

down during the main harvest. *And* the wise son isn't doing a little early work to exempt himself from the tougher harvest schedule ahead. Remember, we all get tired. Wisdom tells us when to keep going anyway.

Caveat:

This verse does not condone the 'workaholic'. It condones the one who does what is necessary to get the job finished. In the world's God-created rhythms, harvest doesn't last all year. Someone who is wall-to-wall work has missed this important fact. They also fail to see:

Ps 127:2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for He gives His beloved sleep.

Do you?

Devotion 1

Proverbs 10:1

The proverbs of Solomon:

A wise son makes a glad father,
But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.

Solomon began the book of Proverbs with a similar introduction:

Prov 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

He then penned nine chapters in which he encouraged children to do two basic things:

- 1) Seek wisdom with all your heart;
- 2) Avoid fornication.

This was Solomon's way of preparing us for the 'proverbs proper', the brief, two-part statements usually contrasting *good* people or behavior to *bad*. Prov. 10:1 then begins the collection of proverbs which continues through chapter 31.

This first proverb is, in a way, a recap of the first nine chapters, a sample of their beginnings running thus:

Prov 1:8 My son, ...

Prov 2:1 My son, ...

Prov 3:1 My son, ...

Prov 4:1 Hear, my children, ...

Prov 5:1 My son, ...

Prov 6:1 My son, ...

Prov 7:1 My son, ...

The concept of authority is basic to Scriptural truth.

God is in ultimate authority. This is the fact that man had a problem with in the Garden of Eden. All subsequent redemptive history can be viewed as the re-teaching of that lesson which we rejected. One means by which we learn God's authority is by recognizing those whom He puts in positions of authority over us: governing authorities, family authorities, church authorities...

The most basic human authority is parental:

Ex 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

And its implementation comes with a blessing.

Solomon recognizes this as the starting point of wisdom. A fool is one who acts in independence of God. That independence must be replaced by submission to Divine authority, as manifested by submission to those he puts over us, parents first.

Teaching of the Verse:

Man's Two Basic Approaches to Work: Part Two

Solomon now combines 10:1 with 10:4, you might say- a verse on children with a verse on laziness. Or you could say that we just had a verse on laziness; now for a particular example.

The son who begins gathering early, in the summer, before the real harvest gets into full swing, is the son who distinguishes himself as *wise*. On the other end of the spectrum, the *shameful* son earns his name by *resting* during a time clearly designated for working.

Bear in mind that in an agrarian culture, like the old Hebrew one, the harvest yield made its own demands of its workers. When crops were finally considered best for harvesting, you simply had to harvest until it was done. There may have been some nights you slept very little, or not at all, especially if you were trying to beat impending bad weather.

The son who sleeps during harvest may have a great need of sleep. To avoid shameful behavior, though, he must put off sleep according to the demands of the job, or at least sleep no more than the other laborers.

The wise son has shown himself so by getting into the fields early, seeing which stalks have matured first. If they can be harvested now, they won't slow us

Devotion 7

Proverbs 10:5

He who gathers in summer is a wise son;
He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.

Verse Analysis:

What's being compared:

- The one who gathers in summer
- The one who sleeps in harvest

The appellations (names for those who do such):

- Wise son
- Shame-causing son

Graphically:

Wise	=	Summer	⌚	Harvest	=	Shameful
son		gatherer		sleeper		son

Background:

Harvest time is fall, after summer. Children are expected to work in the gathering of crops.

Devotion 2

Proverbs 10:1

The proverbs of Solomon:
A wise son makes a glad father,
But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.

(This is Part Two of comments on Prov. 10:1.)

Obedience to parents is the true starting point of wisdom for children (Solomon's first addressees in the book). Obedience to parents is how children manifest the overall starting point for any wisdom or knowledge:

Prov 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The fear of Jehovah ("LORD" in all capital letter represents the Hebrew word יהוה, "Yahweh", usually transliterated "Jehovah" using the vowels of another Hebrew word for God) is the only starting place for true knowledge. Any knowledge without recognition of God is a knowledge that begins by denying the basis for our existence. God is the ultimate reality:

Acts 17:28 ...for in Him we live and move and have our being,

But since God has chosen a life of faith for us during our time on earth, we show our basic attitude towards *Him* by how we treat *one another*. For instance:

1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

Likewise, obedience to parents is a child's basic means of demonstrating faith in God.

Grownups continue to have authorities in *their* lives: wives have husbands, workers have their bosses, citizens have governing figures, etc. It is vain to imagine that we are submitting to God while we fail to recognize the authorities He places in our lives:

1 Peter 2:13-14 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good...

1 Peter 2:18-19 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully...

1 Peter 3:1-2 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

parently could not have fulfilled his God-given design *without* work.

Work is good. Work is in the image of God.

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

This is why laziness is such a pernicious sin; it is a direct challenge to the way God made us. Therefore:

Prov 18:9 "He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer."

Application:

Do you see *your* work as a God-given blessing, or as a curse you are stuck with?

Even though sorrow has been added to our labors (Gen 3:17 "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life." Notice that it is the soil that was cursed, not work.), yet the Christian sees the labor itself as good, as a gift from God.

the verse literally reads "Poor- he who deals with a slack hand." So it is more like prophecy; he's already *as good as* poor, because his actions call for poverty. Like so many proverbs, this one has to be viewed as **movement in directions**, not **arriving at ultimate extremes**. A graphic view of the verse helps.

Graphically:



Meaning of the Verse:

Man's Two Basic Approaches to Work

It would almost seem that an 'unmanned' hand put to its task could supply a man with provision. 'Just stay busy,' Solomon seems to be telling us, 'and you will have more than enough.' Try to *avoid* work, though, and you are inviting the diminishing of your goods.

Again, Solomon is laying foundational concepts in these first few proverbs. Here we are reminded that man was given the task to WORK *before there was sin*. Gen 2:15 "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it."

Work is not a punishment because of sin. Adam ap-

Devotion 3

Proverbs 10:1
 The proverbs of Solomon:
 A wise son makes a glad father,
 But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.

(This is the third comment on Prov. 10:1)

Children are to obey their parents. This is the primary earthly means children are given to demonstrate their obedience to God.

Children come into this world as readymade rebels:

Ps 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me.

And yet children have an immediate advantage in correcting this radical maladjustment. Jesus specifically calls them:

Matt 19:14 But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Parents must rule over their children, but humbly and kindly, as administrators of God's rule.

Children have their own incentive to do things God's way. Prov. 10:1 says a wise son makes a glad father. The children, though under authority, have a great deal to do with the well-being of their parents.

They can make their parents happy, or they can make them sad:

"But a foolish son is the grief of his mother."

The main fact this may be communicating is that children are a parent's chief work upon the earth. However else parents may be successful and have reasons for happiness, if their children turn out poorly, parents will be miserable. Child rearing is a weighty responsibility, one that cannot be successfully carried out without God's instructions and His direct intervention.

Parents had better be Bible-reading, praying folk!

Devotion 4

Proverbs 10:2

**Treasures of wickedness profit nothing,
But righteousness delivers from death.**

Words in the Verse:

"Treasures" means storehouse or depository.

Verse Analysis:

The two things being compared:

- The one with a slack hand
- The hand of the diligent

The two outcomes:

- Becoming poor
- Making rich

Notice that it is a *man* being compared to a *hand*. (This is similar to Prov. 10:20, where the *heart* of the wicked is compared unfavorably to the mere *tongue* of the righteous.)

Notice that it is also a *status* (poor) being compared to a *process* (making rich).

Key Concepts:

Here's a verse that demonstrates how important our hermeneutic (principle of interpretation) is. Does 'become poor' mean 'will be flat broke'? And does 'makes rich' mean 'will have a mountain of cash'? Remember that "making rich" literally means "accumulates." This removes the necessary connotation of a man being listed in the Fortune 500. Also,

his needs met or having his demands turned away.

* The "soul" hungering can mean the body, the person hungering.

Matthew 6:25 "Because of this, I say to you, Do not be anxious for your soul, what you eat and what you drink, nor for your body, what you put on. Is not the soul more than the food and the body than the clothing?" This is a literal rendering of this verse.

Devotion 6

Proverbs 10:4

**He who has a slack hand becomes poor,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.**

Words in the verse:

"Slack" is only used in Proverbs as 'lazy' (3 times); the 12 times it is used elsewhere it always means deceitful or false.

"Makes rich" literally means to accumulate.

Verse analysis:

What are the two things being compared in the verse?

- The treasures of wickedness
- Righteousness

Note: It is not wickedness and righteousness being compared, but the *treasures* of wickedness being compared to 'plain old' righteousness, you might say.

Nor is it the treasures of wickedness vs. the treasures (or fruits, etc.) of righteousness.

What are the two outcomes?

- No profit
- Deliverance from death

Graphically:

No profit	<<<	Wickedness'	≈	Righteousness	>>>	Deliverance From Death
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Teaching of the Verse:

Man's Two Basic Approaches to Life

Solomon, in his second lesson, is trying to convey a second 'basic'. He is telling us that our unaided view of life might convince us of the advantage that sinning

can bring; but our view aided by faith will assure us that any such advantage is temporary and will eventually undo itself and leave the sinner with *no* gain.

He is also showing us how powerful righteousness is. 'Plain old' righteousness is enough by itself to save me from man's greatest nemesis- death. By comparison, wickedness will save me from nothing at all. Even if we give wickedness an advantage and include all the treasure it can possibly gain, it is still finally impotent.*

Throughout Proverbs, Solomon presses the discomfiting premise that each of us is in one of two camps. This is consistent with all of Scriptures, but Proverbs has perhaps the most stark and voluminous display of the split dividing humanity in half: virtually every verse from this point on says we can only be righteous *or* wicked, wise *or* foolish, etc.

Paramount in gaining the benefit Proverbs offers is the Biblical premise (evident in many proverbs) that we all enter this life as wicked men- not neutral, but wicked. We don't think of ourselves as liars, for instance, but would we be willing to tell just one lie to gain a significant advantage in life or avoid a major setback? Yes. (In actuality, we all tell many lies, most for very insignificant advantages) If we came into this life righteous, we would know that all lying would eventually turn against us. Manifestly, we don't come into this life as righteous folk.

and already has a plan in action to feed him.*

Notice this difference: God responds *actively* to the wicked and *passively* to the righteous, if you will. The wicked comes knocking on God's door and God tells Him to go away. But God is the one who opens the door and goes out to find the righteous man to help him.

Oddly, this draws us portraits of the two men which are contrary to a fundamental part of their natures. It is the righteous man who seeks God out, while it is the wicked who leaves God alone. But Solomon's point is that in God's Universe, He relates to all His creatures personally. The wicked doesn't actually come knocking, but his selfish desires still elicit God's reaction. The righteous doesn't ignore God, but God's care for him precedes and excels the righteous man's recognition of his own needs.

This, by the way, supplies us with a good definition for the righteous. He is the one who has been given the grace to *stifle* his natural insistence and replace it with a contented desire for God and His will (albeit through pitched battle with the old desire).

The defining aspect of every man on earth is His relation to God. What he receives in life is based on this relationship, whether to God as friend or God as enemy (not a pronounced enemy- almost no one *says* he is an enemy of God- but enemy through rejection of the Divine commands), whether, therefore, having

Teaching of the Verse:

God's Two Basic Approaches to Man

Now Solomon is into Theology proper- the doctrine of God. Jehovah, who either gives or withholds man's provision, gives the righteous what he needs but withholds what the wicked man wants. Man has two basic approaches to life (previous verse); now we see that God has two basic approaches to man.

This does not mean that God doesn't supply the wicked man with earthly provisions; He does ("He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust", Matt. 5:45). But what does the wicked man essentially want?

"The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Eccl. 1:8

The wicked man's desire is essentially for *everything!* He still has Adam's cry of "I will be like God" in his soul. God's response to Him is basically negative. God will not allow the satisfaction of this insatiable demand. Hence, we see what kind of God is running the Universe. The unbeliever's approach to life is an ultimatum banged on God's desk; God's reply is to nonchalantly slide it to the side.

Conversely, God's basic interaction with the righteous is positive. God sets Himself up as protector of the righteous. God hears the saint's stomach growl

Solomon is asking us to break ranks and *join* the side of righteousness. He is telling us to STOP being wicked. He is telling us to make the long-term choice rather than the short-term one. Does a righteous choice tend to put me at an advantage? No, the truth tends to handicap me, while those willing to lie get a leg up on situations. But in the long run, the lie will unravel, betray us, and do us harm. The truth will eventually make me invincible, if you will.

The righteous man knows that he will *eventually* be vindicated for choosing according to what is just. This is the optimism of Proverbs (and the whole Bible). If I will sign on and learn the way of righteousness, God will rebuild me and protect me from harm and loss. Indeed, He will nullify the greatest loss facing me, Death, and therefore all its lesser minions as well.

* The treasures of wickedness can be anything or *anyone* I want to gain (getting the spouse I want, etc.) unjustly.

Theological point:

The righteousness in this verse can refer to the righteousness of *justification* or the righteousness of *sanctification*.

The righteousness of *justification*: Jesus' righteousness on my account delivers me from **eternal** death, the second death- the Lake of Fire;

The righteousness of *sanctification*: The righteousness Jesus works in my life delivers me from **daily** death, the pullings of sin which would separate me from God, who is Life.

P.S. Calling this a theological point does not imply that it is 'extra' or obtuse information. *Any* of the observations made could be called theological points, but this one is a correlation with a doctrine specifically developed elsewhere in Scriptures.

Devotion 5

Proverbs 10:3

The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to famish,
But He casts away the desire of the wicked.

Words in the verse:

- When you see "LORD" in all capital letters, it stands for the Hebrew word יהוה, YHWH in English letters, usually pronounced 'Yahweh'. We have come to pronounce it 'Jehovah' because the Jews, long before the time of Christ, had superstitiously begun pronouncing the word 'Adonai' ("Lord / Master") when they came to YHWH to avoid dishonoring God's most personal name. The Masoretes, Hebrew copyists after the time of

Christ, put the vowels for Adonai on YHWH in partial adherence to this tradition. English versions which have "LORD" are following a tradition that dates back to the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (c. 250 B.C.).

- The word "soul" often refers to the entire man, including his bodily state.

Verse Analysis:

This verse contains *two activities* of Jehovah:

- Not allowing hunger
- Pushing aside

The *objects* of these activities respectively are:

- The righteous
- The wicked man's desire

Graphically:

Righteous soul's hunger	<	Not allowed	<	Jehovah	>	Pushed aside	>	Wicked's desire
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