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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Proverbs 15.

(2015)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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Proverbs 15.

Topics.

- This chapter is full of a variety of various Proverbs.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Proverbs is a collection of Israelite wisdom literature, that has multiple authors, but most of it is attributed to King Solomon. Chapter one to nine gives readers a framework for understanding the rest of the book. The central concern of the book of Proverbs is practical wisdom for living. We are told that the beginning and essence of wisdom is the fear of the LORD (Prov. 1:7) (Prov. 9:10). It contrasts the benefits of seeking wisdom and the pitfalls of living a foolish life. While the wicked stumble in deep darkness (Prov. 4:19), the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day ((Prov. 4:18). Individual proverbs date from between the tenth and sixth centuries B.C.

Kings and angels: the title king is often used throughout the book of Proverbs, it comes from the Hebrew word (*malak*) which can refer to the following four things: -

1. A royal king ascending to the throne of royalty and reigning from it.
2. A male sovereign (i.e., a man or boy who rules as a monarch over an independent state.
3. The chief, or the principal leader or ruler of a group (secular or religious).
4. A messenger or ambassador, especially of God, (i.e. an angel, a king, a prophet, a priest or a teacher).
5. The best, the strongest and the wisest of all.

It is interesting to notice in the first verse of proverbs (Prov. 1:1) the word king comes from the Hebrew word (*malak*) and the first mention of an angel in the Bible also comes from the Hebrew word (*malak*) (Gen. 16:7). This means when the title king is used in the book of Proverbs it carries the idea of a wise king that does good unless the context implies otherwise. For further information concerning angels see the title: "Angels," (ON WEBSITE MENU).

NOTE: since the word fool and righteousness are often used in this chapter, following is a brief definition of each of them.

Fools: are unwise, egotistical, sensual (meaning they live to follow the flesh and for the things of this world). They are spoken of as being foolish in the Bible for the following two reasons, firstly, they consider sin a mere trifle and make light of it rather than mourned over it and secondly, their pride is so high they refuse to listen to those with knowledge and wisdom or take counsel and advice from them and therefore their growth in good knowledge, wisdom and maturity is stunted.

Righteousness: when used in a secular sense refers to those who do what is could and right according to the law of the world and the law of justice. It embraces honesty, integrity, loyalty and treating all people with respect and decency. Today we do not use the word righteousness when referring the unsaved, we would simply say they are a good and decent person, meaning they have a compassionate and kind heart and do what is good and right.

When used of those saved it refers to the truth that those in Christ are by faith saved by his righteousness and not, their own, it refers to the faithful being made righteous not by self-effort or good works or by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions, but by Christ's righteousness and God's grace.

Proverbs 15

Proverbs 15:1 ----- ¹A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

When tempers flare those with wisdom speak softly because they know raising the voice will increase the anger whereas a soft word will quieten and calm a person down.

Proverbs 15:2 ----- ²The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.

A wise person will praise and commend a person for their knowledge, whereas the foolish will condemn, criticise, degrade those with knowledge and gossip about others.

Proverbs 15:3 ----- ³The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

There is nothing on earth good or bad that God does not see.

Proverbs 15:4 ----- ⁴A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

A person who is kind of heart is gentle and encourages, comforts and brings life to others, but the perverse and mean of heart and those who are unable to think logically and clearly behave and speak in a way that is contrary to the best interests of others and makes a person feel even worse.

Proverbs 15:5 ----- ⁵A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.

Those who lack good sense do not accept correction, but those who are wise carefully consider and take notice of correction and other peoples advice.

Proverbs 15:6 ----- ⁶In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.

In a family of those that do what is good, honest and right there is love, unity, grace, happiness, friendship and financial contentment, but the family of the wicked is full of trouble, tension and strife.

Proverbs 15:7 ----- ⁷The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools.

A wise person's speech imparts good knowledge to others, but the foolish do not have wisdom within them.

Proverbs 15:8 ----- ⁸The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.

It not only counts for nothing, but is also considered a gross offence by God when a person who deliberately does what is wrong and harms others offers Him a gift (no matter how great the gift maybe). This could be likened to those who go to church every week to worship God, but on every other day of the week do as they please and give no thought to the shame their lifestyle and speech brings to God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In contrast to this even a simple prayer from a faithful believer who does what is good and right is received by God.

Proverbs 15:9 ----- ⁹The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but he loves him who pursues righteousness.

God is intensely against those who deliberately do what is wrong and harm and hurt others, but He loves those who constantly endeavour to do what is good and right.

Proverbs 15:10 ----- ¹⁰There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way; whoever hates reproof will die.

In this context the severe discipline of those who refuse correction and turn away from the right way is eternal death (i.e., total destruction and utter extinction). For further information, see the title: "Lake of Fire," in Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Proverbs 15:11 ----- ¹¹Sheol (grave) and Abaddon (destruction in KJV) lie open before the LORD; how much more the hearts of the children of man!

Abaddon; comes from the Hebrew word (*'abaddown*) it refers to the depth of the grave and carries the idea of perishing and destruction. (Sheol is the Hebrew word for grave while Hades is the Greek word for it). Since God even sees the dead in the grave as though there was no covering over them, how easy is it for Him to see into the heart of us all? This verse shines a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that no one's thoughts or motives are hidden from the eyes of God. This is why we are saved by grace and by Christ's righteousness and not our own and why God is the perfect judge.

Proverbs 15:12 ----- ¹²A scoffer does not like to be reproved; he will not go to the wise.

Scoff: comes from the Hebrew word (*qalac*) and means to ridicule, mock, belittle, demean, laugh at and sneer and pour scorn upon. A man or woman who scoffs and mocks not only hate correction, but will also refuse it and never ask for another person's advice this is why the Bible calls them fools.

Proverbs 15:13 ----- ¹³A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.

If someone is smiling and laughing it is because they have a happy heart. In contrast to this a heart filled with sorrow and grief is robbed from such joy and laughter.

Proverbs 15:14 ----- ¹⁴The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly.

Understanding in this context, means that a wise person knows that gaining knowledge is constantly going to increase the wellbeing of their lives physically, mentally, emotionally financially and spiritually. People who have understanding constantly seek greater knowledge to enhance their lives. In contrast to this the foolish are content to entertain themselves on foolishness that adds nothing to their lives in anyway.

Proverbs 15:15 ----- ¹⁵All the days of the afflicted are evil, but the cheerful of heart has a continual feast.

Every day and night of a man or woman who is in severe physical pain through some type of sickness or mental distress because of some hardship in life is extremely unpleasant, depressing, and difficult to cope with day after day. In contrast to this those who are healthy and trouble free have a cheerful heart and constantly enjoy every day.

Proverbs 15:16 ----- ¹⁶Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it.

The reason a person is told to fear the LORD is because all humans have sinned and will one-day be judged by God. This fear should motivate all of us to seek God and his eternal salvation and forgiveness. This is why the Bible says the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom it motivates a person to seek God and His forgiveness.

The apostle John in his letter wrote: -

- If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all

unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10).

The fear of the LORD has the following two aspects: -

- 1 An eternal aspect: wisdom teaches that mankind is separated from God because of sin and without God a person has no hope of eternal life and will be judged accordingly. The fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because it motivates a person to seek God and eternal life.
- 2 An aspect for the present moment: the fear of the LORD in the present moment motivates mankind to obey God's Ten Commandments which are all designed to protect the innocent from harm, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally and spiritually (summed up they mean do-good and not harm). The fear of the LORD in this context is also wisdom because if everyone feared the LORD humanity would live in harmony with each other. Sadly there is very little fear of the LORD in the world today and so we see rampant rebellion, violence, crime and wars in most countries.

The fear of God and Christians: those in Christ look to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and understand and experience Christ's great love and God's grace in their hearts and minds and no longer act from fear, but from love in the same way that a man in love with a woman does not do things to please her from fear, but from the love dwelling in his heart. Likewise it is with the faithful who belong to the Lords global family.

- The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. (Prov. 8:13).

The fear of the LORD is hatred toward evil: it is having a hatred of everything that harms another human physically, financially, sexually, emotionally, or spiritually and having a strong dislike of anything that destroys the planet and of whoever treats animals cruelly. God loves humans He gave his only Son to die for them. The fear of the LORD is about protecting and preventing harm to other humans.

It is about knowing we are all going to stand before Him one day and give an account of our actions. The fear of this judgment should motivate a person to do the right thing and treat others with respect.

Verse 16: it is better to have little of this world's riches and possessions with a little the fear of the LORD than all the treasure the world has to give and trouble with it. This is because those that have some fear of God will have some moral ethics and integrity and at least mostly do the right thing. In contrast to this those who have no fear of God at all will lie, cheat and deceive when it is to their advantage and their gain, others will use violence (i.e., the mafia and gangsters, etc.), while those who have the power will even start wars if it is going to increase their power and their nations wealth.

Proverbs 15:17 ----- ¹⁷Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it.

It is better to be amongst caring friends eating a sandwich, than sitting at a table where there is an atmosphere of intense hostility and tension eating a great feast.

Proverbs 15:18 ----- ¹⁸A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

People who cannot control their temper will increase strife in an argument, but those who have learnt to control their temper will quieten the contention down.

Proverbs 15:19 ----- ¹⁹The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.

The life of a lazy person is going to be full of hardships and trouble, whereas the life of the wise who do what is right and good will run smoothly (obviously there are exceptions to the general rule as there always is to the general rule of everything), but it is certain the life of those who do honest work will have far less trouble than those who are lazy and refuse to work.

Proverbs 15:20 ----- ²⁰A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother.

Naturally a father is thrilled when his son does what is good and right. The reason Solomon says, "a foolish man despises his mother is because a mother has a unique bond with her son and for that reason is easily hurt by him, when he does what is wrong and brings shame to his family. If the son loved his mother he would not want to hurt her, so he would do all he could to make her happy and do all he could to avoid doing the wrong thing.

Proverbs 15:21 ----- ²¹Folly is a joy to him who lacks sense, but a man of understanding walks straight ahead.

Those who lack common sense and understanding find joy in wrongdoing, because they do not consider the ramifications and consequences of their wicked actions and behaviour. In contrast to this those who have understanding take the time to consider the ramifications and consequences of their wrongful actions and perceive that it will end in trouble and ultimately in judgment and condemnation to eternal death (i.e., total destruction and utter extinction). This is why people with understanding and insight set their mind to doing what is right. For further information concerning death and extinction see the title: "Lake of Fire," in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Proverbs 15:22 ----- ²²Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.

People who do not ask others their advice and listen to their opinions are likely to make wrong decisions and fail; whereas a wise person will listen and get the advice of professionals, their friends or their family and those they trust and then make their own decision.

Proverbs 15:23 ----- ²³To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!

When a person gives a very appropriate answer that is especially suited to the circumstances it brings great joy.

Proverbs 15:24 ----- ²⁴The path of life leads upward for the prudent, that he may turn away from Sheol beneath.

Sheol is the Hebrew word for grave. Those who have good sense know the consequences of doing wrong and therefore turn away from wickedness to escape eternal death and be counted worthy of eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory.

Proverbs 15:25 ----- ²⁵The LORD tears down the house of the proud but maintains the widow's boundaries.

God will cast the prideful down to the grave, but He will exalt and crown the godly widow with eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory. There are two aspects to pride, healthy pride and destructive pride. Not all pride is evil pride the following shows the difference between healthy pride and destructive pride.

Healthy pride embraces the following: -

- That happy satisfied feeling experienced when having or achieved something special that other people admire.
- Taking great pride in one's work is healthy and productive pride.
- That personal sense of satisfaction and pleasure that comes from something accomplished or a quality possessed.
- Having a proper sense of one's own value and the correct level of respect for the importance and value of one's personal character, life, efforts and achievements as opposed to having no confidence and no sense of worth.
- That personal feeling of satisfaction because of an achievement or possession that one is especially pleased to have accomplished and is fully satisfied with (i.e. their grandchildren were their pride and joy or the gold medal I won at the Olympics is my pride and joy etc.).

Unhealthy pride embraces the following: -

- Having a feeling of superiority and a haughty attitude. This type of pride is shown by somebody who believes (often unjustifiably) that he or she is better than others. A person who has this kind of pride will often not mix with those they consider their social inferiors. This pride is arrogant it exalts oneself above others and even God, and will treat those it looks down to and believes are inferior to them with disdain and at its peak with cruelty and destruction. It causes quarrels, strife, arguments, fights and even wars.
- Having the biggest ego of all, a person at this level of pride sees themselves at the top of humanity and views themselves as always being right. They believe they are equal to God or even a god themselves and are so egotistical that they think the whole world revolves around them.

Proverbs 15:26 ----- ²⁶The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, but gracious words are pure.

God hates the violent, deceitful, lying and corrupt thoughts of the wicked, but thoughts and words of kindness, comfort, mercy, and compassion toward others bring delight to His heart.

Proverbs 15:27 ----- ²⁷Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live.

Everyone who is so greedy for money that they are prepared to take a bribe and be dishonest to increase their wealth are bringing future trouble to their own family, but the life of the godly who are honest and refuse to take bribes to gain riches and wealth will live in peace and inherit eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory.

Proverbs 15:28 ----- ²⁸The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

A godly and wise person will think about something carefully before they answer, whereas a foolish person will immediately speak without taking any thought.

Proverbs 15:29 ----- ²⁹The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

God is not with those who are corrupt and cause harm to others, but when godly people who do the right thing pray God tunes in. This can also be applied to those who go to church every Sunday to worship God, but on every other day of the week do as they please without giving God any thought as to how their behaviour and speech reflects on God's honour and the good name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

Those who live this way are deceiving themselves if they think their worship on Sunday counts for anything before God.

Proverbs 15:30 ----- ³⁰The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones (makes the bones fat in KJV)

This verse can carry the following two applications: -

1. The objects seen by the light of the eyes such as, gardens, flowing rivers, pleasant meadows, rising hills, lowly vales, herbs, plants, trees, birds, beasts, and creatures of every kind, these are all pleasant things for the eyes to behold and brings delightful, joy and rejoicing to the heart.
2. The spiritual light of the eyes of understanding when opened by the Spirit of God at that glorious moment of conversion is a marvellous light that souls are called into and wonderful things unfold which brings great rejoicing to the heart and the mind. Such as God's forgiveness, love, mercy, grace and justification by Christ's righteousness and free and full salvation through him for even the lowest child of Adam when their eyes are opened by the Spirit of God to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Good news refreshes the bones: can apply to the following three things: -

- 1 Good news of any sort not only makes the spirit the mind and the heart cheerful, but also gives comfort and vitality.
- 2 It does the heart good to see others whose eyes are sparkling with happiness and whose face is shining with joy
- 3 The good news of God love, grace and mercy towards men in Christ Jesus and of the Gospel, salvation, the resurrection, eternal life and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ etc., not only makes the spirit the mind and the heart cheerful, but also gives comfort and vitality.

Proverbs 15:31 ----- ³¹The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.

Those who listen to constructive correction will grow in wisdom and have many wise friends, because they will enjoy their company.

Proverbs 15:32 ----- ³²Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.

A person who will not receive correction is heading for trouble that is why Solomon says they despise themselves they are by their own pride and foolishness bringing harm and ruin to themselves whereas those who accept correction will not only gain knowledge and protect themselves from harm and hurt, but will also inherit eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory.

Proverbs 15:33 ----- ³³The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Wisdom believes in God and trusts in His plan of salvation and does what is good and right, therefore, the expression, "the fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom," means, a person who fears the LORD will accept correction that leads them on the right path toward God and doing what is good and right. This is why humility comes before honour a person has to humble themselves to accept Christ and make him the King of their heart and mind and the Lord of their life.

Wisdom embraces the following nine aspects: -

1. Having a clear thoughtful, rational, discerning, discriminating, sharp, and discreet mind.
2. Being cautious in character as opposed to being impulsive.
3. Being sensible and practical with the skills and talents that a person has.
4. Making choices that considers others and that will be fair and just.
5. Studying, reading and learning to acquire mental knowledge that helps in making right decisions for the present moment and for the future.
6. Being able to see the future danger of a decision, choice or action.
7. Having the ability to make good choices and decisions in the present moment that will end in the best result and a good outcome in the future.
8. Being able to perceive the end result or ramifications (good or bad) of the underlying message a speaker is teaching.
9. Wisdom will protect a person from making decisions and choices in the present moment that will lead to hurt or calamity in the future for themselves and for others.

End.