

Proverbs 10 • Observations for Life

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Proverbs chapter 10. In this chapter of Proverbs, we're going to be beginning a new section of the Book of Proverbs because in a sense, the first 9 chapters almost serve as an introduction, I suppose.

But what we're going to see now as we get into chapter 10, and this is going to last through chapter, well, about the middle of chapter 22 or 26, something like that. I forget.

Anyway, it's now going to be single thoughts for the most part that are bound up in one single verse. And this is really what a proverb is. The word, proverb speaks of a contrasting thought and you're going to see that most of the verses that we look at in this section of Proverbs are going to have that word, but. And that will tell you that there's a contrast that's going to be brought to your attention.

Solomon will make a statement and then he'll say, but, which is the contrast, and then he'll speak of the opposite, or the contrasting idea to that. In some cases, and we'll see it even in this chapter, you're going to see where the whole verse just expresses one single thought, and rather than a, but, you're going to see an, and. And that means that instead of a contrast, it's simply going to repeat the thought in another way, and by the way, that is what Hebrew poetry is.

When you and I think of poetry, we think of limericks or something like that rhyme. In fact, if you ask people today, probably in America, what characterizes poetry? They'd say, well, it has to have a rhyme to it.

Well, the Jews didn't rhyme their poetry. They made parallel thoughts and in fact, it's called synonymous parallelism. Believe it or not, I learned that in college and never forgot. And it's essentially a thought where you make a statement and then you make it again. And you do it to emphasize, and you'll see that going on here as well.

Let's get started. Now, let me just tell you what we're going to be doing here in Proverbs chapter 10, and then we'll talk about how we're going to tackle the rest of this book going forward. As I said, pretty much every verse in Proverbs 10 and following is its own thought, although there are some ideas or themes that

are clustered together. We're going to cover almost every, pretty much every verse here in chapter 10.

But as we move forward after this, as we get into chapters 11 and following, we'll definitely read through all the verses, but I'm not going to stop and comment on every one because there's actually a lot of repetition in the Book of Proverbs.

What I want to accomplish tonight is I want to help set a course for how to read through the Book of Proverbs. How to think about the things that are being said in the Book of Proverbs, and how to interpret the statements that are made in the Book of Proverbs. Because this is probably the most important key that I can give you.

The Book of Proverbs is a book of observations made by a very wise man. In fact, the wisest man ever to live on the earth, save that, of course, of Jesus.

Solomon was given wisdom from God, he looked at life, and he made observations in the Book of Proverbs. Now, he took that same wisdom and applied it in a different way in the Book of Ecclesiastes. When we get to that one we'll talk about a different application of wisdom. But in this particular book, it's simply looking at life and making observations.

Now, when you make an observation, you're not necessarily always giving a moral to your observation. In other words, you're not always saying this is right and this is wrong, you're just making an observation. You might look at a pickup and a trailer and say, that pickup and that trailer don't match, the colors don't match, that's an observation.

Now, if you're an artist or you're a painter or you paint vehicles, you might look at it and go, oh, that's just wrong. Right? Now you've made a determination based on the observation. The reason I bring this up is because Solomon doesn't always make a point to his observation. He often does. In fact, I'll even go on to say that the majority of the time he does.

But sometimes, and I'll point this out when we get to these. Solomon simply makes an observation to make an observation. He's not telling you, this is right, this is wrong, this is good, this is bad. He's just saying, this is what it is. This is what I've observed, okay?

It's like somebody saying, I was driving on the freeway today, and I observed that the majority of the people are going over the posted speed limit. Now, you

haven't said, that's really wrong to do that or that's lawlessness or man, people were in a hurry and that's really dangerous. You haven't made that kind of a statement. You've simply said, this is what I observed. We're going to see Solomon do that.

The reason I'm bringing this up to you is because there are a lot of people who read the Bible and they assume that everything has to have a moral behind it. Because they believe the Bible to be a moral book, and obviously it upholds the morality that is revealed to us by God.

But, not every statement in the Bible connects to morality. Some statements in the Bible and particularly here in the Book of Proverbs are just informational, observational. And if you don't get that, you're going to read certain verses and you're going to go, why did he put that in there? Why did he even say that?

And it can be confusing to some people if they don't understand that Solomon simply was observing life and writing down those observations. And again, we're going to run into one of those here in chapter 10, and I'll point it out to you, and I'll show you what's going on.

So, chapter 10, verse 1, it says, "*The proverbs of Solomon.*" (ESV) And then we begin to get into the Proverbs, which is a statement, usually, with a contrast. And here's the first one.

"... *A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.*" And you see the, but, in the middle of that verse, which tells you that he's given you a contrasting thought. Now, what about the thought?

Well, this is one of those, what we call self-evident truths. And because Solomon is giving you observations, many of these are going to be observations that you've made yourself, if you've lived long enough. You're going to read these and you're going to go, yeah I figured that part out.

And he's really making a very simple statement here, saying that a parent is affected, either negatively or positively by the choices and the actions of their child. And he's saying that if a child is making wise choices, that makes a parent glad. If a child, on the other hand, is making hurtful and foolish choices, then obviously a parent's heart is going to be filled with sorrow. And that's what he refers to here obviously until that child changes their ways. It's a very simple statement in this very first proverb, but again, it's one of those self-evident truths.

Verse 2, “*Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, ...*” Which is to say that even though there may be short term benefits to someone's financial gain that he is accomplishing through unscrupulous or maybe even illegal means, right, it's ultimately going to come to no profit at all.

Because Solomon is observing that there's a law that God has established in the universe, at least among his created beings. And that law is the law of sowing and reaping. And where the law of sowing and reaping comes into play is that it essentially communicates to you and I that you can't get away with murder forever. In other words, eventually, someday, there's going to be a reckoning for one's actions.

And so he says, even though someone may get some kind of financial gain for a period of time through wicked means, obviously it's not going to profit them forever. Now here's the contrast at the end of verse 2, “*...but righteousness delivers from death.*”

In other words, being right with God, and that's what righteousness means, brings benefits that money can't buy. And that's the point that Solomon is making. That's the observation that he has seen over the years.

Verse 3, “*The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.*” Again, you see another contrast here declaring that God is faithful to feed His children, to take care of those who are called by His name. But he goes on to say that the cravings of the wicked are thwarted, which means the wicked are kept from being satisfied. Right? It's like that old Rolling Stones song, I Can't Get No Satisfaction. I always think about that whenever I hit up with a verse like this.

The response of that song should have been, yeah, you need to turn to the Lord. Because that's why you don't get no satisfaction. Because there is no satisfaction. And that's what this proverb is saying. Ultimately the cravings or the desires or the expectations of the wicked, the expectations that the wicked have in life are not fulfilled.

They're not satisfied because the Lord thwarts them. Why does He do that or how, exactly why is that going on like that? Well, the Bible tells us that God opposes the proud. If you got God opposing you, things aren't going to go the way you want.

Verse 4, “*A slack hand (which is a biblical term to refer to a lazy person, okay, a person who is unwilling to work) causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent*

makes rich.” Or if you have a different Bible translation, yours may say, *“brings wealth.”* And, again, this is one of those simple, self-evident proverbs again that says hard work and diligence is going to be rewarded, laziness won't be. Unless, of course, you're living in a socialist sort of a government structure where they pay people for being lazy. Which is a real detriment to society, but that's a whole different message altogether.

Verse 5. Here is a very similar message. *“He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.”* Pretty self-evident.

Verse 6. *“Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.”* Many of the proverbs just serve to underscore again, this law of the harvest that we were talking about here.

And this proverb just simply makes a declaration. It says that there's going to be blessings, they're going to come to the godly man, obviously because he is sown seeds of blessing in the lives of other people. But it contrasts that with the wicked person who is characterized as having a mouth that conceals or hides violence.

In other words, it's talking about the person who says things with his mouth that he doesn't mean. He says things to placate you, or to make you feel good, or to make you think he's your friend, but in his heart, he's devising wicked schemes, and his mouth is actually concealing a greater wickedness that is going on. And so that's the essence of what that proverb means.

Verse 7, *“The memory of the righteous is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot.”* Interesting sort of a thought.

Verse 8, *“The wise of heart will receive commandments, ...”* Which means basically that the wise person in heart will allow themselves to be taught. That's what it means by receive commandments. They will hear the Word of God and they'll receive it, they'll embrace it. Okay.

But it contrasts that person with the *“... babbling fool* (who, he says) *will come to ruin.”* And so this is speaking of the foolish person who always talks but never listens to instruction. That person who is just constantly talking to the point of babbling, but they're never listening so they're never being taught.

Verse 9, *“Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.”* All right. This proverb begins by speaking of what it means to walk in integrity.

And you know that means to be a fair person, to be an honest person, the person who says what they mean and means what they say. And you know that when they say yes, they mean yes. When they say no, they mean no. And they're just an upstanding, upright, honest person. Notice that what he says about that, that person who lives that way, who walks that way, he says they walk securely.

In other words, there's a sense of security about their life because they're very straight and very honest about the way they speak. But the cheat and that's the crooked person, is going to eventually be discovered by his actions, and he'll be exposed for the kind of person he is. And that's why it says he will be ultimately found out.

Verse 10, *“Whoever winks the eye causes trouble, and a babbling fool will come to ruin.”* And this is the first proverb, I think here that we've covered where the contrasting word, but, is replaced with the connecting word, and. Which means that rather than a contrast the proverb speaks of a re emphasis of what is being said. And this verse highlights the man who just lives to cheat and to do business in an underhanded sort of a way.

And he says here in verse 10 that he causes trouble. That's that winking eye, that's always the picture in the Bible of the person who is plotting deception. And it says that he will not only cause trouble, he will ultimately come to ruin.

Verse 11, *“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.”* Here again, contrasting the words of the godly and the wicked. Notice the mouth of the righteous man brings forth life, it's a fountain of life. The words that he speaks are words of encouragement, words that build up, words that bless. It's a fountain of life. It gives life. It speaks of refreshing. Right?

But it says that the one who conceals violence is a wicked man. And again, the idea of concealing violence means that his words are insincere. He's saying things just to draw your attention, but he has other things in mind.

Verse 12, *“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.”* Now, this is a good verse for us to talk about, because this one can be misunderstood. This whole idea of love covering all offenses. There are people, and maybe you're even that personality type, there are people who are..., folks who just want

everybody to get along. And whenever there's a family kind of a gathering, or even within your family, you're the peacemaker.

You're the person who is always trying to reconcile parties, who perhaps are warring at the time. And you're talking, you're the one who talks to both sides and you probably don't really like your position because you feel like you're caught in the middle, but you're the one who's trying to make peace. Well, you read a verse like this and you say that love covers all offenses. And so your motto as a peacemaker can very easily become, hey, don't even worry about it, so what, it's not a big deal.

But that's really not what Solomon is saying here. He's not saying that, that love ignores offenses, or pretends like offenses aren't real and aren't bad. He's actually not saying that at all. This verse is talking about how you respond to people who make mistakes, who blunder through their relationships and stuff like that. And what this proverb is saying is that a heart that is motivated by hatred actually capitalizes on the mistakes of others in order to bring unrest.

Or to bring well, the biblical word is strife, which means angry disagreement. Can you imagine? There's actually people like that in this world. They'll see a couple of parties, and they'll see one person make a mistake, and it doesn't take long to watch, or to wait for somebody to make a mistake, because we make them all the time.

But when they make a mistake, they pounce on it. And they go to the other person, and they say, do you know what she did? Or do you know what he said? And they stir up strife, right? And that's the heart motivated by hatred.

Now, the opposite of that is the heart that is motivated by love. And you'll notice here, it says, it, "*covers all offenses.*" And what that means is, it sees what other people do in error, but it sees that as an opportunity to hold their tongue and refuse to get people worked up about it. Okay? That's what it means.

Love covers over transgressions so as not to get people worked up. It doesn't cover over transgressions to pretend it wasn't a transgression. Do you see the difference? One is recognizing that a real genuine wrong has been committed here, but we're not going to stir up the pot.

We're not going to get people all upset about it. That's where love comes in. And it's a very important distinction to make here because this proverb is not telling us that if we really love people, we're never going to even notice their

mistakes. We'll notice them. We'll notice them big time, but we're just not going to stir people up and cause division among people because of their mistakes.

Verse 13, *“On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense. ¹⁴ The wise lay up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.”* Again, the emphasis on how important are our words. In this case, it says that ruin is brought near or brought into a situation through the reckless and careless words spoken in foolishness.

There's not one of us who hasn't spoken something in the moment of heated anger and said things that we end up regretting to people that. We may have felt at the time deserved what we said, but later on, we came to realize that, that was really foolish and it brought more ruin.

I don't know about you, but I have never spoken a rash, an angry word that ever solved a problem or built anybody up. I never have. My anger has never brought about a good result. Right? We're told in the scripture that man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. And that's absolutely true.

And so this passage is a warning, if you will, about foolish and careless, reckless words. And I tell married partners, you know, you become so familiar with your marriage partner, and you get so comfortable that you feel free to say things around them that you wouldn't say to anybody else.

And they make you angry and you have this momentary flash and we've all done it and you say something that's very hurtful and it's reckless and it brings ruin and it's just, it's never helpful. I always tell married couples, don't talk if emotions are running high, just don't..., put off your conversation.

As I said before, I'll say now as it relates to Sue and I, we have never ever had a productive conversation when emotions were running high. We never have. It's never been helpful. And we have to learn that this is not going to help anything. We have to be willing to take a time out. And just say, okay, 30 minutes, an hour, we're going to cool down and then we're going to come back and we're going to discuss this because we have to. But this is not the time because, it's just not going to be good.

Verse 15, *“A rich man's wealth is his strong city; the poverty of the poor is their ruin.”* Okay, you ready? This is what I was talking about. Verse 15 is the observation without a moral. He's not saying that a rich man should consider his wealth a strong city or a fortress. All he's saying is that a wealthy man sees his wealth as a stronghold against trouble, that's all he's saying.

And he then goes on to make the point that the other man's poverty actually makes him vulnerable when difficult times come, because he doesn't have the ability financially to get himself out of a difficult situation. Again, this is one of those proverbs right here where Solomon is not attempting to say what is right and what is wrong. He's just observing. He's saying, I've observed something. Rich guys, they think their wealth is their strength, it's their stability.

Now, you and I, if we're going to go on and talk about that, we're going to say, well, that would be really dumb, because that would be putting your hope and your trust in wealth. And we're told in the Bible not to put our hope and trust in wealth because it can flee at a moment's notice. Solomon isn't making that point. We go elsewhere in the scripture to do that. He's simply observing, all right, that, this is the way it is with the wealthy, this is the way it is with the poor.

Verse 16, *"The wage of the righteous leads to life, the gain of the wicked to sin."* Now, here again, he contrasts the godly man and the wicked man but this time he uses financial language or terminology and he uses the words, wages and gain. And by the way they mean the same thing so he's talking about the earnings of the godly man. The earnings of the ungodly man.

What is he saying? He says, the earnings of the godly man bring about life giving results, but the earnings of the ungodly man simply creates a furthering of sin. Or in other words, gives him an excuse to buy more opportunities for sin, alright? He's talking about what men do with their money. Very simple, very simple statement.

It's a self-evident sort of a thing. But it can be also very convicting. We've heard that, you want to find out where somebody's life is, you look at their checkbook register, and you can learn a lot about what dominates their attention. And what really motivates them to spend their hard earned money and so forth what they love and there's probably some truth to that. This proverb is simply saying that a man's earnings say a lot about the man.

Verse 17, *"Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof (which is this really the same as instruction) leads others astray."* And so this proverb speaks of a teachable spirit or the lack thereof. He says the man with the teachable spirit, and that's the one who heeds instruction, it says here, he's on a path to life.

But he who rejects instruction coming in the form of reproof is ultimately going to lead others astray by his prideful attitude, that says, you can't tell me

anything. And it's too bad that we live in a world where pride, human pride, is exalted in the movies, People who did it their way and can't be told, and they're independent. And they're shown in the movies as strong and we admire them, but the Bible has something different to say about them. It speaks rather of the man who listens to the voice of instruction and is willing to be taught, willing to hear.

Now, as we move on, verse 18 and following, the next few verses are going to deal once again coming back to this theme of the importance of the words that we speak. *"The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever utters slander (which of course is speaking in a damaging way of the character of others, he says, that person) is a fool."*

Verse 19, I love this verse. *"When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent."* I like this because it speaks of this idea of when words are many. It speaks to the person who is using words in an attempt to mislead and deceive.

And they're doing what, with their words, what the magician does with sleight of hands. You ever seen a magician, they're working, they got a coin and all of a sudden it turns into a flower or whatever behind your ear and this and that and the other thing.

And there are people who do that with their words. And we call these people fast talkers. And, essentially, the Bible is saying that where there are all these words going on, transgression is not lacking, meaning the breaking of rules, which is what transgression means.

It's the breaking of rules is going to be many among those who are constantly talking, but it contrasts that individual with the person who, as it says here, restrains his lips. And that speaks of the person who holds their tongue. And they're called prudent, which is really just another word for wise, and they're called that because they're not trying to use their words to mislead. They're not trying to use their words to deceive.

They just say what they mean. They say what's going on and they let the truth speak for itself. I rarely, well, I never answer the phone around here anymore because we have people that do that. But, back in the early days of the church, when I was both the pastor, and the secretary, and the janitor, and everything else, lawnmower, I would answer the phone when people would call. And of course, being on the freeway, all the churches around this area get a lot of calls from people passing through the area. Transients, who are needing help and that

sort of thing. And I've noticed that there's one consistency to the vast majority of the people who call, they're fast talkers. They talk and they don't let you get a word in edgewise.

But I also found out, as time went on, that if you just let them keep talking, they'll eventually change their story, which is really interesting. It's like, oh, I thought you said such and such. Then they could, they explain that away. There's just a lot of quick explanations and there's a lot of quick things and stories, and they go into great detail. And I remember getting very burdened at one point about that. And you start to recognize it for what it is. It's that fast talking sort of a thing.

And then I remember one time I got a phone call from somebody who needed some help, I think their car had broken down, and this person didn't know what to say. And I was just really taken aback because they're like, yeah I've never called a church before, but we need some help and I don't know what to do.

And I had to ask questions, well what happened? Well, we were going along and da, da, da, da, da, and this happened, and no fast talking. This person just waited on the other end of the line to see what I would say. And I remember just being so amazed by that different..., it was so... Speaking of contrast, contrasting sort of characterizations of people not the fast talker, the person that didn't know what to say. I need help. That's all I know.

And I'll tell you something, I was quick to help that person. But anyway the prudent is the individual, the wise person is the one who does not constantly talk so as to confuse. They just speak the truth and let the truth do the talking.

Verse 20, *"The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is of little worth."*²¹ *The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense."* Some very, again, self-evident truths that Solomon is giving observation to.

Verse 22, *"The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it."* And I love this verse and this is a great verse for Americans. Particularly Americans who are drawn to instant wealth which is a big drawing point in our culture with lotteries and things like that. But notice here it says that there's different sources of the way people can become wealthy and this verse contrasts those sources.

And Solomon knew that wealth can come from different things And it can come through, worldly shrewd dealings, or it can come from dumb luck, or it can

come from sinful activity. You can become wealthy, by doing things that are underhanded and so forth, but it can also come from the blessing of the Lord.

And the point that Solomon is making here is that when wealth comes, and, by the way, don't think of wealth as having billions. Wealth is just having income.

He's saying that when wealth comes from the blessing of the Lord, it comes free from all of the drama and all of the entanglements that would otherwise suck the joy out of every moment of it.

I mean, it's amazing to hear stories about people who have won the lottery that you rarely ever hear about how many of their lives come to ruin that many of them go bankrupt over after a period of time, they've spent all their money and, or frittered it away or become estranged from family and friends because now they have this wealth and so forth.

And, so here they are now with a bunch of money and nobody to live life with because it came from a source other than the blessing of the Lord. Solomon says, you know, I've observed something. When God gives wealth, He doesn't give it with all of the entanglements that the world does. All of the drama, all of the junk, all of the heartache that can easily come and just absolutely take every bit of joy from it.

Verse 23, *"Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding."* Now this proverb contrasts what man takes pleasure in and the fool we're told here literally takes pleasure in doing wrong. He considers it like a joke. But this is contrasted with the man of understanding here in verse 23 whose pleasure in life is to gain wisdom, to learn more, to dig into the Word of God, to understand more about what God's Word has to say. And there's a great pleasure that comes to that man of understanding from growing in wisdom.

Verse 24, *"What the wicked dreads will come upon him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted."* Again, another proverb that speaks of the fruit of a man's life. The law of the harvest is in view here once again. The wicked man, he dreads evil, he dreads it because he's well acquainted with it.

He, in fact, has brought much of it upon others, and he knows that it could come to him too. In fact, he dreads it. And the Bible says here that Solomon observed that his fears are founded because ultimately, that's exactly what he gets. Why? Because he's reaping what he's sown. The law of harvest or sowing and reaping, if you will.

But it says here, by contrast, that the godly man reaps a harvest of his own when God grants him the desires of his heart and the reason God grants him the desires of his heart is because his heart is tuned to the Lord, not to the world or not to his pocket. It's in tuned instead to the desires of the Lord.

Verse 25, *"When the tempest passes, (that's a storm) the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established forever."* This very simple proverb, verse 25, is something Jesus communicated in parable form, you guys know it. He revealed what makes us secure though.

Here he's simply referred to as the righteous man who is established as in his security. But Jesus told us what establishes him in security. It's hearing the Word of God and putting it into practice, right? That was the wise man who heard the Word and put it into practice in his life was like the man who built his house upon the rock. He weathered the storm very literally.

Verse 26, *"Like vinegar to the teeth (yuck) and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him."* Now remember, the biblical term for the sluggard is one who is lazy and therefore unreliable. And Solomon says that to send that kind of a person on an errand or give him a job to do is likened to something very irritating or something very unwanted, such as the vinegar to the teeth or smoke to the eyes. That's what depending on that kind of a person is going to bring you.

Verse 27, *"The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short."* Again, these are not promises. This is an observation that Solomon is giving, saying that fearing God, which by the way is a reference to avoiding sin.

He's simply saying, you know, when somebody goes around avoiding sin, he's avoiding sin. And all of the wrongdoing that goes along with it, he's not going to be giving an opportunity for his choices to jeopardize his future.

He's being careful. He's being prudent. And so therefore, he's going to have a lot of years, but that's not the case with the ungodly or the wicked man. He's going to be making all kinds of choices that are evil. And in so doing, he's going to reap evil and his life is going to be cut short because of it. That's the observation being made.

Verse 28, *"The hope of the righteous brings joy, but the expectation of the wicked will perish."* Again, we have two words, hope and expectation. They essentially speak of the same thing. This proverb is comparing the expectations or the hopes of the godly and the hopes of the wicked. The things they put their

hope in. It says the godly man hopes for things that bring joy, but the wicked man hopes for things that are ultimately going to perish because, just like him, he is perishing.

Verse 29, *“The way of the Lord is a stronghold to the blameless, but destruction to evildoers.” “The way of the Lord.”* Can we talk about this term for just a moment? What is the way of the Lord?

The way of the Lord describes the way God created things to be, you know that. God created things to be a certain way, and we call it order.

And God put order in the universe, and it's the way. And when you and I choose to live in harmony with the way God created things, then things are good. It becomes, he says, a stronghold to our lives.

Let me give you an example. One of the ways of the Lord is that marriage would be consisting of one man and one woman, that they would live together in a faithful, monogamous relationship. And this is the way of the Lord.

Now, the godly man recognizes it as the way of the Lord and for him it becomes a security. It literally becomes something that makes his life secure. Because he recognizes, well, this is the way of the Lord and I'm not going to try to violate the way of the Lord.

Now the ungodly man, it says here that the way of the Lord becomes a path of destruction for him. Why is that? Because he rejects the way of the Lord. He rejects God's way of doing things and he says, I'm going to do it my own way. Right? And again, this is something that the world exalts and thinks is very cool. We even wrote songs, I did it my way and we think, whoa, that is really cool.

When somebody can sing, I did it my way. Well, what they're saying is God, forget your way. I'm not going to do it your way. I'm going to do it my way. Well, what's going to happen? There's going to be a lack of stability in the man's life who says he's going to do it his own way. And it reminds me of the difficulty that the nation of Israel lived in during the time of the Judges.

In fact, the very last verse of the Book of Judges is a very telling verse from the standpoint of the way they were living their lives and the insecurity that came out of how they were living their lives. Let me put this on the screen for you because this is very interesting. It says in Judges chapter 21 that,

Judges 21:25 (ESV)

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

In those days there was no king in Israel. (and look at this statement) Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

In other words, they weren't following God, they weren't doing it God's way. They weren't even acknowledging God's way as God's way. They were just saying, I'm going to do it my way. If it's right in my eyes, it's right. If it's wrong in my eyes, it's wrong. I don't care what God says. Right.

Well, obviously that's the world we're living in today. That's our world. We're living in that very same attitude where God and the morality of the Bible has been kicked to the curb by culture and people are just living in their own way.

Well, listen, if you've gotten angry about that, can I encourage you to have a different emotional response? The Bible says here that it is a path of destruction, actually. The world is moving toward destruction because they've rejected the way of the Lord. For you and I, it's a stronghold, it's stability.

It's a sense of, well, it's more than a sense of stability, it is true stability. When we're thinking of the world, and we're looking at the evil, and the rejection of God that we see all around us. Just know this, it's a path of destruction, it's their destruction.

They are moving toward destruction and our heart should go out for them in pity, to pray for them, to pray that they would turn before it's too late. Rather than getting angry and shaking our fist at the world, which is a very common, and frankly, very fleshly response that I think we can all relate to, because I've done it too. But it doesn't help anything.

It doesn't help to shake our fist at the world. What is going to make a difference is when we begin to pray, but it always leads to destruction when we say I don't care about God's way, I'm going to do it my way.

Verse 30, *"The righteous will never be removed, but the wicked will not dwell in the land."* And this is just another statement about stability.

There is stability that God gives to those who yield their lives to His Word, His direction, and His ways. But no such stability exists for those who reject the

way of the Lord and choose the way of the world. It says they won't dwell in the land, which is a picture of just being ousted from all that is supposed to be the blessing of the Lord.

Last 2 verses of the chapter go like this. *“³¹ The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off.” ³² The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse.”*

These last 2 statements repeat again what is a common theme among the Proverbs about the words that we speak. Verse 32 says that, the godly person knows what to say and when. They've got an appropriate word. Why? It's based on God's wisdom. It's not based on worldly wisdom. It's not based on what I think. It's not based on how I feel. It's based on God's Word. And so there's an appropriateness when the godly person submits to the godliness of God in them and speaks his word and not their own.

But, the observation of Solomon here is that the wicked say things that are, he calls, worthless. And then he even uses the word, perverse, 2 times. And that means basically inappropriate without any kind of consideration of how those words are going to be taken, right?

The godly person uses fewer words and tends to choose the words they're going to do the most good.

The wicked person just spurts out whatever comes into their mind, and it is often perverse and as he says, wicked or unacceptable.