

Woodland Baptist Church
 Wednesday, March 5, 2014
 Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 11:1-15

1) READ PROVERBS 11:1-15

- a) All commentary is taken from the Bible Knowledge Commentary and Dr. Constable's online commentary.

2) INTEGRITY AND TRUTHFULNESS

- a) **1 A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight.**

- i) The Lord hates dishonest scales (lit., "balances of deceit"), but is pleased with accurate weights (lit., "perfect stones").

(1) Dishonesty in business was condemned and honesty commended (cf. 16:11; 20:10, 23; Lev. 19:35–36; Deut. 25:13–16; Micah 6:10–11; also note Amos 8:5). To increase their profits many merchants used two sets of stone weights when weighing merchandise. Lighter stones were placed on the scales when selling (so that a lesser quantity was sold for the stated price), and heavier ones were used when buying (so that more was obtained for the same price). With the absence of coinage, scales were used in most daily commercial transactions. The reference to "the Lord" puts commercial matters in the spiritual realm.¹

- ii) The same proverb, with slight variation, appears again in 20:23 (cf. 12:22; 15:8; 16:11; 20:10). The promise of Zaccheus should cause offenders of this proverb to blush (cf. Luke 19:8).²

- b) **2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.**

- i) This verse contains an interesting combination of words. Pride leads to disgrace, its opposite, while humility (this Heb. noun is used only here and its

¹ Bible knowledge commentary

² Constable

verbal form is used only in Micah 6:8, “walk humbly”), which pictures a submissive, modest spirit before both God and man, leads to or is accompanied by wisdom. Proverbs 13:10 also contrasts pride and wisdom.³ The word for “pride” (zādôn, “arrogance”; cf. 13:10) is from the verb zîd, “to boil up” (cf. “cooking,” Gen. 25:29) and sounds much like the Hebrew word for disgrace (qālôn).⁴

- ii) A proud person refuses to accept instruction from God, which, if he or she would follow it, would result in his or her receiving honor. The humble take God's advice, and that is their wisdom. Pride goes before a fall. King Nebuchadnezzar had to learn this lesson the hard way (Dan. 4).

(1) Pride = disgrace....humble = wisdom

3) VERSES 3-8 - VALUE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a) Verses 3–8 refer to the value of righteousness in guiding and protecting from hardships. Integrity (trans. “blameless” in Job 1:1; Prov. 11:20) refers to moral wholeness, being without moral blemish. When integrity is a way of life, it guides like a shepherd. Duplicity is the contrasting characteristic. The noun selep is used only here and in 15:4 (“deceitful”); the related verb sālap means “to pervert, subvert, or overturn.” It is rendered “overthrows” in 13:6 and “frustrates” in 22:12.

b) 3 The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.

- i) Integrity = a guide
- ii) Crookedness = destruction

(1) When a person determines to walk in God's ways, he or she can count on God's Spirit to provide guidance and direction (cf. Ps. 32:7-8). Obadiah is a positive example (1 Kings 18:3-4), and King Ahab a negative one (1 Kings 21:25).⁵

c) 4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

³ BNC

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Constable

- i) The day of wrath (cf. "wrath" in v. 23) probably refers to death. Wealth cannot buy long life; only righteousness can aid in that (cf. 10:2b). In 10:27 fearing the Lord is said to contribute to longevity.

(1) Riches do not profit in the day of God's wrath (cf. 10:2; Job 21:30; Ezek. 7:19; Zeph. 1:18).²³⁷ The rich man in Jesus' story about the rich man and Lazarus discovered this to be true (Luke 16:19-31). Noah is an example of the truth that "righteousness delivers from death."⁶

- 4) RETRIBUTION - Galatians 6:7-8 - 7** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. **8** For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

- a) 5 The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight, but the wicked falls by his own wickedness.**

- i) Righteous living results in a straight way (cf. 3:5–6), a life with fewer obstacles and troubles (cf. 11:8), but wickedness leads to a person's downfall.
- ii) The person who deals with his or her sins appropriately will sail through life with few major troubles, generally speaking. However, the "wickedness" of the wicked will cause him or her to stumble and "fall." Joseph and his hateful brothers are examples of these two lifestyles.⁷

- b) 6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the treacherous are taken captive by their lust.**

- i) Another benefit of righteous living is deliverance, escape from troubles (see comments on v. 5) or death (v. 4). But even the evil desires of an unfaithful (lit., "treacherous") person get him in trouble (cf. v. 3). He is trapped (1:17–18; 6:2; 7:22–23; 12:13), for his desires lead him to sin.
- ii) This proverb is very similar to the preceding one. A righteous person's "righteousness" will deliver him or her when that person is accused of some wrongdoing, because his or her reputation will incline the accusers to assume the best of him or her. However, a greedy person will discover that his or her treachery in acquiring what he or she covets ensnares him or her. Esther

⁶ Constable

⁷ Constable

gained the favor of her husband by her previous behavior, whereas Haman's greed for glory doomed him.⁸

c) 7 When the wicked dies, his hope will perish, and the expectation of wealth[a] perishes too.

- i) Death for the wicked puts an end to all he hoped to accomplish. Neither his wealth (v. 4) nor his power can divert death. Obviously it is futile to forsake righteousness to gain power.
- ii) Because the wicked live for the here and now, when they die, what they hoped to obtain vanishes ("will perish"). The same is true for another kind of wicked man: he who relies on his own strength ("hope of strong men"), rather than on the Lord. The rich fool in Jesus' parable is a case in point (Luke 12:20).

d) 8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, and the wicked walks into it instead.

- i) As stated in verses 3, 5–6, righteous living helps avert trouble (cf. 12:13). As in the Book of Esther, the trouble which wicked Haman planned for Mordecai came on Haman instead (Es. 3–7).
- ii) The wicked do not experience deliverance from trouble ultimately, but finally they go to the "place" reserved for them—forever. Daniel was delivered from the lions' den, but his accusers perished there (Dan. 6).⁹

5) COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

- a) Verses 9–15 discuss community relationships: one's neighbor (vv. 9, 12), the city (vv. 10–11), a gossip (v. 13), advisers for a nation (v. 14), and a cosigner (v. 15). A godless person can defame another merely by what he says (cf. comments on 10:18–19a). The Hebrew word for "godless" is ḥānēp, "profane." The verb ḥānap is translated "defiled" (Jer. 3:1), "pollute(s)" (Num. 35:33), "desecrated" (Ps. 106:38). Contrasted with a profane person, who is careless in what he says, is the righteous person who escapes through knowledge. Perhaps this means he escapes the injury of slander either because he knows it is not true or because he knows to stay away from profane people.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Constable

b) 9 With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbor, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.

i) Potiphar's wife sought to destroy Joseph, but through his true knowledge of God, Joseph obtained deliverance (Gen. 39).¹⁰

(1) "Three proverbs follow relating to the nature of city and national life, and between them two against mockery and backbiting:"

c) 10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness. 11 By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown.

i) These verses refer to the beneficial effect that righteous people can have on public life. People of a city appreciate and take delight in the prosperity of and God's blessing on its upright citizens because they exalt the city. That is, such people help keep a city sound economically and morally (cf. Jer. 22:2–5). Conversely citizens are glad when the wicked—who lie, slander, deceive, rob, and murder—die (cf. Prov. 28:12, 28) because then the city is safer. Wicked people's words (mouth; cf. 11:9)—not to mention their deeds!—can destroy a city economically and morally.

(1) As frequently in the proverbs, "the city" represents the state (by metonymy): national life. When things went well for righteous David, Israel rejoiced (cf. 2 Sam. 19:14). When wicked Abimelech died, Israel also rejoiced (Judg. 9:50-57).

(2) David's uprightness led to the establishment of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:6-10), but the words of the last four ungodly kings of Judah resulted in its overthrow and demise (2 Kings 24—25). "Henrietta Mears used to say, 'God made the country, man made the city, but the devil made the small town.'¹¹

d) 12 Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent. 13 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.

¹⁰ Constable

¹¹ Ibid

i) In these community relationships (vv. 9–15), right and wrong talking is mentioned several times: in verses 9, 11–13. Anyone who derides (*bûz*, “to despise, belittle, hold in contempt”; cf. comments on *bûz* in 1:7b) his neighbor (cf. 14:21) lacks judgment (see comments on 6:32; 10:13). It simply makes no sense to slander (cf. 10:18) one who lives or works nearby. Since that makes for friction and dissension, it is wise to keep quiet (hold one’s tongue; cf. 10:19) even if he does know something unpleasant about his neighbor. Divulging a secret by malicious gossip is a betrayal of trust (also stated in 20:19). “A gossip” is literally “one who goes about in slander.” Gossiping is also condemned in 16:28; 18:8; 26:20, 22.

(1) "Despises" means "belittles" (RSV). Shimei's cursing of David illustrates the first line of this proverb, and David's restrained response illustrates the second (2 Sam. 16:5-14).¹²

(2) Verse 13 - Bearing tales about people and incidents can too often result in revealing "secret" information (cf. 20:19; Lev. 19:16). Paul alerted Timothy to the tendency among younger widows to do this (1 Tim. 5:13). A person worthy of trust, on the other hand, does not share everything that he or she knows. Jesus advocated loving, "private" confrontation rather than gossip (Matt. 18:15).¹³

e) 14 Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

i) Guidance (*taḥbûlôt*, also used in 1:5) is a nautical term used of steering a ship. The “steerings” or counsel of advisers can be helpful (cf. 15:22; 20:18; 24:6). A wise person is open to others’ opinions and counsel. Without such counsel, he may make serious mistakes.

(1) “. . . in general it is found to be true that it is better with a people when they are governed according to the laws and conclusions which have resulted from the careful deliberation of many competent and authorized men, than when their fate is entrusted unconditionally to one or to a few.”

¹² Constable

¹³ Ibid

- (a) An example is the early Christians, who sought the counsel of others in Jerusalem when differences of opinion arose (Acts 15). The importance of seeking "guidance" from "counselors" is emphasized in the proverbs repeatedly (cf. 15:22; 20:18; 24:6). "To depend entirely upon one's own judgment is the height of folly."
- ii) "We stand too close to the canvas to see the whole picture and we bring so much emotional fog to our decisions that what we do see is blurred."¹⁴
- f) **15 Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm, but he who hates striking hands in pledge is secure.**
- i) Putting up security for someone poses serious problems (see comments on 6:1–5; cf. 17:18; 22:26–27).
- (1) We have heard this advice before (cf. 6:1-5). Here Solomon expressed the truth concisely. It is very dangerous to take another's debts on oneself. There may be occasions when one might choose to do so, but this usually proves costly. Take, for example, our Lord's willingness to assume humanity's debt for sin upon Himself. It cost Him His life.¹⁵

¹⁴ Constable

¹⁵ Ibid