

Highways & Hedges of Thorns

Proverbs 15:5-15:19

Puritan Reformed Church - Pastor David Reece

Lord's Day September 11th, Anno Domini 2022

PROVERBS 15:5-15:19 - The Importance of Instruction

15:5-15:12 - 7 verses - Consequences of Accepting or Rejecting Instruction

5 A fool despises his father's instruction,

But he who receives [Lit. keeps] correction is prudent.

6 In the house of the righteous there is much treasure,

But in the revenue of the wicked is trouble.

7 The lips of the wise disperse [spread] knowledge,

But the heart of the fool does not do so.

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 follows righteousness.

10 Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way,

And he who hates correction will die.

11 Hell [Or Sheol] and Destruction [Heb. Abaddon] are before the Lord;

So how much more the hearts of the sons of men.

12 A scoffer does not love one who corrects him,

Nor will he go to the wise.

- 1) 5 A fool [Heb. 'ewil¹] despises his father's instruction [Heb. musar], But he who receives [Lit. guards, keeps - Heb. Shomayr] **correction [toka'hat - rebuke]** is prudent [shrewd - Heb. ya'rim].

- a) Another warning to heed the training and instruction of a godly father [authority]. An insult to those who reject the instruction of godly fathers - you are obtuse because of your own wickedness. Repent.
- b) In contrast - the one who receives, holds onto, keeps, guards rebuke (being

¹ 'Ewil - obtuse by the effects of moral perversion

told what to stop doing) is prudent, shrewd, effective at accomplishing what is good.

c) Listening to criticism is extremely important. You have to encourage criticism. You have to listen to it. Especially in a position of authority - you have to draw criticism out and be careful to protect people when they give it to you and be careful to not punish the critic. The more isolated you are the harder it is to get criticism from people who know you and who care about you. The more successful you are the more isolated you become.

d) Forms a frame with v.12 - **A scoffer does not love one who corrects [hokayha - rebukes] him, Nor will he go to the wise [Heb. hakamim].**

2) **6 In the house of the righteous there is much treasure,**

But in the revenue [produce, yield, harvest] of the wicked is trouble.

7 The lips of the wise [Heb. Hakamim] disperse [spread, scatter] knowledge, But the heart of the fool [Heb. kesilim²] does not do so.

a) The house of the righteous (ambiguous phrase that means in the physical house and in the household) - In the house of the righteous there are physical treasures from consuming less than is produced, spiritual treasures from learning and discipling, and customs and skills that can be displayed as treasures. - Sociologists - Culture - Habits/Customs, Language/Topics, Skills/Tech

b) On the other hand, the things that look like treasures (even income-producing treasures) in the possession of the wicked - the income of the wicked - is a curse. The income, the yield, the harvest of the wicked is trouble, disorder, confusion, disaster, ruin.

c) Wisemen scatter seeds of knowledge and thus expect a harvest of a different kind since one reaps what one sows.

d) The inward man [the heart - Heb. layv] of the Fool has no intention of spreading true knowledge, and thus the fool scatters ignorance and error and reaps the whirlwind since the harvest is like unto the sowing in kind, but increased in magnitude across time.

e) The inward world of the mind controls the output of the man into the outer world of the physical creation and has impacts upon the inner world of the minds of others.

² Perverse because of obtuseness

- 3) **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 follows righteousness.**
- a) Giving and Taking - Giving to God without faith and in unbelief is an abomination. However, even asking to take from God with faith and in faith is a delight to God.
 - b) The way and the Man - God hates the way of the wicked, and also the wicked (Ps. 5:5). God loves the righteous who follow the way of righteousness.
 - c) We are forgiven in Christ. We are righteous in Christ. We can by degrees, more and more, be strengthened to walk in the way that God loves.
- 4) **10 Harsh discipline [musar] is for him who forsakes the way,
And he who hates correction [rebuke] will die.
11 Hell [Heb. Sheol - the grave, hades in greek] and Destruction [Heb. Abaddon] are before the Lord; So how much more the hearts of the sons of men.**
- a) Sheol is the place of the dead and can refer to the place of torment or paradise like the greek word Hades, but Abaddon is the place of torment for those awaiting the resurrection - Abaddon equates to hell in this context.
 - i) Relates to v.3 - **3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place,
Keeping watch on the evil and the good.**
 - b) If you forsake the way, then the process of being off the path is going to bring harsh/rough discipline. If the rebukes of that hard/rough discipline that comes in leaving the way are not heeded, then the one who hates the rebukes of that painful training will die.
 - c) The death is explained more - Sheol and Abaddon are seen by God - He knows the destination. He knows the hearts that lead to the end of destruction and death all the more.
- 5) **12 A scoffer [Heb. les or layts] does not love one who corrects [rebukes] him,
Nor will he go to the wise.**
- a) The scoffer hates the one that rebukes him. What a fool. We should love those who rebuke us and guard the rebukes we received as treasures. Because the scoffer hates rebuke he will not go to the wise, since the wise could have little to say without rebuking the scoffer.

15:13-15:19 - 7 verses - The Overcomer's Superiority to Circumstances

15:13-15:17 - 5 verses - The Heart's Superiority to Circumstances

13 A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance [faces plural],

But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

14 The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge,

But the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.

15 All the days of the afflicted are evil,

But he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast.

16 Better is a little with the fear of the Lord,

Than great treasure with trouble.

17 Better is a dinner of herbs [Or vegetables] where love is,

Than a fatted calf with hatred.

6) 13 A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance [face],

But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

- a) The happiness of the heart affects the outward projection from the inward world, and the sorrow of the heart impacts the inward world.
- b) Having happiness is a virtuous cycle that improves the inward world and the outward world and the inward world of others around you.
- c) Having Sorrow is a vicious cycle that breaks the inward world, the outward world, and the inward world of those around you.
- d) Happiness is the effect of getting and possessing what one believes is good.
- e) Lasting happiness requires stable possession of what one believes is good and stability in belief about what is good. Disillusionment and loss of what one believes is good are the two are sources of unhappiness.
- f) Knowledge allows for stability in belief about what is good. Contrary beliefs must be confronted with deepening knowledge of what is good.
- g) Possessing the true Good - the knowledge of God - cannot be taken or lost even by death, since you take your knowledge with you even when body and spirit are separated at death.
- h) Possessing the knowledge of God allows for both stability of belief and stability of possession.
- i) Possessing the knowledge of God guarantees long-term happiness - Joy.

7) **14 The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge,
But the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.**

- a) When you have understanding you start to look for more. When you do not have understanding you take in garbage and act like it is food for the soul.
- b) The search for knowledge is hard, and time to spend in gaining knowledge is rare. The search for knowledge increasingly results in putting off feeding on foolishness.
- c) I exhort you all to design your lives to increase the intake of knowledge and to put off the consumption of garbage. Popular conservative media is garbage.
 - i) Listen to the TrinityFoundation.org lectures by Robbins and Clark. Listen to sermons by Phillip Kayser. Listen to old sermons from Puritan.
 - ii) Read Commentaries on the Bible online for free from John Calvin, Charles Spurgeon, Matthew Henry, and John Gill. Discuss truth with each other, read together, read alone.
 - iii) Keep covenant in daily morning and evening worship.
 - iv) Sing psalms when joyful.
 - v) Pray when down.
 - vi) Read and listen when searching for answers.
 - vii) Ask for counsel from the wise.
 - viii) Organize your thoughts.
 - ix) Surround yourself with wise friends. Put distance between yourself and fools.
 - x) Call the Sabbath a delight.

8) **15 All the days of the afflicted [poor] are evil,
But he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast.**

- a) Experience is interpreted. The inner world interprets the outer world.
- b) The poor in heart or spirit do not possess the treasure of wisdom and thus interpret things in a joyless and unstable way.
- c) The stable heart of joy has wisdom (the knowledge of the good and the knowledge of the means to good) and thus interprets all things in light of the reality of God and God's purposes. Thus the intake of the inner world of the heart is a feast of rightly interpreted inputs. The suffering is lighter in light of purpose and the joys are higher in light of purpose.

9) **16 Better is a little with the fear of the Lord,
Than great treasure with trouble [of the mind - dismay - disquietude of mind -
confusion - tumult - instability of mind].**

a) Small material possession with great and lasting spiritual wealth is greater than great material wealth with disquietude of mind.

10) **17 Better is a dinner of herbs [Or vegetables] where love is,
Than a fattened calf with hatred.**

a) Love of God or of neighbor - either implies faith since one cannot know the god of the neighbor or of God without the knowledge of the good.

b) Your love makes your possessions far more enjoyable.

c) Your hatred makes your possessions an ash heap and desolation

15:18-15:19 - 2 verses - Two Overcomers

**18 A wrathful man stirs up strife,
But he who is slow to anger allays contention.**

**19 The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns,
But the way of the upright is a highway.**

11) The man who is hateful takes the destruction that is in his inner world and brings destruction to the outer world in making strife.

12) The man who loves is slow to anger and reduces strife. He takes the construction that is in his inner world and brings order and building into the external world and bolsters the ties between the inner worlds of minds.

13) **V.19 connected to V. 6-7 - 6 In the house of the righteous there is much
treasure, But in the revenue [produce, yield, harvest] of the wicked is
trouble. 7 The lips of the wise [Heb. Hakamim] disperse [spread, scatter]
knowledge, But the heart of the fool [Heb. kesilim³] does not do so.**

a) The lazy man does not order his inner world, external world, or relationships with other minds. He finds that his way is like a hedge of thorns.

b) The wise man, the righteous, orders his inner world, external world, and the relationships he has with the inner worlds of other minds.

14) God's curse and the structures of reality in second causes halt the progress of the journey of the wicked and intellectually lazy.

15) God's blessing (first causes) and the structure of reality in second causes (ordinary means) give progress to the journey of the upright.

³ Perverse because of obtuseness