

# Dealing with The Danger of Neglecting Instructions



“ It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.”—*Eccles. vii. 5.*

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## **Background Information on the Book of Proverbs**

### **1. What is the main idea of the Book of Proverbs?**

The Book of Proverbs is about godly wisdom, how to get it and how to use it. It's about priorities and principles, not get-rich-quick schemes or success formulas. It tells you, not how to make a living, but how to be skillful in the lost art of making a life.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Roy Zuck's definition: "Wisdom means being skillful and successful in one's relationships and responsibilities . . . observing and following the Creator's principles of order in the moral universe."<sup>2</sup> In that definition you find most of the important elements of biblical wisdom, the kind of wisdom we can learn from the Book of Proverbs.<sup>2</sup> The Book of Proverbs focuses on human character and conduct. The book's observations and admonitions about life are addressed to individuals, not to the nation Israel as such. As brief maxims, the verses in Proverbs are to-the-point sentences about life. They boil down, crystallize, and condense the experiences and observations of the writers. The brief but concentrated statements cause their readers to reflect on their meanings. They tell what life is like and how life should be lived. Many of the proverbial maxims should be recognized as guidelines, not absolute observations; they are not ironclad promises. What is stated is generally and usually true, but exceptions are occasionally noted.

### **2. Who wrote the Book of Proverbs?**

In Proverbs 1:1, 10:1, and 25:1, we're told that King Solomon is the author of the proverbs in this book. "The men of Hezekiah" (Prov. 25:1) were a group of scholars in King Hezekiah's day (700 B.C.) who compiled the material recorded in chapters 25–29, and in Proverbs 30 and 31, you meet "Agur the son of Jakeh" and "King Lemuel," although many scholars think "Lemuel" was another name for Solomon. Most of the material in this book came from King Solomon, so it's rightly called "the proverbs of Solomon."

### **3. To whom was this book written?**

The frequent occurrence of the address "my son" and "my sons" in this book has raised some question about the relationship between Solomon and his "audience." The words "my son" were written by Solomon 15 times in chapters 1-7 and twice elsewhere (19:27; 27:11). They are used 5 times in the sayings of the wise men (23:15, 19; 23:26; 24:13, 21) and once by Lemuel's mother (31:2). "My sons" occurs 4 times (4:1; 5:7; 7:24; 8:32), all by Solomon. Originally these verses with "my son(s)" were addressed orally either to students of Solomon and to students of others in the royal court, or by Solomon and others to their sons in their homes.

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<sup>1</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1995. *Be skillful*. An Old Testament study. Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.  
<sup>2</sup> Roy Zuck, *Biblical Theology of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 232.

<sup>2</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1995. *Be skillful*. An Old Testament study. Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

#### 4. What Kind of Literature am I reading?

- a. The first four verses you will study are written in a Hebrew Poetry style called Antithetical Parallelism. This means that the first line of the verse has a thought that contrast with the second line of the verse.
1. In Proverbs 10:17 there is a contrast between heeding instruction and ignoring reproof
  2. In Proverbs 12:1 there is a contrast between loving discipline and hating reproof
  3. In Proverbs 13:18 there is a contrast between neglecting discipline and regarding reproof
  4. In Proverbs 15:32 there is a contrast between neglecting discipline and listening to reproof
- b. The last six verses you will study are written in a Hebrew Poetry style called Synthetic Parallelism. This means that the second line of the verse may amplify the the thought in the first line of the verse, complement the thought of the first line of the verse, complete the thought of the first line of the verse, describe something in the first line of the verse, give the result of the first line of the verse or give preference over what is referred to in the first line of the verse.
1. In Proverbs 16:20 the second line expands and completes the thought of giving attention to a matter.
  2. In Proverbs 18:1 the second line describes what a self-serving persons does with sound wisdom
  3. In Proverbs 18:2 the second line completes the thought about what a fool delights in
  4. In Proverbs 19:27 the second line gives the result of turning away from listening to discipline
  5. In Proverbs 21:16 the second line gives the result of wandering away from understanding.
  6. In Proverbs 29:1 the second line gives the result walking in stubbornness

#### 5. What is the major focus of these particular passages of study?

These passages focus on eight key points:

- a. The direction of those who heed instruction and ignore reproof
- b. The character of those who love discipline and hate reproof
- c. The self image of those who neglect discipline
- d. The benefit of giving attention to a matter
- e. The characteristics of people who refuse to listen to wisdom
- f. The delight of fools
- g. The result of leaving the path of understanding
- h. The result of being stubborn towards instruction

Overall, these passages were organized in such a manner as for you to come to terms with the particular, thoughts, desires, words, actions, relationship patterns you have been warned about but are refusing to repent of. This was designed to help you to see the consequences of refusing to repent and hopefully challenge you to confess, repent, replace the sin with right thoughts, desires, words, actions and relationship patterns. Use the questions after each verse to help you work through the particulars mentioned above.

Major Idea of Text	The Text	The Relationship between each line of the Text
The direction of those who heed instruction and ignore reproof	He is on the path of life who <u>heeds</u> <b>instruction</b> <i>But he who <u>ignores</u> <b>reproof</b> goes astray</i> <b>Proverbs 10:17</b>	Contrast between heeding instruction and ignoring reproof
The character of those who love discipline and hate reproof	Whoever <u>loves</u> <b>discipline</b> loves knowledge <i>But he who <u>hates</u> <b>reproof</b> is stupid</i> <b>Proverbs 12:1</b>	Contrast between loving discipline and hating reproof
The consequences of neglecting discipline and regarding reproof	Poverty and shame will come to him who <u>neglects</u> <b>discipline</b> <i>But he who <u>regards</u> <b>reproof</b> will be honored</i> <b>Proverbs 13:18</b>	Contrast between neglecting discipline and regarding reproof
The view of self according to neglecting discipline and listening to reproof	He who <u>neglects</u> <b>discipline</b> <u>despises</u> himself <i>But he who <u>listens to</u> <b>reproof</b> <u>acquires</u> <b>understanding</b></i> <b>Proverbs 15:32</b>	Contrast between neglecting discipline and listening to reproof
The reward of giving attention to a matter and trusting the Lord	He who <u>gives attention</u> to the Word will find good <i>And blessed is he who <u>trusts</u> in the Lord</i> <b>Proverbs 16:20</b>	Expands the idea of giving attention to a matter with the idea of trusting the Lord
The actions of self serving people	He who <u>separates</u> himself <u>seeks</u> his own desires <i>He <u>quarrels against</u> all sound wisdom</i> <b>Proverbs 18:1</b>	Expands the idea of separating self for self serving reasons with quarreling against wisdom for self serving reasons
The delight and dislike of a fool	A fool <u>does not delight in</u> <b>understanding</b> <i>But only in <u>revealing</u> his own mind</i> <b>Proverbs 18:2</b>	Contrast between what a fool does and does not delight in
The result of turning away from listening to discipline	<u>Cease listening</u> my son to <b>discipline</b> <i>And you will <u>stray away</u> from words of knowledge</i> <b>Proverbs 19:27</b>	Explanation of what happens when you cease listening to discipline
The result of leaving the path of understanding	A man who <u>wonders</u> from the way of <b>understanding</b> <i>Will rest in the assembly of the dead</i> <b>Proverbs 21:16</b>	Explanation of what happens when you wonder away from understanding
The result of being stubborn towards reproof	A man who <u>hardens</u> his neck after much <b>reproof</b> <i>Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy</i> <b>Proverbs 29:1</b>	Explanation of what happens to stubborn people

**Proverbs 10:17**

He is on the path of life who heeds instruction *But he who ignores reproof goes astray*

1. What path of life is a person on who listens to instruction?

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2. Whose instruction is the text referring to?

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3. What does it mean to ignore?

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4. What is reproof?

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5. From what do you believe a person will go astray from in reference to this text?

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6. What specific instructions of God are you ignoring and what has that lead you to do in thoughts, words, actions and relationships?

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7. What are you wanting so much that you are willing to ignore God's instructions to have?

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8. What is the status of your relationship with God and others as a result of ignoring his instructions? What are you going to do about it?

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**Proverbs 12:1**

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge *But he who hates reproof is stupid*

1. What is meant by the term discipline?

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2. What type of knowledge do you believe the text is referring to?

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3. What is the connection between loving discipline and loving knowledge?

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4. What does it mean to hate reproof?

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5. Define the word stupid.

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6. In what ways are you demonstrating that you love knowledge and discipline?

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7. What desires, thoughts, words, behaviors and relationships give evidence to your stupidity?

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8. What specific discipline and knowledge will you start to take heed to in order to stop walking in stupidity? Who will hold you accountable to this change?

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**Proverbs 13:18**

Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline *But he who regards reproof will be honored*

1. Define the word poverty.

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2. How do you think the word poverty is being used in this passage?

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3. Define the word shame.

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4. How do you think the word shame is being used in this passage?

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5. What poverty have you encountered as a result of neglecting discipline?

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6. What shame have you encountered as a result of neglecting discipline?

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7. Define the word the honored.

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8. How do you think the word honored is being used in this passage?

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9. As you look at your life what honor is coming your way as result of regarding reproof?

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**Proverbs 15:32**

He who neglects discipline despises himself *But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding*

1. What does it mean to despise one's self?

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2. What discipline are you neglecting which is resulting in you despising yourself?

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3. Are you ready to listen to change or are just looking to feel better, or relief from pain?  
Please explain.

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4. What areas of your life are lacking understanding?

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5. Is it possible that you do understand but you don't want to listen to what you hearing because is does not align with your agenda, desires, beliefs, thoughts?  
Please explain?

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6. Is it possible that they way you see yourself is connected to the way you are living?  
Please explain.

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7. What is the connection between neglecting discipline and despising yourself? How does this play out in your life?

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**Proverbs 16:20**

He who gives attention to the Word will find good *And blessed is he who trust in the Lord*

1. What does it mean to give attention to the Word?

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2. What good do you think one will find?

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3. What does it mean to trust in the Lord?

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4. What areas of your life are paying attention to what Word of God is saying?(thoughts, desires, words, actions, relationships) Please explain.

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5. What areas of your life are you not paying attention to what Word of God is saying? (thoughts, desires, words, actions, relationships) Please explain.

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6. What areas of your life are you trusting God?(thoughts, desires, words, actions, relationships) Please explain.

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7. Are you trusting God to do what He promised or are you trusting Him to do what you expect according to your preferences, desires, and demands? Please explain.

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8. Is there a correlation between giving attention to a matter and trusting God in the matter? If so, how is this playing out in your life? Please explain.

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**Proverbs 18:1**

He who separates himself seeks his own desires. *He quarrels against all sound wisdom*

1. What does it mean to separate yourself?

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2. What is sound wisdom?

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3. What desires do you have in life that seem to preoccupy your conversation, time, and energy?

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4. What wisdom are you resisting to follow because it interferes with your desires?

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5. What excuses are you giving for resisting sound wisdom?

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6. What people have you distance yourself from listening to because your desires override their wisdom?

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7. How far have you removed yourself from people who are seeking to give you sound wisdom?

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8. What is happening in your life as a result turning away from sound wisdom giving by these people?

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**Proverbs 18:2**

A fool does not delight in understanding *But only in revealing his own mind*

1. Define the word delight.

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2. Define the word fool.

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3. Define the word understanding.

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4. What areas in your life are you acting foolish?

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5. Do you find yourself more concerned with being understood by others or seeking to understand others? Please explain.

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6. Name the people in your life you want to understand you.

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7. What are you doing to understand these people? Please explain.

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8. Do you listen with intent to understand them or are you waiting for them to stop talking to get your point across? Please explain.

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9. How often are you interrupting people to share your thoughts? Please explain

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**Proverbs 19:27**

Cease listening my son to discipline *And you will stray away from words of knowledge*

1. What does it mean to cease listening to discipline?

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2. What does it mean to stray away?

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3. What insight have you been given recently?

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4. Is the insight biblically correct? Please explain.

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5. What insight do you keep hearing over and over again? Please explain.

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6. Have you stop listening to the insight or are you applying the insight to your life?  
Please explain.

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7. Is it possible that you have confused intellectual understanding with application of the insight? Please explain.

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8. How far have you strayed from the truth in your thoughts, desires, words, behavior and relationships? Please explain.

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**Proverbs 21:16**

A man who wanders from the way of understanding *Will rest in the assembly of the dead*

1. What does it mean to wander from the way of understanding?

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2. What does it mean to rest in the assembly of the dead?

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3. What are some of the ways people tend to wander from the way of understanding?

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4. Identify the desires, thoughts, words, actions, relationships in your life that demonstrate that you are wandering from the way understanding?

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5. What are you experiencing in your life as result of wandering from the way of understanding that feels like death to you? Please explain.

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6. Are you willing to do what it takes move back into the way of understanding? Please explain.

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7. Who do you blame for your wandering from the way of understanding? Can you use Scripture to support your answer. Please explain.

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8. Would God agree with you that this person is responsible for you wandering from the way of understanding? Can you prove it from Scripture? Please explain.

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**Proverbs 29:1**

A man who hardens his neck after much reproof *Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy*

1. What does it mean to harden your neck?

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2. Do you find it difficult to follow the instructions of other people? Please explain.

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3. What have you been corrected on lately that you refuse accept as true about yourself?  
Please explain.

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4. What ways have you resisted the reproof? Please explain.

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5. Are you resisting because you know it is true but your are embarrassed? Please explain.

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6. Are you resisting because it is true but you don't want the other person to know that it is true due to the image you have developed for yourself? Please explain.

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7. What relationships in your life has been damaged beyond repair because you refused to listen and follow the truth? Please explain.

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8. Would people who know you best say that you are stubborn? Please explain.

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**Critical Terms of Biblical Passages Selected for the Study**  
**(Proverbs 10:17,12:1,13:18,15:32,16:20,18:1,18:2,19:27,21:16,29:1)**

1. Assembly (Hebrew word- *Qahal* #6951 in Strongs Concordance) – company, congregation, multitude (Proverbs 26:26)
2. Astray (Hebrew word *Taah* #8582 in Strongs Concordance) – to be misled; to hold a wrong view about something; to wonder off the correct path which leads to wrong behavior (Isaiah 3:12)
3. Attention (Hebrew word *Al* # 5921 in Strongs Concordance)– listening with intent to obey what is heard
4. Blessed (Hebrew word *Esher* #835 in Strongs Concordance)– to be happy (Proverbs 28:14)
5. Broken ( Hebrew word *Shabar* #7665 in Strongs Concordance)– to shatter, to crush, to destroy (Jeremiah 48:4)
6. Cease (Hebrew word *Chadal* # 2308 in Strongs Concordance) – to stop, forsake, let alone (Proverbs 23:4)
7. Dead – ( Hebrew word *Rapha* # 7496 in Strongs Concordance) -no longer existing in the physical life (Proverbs 9:18)
8. Delight – ( Hebrew word *Chaphets* # 2654 in Strongs Concordance) to take pleasure in; to desire (Isiah 1:11)
9. Desire ( Hebrew word *Taarah* # 8378 in Strongs Concordance) – longing of the heart, appetite for something (Proverbs 19:22)
10. Despises (Hebrew word *Maal* #3998 in Strongs Concordance) – to loathe, to strongly dislike, to have a great displeasure of something (Job 36:5)
11. Discipline – (Hebrew word *Muwcar* # 4148 in Strongs Concordance) - chastisement, reproof, warning , instruction (Proverbs 13:1)
12. Fool – ( Hebrew word *Keciyl* #3684 in Strongs Concordance) - being without understanding, not using one’s capacity for understanding, stubborn of the will, arrogant one, stupid fellow, simpleton (Proverbs 19:10)
13. Good- (Hebrew word *Towb* #2896 in Strongs Concordance) - useful, agreeable (Proverbs 14:22)
14. Hardens (Hebrew word *Qashah* #7185 in Strongs Concordance) – to make stiff, to make stubborn, to make difficult (Jeremiah 19:15)
15. Hates – (Hebrew word *Sane* #8130 in Strongs Concordance) - to abhor, to detest, to loathe, to be hostile, intense dislike (Proverbs 15:10)



16. Heeds – (Hebrew word *Shamar* #8104 in Strongs Concordance) - to obey with diligence and detail (Proverbs 21:23)
17. Honored (Hebrew word *Kabed* #3515 in Strongs Concordance) – to be recognized and placed in high regard among others (Proverbs 27:18)
18. Ignores (Hebrew word *Azab* #5800 in Strongs Concordance) – abandon, reject, desert, neglect, not paying attention to (Proverbs 4:2)
19. Instruction (Hebrew word *Muwcar* #4148 in Strongs Concordance) - chastisement, reproof, warning (Proverbs 15:5)
20. Knowledge (Hebrew word *Daath* #1847 in Strongs Concordance) – information with focus on how to live as God designed (Proverbs 15:2)
21. Life (Hebrew word *Chay* # 2416 in Strongs Concordance) – quality of existence (Proverbs 11:19)
22. Listening (Hebrew word *Shama* #8085 in Strongs Concordance) – receives information with intent to apply life (Proverbs 21:28)
23. Loves (Hebrew word *Ahab* #157 in Strongs Concordance) – to have affection based on close relationship, to have personal regard for (Proverbs 17:17)
24. Mind (Hebrew word *Leb* #3820 in Strongs Concordance) – inner man, soul, heart (Proverbs 18:15)
25. Neglects (Hebrew word *Para* #6544 in Strongs Concordance ) – let go, let alone (Proverbs 4:15)
26. Path (Hebrew word *Orach* #734 in Strongs Concordance) – journey, moving from one place to another (Psalm 142:3)
27. Poverty- (Hebrew word *Resh* #7389 in Strongs Concordance) - having little wealth, few or no possession, lacking in financial or other resources, destitute (Proverbs 28:19)
28. Quarrels (Hebrew word *Gala* #1566 in Strongs Concordance )- to break out in contention, to have arguments, to be obstinate (no cross reference found)
29. Regards (Hebrew word *Shamar* #8104 in Strongs Concordance) – to pay attention, to take heed (Proverbs 15:5)
30. Remedy (Hebrew word *Marpe* #4832 in Strongs Concordance) – without cure, without deliverance (Proverbs 6:15)
31. Reproof (Hebrew word *Towkechah* #8433 in Strongs Concordance) – correction, speaking words which show strong disapproval with possible actions of punishment to follow, chastising (Proverbs 29:15)

32. Rest (Hebrew word *Nuwach* #5117 in Strongs Concordance) – remain, to stay, to dwell (no cross reference found)
33. Revealing (Hebrew word *Galah* #1540 in Strongs Concordance) – to uncover; to disclose (Proverbs 25:9)
34. Seeks (Hebrew word *Baqash* #1245 in Strongs Concordance ) – to search out, to strive after (Proverbs 17:11)
35. Separates (Hebrew word *Parad* #6504 in Strongs Concordance) – to divide (Genesis 13:11)
36. Shame (Hebrew word *Qalown* #7036 in Strongs Concordance) – disgrace (no cross reference found)
37. Stray (Hebrew word *Shagah* #7686 in Strongs Concordance) – to transgress, to go astray, to wander off (no cross reference found)
38. Stupid (Hebrew word *Baar* #1197 in Strongs Concordance) – given to unintelligent decisions or acts, acting in an unintelligent or careless manner (Proverbs 30:2)
39. Trust (Hebrew word *Batach* #982 in Strongs Concordance) – confidence, security, refuge (Proverbs 28:26)
40. Understanding (for Proverbs 15:32 the Hebrew word is *Leb* #3820 in Strongs Concordance; for Proverbs 18:2 the Hebrew word is *Tabuwn* #8394 in Strongs Concordance; for Proverbs 21:16 the Hebrew word is *Sakal* #7919 in Strongs Concordance – *Leb* #3820- awareness of self from the inside out (Proverbs 9:4); *Tabuwn* #8394- discernment, to distinguish between things, to be informed, to perceive (Proverbs 20:5); *Sakal* #7919 – to have wisdom, insight, intelligence in relation to various things abroad
41. Wanders (Hebrew word *Taah* #8582 in Strongs Concordance) – reel or stray, to be out of the way (Genesis 21:14)
42. Way (Hebrew word *Derek* #1870 in Strongs Concordance) – course of life (Proverbs 21:29)
43. Wisdom, תְּשׁוּבָה (Hebrew Word *tushiyah* 8454 in Strongs Concordance)- **success** , victory, i.e., what is a completion or finishing of something ( Job 5:12 ; 6:13 ; 12:16 ; Pr 2:7 + ); **2. LN 32.24-32.41 sound judgment** , wisdom, i.e., insight as a capacity for understanding ( Job 11:6 ; 26:3 ; Pr 3:21 ; 8:14 ; 18:1 ; Isa 28:29 ; Mic 6:9 + ), note: for NIV text in Job 30:22 Q , see 9583

## Commentary on Selected Passages of Proverbs by Matthew Henry

### Proverbs 10:17

See here, 1. That those are in the right that do not only receive instruction, but retain it, that do not let it slip through carelessness, as most do, nor let it go to those that would rob them of it, that *keep instruction* safely, keep it pure and entire, keep it for their own use, that they may govern themselves by it, keep it for the benefit of others, that they may instruct them; those that do so are *in the way of life*, the way that has true comfort in it and eternal life at the end of it. 2. That those are in the wrong that do not only not receive instruction, but willfully and obstinately refuse it when it is offered them. They will not be taught their duty because it discovers their faults to them; that instruction which carries reproofs in it they have a particular aversion to, and certainly they err; it is a sign that they err in judgment, and have false notions of good and evil; it is a cause of their erring in conversation. The traveler that has missed his way, and cannot bear to be told of it and shown the right way, must needs err still, err endlessly; he certainly misses *the way of life*. (Matthew Henry)

### Proverbs 12:1

We are here taught to try whether we have grace or no by enquiring how we stand affected to the means of grace. 1. Those that have grace and love it will delight in all the instructions that are given them by way of counsel; admonition, or reproof, by the word or providence of God; they will value a good education, and think it not a hardship, but a happiness, to be under a strict and prudent discipline. Those that love a faithful ministry, that value it and sit under it with pleasure, make it to appear that they *love knowledge*. 2. Those show themselves not only void of grace, but void of common sense, that take it as an affront to be told of their faults, and an imposition upon their liberty to be put in mind of their duty: *He that hates reproof* is not only foolish, but *brutish*, like the horse and the mule that have no understanding, or the ox that kicks against the goad. Those that desire to live in loose families and societies, where they may be under no check, that stifle the convictions of their own consciences, and count those their enemies that tell them the truth, are the *brutish* here meant. (Matthew Henry)

### Proverbs 13:18

Note, 1. He that is so proud that he scorns to be taught will certainly be abased. he that *refuses* the good *instruction* offered him, as if it were a reflection upon his honor and an abridgment of his liberty, *poverty and shame shall be to him*: he will become a beggar and live and die in disgrace; every one will despise him as foolish, and stubborn, and ungovernable. 2. He that is so humble that he takes it well to be told of his faults shall certainly be exalted: *He that regards a reproof*, whoever gives it to him, and will mend what is amiss when it is shown him, gains respect as wise and candid; he avoids that which would be a disgrace to him and is in a fair way to make himself considerable. (Matthew Henry)

## **Proverbs 15:32**

See here, 1. The folly of those that will not be taught, that *refuse instruction*, that will not heed it, but turn their backs upon it, or will not hear it, but turn their hearts against it. They *refuse correction* (margin); they will not *take it*, no, not from God himself, but kick against the pricks. Those that do so *despise their own souls*; they show that they have a low and mean opinion of them, and are in little care and concern about them, considered as rational and immortal, instruction being designed to cultivate reason and prepare for the immortal state. The fundamental error of sinners is undervaluing their own souls; therefore they neglect to provide for them, abuse them, expose them, prefer the body before the soul, and wrong the soul to please the body. 2. The wisdom of those that are willing, not only to be taught, but to be reprov'd: *He that hears reproof*, and amends the faults he is reprov'd for, *gets understanding*, by which his soul is secured from bad ways and directed in good ways, and thereby he both evidences the value he has for his own soul and puts true honor upon it. (Matthew Henry)

## **Proverbs 16:20**

Note, 1. Prudence gains men respect and success: *He that handles a matter wisely* (that is master of his trade and makes it to appear he understands what he undertakes, that is considerate in his affairs, and, when he speaks or writes on any subject, does it pertinently) shall *find good*, shall come into good repute, and perhaps may make a good hand of it. 2. But it is piety only that will secure men's true happiness: Those that *handle a matter wisely*, if they are proud and lean to their own understanding, though they may find some good, yet they will have no great satisfaction in it; but he that *trusts in the Lord*, and not in his own wisdom, *happy is he*, and shall speed better at last. Some read the former part of the verse so as to expound it of piety, which is indeed true wisdom: *He that attends to the word* (the word of God, ch. 13:13 ) shall *find good* in it and good by it. And whoso *trusts in the Lord*, in his word which he attends to, is happy. (Matthew Henry)

## **Proverbs 18:1**

The original here is difficult, and differently understood. 1. Some take it as a rebuke to an affected singularity. When men take a pride in *separating themselves* from the sentiments and society of others, in contradicting all that has been said before them and advancing new notions of their own, which, though ever so absurd, they are wedded to, it is to gratify a desire or lust of vain-glory, and they are seekers and meddlers with that which does not belong to them. He *seeks according to his desire, and intermeddles with every business*, pretends to pass a judgment upon every man's matter. He is morose and supercilious. Those generally are so that are opinionative and conceited, and they thus make themselves ridiculous, and are vexatious to others. 2. Our translation seems to take it as an excitement to diligence in the pursuit of wisdom. If we would get knowledge or grace, we must desire it, as that which we need and which will be of great advantage to us, 1 Co. 12:31 . We must *separate ourselves* from all those things which would divert us from or retard us in the pursuit, retire out of the noise of this world's vanities, and then *seek and intermeddle with all* the means and instructions of *wisdom*, be willing to take pains and try all the methods of improving ourselves, be acquainted with a variety of opinions, that we may prove all things and hold fast that which is good. (Matthew Henry)

## **Proverbs 18:2**

A fool may pretend to understanding, and to seek and intermeddle with the means of it, but, 1. He has no true delight in it; it is only to please his friends or save his credit; he does not love his book, nor his business, nor his Bible, nor his prayers; he would rather be playing the fool with his sports. Those who take no pleasure in learning or religion will make nothing to purpose of either. No progress is made in them if they are a task and a drudgery. 2. He has no good design in it, only *that his heart may discover itself*, that he may have something to make a show with, something wherewith to varnish his folly, that that may pass off the better, because he loves to hear himself talk. (Matthew Henry)

## **Proverbs 19:27**

This is a good caution to those that have had a good education to take heed of hearkening to those who, under pretence of instructing them, draw them off from those good principles under the influence of which they were trained up. Observe, 1. There is that which seems designed for instruction, but really tends to the destruction of young men. The factors for vice will undertake to teach them free thoughts and a fashionable conversation, how to palliate the sins they have a mind to and stop the mouth of their own consciences, how to get clear of the restraints of their education and to set up for wits and beaux. This is *the instruction which causes to err from the forms of sound words*, which should be held fast in faith and love. 2. It is the wisdom of young men to turn a deaf ear to such instructions, as the adder does to the charms that are designed to ensnare her. "Dread hearing such talk as tends to instill loose principles into the mind; and, if thou art linked in with such, break off from them; thou hast heard enough, or too much, and therefore hear no more of the evil communication which corrupts good manners." (Matthew Henry)

## **Proverbs 21:16**

Here is, 1. The sinner upon his ramble: He *wanders out of the way of understanding*, and when once he has left that good way he wanders endlessly. The way of religion is *the way of understanding*; those that are not truly pious are not truly intelligent; those *that wander out of this way* break the hedge which God has set, and follow the conduct of the world and the flesh; and they go astray like lost sheep. 2. The sinner at his rest, or rather his ruin: He *shall remain (quiescet — he shall rest, but not in pace — in peace ) in the congregation of the giants*, the sinners of the old world, that were swept away by the deluge; to that destruction the damnation of sinners is compared, as sometimes to the destruction of Sodom, when they are said to have their portion in fire and brimstone. Or *in the congregation of the damned*, that are under the power of the second death. There is a vast congregation of damned sinners, bound in bundles for the fire, and in that those shall remain, remain for ever, who are shut out from the congregation of the righteous. He that forsakes the way to heaven, if he return not to it, will certainly sink into the depths of hell. (Matthew Henry)

**Proverbs 29:1**

Here, 1. The obstinacy of many wicked people in a wicked way is to be greatly lamented. They are *often reproved* by parents and friends, by magistrates and ministers, by the providence of God and by their own consciences, have had their sins set in order before them and fair warning given them of the consequences of them, but all in vain; they *harden their necks*. Perhaps they fling away, and will not so much as give the reproof a patient hearing; or, if they do, yet they go on in the sins for which they are reproved; they will not bow their necks to the yoke, but are children of Belial; they refuse reproof ( ch. 10:17 ), despise it ( ch. 5:12 ), hate it, ch. 12:1 . 2. The issue of this obstinacy is to be greatly dreaded: Those that go on in sin, in spite of admonition, *shall be destroyed*; those that will not be reformed must expect to be ruined; if the rods answer not the end, expect the axes. They *shall be suddenly destroyed*, in the midst of their security, *and without remedy*; they have sinned against the preventing remedy, and therefore let them not expect any recovering remedy. Hell is remediless destruction. They *shall be destroyed, and no healing*, so the word is. If God wounds, who can heal?(Matthew Henry)

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