

Introduction: Human behavior comes from the condition of a person's heart. Whatever people put as the highest priority in their lives, they will do whatever it takes to make that priority happen. *** The Bible has much to say about this. A proverb says: above all, you must guard your heart because from it is going out how you live your life (Proverbs 4:23). The prophet Jeremiah warned: the heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked, who can know it (17:9)? But, the prophet Ezekiel was given this word of hope from The Covenant God, Yahweh: I will put My Spirit in your (plural – His community of people's) midst, I will do this so you will walk in (live by doing) My rules and keep My ordinances (36:27). *** Jesus taught that people speak from the overflow of their hearts, so good people bring good things out of the good treasure in their hearts, and evil people bring evil things out of their evil treasure (Matthew 12:34-35). With this, Jesus is teaching there are two kinds of people: those with good hearts and those with evil. Jesus further warned about the uncleanness that is in the human heart being of more concern than the food people eat (Mark 7:14-23). *** After three weeks considering the introductory chapters of Proverbs with discourses on topics of life, today we look at collections of poetic couplet proverbs: in one verse there are two subjects, thoughts and/or actions that either complement each other or contrast with each other. These are the proverbs with which we are most familiar. *** In today's chapter we have contrasts about the heart: righteous and wicked, wise and foolish, integrity and perversion. These lead people to different actions that are: diligent or slack, safe or painful, blessed or rotten. *** In the Gospel portion, Jesus says the results of people's heart condition are in God's hands because He responds to people according to what they do. *** Let's discover the specifics of these generalities in our passages.

I. Yahweh watches over wise sons who are righteous and diligent; but, He will throw down the wicked and violent.

(Proverbs 10:1-11)

A. Parents and wise and wicked sons; and, the role of The Covenant God in the lives of the righteous and wicked.

(Proverbs 10:1-5)

1. The proverbs of Solomon: wise son will make glad father / foolish son sorrow of his mother. *(Verse 1)*

Proverbs: The first phrase introduces the more 'traditional' proverbs that could also be called parables.

Jesus taught in parables and said He is greater than Solomon in terms of wisdom (Matthew 12:42).

Parents and children: Hebrew poetry is not linear. The first part of each half-line applies to the second part of BOTH half-lines, and vice-versa. So a Hebrew speaker would hear: a wise son will make glad his father AND mother, a foolish son (will be the) sorrow of his mother AND father; and, fathers will be made glad by a wise son AND (have) sorrow (over) a foolish son, as will mothers.

2. Not they will profit, the treasures of wickedness / and righteousness will deliver from death ...

being poor (is) being made (by) the hand of slack (one) / and the hand of the diligent will make (one) rich. *(Verses 2 and 4)*

Poverty: Wicked people will not profit before God no matter how much treasure they accumulate; and, lazy people who shirk their God-given responsibility will end up impoverished.

Righteous riches: But wisdom tends to make it possible for sons (and all people) to be righteous, to be delivered from death, and gives diligence to be rich in God's eyes.

A wise son is righteous and diligent

3. Not will Yahweh cause to hunger the soul of the righteous / and the desire of the wicked He will cast away. *(Verse 3)*

Yahweh: The Covenant God is directing the lives of all people. He will not allow the soul of the righteous to hunger:

Jesus said those who hunger after righteousness will be filled (Matthew 5:6). On the other hand, what the wicked desire in their wicked hearts will be thwarted (cast away) by Yahweh.

4. The one gathering in summer (is being) a wise son / the one sleeping in harvest-time (is) a son bringing shame. *(Verse 5)*

Wisdom and shame: While this proverb specifically addresses people in an agricultural society, the principle is universal.

People with wisdom will work diligently in the proper time and not slack off in the critical time. But, people who fail to do the right thing at the right time, and sleep-walk through life bring shame on their parents and are an offense to God.

B. Blessings and security depend on character; and, though the wicked speak to conceal violence, they will be thrown down.

(Proverbs 10:6-11)

1. Blessings on the head of the righteous / and the mouth of the wicked covers violence. *(Verse 6)*

Contrast – righteous and wicked: This is a relatively straightforward. God will bless the head of those who have the righteousness of His Son by grace through faith; and, He is not deceived whenever wicked people try to cover over their oppressive violence with smooth words.

2. The remembrance of the righteous (is) blessing / and the name of the wicked will be rotten ... the one walking in integrity (uprightly) will walk safely / and the one being perverted his ways will be known. *(Verses 7 and 9)*

Righteousness and integrity: Whenever people remember righteous people they will be blessed by the memory; and, those who have integrity will have their lives kept safe by God. Integrity is a poetic synonym for diligence that results from wisdom. So, once again **A wise son is righteous and diligent.**

Wicked and perverse: However, in contrast, the enduring legacy of wicked people will be that their hearts and actions were a rotten stench in the nostrils of God and people; and, their perverted hearts and actions could not be hidden from God because He knows everything.

3. A wise heart will receive commandments / and the prating speech of a fool will be thrown down ...

the one winking (his) eye will give sorrow / and the prating speech of a fool will be thrown down. *(Verses 8 and 10)*

Wise hearts: People made righteous by faith have wise hearts that are willing to do all God commands.

Foolish talk: People who talk foolishly will surely be thrown down. The repetition of this exact phrase within the poetic paragraph makes this certain. In The Bible, one who winks totally shuts his eyes to everything: another Proverb says one shutting his eyes is planning perversity (16:30).

Application: We must all be concerned about the deceitfulness of evil so as to be prayerfully on guard to be delivered from the evil of acting as if there is no God of justice.

4. A fountain of life is the mouth of the righteous / the mouth of the wicked covers violence. (*Verse 11*)

Righteousness and life: Righteous people are diligent in sharing their wisdom with others so they may drink from the fountain of life.

A wise son is righteous and diligent

Wicked hide violence: Once again, a phrase is repeated word-for-word. This literary device of repeating the same phrase after developing many related thoughts is called 'inclusio'. Its use alerts those listening that, by going back to the initial phrase, a collection of thoughts is completed.

II. Jesus' great love for humanity covers even transgressions; and, those who are generous and forgiving will be blessed.

(*Proverbs 10:12; Luke 6:37-38*)

A. Love covers transgressions, as two apostles emphasized; but hatred seeks to harm. (*Proverbs 10:12*)

1. Hatred will stir up strife / ... (*Verse 12a*)

Hatred: A powerful 'stand alone' proverb starts with a simple statement that people who hate will cause strife within a community.

2. ... and above all transgressions, (it) will cover – love. (*Verse 12b*)

Love: Here is a strong Gospel declaration almost one thousand years before Bethlehem. There was no covering over (or forgiveness) for strong disobedience of God's Torah-instruction under the Mosaic Covenant. However, The Cross of Jesus is greater than all the animal sacrifices that could not cover over extreme disobedience.

This particular proverb is so powerful that both James and Peter quote this half-line near the end of their letters (James 5:19-20; 1 Peter 4:7-11).

Application: Because of this collection of proverbs, we must recognize our need to be IN Jesus to have transgressions covered by grace through faith in what He did on The Cross so we may share in His righteousness to live in diligent integrity.

B. Jesus tells His followers that His Father always responds in kind. (*Luke 6:37-38*)

1. Not y'all must be judging, that in no way y'all may be judged. (*Verse 37a*)

Judgment: Jesus gives a strong general command to all His followers that they must not be judgmental to one another. However, the benefit of obeying this command is in no way will God judge those who refuse to give in to a critical spirit.

2. And, not y'all must be condemning, that in no way y'all may be condemned. (*Verse 37b*)

Condemnation: Using the same grammatical format, Jesus clarifies that He is speaking about judgment that condemns another person. Only God can condemn people.

3. Y'all must forgive, and y'all will be forgiven. (*Verse 37c*)

Forgiveness: This is a command with an outright promise. When people refrain from doing to others what only God can do; and, instead, forgive as they have been forgiven by Jesus (Colossians 3:12-14), they will continue to receive forgiveness from God.

Bottom line: In all three situations Jesus says that God will treat people as they treat others – in other words, God practices reciprocity with people.

4. Y'all must be giving and it will be given to y'all; good measure which had been pressed down, shaken together, being made to run over, they will give into your body-purse. (*Verses 38a-b*)

Give and receive: God is sovereign over human behavior, both in Solomon's day and Jesus' day.

Jesus is saying God will see that when His people are generous, some people will respond to them in kind.

5. For, which measure y'all are measuring, it will be measured out in return to y'all. (*Verses 38c-d*)

Now and future: What God's people (as His Church) measure out together to give to the needy now, God will return to them in the future. Once again God is 'hiding' behind a passive verb.

Application: In light of what Jesus is teaching in this portion of His 'Sermon on the Plain' let us live our lives gratefully in positive reciprocity with God by continually receiving His grace by staying connected with Jesus' Body – The Church to do His will in giving to others what we have received from God.

Jesus says: God always responds in kind

Conclusion: Yahweh watches over wise people who are righteous and diligent; but, He will throw down the wicked and violent.

Jesus' great love for humanity covers the transgressions of people who obey Him by grace through faith in love.

Those who are generous and forgiving will be blessed.

A wise person is righteous and diligent IN Jesus.