

A Study of the Wisdom Literature

(OT Survey Lesson 292—Wisdom about Sinful Living)

Introduction: True wisdom in the Proverbs is grounded in the fear of the Lord and obedience to His law. Consequently, Solomon give many warnings concerning sinful living which brings rejection by God and destruction.

Lesson aim: To consider some dangerous sinful attitudes and their consequences.

General warnings concerning wickedness

4:14 Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not proceed in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on. 16 For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; And they are robbed of sleep unless they make *someone* stumble. 17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, And drink the wine of violence. 18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day. 19 The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know over what they stumble.

10:23 Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool; And *so is* wisdom to a man of understanding.

11:7-8 When a wicked man dies, *his* expectation will perish, And the hope of strong men perishes. The righteous is delivered from trouble, But the wicked takes his place.

13:21 Adversity pursues sinners, But the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity.

14:11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed, But the tent of the upright will flourish.

14:14 The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways, But a good man will *be satisfied* with his.

14:19 The evil will bow down before the good, And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

14:22 Will they not go astray who devise evil? But kindness and truth *will be* to those who devise good.

29:6 By transgression an evil man is ensnared, But the righteous sings and rejoices.

29:16 When the wicked increase, transgression increases; But the righteous will see their fall.

19:2 Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, And he who makes haste with his feet errs.

22:8 He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, And the rod of his fury will perish

21:16 A man who wanders from the way of understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead.

God's attitude toward the wicked

6:12 A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a false mouth, 13 Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, Who points with his fingers; 14 Who *with* perversity in his heart devises evil continually, Who spreads strife. 15 Therefore his calamity will come suddenly; Instantly he will be broken, and there will be no healing. 16 There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, 19 A false witness *who* utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. 9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves him who pursues righteousness.

28:9 He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination. 10 He who leads the upright astray in an evil way Will himself fall into his own pit, But the blameless will inherit good.

17:15 He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

21:27 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, How much more when he brings it with evil intent!

Man's attitude toward the wicked

29:27 An unjust man is abominable to the righteous, And he who is upright in the way is abominable to the wicked.

17:4 An evildoer listens to wicked lips, A liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.

17:11 A rebellious man seeks only evil, So a cruel messenger will be sent against him.

18:3 When a wicked man comes, contempt also comes, And with dishonor *comes* reproach.

24:8 He who plans to do evil, Men will call him a schemer.

24:9 The devising of folly is sin, And the scoffer is an abomination to men.

21:18 The wicked is a ransom for the righteous, And the treacherous is in the place of the upright.

Importance of watchfulness over the heart

14:20 My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. 21 Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their whole body. 23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it *flow* the springs of life. 24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put devious lips far from you. 25 Let your eyes look directly ahead, And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. 26 Watch the path of your feet, And all your ways will be established. 27 Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.

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

Warnings concerning violence and mistreatment of others

24:15 Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; Do not destroy his resting place; 16 For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in *time of* calamity.

24:1 DO not be envious of evil men, Nor desire to be with them; 2 For their minds devise violence, And their lips talk of trouble.

30:14 There is a kind of *man* whose teeth are *like* swords, And his jaw teeth *like* knives, To devour the afflicted from the earth, And the needy from among men.

3:31 Do not envy a man of violence, And do not choose any of his ways. 32 For the crooked *man* is an abomination to the LORD; But He is intimate with the upright.

29:10 Men of bloodshed hate the blameless, But the upright are concerned for his life.

28:17 A man who is laden with the guilt of human blood Will be a fugitive until death; let no one support him.

25:17 Let your foot rarely be in your neighbor's house, Lest he become weary of you and hate you.

28:21 To show partiality is not good, Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.

16:29 A man of violence entices his neighbor, And leads him in a way that is not good.

17:5 He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.

25:20 *Like* one who takes off a garment on a cold day, *or like* vinegar on soda, Is he who sings songs to a troubled heart.

21:7 The violence of the wicked will drag them away, Because they refuse to act with justice.

21:10 The soul of the wicked desires evil; His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.

21:13 He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered.

13:23 Abundant food *is in* the fallow ground of the poor, But it is swept away by injustice.

20:14 "Bad, bad," says the buyer; But when he goes his way, then he boasts.

Warnings about dishonesty

20:23 Differing weights are an abomination to the LORD, And a false scale is not good.

20:10 Differing weights and differing measures, Both of them are abominable to the LORD.

11:1 A FALSE balance is an abomination to the LORD, But a just weight is His delight. 2 When pride comes, then comes dishonor; But with the humble is wisdom. 3 The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the falseness of the treacherous will destroy them.

11:18 The wicked earns deceptive wages, But he who sows righteousness *gets* a true reward. 19 He who is steadfast in righteousness *will attain* to life, And he who pursues evil *will bring about* his own death. 20

The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, But the blameless in *their* walk are His delight. 21
Assuredly, the evil man will not go unpunished, But the descendants of the righteous will be delivered.
22:28 Do not move the ancient boundary Which your fathers have set.
25:18 *Like* a club and a sword and a sharp arrow Is a man who bears false witness against his neighbor.

Warnings about anger

14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of evil devices is hated.
15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger pacifies contention.
14:29 He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.
15:1 A GENTLE answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.
19:19 *A man of* great anger shall bear the penalty, For if you rescue *him*, you will only have to do it again.
25:28 *Like* a city that is broken into *and* without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.
29:11 A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back.
27:4 Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, But who can stand before jealousy?
29:22 An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.
17:19 He who loves transgression loves strife; He who raises his door seeks destruction. 20 He who has a crooked mind finds no good, And he who is perverted in his language falls into evil.
28:4 Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, But those who keep the law strive with them.

Dangers of a retaliatory spirit

24:17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; 18 Lest the LORD see *it* and be displeased, And He turn away His anger from him.
24:29 Do not say, “Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.”¹
25:21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; 22 For you will heap burning coals on his head, And the LORD will reward you.
24:19 Do not fret because of evildoers, Or be envious of the wicked;
17:13 He who returns evil for good, Evil will not depart from his house.

Warnings about pride

30:12 There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, Yet is not washed from his filthiness.
30:13 There is a kind—oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised *in* arrogance.
15:25 The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow.
16:5 Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.
16:18 Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling. 19 It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.
18:12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, But humility *goes* before honor.
21:4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin.
21:24 “Proud,” “Haughty,” “Scoffer,” are his names, Who acts with insolent pride.
27:1 DO not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.
31:4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Or for rulers to desire strong drink, 5 Lest they drink and forget what is decreed, And pervert the rights of all the afflicted. 6 Give strong drink to him who is perishing, And wine to him whose life is bitter. 7 Let him drink and forget his poverty, And remember his trouble no more.
30:32 If you have been foolish in exalting yourself Or if you have plotted *evil*, *put your* hand on your mouth. 33 For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the nose brings forth blood; So the churning of anger produces strife.
29:23 A man’s pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor.
27:21 The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, And a man *is tested* by the praise accorded him.
25:27 It is not good to eat much honey, Nor is it glory to search out one’s own glory.
18:1 HE who separates himself seeks *his own* desire, He quarrels against all sound wisdom.

¹*The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.

Warnings about strong drink

20:1 WINE is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.

23:29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? 30 Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine. 31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly; 32 At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper. 33 Your eyes will see strange things, And your mind will utter perverse things. 34 And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, Or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. 35 “They struck me, *but* I did not become ill; They beat me, *but* I did not know *it*. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.”