

Bible Recall: POINTS IN PROVERBS

PROVERBS 10 – Moral Merits That Sustain Us

KEY PASSAGE: Proverbs 10:25, “As the passing by of a hurricane, So the wicked is not, And the righteous is a foundation age-during” (YLT).

PROVERBS 10-22

Chapters 10-15 are largely filled with proverbs that are framed as *contrasting parallelisms*. These proverbs state something which is sharply contrasted with the word “but.”

“The Proverbs of Solomon: A wise son makes a glad father, **But** a foolish son is the grief of his mother” (Prov. 10:1, emp. added).

Chapters 16-22 primarily have *synonymous parallelisms*. Clause one is restated in another form in clause two. Although it is not always the case, these are often joined by the word “and.”

“In the light of the king’s face is life, **And** his favor is like a cloud of the latter rain” (Prov. 16:15, emp. added).

“Pride goes before destruction, **And** a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18, emp. added).

Additionally, *progressive parallelisms* are found at times where clause one is further developed in clause two. For example, Proverbs 16:25 reads,

“There is a way *that seems* right to a man, **But its end is the way of death.**”

Proverbs 10-15 has more *contrasting* sayings. Proverbs 16-22 has more *synonymous* maxims.

For our study, let us appreciate from chapter 10 some moral virtues that can sustain us while noting the contrasting destructive traits.

A. RIGHTEOUSNESS (Prov. 10:1-3)

The righteous man:

1. Brings joy to his parents (10:1).
2. Delivers himself from death (10:2). The fears of the wicked will not be upon the one who is honest in his dealings.
3. Will not starve (10:3). God always provides the necessities to His people (see Psa. 34:9, 10; 37:3, 19, 25; Matt. 6:30).

Contrast the above facts with the foolish person in Proverbs 10:1-3. *Compare also *the treasures of wickedness* with 1 Timothy 6:9, 10.

B. DILIGENCE (Prov. 10:4, 5)

The hand of the diligent makes rich—he gathers in the summer. He takes advantage of the opportunities and will be able to provide for his family.

The object in this text is “the hand.” The hand is designed to grab, to build, to work, to create but can also be used to destroy, and can be given to idleness. The wicked “has a slack hand.” The wicked are slothful and spurn good opportunities for sleeping while the diligent succeed. What a man uses his hands for will be revealed in the life he lives.

C. A CONTROLLED TONGUE (Prov. 10:6-14)

The one who controls his tongue will find blessings on his head (10:6), leave behind a blessed memory of his example (10:7), own a heart blessed to receive commands (10:8), walk a walk that is blessed with security (10:9), possess a mouth that is viewed as a wellspring of life that covers all sins (10:11, 12). Like Jesus in the New Testament, Solomon places a direct correlation between the heart of man and his use of the tongue (Matt. 12:34; Lk. 6:45).

On the other hand, a person who does not control his/her tongue will have a mouth that is

1. *Covered by violence (10:6)*. The fool will not conceal a matter but will indiscreetly publish the errors of another to cause strife. This person will not talk *to* the person about his error but is happy to talk *about* the person.
2. *Near destruction (10:14)*. When people use their *words* as *swords* to cut people up and down, they are also slicing to pieces their own reputation and leaving their own name to rot before men (10:7). The tongue that *cuts up* will be *cut out* (10:31)! The one who brings slander to you will often bear forth slander about you. Hence their mouth is near destruction as they use it to destroy others. As a man sows, so he will reap (Gal. 6:7, 8).

Conclusion:

Why are these morals to be sought for? The balance of Proverbs 10 answers. One, righteousness leads to life (10:15-17). Two, the training of the tongue is as choice silver and with it, many are fed (10:18-21). Three, security is found in life (10:22-32).

—Steven J. Wallace