

## Proverbs 11:1-31

Up through the 1<sup>st</sup> 9 Ch's of the book of proverbs what we really have is the appeal of wisdom; the need *for* it, the benefits *of* it, & the destruction that ensues apart *from* it. It's as if wisdom is making its case & placing the ball in our court. **We're forced to make a decision. Pursue wisdom or pull the ripcord, accept it or reject it. We talked about this principle a bit Sunday morning. The word of God always brings us to a place of decision. It's a call to action; once we receive illumination, once we receive revelation it always needs to lead to application.**

God doesn't give us His word so that we can remain idle. When He *speaks* something to us or *shows* something to us from His word we're to integrate/assimilate that into our lives. Jesus said that like this, ***"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."***<sup>1</sup> You see, wisdom is found in applying God's word. That's been the appeal of the 1<sup>st</sup> 9 Chs.

**Once we roll into Ch 10 we get into the actual proverbs themselves... From an expositional stand point they're very difficult to teach from. Not because we can't elaborate; but because the beauty of the proverbs is that they say all there is to say about a subject.** The idea is the enormous amount of insight & practical wisdom in a simple sentence... So we sort of defeat the purpose when we continue to elaborate because the wisdom is to be gleaned in the brevity of the statement itself. Having said that there are certainly some things in the proverbs that are worth considering further & we'll do that. **I just wanted you to recognize & realize that each proverb stands alone, it doesn't depend upon the previous or proceeding verses & a Christian Chinese restaurant would do well to place these in their fortune cookies 😊.**

We find ourselves in a section whereby Solomon is contrasting actions & end results of the righteous & the wicked. So we'll note the upright & the unjust, the prideful & the humble, those who walk in integrity & those whose lives are marked by perversity; look at **Vs 1.**

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Mt 7:24-27). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Mt 7:24-27). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

This proverb obviously speaks to a time prior to digital scales, which keep a person honest. But the idea here is that God delights in fair business dealings but abhors the scam artist & the guy that's always trying to rip others off.

There was a day when the vast majority of business dealings required scales for buying & selling. If you wanted to buy 5lbs of grain, how would you determine what exactly 5lbs was? Well, they would take a 1lb weight & set it on one side of the scale & pour grain on the other side of the scale until it balanced out. Once it balanced out you knew you had a lb. Do that 5 times (Scales no doubt were of various sizes & weights) & you have your 5lbs of grain.

The problem was the age-old problem of mankind in always seeking to tip the scales in our favor. So some guys would have 1 set of weights by which they would purchase things & another set of weights by which they would sell them. **So although they look identical my purchasing weights are accurate (I want to make sure I'm getting the full measure of what I'm buying). However my selling weights are maybe 10-20% lighter. Not enough to really notice (5/6 or 3/4 of a lb) but in the long run it serves me & rips you off.**

God is saying, "I hate that." Dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord. *Fraud* is an abomination to the Lord. Over the years I run across people & it's amazing how they've learned to compartmentalize their lives. They're super upright & model integrity in the church, but their business isn't that way. **They think, "Business is business, ministry is ministry" & they see them as 2 different things. That's not true, others seek to honor God in ministry but don't seek to safeguard their marriage; they see them as 2 separate things not really related to one another. But here God is declaring it doesn't work that way. As believers everything we do is reflective of our relationship w/the Lord.** We represent God in business, in our homes, in the ministry, recreationally, it doesn't matter; the *whole* of our lives belongs to Him & as such God desires integrity/honesty, fairness in the whole of our lives, not just at church. God is represented by the way we do business just as much as He is in our ministry. We're to be fair w/people, run our business w/integrity.

I also believe this applies in the way we handle God's word. This is the Vs that inspired me to call my radio broadcast, "The Balance". Some pastors/people seem to "tip the scales" & in so doing they get God's word out of balance, they emphasize some things at the neglect of other things. They're all about the moving of the Holy Spirit therefore they neglect the teaching of the word of God.

Or perhaps they're all about the word but they present dead orthodoxy, they deny the power of the Holy Spirit being alive & moving in power through our lives. Some guys think that because we're under the new covenant that the OT no longer holds real value. But Jesus said, *"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*<sup>2</sup> So we want to be careful to honor the whole of God's word, glean & grow from it all. We don't want to tip our scales to one side or the other. We want to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. We've got to hover in the balance, keep a "just weight" (if you will).

### Vs 2

Pride is such a deceitful thing. People think they're super cool or better than others therefore they get prideful. But the irony is that no one likes you if you're full of pride. Being prideful is shameful; it's the opposite of everything we think when we're puffing ourselves up. We think everyone loves us because we're so awesome. & That attitude makes everyone disdain us.

Even God disdains the proud (but gives grace to the humble). W/the humble is wisdom. Wisdom forsakes the haughty & lodges w/those who will walk in humility, walk w/God in transparency. It's what God desires of us, it's what God requires of us. If we're to walk w/God it requires humility. The prideful person is not a person who is walking w/God. You can't see God in truth & believe yourself to be anything worth being proud of (not in the sense of being prideful). The year King Uzziah died Isaiah saw the Lord high & lifted up & seeing God in truth resulted in himself being humbled. He said, *"Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts."*<sup>3</sup> He thought perhaps he was something, but upon encountering the Lord he realized he was nothing, he was brought low. If we're to walk w/the Lord, or be used by the Lord in any significant fashion, humility is of necessity. Micah 6:8 right? *"He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?"*<sup>4</sup> W/the humble is wisdom.

### Vs 3-8

You can see the comparison/contrast between the righteous & the wicked.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Mt 4:4]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Is 6:5]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Mic 6:8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 3-4 can be viewed in the light of Vs 1. Vs 1 speaks of God's disdain for dishonesty in business. Vs 3 underscores it w/the integrity of the upright guiding them & the perversity (or crookedness) of the unfaithful (or deceitful) destroying them. Vs 4 reemphasizes that whatever profit they may've made initially won't benefit them in any way eternally. However righteousness delivers from death. Of course we're to realize that the righteousness that delivers from death is not a righteousness of our own but that which is imputed by God through faith in J.C.

We're reminded of the rich man & Lazarus (Luke 16); the rich man had more wealth than he knew what to do with & Lazarus, being full of sores was laid as his gate as a beggar. Time passed, they both died. The rich man was carried off by the angels to Abraham's bosom & the rich man was tormented in flames. It's not that being rich is sin; it's that it won't profit you on the day of your death. We're to be rich toward God, covered (by faith) in the righteousness of J.C.

Vs 6 basically tells us that in seeking to honor God it keeps us out of trouble, but those who simply seek to gratify their lusts will find themselves in trouble.

Look at Vs 7 (read). In Christ we have hope, but the bible teaches that those who are w/out God are w/out hope in the world. (Eph 2:12) The hope of the unjust perishes.

Vs 8 points out what we see on occasion in the scripture & that is that God is into what we call "poetic justice". "The righteous is delivered from trouble, & it comes to the wicked instead." In the 35th Psalm David wrote, "Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly, And let his net that he has hidden catch himself; Into that very destruction let him fall."<sup>5</sup> We see it w/Haman & Mordecai in the book of Esther, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were spared in the fiery furnace, but the ones who cast them in were consumed by the heat (Daniel 3:22). God will deal w/the wicked, vengeance is His, He will repay.

### Vs 9-15

Vs 10-11 speak to the benefit of the righteous upon public life. People benefit by God's blessing upon a city for the sake of the righteous in that city. The righteous have an economic & moral influence in the city. On the flip side people rejoice when the wicked perish. I'm not sure anyone lost sleep when Hitler was removed from the scene.

Vs 12 speaks to keeping the peace in your neighborhood.

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Ps 35:8] Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Better is a neighbor nearby than a brother far away. You don't want to burn bridges that are near to you because you never know when you may have a need that they can help with. But if you've despised them & /or shunned them, that could easily snap back to hurt you. Best to *hold* your peace & *keep* the peace.

Vs 13 condemns gossip/slander; if you meet someone who talks about others to you, you can pretty much rest assured they're talking to others about you. One who is of a faithful spirit keeps his/her mouth shut, keeps confidence, holds water, doesn't divulge information that will do damage to another person's character.

"Where there is no counsel the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." There's a reason Mt Climbers tether themselves to one another. If one falls the other can catch them, it creates safety. **We're to be tethered to one another in life. No man is an island to himself. Wisdom says seek counsel from godly people before navigating some serious course in life. Don't look for people who will tell you what you want to hear, but what you need to hear.**

Vs 15, If you verify or vouch for a stranger it's going to come back to bite you. "Oh yeah he's good for it," you don't even know them, not really. But if you keep clear of co-signing, or putting your name on the line for someone else, you'll keep secure.

### Vs 16

The kind woman, the cruel man. The kind woman gets respect, the cruel man doesn't care for anyone or anything but his money. The idea here is that honor is of much more value than is wealth. To value relationships over career accomplishments is wise.

### Vs17-21

What we're seeing in this section is the reciprocal nature of righteousness & wickedness. The righteous man benefits his life, the wicked man detracts his life. There's a snapback or boomerang effect (sowing & reaping) regarding the things we do. The merciful man does good for his own soul; he who is cruel troubles his own flesh. Righteousness leads to life, he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death (personal cause & effect), not only physically, certainly there are spiritual implications here as well. (Jn 5:24).

Look at Vs 20 (read). What's the correlation found in this Vs w/Vs 1? 2 key words, "abomination" & "delight". It's interesting to note the various kinds of attitudes that are an abomination (loathsome, detestable) to the Lord. Fraudulent, perverse/crooked, lying, hypocritical/deceitful, pride, injustice, wicked thoughts/conduct. God detests these kinds of things.

But the blameless, the upright, the man of integrity who leads a life marked by truth & honesty are His delight.

If you think perhaps your behavior is your business & it doesn't concern anyone else; Vs 21 needs to be etched in your heart. The wicked will be punished regardless of how many they lock arms with. But the posterity (the offspring, the descendants) of the righteous will be delivered. We've seen this from time to time throughout our bibles. God will often times bless your children because of *your* walk w/Him. The best thing you can do as a mom or a dad for your family is to honor God w/your life.

### Vs 22

Out of place & unattractive; a nose ring would be worn like earrings or whatever today. So to compare a lovely woman doesn't know how to be discreet to an unclean pig (about the lowest you could go as an Israelite) w/a ring of gold in its snout paints a pretty powerful picture. It's unappealing, unattractive & out of place.

### Vs 23-26

This is the reverse economy of the Kingdom of God. The way up is down, the way to gain is to give. God refuses to be a debtor to man. We can't out give God. We saw Sunday morning how the Egyptians were required to bring the grain into the storehouse. The bible teaches that we're to bring the tithe into the storehouse as well. We're to give to the Lord. It teaches us to deny ourselves, to crucify our flesh, to think of the needs & well being of others. But along w/that God promises that as we give He'll increase the resource from *which* we give.

A lot of times people try to budget & it seems like they should be able to pay their bills but they come up short. Therefore they don't tithe. Yet the bible declares that if you'll budget your tithe 1<sup>st</sup>, God will meet your needs; He will "rebuke the devourer". In the book of Malachi we read that we actually steal from God when we don't tithe because the tithe (the 10<sup>th</sup>) belongs to Him. We read there, *"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this, ' Says the LORD of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.'"*<sup>6</sup> A lot of people give to other organizations & that's great, but God says bring the tithe to the place where you're fed (to church), to the storehouse that there might be food in My house. If you honor God He promises to honor you.

Jesus underscored this same principle in the gospel of Luke.

<sup>6</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Mal 3:10]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He said, *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*<sup>7</sup> Then Paul reiterated it again in 2 Cor when he said this: *“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”*<sup>8</sup> (Reread Vs 24-25)

### Vs 27-29

If you're nothing but a pain to your family don't expect to be mentioned in the will ☺. However that neighbor or friend that was always there for them just might be & in so doing rather than being wealthy & having servants you just might become a servant yourself.

### Vs 30-31

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. True righteousness attractive in a person's life (because it's Christ in you) it draws people to you & in turn you point them to Jesus. The one who wins souls is wise. In the book of Daniel we read it like this, *“Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.”*<sup>9</sup>

Finally, if the righteous are held accountable for the things they do on the earth, how much more the ungodly & the sinner? Peter reiterated these words when he said, *“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now ‘If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?’”*<sup>10</sup> It won't be good. Wisdom says give your life to J.C. walk humbly, give of yourself generously & God will bless your life. Amen?

### Prayer Points:

God thank You for Your word, the practical wisdom You so generously impart to us. Help us to take this information & be responsible in making application of it. Thank You for Your unending grace & for Your everlasting mercy.

<sup>7</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Lk 6:38]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>8</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [2 Co 9:6-7]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>9</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Da 12:3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>10</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [1 Pe 4:17-18]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

