

## Proverbs Week #97 (10:1-16)

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*“The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.” Prov. 10:1*

When I read this first verse I am reminded of what the Torah commands sons and daughters.

*“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.” (Deuteronomy 5:16)*

The relationship between parent and child is so important to God that He connects long life and the promise of living in the land to those who would be faithful to His teaching (command) in this area. I could imagine a parent telling their child, “Do not forget this teaching! If you obey it you will prolong your life and prosper in the Land.” This practical advice would not be based upon the guarantee of the parent but upon God Himself who was the source of this instruction.

*“Ill-gotten gains do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death. The LORD will not allow the righteous to hunger, but He will reject the craving of the wicked. Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.” Prov. 10:2-5*

These verses are filled with comparisons. They compare profit and death, satisfied hunger and rejected cravings, hands that make rich and hands that make poor, and finally a son who acts wisely not shamefully. These verses are presenting us with a proper, wise, and biblical work ethic. They begin with considering the virtues of what we do, acknowledging that the LORD is the ultimate judge of righteousness and wickedness, and end by having us consider the work of our hands. They encourage us to be wise as we consider the proper times that work should be done.

*Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. The memory of the righteous is blessed, but the name of the wicked will rot. The wise of heart will receive commands, but a babbling fool will be ruined. Prov. 10:6-8*

The words that are spoken on the head of the righteous promote the good things that are yet to be revealed (the good results of a blessing). The words spoken from the wicked have hidden messages too but these are violent and destructive (they will ultimately tear down and destroy). We learn that the very name and memory of both the righteous and the wicked can be understood in these terms. When we think of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob our hearts consider the blessings promised by God in the gospel that was given to them. When we think of Saul, Balaam, or Judas their names remind us of death, the consequences of sin, and unfaithfulness.

*He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out. He who winks the eye causes trouble, and a babbling fool will be ruined. The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions. Prov. 10:9-12*

Water is precious and it was not always easily found for travelers in Bible times. How can we learn from these verses in our life when all the water we need is easily found by just turning on a water faucet? When we read about “the mouth of the righteous” what kinds of things would we expect to hear on his lips? Regardless of the subject, we would expect his mouth to be proclaiming what is true. Just as water is readily available, so too we have a ready supply of all sorts of so-called truth that assaults our ears. The world of marketing, radio, and television provide any listening ear with “babbling” that we are expected to receive as “wisdom.” “Buy this and not that, believe this and not that, and above all you can trust us to make you happy! Just buy what we say—and our products too!”

*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.