

## Proverbs Week #141 (13:15-16)

*"Good sense wins favor, but the way of the treacherous is their ruin. In everything the prudent acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly." (Proverbs 13:15-16 ESV)*

If we read these two verses from Proverbs and look just for key words, we might outline these verses as follows:

1. Good/sense – favor
2. Way/treacherous – ruin
3. Prudent/acts – knowledge
4. Fool/flaunts – folly

Have you ever heard someone say, "Well, that's just common sense!" What do you think they mean when they say that? When people say we should use our common sense they are appealing to us based upon what we should know is good for us. If someone advises us not to grab an angry dog by its ears, they assume that we don't enjoy being bitten by a dog. That is just common sense. Who would enjoy being bitten by a dog? In some ways, even this proverb hopes that we have common sense and will desire things that win favor and avoid things that bring ruin.

The first part of our lesson today in Hebrew is *שֶׁחֵל-טוֹב יִתֶּן-חֵן* *sechel-tov yiten-chen*. The NASB and the NET bibles both translate the third word in this set as "produces." So, the result of having good sense produces favor. This favor is to be understood relationally. If we want our relationships with others to be characterized by kindness, support, courtesy, or approval, then having good sense (as defined by God) would be something worth acquiring and possessing .

You may also notice part of this phrase from *Birchat HaMazon* (The Blessing After Meals) and also in Psalm 111:10. If you look on page 44 of our Shabbat Siddur you will see this request to God, "And may we find grace and good favor in the eyes of God and man." You might say that in some ways we are not asking God to just "make it so" but we are actually uttering a prayer for wisdom. If we consider Yeshua to be our model and example of all things that are good and right, we too should make it our life goal to increase in wisdom and favor in the sight of God and men. This kind of request would be asking God to work in us as we work with Him.

*"And Yeshua kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." (Luke 2.52 NAS95)*

Our second phrase tells us that the way of the treacherous leads to ruin. What do the words "ruin" and "treacherous" mean? They don't sound good do they? "Ruin" isn't a hard word to understand. If someone reveals a secret before its time they might ruin something meant to be a surprise. If someone is planning a surprise party for you and you hear about it, the surprise is ruined. This simple meaning though is too light for the Hebrew word used here (*עִיטָן* *eitan*). This word carries the meaning of something that is ever flowing, like a river during a flood. For example, we can understand how a garden might be ruined with a continuous flood of water. The word "treacherous" should be understood in terms of relationships. Someone who only pretends to be nice or kind but really hates you could be said to be treacherous. The treacherous bring ruin wherever they go. They harm themselves and usually hurt others too.

Our third phrase has another word that might be hard to understand. What does the word "prudent" mean? The Hebrew word translated "prudent" is one that I really like. The word is *אַרֻם* *arum*. It carries the meaning of being crafty or cunning. But those two words are kind of hard to understand too! Being crafty doesn't just mean you're really good at making things with popsicle sticks and glue. Being crafty is more likely being really skilled at doing things. It is more like being really good at solving puzzles or being able to fix things broken things that most people would have no idea how to fix.

Our fourth and final phrase is not too hard to understand. We are taught here that a fool is a big "show off." Do you know what a "show off" is? Someone who wants everyone to see how "good" they are at something and thinks that they are more important than others is a show off. Well the fool described here is a "show off" but what they show off is their folly! It's one thing to be a show off when you are good at something and completely different to be a show off when you are not. Wisdom expects us to know and remember the good ways to act and avoid the bad. Doesn't that seem like "common sense?"