

Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 29:15-27

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

16 When the wicked increase, transgression increases, but the righteous will look upon their downfall.

17 Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart.

18 Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.

19 By mere words a servant is not disciplined, for though he understands, he will not respond.

20 Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

21 Whoever pampers his servant from childhood will in the end find him his heir.

22 A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.

23 One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.

24 The partner of a thief hates his own life; he hears the curse, but discloses nothing.


25 The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.

26 Many seek the face of a ruler, but it is from the LORD that a man gets justice. The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!"

27 An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, but one whose way is straight is an abomination to the wicked.

DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 29:15-27

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When reading the proverbs attributed to Solomon, it is easy to get lost in all the words. Stories are much more easily understood. I have to draw a word picture to try to grasp the wisdom I know is there in the text.

Once upon a time a baby was born – smiles and chubby cheeks and laughter. One day, at around the age of two, he heard and understood the word “no”. It made his mommy giggle when he scrunched up his face and stomped his little legs. She gave in to his cute little tantrum and thought perhaps it was the easiest way to calm him. And it was, for the moment. Fast forward to his teen years, and his temper tantrums grew in intensity and were not so adorable. The writer of Proverbs 29 accurately predicts that a child left to himself will eventually bring shame to his mother. Before I begin to judge the weary mother in Walmart struggling to contain her inconsolable toddler who is screaming for the brightly colored and tempting toys, I think it is important that I recognize before reading any further in this text – that I am a child of God. Therein lies the wisdom for which I am searching.

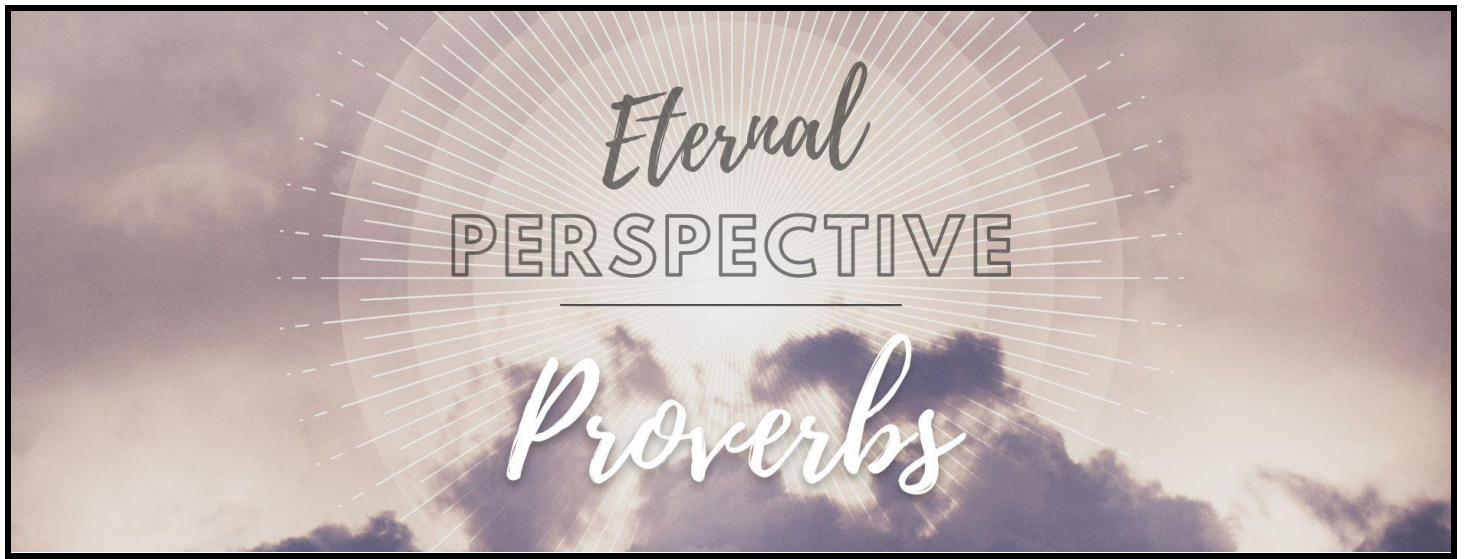
At first glance, it is sound advice to parents to guide and correct their children lest they go astray. But I want to feel and express the weight of what it means to bear the image of God - to be His child. The text is a template to follow in order to bring rest and joy to the Father of creation.

Am I keeping the law? “So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12). Or am I casting off all restraint and following my own way? “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death” (Proverbs 14:12).

Do I love the sound of my own voice, and would I rather talk than listen? Or do I respond to correction, and listen to sound advice? “When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent” (Proverbs 10:19). Am I given to anger? Am I prideful and arrogant? Or do I seek the good of others before myself? “...for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble” (Daniel 4:37b).

Am I partnering with darkness, or walking in the light? “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness” (2 Corinthians 6:14)? Am I seeking approval from God or from man? “But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4).

In conclusion, my default is often to choose my own way, to talk more than I listen, to give in to anger and pride, to agree with the darkness, and to be a people pleaser. However, because the Spirit of God – who raised Christ Jesus from the dead lives in me, I have been given everything needed to walk righteously and in the light. Sometimes though, when I reach for the shiny toy that seems so tempting for the moment, my Father has to discipline me - for my good and for His glory.



Questions:

1. What temptation keeps you from walking in the light?
2. Do you look more like the undisciplined or the disciplined child?
3. What does it look like to bring rest and joy to God?