

Proverbs 11-31

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into the Book of Proverbs, highlighting key verses that emphasize the importance of honesty, generosity, humility, wisdom, and the power of words. It explores divine principles such as giving to receive, seeking God's will over human wisdom, and the significance of joy and cheerfulness in the Christian life. The sermon also touches on themes of forgiveness, discipline, and the impact of our actions on others, urging listeners to live in accordance with God's wisdom and love.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:3, Proverbs 11:24, Proverbs 12:23, Proverbs 14:12, Proverbs 15:13, Proverbs 16:18, Proverbs 17:9, Proverbs 17:28, Proverbs 18:12, Proverbs 18:19, Proverbs 18:21, Proverbs 19:17, Proverbs 19:18

Topics: "Wisdom in Action", "The Power of Words"

Description

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Transcript

Welcome once again to Words of Life. We are studying through the Bible and we have come to the Book of Proverbs. We looked at the first ten chapters in our last study.

And now we come to Chapter 11. As I said, we are looking only at some of the important verses. And I hope that will give you an incentive to study the whole book more thoroughly.

Proverbs 11. Verse 3. The integrity of the upright will guide them. The first thing that God looks for from us is honesty.

If He doesn't find honesty, we go no further with God. But if we are honest, we will find that God guides us into His will, even if we don't hear His voice very clearly. That sincerity of our life will guide us into the right path.

In Chapter 11. Verse 24 and 25, we see a very interesting divine principle. This is one of the paradoxes of the Christian life which worldly people cannot understand.

That in order to receive from God, you got to give. And to receive more, you got to give more. The only thing is a lot of people have limited it to money.

But that's because they are covetous preachers themselves. The first thing we are commanded in the New Testament to give to God is our heart and our body. The first thing we are commanded to give to God in the New Testament is our heart and our body.

Money comes after that. But the principle is this. If you seek to serve others, God will serve you.

If you are generous with others, God is very generous with you. And if you water other people's plants, God will water your plants. So if you want God to water you and keep you fresh every day of your life, you must seek to give out what God has given you.

Have you received some revelation from the Lord in His word? Don't keep it to yourself. Give it out. Begin to think about the needs of others.

See how you can bless them. And as you do that, you will find that God blesses you also abundantly. Chapter 12 verse 23 says, A wise man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.

A wise man is not keen to display his knowledge. He may know a great deal, but he keeps it to himself. A foolish man, however, is ready to give his opinion on anything and everything.

In chapter 14 verse 12, it says, There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end is the way of death. So there are many things which may appear right to our human wisdom, but finally ends up in death. Now this verse is repeated again in chapter 16 verse 25.

Why does God repeat something just two pages later? It must be something important. So that if you missed it the first time you read, you get it when you come to chapter 16. Very often we don't seek God's will in something.

Because we already know or we think we know. But the way which seems right to you is the way of death. God wants to lead us in the way of life.

In many areas, it's good to remember this verse, there's a way which seems right to man, but it ends up in death. Because God says, My ways are not your ways. As the heavens are high above the earth, so are different are my ways from your ways.

So, to find God's ways, we must be willing to give up our own ways. Chapter 15 and verse 13, A joyful heart makes a cheerful face. And also it says a cheerful heart, verse 15, has a continual feast.

There's a great emphasis in the book of Proverbs on having joy and cheerfulness in our life. They didn't have this ability in the old covenant. But the new covenant is righteousness with joy in the Holy Spirit.

And so a joyful heart is a very important feature of new covenant life. Chapter 16 and verse 18, Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before falling. There's only one reason why anybody falls into sin.

And that's pride. There's no other reason why anybody falls into sin. God gives grace to the humble.

And if a person remains in humility, he'll always have grace. And when he's under grace, he gets victory over sin. So here it says that all fall goes on the way of pride.

No matter how much God may bless us or use us, we need to keep our face in the dust, acknowledge that he is Lord. If we keep that in mind, we can never fall. Chapter 17 and verse 9, says he who covers the transgression seeks love.

Has somebody done you some wrong? And did they hurt you or insult you? Forgive it. Ignore it. That is the way of love that a godly man walks in.

In chapter 17 verse 28, it's a lovely verse. Even a fool when he keeps silent is considered wise. So if you're foolish, and you want people to consider you to be wise, you know what to do.

Just keep your big mouth shut. And then when your mouth is shut, people will think, oh that man is a man of deep wisdom, he's silent. If he had opened your mouth, everybody would have seen that you're a fool.

What a good exhortation that is. Be quick to hear and slow to speak. And especially when we are young and foolish, we must be slow to speak and quick to hear.

That will protect us from losing our testimony. Chapter 18 and verse 12. The last part it says, before humility is honor.

So, humility goes before honor. Sorry, humility goes before honor. So, if we want God's honor, we must be humble.

Chapter 18 verse 16. A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men. It's through the gift God gives you, which he will make others recognize that he makes room for you in the church.

So, don't try and fight and try to get a position in the church. Pursue after the gifts of the Holy Spirit and when God gives you his gifts, nobody will be able to stop you. You will come into the place which God has planned for you.

Chapter 18 verse 19. A brother offended is harder to be one than a strong city. This is why we have to be very careful in relationships.

Of course, if you are a mature brother, you never get offended with anybody. But such brothers are very rare. Most brothers get offended with something or the other.

And that's why we have to be very careful about what we say or what we write because you can break a relationship that remains broken for years. Chapter 18 verse 21. Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

That is so true. You know, there is a tongue of fire that is set on fire by the Holy Spirit. And then James 3 says that tongue can be set on fire from hell.

The natural tendency of our life is to speak selfishly seeking our own. But if we humble ourselves, judge ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to control our tongue, He can help us to spread life instead of death. Chapter 19 verse 17.

When you help a poor person financially, you know you are actually giving a loan to the Lord. And He will repay you. The Lord Himself will repay you for the good deed you did.

So everything you do for a poor believer, the Lord takes note of it and He will repay you for it. And then further in chapter 19 verse 18. Discipline your son while there is hope and do not desire his death.

Proverbs speaks a lot about disciplining our children. If you want to save them from hell. Chapter 20 verse 14.

This is a technique that people use when they want to buy something. They tell a lie. They say to the shopkeeper No, that's bad, that's bad.

It's not worth so much. They are telling a lie. And then when they get it for a lower price, they go away and boast.

It says, You know what price I got this for? A Christian should never behave like that. It is hypocrisy. Chapter 21 verse 2. It says here that every man's way is right in his own eyes but the Lord weighs the hearts.

Remember that to God the motive with which you do something is more important than what you do. If your motive is bad then the whole action is bad. Chapter 21 verse 13.

He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will cry himself and God will not hear him. That's self explanatory. Chapter 21 verse 19.

It's better to live in a desert land than with a contentious and vexing woman. Solomon who wrote this must have had a lot of experience. He had 700 wives.

Chapter 22 verse 4. It says the reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor in life. When we are humble and we fear God the result is spiritual riches spiritual honor and spiritual life. Then in chapter 22 in verse 29 it says do you see a man who is hard working who is careful in his work such a man will stand before kings This is a good verse to apply to study of God's word.

And if you are diligent in serving the Lord God will open many doors of service for you. Chapter 23 verse 31 It says don't look on the wine when it is red when it sparkles in the cup. This is an exhortation to avoid all highly fermented wine.

Most of the alcohol in the world is something we should avoid. In chapter 24 in verse 11 It says deliver those who are being taken away in debt and those who are staggering to slaughter hold them back. This is a great exhortation to challenge us to engage in evangelism.

Chapter 24 in verse 17 Don't rejoice when your enemy falls don't let your heart be glad when he stumbles. Vengeance belongs to God but we are not to get involved in that at all. And we don't have to be eager as to decide when God is going to take vengeance.

Leave your enemies in God's hands let God deal with them. Your job is to love them and be good to them. Chapter 24 verse 27 It says prepare your work outside make it ready and then go and build your house.

That means when you are considering marriage first get a job support yourself and then get married. If you don't earn enough money to support a family then you are probably not ready to get married. In chapter 24 in verse 30 to 34 is a repetition of that exhortation to study to learn from the ant.

To work hard in chapter 25 verse 14 Like clouds and wind without rain so is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely. There are many people today who are boasting about gifts that they don't have. Many people claim to have the gift of healing who don't have it.

They claim to have the gift of miracles but they don't have it. And when they discover that they don't have it they want to keep up the pretense of it by psychological tricks which they use when speaking to an audience. So a man like that is compared here to a farmer who is looking at the clouds in the sky hoping that he will get rain.

So in the same way all these people expect something from you, the great preacher. But they are disappointed because they don't get it from you. Maybe one or two drops of rain come but not the big showers that you give and the impression would come.

Then chapter 26 verse 4 it's a very interesting verse. It says here don't answer a fool according to his folly lest you be like him. And the next verse says answer a fool according to his folly lest he be wise in his own eyes.

So what is the right thing? Is the first verse right or the next verse right? Because it looks as if it's contradicting each other. The reason is because there are two types of fools in the world. And if it's fool A then answer him.

No, do not answer him. If it's fool B answer him. Jesus would answer some questions but not answer certain other questions.

When Herod asked him questions he was fool A and God didn't answer him anything. There are people who ask with wrong motives. Jesus recognized that and he wouldn't answer him.

So we don't have to answer everybody who asks us something. Chapter 27 Verse 1 Do not boast about tomorrow for you do not know what a day can bring forth. Many people boast about what is going to happen in the coming days.

James says always say if the Lord wills we will live. As we will do this. That's the way we should talk about the coming days.

Verse 2 of 27 Let another man praise you and not your own mouth. The self promotion that we see in Christendom today is completely against the spirit of Christ. If you are doing something let other people appreciate it.

Don't go around boasting about yourself. Chapter 28 Verse 13 It says he who conceals his transgressions will not prosper. He who confesses and forsakes them will find mercy.

We can get mercy from God when we confess and forsake our sins. But if we hide it there is no mercy for such people. Chapter 29 Verse 1 A man who hardens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be destroyed.

So God is very merciful with the person when he corrects him. But a time comes when God says Ok finished I have got nothing more to do with you. And then his life is destroyed.

Chapter 29 Verse 18 Where there is no vision the people perish. God wants to give us a vision of what he can accomplish through us. And if we have faith he will accomplish it.

And it will save us from discouragement when we have vision. Chapter 29 Verse 20 These are towards the end of Solomon's Proverbs. In a few more verses for end of 29 that's the end of Solomon's Proverbs.

And he says I have written about many fools in this book. Shall I tell you who is the greatest fool? The one who is very hasty in his speech or hasty in his matters. He doesn't stop to think.

Chapter 30 Verse 6 Verse 7 He says two things I have asked of you don't refuse them to me. Don't let me ever tell a lie. And don't give me poverty or riches.

Because otherwise I will drift away from you or deny you. But in the new covenant we don't have to pray that prayer. Paul said whether I have much or little I am quite happy and I will not go away from the Lord.

Chapter 31 Very beautiful description Verse 10 onwards the type of wife a man should have. I would encourage all young sisters to read this to be the type of woman you should be. And all young men read this to know the type of wife you should look for.

It's not her beauty that's important. She fears God. She's hard working.

She's got a gentle tongue. She's careful with money. And she takes care of her children.

She provides for the future. Pray that God will give you such a wife. And your young sister pray that you will be a person like this.

In conclusion all young people should read Proverbs frequently. God bless you.

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