



Proverbs 21-22

Tape #7228
Proverbs 21-22
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to Proverbs, chapter twenty one, as we continue our trek through the Bible, continuing the study straight through the scriptures. Solomon in the beginning of Proverbs tells us the purpose of the Proverbs are for instruction, for wisdom. To really help plant truth in your heart.

Now so much of our education, our early training, was by proverbs. If you stop to think of it, your mother, or your dad probably quoted many proverbs to you as you were growing up. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." We all remember that. They're telling you that the wisdom in that is that if you have something at hand, it's really better than the hoping for something that you don't have. "A stitch in time, saves nine." If you delay and put things off, you're gonna have a bigger job by the time it comes around.

So we learn by proverbs. They're just little bits of wisdom that are put in a nugget form that help in the instruction. So Solomon's kids, man he wrote over three thousand proverbs, so they probably had new proverbs every day being tossed at them by their dad. So the book of Proverbs is for the purpose of imparting instruction, giving wisdom, putting the wisdom in subtle forms that make it easier to remember. So as we begin chapter twenty one, he talks about...

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will (21:1).

God is sovereign. God is in control, even over the king's heart. God turns it however He will. You remember when Nebuchadnezzar was sort of glorying in the greatness of Babylon? "Is this not the great Babylon that I have built?" According to the dream interpreted by Daniel, he did have the greatest kingdom that the world has ever seen. "Thou, O Nebuchadnezzar are the head of gold." So this golden empire, it was replaced by the silver, "Which is inferior, even as silver's inferior to gold. So your kingdom will fall to an inferior kingdom. But yours is the greatest. The head of gold." Because of this great kingdom he had a lot of pride, and he was sort of glorying in the greatness of the kingdom.

The Lord gave him a dream, in which the Lord warned him that his pride was going to lead to a abasement. So Daniel said, "Be careful. Walk carefully O Nebuchadnezzar, because man, you're due for a fall". He behaved himself for awhile, but then he said, Well this great Babylon that I have built!", and he went insane and until seven seasons passed over he lived like a wild beast, out with the cattle in the field. The dew of heaven falling on him, his nails growing like claws, until he knew, until he recognized that it is the Lord who reigns. "The king's heart is really in the hand of the Lord, and like rivers of water, God turns it wherever He will."

So God is in control, God is sovereign, and God allows things to happen that we often do not understand. Sometimes the only comfort that I can get in circumstances is to know that God is on the throne, and God is in control, and though this seems like a hard, heavy thing, yet all things are working together for good. God is working out His purpose in my heart, and in my life. Even through, and often times through extremely difficult circumstances. Because, God knows my temperament, and my stubborn nature that it takes difficult things to get me to pay attention. The second proverb is...

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes (21:2):

How true that is! This past week with my grandkids up in the mountains, I would go into their room, and there would be junk on the floor. I'd say, "Who put this on the floor?", not a one of them did! And, I'd say, "Well, I guess it isn't here, I'm just seeing things". I'd pick it up and put it in the trash can. "I thought I saw something on the floor. Isn't that amazing? You know, no one put it there!"

To hear a person tell their side of the story you, you'd say, "My that's terrible! You were really wrong!", but then when you hear someone else tell their side, two different stories! But whoever tells the story, he was right. It was the other one that was wrong. "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes." We can justify anything we do. There was a reason for it. "Oh I know it looks bad, but really...", you know.

but God ponders the hearts (21:2).

The Lord knows the motive. The Bible tells us that, “There is a day coming when the secrets of the heart shall be revealed. For everything is naked and open before Him, whom we all must stand.” So we judge according to the outward appearances so many times.

To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice (21:3).

Now the purpose of sacrifice was to bring alienated man back into fellowship with God. You see, when God created man, the purpose of creating man, was fellowship. God wanted to fellowship with His creation. So He created man for that purpose of fellowship. But He wanted it to be a loving, meaningful, fellowship, and thus He gave to man, the power and capacity of choice. Self-determination. So I can love God, or I can hate God. I can fellowship with God, or I can just forget God. So that, when I do love God and fellowship with Him, it is meaningful fellowship because I don’t have to, it’s my choice. Thus, I choose to have a relationship with God.

But man chose to rebel against God, and the fellowship was broken. But God provided a way to restore broken fellowship. That way of restoration was through sacrifice. For God had said, “The soul that sinneth shall surely die”, so there was that substitutionary death of the animal, who took the guilt of the sin, and, and died in the person’s place. So that, fellowship with God could be restored. Thus, sacrifice was one of the most important steps of the restoring of a man’s relationship with God, who had become alienated by his sin.

But God over a period of time, said that He abhorred their sacrifices. They were, they had become an abomination unto Him. Because they were just doing, they were just deliberately rebelling against God, saying, “Well, we’ll just offer a sacrifice”. They would disobey deliberately, and thinking, “Well, we’ll just make up for it, we’ll give Him another sacrifice”. God said, “No, no, no, you’ve got things all killywop. That’s not the way it is.”

When Samuel the prophet, came to king Saul, and said, “When Israel came from Egypt, to the promised land, being led by Moses, the Amalekites made a dastardly attack against Israel, trying to destroy them. I promised that we would get even with the Amalekites. We’d wipe em’ out.” Now that the nation is strong and powerful, God wants you Saul to take the army and go down and utterly destroy the Amalekites, because of the evil of their attacking of Israel, in those early years.”

So Saul went down, you remember? He brought back the king as a hostage, Agag. He also brought the best of the sheep, and the oxen. The sickly ones he just destroyed, they hacked them up good. But the good ones they brought back. Old Samuel the prophet, eyes are now blind because of age, came out to meet Saul as he returned with the army. Saul said, “As the Lord liveth, I’ve done everything God commanded me to do”. Samuel answered, “As the Lord liveth, if you have done everything God has told you to do, how is it that I hear the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the cattle? Blind, but man I can still hear!” “Oh”, he said, “they were so good”. Remember, “Every man’s ways are right in his own eyes.” “They were so wonderful that I thought that I would bring them back and sacrifice them to the Lord. We’d use them for sacrifices.” The old prophet said, “To obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken to God is better than the fat of rams. That rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and in that you have done this, you have done foolishly. Because you have rejected God from ruling over you, God has rejected you from ruling over the people”. Now, “To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice”. Better that you are just, than to offer sacrifices.

Now the high look, the proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin (21:4).

Now, plowing, the word plowing is a Hebrew word “nare”, and there’s another translation of the Hebrew word, “nare”, that the lamp of the wicked. Even the light of the wicked is sin. But, proud look, or a high look, I guess that’s sort of a proud look, a proud heart. The high look comes out of the proud heart. Even the light of the wicked, is, everything they do is sin.

The thoughts of the diligent tend only towards plenteousness (21:5);

Again, there is the constant commending of a person being diligent. There is that constant condemning of a person being slothful. So here, “The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness”. That is, a person who is diligent in his business gives careful thought to his actions and activities, and plans things out, he’s gonna prosper.

but those that are hasty [Hasty decisions, or in a hurry to get rich] *they're gonna end up with want* (21:5).

You know, it's an amazing thing to me how so many people prey on the poor, and they prey upon them with all kinds of schemes, whereby they get hope that, that person can get money quick. Now there are people that are in difficult circumstances, they, they need money, they can't really go out in the marketplace, things are such that they have to be in their home. So there's all kinds of gimmicks, of, "Earn money while at home, and all you have to do is invest about five thousand dollars, and you can buy this loom, and get material and you can start making rugs. There's a tremendous demand for hand made rugs!" You know. These poor people, "I've got five kids to watch, I can't go out and get a job! Cost me as much to get a babysitter as I'm gonna make! Oh I can sit at home!" You know, so they are, they are preyed upon by these charlatans, and it's tragic that a person would prey upon a person who is in dire circumstances.

You're gonna you know, get some kind of a scheme to rip people off? Figure out something to rip off the rich! But the problem is, they're too smart. But, this hasty, it's gonna bring you to want. It's better to plod along, to plan things out, to be diligent, that'll bring you into prosperity. But in a hurry to get rich, it's gonna leave you in poverty. I'm amazed at how many people take the change with the, of their food stamps with lottery tickets.

The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity that is tossed to and fro of those that seek death (21:6).

Enriching yourself by lies, by fraud, fraudulent methods, an emptiness. When they catch up with you, they're gonna kill you.

The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment. [So, a man will ultimately be destroyed by his own actions.] *The way of a man is perverse, and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right* (21:7-8).

So the contrast here of a perverse man, with a pure man.

Better to [This is--no comment on this one, "Better to".] *dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house* (21:9).

As I said, and I must comment on this one, or I'll be in trouble. Solomon you remember, was notorious for the number of wives that he had. So with all of the wives that he had, he had every type and variety no doubt of woman, that ever existed. Among those women were brawlers. So it's better to just dwell in the little corner of the housetop. Man just have you a little shack out there, where there's peace, than in a broad house, a big house with a brawling woman.

The soul of the wicked (21:10)

And he's gonna have something else to say about women, before we get through with it tonight. I feel sorry for the guy, well really! I have a hard enough time with one woman, trying to please her, and keep her satisfied, and happy, and all. It's a full time job! Imagine trying to keep a thousand women happy! "The soul of the wicked"...

desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes (21:10).

Down deep inside the wicked, there's, there's the desire for evil. The perverseness of the heart. Down in his soul, there's that desire for evil, and even his neighbor, he's, he's ready to take advantage of, finds no favor in his eyes.

When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: [We had one that was similar to this over in the nineteenth chapter.] *and when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge. The righteous man wisely considers the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness* (21:11-12).

Now, "the righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked". There's the seventy third Psalm that fits with this proverb. Asaph, the writer of the seventy third Psalm, speaks about being envious of the wicked, when he saw their prosperity. He was going through hard times, he was having heart problems, he was very sick. He looked around and he saw the wicked, and it seemed like they had anything and everything they wanted. They weren't sick like he was, they didn't have the problems that he had, and yet, they were blasphemous, they were evil in their speaking against God, and he said, "I almost was wiped out, until I went into the sanctuary of God, and I saw their end. I saw the result of living a life of wickedness. I

saw what was gonna happen to them”, and then rather than envying them, he felt a pity towards them.

He realized how well off he was! “For Lord, thou are continually with me, you hold me by the right hand, you guide me with your counsels, and you will receive me into glory. Who am I on earth beside thee? And who in heaven do I desire but thee, O Lord? I’m so fortunate, I’m so blessed!” When he saw the end result of a life of sin, compared with the end result of a life of righteousness.

The end result of the life of sin is destruction. Now it’s put them in slippery places, in a moment they are going down to the pit, they are utterly consumed with terror. The end result of a life of sin, compared with the end result of a life of righteousness, “And thou wilt receive me into glory”.

Then he sort of rebuked himself for the thoughts that he was thinking. That, “It doesn’t pay to serve God, it doesn’t pay to try to live a right kind of a life”. “So foolish was I! I was like a beast, I was thinking like an animal! That the grave was the end, and I didn’t look beyond to eternity”. Thus, “the wise, the righteous man, wisely considereth the house of the wicked”. You see them with all of their riches, and all of the splendor and all, but wisely considering it, you realize that death is going to bring the end, it’s going to bring worse than the end. It’s going to bring horrible retribution of God against their wickedness. “For God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.” God will overthrow them.

Whoso stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard (21:13).

Again, how that in so many of the Proverbs, Solomon takes up the cause of the poor, the Lord takes up the cause of the poor. Here’s another proverb that is encouraging us to help the poor. If you stop your ears at the cry of the poor, then when you are in need and are crying, there will be no one to listen to you.

A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath (21:14).

So the way to appease. I think that most husbands have found this out, take some flowers home, you know. Pacifieth anger, bring home a gift, so that you, you know, that’s one of the major problems that wives have, is, “Does he love me?” Sometimes by our actions, we don’t show loving, tender concern, and that’s what they need! They’re, they’re made of a finer temperament than we are. We are coarse, rough, tough, macho. They’re fine, and weak, and tender. They need to feel that they are loved. Sometimes in our coarseness we don’t show it, and we hurt them, not meaning to. They get angry with us. Ha, ha! Time for a box of candy. “A gift in secret will pacify anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.”

It is a joy to the just to do justly (21:14):

If you are a just person, doing the right thing is just a joy, it’s a delight! Don’t you feel good when you’ve done the right thing? “It’s just a joy to the just to do judgment.”

but destruction shall come to the workers of iniquity. The man that wanders out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead (21:14-15).

How important it is to have an understanding. If you wander out of that path, you’re in, walking in the congregation of the dead.

And he that loves pleasure shall surely be a poor man (21:16):

What poverty, spiritual poverty that person has who lives for pleasure. What an emptiness is there! For pleasure is so fleeting, it’s just a moment of exciting, the moment of thrill. But you have to go back and seek more, more, more! I, I’m always amazed at how we are developing more and more gimmicks and things to bring sensations, and excitement, and thrills. When I first surfed, it was the old long balsa wood board. You just get there and you just stand, you know, and ride the wave in. That was great stuff you know. Man you see these guys today with these short little boards, and curling up on the wave, and making a fan tail, and watching them go on those waves, and it’s just absolutely, I think of myself on that big old long board, just standing there. Compared with what these guys are doing today, I think, “Man alive! Can’t believe the stuff they do!” But, you see the excitement wears off after awhile, and so you’ve got to get some new little twist, some new little angle. Some little thing to give it another little, and so you, different shape of the board. A different feel on the wave, and, and, you just, you go, and go, and go!

The same with water skiing, and the types of skis, and the types of things that they’re doing now, with water skis. Even just snow skiing, you see some of these guys that are doing these flips and all, with snow skis. I can’t believe! Because when you make pleasure your big thing in life, it’s sort of like an opiate, it takes more and more to bring the same degree. I mean it, after awhile anything gets old. So you have to add

a new wrinkle, you have to add a new twist, you've got to do something else to make it a little more, to get that same excitement, that, that same rush that you, that you had. You know, and so you're a poor man, when pleasure is your god.

and he that loveth wine and oil [luxuries] shall not be rich. [Shall be poor in the things of God.] The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright (21:17-18).

You remember when the children of Israel were finally coming into the land, being led by Joshua, and they had conquered the city of Jericho by unusual means, marching around it for seven days. Then as they began their journey up towards Bethel, moving now into the land, they'd have established now their stronghold at Jericho, and now there beginning to move into the land. As they move up the valley towards Bethel, there's this little town of Ai over here. The men said to Joshua, "Oh, you don't need to deploy the whole army for that little town! We'll just go over there and wipe it out, and then we'll join you at Bethel". So these men went over, and the men of Ai came out, and they began to get the better of them in the battle. The men of Israel came fleeing back to Joshua, defeated. Joshua cried unto the Lord. The Lord said to Joshua, "Hey, there's a problem here Joshua, there's sin in the camp. You know I told you that Jericho was mine. I was giving you the victory, thus all of the spoils of Jericho belong to me. But there is a man in the camp who took some of the spoils into his own tent". So God fingered Achan, who had taken this Babylonish garment and had hid it in his own tent. So they brought him forth, and he was put to death. God couldn't give them victory as long as this sin was in the camp. So in that case, the wicked man Achan became a ransom for the righteous, when he was dealt with. Then they went back and they took Ai. Then they went on and took the land. "The transgressor becomes the ransom for the upright." God seeks to remove the evil out of the camp of His people.

Here is the other one.

It is better to dwell in the wilderness, [he moved out of his little shack on the roof!] than with a contentious and angry woman. [Poor Solomon, ha, ha!] There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spends it up (21:19-20).

The importance of saving. Treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise. To, to have, remember you have the foolish and the wise virgins, the, the lack of oil. So it's just the foolish man spends everything he has.

He that followeth after righteousness and mercy will find life, righteousness, and honour (21:21).

What are you seeking? Are you seeking righteousness, are you seeking mercy? Then you're gonna find life, and righteousness, and honor.

A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and he casts down the strength and the confidence thereof. [So by wisdom a city is taken, the wise man will scale it, the city of the mighty.] Whoso keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from trouble (21:22-23).

How many times have you gotten in trouble because you said something? You know, the Bible talks about the tongue being an unruly member, and how much better it is just to keep your mouth shut so many times. So, "He who keeps his mouth shut, and his tongue will keep his soul from trouble". You can just stay out of a lot of trouble by just keeping quiet.

Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath (21:24).

So a proud and haughty scorner, that probably is a bad name. That's the name of the one who deals in proud wrath.

The desire of the slothful [or the lazy man] kills him; for his hands refuse to labour (21:25).

You desire, you want, but you know, you're too lazy to work. So that desire can just kill you, just drives you mad! "Oh I wish I had this! Oh I wish I had that!". "Well, go out and work." "No! But sure wish I had it!" The desire will kill you.

For he covets greedily all day long: [It's just, it's just there, it's nagging on you, you desire it, but you won't work.] but the righteous he gives and he spares not (21:26).

Now we dealt with the sacrifice, "It is to do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice".

The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he brings it with a wicked mind? [God knows your heart, and the sacrifice of the abomination, of the wicked just is an abomination to God,

and it's even worse when he does it with a wicked mind.] *A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh consistently (21:27-28).*

A false witness, the problem is, as you are questioned over and over again, and you're trying to make up an excuse, and an alibi, and you're lying about it, as you tell your story, you're going to become inconsistent in the telling of your story. Then they begin to catch you up with your inconsistencies. "Well I thought you said there were two people!" "Well I, I mean there was, there was, there was actually three. I only saw two to begin with." But you see, you have to, you have to start, you know, going from one toe to the other, and you get talking faster, and, and, and you get caught up with. But, if you're telling the truth, the one thing about it, it's consistent. The story remains the same. "That's the way I saw it." And, you're telling a straight story. So, "The man that heareth speaketh constantly". It should be consistently. There's a consistency to the story.

Now the wicked man hardens his face: but as for the upright, the Lord directs his way (21:29).

Now the wicked so often get hardened in their position. They harden their face, they, they say, "I'm gonna do it, and I don't care what people say, I don't care what they think, I don't care what God thinks. I'm gonna do it!" He, he hardens himself in his way. But, the upright, he looks to God for direction. I'm pliable, I'm, I'm open to be directed by God.

Now important proverb that we all should take and really put to heart. For...

There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord (21:30).

There's an old Greek proverb that declares, "The dice of the gods are loaded". That is, you can't really go against God and win. There's nothing you can do! If you put yourself in opposition to God, there's no way you can win! You go against the word of God, you go against the will of God, and you're the loser. You're going to lose. "The dice of the gods are loaded." For, "there is no wisdom nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord". No way that you can defeat Him.

Now the horse is prepared against the day of battle (21:31):

The horse was the tank in those days, he was the super weapon, he was the advantage in a battle. The horse being strong, and large, was a definite advantage in any battle. So, "The horse is prepared against the day of battle". But the real safety isn't in the horse. It's of the Lord. So, a person shouldn't look to the horse for safety, but look to the Lord. Don't look to material things, or whatever, look to the Lord.

Chapter 22

Now a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches (22:1),

That you have a good name, that you have a good reputation. If you had the choice, being very rich, or being known as a very fair, honest person, better to take the choice of being known as a honest, man of your word. A good name is the better choice than riches.

loving favour is better than silver and gold. Now the rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is maker of them all (22:1-2).

Where do the rich and poor meet together when you stand before God? I mean the rich have no advantage, standing before God. The rich and the poor meet together, the riches may get you a lot of things in this life, but they get you nothing with God. They don't buy favors with God. The rich and the poor are alike before the Lord, as far as, as the meeting of justice and all, they stand side by side, and there is no discrimination between the rich and the poor when you stand before the Lord.

We have a problem with our court system now, and many cases are being taken to the Supreme Court, because they say that there is not a true equity in the judgments that are coming forth. That, and they show statistically how that a, a rich person has not really been sentenced to death, or has not, the sentence of death has not been carried out with the rich. Where, with the poor, more poor people are executed than rich people. Thus, it shows an inequity in the sentence, and thus they're trying to get people freed from their sentences because of inequity. Well, it is true that there is inequity in the court system. But what do you expect? You're dealing with man, you're dealing with man's system.

Those gay activists that broke into St. Peter's, back in New York, and disrupted the service and all, they each got a hundred dollar fine. Some of the people who were involved in the operation rescue, they got a

hundred dollar fine, no jail time at all. Just a hundred dollar fine. Some of those that were involved in the operation rescue, down in San Diego have been meted out ten thousand dollar fines, and three years in jail. So, tell me, where is the fairness? Where is the equity? What is worse, you know, going in and disturbing the services in St. Patrick's Cathedral, that's a little slap on the hand. Carrying the placard in front of the operation, in front of an abortion clinic, that's a major felony! Something's wrong. Don't expect it to get right until the Lord comes, and then, watch out! Ha, ha! I'm gonna be sitting in the front row just cheering like everything! So there is a place where the rich and poor meet together, it's before the Lord.

The prudent man [The wise man] foreseeth the evil (22:3),

Now, boy I have to say that this is where my wife excels. She can see the problems that will develop, and she has a lot of insight this way. I'm more or less one to just plunge on in, and when the problems come, you just deal with the problems. But she can see the problems before they come. "The prudent man can see the evil", and he avoids it.

he hides himself: but the simple pass on, [Get into trouble, so there I am trying to get my way out of it, just passing on.] By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches (22:3-4),

Oh how important that humbleness, and that reverence of God, there's the path, and again spiritual riches. When the Bible talks about riches, so often it is not talking about material things. Unfortunately that's the way we measure. We say, "Oh he's got so much money!" He could be the poorest man in town, living in the greatest mansion, but still the poorest man in town, in things that really are valuable. I'm the richest man in town. I know that! I am so rich that I just glory daily in the riches that I have in Christ Jesus! I'm the wealthiest man! For the Lord loves me, I'm His child! The Lord blesses me, and He's so good to me, and He surrounds me with such joy, and so many blessings, that I'm rich in Him. Riches that are eternal. "The fear of the Lord are riches."

and honour, and life (22:4).

That's the whole thing. The eternal life. My riches don't corrupt. They can't rot, they're not, they can't be stolen! If you have riches that can be stolen, you're in bad shape, because you have to worry about them. You can't steal my riches! I think of how when Jacob had left Laban with his wife, and his children and all, and they'd sort of taken it on the lamb, and, and Laban began to pursue him. When he caught up with him, he said, "You've stolen my gods!" How sad to have gods that can be stolen! No one can steal my God, you see! No one can steal my riches. Because the riches that I have are in Christ. Eternal life.

Thorns and snares are in the path of the perverse: and if you want to keep your soul stay far away from perverse people. Then train up a child in the way that he should go: when he is old, he will not depart from it (22:5-6).

The recognition that children must be trained. "A child left to himself will bring reproach to his parents." How important that we take the responsibility of training our children in the way that they should go! When they're old, they'll not depart from it. When I was sharing, this was our text this morning for you that were here, and if you want a full blown exposition of this, get the morning tape.

But we were sharing the story that I was reading in the September issue of Reader's Digest, 1989, September issue of this radical from the 60's, who had gone so far from the, the home, environment, and background. Now his dad and he just were at such odds. How that his dad was dying of cancer, so they took this trip together, and how he came to the realization, the values that his dad had, were the right values. He saw the folly of his radicalism that he was into inadvertently, he saw that it, with the dad there was that foundation of love. With him, he had been taught to hate. All of the people he was involved with, there was such hatred. He came the full circle, and came around to appreciate, admire, and to emulate again, his father's value system. He took a wide digression from the straight path, but because of the training, early training, came back to him. "Train up a child in the way he should go, he'll come back to it." They may stray, but they'll come back to it.

The rich rules over the poor, [And sort of as the rich rule over the poor,] so the borrower is a servant to the lender. [So keep from borrowing if you possibly can!] He that soweth iniquity shall reap emptiness: [To sow sin, to sow a life of sin, it, it leaves you so empty, the fruit of it is just the emptiness, that feeling of guilt, that feeling of shame, that feeling of sorrow.] the rod of his anger shall fail. Now he that hath a

bountiful eye shall be blessed; [That is, the person who is generous is gonna be blessed.] for he gives of his bread to the poor (22:7-9).

What a blessing it is to be God's instrument in helping the needy! Here's an interesting proverb.

Cast out the scorner, and contention will go out; yes, strife and reproach shall cease (22:10).

I have discovered that it is dangerous to start becoming critical. Sort of scorner, and a scorner is a critical person. Because if you open up yourself to becoming critical, you begin to see more and more things to criticize, until nothing is right! You become critical of everything! You are just looking always for something wrong. You get to the point where that becomes the bent of your whole life is to discover what's wrong with it.

I've observed, there have been people who've written me letters, and now when I get a letter, and I see their handwriting and all, I know it's gonna be something critical. They've, they've got in that frame of mind, that bend of mind, and they're gonna be critical of something. Something that was said that they don't like. I'll probably get a lot of letters this week. Cause I say a lot of things people don't like. But they're just looking. Well look, you don't have to really look hard. You can find something wrong. Something to be offended over, something to be upset about, and when you get that bent, mind bent, you get to the place where you're just constantly stirring, stirring, stirring up things. Now the solution here is, "Cast out this scorner, and strife will cease".

We had a situation at the conference center, where there was just an awful lot of strife. It seemed that there was just this continual undercurrent of strife up there. So what we did is sought to get to the bottom of it. Who is it that's stirring up the strife? And all of the signs pointed to this one fellow. So I sat down with this one fellow, and I let him just pour out all of the venom that he was feeling. When he was through, I said, "Alright, if that's the way you feel, and things are as wrong as you believe they are, then you surely shouldn't be working here", and I fired him. I cast out the scorner. But you know what happened? The strife ceased. Things have been happy. Things have been good. Things are going great! But you can have one person, who has this critical kind of an attitude, and he can just keep things constantly in a turmoil, constantly stirred up. So, it's a wise proverb, it's a good, it's a good proverb. "Cast out the scorner, the contention will go out, and strife and reproach will cease."

He that loves pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend. [Oh that person who's pure in heart, and just speaks things that are, that are graceful, and kind and all, you'll become the friend of the king!] The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, and he overthrows the words of the transgressor (22:11-12).

So again, you can't stand against God. He'll overthrow the words of the transgressor, the Lord preserves and all.

The lazy man says, There's a lion without, so I'll be slain in the streets (22:13).

You say, "Well you ought to go out!", "No there's a lion out there, I'll be eaten!" I mean, you can have all kinds of excuses not to work, and, the slothful man, the lazy man.

The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: and he that is abhorred of the Lord will fall in it. [So again Solomon has an awful lot to say about the women of the night, back in the earlier chapters, but he threw this one in at this portion.] Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him (22:14-15).

So again, in the training of the child, the importance of discipline.

Now, let me say that it is a sad day in a nation, when the laws of the nation come in conflict with the word of God. We are in that sad day in our nation.

Now I can understand the dilemma of the legislatures, because there is horrible child abuse, and children need to be protected from abusive parents. But unfortunately, when the government begins to step in, they can give power to the government, of removing a child out of a home, where there is a suspicion of abuse! I mean the law's become so geared that it, it's tragic that many a child has been removed from a good home, and the parents have to go through all kinds of hassle, because there is a suspicion that a child has been abused, because he was spanked by his parents. Thus, we are told in the scriptures to obey the laws of the land, and I thus do not advocate using a rod on a child. That is, a ruler. Because if you leave marks upon the

child, and the nurse at school would see those marks, she reports you to the welfare agency, they come and take away your child, and man you've got problems!

Any time you get involved with the legal system, you've got problems. All due respect to the attorneys that we have in the church. But they are there because when, once you get entangled with the legal system, you've got problems! They're not, they're not the problem always, some of them can be but they're usually there to help you get out of the problems, the law becomes such a difficult thing to, to interpret, and understand, and everything else, that you need someone with a little background to help you out!

So, where Solomon tells us, "The rod of instruction drives it far from him", find a form of discipline, and it is necessary to discipline your children. If you don't discipline, you're not training. Discipline is a part of training. But I, I don't recommend that doing those things that can bring you into conflict with the law. Perhaps there are better means, and better ways of punishing a child, than striking the child.

He that oppressteth the poor to increase his riches, [What a dirty dog!] and he that gives to the rich, shall surely come to want (22:16).

It'll tend towards your poverty. Oppressing the poor, God will take care of you. Giving to the rich, you're just, it's a folly!

Now, the next really the rest of the chapter, is more or less tied together. In the first five verses here, he is encouraging you to listen to the wisdom he's going to give you in the remaining verses of the chapter. So this is an exhortation now to pay careful heed.

Bow down your ear, and hear the words of the wise, apply your heart unto my knowledge. ["Now listen carefully to me", is what he is saying, "just give me your ear now, I'm gonna give you some real wisdom."] For it is a pleasant thing if you will keep these words within you; for they shall be fitted within thy lips. That your trust may be in the Lord, I have made known unto you this day, even to you. Have not I written to you the excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth; that you might answer the words of truth to them that send unto you (22:17-21)?

So, "I'm gonna give you wisdom, I'm gonna give you instruction. I want you to listen now, carefully. Because this is gonna benefit you. But not only will it benefit you, but when others come to you for advice, you'll be able to give them good advice. These are the words...

Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: For [If you do that,] the Lord will plead their cause, and he will spoil the soul of those that spoiled them (22:23).

So if you are taking advantage of the poor, or of an afflicted person, you're going against God, and God is gonna stand up in their defense. Thus, first words of advice. Second...

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go. [Be careful of that person, the angry man, the man who is furious, loses his temper, he's gonna create problems.] Lest you learn his ways, and it becomes a snare to your own soul (22:24-25).

You learn to copy him. The third thing...

Do not be one of those that strike hands, or become a surety for another man's debt (22:26).

Now the striking of the hands was, was the idea of shaking on it. "Shake on it man!" "Yes, if he can't pay, I'll pay his debt. He's good, he's my friend. I'll sign, you know, co-sign!" Don't do it!

For if you don't have anything to pay, why should they take away your bed from you (22:27)?

In other words, you put yourself up, you guarantee another person's loan, then they're gonna come to you, and you're gonna have to give up the collateral that you placed for that loan. So just better not to do it. And then...

Don't remove the ancient landmarks, that your fathers have set (22:28).

Over today, to the present day, you can see the landmarks, the fields. They have these little pillars of stone, and they are the landmarks. They don't have surveyors like we have here, you know, that go out and set the stakes, and put the corners and so forth. From as long as they can remember. "That pile of stones has been there since I was a little kid! That pile of stones marks the corner of our property." Now, there were those crooked people who would go out in the night, and move the pile of stones. You know, pick up a few yards. So the, the, the warning, or the, the advice is, "Don't remove the ancient landmarks". Now they were ancient in Solomon's days, think how ancient they are today. Still they are there! They are interesting to see,

these little rock piles that distinguish the boundaries of the person's property. Then...

Do you see a man who is diligent? he will not stand before ordinary men, or obscure men, the man who is diligent in business, he will stand before kings (22:28-29).

So, we've come to the end of the Proverbs for tonight. A lot of wisdom. Oh Lord, help us to remember these things, and put them into practice. Shall we pray?

Father, we give thanks to You tonight for wisdom. Now Lord, may we give heed to the words, to obey. Lord we surely don't want to be found in conflict with You! We don't want to be fighting with our maker. But Lord, we want to be obedient, we want to be the kind of person that You want us to be. We want to do the things that you would have us to do. So Lord, even as you direct the heart of the kings, so direct our hearts in your path, dear Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.