



Proverbs 27-28

Tape #7231
Proverbs 27-28
By Chuck Smith

Shall we turn in our Bibles now to Proverbs? Tonight we begin with chapter twenty-seven, as we continue our journey through the bible. Now these are the proverbs of Solomon. Beginning with chapter twenty-six, they are proverbs that were collected during the time that Hezekiah was the king. So it was some four hundred years after he had written them, that Hezekiah, the king, ordered his scribes to collect as many they could of Solomon's proverbs. So these were collected in addition to the proverbs that we already had. It, it would be like someone commissioning now, to find all of the literary works of Columbus. "Let's record that which hasn't been recorded history of Columbus." You can understand really the difficulty of compiling so many years after these were written!

But the purpose of a proverb is for instruction, and of course we realize that, most of us grew up on proverbs. Our parents used them constantly in instructing us, and in training us. As we were growing up, we were always reminded that, "The early bird catches the worm", and these various proverbs that we were taught by. On that, "early bird catching the worm", I read a poem once that I thought was rather interesting. It said, "Ever since the early bird caught the worm, in world wide fame, he's wallowed. But the worm got up early too, and what did he get? Swallowed!", But the purpose of a proverb is to give wisdom, and to give instruction, and it's, it's actually a part of a catechism, of sorts. Learning by proverbs.

So as we continue with these proverbs, the bits of wisdom, the observations of life.

Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for you know not what a day may bring forth (27:1).

The uncertainty of tomorrow. A lot of people put off until tomorrow things that need to be done. They boast of tomorrow. "Tomorrow I'll do it!" But, so many times, tomorrow never arrives. It, it's uncertain. Therefore the importance really of doing things now, while the opportunity is there, not putting off until tomorrow. So many people have great plans for the future, but as we are exhorted in the new testament, rather than saying, "Tomorrow, I'll do this and that", we should rather say, "If the Lord wills tomorrow, this is what we will do". For the Lord's will is always the contingency factor in all of our planning. "This is what I anticipate, this is what I hope, this is what I plan to do, if the Lord wills." But that should always be a part of the planning process, the will of God governing our lives.

Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth (27:2),

Now if you praise yourself, it's called, "bragging". People don't like a bragger. Let other people say how wonderful you are, all of the kind things you've done, what a beautiful person you are. Let others say it, but don't go around saying it yourself.

let it come from a stranger and not from your own lips. A stone is heavy, the sand is weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both (27:2-3).

Watch out when a fool gets angry. I mean he'll say anything, he'll do anything, he has no governing inhibitions, a fool when he lets go, is, is crazy! So, "A stone is heavy, sand is weighty, but watch out a fool's wrath is heavier than them both!" Continuing in the idea of wrath...

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy (27:4)?

A lot of times, people are angry, it's outrageous. Wrath is cruel. But the worst thing of all is envy. If a person envies you, the, the envy is manifested many times in such subtle ways, and it, it's hurtful. My daughters are very beautiful girls, and I told them as they were growing up that, "One of the difficulties of being so beautiful is that other girls are gonna be envious. They're gonna say cutting things, and it's just because they're envious, because you are so beautiful." Who can stand before envy? It was hard, they did have hard times. They would come home cut, and hurt, because things had been said that were not true. Cutting things, hurtful things. Many times, daddy would have to take them in his arms, and just comfort them, and strengthen them, and say, "Well honey, I told you, they're just jealous because of your beauty".

It's just difficult to stand before envy.

Open rebuke is better than secret love. For faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful (27:5-6).

So this idea of that openness of rebuke. A person is a better friend to you, who will say to your face what needs to be said. "Open rebuke." Because, "The wounds of a friend are faithful". A surgeon only cuts to heal.

There are many times when people come to me for counsel, who are involved in things that they should not be involved in. As I counsel them, I say, "Look, you're gonna have to cut this off right now, right away. Immediately, not tomorrow, now. I know that it is painful, I know that it is going to hurt. It's not going to be easy, but it's got to be done". I say, "If I were a surgeon, and you came to me, and you said", 'My doctors referred me to you because I have some lumps under my arm here.', and I feel them and I say, "Well we better take some tissue, and get a biopsy. Doesn't feel good". So I take some tissue, and I set an appointment for you on Wednesday to come back. You come in, and I sit down, well, doctors don't work on Wednesday, Thursday. Ha, ha! I sit down with you, and I say, "Well, have some bad news, the biopsies are not good, it shows it's cancerous. It seems to be in the lymph nodes there. But I'll tell you what, just go home and take aspirin for six months, and we'll see what happens. Because if I operate on you, if I remove those lymph nodes, that's gonna be painful. You're, you're not gonna have much movement in your arm for awhile. You're gonna be tied up, it's just gonna hurt. It's going to be painful, so you know, I don't want to see you go through pain. Everybody hates pain, and so just take aspirin and let's just see what happens." I would be a quack! You could sue me for malpractice! "Though it is going to hurt, though it is going to be painful, though there will be no doubt, a time of recovering, it is important that we get you into the surgery immediately. We'll take you into the hospital right now! We've got an appointment set for this afternoon. We're gonna operate immediately, the sooner we get to that, the better. Yes, it's gonna be painful, yes, you're gonna be tied up for awhile, yes, it's gonna be uncomfortable, but we've gotta do it now."

So with things in our lives that destroy, and are destroying our spirits. They call for radical surgery. They call for immediate surgery. Yes, the process may be painful, you'll hurt for awhile, but the hurt is for the purpose of healing. Open rebuke often times hurts us. When a friend rebukes us, we feel wounded, we feel hurt, because they were open, and honest with us. But faithful are the wounds of a friend, for though they hurt, they are intended to heal. So, the Lord, our friend who sticks closer than a brother, many times the things He says to us, hurt. The word of God really cuts! It's like a sharp two edged sword! It really cuts, but always cutting not to destroy, but cutting to heal.

A full soul loatheth a honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet (27:7).

A person who is satiated, gluttoned, has done everything. Life becomes a bore, everything is blah. "Trip to the Caribbean?", "Oh again?" Even the sweet things are loathsome. For a person who is hungry, you're hungry enough, man anything tastes good! I have a couple of dogs, and they don't like dry dog food, but they eat it.

As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place. [Picturesque enough that you can tie it together.] Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel (27:8-9).

That is, conversation with friends. It's just good to sit down and, and share with others. I've often said that really the joy of an experience is the ability to share it! You know, just by yourself, you may have the most beautiful experience, but by yourself it's, you, you've gotta share it! There are sometimes that I'm driving along the coast, and the sun will be setting, and it'll be absolutely beautiful. But, if Kay isn't there, I don't enjoy it nearly so much. Because, beauty is to be shared, and with a friend. Conversation, it's just as, it's like sweet perfume, it's like a good balm, ointment, they rejoice the heart. The being able to share with a friend.

Your own friend, and your father's friend, forsake not (27:10);

Don't forsake friendships. Your father's friends. That's good advice because your father's friends have an interest in you because of their friendship with your father. So you're not to forsake them.

neither go to your brother's house in the day of calamity: for it is better to have a neighbour that is

near than a brother that is far off (27:10).

So, a neighbor who is a true friend, is really better, more convenient, than a brother that lives in New York. Better to have a neighbor who is, because in the time of emergency, tragedy or whatever, he's right there. He's close, he can step right in to help. So, don't forsake friendships. Develop and create friendships.

My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproaches me (27:11).

Now Solomon, unlike his father, evidently was a pretty strict disciplinarian. In fact he was I imagine, a little stricter than we would like to have as fathers. He said, "If you spare the rod, you will spoil the child". He said, "Don't let up on the rod, just because your child is crying. He's not gonna die". He said, "The foolishness of the world is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of instruction drives it from him". So, I imagine that Solomon came in for some reproach because of the way he was disciplining his boys. He was tough, a tough disciplinarian. So, he, he's saying to his sons, "Alright now son, behave yourself, act wisely that you might make my heart glad, and when these people come around and say, 'Oh you're too tough on them', I'll be able to say, 'But look at how they turned out!'", and, "so I may answer him that reproaches me."

A prudent man is able to foresee the evil, [You're able to anticipate the problems that may arise, and thus,] you're able to protect yourself; but the simple just pass right on, and they suffer the consequences (27:12).

So the Bible does tell us to you know, sort of look at a situation and try to determine the consequences of it, avoid the evil.

Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman (27:13).

This we had earlier in the Proverbs. The Bible warns against being a surety for a stranger. It actually warns against being a surety for a friend. That is, signing, cosigning papers. That's what it's all about really. Making, or guaranteeing the surety, as being a guarantor for another person's debt. For another person's obligation. "Oh I can't get a loan, my credit isn't good, but would you sign with me?" Look out! Unless you want to end up paying it yourself, better not to sign. So the Bible says, "Make sure that you've got collateral when you're dealing with a person that would cosign with another, or those that are interested in womanizing, they're not to be trusted". This one I like!

He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him (27:14).

Those people that get up early, and start singing at the top of their lungs, you know. "Bless you my brother!", The person rolls over in bed, and says, "Shut your big mouth!", you know. It's a curse to them.

We've already had this one. Remember this is a collection that came later, and thus they, they collected some that were already there.

A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike (27:15).

Um, it never stops, and it drives you crazy!

And whosoever hideth her it's like trying to hide the wind, [You just can't hide the wind!] and is like the ointment of his right hand (27:16),

You pour perfume all over your hand, you can't disguise it, people are gonna smell it! So, there's no hiding of it, is basically what it is saying. They're loud, they're contentious, they're boisterous, and they're like a continual dropping.

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend (27:17).

Again, this is, this is conversation. How great it is to sit down with a friend, and discuss issues, share ideas, share philosophies, and back and forth kind of a sharing, of, of, it just sharpens. You get sharp when you sit down, and have discussions with your friends. It's just a sharpening of the mind, of the thoughts. There's nothing quite like good discussions among friends. Lively discussions on issues and all. "And like iron sharpens iron." You just really, you get sharper as you share with friends.

Whoever keeps the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured (27:18).

Again, this is sort of in diligence. In being diligent, "The one who keeps the fig tree, he eats the fruit

thereof". One of these Mother Goose stories sort of came out of this Proverb, of the little hen, The Red Hen, who said, "Who will help me pick the grain, that I might bake the bread?", "Not I!", said the fly! "Not me!", said the flea. "Then I'll do it myself", you know, and all. Finally, "Who will help me eat the bread?" "I will!", said the fly. "No, I'll do it myself", said the little red hen. So the idea is, the one who takes care of things, is the one who will partake of the fruit of it.

And as in water face answers to face, so the heart of man to man (27:19).

So in looking, that, it's talking about the reflection when you, when you look at a pool of clear water, you see the reflection of your face. "As in water face answers to face. So, again, heart, man meeting together, there is that heart to heart kind of a relationship. That heart to heart experience that you have as you open up to your friend.

Hell and destruction are never full; [I don't know how big hell is, but the Bible says it's never full.] so the eyes of a man are never satisfied (27:20).

There are some things that can never be satisfied. Your flesh, can never be satisfied. That's one of the characteristics of the flesh, it's impossible to satisfy your fleshly desires, and appetites. You may glut them for a moment, but in a few hours, you'll be hungry again, not really satisfied. As Jesus said, "Drink of this water, you will thirst again". That's true of every fleshly pursuit, of every fleshly experience. They do not bring a satisfaction. They bring a temporary diversion many times, but they don't bring satisfaction.

As the fining pot for silver (27:21),

Now the fining pot was a big old kettle that they heated the silver in, to burn out the dross. So, "As the fining pot for silver"...

and as the furnace (27:21),

They would heat the gold again to the burning point, to burn out the dross. "As the furnace"...

for gold; so is a man to his praise (27:21).

The fining pot, and the furnace really showed the purity of the gold and the silver. So praise, really shows what is in a man. You know there are some people that just can't take praise. They believe it, they let it go to their heads. They begin to get puffed up, they begin to think that they are really something wonderful, and, and they get intolerable. So, praise really proves what's in a man's heart. It really proves what you might say, "the metal of a man", his capacity to accept praise without it going to his head.

Though you should bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle (27:22),

Now they would take the mortar and the pestle, and they would, with a pestle, grind the wheat. So, though you take a fool and you know, pound him, with a pestle.

yet will not his foolishness depart from him (27:22).

I mean you can't drive it out! The guy's just a fool. Can't do anything for him.

Be diligent to know the state of your flocks (27:23),

And the rest of these proverbs are tied together. They just have to do with life, and with the sustaining, and sustenance. "Be diligent to know the state of your flocks"...

and look well to your herds (27:23).

Now remember this was an agrarian society. These people were all involved in farming. The society had not developed to the tragic extent that it has today. People were closer to the earth, closer to the ground. So every man had his flocks, every man had his herds.

For [he said] riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation? The hay appears, and the tender grass shows itself, the vegetables of the mountains are gathered. The lambs are for thy clothing, the goats are for the price of your field. And you will have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance of thy maidens (27:24-27).

So be diligent in the taking care of your affairs, in order that you might lay up in store.

Chapter 28

We're told that...

The wicked flee when no one pursues (28:1):

You know, it's terrible to have a guilty conscience. It's terrible I guess to be wicked. Because a

wicked person gets paranoid, and they flee when there's no one chasing them. Every one they see, you know, standing over there, they think, "Hmm, I wonder if he's an FBI agent following me? Better get out of here!", and the wicked flee when there's no one even pursuing. That consciousness of guilt and evil doesn't give any place to rest. The Bible says, "The wicked are like a troubled sea, that's tossed to and fro". Their mind is troubled, there's no place of resting. You flee when there's no one pursuing.

but the righteous they're as bold as a lion (28:1).

They just go right in, they're not worried you know, nothing to hide.

For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof (28:2):

When a nation has deteriorated, the transgression of a land, it is talking about a nation that has deteriorated morally, and spiritually. As you look at the history of the nation of Israel, as, and Judah, during the periods of spiritual moral decline, there were many princes. As we were going through the books of Kings, you'll remember that we had a period in their history of, as the nation had morally declined, just really almost come to the bottom, that there was one king after another. They were assassinated. He would reign for two months, and he'd be assassinated. The guy would come in and reign, the guy who'd assassinated would, would start to reign, and in three months, he'd be assassinated. So there were many princes, and that's the idea. When the nation has deteriorated morally, spiritually, anarchy almost takes over. There are many princes. You don't have any really long reigning kings.

but a man of understanding and knowledge the state shall be prolonged (28:2).

When you have a good ruler, one who is diligent, and fair, honest, then his state is prolonged. He rules over a period of time.

A poor man that oppresses the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaves no food (28:3).

One of the problems in life is that poor people, when they get power or money, are often times more vicious and cruel than a normal person. They become like a sweeping rain, which leaves no food. They just devastate the soil, and there's a flood, there's a run off, but there's nothing that really soaks in to nourish the ground. It just washes, and wipes things away, rather than bringing forth fruit.

We, this morning mentioned, Festus, Felix, the governor that was appointed by the Roman emperor. The Roman emperor liked Felix's brother, so as a favor to his brother, he appointed Felix as the governor. But Felix had been a slave, and now he is the governor, and he is corrupt. He, he has, he uses his position just to enrich himself, and he lives a very profane and corrupt life. This proverb was surely one that would apply to his reign, "A poor man that oppresses the poor".

They that forsake the law praise the wicked (28:4):

The law of God condemns the wicked. When you forsake the law of God, you begin to praise the wicked.

but such as keep the law contend with them (28:4).

To me it is very disturbing, the way our judicial system, certain judges, are determined to break the back of the pro-life movement, and are guilty of miscarriages of justice. They are doing unjust things. They are limiting the person's defense. They are denying the rights of freedom of speech. They are using contempt of court, to imprison innocent people. It's tragic when those that forsake the law begin to praise the wicked. It's a tragic day in the history of a nation, and the judicial system becomes so biased.

There's a beautiful brother who is serving right now, six months in the Los Angeles County Jail, because he was at one of the protests at an abortion clinic. The judge threw the book at him. Later on, the judge had a man who had stolen a car, and all, and he had to spend three months in jail. He's a real criminal. It, it just, there's something wrong when, they that forsake the law, praise the wicked.

Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things (28:5).

Paul gives us something like this in II Corinthians. Paul tells us that, "The natural man doesn't understand the things of the Spirit, neither does he know them. For they are spiritually discerned. But he which is spiritual, understands all things, though he is not understood". The natural man does not understand the things of God, judgment. But they that seek the Lord, they that walk in the Spirit, they do have understanding of the spiritual things.

Better is the poor that walks in integrity, than he that is perverse, though he is rich (28:6).

So it's better to be an honest poor man, rather than a perverse rich man. Let me say, that I would rather be the poorest man on the face of the earth, not have a dime to my name, but know Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, and walk in fellowship with Him, than to be the richest man on earth, whoever he may be, and not know Jesus Christ. For he may enjoy the luxuries that his riches can buy him, for, let's give him a hundred years. He won't enjoy them that long. But then, he's gonna face eternity. Whereas I may have to beg every bite of bread, please don't give me a hundred years, but then spend my eternity with Jesus Christ. So you're much better off being a upright, honest poor man, than a perverse rich man. Eternity balances everything.

Whosoever keeps the law is a wise son: but if you choose [bad company, riotous friends] the companion of riotous men, you will bring shame to your father. He that by unjust interest, and unjust gain increases his substance, you may gather a lot of wealth, but someone else is gonna squander it and use it up (28:7-8).

That person who has gotten rich by dealing with cocaine. The government, when they catch you, will confiscate everything you have. You'll lose it all.

I think of Hattie Green, who in her day was the wealthiest woman in the world. She was probably also the stingiest woman in the world. She had amassed a humongous fortune. She had done it through Wall Street, and through conniving, and scheming. Hurt a lot of people. She was so tight, at that time the New York Times sold for a nickel. She would buy the New York Times and read it, the financial section, then fold it up, give it to her son, and send him out to Central Park in New York to resell it, so she could get her nickel back. She was so tight, her daughter was so miserable, she committed suicide, and her son, when he was out selling the paper on a winter day, slipped on ice, cut his leg. She took him to the free hospital. But the doctor recognized her, and wouldn't treat her son free. She got so mad, she took her son out of there. Gangrene set in, they had to amputate his leg.

When she died, she left her fortune to her son. Within a year or so, he was broke. He spent it all. Threw it all away really. He gave it away to the poor, he just, he just didn't want anything to do with it. He saw what it did to his mother, and he didn't want it, anything to do with it. So this proverb really came to pass in that, in that instance. Whoso, or, "He who by usury", high interest rates, and unjust gain, "increases his substance, you may gather it, but you gather it for him who would give it to the poor, or who will pity the poor".

He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination (28:9).

We think of prayer as probably one of the highest forms of spiritual manifestation in our lives. We don't realize that prayer itself can become an abomination to God. God spoke about how that their sacrifices became an abomination to Him. For God is interested in what's in your heart. Through the prophet Isaiah, God said, "When you lift up your hands to me, I will not listen to you, I will not hear you, because your hands are filled with blood".

So the lifting up of hands, which was the form of prayer, supplication to God. God said, "I'm not gonna listen, your hands are filled with blood". When you don't regard the law of God, when you're living a sinful life, your prayer is an abomination to God. It isn't, it doesn't, it doesn't gain you any points, that when you go to sleep at night, you say, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep". If all day long, you've just been living in open rebellion against God, and the laws of God. Living a very corrupt life. That, "Now I lay me...", at night, doesn't handle it. It's an abomination to God.

He came to live with us for a time. He had married this wealthy woman, had an interest in the Coca Cola Company. She was smart enough to see that he would just waste the money if he got it all. So she left it in a trust, and he only got a certain amount a month. Should've been sufficient to take care of him, but his alcohol had the better of him. I happened to be going to Bible school at the time that he was living at our house, and so he was actually staying in my room. I would come home on the weekend, and I'd try to witness to him, and he would say, "No Charles, I'm not as bad as you think I am. I, I say my prayers every night". You know, but he'd curse God every day! If you curse God all day long, and, and you forsake the law of God, your prayers at night are an abomination to God.

David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord doesn't hear me when I pray". Prayer becomes

deceitful. Because people think, “Well I know I’m bad, but I’m not too bad because I still pray!”, well, your prayer is an abomination. You’re deceiving yourself if you think that your prayer is covering for you, and all of the evil that is in your heart. So, “If you turn away your ear from hearing the law, your prayer even becomes an abomination”.

Whoever causes the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit (28:10):

You set the trap for the righteous, but the Lord will let you fall in your own pit. I like this. The Lord is constantly in the Bible, turning the tables on, on the unrighteous. It’s, it’s, I just, that’s one of the things about the bible. I enjoy the stories of the bible how, so often times they would plot against the righteous man, and then God would just turn it around. I think classically of the story of Haman, who plotted to destroy all of the Jews. He was so angry at, at Esther’s cousin, Mordecai, because Mordecai wouldn’t bow to him. So to take out his anger against this one man, he deceived the king into signing a decree that all of the Jews in all of the land should be exterminated on a certain day. Then, it so happened, that there had been a plot against the king’s life, and Mordecai happened to be at the gate, and he heard these two servants of the king plotting to kill him. So he reported to one of the king’s men that these two guys were plotting to kill the king. They had an investigation, they found it was true, and the two men were put to death.

So the king was spending this restless night. The decree had been signed, and old Haman looks like he’s in the driver’s seat you know. He’s gonna really get this guy now! And he’s in the driver’s seat, and boy he’s just waiting for this day, when he can just personally exterminate this one guy. But all the Jews to go with him. So the king had this restless night, couldn’t sleep. So he said, “Bring me in the records. Just read me you know, the court records, what’s happened in the kingdom”. So they started reading the records, and they were reading about how there was this plot against the king’s life, and this guy Mordecai warned the king, and they found out it was true, and the king’s life was spared. The king said, “Wait a minute! Wait a minute! What did we do to reward that fellow?”, and the scribe said, “Well it looks like we didn’t do anything!” The king said, “Well that’s not fair! We ought to do something for him!”

So in the morning when Haman came into the king, the king said, “Hey Haman tell me, what should a king do for a man that he would like to highly honor?” Haman thought, “Who would he like to honor more than me?” He said, “Well I think the king ought to take his robe and put it on the man, and he ought to have the man go down the streets of the city in the king’s chariot, and let the people go in front of the chariot crying, Behold the man that the king wants to honor!” The king said, “That’s a tremendous idea Haman! Get my chariot, and put my robe on that guy Mordecai, and you go in front of him yelling, Behold the man who the king wants to honor!”. Now Haman was so angry the family said, “Look you just build a huge gallows. So tall that everybody can see it, and hang that guy from the highest gallows. So the whole town to see that guy swinging!” So he had built this huge gallows. He got hung on his own gallows. The Lord turned it. He dug a pit for the righteous, but he fell into the pit for himself.

but the upright shall have good things in possession (28:10).

You cause the righteous to go astray, and by evil devices, you’re gonna fall in your own pit.

The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding will search him out (28:11).

There are people who think they are very wise. “I mean, after all I’ve got so much money, I must be wise, you know, how could I have so much money?” Yet, you know their, their riches are really no fault of their own. But the poor man who is wise can, can search him out. That is, he can expose his ignorance, really.

When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory (28:12):

Oh how wonderful it is when righteous men rejoice together in the Lord! What glory that is!

but when the wicked rise, then men hide. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy (28:12-13).

Our first tendency is usually to try to cover sin. We try to cover our guilt. But the bible tells us here, you try to cover your sin, you’re not gonna prosper. David, with his sin with Bathsheba, he first sought to cover it. He didn’t prosper. It was not until he confessed his sin that he was forgiven. It is not until you

confess your sin. Now sometimes people try to cover their sin by saying they haven't done it. John says, "If a man says I have no sin, I didn't sin, the truth isn't in him. He deceives himself. But if we confess our sins, then He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". The cleansing of sin cannot be accomplished by your endeavor to cover it. The only way your sin can be blotted out, or gotten rid of, is by confession. When you confess your sin, He's faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse.

Happy is the man that lives in the fear of the Lord always (28:14):

Stands in that constant awe of God, and of God's glory, oh how happy is that man! I don't know what God is doing in my life, but it's wonderful! More and more, God is making me just aware of Himself. He's revealing Himself to me, in this last few months, in just a very special way. It's just absolutely glorious, I, the, the joy that I feel, and the happiness that I have as, as God just reveals Himself to me! I'm sure that people driving by seeing me in the car probably think that I'm crazy or something, because sometimes I just break out laughing. I'm by myself, and the Lord just reveals you know something of His goodness and all to me, and I start to think about it, and, "Oh man! That's so neat! Wow!", and I'm sure people going by are saying, "What's happening to him?", you know! If they only knew! Happy is the man who is awe of God. How true that is!

but he that hardeneth his heart to God, you're gonna fall into mischief (28:14).

You're gonna get into trouble. Dare not to harden your heart against Him.

As a roaring lion, and as a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people. [Tyrant, yelling.] The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor (28:15-16):

Now the wicked ruler over the people, he's an oppressor. He's like a roaring lion, a raging bear. But the prince that wants understanding, that's lacking in understanding, he's also a great oppressor.

but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days (28:16).

The one who is not using his position of authority for his own personal gain. Now that's the greatest problem with human government. That is why human governments fail. Because the most difficult thing in the world is to be in a position of authority and power, and not use that authority for your own personal gain. It's almost impossible. I think the only way it is really possible, is that a person, again, have the consciousness that God rules, and he is ruled by God, and he is going to answer to God, for his rule.

But I do believe that our system is on the verge of collapse. The corruption cannot be stemmed. It is so ripe within all levels of government. Because we have elected officials, who do not have the fear of God in their hearts. They have no higher authority to which they feel responsible. Not believing in God, it's impossible for them to exercise that position of authority and power, without doing it in covetousness, using that power to enrich themselves, to better themselves. Thus, the corrupted government. Government only gets so corrupt, before it collapses. So you take God out of the national life, and that's what they have sought to do, and are doing. It leaves you exposed to all forms of corruption. But that doesn't last long. It's not long before that system collapses. It can't go on. Ultimately, the people rise up, and that system will go down. So the, but the ones who hate covetousness, who really rule in the fear of the Lord, they will prolong their days. The nation will be blessed under that kind of reign.

A man that does violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; and let no man stay him (28:17).

Now this is, in those days, they had a system of justice, if you murdered a person, then a member of that person's family was assigned to murder you. They were called the, "Avenger of Blood", and they would pursue you until they found you, and they would kill you. It was a part of the legal system of that day. A lot of people today who have had children and all, who have been murdered, they would like to have the privilege and the opportunity of being the avenger of blood. But they did have it. It was a, it was a part of the code by which they lived. So when a person would kill someone, they would flee. They would flee to hide. So this is saying, "Don't help that person who is guilty of murder. Don't aid them". But if a person has murdered, if a man takes a man's life, by man shall his life be taken, was a part of the law. So this has to do with that particular law.

Whoever walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once (28:18).

If you walk uprightly before the Lord, walking in righteousness, believing in Jesus Christ, you're gonna be saved. But if you walk in perverseness, in sin, one day you're gonna fall, suddenly it'll all be over. As we get the first proverb of the next chapter, "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy". What a heavy proverb! We'll get to that next week.

He that tills his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that follows after vain persons shall have poverty (28:19).

So again, an agrarian society, there were boys that would be out there plowing the field, tilling the land. They're gonna have plenty of bread. There were other boys that liked to run around with the gangs, they're gonna have poverty.

A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but if you're in a get rich quick scheme you're not gonna be innocent (28:20).

As they say, "If it sounds too good to be true, it is!" There are so many get rich quick schemes, and people who are anxious to get rich quick, are suckers for these schemes. They end up in poverty because people take advantage of the greed that they have. They want to get rich quick. But you can't do it, and be innocent.

To have respect of persons is not good (28:21):

James, evidently James read the Proverbs, because many of the scriptures in the epistle of James refer back to the Proverbs. You can see the influence that the Proverbs had upon James, and upon his writings. James said, he sort of rebuked the people in the church, because they had respect of persons. He said, "If a person comes in and he's dressed in fancy clothes, and he's wearing diamond rings and all, you say, 'Oh well come on in. Yes, sit down over here in the good seat, the soft pew.', and someone comes in and he smells bad, and wearing rags and all, you say, 'You mind sitting outside. You know, you can see in the window, and you can hear out there, we've got speakers.' He said, "When you do that, you have respect of persons and that is not good".

My dad, wish you knew him! Had his faults, but what a great guy. How seriously he took the scriptures. This particular scripture, my dad was an usher in the church where I was growing up, he was also a Sunday School Superintendent. He was, he loved to serve the Lord! He was a chaplain at the city jail, but he really made his living working for the Southern County's Gas Company at that time. But a tremendous witness for Christ. He would witness to everybody he met. Personal evangelism, he just, always involved in it.

I can remember this one Sunday, as dad was ushering at the church, the service had already started. I was a little boy, and I used to sit down on the front row. I can remember this one Sunday, service had already started, and here my dad comes ushering in this tramp. They used to have tramps in those days. Today, they call them homeless people. But, he ushered this guy down, and he had the smell of the antiseptic of the missions on him. Filthy as could be, sat him right down in the front row. You know, he wasn't gonna show respect of persons, I mean he gave the guy the best seat in the house!

Afterwards, he invited him home for dinner, and then gave him a bed to spend the night. "Be careful to entertain strangers, you may be entertaining angels unaware." Don't have respect of persons. I mean, he took the scriptures seriously. God preserved us through it all.

The guy's name was George. We called him "George the Tramp". Ask my brother and sister about old George the tramp, they'll laugh, because we had quite a few interesting experiences with George the tramp. Dad gave him a new suit. Dressed him up so he could go out and get a job. George went out and hocked the suit. Ha, ha! He didn't want a job. Ha, ha! But the scripture says that we are not to have respect of persons.

Now that isn't easy, for we, we are prone to make judgments of people by the way they dress, by the way they look, and by the way they smell. Yet, hasn't God chosen the poor of this world who are rich in faith? They're children of God, and they're going to be co-heirs with you in the kingdom of God! To have respect of persons is not good.

for a piece of bread that man will transgress (28:21).

If you are, if you're used to just showing favors, you can be bribed for a piece of bread.

He that hasteth to be rich [And again, this get rich quick.] has an evil eye, and he doesn't consider the poverty that's gonna come upon him. [Don't get involved in get rich quick schemes.] He that rebukes a man afterwards will find more favour than he that flatters with his tongue (28:22- 23).

"Ah you look so nice! My you look so great!" Be honest say, "Hey you've got, something wrong here". Better to be honest than to be flattering. You come into greater favour in the end.

Whoso robs his father and his mother, and says, It's not a transgression; the same is the companion of the destroyer (28:24).

Jesus said that they were guilty of circumventing the law. Because the law said, "If a son would curse his father, he should be put to death", but they had developed a tradition and if you would preface your curse by saying, "Dad this is for your own good that I'm going to tell you this", then you could curse him. Because you know, you were doing it for his own good. So Jesus said, "By your, by your traditions you've circumvented the law. You've made the law of none effect. You've substituted your traditions for the law". So if a man robs his father and mother, and says, "Well, nothing wrong with that", he's a companion of a destroyer.

He that is of a proud heart stirs up strife: but he who puts his trust in the Lord shall be made fat. He that trusts in his own heart is a fool (28:25-26):

"The heart is deceitful", the Bible tells us, "and desperately wicked, who can know it?" "My heart tells me", trust in your own heart man, you're a fool!

but whoso walks wisely, he shall be delivered (28:26).

That is, walking in the wisdom of the Lord, seeking the guidance and the counsel of God. I, I, sort of shun the "feelings" that people have. Unless the feelings come from the Lord, they can be very deceptive. "He that trusteth in his own heat is a fool, who walks wisely will be delivered."

He that gives to the poor will not lack: [God will bless you if you give to the poor.] but he who hides his eyes from the cause of the needy will be cursed. When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: [That is, rise in power.] but when they perish, [righteousness increases, or] the righteous increase (28:27-28).

So great proverbs, great understanding of life, and the things of life. Guidance, wisdom, live by them!

Father, we just thank You again for the wisdom that's been imparted. Instruction Lord, in living. We pray Lord that we might follow those instructions, and that we might live righteously a life pleasing unto You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Just about through with Proverbs. Three more chapters and we move out of the book of Proverbs, on into Ecclesiastes.

So may the Lord keep His hand upon your life, and guide you according to His counsel, and may you live in that reverence, fear, awe of the Lord. That your heart might be made glad, and happy in the things of His grace and goodness, as He seeks to demonstrate it to us day by day. May your life be rich in the things of the Spirit, and may the joy of the Lord be your strength. In Jesus' name.