

## Proverbs Week #90 (10:13-16)

*On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding. Wise men store up knowledge, but with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand. The rich man's wealth is his fortress, the ruin of the poor is their poverty. The wages of the righteous is life, the income of the wicked, punishment. Prov 10:13-16*

In the verses of the Shema (Deut 6:4-9) God commands us to love Him. He also commands us to impress (sharpen) the words of His instruction on our children (to teach them). We need to cry out to God for His wisdom in order to fulfill the words of these commands. When Yeshua teaches that the second greatest command is to *“love your neighbor as yourself”* (Mark 12:31, Lev 19:18) He had real people in mind. That means that husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, friends, and enemies all are different kinds of people God intends for us to learn to love. The wisdom we are learning needs to be seen in the context of this commanded love. When seen in this light I think you will see that the fortress that the wise stores up or ruin earned as a wage by the wicked are more than just pictures of buildings, houses, and cities.

**Learn:** Proverbs need to be understood, learned, and applied. The verse that speaks of “his fortress” and “the ruin of the poor” needs to be seen in the context of verses 14, 15, and 16. In these verses there is a driving theme that centers on key concepts of what the wise men do and what the wicked do not do. The wise builds, creates a fortress, and receives the wage of life. The fool lies in ruin, poverty, and in the end finds punishment. How important are these themes? They seem like grave warnings. Are we hearing them that way?

**Discern:** How are we to know how to apply this teaching to ourselves and to our families? I recently had the honor of previewing a speech that a godly young man was to read at his college graduation. He warned of the dangers of moral relativism in our nation. The culture around us does not like anyone defining absolutes in matters of truth or morality. Keith Green illustrated this problem in his song *The Prodigal Son Suite*. He expands the story of the prodigal son. As you listen to the song you hear the wayward son being approached by a new friend. In regard to the new friend's immoral lifestyle the son, “...asked him, wasn't that sinful?” and his reply was “...no, it isn't that bad.” For us and our sons and daughters, the need to stay connected to God and His standards of right and wrong is as important as ever.

**Receive:** These verses describe two possible outcomes. Each is based upon whether or not one receives and keeps wisdom. Sometimes we have to learn things the “hard way.” There is much heated debate in our day about the use of corporal punishment. Some have made strong cases against any kind of physical punishment based on real instances of abuse, but I do not think we should let these extreme cases rule out a whole person approach to discipline. The Bible tells us that God disciplines those He loves (Heb 12:6).

**Impart:** *“A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.” Prov 13:22* I want to stress once again that these lessons are meant to be learned in the context of multi-generational discipleship. Whether you have children of your own or not, the command of the Lord to make disciples is a commission to you. Each of us must do his or her part to be part of God's work in the world. The skills you are to learn to be wise can be transferred to others. I challenge you again to see yourself as a giver and not only a taker. Whether you are young or old, if you think the world exists for your pleasure alone then you are in danger of being like the foolish person whose life ends up in ruins and punishment. Those who receive God's love are those who can in turn impart that love to others. How wise are you in the skills of loving God and loving others?

One family shared with me an application to help remember last week's verses *“a babbling fool will be ruined. The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life...” Prov 10:10b-11a*. The “tool” chosen to help remember one of the concepts was a flashlight. Consider the right and wrong ways to use a flashlight. It can be shined on a path to help someone walk when it is dark or it can be shined in people's eyes blinding them and not helping them at all. If the words of our lips are like a flashlight can we think of ways that our words might help someone or “blind” them? Are we using our words to create ruin or bring a refreshing spring of water? Once again, I want to encourage you to find ways to creatively remember these lessons and share your ideas with your family (and me too).