

(Through the Bible) Proverbs 21-25

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a heart that is in God's hands, with good motivations and a focus on humility and trust in God.

Duration: 1:17:41

Scripture: Proverbs 21:1, Proverbs 22:15, Proverbs 22:17-23, Proverbs 23:1-5, Proverbs 23:27-28

Topics: "Wisdom Teachings", "Righteous Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of listening to wise instruction and applying it to our lives. The main message is to trust in the Lord. The speaker also warns against oppressing the poor and advises caution when dining with rulers. The sermon encourages believers to persevere in their walk with God, even when they stumble, and to not rejoice in the misfortune of their enemies. The removal of impurities and wickedness is highlighted as a means to establish righteousness in God's kingdom.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Proverbs 21. Proverbs 21, Solomon declares, the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord. As the rivers of water, he turneth it whether so ever he will.

The word rivers of water is in the Hebrew as the water courses. Now in the land of Israel, they had made many sluices for the water by which they could direct the water from the river to their farm areas. And these sluices were, of course, to turn the water and to bring it to a desired area.

So Solomon is declaring that in reality, the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord. And even as the King by the water sluices is able to direct the water to where he desires it to be, so God is able to direct the heart of the King according to God's will. How we should desire that our hearts be in the hands of the Lord.

That God would direct our hearts and that's exactly what the scripture promises is the reality for us who walk with Jesus Christ. The Lord said, and in those days I will write my laws on the fleshly tablets of their hearts, no longer on the tables of stone, but on the fleshly tablets of our heart. And as a child of God, God expresses his will and his purpose for my life by the directing of my desires.

So as a child of God, we can say, our hearts are in the hands of the Lord. He directs them like the sluices of water wherever he wills. That should be our case.

The second proverb is one that we can all attest to. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes. It's amazing how that we can actually rationalize and justify every single thing we've done.

We can, you know, every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord ponders the hearts. God looks down at my motives. God is always interested in not so much of what I do, but what motivated that action.

Now it is possible that a person have the totally proper actions, but the wrong motivations. We are told in second Corinthians five that we are all to appear before the judgment seat of Christ in order that we might be judged according to our works, what sort they are. Now Jesus tells us that we will definitely be judged according to not what I've done, but what motivated what I did.

Take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of men. For I say unto you, ye have your reward. There are many things that a person does ostensibly for the Lord, but inwardly he is motivated by his own desire for recognition, his own desire to be a leader or whatever, and the motivation of the work is wrong.

God's gonna test one day our hearts, our motivations. So where every deed is right in my own eyes, I can say, oh, look what I did. Lord, I prophesied in your name.

I preached in your name. I did all this. And the Lord says, hey, I never knew you.

You see, your heart, the motivation was wrong. And so that is why earlier a proverb said, keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. What is the attitude of my heart? What is the motivation of my heart? That's something that I need to examine.

And yet who knows? The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. So what can I do? God's gonna one day judge me by the motivations of my heart, but my heart's deceitful and desperately wicked. What can I do? Exactly what David did in Psalm 139, and say, search me, oh God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my way, and see if there be some way of wickedness in me. I don't know my own heart. Therefore, I ask God, search my heart.

God, reveal to me if there is something that is there that is unlike Thee. Let it be known, Lord, reveal. To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

Now there are people who are always ready to sacrifice. In the New Testament, Jesus got after the Pharisees because they were so meticulous in paying tithes of their herb gardens where they raised little seeds. And so they would count out the corander seeds.

Nine for me, one for the Lord. Nine for me, one for the Lord. And so meticulous in the paying of their tithes.

They tithes of their anise, their mint, their cumin, their spices. But he said, you've totally omitted the more important things. Righteousness, mercy, judgment.

And so God is more interested. In my seeking to be righteous, my seeking to be merciful, than for me coming and offering some sacrifice to God. To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than to sacrifice.

God said, sacrificing and offerings, I would not. I don't care about those. What I want is a broken and a contrite heart.

The repentant heart. God said, I will not turn away. But he spoke about the rejection of their sacrifice and offerings at one point.

He said, don't bring me any more. I'm sick of them. I don't want any more of your sacrifices.

Your heart isn't in it. And the sacrifice is meaningless. At that point, God says, don't offer.

I don't want any more. What I want is a true repentance, true judgment, justice, mercy. Those are the things that God is interested in.

A high look, a proud heart, and the light of the wicked is sin. The wicked can't do anything right. But the proud look, the proud heart, the high look, how God hates, detests.

Humble yourself. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. He that exalts himself shall be abased.

The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness, but of every one that is hasty only to want. They that are hasty to be rich. Those that are looking for a get rich quick scheme.

Here's the warning. Hey, you're going to get burned. There's no quick way to riches.

The thoughts of the diligent tend towards the plenteousness, but the get rich schemes are going to leave you broke. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of those that seek death. These are those persons that go around with fraudulent schemes.

The getting of treasures by a lying tongue. All of the scams that they have. But how often when they get caught, they get rubbed out.

The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them because they refuse to do judgment. The way of a man is perverse and strange, but as for the pure, his work is right. You notice the contrast in the poetry here.

It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. Now I would say that probably one woman in a thousand is brawling. But in as much as he married a thousand, he got one of them.

And so he speaks probably from experience, one of his wives. And better to dwell in the corner of the housetop. I really wouldn't know.

I say that seriously. Better to dwell in the bedroom. The soul of the wicked desireth evil.

His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes. The soul of the wicked, the mind, the consciousness. It just desires evil.

When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise. When the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge. Some of these really don't really call for any further kind of amplification.

The righteous man wisely considers the house of the wicked, but God overthrows the wicked for their wickedness. Whoso stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he shall cry himself and not be heard. Now again, God taking up the cause of the poor.

All the way through, we see God taking up the cause of the poor. He who lends to the poor, lends to the Lord. Now if you close up your ear to the cry of the poor, then God says he'll close up his ear to you.

A gift in secret pacifies anger, and a reward in the bosom, strong wrath. It is joy to the just to do judgment, but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. A man that wanders out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

And he that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man, and he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich. The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright. It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman.

Again, one in a thousand, and he had his one, and he had to deal with her. There is treasure to be desired, and oil in the dwelling of the wise. But the foolish man spends it up.

He that follows after righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness, and honor. Let's look at that again. He that follows after righteousness and mercy, what will he find? He'll find life, righteousness, and honor.

A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof. Whoso keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from troubles. How many times I wish I hadn't said it.

That word that was said in jest or carelessness or just off how you would like to draw it back so many times. Whoso keeps his mouth and his tongue will just keep himself from a lot of trouble. Proud and haughty scorner is his name who deals in proud wrath.

The desire of a slothful man absolutely destroys him for his hands refuse to labor. He has so much to say about the slothful man, the lazy person. And here is the desire of the lazy person just eats him up, it kills him.

Because you desire but you don't have because your hands refuse to labor. So it's that desire but no fulfillment. He coveteth greedily all the day long but the righteous giveth and spareth not.

That is the desire of the slothful kills him, his hands refuse to labor. He is coveting greedily all day long. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination.

Now we dealt with this a little bit earlier in one of the earlier Proverbs here in the chapter. Where God is interested in justice and judgment more than sacrifice. And the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination.

God doesn't really want any sacrifices from the wicked. How much more when he brings it with a wicked mind. When he is regarding iniquity in his mind and heart and yet brings a sacrifice before the Lord.

A false witness shall perish but the man that heareth speaketh constantly. A wicked man hardeneth his face but as for the upright he directeth his way. Verse 30 there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.

There is no way that you can bring to not the works of God. There is no wisdom, no understanding, no counsel that you can take against him. The horse is prepared against the day of battle but safety is of the Lord.

Now what are you trusting in for safety? For your own personal safety. You say well I got a permit to carry a gun living in horrible days. No the Lord said he who lives by the sword dies by the sword.

What are you trusting in for safety? A horse is prepared against the day of battle. But the real safety is in the Lord. Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain.

Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord is keeping you all of your endeavors to keep yourself are in vain. Better to put your trust in the Lord and your keeping into his hand than to take it in your own hands.

How important that we learn to just trust in the Lord for his protection. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and loving favor rather than silver and gold. The good name so important so valuable.

Good reputation so important rather to be chosen than great riches. Loving favor rather than silver and gold. The rich and the poor meet together where? In the eyes of the Lord for the Lord is the maker of them all.

You know God can't be impressed with your bank account. We all meet together when we stand before God the rich and the poor were all alike. We meet together there's a common ground.

Whenever we stand before the Lord we're meeting on common grounds. Except as I understand the scripture the poor man has maybe a few advantages. How hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

That is how hard it is for those who trust in riches. The danger of riches is always that tendency and temptation to trust in your riches. I've learned that I can buy my way out of problems with my money.

I learned that I can use money to influence people or to control people. And I'm used to then the manipulation of people because of my financial prowess. Poor person doesn't have any of those problems.

When you stand before the Lord the rich and the poor meet together. The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hides himself. But the simple pass on and are punished.

The prudent man. Now we see the evil that is going to result from a life of sin. And we hide ourselves in the provisions that God has made through Jesus Christ.

We hide from that day of judgment. But the simple they're gonna pass right on into it. And will be punished.

By humility and the fear of the Lord or reverence of the Lord are riches, honor and life. Now he that follows after righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness and honor. Here by humility and the reverence of the Lord are riches, honor and life.

Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse. And he who keeps his soul shall be far from them. Train up a child in the way he should go.

And when he is old he will not depart from it. This particular passage of scripture has been the center of great controversy. There are many people who with an aching heart.

Looking at their children who are rebelling from the things of the Lord. And their hearts filled with wonderment as to how the child could turn so far from God. But yet God has declared train up a child.

Of course it does involve that responsibility of training the child. The Hebrew word is one that we translate catechize. It's a systematic form of training.

But what did you train your child to be? What was your primary purpose for your child? What was your goal for your children? What did you want for them above everything else? You say well I wanted them to be successful. I wanted them to be happy. I wanted them to have a successful career.

I wanted them to have a good education. Well they are purely pagan goals and ideals for your children. They're totally unchristian.

The primary goal that we should have for each of our children is that they walk with the Lord. That they learn to know God and serve God and walk with Him. Now that is not undervaluing education.

I think that it's great. I think a person should avail himself the opportunity of every educational advantage he can receive. But that should never be our goal.

Our goal should be that our children will walk with the Lord. And I'd rather have them walking with the Lord and be an ignoramus. And work in some very menial work than I would to have them have their PhD's and be agnostic or atheistic or blasphemous against God.

Now, not all of our children graduated from college. I have to confess a disappointment that they did not take full advantage of all of the natural God-given intellectual capacities that they had in going to college. And yet, we've learned to commit this completely into the hands of the Lord.

The fact that they went to college or graduated from college or not doesn't really make any difference to me. I'm thankful they're walking with Him. That's what's important.

It could be that in college their minds could have been twisted. It could have been that their values could have been destroyed. The true values.

I would much rather that they be walking with the Lord than to have their PhD's. Train up a child. What is the goal that you have? That's important.

If you're training a child to be successful, he may be successful. But he also may be a successful infidel. Train up your child in the ways you go.

When he's old, he will not depart from it. The rich rules over the poor. And the borrower is servant to the lender.

He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity. And the rod of his anger shall fail. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed.

For he giveth of his bread to the poor. God's mark upon generosity. He that has a bountiful eye shall be blessed.

When he will give to the poor. Cast out the scorner and contention shall go out. Yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

It's amazing what one scorner can do. In bringing strife and contention. So cast out the scorner.

Here at Calvary Chapel, actually we have requested many scorners not to come back. That's usually Romaine's job and he does it quite effectively. But it's valuable.

You know, it's a healthy body that can purge its system of the poisons. And when a body is no longer strong enough to purge itself of its poisons, that body is going to die. In the New Testament it says to get rid of the leaven.

For a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. So cast out that leaven. Same thing here, cast out the scorners and you can get rid of so many problems.

The contentions and all will cease. He that loves pureness of heart, for the grace of lips the king shall be his friend. The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.

The slothful man says, there is a lion outside, I'll be slain in the streets. Any excuse to keep from going to work. And again, as Benjamin Franklin said, the man who is good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else.

The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit and he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall in it. Verse 15, again as far as the correction of our children, foolishness is bound in the heart of a child. But the rod of correction shall drive it from him.

Solomon no doubt observed his father David's mistake. David was an extremely poor disciplinarian. And as a result of his being a poor disciplinarian, his sons rebelled against him.

It is spoken of one of David's sons that he never once punished him or did anything to antagonize him. He just left him alone. And that son grew up to hate David and rebelled against David.

And of course Absalom also rebelled against his father. David was just a poor disciplinarian. So many times we have the false concept.

Well, I don't want my, you know, I don't want to break this bond between my child and I. You know, I won't punish him. I'll just let him go. And that laxity, lack of discipline, the foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.

But the rod of destruction will drive it far from him. A child left to himself will bring reproach to his parents. He that oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he who gives to the rich, shall surely come to want.

Now at this point, the whole thing of the Proverbs begin to change a bit. We've had Proverbs for a long period that more or less are isolated, singly, and stand alone. Sometimes you have a couplet, two of them together.

But now the whole procedure of the Proverbs change, and we now have longer Proverbs. That is, they take two, three, four verses. In the Proverbs that we now follow, you'll notice this definite change.

And rather than just little four liners, they now expand on a particular thought. Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within thee.

They shall withal be fitted in thy lips, that thy trust may be in the Lord. I have made known to thee this day, even to thee, have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge? That I may make thee

know the certainty of the words of truth, that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee. So, that whole paragraph now is the one idea of just hearken to the instruction that I'm going to give to you.

Keep it, and basically the instruction is to teach you to trust in the Lord. The next two verses form one thought. Rob not the poor, because he is poor.

Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate. For the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoil them. Again, God taking up the cause of the poor person.

24 and 25, make up one thought. Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest you learn his ways and get a snare in your soul. 26 and 27 are together.

Be not thou one of them that strikes hands, or of them that are surety for debts. For if you have nothing to pay, why should they take away your bed from under thee? How many people who have, you know, signed as a surety have been stung? So, it's a warning against signing as a surety for someone else. Co-signing on this loan for me, friend.

Be careful. Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set. Now, this, of course, came as a law in the book of Deuteronomy.

Where they were prohibited from removing the landmarks. The landmarks have been established by God. Property ownership and the limits of that property ownership.

Remove not the landmark. I think of it in a spiritual sense. The landmark is the guidelines.

And in a spiritual sense, unfortunately, we are living in the day when many men have sought to remove the spiritual type of landmarks or the foundational truths of the Word of God. And what confusion has ensued when men start playing around with the foundational truths of Christianity. Questioning the authority of the Word of God.

Questioning the deity of Jesus Christ. And men starting to remove these landmarks. Confusion results.

Do you see a man that is diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings. He shall not stand before mean men or, in the Hebrew, obscure men. Now, the next three verses are coupled together.

When you sit to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee. And put a knife to your throat, if you be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties, for they are deceitful meat.

So you don't go in and start scarfing up the hors d'oeuvres, you know. All of these dainty little fancy things, you know. And you go in and, you know, just start wolfing them down.

And never anyway you're going to fill up on hors d'oeuvres. So, when you sit with a ruler, just consider diligently what's put before you. And if you're given to appetite, better just take your knife, put it to your throat.

Don't be desirous of those little dainties. Keep your hands off. They're deceitful.

Labor not to be rich. Cease from your own wisdom. The Bible says, if riches increase.

Now, it says labor not. Don't let that be a goal of life. But if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

God may see fit to increase riches. Just don't let your heart get set on them. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings.

They fly away as an eagle toward heaven. The next three verses are coupled together. Eat not the bread of him that hath an evil eye.

Now, this isn't referring to the old superstition that there are some people that have an evil eye. That they can look on you with that evil eye and put a hex on you. It's almost humorous to watch the preliminaries of some of these boxing matches.

Where they have these guys over in the corner, you know, to put the evil eye on the other boxer, you know. And you see them trying to put this evil eye and hex. And you see the boxer deliberately avoiding, you know, won't look and see that evil eye.

But this is not at all a reference to, you know, some kind of a power that a person has to put a hex on you with an evil eye. Actually, it is just referring to a person whose mind is evil. To an evil person.

Eat not the bread of him who is evil. Neither desire his dainty meats. For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

If he is thinking this evil in his heart, then he's an evil person. Eat and drink, he says to you. But his heart is not with you.

The morsel which you have eaten, you'll vomit up. And lose thy sweet words. Speak not in the ears of a fool.

For he will despise the wisdom of your words. And again, we had in the last chapter. Remove not the old landmark.

And enter not into the fields of the fatherless. For their Redeemer is mighty. And he shall plead their cause with thee.

In other words, God will take up the cause of the widow or of the orphan, of the poor. If you're a widow, if you're an orphan, you're poor, you've got a fantastic ally. God will take up your cause.

Apply thine heart unto instruction, thy ears to the words of knowledge. And withhold not correction from the child. For if you beat him with a rod, he shall not die.

You'll get arrested. Thou shalt beat him with a rod and shalt deliver his soul from hell. Now, as we mentioned this morning, train up a child in the way he should go.

In the Hebrew, literally, is train up a child according to his way. That is, recognize that there is a vast difference in the character, in the personalities of children. And there are some children where spanking is excellent discipline.

There are other kids you can beat all day and it's not going to do any good. So, learning that children have different temperaments, your training then is according to their temperament. Train up a child according to his way.

And there's no sense of waiting on a kid that doesn't do any good. Find another form of discipline. You can find an effective form of discipline.

Maybe the deprivation of certain privileges or desires that the child has is an excellent form of discipline for particular children. But, I don't advocate child beating. And neither do, I believe, that the scriptures advocate that.

But for some kids, a good wailing once in a while isn't a bad idea. As I said, several years ago, I knew much more about raising children than I do now. In our first pastorate, small little church, sort of a one room church.

And for Sunday school, we just had curtains to divide off the auditorium into the classrooms. It wasn't an ideal situation at all. In fact, it was a very difficult situation, especially because the lady who was teaching the high school class had a little girl that she never disciplined.

And a child left to itself will bring reproach to its parents. And because this little girl was never disciplined, she would just start screaming. And because we were all in the same room, only divided by curtains, it would disrupt the whole Sunday school.

And of course, I was very young and very new to pastoring and I didn't have any children. So, I had all the answers for raising children and everything else. So, the second Sunday that we were in this church, and the same procedure started again.

As this mother started to teach the class, her little girl started screaming and yelling. I went up to her and graciously offered to take her little girl for a walk. I would never do it now, but I spanked that little gal.

I got her outside. I got her about a block away and then I applied some psychology where I thought it would do the most good. It worked.

I don't advocate it, but it worked. I'll tell you, from then on, whenever that little girl would start to scream, I'd look at her and she'd go... Several years ago, I was directing a summer camp in Arizona and this nice-looking young lady, about 18 years old, came up to me and said, Do you know who I am? And I looked at her and I said, Well, no, I don't. She said, and she gave me her name and I said, Oh, no.

She grew up to be a very lovely young lady. I don't know that my spanking had anything to do with that, but I'd like to think that it did. These next few are coupled together.

My son, if your heart is wise, my heart shall rejoice. Yes, my reins shall rejoice when your lips speak right things. Now, the reins are really the kidneys.

And they felt that the deepest emotions of a person are not really felt in your heart, Valentine's Day notwithstanding, but the deepest emotions of a person are felt down in the stomach region. When you really feel an emotion extremely deep, you feel it in the region of the stomach. That's why in the New Testament you have bowels of compassion as the deepest area of feeling is way down.

And we say, I had a gut level feeling, you know, and we're trying to describe a feeling that is more than just an emotional moment, but where I feel something very deeply. So here is the father talking to his son. My heart will rejoice, yeah, even deeper than that.

If you're a wise son and you speak wise things, right things down in the deepest area, I rejoice. Let not your heart envy sinners, but reverence the Lord all day long. For surely there is an end, and your expectation shall not be cut off.

Hear thou my son and be wise, and guide your heart in the way. Again, there is an end. Look down the road, consider the end result.

There is an end to all things, that is, of this life, and then I'm going to stand before God. So consider that. Be not among winebibbers, among riotous eaters of meat.

For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Hearken unto your father that begat thee, and despise not your mother when she is old. By the truth, sell it not, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.

The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice, and he that begets a wise child shall have the joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bore thee shall rejoice. My son, give me your heart, let your eyes observe my ways.

For a whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lies in wait as for a prey, and increases the transgressors among men. Now this next portion is all together to the end of the chapter, and it is extremely interesting.

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has babblings? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine. They that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, or when it moveth itself aright, or when it moves by itself.

Some believe that this is talking of the fermentation process. And after the fermentation has taken place, then you should avoid it. In other words, they did have non-fermented types of wines.

And once the wine moves of itself in the cup, the fermentation process, then leave it alone. For at the last it bites like a servant, and stings like an adder. As a result, your eyes will behold strange women.

You will lose your inhibitions. Your heart will utter perverse things. Things that you would not normally say.

Things that you would not normally do. But now that you're under the influence, your inhibitions have been loosed. You're going to do all kinds of weird and stupid things.

Yea, thou shalt be as he that lies down in the middle of the sea, doing just really dumb things. Or as one who lies on the top of a mast. They have stricken me, you will say.

And I was not sick. They have beaten me, but I didn't feel it. You'll wake up with all the bruises and cuts and you don't know how you got them.

When shall I awake? And then what happens? I'll go right back and seek it yet again. The tragic effects of alcoholism. Described quite graphically here in Proverbs.

Again he continues in 24 in putting them together in couplets or in phrases. Be not envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. For their heart studies destruction and their lips talk of mischief.

The next one. Through wisdom is a house built and by understanding it is established. And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all pleasant riches.

Wisdom and knowledge, the value of them. A wise man is strong, yea, a man of knowledge increases strength. For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war.

And in the multitude of counselors there is safety. Wisdom is too high for a fool. He openeth not his mouth in the gate.

The gate was always the place of judgment. He that devises to do evil shall be called a mischievous person. The thought of foolishness is sin.

And the scorner is an abomination to men. Now we have some more that are, no not yet. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death.

And those that are ready to be slain. If you say behold we knew it not. In other words if you fail to help someone when you have the capacity to do it.

If you do it not. If you say behold I didn't know. Doth not he that pondereth the heart considereth it.

And he that keeps the soul does he not know it. And shall not he render every man according to his works. You know you can't beg off your responsibility because God knows your heart.

God knows what's in your mind. And you may try to excuse your actions. Oh I didn't know.

But yet God is going to ponder your heart. God knows what's in your mind. And God will render every man according to his works.

Render to every man. My son eat honey because it's good. And the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste.

And so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto your soul when you have found it. Then there shall be a reward and the expectation shall not be cut off. How sweet is a nugget of truth.

How sweet it is to get understanding from the Lord on a particular thing. It's just as sweet as honey is into your mouth. There is a sweetness in your soul when you gain knowledge and wisdom.

Lay not wait oh wicked man against the dwelling of the righteous. Spoil not his resting place for a just man falleth seven times. But he will rise up again.

But the wicked will fall into mischief. We may fall. But thank God we rise again.

I've often said there isn't any great evil in falling unless you just lie there. Everybody stumbles. Everybody falls.

None of us are perfect. And God knows that we're not perfect. He knows our frame that we're but dust.

We usually expect more out of ourselves than God expects. And we're usually harder on ourselves than God is. We get so disappointed when we have fallen.

We get so disappointed when we have failed. It doesn't disappoint God at all. He knew all the time we were going to stumble.

It was just I was expecting more out of myself than God is. And God doesn't judge or condemn when you stumble. It's only when you lie there.

God understands. He has great patience with us. Even as you have great patience in teaching your child to walk.

You expect your child to stumble. You expect your child to fall. Oh of course you will do your best to keep your child from falling.

But there are those times when the child is learning to walk and he falls. Now a wise parent won't get all excited and scream and run over and say, Oh, are you alright, alright? You just say, well, get up now, honey. Try again.

If you show all fear and excitement, then the child will get excited and start to cry and get discouraged. But you say, well, that was great. You did real well.

You took five steps before you stumble. That's good. And you encourage the child to go again.

Now God is teaching us to walk. And we stumble. And we get all discouraged.

Oh, I tried so hard. Failed again. And God is saying, hey, that was a good try.

Let's go at it again. Now here's where you made your mistake. You got your eyes off of me.

You got them on the waves. That's why you began to sink. And the Lord picks us up, dusts us off, and sets us up again.

He's so patient with us. He's so understanding with us. And if the righteous falls seven times, he's going to rise again.

Now, here's a hard one. Rejoice not when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turns his way as wrath from him. Now, that's not too good a motivation.

Not to rejoice. If you rejoice, God may take it off. So, don't rejoice and let God just continue to whip him.

Fret not thyself because of evil men. Remember Psalm 37? It seems like this is probably something that Solomon picked up from his father David. Fret not thyself, David said, for evildoers, for they shall be cut off.

Now, fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked, for there shall be no reward to the evil man. The candle of the wicked shall be put out. Don't be envious of them.

They're going to be cut off. My son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change, for their calamities shall rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin of them both? These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

He that saith to the wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him. But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them. Every man shall kiss his lips that gives a right answer.

Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field, and afterwards build your house. Now be not a witness against your neighbor without cause, and deceive not with thy lips. Say not, I will do so to him as he has done to me, I will render to the man according to his work.

Don't say that. That's so often that I'm going to do to him what he did to me. Boy, as we grew up with kids, always.

I just did to him what he did to me, you know. God said don't say that. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay.

Now from 30 on we have Ode to the Slothful Man. I went to the field of a slothful, and by the vineyard of the man who is void of understanding. And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall was broken down.

Now you that have been over into the land, you can picture this, all of those stone walls that are around the vineyards, and all, and some of the, they are set usually in such neat order, but the slothful man, the stone wall is broken down. Then I saw and considered it well. I looked upon it, and I received instruction.

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, and so shall thy poverty come as one that trevelleth, and thy want as an armed man. The lesson from the slothful. Now, in chapter 25, these Proverbs were gathered by Hezekiah when he became king.

And they were added to the books of Proverbs by Hezekiah's scribes. During the period of Hezekiah's reign, it was a period of national revival. Prior to Hezekiah, the kingdom had reached a low point.

As Hezekiah began to reign, there was a real spiritual revival, and it was a national movement among the people. And as is true in all spiritual revivals, there is an interest, a concern, and a returning to the Word of God. Where you see people really interested in the Word of God, you know that there is a revival that is happening because a revival always brings a renewed interest in the Word of God.

And so, Hezekiah's scribes began to search for the Word of God, search for the Scriptures. And they found these Proverbs, and they added them to the book of Proverbs. So, 25.1 explains it all.

These are also Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied. So, they found these, and they copied them, and added them to the book of Proverbs. Proverbs of Solomon.

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings is to search out a matter. How much God has concealed of His own wisdom, and understanding, and power, and might, the secrets of the universe, concealed by God. Yet, the honor of the king is to search out a matter.

The heaven for height, the earth for depth, and the heart of the king is unsearchable. 4 and 5 stand together. Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.

Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness. So, the removal of the dross. Now, we know that the day is coming when God is going to test our works by fire, and the dross to be purged as we stand before the king.

And He will establish then His kingdom in righteousness. All of the dross will be taken away. Put not forth thyself in the presence of a king, and stand not in the place of great men.

For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, then you should be put in allure in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen. Now, this was referred to tonight by Hal, and Jesus said, when you're bidden to come to a feast, don't go and take the most honorable table and the honorable chair. When you're sitting in a lesser place, it's much, much better to have the host come and say to you, Oh, come up and sit up here, rather than to be sitting in the place of prominence and the host come up and say, Hey, buddy, you're in the wrong place.

Get down there, you know. So, Jesus really is more or less taking from Solomon. Better it be said unto thee, Come up hither, then you should be put in the lower place in the presence of the prince.

Don't be in a hurry. Don't go out quickly to strive. Lest you know not what to do in the end thereof when your neighbor has put thee to shame.

Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself and discover not a secret to another. Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame and your infamy turn not away. Verse 11, very picturesque.

A word that is fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pitchers of silver. Now, I don't know if that's gold and delicious apples in a silver pitcher, but that would look awful good, you know. But a word fitly spoken.

Some people have the gift of saying the right thing at the right time. You know, you can have a very explosive kind of a situation. Everybody is tense.

And somebody with this gift just comes along and says the right thing and it just diffuses the whole thing. And you think, whew, you know. You're just expecting the whole thing to go.

And this word that is fitly spoken, how glorious it is. God grant us this gift of saying the right thing at the right time. Now, I don't know why it is that so many times though we know the right thing to say, it's hard to say it.

Now, what kind of a perversity is that? When I know to say the right thing and yet I have difficulty saying it. Now, even with my own wife, I oftentimes have difficulty in saying to her what I know I should say. And I don't know why I have this difficulty.

It's some kind of a block of the inability to say the right thing at the right time. There are so many times when we could change the whole atmosphere if we would just say the right thing. A word fitly spoken, how glorious it is.

And yet, many times even when we know that word, we don't say it. Now, that's no virtue. In fact, that's probably evil to let something simmer when you by a word fitly spoken could stop it.

Some perversity of our own hearts. I don't know. But God loves me and I like that.

But I get so angry with myself sometimes because I know what I should do but I don't. An earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold so is a wise reprove to an obedient ear. As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is the faithful messenger to them that send him, for he refreshes the soul of his masters.

Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain. And by long forbearing is a prince persuaded and a soft tongue breaketh the bone. Have you found honey? Eat as much as is sufficient for thee lest you be filled and vomited.

Here's an interesting one. Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor's house lest he be weary of thee and so hate thee. You know, you just sit there and sit there and sit there and they've got things that they want to do and you're not moving.

Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor's house. A man that bears false witness against his neighbor is a maul, a sword, and a sharp arrow. Confidence in an unfaithful man in the time of trouble is like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint.

He that takes away a garment in cold weather and adds vinegar upon niter, so is he that sings songs to a heavy heart. You ever put vinegar in, what is it we used to pour vinegar in? Baking soda, right, you know it. Vinegar upon niter.

So is he that sings songs to a person with a heavy heart. If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat. Paul quotes this in Romans chapter 12, or not chapter 12, is it? Yes, 12, 15.

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat. If he is thirsty, give him water to drink. For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.

Now, what does that mean? I am certain that the heaping of the coals of fire is not a bad thing. There's probably something that has to do with their customs that would give you a better understanding of what it means to heap coals of fire upon their head. But it doesn't mean to really crown them with hell, you know.

Some have suggested that it will cause them to burn with shame. In other words, if your enemy is hungry and you feed him, if he is thirsty and you give him a drink, you cause him to burn with shame. The Lord will reward you.

My motive for doing it shouldn't be that I really heap coals of fire upon his head, you see. My motive in doing it should be really kind and generous. The north wind drives away the rain, and so does an angry countenance, a backbiting tongue.

Someone is backbiting, just give them a dirty look. It will stop them. Angry countenance and backbiting tongue drives it away.

It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a white house. Now we already dealt with that one, but these men who were scribes copied it. They evidently got a kick out of that one.

As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring. It is not good to eat much honey, so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

And then the last one. He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down without walls. A man that has no rule over his own spirit, a man who is always losing his temper, he is like a defenseless city, a city that is broken down without walls.

Oh God, help us to rule over our own spirits.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-proverbs-21-25/>

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