

Proverbs Week #113 (11:28-30)

“He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like the green leaf. He who troubles his own house will inherit wind, and the foolish will be servant to the wisehearted. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls. Proverbs 11:28-30

If you look at the front page of my proverbs lesson you may notice that I usually have a few paragraphs heading in bold. If you remember when I started these lessons a few years ago, you will know that these bold paragraph headings stem from the four goals that we find in the first few verses of this book.

In the NET Bible they read this way:

*“The Proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: **To learn** wisdom and moral instruction, and to discern wise counsel. **To receive** moral instruction in skillful living, in righteousness, justice, and equity. **To impart** shrewdness to the morally naive, and a discerning plan to the young person. (Let the wise also hear and gain instruction, and let the discerning acquire guidance!) **To discern** the meaning of a proverb and a parable, the sayings of the wise and their riddles.” Proverbs 1:1-6*

You will notice how the words in bold reflect the structure of many of my lessons. I want to remind you of these things because I believe as we study this book together God intends to bring about these goals or ends in our lives and in the relationships in our families and community. If we will learn, receive, impart, and grow in discernment, we will find good success in the paths of wisdom God has designed for us to walk.

To Learn Wisdom and Instruction: Our focus today is on learning how focusing wrongly on riches can cause us to fall. If we place our trust in the abundance of our possessions and not in the LORD we will be like a withering tree that does not produce fruit. Are apple trees that don't produce apples still apple trees? Sure, but if you want to make apple sauce or an apple pie, what use is a tree that is not producing? God teaches us that the righteous will bear good fruit. We learn from Him that to be righteous we must trust in Him.

To Receive Moral Instruction: During Sukkot we read the book of Qohelet (Ecclesiastes). It reminds us that many things in life are like chasing the wind or trying to grasp a vapor. If you receive the words of instruction these proverbs teach you will know that causing trouble in your family is a foolish thing to do. It is easy to cause trouble, isn't it? Saying things that are mean or pushing someone who is smaller than you is the wrong use of strength.

To Impart Shrewdness or Moral Skills: One who is wise “wins souls.” We also read, “The heart of the wise instructs his mouth and adds persuasiveness to his lips.” (Proverbs 16:23) In both of these verses the phrase “wise of heart” expresses someone who at the core of their being is wise. God's wisdom has filled their heart and they reproduce that wisdom by the way they live and teach.

To Discern Wise Counsel: Can we look at our own lives and distinguish the difference from when we are doing what is right and we are doing what is wrong? Are we skilled enough to acknowledge our wrongs to God and humble ourselves before Him? One who is wise has trained their palate to know the difference between what is good and what is bad. Our tongues know the difference between sweet and bitter. Most of us know if something tastes salty enough based on our preference. Have you ever eaten popcorn from a hot air popper before any salt or butter has been put on it? God compares discernment to learning to eat things that have a certain taste.

“My son, eat honey, for it is good, yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; know that wisdom is thus for your soul; if you find it, then there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off.” Proverbs 24:13-14

“You are what you eat and you eat what you are...”