

The Wisdom Literature

Lesson #11

Two Ways Contrasted

Introduction

- This lesson introduces us to the four principle characteristics in Proverbs. Two ways are contrasted in the book: the wise and the fool, the righteous and the wicked.
- Which one are you? Being a "baptized believer" or a "Christian" does not necessarily mean that you are acting wisely and righteously. Furthermore, a person can be "smart" (intellectual), but not "wise."

The Wise And The Fool

- Wisdom and folly defined.
 - Terms associated with wisdom.
 - "Wisdom" -- Hebrew *chokmah* from *chokam*, meaning "to be wise in mind, word or act."
 - "Understanding" or "discernment" -- Hebrew *biynah* from *biyn*, meaning "to separate mentally (or distinguish), i.e., understand."
 - "Knowledge" -- Hebrew *da'ath* from *yada'*, meaning "to know, to ascertain by seeing."
 - "Discretion" -- Hebrew *mezimmah* from *zamam*, meaning "to plan, usually in a bad sense;" *mezimmah* means "a plan, usually evil (machination), sometimes good (sagacity)."
 - "Prudence" -- Hebrew *'aruwm* from *'aram*, meaning "to be or make bare; but used only in the derivative sense ... to be cunning."
 - "Counsel" -- Hebrew *'etsah* from *ya'ats*, meaning "to advise; reflexive, to deliberate or resolve."
 - "Correction" -- Hebrew *muwsar* from *yasar*, meaning "to chastise, literally with blows or figuratively with words; hence to instruct."
 - "Rebuke" -- Hebrew *towkechah* from *yakach*, meaning "to be right (i.e., correct);" *towkechah* means "chastisement; figuratively (by words) correction, refutation, proof (even in defense)."
 - "Teaching" (law) -- Hebrew *torah* from *yara*, meaning "to flow; to lay or throw; to point out, to teach;" *torah* means "a precept or statute."
 - "Command" -- Hebrew *mitsvah* from *tsavah*, meaning "to constitute, to enjoin;" *mitsvah* means "a command, whether human or divine."
 - Terms associated with folly.
 - "Fool" -- Hebrew *kesiy* from *kasal*, meaning "to be fat, i.e., figuratively stupid or silly."

- "Fool" -- Hebrew *'eviy*, meaning "to be perverse; figuratively, silly."
- "Fool" -- Hebrew *nabal* from *nabel*, meaning "to wilt; generally to fall away, fail, faint; figuratively to be foolish or (morally) wicked;" *nabal* means "stupid; wicked (especially impious)."
- "Simple" -- Hebrew *pethiy* from *pathah*, meaning "to open, i.e., be roomy; usually figuratively to be simple or delude;" *pethiy* means "silly (i.e., seducible)."
- "Mocker," "scoffer" or "scorner" -- Hebrew *luwts*, meaning "to make mouths at, i.e., to scoff."
- "Sluggard" -- Hebrew *'atsel* from *'atsal*, meaning "to lean idly, i.e., to be indolent or slack."
- "Deceit," "liar" and "lying" -- "Deceit" comes from the Hebrew *mirmah* from *ramah*, meaning "to hurl; specifically to shoot; figuratively to delude or betray (as if causing to fall)." "Liar" comes from the Hebrew *kazab* meaning "to lie (i.e., deceive)." "Lying" comes from the Hebrew *sheqer* from *shaqar*, meaning "to cheat, i.e., be untrue (usually in words)."
- The way of wisdom.
 - Wisdom's invitation.
 - Wisdom should be sought out (1:20-21; 8:1-7; 9:1-6; 24:3-4).
 - Wisdom should be acquired (1:1-6; 4:1-5; 18:15; 19:20; 23:22-23).
 - Wisdom should be maintained (7:1-4; 8:32-34; 23:12, 19, 26).
 - Wisdom's characteristics.
 - The wise listen to wisdom (5:1-2; 16:21).
 - The wise benefit from good advice (11:14; 15:22; 20:18; 24:6).
 - The wise accept and value rebuke (15:31; 25:12).
 - The wise use self-control to appease anger and to avoid danger (16:14; 19:11; 23:1-3; 25:28).
 - The wise are righteous and just (2:20-22; 8:8-9).
 - The wise have inner power and strength (16:32; 21:22; 24:5).
 - The wise have protection (2:9-15; 4:6).
 - The wise find wisdom attractive and pleasant (1:8-9; 3:21-26; 4:8-13; 24:13-14; 27:9).
 - The wise value wisdom highly (3:1-2, 13-18; 4:7; 8:10-21; 16:16; 19:8; 20:15).
 - Wisdom's benefits.
 - Life and health (4:20-23; 6:20-23; 11:30; 13:14; 15:24).
 - Rejoicing parents (23:15-16, 24-25; 27:11).
 - Wisdom's rejection.
 - Disaster, calamity, distress and trouble (1:20-33; 19:27).
 - Discipline (15:10).

- Death (1:32; 21:16).
- The way of folly.
 - Folly's characteristics.
 - The fool repeats his foolishness (26:11).
 - The fool has zeal without knowledge (19:2).
 - The fool rejects knowledge (14:7; 18:2; 23:9; 26:4-5).
 - The fool detests turning from evil (13:19; 24:8-9).
 - The fool is quick-tempered (14:17).
 - The fool is dangerous, quarrels, vexes and arouses hostilities (17:12; 22:10; 27:3; 30:32-33).
 - The fool is arrogant (17:7; 21:24; 26:12).
 - The fool is slanderous (10:18).
 - The fool is useless to others:
 - As a messenger (26:6).
 - As an employee (26:10).
 - The fool finds certain objects useless.
 - Money (17:16).
 - Luxury (19:10).
 - Honor (26:1, 8).
 - Proverbs (26:7, 9).
 - Folly's results.
 - The fool receives penalties, beatings and death (19:29; 20:30; 26:3; 27:22).
 - The fool comes to ruin (10:10).
 - The fool brings grief to his parents (17:21, 25; 19:13).
- Wisdom and folly contrasted.
 - The wise acquire wisdom with ease; the fool acquires wisdom with difficulty (14:6, 33; 24:7).
 - The wise enjoy wisdom; the fool enjoys evil (10:23; 17:24).
 - The wise do not trust in themselves; the fool trusts in himself (26:16; 28:26).
 - The wise follow knowledge; the fool displays his foolishness (12:23; 13:16; 14:18; 15:14, 21).
 - The wise think; the fool is misguided (14:8, 15).
 - The wise listen to the advice of others; the fool follows his own advice (12:15; 13:10).
 - The wise are humble; the fool is proud (11:2; 16:18; 18:12; 25:6-7; 29:23).
 - The wise exercise self-control; the fool is quick-tempered (12:16; 14:9, 29, 35; 20:3; 29:8-9, 11).
 - The wise build up; the fool tears down (14:1).
 - The wise learn; the fool experiences trouble (10:8, 14, 21; 13:20; 22:3; 27:12).

- The wise are rewarded; the fool suffers (9:12; 10:13; 13:15; 16:22).
- The wise accepts discipline, correction and rebuke; the fool rejects all of these (9:7-9; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1, 13, 18; 15:5, 12, 32; 17:10; 19:16, 25; 21:11; 29:1).
- The wise are praised; the fool is despised (12:8).
- The wise become wealthy; the fool lives in poverty (14:24; 21:5, 20).
- The wise bring joy to their parents; the fool brings grief to his parents (10:1; 15:20; 28:7; 29:3).

The Righteous And The Wicked

- Righteousness and wickedness defined.
 - Terms associated with righteousness.
 - "Righteous" -- Hebrew *tsaddiyq*, meaning "to be right (in a moral or forensic sense)."
 - "Justice" -- Hebrew *mishpat* from *shaphat*, meaning "to judge, i.e., to pronounce sentence (for or against); by implication to vindicate or punish; by extension to govern; passively to litigate."
 - "Integrity" -- Hebrew *tummah* from *tom*, meaning "completeness; figuratively prosperity; usually (morally) innocence."
 - "Upright" -- Hebrew *yashar*, meaning "to be straight or even."
 - "Good" -- Hebrew *towb*, meaning "to be (do or make) good (or well) in the widest sense."
 - Terms associated with wickedness.
 - "Wicked" -- Hebrew *rasha'*, meaning "morally wrong; concretely a (actively) bad person."
 - "Evil" -- Hebrew *ra'* from *ra'a'*, meaning "to spoil (literally by breaking into pieces); figuratively to make (or be) good for nothing, i.e., bad (physically, socially or morally)."
 - "Sin" -- Hebrew *chatta'ah* from *chata'*, meaning "to miss; hence (figuratively and generally) to sin."
 - "Transgression" -- Hebrew *pasha'* from *pasha'*, meaning "to break away (from just authority), i.e., trespass, apostatize, quarrel."
 - "Perverse" -- Hebrew *tahpukah* from *haphak*, meaning "to turn about or over; by implication to change, overturn, return, pervert;" and the Hebrew word *'iqqesh* from *'aqash*, meaning "to knot or distort; figuratively to pervert (acts or declare perverse)."
- The way of righteousness and the way of wickedness.
 - Qualities of the righteous and the wicked.
 - The walk of the righteous and the wicked.
 - The walk of the righteous (4:18-19; 13:9).
 - The walk of the upright (11:3; 15:19; 21:8; 25:19).
 - The walk of integrity (4:25-27; 11:5; 13:6; 16:17; 20:7).

- The walk of the wicked (4:14-17; 17:11; 21:10).
- The plans of the righteous and the wicked.
 - The just plans of the righteous (12:5).
 - The evil plans of the wicked (1:10-19; 16:27, 29-30; 21:7; 30:11-14).
- The justice of the righteous and the wicked.
 - The righteous care about justice (18:17; 29:7).
 - The wicked pervert justice (17:23, 26; 18:5; 19:28; 24:23-26; 28:21).
- The possessions of the righteous and the wicked.
 - The righteous are generous (12:10).
 - The wicked are never satisfied (12:25-26; 27:20; 30:15-16).
- The attitude of the righteous and the wicked.
 - The righteous are careful, but the wicked do not think (12:26; 21:29).
 - The righteous are humble, but the wicked are proud (6:17; 21:4).
 - The righteous keep the law, but the wicked disobey the law (29:18).
 - The righteous hate what is false and disobedient, but the wicked promote shame (13:5; 18:3; 29:26; 29:10, 27).
 - The righteous are bold and strong in spirit, but the wicked are weak in spirit (24:15-16; 28:1, 5).
- God's evaluation of the righteous and the wicked.
 - Conduct indicates character (20:11).
 - The righteous are polluted when they give way to the wicked (25:26).
 - Better to be righteous and poor, than wicked and prosperous (16:8, 19; 19:1; 28:6).
 - People are happy with the righteous, but unhappy with the wicked (11:10; 28:12, 28; 29:2).
 - The religion of the wicked is detestable (21:27; 28:9).
- Results of being righteous or wicked.
 - The righteous avoid trouble, but the wicked encounter trouble (10:2; 11:4, 6, 8, 21; 12:21; 13:17; 22:5, 8; 24:1-2).
 - The righteous are secure, but the wicked fall (6:12-15; 10:9, 25, 30; 12:3, 7; 14:11, 32; 28:18).
 - The righteous attain to life, but the wicked are led to death (10:11, 16; 11:19; 12:28; 14:12; 16:25, 31; 20:20; 21:21; 24:19-20; 28:15-16, 24; 30:17).
 - The righteous get what they want, and the wicked get what they want.

- General principle stated (10:6-7, 24; 11:18, 31; 14:14, 22-23, 27; 17:13; 28:20).
- Specific examples:
 - Prosperity vs. poverty (11:28; 12:12; 13:21-22, 25; 15:6; 28:10).
 - The wicked are victimized (5:22-23; 26:27).
 - Joy vs. terror (10:28; 12:20; 21:15; 29:6).
 - The wicked are tormented (28:17; 29:24).
 - Honor vs. disgrace (14:34; 16:12; 20:28; 25:4-5; 29:4, 14).
 - Win vs. lose (14:19; 21:18; 29:16).
 - Sin is to be confessed (20:9; 28:13).

Some Practical Lessons Of Great Value

- There are only two choices -- two ways in life (Matthew 7:13-14).
- God does not force us to choose which one we will be, He simply invites and gives us the incentive (Joshua 24:15).
- Which way are you living?
 - Are you wise (Matthew 7:24; 24:45; 25:1-13; Romans 16:19; Ephesians 5:15; 2 Timothy 3:15; James 3:13)?
 - Are you a fool (Matthew 7:26; Mark 7:22; Luke 12:20; Romans 1:21-22; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 3:19; Galatians 3:1; Ephesians 5:4, 15; 1 Timothy 6:9; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:3, 9; 1 Peter 2:15)?
 - Are you righteous (Matthew 5:6, 10; Acts 10:35; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 6:14; Philippians 1:11; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:16; James 3:18; Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 3:14; 1 John 2:29; 3:7, 10; Revelation 19:8)?
 - Are you wicked (Matthew 25:26; Mark 7:22; Acts 8:22; 1 Corinthians 5:8, 13; Colossians 1:21)?

Conclusion

- Which way are you traveling today?
- Come and be wise, come and be righteous!