



## Proverbs 15

**Tape #7223**  
**Proverbs 15**  
**By Chuck Smith**

Alright! Proverbs fifteen. Now the proverbs are gradually changing from the earlier style of setting things in contrast. More and more as we move into the Proverbs, we're not gonna be getting the contrast that we did in the earlier Proverbs. But more or less, a word of wisdom, then more or less an explanation, or amplification of that word of wisdom. We do start off with a contrast however, and the contrast is between a soft answer, and grievous words. We are told that...

*A soft answer turneth away wrath (15:1):*

One of the best ways to end a fight is to give a soft answer. You remember in the old testament, when Gideon had gone out against the Midianites, and God delivered the Midianites into the hands of Gideon. The men from the tribe of Ephraim came, and they said, "Why didn't you call us to go out with you!", you know, and they were really upset. Gideon just gave to them, a very soft answer. He said, "What did I do in comparison with what you have done? After all, you captured the king". Well, they had already been pretty well defeated by then, and the fellows had captured them, but Gideon gave them a soft answer, and the Ephraimites went away all settled, and happy!

There could've been real bitterness over that. There could have been real strife over that. In fact later on, these same Ephraimites came to Jephtha in a similar situation, and they said, "Why didn't you call on us?", and Jephtha said, "You rats! You didn't turn out!". You know, and they, they had a big confab! I mean they really got into it!

*grievous words stir up anger(15:1).*

Now again, the Bible deals with life, and the issues of life, and how to best get along in life. This is just an excellent rule to mollify troubled waters. A soft answer, turns away wrath. Try it this week. You'll no doubt have opportunity to do so! "Where were you? What took you so long to get home?" "Well sweetheart, I was looking for a bouquet of flowers for you." Soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words, they always stir up, and you know, as, as we had our proverbs last week, the power of the tongue to cut, or to heal. God help us to use our tongues to heal. There's a fire, world of fire in the tongue. But, God help us that the words that we speak, will be healing, will be comforting, will help. Still dealing with the tongue, verse two...

*The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness (15:2).*

So there is the contrast here between the wise using knowledge aright, whereas the fools, their tongue pours out just, foolishness. Interesting proverb, the third one here.

*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good (15:3).*

As David, in Psalm 139 said, "Where can I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, you are there. If I descend into hell, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and I flee to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there you surround me!" The inescapable God. People so often make the mistake of thinking that they can hide from God. But the scripture tells us that, "Everything is naked, and revealed before the eyes of Him, with whom we have to do". Don't be deceived. God sees and God knows every thing that we do. More than that, He knows our thoughts, He knows the motive behind the things that we do. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

It is a mistake to think that you can escape from God. People used to think of God as localized. When the children of Israel were fighting against an enemy, and they met the enemy in the valleys, and defeated them, they said, "Oh well they have the god of the valleys. Next time we will fight the mountains". They thought of God as being, "the God of the valleys", over against, "the God of the mountains". Not realizing that He is the God of everywhere! God isn't localized. But they had their local deities, and they thought of God so often as being localized in a particular place.

It is interesting that even Jonah, when God called him to Ninevah, went down to Joppa to get a ship, to take him to Tarshish, and twice it said, "that he might hide from the presence of God". "Yes, God dwells in Israel, but He surely doesn't dwell in Tarshish!" But God dwelt in Tarshish! "Though I take the wings of the morning, and I flee to the utter most parts of the sea, every, even there Lord, you will surround me!" So the eyes of the Lord are every where.

Sometimes we think that He is the God of the Sanctuary. So when we come into the Sanctuary we, all of a sudden, take on a more somber, serious, you know, "We're in the house of God, and now we are in the presence of God", and, and sometimes even in our prayers, give that intimation. "Lord it is so good to gather in your presence this evening." As though you weren't in the presence of God when you left home. But finally, when you came in the doors, you came into the presence of God, and, and, that's, that's wrong. You never escape the presence of God. "The eyes of the Lord are every where." So it isn't that I should have one attitude, and way of reaction in the Sanctuary, and another one when I get home.

I need to realize that I, well, as, as Paul, when he was talking to the Athenians, the Epicurean philosophers, there on Mars hill, said, "I perceive you're a very religious people, as I have been walking through the market place, I have seen all of your idols, and your gods, your little places of worship. I saw one altar and it was inscribed, 'To the Unknown God'". I'd like to tell you about this God. He's the one who created the heavens, and the earth, and all things. In Him, we live, we move, we have our being." He's sharing with them the omnipresence of the eternal God. So, the eyes of the Lord are in every place, you don't escape God. You don't hide from God. There is no such thing as a secret sin. The eyes of the Lord are everywhere! "Thou Lord seest me." Good to remember that.

I think that one of the greatest needs that we have as Christians, is the consciousness of the presence of God, wherever we are. Now God is where ever we are. But we're not always conscious of it. Because we're not conscious of it, we do things that we really shouldn't do. Were we conscious of His presence, we wouldn't be doing them. So what we need desperately is that consciousness of the presence of God. There's nothing in the world that will alter and change your actions more, than the awareness, or the consciousness, that you're in the presence of God where ever you are. "And the eyes of the Lord are in every place: beholding the evil and the good."

Again going back to the tongue, this is just sort of thrown in between some of these verses on the tongue.

*The wholesome tongue [We had the tongue of the wise, now the wholesome tongue.] is a tree of life: [It, it just it tends towards life, goodness.] but perverseness therein [That is, in the tongue.] is a breach of the spirit (15:4).*

You can break a person's spirit with your tongue. The next verse is a contrast between a fool and the prudent. All the way along, concerning a fool, we've discovered that he hates to be corrected. He hates instruction. So...

*A fool despises his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent (15:5).*

As another scripture said, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend". Someone who comes along and says, "You know, you were wrong in your reaction the other day". Rather than get all huffy and say, "What are you, who are you to judge me!", you know, and get all upset. That, that marks you as a fool. Thank them and say, "You know, I appreciate you pointing that out to me. I sort of felt bad after I did it myself. Would you pray for me? I have a tendency to speak too quickly. Appreciate your prayers". That shows real wisdom. How do you take reproof? How do you take it when someone comes up and says, "Hey that was wrong brother". How do you respond? Better be careful, because you sure reveal a lot when you do.

The righteous and the wicked. These are, the, most of the contrasts in the Proverbs thus far, have been between the righteous and the wicked.

*In the house of righteousness is much treasure (15:6):*

God rewards, and blesses those who follow His commands. In fact, the commands of the Lord are intended to bring you prosperity. When Moses turned the reins over to Joshua, he encouraged Joshua to meditate in that law, to remain in the law. "And thus shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and you will have good success!" The law of the Lord, it's the law of prosperity and success!

In Psalm one, that man who meditates in the law of the Lord, “will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, who brings forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does will prosper”. The law of the Lord. So, “in the house of the righteous, there’s much treasure”.

*but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble (15:6).*

Ask Milken about that! Money that is gotten by wickedness. There’s all kinds of trouble involved. Again, contrast between the wise and the foolish, and it’s in their lips, or in their tongue again.

*The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish does not so.* [Contrast between the wicked and the upright.] *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord (15:7-8):*

God said to Israel in the times of Isaiah, “I, I don’t want any more sacrifices”. When Samuel challenged Saul for his disobedience to God, who had commanded him to utterly destroy the Malachites and all that they had, and he brought back the fatness of the cattle and the sheep, and all, in disobedience to the command of God, Samuel went out and he was very elderly at this time. He had already lost his sight, he was blind. As Saul met Samuel, he greeted him with sort of spiritual jargon. “Blessed be the Lord! I’ve done every thing that the Lord commanded me to do!” And, old, blind Samuel said, “If you’ve done every thing that God has commanded you to do, how is it that I hear those sheep, and those cattle lowing, sheep bleating, the cattle lowing?” “Oh well, they were so fine, and good, I thought I would bring them back to sacrifice them to the Lord.” The old prophet said, “To obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken unto God is better than the fat of rams”.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto God. It’s like you’re trying to buy God off. It’s like you’re trying to buy forgiveness, or buy favor with God. You can’t buy favor with God! If you make some sacrifice for God, and you’re doing it more or less to appease your own conscience, it’s an abomination to God. In contrast...

*the prayer of the upright is his delight (15:8).*

You don’t have to make a sacrifice, just your prayer. God delights in your prayers. Again, a contrast between the wicked and the righteous. The sacrifice of the wicked, we read, was an abomination.

*But the way of the wicked is also an abomination to the Lord:* [The path of wickedness, is an abomination.] *but he loves him that follows after righteousness (15:9).*

So it’s sort of a similar kind of a proverb to the previous one. There’s, there’s a lot of similarity, the wicked, whether it be a sacrifice, or the way of the wicked, they’re an abomination to God. The righteous, He delights in his prayer, and He loves those who follow in the path of righteousness.

Now for a little bit we won’t be having contrasts, but just proverbs that deal with wisdom, and observations.

*Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die (15:10).*

The person who has forsaken the way of the Lord so often hates correction. But, if they hate that reproof, they will die. Another proverb...

*Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men (15:11)?*

This ties together with David’s 139<sup>th</sup> Psalm again. “Though I descend into hell, thou art there.” “Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?” God knows your heart. Another proverb...

*A scorner loves not one that reproves him: neither will he go unto the wise (15:12).*

So the scorner is, won’t appreciate reproof, he won’t seek wise counsel. This is interesting...

*A merry heart (15:13),*

There are several proverbs that deal with a merry heart, good to have a merry heart! God wants you to have a merry heart! God wants you to enjoy Him, life. So, “A merry heart”...

*maketh a cheerful countenance:* [It just gives you a pretty face, merry heart, shows on your face, cheerful countenance.] *but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken (15:13).*

You know a person’s face reads like a history book.

*The heart of him that hath understanding seeks knowledge: but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.* [So the contrast between the heart of those who seek understanding, and the fool.] *All the days of the*

*afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.* [So the merry heart, just your life is like a continual feast.] *Better is little with the fear of the Lord: than great treasure and trouble therewith (15:14-16).*

There are a lot of proverbs that will deal with, “it’s better this, than that”. This is one of the first. We will be getting many as we progress into the Proverbs, there will be many that have this interesting contrast. Just, “It’s better, a dinner of just vegetables”, (that’s the next one). “Better is a little with the fear of the Lord”, now if you don’t have much, and yet you have the fear of the Lord, you’re better off than the person who has a lot of treasure, but he has all kinds of problems therewith.

*Better is a dinner of vegetables where there is love (15:17),*

Eating around a table where there’s love, you don’t have enough money to buy steak, but we got love, and we’re eating carrots. You know, that’s great! “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is,”...

*than a stalled ox* [A whole ox that’s on the rotisserie spit.] *and hatred therewith (15:17).*

Love. Better to eat with love, than to have the contention and the strife, than a stalled ox.

*The wrathful man* [Have you ever met one, I’ve met many, “The wrathful man”,] *stirreth up strife (15:18):*

There are, there are people who are like nitroglycerine. Any little shaking, and they will explode. You know, and you have so careful around them. You just realize, hey walk softly, you don’t want to, too much vibration, this thing’ll go off, you know! “The wrathful man stirs up strife”...

*but he who is slow to anger* [Oh God help us to be slow to anger, God give us control, and give us a smooth, even disposition, so that I’m not easily provoked, slow to anger.] *for he that is slow to anger appeases strife (15:18).*

He makes peace. The lazy man.

*The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns (15:19):*

Prickly! Our gardener around here has planted a lot of thorny plants, where the kids are prone to tromp. He planted all these beautiful tiger lilies, and all the kids tromped them down. Now you’ll see bogambias, sharp thorns, and mahonias, and a lot of those plants with thorns, where, where the kids are prone to take the shortcuts, and so forth. So, can you imagine a thorny hedge? “The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns.”

*but the way of the righteous is made plain. A wise son makes a glad father:* [“Proud of that boy!”] *but a foolish man despises his mother. Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom (15:19- 21):*

An interesting one to contemplate! People get their joy many times in foolishness, but the Bible says, “they’re destitute of wisdom”.

*but a man of understanding will walk uprightly. Without counsel purposes are disappointed (15:21-22):*

A lot of times things aren’t brought to fruition, because of the lack of counsel, the lack of good counsel. It could’ve been done, had you just sought some wise counsel, you could’ve found a way, but the lack of counsel, the purposes are thwarted.

*but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.* [Then] *A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth (15:22-23):*

Now, “a soft answer turns away wrath”, and so we’re dealing again with the, with the tongue, the things that you say. “And a man has joy by the answer of his mouth.” I love this part.

*and a word spoken in due season, how good it is (15:23)!*

Oh there are so many things I wish I would have said, and there are so many things I wish I hadn’t said! But that word spoken in due season, how good it is! Just that word of encouragement, lifting up that person who has fallen. “A word spoken in due season, how good it is!” Words of kindness, words of love, words of comfort, words of hope, words spoken in due season! God help us to, to use our lips, our mouths, our tongues, to lift those that are fallen, to strengthen those that are weak, to encourage those who are cast down, that we might give that word in due season. How good it is!

*The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath (15:24).*

Now no contrast here, it’s just an amplification. “The way of life is above to the wise”, that is, we are guided. It is from above. It is the path that God establishes. It causes us to depart from hell beneath, it will

keep us in that way of eternal life.

*The Lord will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.* [“Pride cometh before destruction”, the Lord will destroy the house of the proud.] *The thoughts of the wicked* [Now we have the way of the wicked is an abomination, the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, and now we have the thoughts of the wicked,] *are an abomination to the Lord (15:25-26):*

Man, I mean, if you’re wicked, you’re an abomination to God! Everything about you, even if you try to sacrifice unto Him, it’s abomination! So, “the thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord”...

*but the words of the pure are pleasant words (15:26).*

Again, God takes delight in the prayers, in the words. If you’re walking with the Lord, He delights in everything about you. He’s just delighted with everything about you, when you’re walking in fellowship with Him. Isn’t that glorious! The way God just sort of delights in you? Because, you’re His child! Just like we delight in our children.

I have two beautiful daughters that have been constant, and continual joy to my wife, and I through the years. My older of the two has to be one of the most patient mothers I have ever seen. She has tremendous patience. She has a softness, a beauty about her that is just something that you just enjoy to behold. Absolutely beautiful!

I was with her the other day when her little son, who is a year and a half old, had quite a temper tantrum. He has, oh he’s quite Biblical, he gets mad and he just puts his face in the dirt, and kicks and screams, or his face on the floor. I mean, he puts his face down, and just has a temper with face down, temper tantrum. So the other day he was displeased with something, and he had one of his little temper tantrums. Face down, and he started screaming and kicking and all, and she looked at me and smiled, and said, “He has quite a way of expressing his desires doesn’t he?” But just so patient! I would’ve picked him up and swatted him you know, if it had been my kid!

But, and I think of how patient God is with us. You know we go through our little tantrums and all, and God just says, “Look at that! Isn’t that interesting how they express themselves”. I love it!

*He that is greedy of gain will trouble his own house (15:27);*

“Seek not to be rich”, the Bible says, “and if riches increase, set not your heart upon them”. If you are greedy for gain, you’re gonna have trouble. Your whole family will be troubled.

*but he that hateth gifts shall live (15:27).*

A person who is just willing to work, not to try to distort judgment with gifts is life. Righteous and the wicked.

*The heart of the righteous studieth to answer:* [That is, you don’t just give a snap answer off the top of your head, you think about it before you answer, you study to answer.] *but the mouth of the wicked just pours out evil things (15:28).*

I mean, have you ever met those people that seem to sort of have verbal diarrhea? Their mouth is just constantly pouring out evil, you know.

*The Lord is far from the wicked (15:29):*

That is in the sense of, God surrounds the wicked, He is not far distance wise. He is just far from the moral standpoint. I mean, you’re walking in wickedness, you’re far from God, you’re far from the path of God.

*but he hears the prayer of the righteous. The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.* [No contrast, just sort of an amplification.] *The ear that heareth the reproof of life abides among the wise. And he that refuseth instruction despises his own soul: but he that hears reproof will get understanding (15:29-31).*

So all the way along, the encouragement to receive reproof. The encouragement to hear what people have to say to you. To be open to instruction. So...

*The fear of the Lord* [Or reverence of God] *is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility (15:33).*

“God abaseth the proud, but He exalteth the humble.” “Before honour is humility.” “Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.” “Before honour is humility.” “Promotion comes not from the

east or the west but promotion comes from the Lord.” Don’t seek to promote yourself. “Humble yourself before the Lord, and He will exalt you in due time.” “Before honour is humility.”

Well, that’s all we have time for tonight. This rate, we’ll finish the bible in another twenty years. We could probably figure out a proverb on that one.

Now let me just say that in the proverbs that we have looked at tonight, there’s a lot of instruction, there’s a lot of reproof, there’s a lot of wisdom. We know the importance of listening to instruction, giving heed to the reproof, that we might be wise, that we might walk in the path of light.

So may the Lord speak to us, and may our hearts be open, that we might walk in His way this week. That we might seek His will at all times. That we might be conscious of the fact that God knows us, and we are living in His presence. May we not do things that we would be embarrassed to do with Him watching us. For indeed, the eyes of the Lord are every where, beholding the good and the evil. So, help us to be aware of that dear Lord, that we might do that which is pleasing before Him. Living the life of righteousness, so that everything we do pleases God, and He finds delight in. Keeping from that path of wickedness, which is an abomination to Him, no matter what you do.