgive the offense (1 Cor. 13:4-6). This way often brings the offender to repentance so that he can enjoy God's forgiveness too (James 5:20, 1 Peter 4:8). Verse 13 logically follows because the kind of love that can cover wrongs comes from listening to God's Word and receiving wisdom.

4. Time for a heart evaluation. Do your words more often stir up strife or cover sin? Are you quick tempered and critical, or do you ask for wisdom and understanding before you speak? What do you think your family or friends would say?
5. How do verses 31-32 show us that words are a reflection of our character?

Below, you'll find a chart called Words and Speaking in Proverbs. I got it from The Bible Knowledge Commentary by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck. (page 918) I thought you might like to use it as a reference or a study tool. *For the rest of your time today, choose a few verses from it and ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to apply them to yourself. Be ready to share what the Lord showed you.*

### **WORDS AND SPEAKING IN PROVERBS**

#### 1. Wrong Uses of Words

- A. Lying  
6:16-17a; 10:18a; 12:19,22a;  
17:4b, 7;  
19:5b, 9b, 22b; 21:6; 26:28a
- B. Slandering  
10:18b; 30:10
- C. Gossiping  
11:13; 16:28b; 17:9b; 18:8; 20:19;  
26:20,22
- D. Constant talking  
10:8, 10b, 19; 17:28; 18:2; 20:19b
- E. False witnessing  
12:17b; 14:5b, 25b; 19:5a, 28a;  
21:28; 25:18
- F. Mocking  
13:1b; 14:6a; 15:12; 17:5a;  
19:29a; 21:11a; 22:10; 24:9b;  
30:17

- G. Harsh talking (perverse, reckless, harsh, evil, sly words)  
10:31b-32; 12:18a; 13:3b; 14:3a;  
15:1b, 28b; 17:4a; 19:1, 28b
- H. Boasting  
17:17a; 20:14; 25:14; 27:1-2
- I. Quarreling  
13:10; 15:18; 17:14, 19; 19:13;  
20:3; 21:9 19; 22:10; 25:24;  
26:17, 20-21; 27:15
- J. Deceiving  
7:19-20; 12:2; 15:4b; 25:23
- K. Flattering  
26:28b; 28:23; 29:5
- L. Ignorant or foolish words  
14:7; 15:2b, 7-14; 18:6-7

#### 2. Right Uses of Words

- A. Words that help and encourage  
10:11a, 20a, 21a; 12:14a, 18b;  
15:4a; 18:4, 20-21
- B. Words that express wisdom  
10:13a, 31a; 14:3b; 15:2a,  
7a; 16:10, 21b, 23b; 20:15
- C. Words that are few  
10:19; 11:12b; 13:3a; 17:27a
- D. Words that are fitting  
(kind, appropriate, pleasant)  
10:32a; 12:25; 15:1a, 4a, 23;  
16:24; 25:11, 15
- E. Words that are true  
12:17a, 19a, 22b; 14:5a, 25a
- F. Words that are carefully chosen  
13:3a 15:28; 16:23a; 21:23

Just the fact that Proverbs has so much to say about our words should speak volumes to us. Verse 32 shows us that the righteous speak words that are fitting, always appropriate to the subject and audience. And they should always be pleasing to the Lord! In Matthew 12:35-37, Jesus said "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth the evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." I think Jesus was trying to show us that our words are a barometer of where our heart really is. See you tomorrow!

### Fourth Day

#### **What's your memory Verse?**

1. Read Proverbs 11:1-31. What do you think are the major themes of this chapter?
2. What are the repeated words, phrases, or thoughts? Are there many "buts"?

Most believe that this chapter can be summarized by two principles found in verses 30-31. The first is that the best way to do good in the world is to be righteous (vs 30), and the second is that all of our actions have consequences that we must bear (vs 31). While reading this chapter, notice how each point seems to fall into one of these thoughts.

3. The first 6 verses really show us the characteristics of a righteous man. Verse 1 refers to how a righteous man does business. Explain this proverb in your own words.
4. What kinds of "dishonesty" are common in the business world today?

During the time of Solomon's writing, many merchants were using two sets of stone weights when measuring merchandise. Lighter stones were placed on the scales while selling so a lesser quantity could be sold at the stated price, while heavier stones when buying so that more could be obtained for the same price. They didn't have coins at the time, so scales were used in most commercial transactions. The fact that Solomon places the Lord's name and His opinion in the Proverb reminds us that how we do our business matters to God. God abhors deception and loves honesty; He is offended at any injustice. Fraud, dishonesty, and deceit are always unpleasing to Him.

5. How "fair" are you while conducting business, whether you're buying or selling? How can we make sure we honor God in all our transactions?
  
6. In verses 2-6, what are some other characteristics of a righteous man?
  
7. The word "blameless" in verse 5 can also be translated "integrity." What's the definition of that word?
  
8. Verses 1-8 also talk about the blessings of the righteous, such as "pleasing God" in verse 1. What are some of the others?

I pondered the meaning of the word "integrity" a lot this week. Job was a good example of it. In Job 2:3,9, it says that in spite of all that satan threw at him, he "maintained his integrity." A person of integrity can be relied upon, is consistent, is faithful to his word, and tries to consistently practice living out what he believes.

9. Do you think others would consider you to be a woman of integrity? Explain how you came to this conclusion.

10. Read Proverbs 11:9-15 and list how the righteous are a good influence on society.
11. Reflect on verse 13. Have you ever been a "talebearer"? What was the result? Explain the seriousness of this Proverb.
12. Explain the principle behind verse 14. What's the relationship between seeking God and seeking counsel?
13. Last question. Have you ever made a wrong or bad decision because you failed to either get counsel or follow it? Looking back, what changes would you make?

### Fifth Day

**Write out your verse from memory.**

1. Let's pick it back up in Proverbs 11:16-31 where we find more characteristics and rewards of the righteous. Can you list some of the main traits?
2. Verse 16 reminds us that honor is more important than riches. What other verses talk about a similar topic?
3. It is said that "The Lord's personal stake in human conduct is made startlingly plain in verses 20-21." (Hubbard) What do you think that means?

4. In your own words, what is Solomon saying in verse 22, especially in light of the subjects he's talking about? How does it relate to Proverbs 31:30?
  
5. What do verses 24-26 tell us about wealth and generosity? Are you a generous person, giving freely without expecting anything in return? Do you see it all as God's money and in His economy, the best way to riches is **not** to hold on to them? (vs 24)

Verse 28 is so clear about where our trust "shouldn't" be. Riches are a snare that trap many of us, and these verses are a good reminder that if that's where our heart lies, we'll be in trouble. Riches are like leaves; after a brief life, they fall. I like how he says we will "flourish like foliage" if we are trusting in Him, especially as it ties in to verse 30.

6. Read what David wrote about the righteous being like a tree in Psalm 1:1-3, along with Proverbs 11:30. In what way is the righteous man like a tree? How is a tree beneficial to many? (How does this contrast vs 29?)

In verse 30, "winning souls" does not mean evangelism per se. "Win" literally means "attract or take," so the idea is that a person who lives a righteous life attracts others to wisdom and righteousness. They are a good advertisement for the Lord which could be something that helps to win them over to Christ!

7. Are you flourishing like a tree? Does your life benefit others? Are you bearing fruit for others? Are you giving shade when needed? Are you providing refreshment? Think on this for the rest of the day. Are you living for others or living for yourself?