

They do not know that they are accepting her salacious invitation to this secretive meal. They are unaware that instead of the life offered in the house of Lady Wisdom, many men met their end in her home. They also see that her invitation is a deceptive temptation. To dine with her, eating her seductively sweet meal, is to dine in a house filled with dead bodies that you will soon join.

Now, this entire chapter is in the form of chiasm. Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly mirror each other. And when we look in the middle, verses 7-12, we find the center of the message. Here, we have Lady Wisdom giving her instructions. She holds forth two types of people: scoffers and wise men, vs. 8,

**Proverbs 9:8** “8 Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you, **Reprove a wise man and he will love you.**”

A scoffer mocks, in this case, one who mocks Lady Wisdom. To discipline, reprove, or try to instruct a scoffer is futile. They have willfully closed their eyes, covered their ears, and turned their backs on the truth. However, disciplining, reproving, and instructing the wise man will lead to greater devotion and love. Why? Because the wise man humbly seeks out instruction and desires understanding.

So then, what message is heard by the wise in the house of wisdom? Verses 10,

**Proverbs 9:10–11** “10 The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

Scoffers will turn their back on this instruction and die. The wise will love this message and live. Which will you be?

## II. Collection 2: Solomon 1 (10:1-22:16)

### Overview

In Solomon’s second collection of Proverbs, the author transitions from a series of lectures (Chapters 1-9) to wisdom sayings in couplets or pairs. In chapters 10-15, these pairs contrast the wise and the fool. However, in chapters 16-22, the royal nature of Proverbs comes into greater focus as Solomon instructs on the theme of God’s sovereignty and authority related to the reign of the king.

### Main Point

In this section, Solomon is painting the portrait of wisdom by which his son is to live and rule.

### Structure

- A. The Righteous vs. The Wicked (10:1-15:29)
  1. The Consequences of Righteousness and Wickedness (10:1)
  2. The Wise are Diligent in their Work and Live with Integrity (10:2-32)
  3. The Wise Measure Scales and Themselves Rightly (11:1-31)
  4. The Wise Seeks Discipline in His Words and Work (12:1-28)
  5. The Wise Desire What is Good (13:1-25)

6. The Wise Avoid What is Right in Their Own Eyes (14:1-35)
7. The Wise Understands the Power of Their Tongue (15:1-33)

## A. The Portrait of Wisdom: A Righteous Life (10:1-15:29)

### 1. The Consequences of Righteousness and Wickedness (10:1)

In Chapter 10:1, Solomon introduces the section with what a thesis statement is, or the foundation for all the other units in Chapters 10-15. Look at verse 1,

**Proverbs 10:1** “1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.”

Here is the overarching thesis statement of Proverbs 10-22: *Wisdom is measured in making your father glad*. Every godly parent desires for their children to walk in God’s wisdom. The father is well pleased in the son who walks in the ways of the Lord. The godly parent loves the Lord, loves the way of the Lord found in His word, and feels the immense burden of shepherding their children’s hearts to be filled with the same affections. When this does not happen, it breaks parents’ hearts. This word is given to Solomon’s son to motivate his heart to pursue wisdom for his own sake and his parents.

Ultimately, this brings maximum glory to God. His command to the son to honor his parents is obeyed. His command to the parents to instruct their children bears excellent fruit. Lastly, in pursuing and possessing wisdom, the parents and the son walk in His will for their everyday lives as they grow in their relational knowledge of Him. The following sections detail the portrait of the righteous life to be possessed and the wicked life to avoid.

### 2. The Wise are Diligent in their Work and Live with Integrity (10:2-32)

In this chapter, the wise and the foolish son are contrasted in how they work. Solomon begins in vs. 2,

**Proverbs 10:2** “2 Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, But righteousness delivers from death.”

Pursuing treasure through wickedness leads to destruction. Their desires will never be satisfied (vs. 3). They resort to ill-gotten gain because of their inherent laziness, leading to their shameful ruin (vss. 4-5). In contrast, pursuing righteousness above any treasure delivers the wise out of the death and destruction of the fool. Like the ants, they are diligent and proactive in their work. For this reason, the Lord blesses them, vs. 3,

**Proverbs 10:3** “3 Yahweh will not allow the soul of the righteous to hunger, But He will push away the craving of the wicked.”

The wicked’s cravings, their desires, are never met. But the Lord satisfies the *soul* of the righteous. He receives daily provision from his Father, and his soul is satisfied, not in the gift but in the Giver.

The reason for this is that the righteous walks in integrity, vs. 9,

**Proverbs 10:9** “9 He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.”

Integrity is the concept of completeness, purity, and uprightness. Crookedness is the antithesis of integrity. The wicked's impure, unholy, and unrighteous ways will be exposed, leading to ruin and demise. On the other hand, those who walk with integrity walk with the peace and security of knowing they are in step with God's will.

In verse 26, we see the shameful repulsiveness of the lazy,

**Proverbs 10:26** "26 Like vinegar to the teeth and like smoke to the eyes, So is the sluggard to those who send him."

Expecting a sweet drink, the sluggard brings a bitter taste. His presence assaults the eyes as well, filling them with smoke. His reputation is distasteful to those managing his work.

In contrast, we meet the diligent man of integrity in vs. 29,

**Proverbs 10:29–30** "29 The way of Yahweh is a stronghold to the one with integrity, But ruin to the workers of iniquity. "30 The righteous will never be shaken, But the wicked will not dwell in the land."

Remember in vs. 9 that the way of integrity was secure. This is why: his way is the way of the Lord. The Lord's way is as safe and unshakable as a mighty fortress. No matter what life's storms bring, the man of integrity will stand. But the way of the wicked, the sluggard, ends in ruin and expulsion from the promised land.

## 2. The Wise Measure Scales and Themselves Rightly (11:1-31)

The wise man does not fool others, and he does not fool himself. Look at verse 1,

**Proverbs 11:1** "1 A deceptive balance is an abomination to Yahweh, But a just weight is His delight."

Scales were used in ancient times to measure the weight of a good before selling it in the marketplace. Dishonest merchants would take false weights and create unjust scales to make extra profit. This practice was an abomination to the Lord. Why? Because God is just. God is not a liar; He is truth personified. And so this unjust and dishonest gain is detestable in His sight. But when we look at the second verse in this pair, we see an interesting connection, vs. 2,

**Proverbs 11:2** "2 When arrogance comes, then comes disgrace, But with the meek is wisdom."

Similarly to the unjust weight on a scale, the fool overestimates himself. He arrogantly overweighs his own heart. This pride leads to the ambition of wanting more riches, leading to deceit with an unjust scale. Using an unjust scale reveals the prideful mindset that they can get away with anything. They will be destroyed by their crookedness (vss. 3, 5) and entrapped by their schemes (vs. 6). Any wealth that they collect will not benefit them in death (vs. 4), and all that they hope for in their life will perish with him (vs. 5).

The point that the unjust scales of the wicked reveal a crooked and prideful heart is made explicit in the parallel to vs. 1 – vs. 20,

**Proverbs 11:20** "20 Those with a crooked heart are an abomination to Yahweh, But those of a blameless way are His delight."

In contrast, the righteous are characterized by justice and honesty in the marketplace, which is pleasing in the sight of the Lord. Just weights show trust in the Lord to provide, a loving desire for fairness for one's neighbor, and honesty before the One who sees all that is done in secret. Why is this so? Vs. 2 says that he is characterized by humility. This word is used only one other time in the Old Testament, in Micah 6:8,

**Micah 6:8** "8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does Yahweh require of you But to do justice, to love lovingkindness, And to walk *humbly* with your God?"

This meekness, this humble walk *with* God, results from a proper fear of the Lord. It is a reverent and teachable spirit directed toward God as Lord and Master. It is the opposite of the arrogant and unteachable attitude of the wicked. This worshipful attitude fuels the integrity to guide their actions (vs. 3), making their pathways straight (vs. 5). Their righteousness before man, and ultimately before God will deliver them from the wrath and curse of God (vs. 4, 6, 8). Most significantly, his blameless way, like his just scales, is a delight to God (vs. 20).

### 3. The Wise Seeks Discipline in his Words and Work (12:1-28)

Chapter 12 begins with an educational proverb that establishes the chapter's theme, vs. 1,

**Proverbs 12:1** "1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is senseless."

The lover of discipline of instruction is contrasted with the one who hates it. The one who loves discipline is the one who loves the Fear of the Lord, who loves wisdom. He has the right relationship with God and finds favor with Him (vs. 2). This contrasts with the one who hates discipline and despises wisdom. This is an echo back to the introduction of the entire book,

**Proverbs 1:7** "7 The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge; ignorant fools despise wisdom and discipline."

This person has no fear of the Lord and, therefore, is condemned by God. This thought is echoed in the parallel statement of verse 15,

**Proverbs 12:15** "15 The way of an ignorant fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel."

The fool leans on his understanding, but the lover of discipline seeks out understanding and godly counsel.

These two types of people, the lovers and haters of discipline, are further described throughout this chapter. We see them first in verse 4,

**Proverbs 12:4** "4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones."

The excellent wife is contrasted with the one who causes shame. Shame is first introduced in Proverbs 10:5 to characterize the lazy,

**Proverbs 10:5** "5 He who gathers in summer is a son who acts insightfully, But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully."

As we saw in Chapter 6, laziness indicates a foolish and wicked heart. This woman acts shamefully and humiliates her husband. In the Ancient Near East, the entire culture was built upon the honor-shame paradigm. Honor was pursued, prized, and protected. But to be shamed

or bring shame was one of the most heinous violations. So then we see the value of the excellent wife to her husband. She adorns herself and her husband's honor. The adjective "excellent" is used one other time in the Old Testament to refer to a woman outside of Proverbs. It was used to describe Solomon's great-great-great grandmother, Ruth,

**Ruth 3:11** "11 "So now, my daughter, do not fear. All that you say, I will do for you, for all my people within the gates of the city know that you are a woman of excellence."

Ruth was disciplined, the very opposite of a lazy sluggard. She was honorable in all her conduct and was a crown of honor to her closest companions, Boaz and Naomi.

Next, we see the lover and the hater of discipline with those who give counsel, vs. 5,

**Proverbs 12:5-6** "5 The thoughts of the righteous are just, But the guidance of the wicked is deceitful. "6 The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, But the mouth of the upright will deliver them."

The wicked seek to steer their prey with deceitful words. Like the adulterous woman in Chapter 7, these haters of discipline lie in wait, seeking to ruin those who come to them for guidance. But the counsel of the righteous and those with integrity is just, fair, and true. They will deliver those who seek it from destruction. Verses 19-20 act as a parallel,

**Proverbs 12:19-20** "19 Truthful lips will be established forever, But a lying tongue is only for a moment. "20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of peace have gladness."

The counsel of the wicked provides half-truths that unravel in an instant. But the truthful counselor offers peace to his hearers, bringing them joy, vs. 26,

**Proverbs 12:26** "26 The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, But the way of the wicked makes them wander about."

Lastly, the lover of discipline is seen in the hard worker, vs. 9,

**Proverbs 12:9-11** "9 Better is he who is lightly esteemed and has a servant Than he who honors himself and lacks bread. "10 A righteous man knows the value of the life of his animal, But even the compassion of the wicked is cruel. "11 He who cultivates his land will be satisfied with bread, But he who pursues empty things lacks a heart of wisdom."

The wicked seeks to honor himself and seek the esteem of his friends by pursuing empty things. He attempts to get rich quickly and gain wealth and status without hard work. This type of man is known for his cruelty and callousness toward this in his employment, seeing them as a means to his end. But the righteous one, the lover of discipline, remains humble in his station, treats his employees and animals with honor and dignity, and faithfully works his land, leading to fruitfulness. The first man lacks bread; the second is satisfied with it.

#### 4. The Wise Desire What is Good (13:1-25)

The wise pursue and desire what is good. The fool pursues wickedness and receives ruin. Look at vs. 2,

**Proverbs 13:1-4** "1 A wise son accepts his father's discipline, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke. "2 From the fruit of a man's mouth he eats what is good, But the soul of the treacherous desires violence. "3 The one who guards his mouth keeps his soul;

The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. "4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, **But the soul of the diligent is enriched.**"

The soul of the diligent is enriched and receives what is good. His wise ears receive his father's instruction, and his wise mouth enjoys the fruitfulness of his guarded words. In contrast, the schemer desires destructive violence; the scoffer ruins his life with his closed ears and wide open mouth, and the sluggard can't get out of bed to satisfy his cravings.

Even if the wicked were able to achieve their desires, their satisfaction would only last for a little while, vs. 9,

**Proverbs 13:9** "9 The light of the righteous is glad, But the lamp of the wicked goes out."

The light and the lamp refer to a person's joy, gladness, vitality, and satisfaction. The wicked poses a mere oil lamp. Eventually, the oil runs out, and that light dwindles. But the righteous possess an enduring light, like the sun, that does not fade but brings greater joy; as Solomon said before,

**Proverbs 4:18** "18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the fullness of day."

Solomon's point about desire becomes explicit in vs. 12,

**Proverbs 13:12–13** "12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life. 13 The one who despises the word will be in debt to it, But the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded."

Bruce Waltke provides great insight here, "Having one's desire gratified is itself a tree of life, but to enjoy that fruit, one must have a prior thirst for the sage's teachings, which are a wellspring of life. They experience the pleasant joy of having their desire fulfilled, but fools never find their appetites gratified, for they will not forsake their evil to attain this joy."<sup>1</sup>

This same truth is repeated in verses 18-19,

**Proverbs 13:18–19** "18 Poverty and disgrace come to him who neglects discipline, But he who keeps reproof will be honored. 19 Desire realized is pleasant to the soul, But it is an abomination to fools to turn away from evil."

The one who does not neglect correction receives discipline, seeks wisdom and righteousness, and will realize his desire. But the fool's heart is sickened, for his hopes are never truly realized. Instead, his life is filled with poverty and shame because he will not listen to correction or turn from evil.

The wise also desires and pursues the good of his offspring, vs. 22

**Proverbs 13:22** "22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, And the sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous."

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, [\*The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15\*](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 568–569.

The wealth of the righteous is stored up for generations. His diligent labor is not for himself alone but for his children's children. Moreover, his desire for the good of his children leads to him persevering in the hardest of parenting tasks, vs. 24,

**Proverbs 13:24** "24 He who holds back his rod hates his son, **But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.**"

In the end, the righteous are satisfied with the fruit of their labor, vs. 25,

**Proverbs 13:25** "25 The righteous eats to the satisfaction of his soul, **But the stomach of the wicked lacks.**"

The diligent pursuit of what God declared good will be realized. This implies that one must first have the wisdom to know what God has claimed to be good and then persevere in pursuing it. Failure to do so will lead to lacking.

#### 5. The Wise Avoid What is Right in Their Own Eyes (14:1-35)

Throughout chapter 14, Solomon holds forth the folly of being wise in one's own eyes and contrasts it with the simplicity of pursuing God's wisdom. The key verse is vs. 12,

**Proverbs 14:12** "12 **There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.**"

There is a way that seems right. Who is defining right here? A man. The truth never just "*seems right*". It is right because truth is God's truth, and He alone is the Definer of right and wrong. The folly and ignorance of trying to perceive truth on our own leads to ruin and death. But because walking in "my truth" seems right, I won't realize I am bringing about my demise.

We see this with the foolish wife vs. 1,

**Proverbs 14:1** "1 **The wise woman builds her house,** **But the woman of folly tears it down with her own hands.**"

Because of her folly and ignorance, she believes she is building up her home, but she is tearing it apart with every action. This is in the literal sense of homemaking and the figurative sense of loving and caring for her husband and children.

Similarly, the ignorant have no clue about the damage they bring upon themselves with their words, vs. 3,

**Proverbs 14:3** "3 In the mouth of the ignorant fool is a rod of lofty pride, **But the lips of the wise will keep them.**"

The proud fool fills his mouth with arrogant boasts that destroy his reputation and the respect of his neighbors.

Likewise, in regard to work, the fool deceives himself with his laziness, vs. 4,

**Proverbs 14:4** "4 Where no oxen are, the manger is clean, **But much revenue comes by the strength of the ox.**"

Here's the "logic" of the fool: *If I don't have a stable full of dirty animals, I don't have to waste time cleaning it.* But he doesn't realize that those dirty oxen pull a plow that tills the field, producing the wheat that makes the bread that fills his belly. The fool looks constantly for



shortcuts and ease to avoid working too hard. But such “wisdom” will only lead to poverty, vs. 23,

**Proverbs 14:23** “23 In all painful labor there is profit, But mere words from the lips lead only to want.”

Lastly, the one who is wise in his own eyes deceives himself in thinking he can find wisdom, vs. 6,

**Proverbs 14:6** “6 A scoffer seeks wisdom and finds none, But knowledge is easy to one who has understanding.”

Remember that the scoffer mocks and despises God’s wisdom, which is why he can find it when he looks for it. It’s hidden from him. Instead, he’s convinced of everything everyone tells him, vs. 15,

**Proverbs 14:15** “15 The simple believes everything, But the prudent one discerns his steps.”

That is unless someone corrects him with God’s wisdom, vs. 16,

**Proverbs 14:16** “16 A wise man fears and turns away from evil, But a fool gets angry and feels secure.”

Notice that in this chapter, Solomon is not cryptic or challenging when describing the way of wisdom. The wise woman builds her house. Painful labor leads to profit. Knowledge is easy. The prudent discern their steps. The wise man fears and turns from evil. God’s wisdom is simple to those humble in heart instead of being wise in their own eyes. Solomon concludes with this very thought, vs. 33,

**Proverbs 14:33** “33 Wisdom rests in the heart of one who has understanding, But in the midst of fools it is merely made known.”

Wisdom *rests*. It’s settled. It finds its home and enjoyment. Where? In the heart of the one who has understanding. In the one who *understands* the Fear of the Lord (1:5).

## 6. The Wise Understands the Power of Their Tongue (15:1-33)

In Chapter 15, Solomon teaches his son that the wise understand the consequences of their speech, vs. 1,

**Proverbs 15:1** “1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. It matters not just what you say but how you say it. A gentle response, speaking the truth lovingly and patiently, will defuse a conflict. However, telling hard truths harshly acts like a punch in the face, adding insult to injury. It stirs up anger.

The power of the tongue is also seen in the effective teacher,

**Proverbs 15:2** “2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge look good, But the mouth of fools pours forth folly.”

Wisdom doesn’t just present truth. In his presentation, the possessor of the wise tongue makes truth beautiful. The content and the form of speech make the truth attractive. On the other hand, like vomit spewing out of one’s mouth, the fool spouts off more folly, which is unattractive.



The tongue can diffuse anger, and it can make beauty attractive. And in verse 4, we see that it can heal the wounded heart,

**Proverbs 15:4** “4 A tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, But perversion in it breaks the spirit.”

Using a metaphor for *the* Tree of Life in the Garden, which sustained the eternal life of Adam and Eve before the fall, the tongue of a wise man brings vitality and healing to those who hear him. Gentle words of comfort and wise counsel often lift the crushed and bruised spirit. However, gentle words that mask the intent to inflict pain will break the spirit of the hearer and do immense damage.

The wise don't just speak the truth in winsome and effective ways. They also listen to wise counsel, vs. 22,

**Proverbs 15:22** “22 Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.”

Wise counselors provide the external perspective to ensure a good plan and path. This implies that one seeks counsel from those also pursuing God's wisdom. Often, these counselors will perceive sin or folly that is hidden from the eyes of the seeker, vs. 31,

**Proverbs 15:31** “31 He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will lodge among the wise.”

This reproof and counsel is also life-giving, just like the tongue that brings healing. The wise one who listens shows themselves to be a resident in the house of Lady Wisdom.

In this chapter, Solomon also connects the tongue with the heart. God is not like man, who merely evaluates the outside. Our hearts are revealed to each other by our mouths. But God looks into our very souls, vs. 3,

**Proverbs 15:3** “3 The eyes of Yahweh are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.”

He sees every action in every place, and He considers the intent and desires behind them, vs. 11,

**Proverbs 15:11** “11 Sheol and Abaddon lie open before Yahweh, How much more the hearts of the sons of men!”

If he can see all the hidden depths of hell, surely he knows the hearts of men. For this reason, He is filled with indignation at the false words of the wicked, but the tongue of the righteous brings Him joy, vs. 8,

**Proverbs 15:8-9** “8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Yahweh, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. ”9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to Yahweh, But He loves one who pursues righteousness.”

The wicked can abound in sacrifice, yet they continue to walk in their wickedness, demonstrating that their hearts were not repentant or worshipful. The mere external practice of sacrifice and observance of feasts was detestable to God. This is what He says to Israel through the prophet Isaiah,

**Isaiah 1:11** “11 “What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?” Says Yahweh. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats I take no pleasure.”

On the other hand, the Lord delights in the prayers and supplication, in the words of the upright. In verse 26, Solomon reveals again what the Lord abhors,

**Proverbs 15:26** “26 Evil thoughts are an abomination to Yahweh, But pleasant words are pure.”

What matters is the heart, which is the seat of one’s thoughts, desires, and emotions. The prayers, the sacrifices, the acts of worship that come from a heart that hates God and His Way is an abomination. But He is pleased by the prayers of the pure, and he hears them, vs. 29,

**Proverbs 15:29** “29 Yahweh is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.”

So then the wise one makes their father and mother glad by working with diligence, living with integrity, measuring themselves rightly, seeking out discipline, desiring what is good, avoiding what is right in their own eyes, and understanding the power of his tongue.