Introduction to the Book

1:1 The Proverbs
d and moral instruc-
tion, and to discern wise counsel. 
1:3 To receive moral instruction in skillful living.

1:2 To learn wisdom and moral instruc-

1 tn The Hebrew noun translated “proverb” is derived from the root נִמְשַׁל (nimshal) which means “likeliness.” The related Niphal verb means “to be like, be comparable with,” e.g., “he is like (ںנָחַל, ninshal) the beasts that perish” (Ps 49:12). The noun can mean an object lesson based on or using a comparison or analogy. It may be a short pithy statement (Ezek 16:44), object lesson drawn from experience (Ps 78:2-6), saying or by-word (Deut 28:37) or an oracle of future blessing (Ezek 21:1-5). Here it means an object lesson setting out courses of action. It helps one choose the course of action to follow or avoid.

2 tn The name שלוח (she’lomoh, “of Solomon”) is a genitive of authorship or source. While Solomon wrote a majority of the proverbial sayings in the book, some proverbial sayings were written by other 3rd-century B.C.E. authors. Chapters 1-9 could have been written by Solomon and perhaps collected by Solomon. The name also forms a phonetic wordplay on the similarly sounding word חכמה (mishkev, “proverbs”), as if to say the name is almost synonymous with proverbs.

3 sn The phrase “The Proverbs of Solomon” is a title for the entire book. The title does not imply that Solomon authored all the proverbs in this collection or that the sections are collections from different authors: the sayings of the wise were collected by Solomon and perhaps added by someone else. The collection of Solomonic proverbs appears to be the collection of short pithy sayings in 10:1-22:16, and the title might have originally introduced only these. There is question whether chapters 1-9 were part of the original form of the book (25:1-29:27). The original collection of Solomonic proverbs appears to be a further purpose of the book: This focuses on the purpose of the book from the perspective of the student/disciple. The infinitive + accusative of the infinitive of the same root כָּלַשׁ (kalash), “prudence”) is a Hiphil infinitive absolute, functioning as an emphatic genitive of result, describing the results of a self-disciplined life. The basic meaning of כָּלַשׁ is “to be prudent, circumspect,” and the Hiphil stem means “to give attention to, consider, ponder; have insight, understanding” (BDB 968 s.v. כָּלַשׁ). Its parallelism with מִשְׁלֵי (musar wïhaskel, “discipline of prudence”) suggests that it refers to moral training or instruction that the Book of Proverbs offers to its readers. This instruction consists of wisdom acquired by observing the consequences of foolish actions in others and developing the ability to control the natural inclination to folly. This sometimes comes through experiencing chastisement from God. Sensing something of this nuance, the LXX translated this term with the Greek word for “child-training.”

4 tn The infinitive construct + לַהֲבָּיָנ (lÿhavin) here designates a second purpose of the book: to compare and to make proper evaluation of the sayings of the wise. The term הָבִי (hin, “to discern”) refers to the ability to make distinctions between things. This is illustrated by its derivatives: The related preposition means “between” and the related noun means “space between.” So the verb refers to the ability to discern between moral options.

5 tn Heb “discernment.” The noun חָכְמָה (khokhmah) functions as an attributive genitive: “discerning words” or “wise sayings” (so NLT). This noun is a cognate accusative of the infinitive of the same root כָּלַשׁ (kalash, “prudence”). The phrase “to discern words of discernment” refers to the ability (1) to distinguish truth from falsehood, (2) to understand wise sayings, such as in Proverbs.

6 tn The infinitive construct + לְהָבִי (lÿhavin) here designates a further purpose of the book: This focuses on the purpose of the book from the perspective of the student/disciple. The verb לַהֲבָּי (liahokh, “receive”) means to acquire something worth having. It is parallel to the verb “treasure up” in 2:1.

7 tc MT reads the genitive-construction phrase מִשְׁרֵפָּה נְוקֵנִיס (musar haskan, “discipline of prudence”). Syriac adds הנ (n) and reads musar ushankan (musar wïhaskan, “discipline and prudence”). MT is the more difficult reading in terms of syntax, so is preferred as the original reading.

8 sn The noun “wisdom” (נִימְשַׁל, khokhmah) could be nuanced “moral skill.” It refers to “skill” that produces something of value. It is used in reference to the skill of seamen (Ps 107:27), abilities of weavers (Exod 35:28), capabilities of administrators (1 Kgs 3:28), or skill of craftsmen (Exod 31:6). In the realm of moral living, it refers to skill in living – one lives life with moral skill so that something of lasting value is produced from one’s life.

9 tn Heb “instruction.” The noun מַשָּׁל (meshal) has a three-fold range of meanings: (1) physical or parental: “discipline; chastisement” (2) verbal: “warning; exhortation” and (3) moral: “training; instruction” (BDB 416 s.v. מַשָּׁל; HALOT 557 s.v. מַשָּׁל). Its parallelism with חָכְמָה (khokhmah, “wisdom, moral skill”) suggests that it refers to moral training or instruction that the Book of Proverbs offers to its readers. This instruction consists of wisdom acquired by observing the consequences of foolish actions in others and developing the ability to control the natural inclination to folly. This sometimes comes through experiencing chastisement from God. Sensing something of this nuance, the LXX translated this term with the Greek word for “child-training.”

10 sn This term refers to experiential knowledge, not just cognitive knowledge; it includes the intellectual assimilation and practical use of what is acquired.

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13 sn This term refers to experiential knowledge, not just cognitive knowledge; it includes the intellectual assimilation and practical use of what is acquired.

14 sn The designation “son of David” is in apposition to the name Solomon, as are the following nouns, further explaining the name.

15 sn The phrase “the king of Israel” is in apposition to the phrase “name Solomon.”

16 sn This is the first of five purpose clauses in the opening section (1:2a, 2b, 3a, 4a, 6a). This clause reveals the purpose of the collection of proverbs in general. The three purpose clauses that follow qualify this general purpose.

17 sn Heb “to know.” The verb יָדַע (yada) here means “to gain knowledge of” or “to become acquainted with.” This term refers to experimental knowledge, not just cognitive knowledge; it includes the intellectual assimilation and practical use of what is acquired. This phrase is used in reference to the study of the Law (Ps 19:7), abilities of weavers (Exod 35:28), skills of craftsmen (Exod 31:6), and skill of living (10:1-22:16). It helps one choose the course of action to follow or avoid.

18 sn Heb “to consider.” The verb לָקַח (laqakh) means to consider, ponder; have insight, understanding” (BDB 968 s.v. לָקַח) and reads לָקַח (laqakh, “receive”) means to acquire something worth having. It is parallel to the verb “treasure up” in 2:1.

19 sn The infinitive construct + לָקַח (laqakh) here designates a further purpose of the book: This focuses on the purpose of the book from the perspective of the student/disciple. The verb לָקַח (laqakh, “receive”) means to acquire something worth having. It is parallel to the verb “treasure up” in 2:1.

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in^4 righteousness,^2 justice,^3 and equity.\(^^4\)
1:4 To impart^4 shrewdness^8 to the morally naive,^7 and^8 a discerning^9 plan^10 to the young person.\(^^1^1\)
1:5 (Let the wise also^12 hear^13 and gain^14 instruction, and let the discerning^15 acquire^16 guidance!^17)
1:6 To discern^18 the meaning of^19 a proverb and a parable,^20

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\(^1\) tn Heb “righteousness and justice and equity.” The three nouns that follow “self-discipline of prudence” are adverbial adjectives of manner, describing the ways in which the disciplined prudent activity will be manifested: “in righteousness, justice, and equity.” The term “in” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied in the translation for clarity.

\(^2\) sn The word “righteousness” (יָשָׁר, yashar) describes conduct that conforms to a standard. Elsewhere it is used in a concrete sense to refer to commercial weights and measures and the norm for gaining a goal (C. H. Toy, Proverbs [ICC], 7). The related verb יָשָׁר (yashar) means “to plan; to devise” (BDB 273 s.v.; HALOT 272 s.v. יָשָׁר; e.g., Gen 11:6). Here the nouns “knowledge and purpose” (יָשָׁר דַּעַת, yashar da’at um’zimmah) form a hendiadys; knowledge of how to form and carry out a morally wise plan for life.

\(^3\) tn Heb “and.” The conjunction “and” appears in the Hebrew text, but is omitted in the translation for the sake of English style and smoothness.

\(^4\) sn The noun יִשְׁמַע (yishma), “justice, judgment”) refers to the ability to make a decision that is just (e.g., Deut 16:18; 1:26). From the legal background, the term came to mean one’s right or precedent. The person with prudence will make decisions that are just and right.

\(^5\) tn Heb “to give.” The infinitive construct + ה (lamed) here introduces the fourth purpose of the book: It reveals the purpose from the perspective of the teacher. It is what the wise instructor/sage wants to impart to the naive youths.

\(^6\) tn The Hebrew noun translated “equity” comes from the root יִשְׁמַע (yishar) which has the basic idea of “upright, straight, right.” It refers to activity that is morally upright and straight, that is, on the proper moral path. Elsewhere it is used in a concrete sense to describe cows walking straight down a path without turning right or left (1 Sam 6:12). Wisdom literature often uses the motif of the straight path to describe a morally “straight” life.

\(^7\) sn The word יֵשׁוֹפֵק (yeshofek), “shrewd, shrewdness, craftiness” (BDB 791 s.v.) or “cleverness” (HALOT 886 s.v. 1) means “to plan; to devise” (BDB 273 s.v.; HALOT 272 s.v. יֵשׁוֹפֵק, 1:26). The related verb describes a wicked concocted plan (Ps 83:4). The term is used positively of a morally prudent life-style (Prov 8:5; 12:15; 15:29). There is no virtue for simpleminded. It has the ability to make a decision that is just (e.g., Deut 16:18; 1:26). From the legal background, the term came to mean one’s right or precedent. The person with prudence will make decisions that are just and right.

\(^8\) sn The Hebrew noun translated “equity” comes from the root יִשְׁמַע (yishar) which has the basic idea of “upright, straight, right.” It refers to activity that is morally upright and straight, that is, on the proper moral path. Elsewhere it is used in a concrete sense to describe cows walking straight down a path without turning right or left (1 Sam 6:12). Wisdom literature often uses the motif of the straight path to describe a morally “straight” life.

\(^9\) sn The term “also” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

\(^10\) sn Verse 5 functions as a parenthesis in the purpose statements of 1:1-7. There are two purpose statements in 1:2 (“to know wisdom” and “to discern sayings”). The first is stated in detail in 1:3-4, first from the perspective of the student then the teacher. 1:6 will state the second purpose of 1:2. But between the two the writer notes that even the wise can become wiser. The book is not just for neophytes; it is for all who want to grow in wisdom.

\(^11\) sn The Hebrew verb יִשְׁמַע (yishma) functions as a jussive of advice or counsel (“Let him hear!”) rather than a customary imperfect (“he will hear”). The jussive is supported by the parallelism with the following Hiphil jussive יָשָׁר (yashar) “Let him add!”.

\(^12\) tn Heb “young man” or “youth.”

\(^13\) sn The term “also” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

\(^14\) tn Heb “to add.”

\(^15\) sn The Niphal substantival participle יִשְׁמַע (yishma), “disern” is used to describe a person who is habitually characterized by discernment. It forms a striking contrast to 1:4 – there was the simpleton and the youth, here the wise and discerning. Both need this book.

\(^16\) sn The Hiphil verb יִשְׁמַע (yishma) is a jussive rather than an imperfect. It features the final short vowel (segol) and accent on the first syllable words (BDB 415 s.v. יִשְׁמַע, Hiph). It has moral guidance (BDB 287 s.v.). It is related to הַשֵּׁמֶשׁ (hashemesh), “shameful” and its derivative הַשֵּׁמֶשׁ לַחֲבָלָה (hashemesh lachbulah), “shameful vestment.” Both are used in the context of the path of God (Ps 37:12) and in a figurative sense of moral guidance (Ps 11:14; 20:18; 24:6). Here it refers to the ability to steer a right course through life (A. Cohen, Proverbs, 2).

\(^17\) sn The conjunction “and” does not appear in the Hebrew text but is implied; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness and style.

\(^18\) tn Heb “knowing and purpose.” The noun יִשְׁמַע (yishma), “knowledge” may be nuanced “discernment” here (HALOT 229 s.v. יִשְׁמַע 4). The nouns יִשְׁמַע (yishma) and יִשְׁמַע (yishma) (da’at um’zimmah, “discernment and purpose”) form a hendiadys (two nouns joined with vav to describe the same thing): The first noun functions adjectively and the second functions as a noun: “discerning plan.” This parallels “a shrewd plan for the morally naive” or “a discerning person to the young person.”

\(^19\) tn The noun יִשְׁמַע (yishma) may mean (1) “plan” or (2) “discretion” (BDB 273 s.v.; HALOT 566 s.v.). It describes the ability to make plans or formulate the best course of action for gaining a goal (C. H. Toy, Proverbs [ICC], 7). The related verb יֵשָׁמֶשׂ (yashemesh) means “allusive expression; enigma” in general, and “proverb, parable” in particular (BDB 539 s.v.; HALOT 590 s.v.). The related noun יָשָׁר (yashar) means “interpreter” (Gen 42:23). The related Arabic root means “to turn aside,” so this Hebrew term might refer to a saying that has a “hidden meaning” to its words; see H. N. Richardson, “Some Notes on יָשָׁר and Its Derivatives,” VT 5 (1955): 163-79.

\(^20\) tn The Hebrew verb יִשְׁמַע (yishma) translates “to give.” The infinitive construct + ה (lamed) here introduces the fourth purpose of the book: It reveals the purpose from the perspective of the teacher. It is what the wise instructor/sage wants to impart to the naive youths.
the sayings of the wise\(^3\) and their\(^3\) riddles.\(^3\)

**Introduction to the Theme of the Book**

1:7 Fearing the **Lord**\(^4\) is the beginning\(^5\) of moral knowledge,\(^6\) but fools\(^8\) despise\(^9\) wisdom and instruction.\(^1\)

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1 tn This line functions in apposition to the preceding, further explaining the phrase "a proverb and a parable," as if reading the phrase in Hebrew.

2 tn The term "their" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but seems to be implied; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

3 tn The noun פָּתָה (patah, "ridge") designates sayings whose meaning is obscure or hidden, such as a riddle (Num 12:8; Judg 14:12, 19), allegory (Ezek 17:2), perplexing moralism (Prov 1:2), perplexing moralization (10:1 = 2 Chr 9:1) or ambiguous saying (Dan 8:23); see BDB 295 s.v. and HALOT 309 s.v. If this is related to Arabic hada ("to turn aside, avoid"), it refers to sayings whose meanings are obscure. The wise of the sages often take the form of riddles that must be discriminated.

4 tn Heb “fear of the Lord.” The expression יָרַא יְהוָה (yara yiru, "fear of Yahweh") functions as a genitive-construct in which יְהוָה (yahu, "Yahweh") designates an object, it captures the polar opposites of shrink back in fear and drawing close in awe and adoration. Both are classified as a genitive of source.

5 tn The noun קִסְוָה (kiswa, "knowledge") refers to experiential knowledge, not just cognitive knowledge. The first option is preferred because 1:2-6 focuses on cultivating fear of the Lord.

6 tn Heb “knowledge.” The noun יָרַא (yara, "knowledge") refers to experiential knowledge, not just cognitive knowledge, including the intellectual assimilation and practical application (BDB 394 s.v.). It is used in parallelism to חֵן (chayn, "instruction, discipline") and חֶסֶד (khesed, "wisdom, moral skill").

7 tn The conjunction "but" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelistical opposition. It is supplied in the translation for clarity.

8 tn The term פָּתָה (patah, "fool") refers to a person characterized by moral folly (BDB 17 s.v.). Fools lack understanding (10:1 = 2 Chr 9:1) or ambiguous saying (Dan 8:23); see BDB 295 s.v. and HALOT 309 s.v. If this is related to Arabic hada ("to turn aside, avoid"), it refers to sayings whose meanings are obscure. The wise of the sages often take the form of riddles that must be discriminated.

9 tn The verb of הבָּשָׁה (bashah, "despise") means to treat things of value with contempt, as if they were worthless (BDB 102 s.v.). The classic example is Esau who despised his birthright and sold it for lentil stew (Gen 25:34). The perfect tense of this verb may be classified as characteristic perfect (what they have done and currently do) or gnostic perfect (what they always do in past, present and future). The latter is preferred; this describes a trait of fools, and elsewhere the book says that fools do not change.

10 sn Hebrew word order is emphatic here. Normal word order is: verb + subject + direct object. Here it is: direct object + subject + verb ("wisdom and instruction fools despise").

11 tn The imperative פָּתַה (patah, "Listen!") forms an urgent exhortation that expects immediate compliance with parental instruction.

12 tn Heb “my son.” It is likely that collections of proverbs grew up in the royal courts and were designed for the training of the youthful prince. But once the collection was included in the canon, the term “son” would be expanded to mean a disciple, for all the people were to learn wisdom when young. It would not be limited to sons alone but would include daughters – as the expression “the children of יִשְׂרָאֵל, הָעָם” Israel (including males and females) clearly shows. Several passages in the Mishnah and Talmud record instructions to teach daughters the Mosaic law so that they will be righteous and avoid sin as well. The translation “my child,” although not entirely satisfactory, will be used here.

13 tn Heb “training” or “discipline.” See note on 1:2.

14 tn Heb "of." The noun פָּתַה (patah, "of your father") may be classified as a genitive of source.

15 tn Heb “instruction.” In Proverbs the noun פָּתָה (patah) often means “instruction” or “moral direction” rather than “law” (BDB 435 s.v. 1a). It is related to פָּתָה (patah, “to point [or, show] the way”) in the Hiphil (BDB 435). Instruction activities point a person in the right direction (e.g., Gen 46:28).

16 tn Heb “of.” The noun פָּתָה (patah, “of your mother”) may be classified as a genitive of source.

17 tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

18 tn Heb “a garland of grace.” The word חֵן (chayn, "grace") refers to qualities that make a person pleasant and agreeable, e.g., a gracious and charming person (BDB 336 s.v.). The metaphor compares the teachings that produce these qualities to an adornment to the wreath.

19 tn The noun פָּתָה (patah, "wreath; garland") refers to a headaddress and appears only twice in the OT (Prov 1:9; 4:9; BDB 531 s.v.; HALOT 524 s.v.).

20 tn Heb “for.”

21 tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

22 tn Cf. KJV, ASV “chains”; NIV “a chain”; but this English term could suggest a prisoner’s chain to the modern reader rather than adornment.

23 tn Heb "for.”

24 tn The term קִסְוָה (kiswa) is the common word for “sinner” in the OT. Because the related verb is used once of sling-shot throwers who miss the mark (Judg 20:15), the idea of sin is often explained as “missing the moral mark” (BDB 306-8 s.v.). But the term should not be restricted to the idea of a sin of ignorance or simply falling short of the moral ideal. Its meaning is more likely seen in the related Akkadian term “to revolt, rebel.” It is active rebellion against authority. It is used here in reference to a gang of robbers.

25 tn The imperfect tense verb פָּתַה (patah) means “to persuade, entice” a person to sin (BDB 843 s.v. פָּתַה 1; see, e.g., Judg 14:15; 16:5; Prov 16:29; Hos 2:16).
We will all share equally in what we steal.\(^{16}\)

1:15 My child, do not go down their way.\(^{18}\)

1:16 withhold yourself from their path.\(^{20}\)

1:17 Surely it is futile to spread a net in plain sight of any bird.\(^{29}\)

1:18 but these men lie in wait for their own blood.\(^{29}\)

do not consent\(^{1}\).  
1:11 If they say, “Come with us! We will\(^{5}\) lie in wait\(^{2}\) to shed blood;\(^{4}\) we will ambush\(^{6}\) an innocent person\(^{6}\) capriciously.\(^{7}\)

1:12 We will swallow them alive\(^{8}\) like Sheol,\(^{9}\) those full of vigor\(^{10}\) like those going down to the Pit.  
1:13 We will seize all kinds\(^{12}\) of precious wealth; we will fill our houses with plunder.\(^{13}\)  
1:14 Join with us!\(^{14}\)

\(^1\) To the MT reads the root פָּלַל (‘aval, “to be willing; to consent”). Some medieval Hebrew mss read the root פָּל (‘aláh, “to go”): “do not go with them.” The majority of Hebrew mss and the versions support the MT reading, which is the less common word and so the more likely original reading.  

\(^2\) In this cohortative נָשַׁף: (nērawnah) could denote resolve (“We will lie in wait!”) or exhortation (“Let us lie in wait!”). These sinners are either expressing their determination to carry out a violent plan or they are trying to entice the lad to participate with them.  

\(^3\) The verb פָּל (‘avn, “to lie in wait”) is used for planning murder (Deut 19:11), kidnapping (Judg 21:20), or seduction (Prov 23:28).  

\(^4\) In Heb “for blood.” The term דָּם (‘dám, “blood”) functions as a metonymy of effect for “blood shed violently” through murder (HAB 224 s.v.).  

\(^5\) In Heb “lie in hiding.”  

\(^6\) In the “innocent” (תָּמִים, nāqî) intimates that the person to be attacked is harmless.  

\(^7\) In Heb “without cause” (so KJV, NASB; NCV “just for fun.” The term אָרַב (‘ārāḇ, “without cause”) emphasizes that the planned attack is completely unwarranted.  

\(^8\) In Heb “lives.” The noun נָשַׁף (nērawn, “lives”) functions as an adverbial accusative of manner: “alive.” The form is a plural of state, used to describe a condition of life which encompasses a long period of time – in this case a person’s entire life. Murder cuts short a person’s life.  

\(^9\) The noun נָשַׁף (‘avn) can mean (1) “death,” cf. NCV; (2) “the grave,” cf. KJV, NIV, NLT (3) “Sheol” as the realm of departed spirits, cf. NAB “the nether world,” and (4) “extreme danger.” Here it is parallel to the noun נָשַׁף (nērawn, “the Pit”) so it is the grave or more likely “Sheol” (cf. ASV, NRSV). Elsewhere Sheol is personified as having an insatiable appetite and swallowing people alive as they descend to their death (e.g., Num 16:30; 33; Isa 5:14; Hab 2:5). In ancient Near Eastern literature, the grave is often personified in similar manner, e.g., in Ugaritic mythological texts Mot (= “death”) is referred to as “the great swallow.”  

\(^10\) In Heb “and whole.” The term נָשַׁף (‘avn) is asseverative or appositional (“even”); it is omitted in the translation for the sake of style and smoothness. The substantival adjective נָשַׁף (nērawn) “whole; perfect; blameless” is an adverbial accusative describing the condition and state of the object. Used in parallel to נָשַׁף (nērawn, “alive”), it must mean “full of health” (BDB 1071 s.v. נָשַׁף 2). These cutthroats want to murder a person who is full of vigor.  

\(^11\) In Heb “find.” The use of the verb נָשַׁף (‘avn) (‘avn, “to find”) is deliberate understatement to rhetorically down-play the heinous act of thieves. The term נָשַׁף (nērawn) “wealth of preciousness.”  

\(^12\) In Heb “a purse” (so KJV, NAB, NRSV). The term נָשַׁף (‘avn) “(purse); bag”) is a synecdoche of container (= “purse”) for contents (= stolen goods). The adjective נָשַׁף (nērawn, “one”) indicates that the thieves promised to share equally in what they had stolen.  

\(^13\) In Heb “do not walk.”  

\(^14\) In Heb “in the way with them.”  

\(^15\) In Heb “your foot.” The term נָשַׁף (nērawn) as a metonymy of association, meaning “to be eager” to do something (BDB 930 s.v.).  

\(^16\) In Heb “to harm.” The noun נָשַׁף (‘avn) has a four-fold range of meanings: (1) “pain, harm” (Prov 3:30), (2) “calamity, disaster” (13:21), (3) “distress, misery” (14:32) and (4) “moral evil” (8:13; see BDB 948-949 s.v.). The parallelism with “swift to shed blood” suggests it means “to inflict harm, injury.”  

\(^17\) In the imperfect tense verbs may be classified as habitual or progressive imperfects describing their ongoing continual activity.  

\(^18\) In the BHS editors suggest deleting this entire verse from MT because it does not appear in several versions (Codex B of the LXX, Coptic, Arabic) and is similar to Isa 59:7a. It is possible that it was a scribal gloss (intentional addition) copied into the margin from Isaiah. But this does not adequately explain the differences. It does fit the context well enough to be original.  

\(^19\) In Heb “for the net to be spread out.” The Pual participle יָרָה (yarah) means “to spread” (HALOT 280 s.v. יָרָה pu.1). The subject of this verbal use of the participle is the noun נָשַׁף (nērawn, “the net”). It is futile for the net to be spread out in plain view of birds.  

\(^20\) In Heb “in the eyes of.”  

\(^21\) This means either: (1) Spreading a net in view of birds is futile because birds will avoid the trap, but the wicked are so blind that they fail to see danger; or (2) it does not matter if a net is spread because birds are so hungry they will eat any- way and be trapped; the wicked act in a similar way.  

\(^22\) In Heb “all of the possessors of wings.”  

\(^23\) They think that they are going to shed innocent blood, but in their blindness they do not realize that it is their own blood they shed. Their greed will lead to their destruction. This is an example of ironic poetic justice. They do not intend to destroy themselves, but this is what they accomplish.
they ambush their own lives.\(^{14}\) 
1:19 Such are the ways\(^*\) of all who gain profit unjustly.\(^4\) 
t\^ takes away the life\(^6\) of those who obtain it!\(^7\)

**Warning Against Disregarding Wisdom**

1:20 Wisdom\(^8\) calls out\(^*\) in the street, she shouts loudly\(^9\) in the plazas;\(^11\)
1:21 at the head of the noisy\(^{12}\) streets she calls, 
in the entrances of the gates in the city\(^{13}\) she utters her words.\(^14\) 
1:22 "How long will you simpletons\(^{15}\) 
love naïveté?\(^{36}\) How long\(^{27}\) will mockers\(^{38}\) delight\(^{19}\) in 
mockery\(^{20}\) and fools\(^21\) hate knowledge? 
1:23 If only\(^{22}\) you will respond\(^{23}\) to my rebuke,\(^24\) 
then\(^{25}\) I will pour out my thoughts\(^{27}\) to you

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\(^{1}\) tn Heb "their own souls." The term נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "soul") is used as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life). The noun נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh) refers to physical "life" (Exod 21:23; Num 17:3; Judg 5:18; Prov 12:10; BDB 659 s.v. 3.c).

\(^{2}\) tn The exclamation דֶּת (den, "so; thus; such") marks a conclusion (BDB 485 s.v.). It draws a comparison between the destruction of the wicked in v. 18 and the concluding statement in v. 19.

\(^{3}\) The MT reads מַרְאֵה (marah, "paths; ways") as figure for modern life; "so are the ways (or, paths) of all who gain profit unjustly." The BHS editors suggest emending the text to מִשְׁפָּט (mispat, "law") to refer to physical life (BDB 659 s.v. 3.c)." The expression means "as if one were walking in the streets," emphasizing the busy, bustling place where the street branches and meets. 

\(^{4}\) tn The verb מַרְאֵה (marah, "paths; ways") is followed by the cognate noun מַרְאֵה (marah) = מַרְאֵה (marah) as figure for physical life (Exod 21:23; Num 17:3; Judg 5:18; Prov 12:10; BDB 659 s.v. 3.c).

\(^{5}\) tn Heb "her own souls." The term נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "soul") is used as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life). The noun נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh) often refers to physical "life" (Exod 21:23; Num 17:3; Judg 5:18; Prov 12:10; BDB 659 s.v. 3.c). The term "soul" can have a cognitive nuance, especially in the Decalogue (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21) and for the covetous desire of Eve (Gen 3:6) and Achan (Josh 7:21). It is tempting to nuance it here as "illicit desire" for mockery.

\(^{6}\) tn The subject of the verb is the noun נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "soul") which is also the referent of the 3rd person masculine singular suffix on נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "its owners"). Greed takes away the life of those who live by greed (e.g., 15:27; 26:27). See G. R. Driver, "Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs," Bib 32 (1951): 173-74.

\(^{7}\) tn The term נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "soul") is used as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life). The noun נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh) often refers to physical life (Exod 21:23; Num 17:3; Judg 5:18; Prov 12:10; BDB 659 s.v. 3.c).

\(^{8}\) tn Heb "its owners."

\(^{9}\) tn The noun נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "soul") is a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life). The noun נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh) often refers to physical life (Exod 21:23; Num 17:3; Judg 5:18; Prov 12:10; BDB 659 s.v. 3.c).

\(^{10}\) tn Heb "her own souls." The term נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "soul") is used as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life). The noun נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh) often refers to physical "life" (Exod 21:23; Num 17:3; Judg 5:18; Prov 12:10; BDB 659 s.v. 3.c).

\(^{11}\) sn The term נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "soul") is often referred to physical life (Exod 21:23; Num 17:3; Judg 5:18; Prov 12:10; BDB 659 s.v. 3.c).

\(^{12}\) tn Heb "her own souls." The term נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, "soul") is used as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life). The noun נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh) often refers to physical "life" (Exod 21:23; Num 17:3; Judg 5:18; Prov 12:10; BDB 659 s.v. 3.c).

\(^{13}\) sn The phrase "in the city" further defines the area of the entrance just inside the gate complex, the business area. In an ancient Near Eastern city, business dealings and judicial proceedings would both take place in this area.

\(^{14}\) tn Heb "she speaks her words."

\(^{15}\) sn Wisdom addresses three types of people: simpletons (טַפֵּט, p'tayim), scoffers (טַפֵּט, kesim) and fools (טַפֵּט, k'silim). For the term "simpleton" see note on 1:14. Each of these three types of people is satisfied with the life being led and will not listen to reason. See J. A. Emerton, "A Note on the Hebrew Text of Proverbs 1:22-23," JTS 19 (1968): 609-14.

\(^{16}\) tn Heb "simplicity" (so KJV, NASB); NAB "innanity." The noun כָּפֵי (pe, "soul") means "simplicity; lack of wisdom" (BDB 659 s.v.; HALOT 669 s.v. 11a). It is related to the term פֶּתֵי (petayim) "simpletons" and so forms a striking wordplay. This lack of wisdom and moral simplicity is inherent in the character of the naive person.

\(^{17}\) tn The second instance of "How long?" does not appear in the Hebrew text; it is supplied in the translation for smoothness and style.

\(^{18}\) sn The term פוֹטֵי (lootim, "scoffers; mockers") comes from the root פָּט (p't, "to scorn; to mock; to speak indirectly") (BDB 539 s.v.; HALOT 989 s.v. 11). They are cynical and defiant freethinkers who ridicule the righteous and all for which they stand (e.g., Ps 1:1).

\(^{19}\) tn The Hebrew verb כָּפֵי (ke, khamad) is often translated "to take pleasure; to delight" but frequently has the meaning of a selfish desire, a coveting of something. It is the term, for example, used for coveting in the Decalogue (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21) and for the covetous desire of Eve (Gen 3:6) and Achan (Josh 7:21). It is tempting to nuance it here as "illicit desire" for mockery.

\(^{20}\) tn Heb "for themselves." The ethical dative הָוֹמִיּוֹת (hoomiyoth, "for themselves") is normally untranslated. It is a rhetorical device emphasizing that they take delight in mockery for their own self-interests.

\(^{21}\) sn The term פוֹט (lo, k'sil) refers to the morally insen
dible dullard (BDB 493 s.v.).

\(^{22}\) tn The imperfect tense is in the conditional protasis without the conditional particle, followed by the clause beginning with הב (bav, "then"). The phrase "If only..." does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied by the syntax; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

\(^{23}\) tn Heb "turn." The verb is from נָשָׁב (nahav, "to return; to respond; to repent.

\(^{24}\) sn The noun הב (bav, "to be rebuked") is used in all kinds of disputes including rebuking, arguing, reasoning, admonishing, and chiding. The term is broad enough to include here warning and rebuke. Cf. KJV, NAB, NRSV "reproof"; TEV "when I reprimand you"; CEB "correct you."

\(^{25}\) tn Heb "Behold!"

\(^{26}\) sn The Highhih collective of הב (bav, "to pour out") describes the speaker's resolution to pour out wisdom on those who respond.

\(^{27}\) tn Heb "my spirit." The term מַתַּן (matann, "gift") functions as a metonymy (= spirit) of association (= thoughts), as indicated by the parallelism with my words (דֶּת, d'baray). The noun מַתַּן (matann, "spirit") can have a cognitive nuance, e.g., "spirit of wisdom" (Exod 28:3; Deut 34:9). It is used metonymically for wisdom (Job 20:3) and mind (Isa 10:13, Ezek 11:5; 20:32, 1 Chr 28:12) see BDB 925 s.v. מַתַּן. The "spirit of wisdom" produces skill and capacity necessary for success (Isa 11:2; John 7:37-39).
and I will make my words known to you.
1:24 However, because I called but you refused to listen,
because I stretched out my hand but no one paid attention,
1:25 because you neglected all my advice,
and did not comply with my rebuke,
1:26 so I myself will laugh when disaster strikes you,
I will mock when what you dread comes,
1:27 when what you dread comes like a whirlwind,
and disaster strikes you like a devastating storm.

Disaster will come swiftly and crush them like a devastating "storm") refers to a devastating storm and is related to the calamity (Prov 6:15; 24:22; BDB 15 s.v. 3). The preposition singular suffix is either (1) a genitive of worth: "the disaster of the wise" (Prov 28:19). Here it means "to avoid, neglect" the offer of wisdom (Wa 8:14). It can refer to unkempt hair of the head (Lev 10:6) or "to let things run free" (Exod 32:25; Prob 28:19). It thus introduces an extended protasis; the apodosis is 1:26.

The expression "to listen" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

The verbs are characteristic perfects or indefinite forms. For the word "comply, consent," see 1:20.

The conclusion or apodosis is now introduced.

Laughing at the consequences of the fool's rejection of wisdom does not convey hardness against the foe; it reveals the folly of rejecting wisdom (e.g., Ps 2:4). It vindicates wisdom and the appropriateness of the disaster (D. Kidner, Proverbs [TOTC], 60).

"at your disaster." The 2nd person masculine singular suffix is either (1) a genitive of worth: "the disaster due you" or (2) an objective genitive: "disaster strikes you." The term "disaster" (םְשַׁבַּת, "turn!") which appears at the beginning of this speech in 1:1 refers to moral knowledge. See note on 1:7.

The verb "spurned" (שׁוּב, "turn") is used figuratively of intensely looking (=seeking) for deliverance out of trouble (W. L. Holladay, Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon, 365); cf. NLT "anxiously search for." It is used elsewhere in parallelism with סָפָה (sufah, "to seek rescue"); Hos 5:15. It does not mean "to seek early" (cf. KJV) as is popularly taught due to etymological connections with the noun סָפָה (sufah, "dawn"); so BDB 1007 s.v. סָפָה.

The causal particle נָתַן (natan, "for the reason that") introduces a second accusation of sin and reason for punishment.

The noun יָדוֹת (yadon, "knowledge") refers to moral knowledge. See note on 1:7.

The noun יָדוֹת (yadon, "knowledge") refers to moral knowledge. See note on 1:7.

The verb "spurned" (נָשׂא, "na'as") is parallel to "comply, accede to, be willing" (e.g., 1:10). This is how the morally stubborn fool acts (e.g., 15:5).

The words "way" (תָּשׁוּבוּ, "to turn") and "ounsel" (מְשַׁבַּת, "to turn") stand in strong contrast to the instruction of wisdom which gave counsel and rebuke to encourage a better way. They will bear the consequences of the course they follow and the advice they take (for that wrong advice, e.g., Ps 1:1).

The verb "to eat to one's fill." The verb סְפַּר (spera) means (1) positive: "to eat one's fill" so that one's appetite is satisfied and (2) negative: "to eat in excess" as a gluton to the point of sickness and revulsion (BDB 959 s.v.). Fools will not only "eat" the fruit of their own way (v. 31a), they will be forced this revolting "menu" which will make them want to vomit (v. 31b) and eventually kill them (v. 32).

The term תְּשׁוֹב (teshuv, "turning away") refers to moral defection and apostasy (BDB 1000 s.v.; cf. ASV "backsliding"). The noun תָּשׁוֹב (tashuv) ("turning away") which appears at the end of Wisdom's speech in 1:32 is from the same root as the verb תָּשׁוֹב (tashuv, "turn!") which appears at the beginning of this speech in 1:23. This repetition of the root סָפָה (sufah, "to turn") creates a wordplay: Because fools refuse to "turn to" wisdom (1:23), they will be destroyed by their "turning away" from wisdom (1:32). The wordplay highlights the poetic justice of their judgment. But here they have never embraced the teaching in the first place; so it means turning from the advice as opposed to turning to it.

19 tn Heb "distress and trouble." The nouns "distress and trouble" mean almost the same thing so they may form a hendiadys. The two similar sounding tenses סָפָה (sufah) and מְשַׁבַּת (sufah) also form a wordplay (paronomasia) which also links them together.

20 tn Heb "look to." The verb סָפָה (sufah, "to look") is used figuratively of intensely looking (=seeking) for deliverance out of trouble (W. L. Holladay, Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon, 365); cf. NLT "anxiously search for." It is used elsewhere in parallelism with סָפָה (sufah, "to seek rescue"); Hos 5:15. It does not mean "to seek early" (cf. KJV) as is popularly taught due to etymological connections with the noun סָפָה (sufah, "dawn"); so BDB 1007 s.v. סָפָה.

21 tn The causal particle נָתַן (natan, "for the reason that") introduces a second accusation of sin and reason for punishment.

22 tn Heb "the fear of the Lord." The noun יָדוֹת (yadon, "knowledge") refers to moral knowledge. See note on 1:7.

23 tn Heb "the fear of the Lord." The noun יָדוֹת (yadon, "knowledge") refers to moral knowledge. See note on 1:7.

24 tn The verb "spurned" (נָשׂא, "na'as") is parallel to "comply, accede to, be willing" (e.g., 1:10). This is how the morally stubborn fool acts (e.g., 15:5).

25 sn The words "way" (תָּשׁוּבוּ, "to turn") and "ounsel" (מְשַׁבַּת, "to turn") stand in strong contrast to the instruction of wisdom which gave counsel and rebuke to encourage a better way. They will bear the consequences of the course they follow and the advice they take (for that wrong advice, e.g., Ps 1:1).

26 tn Heb "to eat to one's fill." The verb סְפַּר (spera) means (1) positive: "to eat one's fill" so that one's appetite is satisfied and (2) negative: "to eat in excess" as a gluton to the point of sickness and revulsion (BDB 959 s.v.). Fools will not only "eat" the fruit of their own way (v. 31a), they will be forced this revolting "menu" which will make them want to vomit (v. 31b) and eventually kill them (v. 32).

27 tn Heb "turning away" (so KJV). The term תְּשׁוֹב (teshuv, "turning away") refers to moral defection and apostasy (BDB 1000 s.v.; cf. ASV "backsliding"). The noun תָּשׁוֹב (tashuv) ("turning away") which appears at the end of Wisdom's speech in 1:32 is from the same root as the verb תָּשׁוֹב (tashuv, "turn!") which appears at the beginning of this speech in 1:23. This repetition of the root סָפָה (sufah, "to turn") creates a wordplay: Because fools refuse to "turn to" wisdom (1:23), they will be destroyed by their "turning away" from wisdom (1:32). The wordplay highlights the poetic justice of their judgment. But here they have never embraced the teaching in the first place; so it means turning from the advice as opposed to turning to it.
simpletons will kill\(^1\) them, and the careless ease\(^2\) of fools will destroy them.

1:33 But the one who listens\(^3\) to me will live in security,\(^4\) and will be at ease\(^5\) from the dread of harm.

Benefits of Seeking Wisdom\(^6\)

2:1 My child,\(^7\) if you receive my words, and store\(^8\) my commands within you, 2:2 by making\(^9\) your ear\(^10\) attentive to wisdom,

and\(^12\) by turning\(^13\) your heart\(^14\) to understanding, 2:3 indeed, if\(^15\) you call out for\(^16\) discernment\(^17\) – raise your voice\(^18\) for understanding – 2:4 if\(^19\) you seek\(^20\) it like silver,\(^21\) and search for it\(^22\) like hidden treasure, 2:5 then you will understand\(^23\) how to fear the Lord,\(^24\) and you will discover\(^25\) knowledge\(^26\) about God.\(^27\)

\(^1\) sn The Hebrew verb “to kill” (חָרָג, harag) is the end of the naive who refuse to change. The word is broad enough to include murder, massacre, killing in battle, and execution. Here it is judicial execution by God, using their own foolish choices as the means to ruin.

\(^2\) tn Heb “complacency” (so NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT); NAB “smugness.” The noun נָטָה (natah) means (1) positively: “quietness; peace; ease” and (2) negatively: “self-sufficiency; complacency; carelessness.” But in parallelism with the idea of storing up the sayings is fitting. They will form the way throughout life and not always immediately applicable, the tens” will enjoy the benefits of the instruction. “Quietness; peace; ease” and (2) negatively: “self-sufficiency; complacency; carelessness.” The Hebrew verb “to kill” (רָג, rāg) means “to destroy; to ruin; to ruin completely; to destroy utterly; to overwhelm.” It is judicial execution by God, using their own foolish choices as the means to ruin.

\(^3\) tn The participles are used substantivally here: “whenever listens” will enjoy the benefits of the instruction.

\(^4\) tn The noun מַעֲשֶׂה (ma‘aseh, “security”) functions as an adversative accusative of manner: “in security.” The phrase refers to living in a permanent settled condition without fear of danger (e.g., Deut 33:12; Ps 16:9). It is the antithesis of the dread of disaster facing the fool and the simple.

\(^5\) tn The Hebrew imperfect of מִשָּׂא (misha, “to lift”) is a Paelal perfect of מִשָּׂא (sh’āan) which means “to be at ease; to rest securely” (BDB 983 s.v. מִשָּׂא). Elsewhere it parallels the verb “to be undisturbed” (Jer 30:10), so it means “to rest undisturbed and quiet.” The duplicated Paelal stem stresses the intensity of the idea. The perfect tense functions in the so-called “prophetic perfect” sense, emphasizing the certainty of this blessing for the wise.

\(^6\) sn The chapter begins with an admonition to receive wisdom (1:4) and then traces the benefits: the knowledge of God and his protection (5-8), moral discernment for living (9-11), protection from evil men (12-15) and immoral women (16-19), and protection for righteous living (20-22).

\(^7\) tn Heb “my son.”

\(^8\) sn Verses 1-11 form one long conditional sentence in the Hebrew text: (1) the protasis (“if…”) encompasses vv. 1-4 and (2) the apodosis (“then…”) consists of two parallel panels in vv. 5-8 and vv. 9-11 both of which are introduced by the preposition מִן (mīn, “then”).

\(^9\) sn The verb “to store up” (לְהַקְשִׁיב, lÿhaqshiv) is a Paelal imperfect of לְקַח (lakkah) in the first, just as “commands” intensifies “words.” This pattern of intensification through parallelism occurs throughout the next three verses. The verb “to store up; to treasure” is used in reference to things of value for future use, e.g., wealth, dowry for a bride. Since proverbs will be useful throughout life and not always immediately applicable, the idea of storing up the sayings is fitting. They will form the way people think which in turn will influence attitudes (W. G. Plaut, Proverbs, 43).

\(^10\) tn The Hiphil infinitive construct בָּקַשְׂתָּם (bakkashə’tam, “by making attentive”) functions as an expository explanation of how one will receive the instruction.

\(^11\) sn The word “ear” is a metonymy of cause; the word is used as the instrument of hearing. But in parallelism with “heart” it indicates one aspect of the mental process of hearing and understanding. A “hearing ear” describes an obedient or responsive person (BDB 24 s.v. בָּקַשָׂה).

\(^12\) tn The conjunction “and” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

\(^13\) tn The Hiphil imperfect (“by turning”) continues the nuance introduced by the infinitive construct in the first colon (GKC 352 §114.f). The verb נָטָה (natah) normally means “to stretch out” and only occasionally “to turn” or “to incline” one’s heart to something, as is the case here.

\(^14\) sn Or “mind” (the center of the will, the choice).

\(^15\) tn Both particles retain their individual meanings, otherwise the verse would begin with a strong adversative and be a contrast to what has been said.

\(^16\) tn Heb “summon.”

\(^17\) sn The noun recalls the second purpose of the book (1:2). It is also cognate to the last word of 2:2, forming a transition. The two objects of the prepositions in this verse are actually personifications, as if they could be summoned.

\(^18\) tn Heb “give your voice”; the expression is idiomatic for raising or lifting the voice to make a sound that carries further (e.g., Jcr 2:15). This deliberate expression indicates that something significant is being uttered. J. H. Greenstone says, “It if (understanding) does not come at your first call, raise your voice to a higher pitch, put forth greater efforts” (Proverbs, 17).

\(^19\) tn The conditional particle now reiterates the initial conditional clause of this introductory section (1-4); the apodosis will follow in v. 5.

\(^20\) tn The verb נָשָׂא (nasā’) means “to search for; to seek; to investigate” (BDB 134 s.v.). This calls for the same diligence one would have in looking for silver.

\(^21\) sn The two similes affirm that the value placed on the object will influence the eagerness and diligence in the pursuit and development of wisdom (e.g., Job 28:9-11). The point is not only that the object sought is valuable, but that the effort will be demanding but rewarding.

\(^22\) sn The verb נָשָׂא (nasā’/nasā) means “to dig; to search” (BDB 344 s.v.; cf. NCV “hunt for it”). The Arabic cognate means “to dig for water.” It is used literally of Joseph searching his brothers’ sacks (Gen 44:12) and figuratively for searching the soul (Ps 64:7). This is a more emphatic word than the one used in the first colon and again emphasizes that acquiring wisdom will be demanding.

\(^23\) sn The verb נָשָׂא (nasā’/nasā) means “to dig; to search” (BDB 344 s.v.; cf. NCV “hunt for it”). The Arabic cognate means “to dig for water.” It is used literally of Joseph searching his brothers’ sacks (Gen 44:12) and figuratively for searching the soul (Ps 64:7). This is a more emphatic word than the one used in the first colon and again emphasizes that acquiring wisdom will be demanding.

\(^24\) sn The two similes affirm that the value placed on the object will influence the eagerness and diligence in the pursuit and development of wisdom (e.g., Job 28:9-11). The point is not only that the object sought is valuable, but that the effort will be demanding but rewarding.

\(^25\) sn The two similes affirm that the value placed on the object will influence the eagerness and diligence in the pursuit and development of wisdom (e.g., Job 28:9-11). The point is not only that the object sought is valuable, but that the effort will be demanding but rewarding.
2:6 For the Lord giveth wisdom, and from his mouth proceedeth knowledge and understanding.

2:7 He hath stored up for those who live knowledge and understanding, and it is for their benefit to store up the paths of the righteous.

2:8 To guard the paths of the righteous is to guard the mouth from evil and to know the path of the upright.

2:9 Then you will understand the way of the pious; and to protect the way of the pious one.

2:10 For wisdom will enter your heart, and moral knowledge will be attractive to you.

2:11 Discretion will protect you, understanding will guard you, and to protect the way of the pious one.

2:12 For the imperfect tense verb יֵשָׁמֶר (yishmore, “to protect”) continues the syntactical nuance of the preceding infinitive construct of purpose.

2:13 The word יִשְׁמֹר (yishmore, “to store up; to treasure up”) is repeated in 2:1 and 2:7. In 2:1 it is the responsibility of man to “store up” wisdom, but in 2:7 it is God who “stores up” wisdom for the wise person who seeks him.

2:14 The phrase “every good way” functions as an attributive genitive: “of good way.”

2:15 To know the best course of action for achieving one’s goal.

2:16 The imperfect tense verb יַעֲשֶׂה (yasheh, “to be”) continues the syntactical nuance of the preceding infinitive construct of purpose.

2:17 The imperfect tense verb יִצְפֹּן (yitsphon) is normally preferred; the scribes are indicating that the received reading is corrupt. The Qere reading is preferred by the LXX and Syriac. The noun יָשָׁר (yashar, “upright”) functions as an attributive genitive: “the ways that the upright take.”

2:18 The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation.

2:19 The infinitive construct יָשָׁמֶר (yishmore, “to store up; to treasure up”) continues the syntactical nuance of the preceding infinitive construct of purpose.

2:20 The noun יִנְעָם (inyaam, “effective counsel”) functions as an attributive genitive: “of effective counsel.”

2:21 The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation.

2:22 The imperfect tense verb יָשָׁפַן (yashphon) is normally preferred; the scribes are indicating that the received reading is corrupt. The Qere reading is preferred by the LXX and Syriac. The imperfect function as a habitual imperfect describing a universal truth in past, present and future.

2:23 The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation.

2:24 The infinitive construct יָשָׁמֶר (yishmore, “to store up; to treasure up”) continues the syntactical nuance of the preceding infinitive construct of purpose.
2:12 to deliver you from the way of the wicked, \(^2\) from those speaking perversity, \(^4\) to walk on the dark ways, \(^7\) who rejoice in perverse evil, \(^11\) whose paths are morally crooked, \(^13\) and who are devious in their ways; \(^14\)

2:16 to deliver you from the adulteress, \(^16\) from the sexually loose woman \(^17\) who speaks flattering words, \(^19\) who leaves the husband \(^21\) from her younger days, \(^22\)  

\(^1\) tn The Hiphil infinitive construct of נָצַל (natsal, “to deliver”) expresses the purpose of understanding right conduct: to protect a person from the wicked. The verb נָצַל (natsal) means “to save; to deliver; to rescue,” as in snatching away prey from an animal, a hostage from enemies, or a woman from the fire, retrieving property, or the like. Here it portrays rescue from the course of action of the wicked. \(^2\) tn The term “wicked” (ם, rv) means “bad, harmful, painful.” Rather than referring to the abstract concept of “wickedness” in general, the term probably refers to wicked people because of the parallelism with “those speaking perversity.” \(^3\) tn Hebrew noun והל (ḥalal, “man”) here will be further defined in vv. 13-15 with plural forms (verbs, nouns and suffixes). So the singular functions in a collective sense which is rendered in a plural sense in the translation for the sake of clarification and smoothness. \(^4\) tn Heb “perversities.” The plural form of דברות תַּהְפֻּכָה (dīḇōrōṯ tāḥpūḵāh) may denote a plurality of number (“perversion things”) or intensification: “awful perversity.” As here, it often refers to the subject of speech (Prov 8:13; 10:31; 32; 23:33). It is related to the noun תַּהְפֻּך (tāḥpūḵ, “that which is contrary, perverse”) which refers to what is contrary to morality (Isa 29:16; Ezek 16:34; BDB 246 s.v. ṭēḇēḵh). The related verb תַּהְפִּיע (tāḥpīʿ, “to turn; to overturn”) is used (1) literally of turning things over, e.g., tipping over a bowl (2 Kgs 21:13) and turning over breadcakes (Judg 7:13; Hos 7:8) and (2) figuratively of perverting things (as here) through the whole formative period within marriage. menstrual bleeding; to part at the parting of the ways.” The noun יְשַׁר (yashar, “rightness; straightness”) is an attributive genitive. The moral vocabulary of the form, expressing the direct object of the participle. 

2:13 who leave the upright paths to walk on the dark ways, who rejoice in perverse evil, they rejoice in perverse evil; \(^11\) whose paths are morally crooked, and who are devious in their ways; \(^14\)  

2:16 to deliver you from the adulteress, from the sexually loose woman who speaks flattering words, who leaves the husband from her younger days,  

\(^15\) sn This purpose clause introduced by מבצעת (mīḇṣetskha, “to deliver you”) parallels the purpose clause introduced by מבצעת (mīḇṣeskha) (“to deliver you”) in v. 12. There it introduced deliverance from the evil man, and now from the evil woman. The description of the evil man encompassed four poetic lines in the Hebrew text (vv. 12-15); likewise, the description of the evil woman is four poetic lines (vv. 16-19). \(^16\) tn Heb “strange woman” (so KJV, NASB); NRSV “the loose woman.” The singular noun אַלּוּף (alaf, “man”) here is a relative clause that does not have a relative pronoun. The purpose of the time of “youth” encompasses the entire formative period within marriage.
and forgets her marriage covenant made before God.²

2:18 For her house³ sinks down to death, and her paths lead⁴ to the place of the departed spirits.⁶

² **tn** Heb “the covenant.” This could refer to the Mosaic covenant that prohibits adultery, or more likely, as in the present translation, to the marriage covenant (cf. also TEV, CEV). The lexicons list this use of “covenant” (יִנָּסְחוּ, yinnaschuh) among other referents to marriage (Prov 2:17; Ezek 16:8; Mal 2:14; BDB 136 s.v. 1.5; HALOT 157 s.v. A.9).

³ **tn** Heb “covenant of God.” The genitive-construct could mean “covenant made before God.” The woman and her husband had made a marriage-covenant in which God was invoked as witness. Her sin is against her solemn pledge to her husband, as well as against God.

⁴ **tn** Or “she sinks her house down to death.” The syntax of this line is difficult. The verb נסח (nisch) is Qal perfect 3rd person feminine singular of נסח ("to sink down") which must take a feminine singular subject – most likely the "loose woman" of 2:16-17. However, most English versions take נסח (nisch) “her house” (ms noun + 3rd person feminine singular suffix) as the subject. The MT reads נסח (nisch) “her house.” (ms noun + 3rd person feminine singular suffix) is masculine rather than feminine so it cannot be the subject. K&D 16:83 suggests that נסח (nisch) (“her house”) is a permutative noun that qualifies the subject: “she together with all that belongs to her [her house] sinks down to death” (GKC 425 §131.k). D. Kidner suggests that “her house” is in apposition to “death” (e.g., Job 17:13; 30:23; Prov 9:18; Eccl 12:5), meaning that death is her house: “she sinks down to death, which is her house” (Proverbs [TOTC], 62). The BHS editors attempt to resolve this syntactical problem by suggesting a conjectural emendation of נסח (nisch) “her house” to the feminine singular noun נסחתה (nischatah) (“her path”) which appears in 7:27, to recover a feminine subject for the sentence: “her house sinks down to death.” However, the reading of the MT is supported by all the versions.

⁵ **tn** In the light of the parallelism, the noun "righteous" (צדק, tzedqem) functions as a genitive possession of death rather than an attributive genitive.

⁶ **tn** Heb “the blameless,” (so NASB, NIV) “the honest” (NASB), “the innocent” (NRSV “the innocent”). The term נסחק (niskhv) ("to be removed") is from the root שָׁחָה (shah), mean "the powerless ones" or "to sink down,” meaning "the powerless ones" or "those who sink down (to Sheol)” (BDB 952 s.v.; HALOT 1274-75 s.v. 1. לְשׁוֹן). It is used in parallelism with נסחק (niskhv), “the dead” to refer to the departed spirits of the dead in Sheol (Ps 88:11; Isa 26:14). The Rephaim inhabit נסחק (niskhv), “the dead” (Ps 2:18), נסחק (niskhv), "to place; to put"): "she established her house near death.” This is a matter of simple orthogaphical error where the word שָׁחָה (shah, "to sink") is derived from the root נָשַׂג (nashag, "to act treacherously" (Ps 22:11; Jer 2:14; Prov 2:11-12; 2 Sam 4:10). The term נסחק (niskhv) preserves the more difficult reading (see following note) so it is probably the original.

⁷ **tn** The verb “lead” is not in the Hebrew but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

⁸ **tn** Heb “to the departed spirits” or “to the Rephaim.” The term רפאים (rafa’im, “Rephaim”) refers to spirits rather than men. It is the term applied to the departed spirits of the dead in Sheol (DDB 952 s.v.; HALOT 1274-75 s.v. 1. לְשׁוֹן). It is used in parallelism with נסחק (niskhv), “the dead” to refer to the departed spirits of the dead in Sheol (Ps 88:11; Isa 26:14). The Rephaim inhabit נסחק (niskhv, “the dead”) to refer to the departed spirits of the dead in Sheol (Ps 88:11; Isa 26:14). The Rephaim inhabit נסחק (niskhv, “the dead”) (Ps 2:18), נסחק (niskhv, “to place; to put”), “she established her house near death.” This is a matter of simple orthogaphical error where the word שָׁחָה (shah, “to sink”) is derived from the root נָשַׂג (nashag, “to act treacherously”) (Ps 22:11; Jer 2:14; Prov 2:11-12; 2 Sam 4:10). The term נסחק (niskhv) preserves the more difficult reading (see following note) so it is probably the original.

⁹ **tn** The Hebrew מָוֶת (metim), “death,” is used in parallelism with יְנָסְחוּ (nischhu), “the dead” to refer to the departed spirits of the dead in Sheol (Ps 88:11). The word מָוֶת (metim) “death” end will end up among the departed spirits in the realm of the dead. This might mean (1) physical death; he will get himself killed by her zealous husband (e.g., Prov 5:23; 6:32-35; 7:23-27) or (2) spiritual death: he will find himself estranged from the community, isolated from the blessings of God, a moral leper, living a shadowy existence of death in the land of no return (W. McKane, Proverbs [OTL], 288).

¹⁰ **tn** Heb “all who go in to her will not return.”

¹¹ **tn** The phrase “reach the paths of life” is a figurative expression for experiencing joy and fullness of blessing (BDB 673 s.v. מַעַן, 2a).

¹² **tn** The conjunction כִּי (kiy, “so; as a result”) introduces the concluding result (BDB 775 s.v. כִּי 2; HALOT 614 s.v. כִּי 2.c) of heeding the admonition to attain wisdom (2:1-21) and to avoid the evil men and women and their destructive ways (2:10-11).

¹³ **tn** Heb “the blameless.” This could refer to the Mosaic covenant (“the good way”) because it is a plural noun and the term “way” (תְּמוּנָה, derekh) is singular. Rather it functions as a genitive of possession identifying the people who walk on this path: “the way of the good people.”

¹⁴ **tn** In the light of the parallelism, the noun “righteous” (צדק, tzedqem) functions as a genitive possession of death rather than an attributive genitive.

¹⁵ **tn** Heb “the blameless,” (so NASB, NIV) “the honest” (NASB), “the innocent” (NRSV “the innocent”). The term נָשַׂג (nashag, “to act treacherously”) (Ps 22:11; Jer 2:14; Prov 2:11-12; 2 Sam 4:10) and those with integrity who are blameless) describes those who live with integrity. They are blameless in that they live above reproach according to the requirements of the law.

¹⁶ **tn** Heb “the guilty.” The term נָשַׂג (nashag, “to act treacherously”) (Ps 22:11; Jer 2:14; Prov 2:11-12; 2 Sam 4:10) and those with integrity (NRSV “the innocent”) describes those who live with integrity. They are blameless in that they live above reproach according to the requirements of the law.

¹⁷ **tn** Heb “to act treacherously.” This is the person who is probably not a covenant member and manifests that in the way he lives, either by sinning against God or committing criminal acts. The noun sometimes refers to guilty criminals who deserve to die (Num 8:26; 35:3; Lev 24:10-11, 16; 1 Sam 24:4). Here they will be “cut off” and “torn away from the land.”

¹⁸ **tn** Heb “cut off.” The verb יָסַח (yaskhu, “to be cut off”) indicates either that the guilty will (1) die prematurely, (2) be excommunicated from the community or (3) be separated eternally in judgment. The Mishnah devoted an entire tractate (m. Keritot) to this topic. The context suggests that the guilty will be “removed” from the land on the day when the righteous dwell in security either through death or expulsion.

¹⁹ **tn** Heb “a bag.” The word יָבִא (yava) means “to act treacherously” (BBD 93 s.v.; HALOT 108 s.v. יב). It describes those who deal treacherously, unfaithfully or deceitfully in marriage relations, matters of property or personal rights, in violating covenants, and in their words and general conduct.

²⁰ **tn** Heb “the covenant” (mishpatim) (Psalms 108:2-7; Prov 2:11-12; 2 Sam 4:10) is vocalized in the MT as רְפָא (rafa), "the imperfect 3rd person masculine plural from רָפָא (rafa), "to heal" but this produces an awkward sense: "they [= the righteous in vv. 20-21] will tear away the treacherous from it” (BDB 650 s.v. רְפָא). Due to the parallelism, the BHS editors suggest emending the form to רְפָא (rafa) which reflects an old Qal passive vocalization – probably the best solution to the problem: “the treacherous will be torn away from it.”
Exhortations to Seek Wisdom and Walk with the Lord

3:1 My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments.

3:2 For they will provide a long and full life, and they will add well-being to you.

3:3 Do not let truth and mercy leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

3:4 Then you will find favor and good understanding, in the sight of God and people.

3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding.

3:6 Acknowledge him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight.

3:7 Do not be wise in your own estimation; fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

3:8 This will bring healing to your body, and protect you from the sight of God and people.

The chapter begins with an introductory exhortation (1-4), followed by an admonition to be faithful to the Lord (5-12). Wisdom is commended as the most valuable possession (13-18), essential to creation (19-20), and the way to a long and safe life (21-26). There then follows a warning to avoid unneighborliness (27-30) and emulate the wicked (31-35).

In the second colon, the verb שָׂר (shar, “or ‘navel”’ or “navel-string”) is used to express purpose or result, even though there is no vav prefixed to it. This indicates that v. 8 is the outcome of v. 7. If a person trusts in the Lord and fears him (vv. 5-7), God will bless him (v. 8).

The form קָרָאת (qara’at, “find”) is imperative but it functions as a purpose/result statement. Following a string of imperatives (v. 3), the imperative with a prefixed vav introduces a volitive sequence expressing purpose or result (v. 4).

The noun בּוֺשֵּׂר (bowser, “understanding”) does not seem to parallel קָרָאת (qara’at, “favor”). The LXX attaches the first two words to v. 3 and renders v. 4: “and devise excellent things in the sight of the Lord and of men.” Tg. Prov 3:4 and Syriac Peshitta list all three words separately: “favor and good understanding.” Ch. H. Toy (Proverbs [ICC], 59) suggests emending the MT’s בּוֺשֵּׂר (bowser, “understanding”) to בּוֺשֶׂר (bowser, “a good name”). It is also possible to take the two words as a hendiadys: the favor of good understanding, meaning, a reputation for good understanding.

The word יָשָׁר (yashar, “true”) is used in the OT (in 1 literal physical sense: to physically lean upon something for support and (2) figurative sense: to rely upon someone or something for help or protection (BDB 305 s.v. I yashar; HALOT 120 s.v. יָשָׁר). The verb is often used with false securities, people trusting in things that prove to be worthless. But here the object of the secure trust is the Lord who is a reliable ob-
and refreshment to your inner self. 3:9 Honor the Lord your wealth and from the first fruits of all your crops; and your barns will be filled completely, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

3:11 My child, do not despise discipline from the Lord, and do not loathe his rebuke.

3:12 For the Lord disciplines those he loves.

Blessings of Obtaining Wisdom

3:13 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who obtains understanding.

3:14 For her benefit is more profitable than silver, and her gain is better than gold.

3:15 She is more precious than rubies, and none of the things you desire can compare with her.

11 tn MT reads בַּעַל (bakh‘al, “and like a father”) but the LXX reflects the Hiphil verb בָּשַׁךְ (bashakh, “and scourges every son he receives”). Both readings fit the parallelism; however, it is unnecessary to emend MT which makes perfectly good sense. The fact that the writer of Hebrews quotes this passage from the LXX and it became part of the inspired NT text does not mean that the LXX reflects the original Hebrew reading here.

12 tn The verb “disciplines” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

13 Although the word רעה (lu‘ah, “blessed”) is frequently translated “happy” here (so KJV, ASV, NAB, NCV, NRSV, TEV, NLT), such a translation can be somewhat misleading because the word means more than that – “happiness” depends on one’s circumstances. This word reflects that inner joy and heavenly bliss which comes to the person who is pleasing to God, whose way is right before God.

14 In Heb “the man” (also again in the following line).

15 The perfect tense verb may be classified as a characteristic or gnomic perfect, as the parallel imperfect tense verb suggests (see note on v. 13b).

16 The imperfect tense verb may be classified as a progressive or habitual imperfect.

17 tn Heb “her profit.” The 3rd person feminine singular suffix on the noun is probably a genitive of source: “from her.”

18 tn Heb “profit.” The noun רעה (lu‘ah, “trading profit”) often refers to the financial profit of traveling merchants (Isa 23:3, 18; 45:14; HALOT 750 s.v.). The related participle describes a traveling “trader, dealer, wholesaler, merchant” (e.g., Gen 37:28; Prov 31:14; Isa 23:2; Ezek 27:36; HALOT 750 s.v. qal2). Here the noun is used figuratively to describe the moral benefit of wisdom.

19 tn The noun רעה (‘lu‘ah) is repeated in this line for emphasis. The two usages draw upon slightly different nuances, creating a polysemic wordplay. The moral “benefit” of wisdom is more “profitable” than silver.

20 tn Heb “her yield.” The 3rd person feminine singular suffix on the noun is probably a genitive of source: “from her.”

21 tn Heb “yield.” The noun הבנת (b‘nah, “product; yield”) is normally used of crops and harvests (BDB 100 s.v. 1). Here it is figurative for the moral benefit of wisdom (BDB 100 s.v. 2b).

22 tn The phrase “is better” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

23 TN Heb “all of your desires cannot compare with her.”

24 TN Heb “your desires.” The 2nd person masculine singular suffix on the noun probably functions as subjective genitive.

25 TN The imperfect tense verb רפח (rakah, “to establish beauty; to resemble”) has a potential nuance here: “can be compared with.”

26 TN Heb “All of your desires do not compare with her.”
3:16 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.
3:17 Her ways are pleasant, and all her paths are peaceful.
3:18 She is like a tree of life to those who obtain her, and everyone who grasps hold of her will be blessed.
3:19 By wisdom the Lord laid the foundation of the earth; he established the heavens by understanding.
3:20 By his knowledge the primordial sea was broken open, and the clouds drip down dew.
3:21 My child, do not let them escape from your sight;

1 tn Heb “length of days” (so KJV, ASV).
2 tn Heb “her ways are ways of pleasantness” (so KJV, NRSV). The present translation contracts this expression for the sake of smoothness. The plural of נַפְשֶׁךָ (naphšekh, “way”) is repeated for emphasis. The noun נַפְשָׁה (naphšah, “pleasantness”) functions as an attributive genitive: “pleasant ways.”
3 tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.
4 sn The metaphor compares wisdom to the symbol of vitality and fullness of life. This might be an allusion to Gen 3:22, where the nemesis of human sin is death, and one who grasps hold of wisdom will obtain life. This might be an allusion to Gen 3:22, where the nemesis of human sin is death, and one who grasps hold of wisdom will obtain life.
5 tn Heb “founded the earth.” The verb יָסַד (yasad, “to establish; to found”) describes laying the foundation of a building (1 Kgs 5:31; HT: 5:17; ET: 7:10; 2 Chr 3:3; Ezra 3:10:12; Zech 4:9) and God laying the foundation of the earth (Job 38:4; Pss 24:2; 89:12; 102:26; 104:5; Isa 48:13; 51:13, 16; Zech 12:1).
6 tn The singular participle פֶּסַל (pesal, “to break open”) functions as a distributive singular for a plural subject (Gen 9:11-12; “each and everyone will be blessed.” Not recognizing this point of syntax, the editors unnecessarily suggest emending this singular form to the plural.
7 tn Heb “lay hold of her.”
8 tn The singular participle פֶּסַל (pesal, “to break open”) functions as a distributive singular for a plural subject (Gen 9:11-12; “each and everyone will be blessed.” Not recognizing this point of syntax, the editors unnecessarily suggest emending this singular form to the plural.
9 sn The theme of God’s use of wisdom in creation is developed through the process by which God established the world to operate according to the principle of wisdom. It is impossible for anyone to live successfully in this world apart from the wisdom that only God can give.
10 sn This might refer to God’s action of dividing the waters to form the dry ground on the third day (Gen 1:9-10) or, less likely, to the breaking up of the fountains of the deep at the flood (Gen 7:11).
11 sn The two colons form a merism: The wisdom of God is behind all forces of nature, whether the violent breaking forth of its watery forces at creation or the provision of the gentle rain and dew throughout history (T. T. Perowne, Proverbs, 55).
12 tn The object of the verb “escape” is either (1) wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in vv. 13-20 or (2) “wisdom and discretion” in the second colon of this verse. Several English versions transpose the terms “wisdom and discretion” from the second colon into the first colon for the sake of clarity.

13 tn Or: “purpose,” “power of devising.”
14 tn Heb “and.” The vav probably denotes purpose/result.
15 tn Heb “they will be.”
16 tn Heb “your soul.” The noun יָשָׁה (yashah, “your soul”) is a synecdoche of part (inner soul) for the whole person (you); see BDB 600 s.v. 4.a.2.
17 tn The phrase “to adorn” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.
18 tn Heb “grace for your neck.” See note on 1:9.
19 tn The noun יָשָׂה (yashah, “your way”) functions as an adversative accusative of location: “on your way.”
20 tn Heb “your foot.” The term יָשָׂה (yashah, “your foot”) functions as a synecdoche of part (foot) for the whole person (you).
21 sn The verb קָשָׂה (qashah, “to strike; to smite”) sometimes means “to stumble” against a stone (e.g., Ps 91:12). Here the object (“stone”) is implied (BDB 619 s.v.). This is a figure (hyperbole) comparing stumbling on a stone in the path to making serious mistakes in life that bring harm.
22 tn The particle גָּזַע (gazah, “if”) here functions in its rare temporal sense (“then”) followed by an imperfect tense (e.g., Num 36:4; BDB 50 s.v. 1.b.4.b).
23 tn Heb “terror.” The verb קָשָׂה (qashah, “terror”) describes emotion that is stronger than mere fear – it is dread.
24 tn The construction of a temporal consecutive + perfect tense followed by a genitive accusative of location. The temporal nuance is also suggested by the parallelism of the preceding colon.
25 sn The verb יָשָׂה (yashah, “to lie down”) is from לָשָׂה (lashah, “to be afraid”) used rhetorically to emphasize that the person who seeks wisdom will have no reason to fear the consequences of wicked actions.
26 tn Heb “do not be afraid.” The negative exhortation אָל־יָשָׂה (al-yashah, “do not be afraid”) is used rhetorically to emphasize that the person who seeks wisdom will have no reason to fear the consequences of wicked actions.
27 sn The noun יָשָׂה (yashah, “terror”) is from לָשָׂה (lashah, “to lie down”) used rhetorically to emphasize that the person who seeks wisdom will have no reason to fear the consequences of wicked actions.
28 tn Heb “terror of suddenness.” The noun קָשָׂה (qashah, “terror”) is from לָשָׂה (lashah, “to lie down”) used rhetorically to emphasize that the person who seeks wisdom will have no reason to fear the consequences of wicked actions.
29 tn Heb “terror of suddenness.” The noun קָשָׂה (qashah, “terror”) is from לָשָׂה (lashah, “to lie down”) used rhetorically to emphasize that the person who seeks wisdom will have no reason to fear the consequences of wicked actions.
30 tn Heb “or when destruction overtakes the wicked.”

safeguard sound wisdom and discretion.
3:22 So they will give life to you, and grace to adorn your neck.
3:23 Then you will walk on your way with security, and you will not stumble.
3:24 When you lie down you will not be filled with fear, when you lie down your sleep will be pleasant.
3:25 You will not be afraid of sudden disaster, or when destruction overtakes the wicked.
3:26 for the Lord will be the source of your confidence, and he will guard your foot from being caught in a trap.

Wisdom Demonstrated in Relationships with People

3:27 Do not withhold good from those who need it, when you have the ability to help.

3:28 Do not say to your neighbor, “Go! Return tomorrow and I will give it,” when you have it with you at the time.

4  tn Or “the Lord will be at your side.” Assuming that the noun קסעל (kesel) is related to the root לכס ("confidence"); BDB 482 s.v. קסעל, the preposition ב (bet) introduces the predicate noun קסעל (kislekha, "your confidence") and function as an attributive genitive. The Qere emphasizes the quality or nature of the noun (BDB 88 s.v. ב; HALOT 104 s.v. ב): “the Lord will be your confidence.” However, if the noun is related to לכס ("loins; side"); HALOT 489 s.v. קסעל 2), the preposition ב (bet) would function in a locative sense: “the Lord will be at your side.” See fn on the following phrase “source of your confidence.”

2 tn Heb “your confidence” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV) or “at your hand.” The term קסעל (kesel) is related to the root לכס ("confidence") or "when it is in your power to act" (NIV). The noun קסעל (= you).

5 tn The form קסעל (kesel) is related to the root לכס ("confidence") or "when it is in your power to act" (NIV). The noun קסעל (= you).

6 tn The MT has “from the poor.” C. H. Toy (Proverbs [ICC], 77) suggests emending the text to read “neighbors” (changing קסעל to קסעל, re’ekha) but that is gratuitous. The idea can be explained as being those who need to possess it, or as the poor (see 3:9).

7 tn The prefix קסעל (kesel) has it with an objective genitive, “the owner of confidence.” The term קסעל (kesel) is related to Kethib/Qere reading. The Kethib is the dual קסעל ("your hands") and the Qere is the singular קסעל, your hand). Normally the Qere is preferred because it represents an alternate textual tradition that the Masoretes viewed as superior to the received text.

8 tn Heb “your hand.” The term קסעל ("your hand") functions as a synecdoche of part (= your foot) for the whole person (= you).

9 tn Heb “it is to the power of your hand.” This expression is idiomatic for “it is in your power” or “you have the ability” (Gen 31:29; Deut 28:23; Neh 5:5; Mic 5:2). The noun קסעל (kesel) means “power” (BDB 43 s.v. ת), and קסעל ("hand") is used figuratively to denote “ability” (BDB 390 s.v. ב). Several translations render this as “when it is in your power to do it” (KJV, RSV, NRSV, NASB) or “when it is in your power to act” (NIV), W. McKane suggests, “when it is in your power to confer it” (Proverbs [OTL], 215).

9  tn Heb “to do it” (cf. KJV, NASB, NRSV).

10 tn Heb “and it is with you.” The prefixed vav introduces a circumstantial clause: “when...”

11 tn The words “at the time” are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied in the translation for clarity.

12 tn The verb קסעל (kesel) means “to cut in; to engrave; to plough; to devise.” The idea of plotting is metaphorical for working, practicing or fabricating (BDB 560 s.v.).

13  tn The word קסעל (kesel) refers because it represents an alternate textual tradition that the Masoretes viewed as superior to the received text. The noun קסעל (= you).

14 tn The form קסעל (kesel) is related to the root לכס ("confidence") or "when it is in your power to act" (NIV). The noun קסעל (= you).

15 tn The prefix קסעל (kesel) has it with an objective genitive, “the owner of confidence.” The term קסעל (kesel) is related to Kethib/Qere reading. The Kethib is the dual קסעל ("your hands") and the Qere is the singular קסעל, your hand). Normally the Qere is preferred because it represents an alternate textual tradition that the Masoretes viewed as superior to the received text.

16 tn Heb “gloriously”; NIV, TEV “for no (+ good NCV) reason.” The adverb קסעל (kesel) means “without cause, undeservedly,” especially of groundless hostility (HALOT 334 s.v. ב; BDB 336 s.v. כ).

17 tn Heb “a man of violence.” The noun קסעל (kesel) = the one to whom it is due. The preposition ב (bet) would function in a locative sense: “the Lord will be at your side.” See fn on the following phrase “source of your confidence.”

18 tn Heb “do not envy a violent man, a man of violence” functions as an attributive genitive. The word itself means “violence, wrong” (HALOT 329 s.v.) and refers to physical violence, social injustice, harsh treatment, wild ruthlessness, injurious words, hatred, and general rudeness (BDB 329 s.v.).

19 tn Heb “do not take it.”

20 tn The basic meaning of the verb קסעל (kesel) is “to turn aside; to depart” (BDB 531 s.v.). The Niphal stem is always used figuratively of moral apostasy from the path of righteousness: (1) “to go astray” (Prov 2:15; 3:32; 14:2) and (2) “crookedness” in action (Isa 30:12; see HALOT 522 s.v. יִנְפָּה; NIV, niph).

21 tn Heb “Do not accuse a man with the upright is his intimate counsel.” The phrase “he reveals” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness and clarity.

22 tn Heb “and I will give it,” when it is in your power to act” (NIV), W. McKane suggests, “when it is in your power to confer it” (Proverbs [OTL], 215).

23 tn Heb “the curse of the Lord.” This expression features a genitive of possession or source: “the Lord’s curse” or “a curse from the Lord.” The noun קסעל (kesel) = the one to whom it is due. The preposition ב (bet) would function in a locative sense: “the Lord will be at your side.” See fn on the following phrase “source of your confidence.”

24 tn The verb קסעל (kesel) means “to cut in; to engrave; to plough; to devise.” The idea of plotting is metaphorical for working, practicing or fabricating (BDB 560 s.v.).
Admonition to Follow Righteousness and Avoid Wickedness

4:1 Listen, children, to a father’s instruction, and pay attention so that you may gain discernment.

4:2 Because I give you good instruction, do not forsake my teaching.

4:3 When I was a son to my father, a tender only child before my mother, I was the only one. The phrase רַךְ וְיָחִיד (‘tender and only one’) is a hendiadys meaning ‘tender and only one.’ The phrase רַךְ (‘tender’) has poetic justice; the punishment fits the crime. Scoffers are characterized by arrogance and undeveloped in character (e.g., 2 Sam 3:39). The adjective רַךְ (‘tender’) means “tender; delicate” (BDB 940 s.v. רך), and describes a lad who is young and undeveloped in character (e.g., 2 Sam 3:39). The adjective יָחִיד (‘only one’) refers to a beloved and prized only child (e.g., Gen 22:2).

4:4 I gave my heart to wisdom, to pursue understanding.

4:5 Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding; do not forget and do not turn aside from the words I speak.

4:6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will guard you.

4:7 Wisdom is supreme...

1 sn The Hebrew is structured chiastically (AB:BA): “he lifts up”: singular Hiphil perfect; the subject is personified “wisdom,” which has been specified in the text. The word order in the translation is reversed for the sake of smoothness and readability.

2 tn Heb “house.” The term הבֹּית (bet, “house”) functions as a synecdoche of container (= house) for the persons contained (= household). See, e.g., Exod 1:21; Deut 6:22; Josh 22:15 (BDB 109 s.v. 5.a).

3 sn The term “bless” (ברך, barakh) is the antithesis of “curse.” A blessing is a gift, enrichment, or endowment. The word order in the translation is reversed for the sake of smoothness and readability.

4 sn The verse uses repetition for the imperative “acquire” to underscore the importance of getting wisdom; it then uses two verb forms for the one prepositional phrase to stress the warning.

5 sn The chapter includes an exhortation to acquire wisdom (1-4a), a list of the benefits of wisdom (4b-9), a call to pursue a righteous lifestyle (10-13), a warning against a wicked lifestyle (14-19), and an exhortation to righteousness (20-27).

6 sn The Qal infinitive construct with preposition מ (lamed) indicates the purpose/result of the preceding imperative.

7 tn Heb “discipline.”

8 tn The Qal infinitive construct with preposition ג (‘im, “though”) introduces a concessive clause: “though... yet...”

9 tn The Hebrew is structured chiastically (AB:BA): “he scorns / arrogant scoffers / but to the humble / he gives grace.” The word order in the translation is reversed for the sake of smoothness and readability.

10 tn MT reads מֵרִים (merim, “merits up”): singular Hiphil participle of מָשַׁק (num, “to rise; to exalt”), functioning verbally with the לֶקַח as the implied subject: “but he lifts up fools to shame.” The LXX and Vulgate reflect the plural מֶשֶׁק (mishqem, “they exalt”) with “fools” (ὑδασάς, kelesmata) as the explicit subject: “but fools exalt shame.” The textual variant was caused by haplography or dittography of מ (depending on whether MT or the alternate tradition is original).

11 tn The noun יָחִיד (‘only one’) is an alternate form of יַחְיָד (‘tender only child’) which means (1) “to treat something lightly,” (2) “to treat with contempt [or, with little esteem]” or (3) “to curse.” The noun refers to personal disgrace or shame. While the wise will inherit honor, fools will be made a public display of dishonor. God lets fools entangle themselves in their folly in a way for all to see.
4:8 Esteem her highly⁴ and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.
4:9 She will place a fair⁵ garland on your head; she will bestow⁶ a beautiful crown⁷ on you.

4:10 Listen, my child,⁸ and accept my words, so that⁹ the years of your life will be many.¹⁰
4:11 I will guide you¹¹ in the way of wisdom and I will lead you in upright paths.¹²
4:12 When you walk, your steps¹³ will not be hampered.¹⁴

¹ The term “so” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness and style.
² The noun נッツיר (natsar) means “thing got or acquired; acquisition” (BDB 889 s.v.). With the preposition that denotes price, it means “with (or at the price of) all that you have acquired.” The point is that no price is too high for wisdom – give everything for it (K&D 16:108).
³ The verse is not in the LXX; some textual critics delete the preposition that denotes price. The verb make use of the idiom – the verb is the Hiphil perfect from נッツיר (natsar), referring to that which is narrow or constricted, signifying disfigurement, trouble, adversity; this volitive sequence depicts purpose/result.
⁴ The verb ירה (yarah) is the Pilpel imperative from ירהו (yarah) (as in בְּלֶכְתְּךָ מָגַן (bellekhtÿkha magan) “wagon tracks, paths.”). Both the verb and the object of the preposition make use of the idiom – the verb is the Hiphil perfect from נッツור (natsar) (derekh, related to “road; way”) and the object is “wagon tracks, paths.”
⁵ The noun נッツור (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
⁶ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
⁷ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
⁸ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
⁹ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
¹⁰ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
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¹⁴ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”

so⁴ acquire wisdom, and whatever you acquire,⁵ acquire understanding.¹³

and when you run,¹⁵ you will not stumble.  
4:13 Hold on to instruction,¹⁶ do not let it go; protect it,¹⁷ because it is your life.
4:14 Do not enter the path of the wicked or walk¹⁸ in the way of those who are evil.
4:15 Avoid it, do not go on it; turn away from it, and go on.¹⁹
4:16 For they cannot sleep unless they cause harm,²⁰ they are robbed of sleep²¹ until they make someone stumble.²²
4:17 For they eat bread²³ gained from wickedness²⁴ and drink wine obtained from violence.²⁵
4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the bright morning light²⁶ represents freedom and deliverance.

¹⁵ The progression from walking to running is an idiom called “anabasis,” suggesting that as greater and swifter progress is made, there will be nothing to impede the progress (e.g., Isa 40:31).
¹⁶ In Heb “discipline.”
¹⁷ The form צא (tsa) from צא (tsahar) an anomalous doubled letter (see GKC 73 §20.h.)
¹⁸ The verb נץ (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
¹⁹ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
²⁰ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
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²⁵ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
²⁶ The noun נッツאר (natsar) “to teach; to instruct; to discipline.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for “wagon tracks, paths.”
Admonition to Avoid Seduction to Evil

5:1 My child, be attentive to my wisdom, pay close attention to my understanding.

5:2 In order to safeguard discretion and that your lips may guard knowledge.

4:19 The way of the wicked is like gloomy darkness; they do not know what causes them to stumble.

4:20 My child, pay attention to my words; listen attentively to my sayings.

4:21 Do not let them depart from your sight, guard them within your heart; for from it are the sources of life.

4:22 For they are life to those who find them and healing to one’s entire body.

4:23 Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it are the sources of life.

4:24 Remove perverse speech from your mouth; keep devious talk far from your lips.

4:25 Let your eyes look directly in front of you and let your gaze look straight before you.

4:26 Make the path for your feet level, so that all your ways may be established.

4:27 Do not turn to the right or to the left; turn yourself away from evil.
5:3 For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her seductive words are smoother than olive oil.
5:4 but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.
5:5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.
5:6 Least she should make level the path leading to life, but she does not know it.
5:7 So now, children, listen to me; do not turn aside from the words I speak.

5:8 Keep yourself far from her, and do not go near the door of her house.
5:9 lest you give your vigor to others and your years to a cruel person.
5:10 lest strangers devour your strength, and your labor benefit another man’s house.
5:11 And at the end of your life you will groan when your flesh and your body are wasted away.
5:12 And you will say, “How I hated discipline! My heart spurned reproof!

5:13 For I did not obey my teachers, and I did not heed my instructors.
5:14 I almost came to complete ruin in the midst of the whole congregation!”

2 sn Heb “her palate.” The word פֶּן (khekh, “palate; roof of the mouth; gums”) is a metonymy of cause (= organ of speech) for what is said (= her seductive speech). The present translation clarifies this metonymy with the phrase “her seductive words.”
3 sn Heb “her end” (so KJV). D. Kidner notes that Proverbs does not allow us to forget that there is an afterward (Proverbs [TOTC], 65).
4 sn The verb “to be bitter” (マル, marar) describes things that are harmful and destructive for life, such as the death of the members of the family of Naomi (Ruth 1:20) or finding water that was undrinkable (Exod 15:22-27). The word indicates that the sweet talking will turn out badly.
5 tn The Hebrew term translated “wormwood” refers to the aromatic plant that contrasts with the sweetness of honey. Some follow the LXX and translate it as “gall” (cf. NIV). The aromatic plant that contrasts with the sweetness of honey is Semen menthae (the oil of peppermint) or Mentha pulegium (the oil of wild mint), both of which are aromatic herbs that produce a pungent liquid that is bitter in taste, yet is commonly used as a condiment in cooking and as an aromatic ingredient in tea. See D. W. Thomas, “A Note on the words of Proverbs 5:14,” JTS 37 (1936): 59.
6 sn The Hebrew has “like a sword of [two] mouths,” meaning a double-edged sword that devours/cuts either way. There is no movement without damage. There may be a wordplay here with this description of the “sword of two mouths,” and the subject of the passage being the words of her mouth which also have two sides to them. The irony is cut by the idiom.
7 tn The term כִּמְעַט (she’el, “grave”) is paralleled to “death,” so it does not refer here to the realm of the unblemished.
8 sn The terms death and grave could be hyperbolic of a ruined life, but probably refer primarily to the mortal consequences of a life of debauchery.
9 tn The particle פֶּן (pen) means “lest” (probably from “for the averison of”). It occurs this once, unusually, preceding the principal clause (BDB 814 s.v.). It means that some action has been taken to avert or avoid what follows. She avoids the path of life, albeit ignorantly.
10 tn Heb “the path of life.” The noun קְוִיָּם (“of life”) functions as a genitive of direction (“leading to”).
11 sn The sadder part of the description is that this woman does not know how unstable her life is, or how uneven. However, Thomas suggests that it means, “she is not tranquil.” See D. W. Thomas, “A Note on the words of Proverbs 5:14,” JTS 37 (1936): 59.
12 tn Heb “sobs.”
13 tn Heb “the words of my mouth” (so KJV, NAB, NRSV).
14 tn Heb “your way.”
15 sn There is a contrast made between “keep far away” ( להקך, harkheq) and “do not draw near” (לֹא־הָבֹא, v’al-tiqrat).
16 sn The term יָד (yad, “vigor; splendor; majesty”) in this context means the best time of one’s life (cf. NIV “your best strength”), the full manly vigor that will be wasted with licentiousness. Here it is paralleled by “years,” which refers to the best years of that vigor, the prime of life. Life would be ruined by living this way, or the revenge of the woman’s husband would cut it short.
17 tn Or “are sated, satisfied.”
18 tn The word כּוּקְח (coakh, “strength”) refers to what laborious toil would produce (so a metonymy of cause). Everything that this person worked for could become the property for others to enjoy.
19 tn “labor, painful toil.”
20 tn The term “benefit” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.
21 tn Heb “at your end.”
22 tn In the form is the perfect tense with the vav consecutive; it is equal to a specific future within this context.
23 sn The verb means “to growl, groan.” It refers to a lion when it devours its prey, and to a sufferer in pain or remorse (e.g., Ezek 24:23).
24 sn The form introduces this clause functions in an explanatory sense.
25 sn The Hebrew term יַרְחֵק (yarah) is the nominal form based on the Hiphil plural participle with a suffix, from the root יָרָה (yarah). The verb is “to teach,” the common noun is “instruction, law (torah),” and this participle form is teacher (“my teachers”).
26 sn The idioms are vivid: This expression is “incline the ear”; earlier in the first line is “listen to the voice,” meaning “obey.” Such detailed description emphasizes the importance of the material.
27 sn The form is the Piel plural participle of יָלַד (lamad) used substantivally.
28 sn In the expression קִימָע (kimâ’ut) is “like a little.” It means “almost,” and is used of unrealized action (BDB 590 s.v. 2). Cf. NCV “I came close to”; NLT “I have come to the brink of.”
29 sn Heb “I was in all evil” (cf. KJV, ASV).
30 sn The text uses the two words “congregation and assembly” to form a hendiadys, meaning the entire assembly.
5:15 Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well.\(^1\)  
5:16 Should your springs be dispersed outside, your streams of water in the wide plazas?  
5:17 Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you.  
5:18 May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in your young wife  
-  
5:19 a loving doe,\(^9\) a graceful deer; may her breasts satisfy you at all times, may you be captivated by her love always.  
5:20 But why should you be captivated of my son, by an adulteress, and embrace the bosom of a different woman?\(^{11}\)

5:21 For the ways of a person\(^2\) are in front of the Lord's eyes, and the Lord\(^{3}\) weighs all that person's paths.  
5:22 The wicked\(^{16}\) will be captured by his own iniquities, and he will be held by the cords of his own sin.  
5:23 He will die because there was no discipline; because of the greatness of his folly\(^{22}\) he will reel.\(^{23}\)

Admonitions and Warnings against Dangerous and Destructive Acts\(^24\)

6:1 My child,\(^{28}\) if you have made a pledge for your neighbor, with moral abandonment she is called “foreign.”

\(^1\) sn Paul Kruger develops this section as an allegory consisting of a series of metaphors. He suggests that what is at issue is private versus common property. The images of the cistern, well, or fountain are used of a wife (e.g., Song 4:15) because she, like water, satisfies desires. Streams of water in the street would then mean sexual contact with a lewd woman. According to 7:12 she never stays home but is in the streets and is the property of many (P. Kruger, “Promiscuity and Marriage Fidelity? A Note on Prov 5:15-18,” JNSL 13 [1987]: 61-68).

\(^2\) tn The verb means “to be scattered; to be dispersed” here the imperfect takes a deliberative nuance in a rhetorical question.

\(^3\) tn The נִשְׁאָרָה (’nashēra) preposition denotes possession: “for you” or “in your house.” The term נִשְׁאָרָה (n’sēra) is appositional, underscoring the possession as exclusive.

\(^4\) sn The point is that what is private is not to be shared with strangers; it belongs in the home and in the marriage. The water from that cistern is not to be channeled to strangers or to the public.

\(^5\) sn The positive instruction is now given: Find pleasure in a fulfilling marriage. The “fountain” is another in the series of implied comparisons with the sexual pleasure that must be fulfilled at home. That it should be blessed (the passive participle of בָּרָחָה, barakh) indicates that sexual delight is God-given; having it blessed would mean that it would be endowed with fruitfulness, that it would fulfill all that God intended it to do.

\(^6\) tn The form is a Qal imperative with a particle. Or “in the wife you married when you were young” (cf. NIV, NLT). The genitive functions as an attributive adjective: “young wife” or “youthful wife.” Another possibility is that it refers to the age in which a man married his wife: “the wife you married in your youth.”

\(^7\) tn Or “in the wife you married when you were young” (cf. NOV, CEV); Heb “in the wife of your youth” (so NIV, NLT). The genitive functions as an attributive adjective: “young wife” or “youthful wife.” Another possibility is that it refers to the age in which a man married his wife: “the wife you married in your youth.”

\(^8\) tn The construct expression “a doe of loves” is an attributive genitive, describing the doe with the word “loves.” The plural noun may be an abstract plural of intensification (but this noun only occurs in the plural). The same construction follows with a “deer of grace” – a graceful deer.

\(^9\) sn The imagery for intimate love in marriage is now employed to stress the beauty of sexual fulfillment as it was intended. The doe and deer, both implied comparisons, exhibit the grace and love of the wife.

\(^10\) sn The verb פָּלַס (pals) means “to swerve; to meander; to reel” as in drunkenness; it signifies a staggering gait expressing the ecstatic joy of a captivated lover. It may also mean “to be always intoxicated with her love” (cf. NRSV).

\(^11\) tn In the interrogative clause the imperfect has a deliberative nuance.

\(^12\) tn "Heb “man.”

\(^13\) tn Heb “he”; the referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

\(^14\) tn BDB 814 s.v. פָּלַס 2 suggests that the participle פָּלַס (pals) means “to make level [or, straight].” As one’s ways are in front of the eyes of the Lord, they become straight or right. It could be translated “weights” since it is a denominative from the noun for “balance, scale”; the Lord weighs or examines the actions.

\(^15\) tn Heb “all his”; the referent (the person mentioned in the first half of the verse) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

\(^16\) tn The suffix on the verb is the direct object suffix; “the wicked” is a second object by apposition: They capture him, the wicked. Since “the wicked” is not found in the LXX, it could be an old scribal error; or the Greek translator may have simply smoothed out the sentence. C. H. Toy suggests turning the sentence into a passive idea: “The wicked will be caught in his iniquities” (Proverbs [ICC], 117).

\(^17\) tn The word is the subject of the clause, but the pronominal suffix has no clear referent. The suffix is proleptic, referring to the wicked.

\(^18\) tn Heb “his own iniquities will capture the wicked.” The translation shifts the syntax for the sake of smoothness and readability.

\(^19\) sn The lack of discipline and control in the area of sexual gratification is destructive. The one who plays with this kind of sin will become ensnared by it and led to ruin.

\(^20\) tn The Hebrew is structured chiastically: “his own iniquities will capture the wicked, by the cords of his own sin will he be held.”

\(^21\) tn The preposition ב (bet) is used in a causal sense: “because” (cf. NOV, TEV, CEV).

\(^22\) sn The word הַיְּלִיָּה (’yelīyāh, “his folly”) is from the root יָלָל (’alal) and is related to the noun יַלִי (’al, “foolish; fool”). The noun יָלָדָה (’aladāh, “foolish; destructive activity.” It lacks understanding, destroys what wisdom builds, and leads to destruction if it is not corrected.

\(^23\) sn The verb חָשַׁךׁ (shakāh, “to swerve; to reel”) is repeated in a negative sense. If the young man is not captivated by his wife but is captivated with a stranger in sinful acts, then his own iniquities will captivate him and he will be led to ruin.

\(^24\) sn The chapter advises release from foolish indebtedness (1-5), admonishes avoiding laziness (6-11), warns of the danger of poverty (9-11) and deviousness (12-15), lists conduct that the Lord hates (16-19), and warns about immorality (20-35).

\(^25\) tn Heb “my son” (likewise in vv. 3, 20).

\(^26\) sn It was fairly common for people to put up some kind of financial security for someone else, that is, to underwrite another’s debts. But the pledge in view here was foolish because the debtor was a neighbor who was not well known (זָר, zar), perhaps a misfit in the community. The one who pledged security for this one was simply gullible.


6:2 if you have been ensnared by the words you have uttered, and have been caught by the words you have spoken, 6:3 then, my child, do this in order to deliver yourself, because you have fallen into your neighbor’s power, go, humble yourself, and appeal firmly to your neighbor.

6:4 Permit no sleep to your eyes, or slumber to your eyelids.

6:5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from a snare, and like a bird from the trap of the fowler.

6:6 Go to the ant, you sluggard, observe its ways and be wise! 6:7 It has no commander, overseer, or ruler, 6:8 yet it prepares its food in the summer; it gathers at the harvest what it will eat.

6:9 How long, you sluggard, will you lie there? When will you rise from your sleep?

6:10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to relax, and your poverty will come like a robber.

and have become a guarantor for a stranger. 6:2 you have been ensnared by the words you have uttered, and have been caught by the words you have spoken, 6:3 then, my child, do this in order to deliver yourself, because you have fallen into your neighbor’s power, go, humble yourself, and appeal firmly to your neighbor.

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6:9 How long, you sluggard, will you lie there? When will you rise from your sleep?

6:10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to relax, and your poverty will come like a robber, and your need like an armed man.
6:12 A worthless and wicked person walks around saying perverse things; he winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, and points with his fingers; he plots evil with perverse thoughts in his heart, he spreads contention at all times. Therefore, his disaster will come suddenly; in an instant he will be broken, and there will be no remedy.

6:16 There are six things that the Lord hates, even seven things that are an abomination to him:

6:17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.

6:18 A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift to run to evil, a false witness who pours out lies, and a person who spreads discord among family members.

6:20 My child, guard the commands of your father and do not forsake the instruction of your mother.

6:21 Bind them on your heart continually; fasten them around your neck.

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1 sn The terms describe one who is both worthless and wicked. Some suggest that בְּלִי יָעַל (b’liy’al, “lack of feet”) is a compound of the negative בָּלַע (b’la, “deceitful”) and a noun יָעַל (ya’al, “profit; worth”). Others suggest that the root is from בָּל (b’l, “lord [of goats]”) or a derivative of בָּלַע (b’la) with reduplication (“confusion” or “engulfing ruin”), or a proper name from Babylonian Bilitu. See B. Otzen, TBDT 2:131-36; and D. W. Thomas, “The Numerical Sequence in the Old Testament,” Biblical and Patristic Studies in Memory of Robert Pierce Casey, 11:19. Whatever the etymology, usage shows that the term describes people who violate the law (Deut 15:9; Judg 19:22; 1 Kgs 21:10, 13; Prov 16:27; et al.) or act in a contemptuous and foolish manner against cultic observance or social institutions (1 Sam 10:27; 25:17; 30:22); cf. NRSV “a scoundrel and a villain” (NAB and NJV similar). The present instruction will focus on the devious practice of such wicked and worthless folk.

2 tn Heb “crooked” or “twisted.” This term can refer to something that is physically twisted or crooked, or something morally perverse. Cf. NAB “crooked talk”; NRSV “crooked speech.”

3 tn Heb “walks around with a perverse mouth.” The term “mouth” is a metonymy of cause, an organ of speech put for the thing that is physically twisted or crooked, or something morally perverse. Some suggest that the root is from בָּל (b’l, “lord [of goats]”) or a noun בָּל (b’l, “profit; worth”). Others suggest that the root is from בָּל (b’l, “lord [of goats]”) or a derivative of בָּלַע (b’la) with reduplication (“confusion” or “engulfing ruin”), or a proper name from Babylonian Bilitu. See B. Otzen, TBDT 2:131-36; and D. W. Thomas, “The Numerical Sequence in the Old Testament,” Biblical and Patristic Studies in Memory of Robert Pierce Casey, 11:19. Whatever the etymology, usage shows that the term describes people who violate the law (Deut 15:9; Judg 19:22; 1 Kgs 21:10, 13; Prov 16:27; et al.) or act in a contemptuous and foolish manner against cultic observance or social institutions (1 Sam 10:27; 25:17; 30:22); cf. NRSV “a scoundrel and a villain” (NAB and NJV similar). The present instruction will focus on the devious practice of such wicked and worthless folk.

4 sn The sinister sign language and gestures of the perverse individual seem to indicate any kind of look or gesture that is put on and therefore a form of deception if not a way of saying something other than what is said. This is an individual who says perverted or twisted things.

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6 sn The word “contention” is from the root בָּל (b’l, “profit; worth”). The noun means “strife, contention, quarrel.” The normal plural form is represented by the Qere, and the contracted form by the Kethib.

7 tn The word is a substantive that is used here as an adverbial accusative – with suddenness, at an instant.

8 sn The conjunction has the explicative use here (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 71, §434).

9 sn This saying involves a numerical ladder, paralleling six things with seven things (e.g., also 30:15-21, 18, 21, 24, 29). The point of such a numerical arrangement is that the number does not exhaust the list (W. M. Roth, “The Numerical Sequence x / x +1 in the Old Testament,” VT 12 [1962]: 303-311; in his “Numerical Sayings in the Old Testament,” VT 13 [1965]: 86).

10 tn Heb “his soul.”

11 sn The expression “highly lofty” יַעַל, "ramar" eyes refers to a proud look suggesting arrogant ambition (cf. NCV “a proud look”). The use of “eyes” is a metonymy of adjunct, the look in the eyes accompanying the attitude. This term “high” is used in Num 15:30 for the sin of the “high hand,” i.e., willful rebellion or defiant sin. The usage of “haughty eyes” may be illustrated by its use with the pompous Assyrian invader (Isa 10:12-14) and the proud king of the book of Daniel (11:12). God does not tolerate anyone who thinks so highly of himself and who has such ambition.

12 sn Heb “a tongue of deception.” The genitive noun functions attributively. The term “tongue” functions as a metonymy. The term is used of false prophets who deceive (Jer 23:16; 44:14), and of a deceiver who betrays (Ps 109:2). The Lord hates deceptive speech because it is destructive (26:28).

13 sn The hands are the instruments of murder (metonymy of cause), and God hates bloodshed. Gen 9:6 prohibited shedding blood because people are the image of God. Even David being a man of blood (in war mostly) was not permitted to build the Temple (1 Chr 22:8). But shedding innocent blood was a greater crime – it usually went with positions of power, such as King Manasseh filling the streets with blood (2 Kgs 21:16), or princes doing it for gain (Ezek 22:27).

14 tn Heb “heart that devises plans of wickedness.” The latter term is an attributive genitive. The heart (metonymy of subject) represents the will; here it plots evil schemes. The heart is capable of evil schemes (Gen 6:5); the heart that does this is deceitful (Prov 12:20; 14:22).

15 tc The MT reads “make haste to run,” that is, be eager to seize the opportunity. The LXX omits “run,” that is, feet hastening to do evil. It must have appeared to the LXX translator that the verb was unnecessary; only one verb occurs in the other cola.

16 sn The Lord hates perjury and a lying witness (e.g., Ps 40:4; Amos 2:4; Mic 1:4). This is a direct violation of the law (Exod 20).

17 sn Dissension is attributed in Proverbs to contentious people (21:9; 26:21; 25:24) who have a short fuse (15:8).

18 tn Heb “brothers,” although not limited to male siblings only. Cf. NRSV, CEV “in a family”; TEV “among friends.”

19 sn These seven things the Lord hates. To discover what the Lord desires, one need only list the opposites: humility, truthful speech, preservation of life, pure thoughts, eagerness to do good, honest witnesses, and peaceful harmony. In the NT the Beatitudes present the “positive opposites” (Matt 5). It has seven blessed things to match these seven hated things; moreover, the first contrasts with the first here (“poor in spirit” of 5:5 with “haughty eyes”), and the seventh (“peacemakers” of 5:7) contrasts with the seventh here (“sows dissension”).

19 sn The figures used here are hypocatastases (implied comparisons). There may also be an allusion to Deut 6 where the people were told to bind the law on their foreheads and arms. The point here is that the disciple will never be without these instructions. See further, P. W. Skehan, Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom (CBQMS), 1-8.
6:22 When you walk about, they will guide you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; when you wake up, they will talk to you.

6:23 For the commandments are like a lamp, like a lamp of instructions, and the rebukes of discipline are like the road leading to life, so is the woman from the smooth tongue of the loose woman.

6:24 by keeping you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the loose woman.

6:25 Do not lust in your heart for her beauty, and do not let her captivate you with her alluring eyes.

6:26 for on account of a prostitute one is brought down to a loaf of bread, but the wife of another man presys on your precious life.

6:27 Can a man hold fire against his chest without burning his clothes?

6:28 Can a man walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?

6:29 So it is with the one who has sex here in the sense of lust. The word is used in the Decalogue of Deut 5:21 for the warning against coveting.

sn Lusting after someone in the heart, according to Jesus, is a sin of the same kind as the act, not just the first step toward it (Matt 5:28). Playing with temptation in the heart – the thought of the woman and the emotions – is only the heart reaching out after the sin.

tn Heb “her eyelids” (so KJV, NASB; NRSV “eyelashes”); TEV “flirting eyes”). This term is a synecdoche of part (eyelids) for the whole (eyes) or a metonymy of association for painted eyes and the luring glances that are the symptoms of seduction (e.g., 2 Kgs 9:30). The term “alluring” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarification.

tn The word וָעִד (v’ad) may be taken either as “on account of” (so by means of a prostitute (cf. ASV, NASB), or “for the price of” a prostitute (cf. NAB). Most expositors take the first reading, though that use of the preposition is unattested, and then must supply “one is brought to.” The verse would then say that going to a prostitute leads to a man to poverty, but going to another man’s wife can lead to death. If the second view were taken, it would mean that one had a smaller price than the other. It is not indicating that one is preferable to the other; both are to be avoided.

tn Heb “the wife of a man.”

tn These two lines might be an example of synthetic parallelism, that is, “A, what’s more B.” The A-line describes the detrimental effect of a man going to a professional prostitute: the B-line heightens this and describes the far worse effect – moral and mortal! – of a man committing adultery with another man’s wife. When a man goes to a prostitute, he lowers himself to become nothing more than a “meal ticket” to sustain the life of that woman; however, when a man commits adultery, he places his very life in jeopardy – the rage of the husband could very well kill him.

tn The Qal imperfect (with the interrogative) here has a potential nuance – “Is it possible to do this?” The sentence is obviously a rhetorical question making an affirmation that it is not possible.

tn Fire” provides the analogy for the sage’s warning: Fire represents the sinful woman (hypocatastasis) drawn close, and the burning of the clothes the inevitable consequences of the liaison. See J. L. Crenshaw, “Impossible Questions, Sayings, and Tasks,” Semeia 17 (1980): 19-34. The word “fire” (תָּאֵשׁ, ’esh) plays on the words “man” (מָן, mān) and “woman” (יָשָׁה, yishah); a passage like this probably inspired R. Gamaliel’s little explanation that what binds a man and a woman together in a holy marriage is σε (yod) and π (he), the two main letters of the holy name Yah. But if the Lxx is removed from the relationship, that is, if these two letters are removed, all that is left is the τὰ – the fire of passion. Since Gamaliel was the teacher of Paul, this may have influenced Paul’s advice that it was better to marry than to burn (1 Cor 7:9).

tn Heb “snatch up fire into his bosom.”

tn The second colon begins with the vav (ו) disjunctive on the noun, indicating a disjunctive clause; here it is a circumstantial clause.

tn The particle indicates that this is another rhetorical question like that in v. 27.

tn Heb “thus is the one.”
with his neighbor’s wife; no one who touches her will escape punishment.

6:30 People do not despise a thief when he steals to fulfill his need when he is hungry.  

6:31 Yet if he is caught he must repay seven times over, he might even have to give all the wealth of his house.

6:32 A man who commits adultery with a woman lacks wisdom, whoever does it destroys his own life.

6:33 He will be beaten and despised and his reproach will not be wiped away; for jealousy kindles a husband’s rage, and he will not show mercy when he takes revenge.  

6:35 He will not consider any compensation, he will not be willing, even if you multiply the compensation.

Admonition to Avoid the Wiles of the Adulteress

7:1 My child, keep my words and treasure up my commands in your own keeping.

7:2 Keep my commands so that you may live and obey my instruction as your most prized possession.

7:3 Bind them on your forehead; write them on the tablet of your heart.

7:4 Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,”}

1 tn Heb “who goes in to” (so NAB, NASB). The Hebrew verb נָרָה (narah, “to go in; to enter”) is used throughout scripture as a euphemism for the act of sexual intercourse. Cf. NIV, NRSV, NLT “who sleeps with”; NCV “have sexual relations with.”

2 tn Heb “anyone who touches her will not.”

3 sn The verb “touches” is intended here to be a euphemism for illegal sexual contact (e.g., Gen 20:6).

4 tn Heb “will be exempt from”; NASB, NLT “will not go unpunished.”

5 tn The verb is נָגַח (naghach), the Niphal imperfect from נָעַח (na’ach, “to be empty; to be clean”). From it we get the adjectives “clean,” “free from guilt,” “innocent.” The Niphal perfect has the meanings (1) “to be cleaned out” (of a plundered city; e.g., Isa 3:26), (2) “to be clean; to be free from guilt; to be innocent” (Ps 19:14), (3) “to be free; to exempt from punishment” (here), and (4) “to be free; to exempt from obligation” (Gen 24:8).

6 tn Heb “they do not despise.”

7 tn Heb “himself” or “his life.” Since the word נַפְשׁ (nefesh, traditionally “soul”) refers to the whole person, body and soul, and since it has a basic idea of the bundle of appetites that make up a person, the use here for satisfying his hunger is appropriate.

8 tn The term “yet” is supplied in the translation.

9 tn Heb “is found out.” The perfect tense with the vav (ו) consecutive is equivalent to the imperfect nuances. Here it introduces either a conditional or a temporal clause before the imperative.

10 tn The imperfect tense has an obligatory nuance. The verb in the Piel means “to repay; to make restitution; to compensate”; cf. NCV, TEV, CEV “must pay back.”

11 tn This final clause in the section is somewhat cryptic. The guilty thief must pay back sevenfold what he stole, even if it means he must use the substance of his whole house.

12 tn Heb “heart.” The term “heart” is used as a metonymy of association for discernment, wisdom, good sense. Cf. NAB “is a fool”; NIV “lacks judgment”; NCV, NRSV “has no sense.”

13 tn Heb “soul.” The noun נְפֶשׁ (nefesh, “soul”) functions as a metonymy of association for “life” (BDB 659 s.v. 3c).

14 tn Heb “will receive a wound and contempt.”

15 sn Even though the text has said that the man caught in adultery loses his life, it does not mean that he was put to death, although that could have happened. He seems to live on in ignominy, destroyed socially and spiritually. He might receive blows and wounds from the husband and shame and disgrace from the spiritual community. D. Kidner observes that in a morally healthy society the adulterer would be a social outcast (Proverbs [TOTC], 75).

16 tn The word “kindles” was supplied in the translation; both “rage” and “jealousy” have meanings connected to heat.

17 tn Heb “a man’s.”

18 tn The verb נָקֵה (naqeh) means “to show mercy; to show compassion; to show pity,” usually with the outcome of sparing or delivering someone. The idea here is that the husband will not spare the guilty man any of the punishment (cf. NRSV “he shows no restraint”).

19 tn Heb “lift up the face of,” meaning “regard.”

20 tn The word rendered “compensation” is נָכֶר (cofer); it is essentially a ransom price, a sum to be paid to deliver another from debt, bondage, or crime. The husband cannot accept payment as a ransom for a life, since what has happened cannot be undone so easily.

21 tn BDB 1005 s.v. נָכֶר suggests that this term means “hush money” or “bribe” (cf. NIV, NRSV, NLT). C. H. Toy takes it as legal compensation (Proverbs [ICC], 142).

22 sn The chapter begins with the important teaching of the father (1-5), then it focuses on the seduction: first of the victim (6-9), then the temptress (10-12), then the seduction (13-20), and the capitulation (21-23); the chapter concludes with the deadly results of consorting (24-27).

23 tn Heb “my son.”

24 tn Heb “within you” (so NASB, NIV); KJV, ASV, NRSV “with you.” BDB 860 s.v. נֶפֶשׁ G 1171 suggests that “within you” means “in your own keeping.”

25 tc Before v. 2 the LXX inserts: “My son, fear the Lord and you will be strong, and besides him, fear no other.” Although this addition has the precedent of 3:7 and 9 and harmonizes with 14:26, it does not fit here; the advice is to listen to the teacher.

26 tn The construction of an imperative with the vav (ו) of sequence after another imperative denotes a logical sequence of purpose or result: “that you may live,” and “you will live.”

27 tn The term “obey” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied for the sake of clarity and smoothness. Some English versions, in light of the second line of v. 1, supply “guard” (e.g., NIV, NCV, NLT).

28 tn Heb “the little man in your eye.” Traditionally the Hebrew idiom is translated into English as “the apple of your eye” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV); a more contemporary rendering would be “as your most prized possession.” The word for “man” has the diminutive ending on it. It refers to the pupil, the object where the focus is focused – a man – is reflected in miniature. The point is that the teaching must be the central focus of the disciple’s vision and attention.

29 tn Heb “fingers” (so KJV and many other English versions). In light of Deut 6:8, “fingers” appears to be a metonymy for the lower part of the arm.

30 sn This is an allusion to Deut 6:8. Binding the teachings on the fingers and writing them on the tablets here are implied comparisons for preserving the teaching in memory so that it can be recalled and used with ease.

31 sn The metaphor is meant to signify that the disciple will be closely related to and familiar with wisdom and understanding, as close as to a sibling. Wisdom will be personified in the next two chapters, and so referring to it as a sister in
and call understanding a close relative, 
7:5 so that they may keep you4 from the adulterous5 woman, from the loose woman3 who flatters you4 with her words.5

7:6 For at the window of my house through my window lattice I looked out 
7:7 and I saw among the naives – I discerned among the youths6 – a young man7 who lacked wisdom.8

7:8 He was passing by the street near her corner, making his way9 along the road to her house10
7:9 in the twilight, the evening,11 in the dark of the night.12
7:10 Suddenly,13 a woman came out to meet him! She was dressed like a prostitute14 and with secret intent.15

this chapter certainly prepares for that personification.

1 tn The infinitive construct with the proposition shows the purpose of associating closely with wisdom: Wisdom will obvi-
ate temptations, the greatest being the sexual urge.

2 tn Heb “strange” (so KJV, ASV).

3 tn Heb “strange woman.” This can be interpreted as a “wayward wife” (so NIV) or an “unfaithful wife” (so NCV). As discussed earlier, the designations “strange woman” and “foreign woman” could refer to Israelites who stood outside the community in their lawlessness and lose morals – an adulteress or wayward woman. H. R. Ringgren and W. Zimmerli, however, suggest that she is also a promoter of a pagan cult, but that is not entirely convincing (Spruche/Prediger [ATD], 19).

4 tn The term “you” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

5 tn Heb “she makes smooth her words.” This expression means “she flatters with her words.”

6 tn Heb “sons.”

7 tn Heb “lad” or “youth.”

8 tn Heb “heart.”

sn This young man who lacked wisdom is one of the simple-
tons, lacking keen judgment, one void of common sense (cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT) or understanding (cf. KJV, ASV). He is young, inexperienced, featherbrained (so D. Kidner, Proverbs [TOTC], 75).

9 tn The verb וַיָּשַׁב (šawâ‘) means “to step; to march.” It sug-
gests that the youth was intentionally making his way to her house. The verb is the imperfect tense; it stresses continual action parallel to the active participle that began the verse, but within a context that is past time.

10 tn Heb “way of her house.” This expression uses an ad-
verbial accusative of location, telling where he was marching along. The term “house” is the genitive of location, giving the goal.

11 tn Heb “in the evening of the day.”

12 tn Heb “in the middle of the night, and dark”; KJV “in the black and dark night”; NRSV “at the time of night and dark-
ness.”

13 tn The particle וַיְזָהָר (v’zarah) introduces a dramatic sense of the immediate to the narrative; it has a deictic force, “and look! – there was a woman,” or “all of a sudden this woman....”

14 tn Heb “with the garment of a prostitute.” The noun נֶשֶׁת (neshêth, “garment”) is an adverbial accusative specifying the appearance of the woman. The words “she was” are supplied in the translation to make a complete English sentence.

15 tn Heb “keep secret of heart”; cf. ASV, NRSV “wily of heart.” The verbal form is the passive participle from נָצַר (nat-sar) in construct. C. H. Toy lists the suggestions of the com-
mentators: false, malicious, secret, subtle, excited, hypocrite-
cal (Proverbs [ICC], 149). The LXX has “causes the hearts of the young men to fly away.” The verb means “to guard; to watch; to keep”; to be guarded of heart means to be wily, to have secret intent – she has locked up her plans and gives nothing away (e.g., Isaiah 48:6 as well). Interestingly enough, this contrasts with her attire which gives everything away.

16 tn Heb “her feet.” This is a synecdoche, a part for the whole; the point is that she never stays home, but is out and about all the time.

17 tn Heb “dwell” or “settle”; NAB “her feet cannot rest.”

18 tn The repetition of the noun “time, step,” usually trans-
lated “now, this time,” signifies here “at one time...at another time” (DBB 822 s.v. פִּסֵּה 3.e).

19 tn Heb “she makes bold her face.” The Hiphil perfect of פָּשַׁר (psâr, “to be strong”) means she has an impudent face (cf. KJV, NAB, NRSV), a bold or brazen expression (cf. NASB, NIV, NLT).

20 tn Heb “with me.”

21 tn Heb “I have peace offerings.” The peace offerings refer to the meat left over from the votive offering made at the sanctuary (e.g., Lev 7:1-21). Apparently the sacrificial wor-
ship meant as little to this woman spiritually as does Christ-
mas to modern hypocrites who follow in her pattern. By ex-
pressing that she has peace offerings, she could be saying nothing more than that she has fresh meat for a meal at home, or that she was ceremonially clean, perhaps after her period. At any rate, it is all probably a ruse for winning a cus-
tomer.

22 tn Heb “to look diligently for your face.”

23 tn Heb “with secret words.” The sentence begins with the cog-
nate accusative: “with spreads I have spread my bed.” The construction enhances the idea – she has covered her bed.

24 tn The feminine noun means “dark-hued stuffs” (DBB 310 s.v. נַבִּים נְבָרֵים). The form is a passive participle from a sup-
pposed root הָעַר (hwâr), which in Arabic means to be of a turbid, dusky color mixed with yellowish red. Its Aramaic cog-
nate means “variegated” (cf. NAB “with brocaded cloths of Egyptian linen”). DBB’s translation of this colon is unsatisfac-
tory: “with dark hued stuffs of yarn from Egypt.”

25 tn The form הָרִיבָה (hirâḇâh) is the plural cohortative; follow-
ing the imperative “come” the form expresses the hortatory “let’s.” The verb means “to be saturated; to drink one’s fill,” and can at times mean “to be intoxicated with.”

26 tn Heb “loves.” The word לָיָד (lad) means physical love or lovemaking. It is found frequently in the Song of Solomon for the loved one, the beloved. Here the form (literally, “loves”) is used in reference to multiple acts of sexual intercourse, as the phrase “until morning” suggests.
let’s delight ourselves with sexual intercourse.

7:19 For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a journey of some distance.

7:20 He has taken a bag of money with him; he will not return until the end of the month.

7:21 She persuaded him with persuasive words; with her smooth talk she compelled him.

7:22 Suddenly he went after her like an ox that goes to the slaughter, like a stag prancing into a trap’s snare to till an arrow pierces his liver – like a bird hurrying into a trap, and he does not know that it will cost him his life.

7:24 So now, sons, listen to me, and pay attention to the words I speak. Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways – do not wander into her pathways; for she has brought down many fatally wounded, and all those she has slain are many.

7:27 Her house is the way to the grave, going down to the chambers of death.

The Appeal of Wisdom

8:1 Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? At the tops of the elevated places along the way, the warning, Cf. KJV, NAB, NRSV “children.”

17 tn Heb “the words of my mouth.”
18 tn Heb “she has caused to fall.”
19 tn Heb “numerous” (so NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT) or “countless.”
20 tn The noun “Sheol” in parallelism to “the chambers of death” probably means the grave. The noun is a genitive of location, indicating the goal of the road(s). Her house is not the grave; it is, however, the sure way to it.
21 tn The Qal active participle modifies “ways” to Sheol. The road, as it were, descends to the place of death.
22 tn “Chambers” is a hypocatastasis, comparing the place of death or the grave with a bedroom in the house. It plays on the subtlety of the temptation. Cf. NLT “Her bedroom is the den of death.”
23 sn In this chapter wisdom is personified. In 1:20-33 wisdom proclaims her value, and in 3:19-26 wisdom is the agent of creation. Such a personification has affinities with the wisdom literature of the ancient Near East, and may have drawn some of that literature, albeit with appropriate safeguards (Claudia V. Camp, Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs, 23-70). Wisdom in Proverbs 8, however, is not a deity like Egypt’s Ma’at or the Assyrian-Babylonian Ishtar. It is simply presented as if it were a self-conscious divine being distinct but subordinate to God, but in reality it is the personification of the attribute of wisdom displayed by God (R. B. Y. Scott, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes [AB], 69-72). This third colon of the verse would usually be rendered, “fetters to the chastening of a fool” (KJV, ASV, and NASB are all similar). But there is no support that יָכָ֣ס (yakaz) means “fetters.” It appears in Isaiah 3:16 as “anklets.” The parallelism here suggests that some animal imagery is required. Thus the ancient versions have “as a dog to the bones.”

24 sn The figure of an arrow piercing the liver (an implied comparison) may refer to the pangs of a guilty conscience that the guilty must reap along with the spiritual and physical ruin that follows (see on these expressions H. W. Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament).

25 sn The expression that it is “for/about/over his life” means that it could cost him his life (e.g., Num 16:38). Alternatively, the line could refer to moral corruption and social disgrace rather than physical death – but this would not rule out physical death too.

16 sn The literal translation “sons” works well here in view of
the intersection of the paths she takes her stand;
8:3 beside the gates opening into the city, at the entrance of the doorways she cries out:  

8:4 “To you, O people, 4 I call out, and my voice calls 5 to all mankind. 6
8:5 You who are naive, discern wisdom! And you fools, understand discernment!  

8:6 Listen, for I will speak excellent things, 9 and my lips will utter 10 what is right.  

8:7 For my mouth speaks truth, 12 and my lips 3 hate wickedness. 14
8:8 All the words of my mouth are righteous; 15 there is nothing in them twisted or crooked.

8:9 All of them are clear to the discerning and upright to those who find knowledge.  

8:10 Receive my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold.  

8:11 For wisdom is better than rubies, and desirable things cannot be compared to her.

8:12 “I, wisdom, live with prudence, 21 and I find knowledge and discretion.  

8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; I hate arrogant pride 24 and the evil way and perverse utterances.  

8:14 Counsel and sound wisdom belong to me; 26
I possess understanding and might.
8:15 Kings reign by means of me, and potentates decree righteousness;
8:16 by me princes rule, as well as nobles and all righteous judges.
8:17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.
8:18 Riches and honor are with me, long-lasting wealth and righteousness.
8:19 My fruit is better than the purest gold, and what I produce is better than choice silver.
8:20 I walk in the path of righteousness, in the pathway of justice,
8:21 that I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, and that I may fill their treasuries.

8:22 The Lord created me as the beginning of his works, before his deeds of long ago.
8:23 From eternity I was appointed, from the beginning, from before the world existed.
8:24 When there were no deep oceans I was born, when there were no springs overflowing with water;
8:25 before the mountains were set in place – before the hills – I was born,
8:26 before he made the earth and its fields.

1 tn The verb הָקַק (ḥaqq) means “to be weighty; to be judicious; to be commanding.” It only occurs in the Qal active participle in the plural as a substantive, meaning “potentates; rulers” (e.g., Ps 1:1-3). Cf. KJV, ASV “princes”; NAB “lawgivers.”
2 sn This verb חֹק (ḥokq), which is a “statute; decree.” The verb is defined as “to cut in; to inscribe; to decree” (BDDB 349 s.v. ḥokq). The point the verse is making is that when these potentates decree righteousness, it is by wisdom. History records all too often that these rulers acted as fools and opposed righteousness (cf. Ps 2:3). The people in power need wisdom to govern the earth (e.g., Isa 11:1-4 which predicts how Messiah will use wisdom to do this very thing). The point is underscored with the paronomasia in v. 15 with “kings” and “will reign” from “judges of righteousness,” The LXX has “sovereigns…rule the earth.” But the MT manuscript in the text has “judges of righteousness.” The verse says “judges of the earth.” The LXX simulates Ps 148:11 in its construction (cf. Ps 10:20).
3 tn The term “and” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness and readability.
4 sn Many of the MT MSS read “sovereigns [princes], all the judges of the earth.” The LXX has “sovereigns…rule the earth.” But the MT manuscript in the text has “judges of righteousness.” C. H. Toy suggests that the Hebrew here has assimilated Psalm 148:11 in its construction (Proverbs [ICC], 167). The expression “judges of the earth” is what one would expect, but the more difficult and unexpected reading, the one scribes might change, would be “judges of righteousness.” If that reading stands, then it would probably be interpreted as using an attributive genitive.
5 sn In contrast to the word for “hate” (זָרַע, zaraʿ) the verb “love” (זָעַר, za‘ar) includes within it the idea of choosing spontaneously. So in this line loving and seeking point up the means of finding wisdom.
6 tn The two synonyms, “than gold, than fine gold” probably form a hendiatris here to express “the very finest gold.”
7 sn The language of the text with “fruit” and “ingathering” is the language of the harvest – what the crops yield. So the figure is hypotaxis, comparing what wisdom produces to such crops.
8 tn The infinitive construct expressing the purpose of the preceding “walk” in the way of righteousness. These verses say that wisdom is always on the way of righteousness for the purposes of bestowing the same to those who find her. If sin is involved, then wisdom has not been followed.
9 tn The Piel imperfect continues the verbal idea that the infinitive began in the parallel colon even though it does not have the same verbal form.
10 tc The LXX adds at the end of this verse: “If I declare to you the things of daily occurrence, I will remember to recount the things of old.”

11 tn There are two roots עָנָה (yanah) in Hebrew, one meaning “to possess,” and the other meaning “to create.” The earlier English versions did not know of the second root, but suspected in certain places that a meaning like that was necessary (e.g., Gen 4:1; 14:19; Deut 32:6). Ugaritic confirmed that it was indeed another root. The older versions have the translation “possesses” because otherwise it sounds like God lacked wisdom and therefore created it at the beginning. They wanted to avoid saying that wisdom was not eternal. Arius liked the idea of Christ as the wisdom of God and so chose the translation “create.” Athanasius translated it, “constituted me as the head of creation.” The verb occurs twelve times in Proverbs with the meaning of “to acquire,” but the Greek and the Syriac versions have the meaning “create.” Although the idea is that wisdom existed before creation, the parallel ideas in these verses (“appointed,” “given birth”) argue for the translation of “create” or “establish” (R. N. Whybray, “Proverbs 8:22-31 and Its Supposed Prototypes,” VT 15 [1965]: 504-14; and W. A. Irwin, “Where Will Wisdom Be Found?” JBL 80 [1961]: 133-42).
12 tn Verbs of creation often involve double accusatives; here the double accusative involves the person (i.e., wisdom) and an abstract noun in construct (BSHS 174-75 §10.2.3c).
13 tn Heb “His way” (so KJV, NASB). The word “way” (implied comparison) for the actions of God.
14 tn The first parallel verb is וָנָסָק (nissakht), “I was appointed.” It is not a common word; it occurs here and in Ps 2:6 for the coronation of the king. It means “installed, set.”
15 tn The verb “exists” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation in the light of the context.
16 sn The summary statements just given are now developed in a lengthy treatment of wisdom as the agent of all creation. This verse singles out “watery depths” (תְּמִירָה, temirah) in its allusion to creation because the word in Genesis signals the condition of the world at the very beginning, and because in the ancient world this was something no one could control. Chaos was not there first – wisdom was.
17 tn The third parallel verb is לָכָה (lakah), “I was given birth.” Some (e.g., KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV) translate it “brought forth” – not in the sense of being presented, but in the sense of being “begotten, given birth to.” Here is the strongest support for the translation of עָנָה (yanah) as “created” in v.22. The verb is not literal; it continues the perspective of the personification.
18 tn Heb “made heavy.”
19 tn Heb “open places.”
or the beginning\(^2\) of the dust of the world.
\(8:27\) When he established the heavens, I was there; when he marked out the horizon\(^2\) over the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above, when the fountains of the deep grew strong,\(^3\)
\(8:29\) when he gave the sea his decree that the waters should not pass over his command,\(^4\) when he marked out the foundations of the earth, when I was beside him as a master craftsman,\(^6\) and I was his delight\(^7\) day by day, rejoicing before him at all times, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth,\(^8\) and delighting\(^9\) in its people.\(^10\)

\(8:32\) “So now, children,\(^11\) listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listened to my instruction\(^12\) so that you may be wise,\(^13\) and do not neglect it. Blessed is the one\(^14\) who listens to me, watching\(^15\) at my doors day by day, waiting\(^16\) beside my doorway.\(^17\)

\(8:35\) For the one who finds me finds life and receives\(^18\) favor from the LORD.\(^19\)
\(8:36\) But the one who does not find me brings harm\(^20\) to himself;\(^21\) all who hate me\(^22\) love death.”

The Consequences of Accepting Wisdom or Folly

\(9:1\) Wisdom has built her house; she has carved out its seven pillars.\(^25\)
\(9:2\) She has prepared her meat; she has mixed her wine; she also has arranged her table.\(^27\)

\(1\) tn Here ישָׁשׁ (’ysh) means “beginning” with reference to time (BDB 911 s.v. 4b).
\(2\) sn The infinitive construct יָשָׁב (yashab, “to cut; to engrave; to mark”) and the noun יש (ysh, “horizon; circle”) form a paronomasia in the line.
\(3\) tn To form a better parallel some commentators read this infinitive יָשָׁב (yashab), “when [they] grew strong,” as a Piel causative, “when he made firm, fixed fast” (cf. NIV “fixed securely”; NLT “established”). But the following verse (“should not pass over”) implies the meaning “grew strong” here.
\(4\) tn Heb “his mouth.”
\(5\) tn The verb form is a preterite with vav consecutive, although it has not been apocopated. It provides the concluding statement for the temporal clauses as well as the parallel to v. 27.
\(6\) tn Critical to the interpretation of this line is the meaning of אמון (’amon). Several suggestions have been made: “master craftsman” (cf. AV, NASB, NIV, NRSV), “nursing child” (cf. NCV), “foster father.” R. B. Y. Scott chooses “faithful” – a binding or living link (“Wisdom in Creation: The Ammon of Proverbs 8:30,” VT 10 (1980): 213-23). The image of a child is consistent with the previous figure of being “given birth to” (vv. 24, 25). However, “craftsman” has the most support (LXX, Vulgate, Syriac, Tg. Prov 8:30; Song 7:1; Jer 52:15; also P. W. Skehan, “Structures in Poems on Wisdom: Proverbs 8 and Sirach 24,” CBQ 41 (1979): 365-79).
\(7\) tn The word is a plural of intensification for “delight”; it describes wisdom as the object of delight. The LXX has the uniform suggestion ‘ Brigham: “harm.”
\(8\) tn Heb “and my delights [were] with/in.”
\(9\) tn Heb “and my delights” [were] with/in.”
\(10\) tn Heb “the sons of man.”
\(11\) tn Heb “sons.”
\(12\) tn Heb “discipline.”
\(13\) tn The conjunction uses two imperatives joined with the vav (ו); this is a volitive sequence in which result or consequence is being expressed.
\(14\) tn Heb “the man.”
\(15\) tn The form יָשָׁב (yashab) is the infinitive construct serving epehegetically in the sentence. It explains how the person will listen to wisdom.
\(16\) tn In Heb “keeping” or “guarding.”
\(17\) tn Heb “at the posts of my doors” (so KJV, ASV).
\(18\) to The Kethib reads plurals: “those who find me are finders of life”; this is reflected in the LXX and Syriac. But the Qere is singular: “whoever finds me finds life.” The Qere is generally favored as the original reading in such cases as these.
\(19\) tn The preterite with vav (ו) consecutive carries the same nuance as the perfect tense that came before it, setting out the timeless principle.
\(20\) tn Heb “the one sining [against] me.” The verb כֹּשֶׁה (koshâ, “to sin”) forms a contrast with “find” in the previous verse, and so has its basic meaning of “failing to find, miss.” So it is talking about the one who misses wisdom, as opposed to the one who finds it.
\(21\) tn The Qal active participle functions verbally here. The word stresses both the social and physical harm and violence.
\(22\) sn Brings harm. Whoever tries to live without wisdom is inviting all kinds of disaster into his life.
\(23\) tn Heb “his soul.”
\(24\) sn The basic idea of the verb נָשִּׁב (nashib, “to hate”) is that of rejection. Its antonym is also used in the line, “love,” which has the idea of choosing. So not choosing (i.e., hating) wisdom amounts to choosing (i.e., loving) death.
\(25\) sn Chapter 9 forms the conclusion of the lengthy introduction to the book. Both wisdom and folly will make their final appeals; and both appeal to the simpletons. Wisdom offers life with no mention of pleasure; folly offers pleasure with no mention of death. The first twelve verses concern accepting wisdom: the invitation of wisdom (1-6), the description of the responses (7-11), and the consequence (12). Verses 13-18 concern accepting folly: the invitation (13-17) and the consequence (18).
\(26\) tn Wisdom is personified as a wise woman. She has prepared a house and established it on seven pillars. This is a reference to the habitable world (e.g., 8:31; For the equation of the house and the world, e.g., 8:29; Job 38:6, and Psalm 104:5 (also G. Boström, Proverbiastudien [LUA], 1-14). The “seven pillars” have been variously interpreted, but since seven is a number for completeness and sacredness, the idea seems to be that wisdom produced a perfect world.
\(27\) tn Heb “she has killed her killing.” Cf. KJV “hath killed her beasts”; NAB “has dressed her meat”; NASB “has prepared her food.”
\(28\) sn Wisdom has prepared a sumptuous banquet in this house and sends out her maids to call the simple to come and eat (M. Lichtstein, “The Banquet Motif in Keret and in Proverbs 9,” JANESCU 1 [1968/69]: 19-31). The figures of meat and wine represent the good teaching of wisdom that will be palatable and profitable (implied comparisons). Compare Isaiah 55:1-2 and John 6:51, 55 for similar uses of the figures. The idea of mixing wine could refer to the practice of mixing wine with spices or with water (as the LXX text assumes; e.g., Prov 23:30; Isa 5:22). Mixed wine was the most intoxicating; thus, her wisdom is attractive. All the imagery lets the simple know that what wisdom has to offer is marvelous.
She has sent out her female servants; she calls out on the highest places of the city.

Whoever is naive, let him turn in here;

Come, eat some of my food, and drink some of the wine I have mixed.

Abandon your foolish ways so that you may live, and proceed in the way of understanding.

Whoever corrects a mocker is asking for insult; whoever reproves a wicked person receives abuse.

Do not reprove a mocker or he will hate you;

The text uses two synonymous terms in construct to express the superlative degree.

The noun "instruction" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation.

The parallelism shows what Proverbs will repeatedly stress, that the wise person is the righteous person.

The LXX has an addition: "Forsake folly, that you may make known, that you may receive for yourself." The word is in the plural in the Hebrew (literally "holy ones"; KJV "the holy"). It was translated "wise men" in Tg. Prov 9:10. It probably was meant to signify the majestic nature of the Lord. As J. H. Greenstone says, he is "all-holy" (Proverbs, 94). This is an example of the plural of majesty, one of the honorific uses of the plural (see IBHS 122-23 §7.4.3b).

The preposition 1 (bet) here may have the causal sense (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 45, §247), although it could also be means (Williams, 44, §243).

The verb Heb "receives for himself" (sn) in view of the expected response for reproof, the text now uses a negated jussive to advise against the attempt. This is paralleled antithetically by the imperative in the second colon. This imperative is in an understood conditional clause: "if you reprove a wise person.

The text simply has the preposition 1 (lamed) with a suffix, but this will be the use of the preposition classified as "interest," either for advantage or disadvantage (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 48-49, §271).

The perfect tense is here in a conditional clause because of the conjunction following the first colon of the verse that begins with "if." The perfect tense then lays down the antithetical condition — "if you mock," or "if you are a mocker.

The use of the imperfect tense here could be the simple future tense (cf. NASB, NRSV "you...will bear it"), but the obligatory nuance is more appropriate — "you must bear it." These words anticipate James' warnings that the words we speak will haunt us through life (e.g., James 3:1-12).
9:13 The woman called Folly is brash, she is naive and does not know anything.

9:14 So she sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, calling out to those who are passing by her in the way, who go straight on their way.

9:16 Whoever is simple, let him turn in here, she says to those who lack understanding.

9:17 "Stolen waters are sweet, and food obtained in secret is pleasant!"

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19:22 But they do not realize that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.

The First Collection of Solomonic Proverbs

10:1 The Proverbs of Solomon:

A wise child makes a father rejoice, but a foolish child is a grief to his mother.

10:2 Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from mortal danger.
10:3 The Lord satisfies\(^1\) the appetite\(^2\) of the righteous, but he thwarts\(^3\) the craving\(^4\) of the wicked.

10:4 The one who is lazy\(^6\) becomes poor,\(^6\) but the one who works diligently\(^7\) becomes wealthy.\(^8\)

10:5 The one who gathers crops\(^9\) in the summer is wise\(^16\), but the one who sleeps\(^11\) during the harvest is a son who brings shame to himself.\(^12\)

10:6 Blessings\(^13\) are on the head of the righteous, but the speech\(^14\) of the wicked conceals\(^15\) violence.\(^16\)

10:7 The memory\(^17\) of the righteous is a blessing, but the reputation\(^18\) of the wicked will rot.\(^19\)

10:8 The wise person\(^20\) accepts instructions,\(^21\) but the one who speaks foolishness\(^22\) will come to ruin.\(^23\)

10:9 The one who conducts himself\(^24\) in integrity\(^25\) will live securely,

\(^1\) tn Heb “does not allow...to go hungry.” The expression “the Lord does not allow the appetite of the righteous to go hungry” is an example of tautology—in this case, a figurative expression stated in the negative to emphasize the positive: The Lord satisfies the appetite of the righteous.

\(^2\) tn The term נפש (nefesh) means “soul” but its root meaning is “throat” and it has a broad range of meanings; here it denotes “appetite” (BDB 660 s.v. 5a; see, e.g., Ps 63:6; 107:9; Prov 27:7; Isa 56:11; 58:10; Jer 50:19; Ezek 7:19). The term could denote “desire” (e.g., 650 s.v. 6a) which could induce the inner urge for success. By contrast, the wicked live unfilled lives—as far as spiritual values are concerned.

\(^3\) tn Heb “thrusts away” (cf. AV, NASB; NLT “refuses to satisfy.” The verb הדה (hada) means “to thrust away; to push; to drive,” either to depose or reject (BDB 213 s.v.).

\(^4\) tn This verse contrasts the “appetite” of the righteous with the “craving” of the wicked. The word רח (rach, “craving”) means “thirst, hunger,” often in a bad sense, as “the desire of the wicked,” which could not be wholesome (Ps 52:9).

\(^5\) tn Heb “a palm of slowness.” The genitive noun כף (remiyah, “slowness”) functions as an attributive adjective: “a slack palm” (BDB 941 s.v.). The term כף (khaf, “palm”) is a synecdoche of part (= palm) for the whole person (= one who works with his hands). The hand is emphasized because it is the instrument of work (HALOT 1104 s.v. כף). The “slack hand” is contrasted with the “diligent hand.” A slack hand refers to a lazy worker or careless work that such hands produce. See N. C. Habel, “Wisdom, Wealth, and Poverty Paradigms in the Book of Proverbs,” BIBH 14 (1988): 28-49.

\(^6\) tc The MT reads זכר (zirih, “poor”) which is the plebe spelling of זכר (nash, “poor [person]”; HALOT 1229-30 s.v. זכר). Both terms reflect an alternate vocalization זרש (rash, “poverty”) which is from the same root, and essentially means the same thing.

\(^7\) tn Heb “causes poverty.” The expression is literally, “the palm of slowness causes poverty.”

\(^8\) tn Heb “but the hand of the diligent” (so KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV). The genitive noun כף (remiyah, “diligence”) functions as an attributive adjective: “a diligent hand.” The noun כף (khaf, “hand”) uses the plural form because the plural is often used for abstract moral qualities. The term יד (yd, “hand”) is a synecdoche of part (= hand) for the whole person (= the one who works with his hands). The hand is emphasized because it is the instrument of physical labor.

\(^9\) tn Heb “makes rich” (so NASB, NRSV). The Hiphil verb is used in a causative sense; literally, “the hand of the diligent makes rich.”

\(^10\) tn The direct object “crops” does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied by the verb; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

\(^11\) tn Heb “prudent.” The term מְנַעֲשׁ (maskî) refers to a wise and so successful person. He seizes the opportunity, knowing the importance of the season.

\(^12\) tn The term מְנַעֲשׁ (maskî) is figurative in implied comparison that has become idiomatic like the contemporary English expression “asleep on the job.” It means that this individual is lazy or oblivious to the needs of the hour.

\(^13\) tn The phrase “to himself” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied for the sake of clarity. Another option is “to his father.”

\(^14\) sn The word “blessings” has the sense of gifts, enrichments, that is, the rewards or the results of being righteous. The blessings come either from the people the righteous deal with, or from God. CEV understands the blessings as praise for good behavior (“Everyone praises good people”).

\(^15\) Heb “the mouth.” The term כף (peh, “mouth”) functions as a metonymy of cause for speech.

\(^16\) tn Heb “covers.” Behind the speech of the wicked is aggressive violence (W. McKane, Proverbs [OLT], 422).

\(^17\) sn Memory (זך, ze’ker) and name” are often paired as synonyms. “Memory” in this sense has to do with reputation, fame. One’s reputation will be good or bad by righteousness or wickedness respectively.

\(^18\) tn Heb “name.” The term “name” often functions as a metonymy of association for reputation (BDB 1028 s.v. זך 2b).

\(^19\) tn The editors of BHS suggest a reading “will be cursed” to make a better parallelism, but the reading of the MT is more striking as a metaphor.

\(^20\) sn To say the wicked’s name will rot means that the name will be obliterated from memory (Exod 17:14; Deut 25:19), leaving only a bad memory for a while.

\(^21\) tn Heb “the wise of heart” (so NASB, NRSV). The genitive noun כף (lev, “heart”) functions as an attributive adjective: “the wise heart.” The term כף functions as a synecdoche of part (= heart) for the whole person (= person). The heart is emphasized because it is the seat of wisdom (BDB 524 s.v. כף 3b).

\(^22\) tn Heb “commandments.”

\(^23\) tn Heb “fool of lips.” The phrase is a generic of specification: “a fool in respect to lips.” The term “lips” is a metonymy of cause (= lips) for effect (= speech). This person talks foolishness; he is too busy talking to pay attention to instruction.

\(^24\) sn The Niphal verb מְנַעַשׁ (maskî) means “to be thrust down [or, away];” that is, “to be ruined; to fall” or “to stumble” (e.g., Hos 4:14). The fool who refuses to listen to advice – but abides by his own standards which he freely expresses will suffer the predicaments that he creates.

\(^25\) sn “Integrity” here means “blameless” in conduct. Security follows integrity, because the lifestyle is blameless. The righteous is certain of the course to be followed and does not fear retribution from man or God.

\(^26\) tn Heb “walks.”
but the one who behaves perversely will be found out.

10:10 The one who winks his eye causes trouble, and the one who speaks foolishness will come to ruin.

10:11 The teaching of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the speech of the wicked conceals violence.

10:12 Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers all transgressions.

10:13 Wisdom is found in the words of the discerning person, but the one who lacks wisdom will be disciplined.

The term נַפְּעַת (naphat, “mouth”) functions as a metonymy of cause for wisdom because the heart is the seat of wisdom. The subject (“a fountain of life”) and the predicate (“the mouth of the righteous”) in the Hebrew text are reversed in the present translation (as in most English versions) for the sake of clarity and smoothness. The idea of this metaphor, “the fountain of life,” may come from Ps 36:9 (e.g., also in the LXX, “a fountain of life, wisdom”).

2 tn The term פֶּה (peh, “mouth”) describes someone who habitually “winks” his eye maliciously as a secretive sign to those conspiring evil (Prov 6:13). This is a comparison rather than a contrast. Devious gestures are grievous, but not as ruinous as foolish speech.

3 tn Heb “the eye.”

4 tn Heb “gives.”

5 tn Heb “the fool of lips”; cf. NASB “a babbling fool.” The phrase is a genitive of specification: “a fool in respect to lips.”

6 tn Heb “mouth.” The word “mouth” is metonymy of cause, representing what the righteous say and teach.

7 tn Heb “a fountain of life is the mouth of the righteous” (NAB similar). The subject (“a fountain of life”) and the predicate (“the mouth of the righteous”) in the Hebrew text are reversed in the present translation (as in most English versions) for the sake of clarity and smoothness. The idea of this metaphor, “the fountain of life,” may come from Ps 36:9 (e.g., also Prov 13:14; 14:27; 16:22). What the righteous say is ben榮 (“the fountain of life,” may come from Ps 36:9 (e.g., also in the LXX, “a fountain of life, wisdom”).

8 tn Heb “the mouth.” The term פֶּה (peh, “mouth”) functions as a metonymy of cause for speech.

9 tn Heb “covers.” Behind the speech of the wicked is aggression.

10 tn The syntax of this line is ambiguous. The translation takes “the mouth of the wicked” as the nominative subject and “violence” as the accusative direct object; however, the subject might be “violence,” hence: “violence covers the mouth of the wicked.”

11 sn This contrasts the wicked motivated by hatred (animosity, rejection) with the righteous motivated by love (kind acts, showing favor).

12 sn Love acts like forgiveness. Hatred looks for and exaggerates faults, but love seeks ways to make sins disappear (e.g., 1 Pet 4:8).

13 tn Heb “on the lips” (so NASB, NAB, NRSV). The term “lips” is a metonymy of cause for the words spoken by the lips.

14 tn Heb “the one who is discerning.” The term “discerning” describes someone who is critically perceptive and has understanding. He can be relied on to say things that are wise.

15 tn Heb “the one lacking of heart.” The noun כָּלָה (kalah, “heart”) functions as a genitive of specification: “lacking in respect to heart.” The term כָּלָה functions in a figurative sense (metonymy of association) for wisdom because the heart is viewed as the seat of common sense (BDB 524 s.v. 3a).

16 tn Heb “a rod is for the back of the one lacking heart.”

The term שֶׁבֶט (shevet, “rod”) figures figuratively: synecdochic of specific (≡ rod of discipline) for general (≡ discipline in general). The term חַטָּאת (chatat, “back”) is a synecdoche of part (≡ back) for the whole (≡ person as a whole). The back is emphasized because it was the object of physical corporeal discipline. This proverb is not limited in its application to physical corporeal punishment because the consequences of foolishness may come in many forms, physical corporeal discipline being only one form.

17 tn Heb “wise men.”

18 tn The verb חָסָן (hason, “to store up; to treasure”) may mean (1) they acquire and do not lose wisdom (cf. NAB, NIV, TEV), or (2) they do not tell all that they know (cf. NOV), that is, they treasure it up for a time when they will need it. The fool, by contrast, talks without thinking.

19 tn Heb “the mouth of foolishness”; cf. NRSV, NLT “the babbling of a fool.” The term פֶּה (peh, “mouth”) functions as a metonymy of cause for speech. The genitive חַטָּאת (chatat, “foolishness”) functions as an attributive adjective: “a foolish mouth” = foolish speech.

20 tn Heb “near destruction.” The words of the fool that are uttered without wise forethought may invite imminent ruin (e.g., James 3:13-18). See also Ptah-hotep and Amenemope in ANET 414 and 423.

21 tn Heb “is.” This expression, “a rich man’s wealth is his strong city,” is a metaphor. The comparative particle “like” is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

22 tn Heb “a city of his strength.” The genitive חַטָּאת (chatat, “strength”) functions as an attributive genitive: “strong city” = “fortified city.” This phrase is a metaphor; wealth protects its possessions against adversity like a fortified city. Such wealth must be attained by diligence and righteous means (e.g., 13:8; 18:23; 22:7).

23 tn Heb “the ruin of the poor.” The term חַטָּאת (chatat, “poor”) functions as an objective genitive. Poverty leads to the ruin of the poor. The term “ruin” includes the shambles in which the person lives. This provides no security but only the fear of ruin. This proverb is an observation on life.

24 tn Heb “is their poverty.”

25 tn Heb “recompense” (so NASB; NAB, NIV “wages.” The noun שֶׁבֶט (shevet, “rod”) has a two-fold range of meanings: (1) “work; deed” and (2) “reward; recompense” (BDB 821 s.v.). There is a clear correlation between a person’s conduct and its consequences. Rewards are determined by moral choices. What one receives in life depends on the use of gifts and a righteous character.

26 tn Heb “the recompense of the righteous.”

27 tn Heb “harvest.” The term חָטָּאת (chatat, “harvest; yield”) is used figuratively here (hypocatastasis), drawing an implied comparison between the agricultural yield of a farmer’s labors with the consequences of the actions of the wicked. They will “reap” (= judgment) what they “sow” (= sin).

28 tn Heb “the harvest of the wicked.”

The one who heeds instruction\(^1\) is on the way to life, but the one who rejects\(^2\) rebuke goes astray.

The one who conceals hatred utters lies,\(^4\) and the one who spreads\(^5\) slander\(^6\) is certainly a fool.

When words abound, transgression is inevitable,\(^8\) but the one who restrains his words\(^9\) is wise.

What the righteous say\(^11\) is like\(^12\) silver, but what the wicked think\(^14\) is of little value.\(^2\)

The one who conceals hatred utters lies,\(^4\) and the one who spreads slander\(^6\) is certainly a fool.

The one who heeds instruction\(^1\) is on the way to life, but the one who rejects\(^2\) rebuke goes astray.

To carry out a wicked scheme\(^25\) is enjoyable\(^26\) to a fool, and so is wisdom for the one who has discernment.\(^27\)

What the wicked fears\(^28\) will come on him; what the righteous desires\(^29\) will be granted.\(^30\)

\(^1\) The term "lips" is a metonymy of cause for speech produced by lips.

\(^2\) The word "dibbah" functions here as a genitive of source.

\(^3\) The one who spreads slander is a fool because it not only destroys others but comes back on the guilty. See also the sayings of Amenemope and Ahiqar on these subjects (ANET 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^4\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^5\) "falsehood") functions as an attributive genitive. The noun "lips of falsehood." The genitive noun functions here as a genitive of cause for speech.

\(^6\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^7\) The one who spreads slander is a fool because it not only destroys others but comes back on the guilty. See also the sayings of Amenemope and Ahiqar on these subjects (ANET 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^8\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^9\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^10\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^11\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^12\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^13\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^14\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^15\) The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (ibid 147:48-99.5.29).

\(^16\) lit. "lips." The term "lips" functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^17\) The verb יָצָא ("to spread") functions as a metonymy of association for wisdom and knowledge (BDB 524 s.v. 3.a).

\(^18\) In what sense the fool "dies" is unclear. Fools ruin their lives and the lives of others by their lack of discipline and knowledge. The contrast is between enhancing life and ruining life.

\(^19\) The word מְעַט ("little") is a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^20\) The one who heeds instruction ("righteous") is a subjective genitive. The noun מְעַט functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^21\) The word מְעַט ("little") is a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^22\) The term מְעַט ("little") is a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^23\) The one who heeds instruction ("righteous") is a subjective genitive. The noun מְעַט functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^24\) The one who heeds instruction ("righteous") is a subjective genitive. The noun מְעַט functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^25\) The term מְעַט ("little") is a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^26\) The term מְעַט ("little") is a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^27\) The one who heeds instruction ("righteous") is a subjective genitive. The noun מְעַט functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^28\) The term מְעַט ("little") is a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^29\) The one who heeds instruction ("righteous") is a subjective genitive. The noun מְעַט functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

\(^30\) The one who heeds instruction ("righteous") is a subjective genitive. The noun מְעַט functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).
10:25 When the storm\(^1\) passes through, the wicked are swept away;\(^2\) but the righteous are an everlasting foundation.\(^3\)

10:26 Like vinegar to the teeth and like smoke to the eyes,\(^4\) so is the sluggard to those\(^5\) who send him.

10:27 Fearing the Lord\(^6\) prolongs life,\(^7\) but the life span of the wicked will be shortened.\(^8\)

10:28 The hope\(^10\) of the righteous is joy, but the expectation of the wicked will remain unfulfilled.\(^11\)

10:29 The way of the Lord\(^12\) is like a stronghold for the upright,\(^13\) but it is destruction\(^15\) to evildoers.\(^16\)

10:30 The righteous will never be moved, but the wicked will not inhabit the land.\(^17\)

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\(^1\) sn The word for “storm wind” comes from the root סף (suf, “to come to an end; to cease”). The noun may then describe the kind of storm that makes an end of things, a “whirlwind” (so KJV, NASB; NLT “cyclone”). It is used in prophetic passages that describe swift judgment and destruction.

\(^2\) tn Heb “the wicked are not”; ASV, NAB, NASB “is no more.”

\(^3\) tn Heb “a foundation forever”; NLT “have a lasting foundation.”

\(^4\) sn The metaphor compares the righteous to an everlasting foundation to stress that they are secure when the catastrophes of life come along. He is fixed in a covenantal relationship and needs not to fear passing misfortunes. The wicked has no such security.

\(^5\) sn Two similes are used to portray the aggravation in sending a lazy person to accomplish a task. Vinegar to the teeth is an unpleasant experience that hinders progress.

\(^6\) sn This general saying has to be qualified with the problem of the righteous suffering and dying young, a problem that perplexed the sages of the entire ancient world. But this is the general principle: The righteous live longer because their life is the natural one and because God blesses them.

\(^7\) sn This proverb contrasts the hopes of the righteous and the wicked. The righteous will see their hopes fulfilled.

\(^8\) sn The saying is concerned with God’s justice. The words תוקה (tokehlet), from הולק (yakhal), and תוק (tak, from הולק, qavah) are synonyms, both emphasizing eager expectations, longings, waiting in hope.

\(^9\) tn Heb “will perish”; NAB “comes to nought.”

\(^10\) sn The “way of the Lord” is an idiom for God’s providential administration of life: it is what the Lord does (“way” being a hypocatastasis).

\(^11\) tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

\(^12\) tn Heb “for the one with integrity” (אֶחָד, laom).

\(^13\) tn Or “ruin” (so NIV).

\(^14\) tn Heb “those who practice iniquity.”

\(^15\) sn This proverb concerns the enjoyment of covenant blessings—dwelling in the land of Israel. It is promised to the righteous for an eternal inheritance, and so the wicked cannot expect to settle there—they will be exiled.

\(^16\) sn This proverb does not state how the disgrace will come, but affirms that it will follow pride. The proud will be brought down.

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\(^18\) tn Heb “the mouth.” The term פֶּה (peh, “mouth”) functions as a metonymy of cause for speech.

\(^19\) tn Heb “bears wisdom.” The verb בּוֹא (naw) means “to bear fruit.” It is used figuratively of the righteous; they produce wisdom and righteousness. The term חָכָמָה (khokhmah, “wisdom”) represents the “fruit” that the righteous bear: “they bear the fruit of wisdom” (BDB 626 s.v.).

\(^20\) tn Heb “the tongue of perversions.” The noun חָפְקֵי חָלָל (chapkei halal, “perversions”) functions as a genitive of content; it refers to what the tongue says—pervasive things. The plural form depicts a plural of character. The term lashon (tongue) functions as a synecdoche of part (tongue) for the whole person (= the speaker). The tongue is emphasized because this person is characterized by pervasive speech. The term חָפְקֵי חָלָל (perversions”) refers to those who turn things upside down, overthrow, or pervert what is right.

\(^21\) tn Heb “will be cut off” (so NAB, NASV, NLT); cf. KJV, NASB, NIV “cut out.” Their tongue will be cut off, a hyperbole meaning to bring to an end the evil that they speak.

\(^22\) sn The verb “know” applied to “lips” is unusual. “Lips” is a metonymy for what the righteous say; and their words “know” (a personification) what is pleasing, i.e., they are acquainted with.

\(^23\) sn The righteous say what is pleasing, acceptable, or delightful, but the wicked say perverse and destructive things.

\(^24\) tn Heb “lips.” The term “lips” is a metonymy of cause for what is said.

\(^25\) tn Heb “an abomination of the Lord.” The term חָכָמָה (khokhmah, “wisdom”) is a subjective genitive.

\(^26\) tn Heb “scales of deception.” The genitive is attributive: “deceptive scales.” This refers to dishonesty in the market where silver was weighed in the scales. God condemns dishonest business practices (Deut 25:13-16; Lev 19:35-36), as did the ancient Near East (ANET 388, 423).

\(^27\) tn Heb “a perfect stone.” Stones were used for measuring amounts of silver on the scales; here the stone that pleases the Lord is whole, complete, perfect (from קָוָה, shalom). It was one that would give an honest, accurate measurement.

\(^28\) sn This term from the root צֹלַד (zol or צָלַד, zul) which means “to boil; to seethe; to act proudly; to act presumptuously.” The idea is that of boiling amounts of silver on the scales; here the stone that pleases the Lord is one that would give an honest, accurate measurement.

\(^29\) tn The verbs show both the sequence and the correlation. The first is the perfect tense of אֶזְכָּר (bo, “to enter; to come”); it is followed by the preterite with vav consecutive from the same verb, showing that one follows or comes with the other. Because the second verb in the colon is sequential to the first, the first may be subordinated as a temporal clause.
but with humility\textsuperscript{1} comes\textsuperscript{2} wisdom.
11:3 The integrity of the upright guides them,\textsuperscript{3} but the crookedness of the unfaithful destroys them.\textsuperscript{4}
11:4 Wealth does not profit in the day of wrath,\textsuperscript{5} but righteousness delivers from mortal danger.\textsuperscript{6}
11:5 The righteousness of the blameless will make straight their way,\textsuperscript{7} but the wicked person will fall by his own wickedness.\textsuperscript{8}
11:6 The righteousness of the upright will deliver them,\textsuperscript{9} but the faithless will be captured\textsuperscript{10} by their own desires.\textsuperscript{11}
11:7 When a wicked person dies, his expectation perishes,\textsuperscript{12} and the hope of his strength\textsuperscript{13} perishes.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{1} tn Heb “modesty”; KJV, ASV “the lowly.” The adjective מודע (y\textsuperscript{v}nu\textsuperscript{m}, “modest”) is used as a noun; this is an example of antimerism in which one part of speech is used in the place of another (see E. W. Bullinger, Figures of Speech, 491-506), e.g., “Let the dry [adjective] appear!” = dry land (Gen 1:9). The root צל (ts\textsubscript{a}nau, “to be modest; to be humble”) describes those who are reserved, retiring, modest. The plural form is used for the abstract idea of humility.

\textsuperscript{2} tn The term “comes” does not appear in the Hebrew, but is supplied in the translation from parallelism.

\textsuperscript{3} sn This contrasts two lifestyles, affirming the value of integrity. The upright live with integrity – blamelessness – and that integrity leads them in success and happiness. Those who use treachery will be destroyed by it.

\textsuperscript{4} tc The form is a Kethib/Qere reading. The Qere צדעי (ts\textsubscript{a}yu) is an imperfect tense with the pronominal suffix. The Kethib צדעי (ts\textsubscript{a}yu) is a perfect tense with a vav prefixed and a pronominal suffix. The Qere is supported by the versions.

\textsuperscript{5} sn The “day of wrath” refers to divine punishment in this life (R. N. Whybark, Proverbs [CBC], 67; e.g., also Job 21:30; Ezek 7:19; Zeph 1:18). Righteousness and not wealth is more valuable in anticipating judgment.

\textsuperscript{6} tn Heb “from death.”

\textsuperscript{7} tn Heb “his way.”

\textsuperscript{8} sn The righteousness will enjoy security and serenity throughout life. Righteousness makes the path straight; wickedness destroys the wicked.

\textsuperscript{9} sn The contrast is between being rescued or delivered (ה\textsubscript{v}ת, natsal) and being captured (צְּנַע, lakhad). Righteousness is freeing; evil desires are enslaving.

\textsuperscript{10} tn Heb “taken captive” (so NRSV); NIV, TEV “are trapped.”

\textsuperscript{11} tc Heb “but by the desire of the faithless are they taken captive.”

\textsuperscript{12} tn The first colon features an imperfect tense depicting habitual action, while the second has a perfect tense verb depicting gnomic action.

\textsuperscript{13} sn The subject of this proverb is the hope of the wicked, showing its consequences – his expectations die with him (Ps 49). Any hope for long life and success borne of wickedness will be disappointed.

\textsuperscript{14} tc There are several suggested changes for this word צדעי (ts\textsubscript{a}yu, “vigor” or “strength”). Rashi, a Jewish scholar who lived a.d. 1040-1105, suggests that the word refers to children, a meaning implied from Gen 49:3. This would mean that even his children would not benefit from his wickedness. Tg. Prov 11:7 rendered it “who practice crookedness,” deriving it from the first root which means “wickedness.”

\textsuperscript{15} tc The LXX adds an antithesis to this: “When the righteous dies, hope does not perish.” The LXX translators wanted to see the hope of the righteous fulfilled in the world to come.

\textsuperscript{16} sn What the wicked say has a disastrous effect on society, endangering, weakening, demoralizing, and perverting with malicious and slanderous words. Wicked leaders, in particular, can bring destruction on a city by their evil counsel.

\textsuperscript{17} sn The verb צדעי (ts\textsubscript{a}yu) means “to despair; to show contempt for” someone. It reflects an attitude of pride and judgmentalism. In view of the parallel line, in this situation it would reflect perhaps some public denunciation of another person.
sn According to Proverbs (and the Bible as a whole) how one treats a neighbor is an important part of righteousness. One was expected to be a good neighbor, and to protect and safeguard the life and reputation of a neighbor. 

1tn Heb “heart.” The noun פָּנָי (lpn, “heart”) functions as a metonymy of association for wisdom, since the heart is often associated with knowledge and wisdom (BDB 524 s.v. 3a).

2tn Heb “a man of discernment.”

3tn The verb translated “keeps silence” (דָּבָר, dā바ֹר) means “holds his peace.” Rather than publicly denouncing another person’s mistake or folly, a wise person will keep quiet about it (e.g., 1 Sam 10:27). A discerning person realizes that the neighbor may become an opponent and someday retaliate.

4tn Heb “going about in slander.” This expression refers to a slanderer. The noun means “slander” and so “tale-bearer” (so KJV, ASV, NASB), “informer.” The related verb (דָּבָר, dā바ֹר) means “to go about” from one person to another, either for trade or for gossip.

5tn The participle רַע־יֵרוֹע (rāʿ-yēroʿ) means “uncovering” or “revealing” secrets. This is the intent of a person who makes disparaging comments about others – he cannot wait to share secrets that should be kept.

6tn Heb “faithful of spirit.” This phrase describes the inner nature of the person as faithful and trustworthy. This individual will not rush out to tell whatever information he has heard, but will conceal it.

7tn The word תַּחְבֻּלוֹת (takhvulot, “guidance; direction”) is deverbal. Thus spiritual guidance is like steering a ship, here the ship of state (R. N. Whybray, Proverbs [CBC], 68; Prov 1:5). Advice is necessary for the success of a nation.

8tn Heb “victory.” This term תְּשֻׁוָּה (tēshūvāh) means “salvation” or “victory” (BDB 448 s.v.); cf. NAB, TEV “security”; NRSV, NLT “safety.” Here, it connotes “success” as the antithesis of the nation falling. The setting could be one of battle or economics. Victory or success will be more likely with good counselors.

9tn The “stranger” could refer to a person from another country or culture, as it often does, but it could also refer to an unknown Israelite, with the idea that the individual stands outside the known and respectable community.

10tn The sentence begins with the Niphal imperfect and the concomitant (raʿ-ronaʿ), stressing that whoever does this “will certainly suffer hurt.” The hurt in this case will be financial responsibility for a bad risk.

11tn Heb “hates.” The term שֹׂנֵא (šōneʿ) means “to reject,” and here “to avoid.” The participle is substantival, functioning as the subject of the clause. The next participle, עָרִיץ (ʿārīʿt), “striking hands”, is its object, telling what is hated. The third participle, בָּשַׂר (bāšar), “benefits” (BDB 256 s.v.), functions verbally. 

12tn Heb “striking.” The imagery here is shaking hands to seal a contract. The term “hands” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied.

13tn Heb “a woman of grace.” The genitive כֹּזֶה (kōzeh, “grace”) functions as an attributive adjective. The contrast is between “a gracious woman” (דְּבָרָה כְּזֶה, ḏēraḵi-kōzeḥ), a woman who is not only graceful but generous, and “powerful men,” a term usually having a bad sense, such as tyrants or ruthless men.

14tn Heb “those who are terrifying.” The term דָּרִי (ārī, “arts”) refers to a person who strikes terror into the hearts of his victims. The term refers to a ruthless person who uses violence to overcome his victims (BDB 792 s.v.). Cf. ASV, NASB, NLT “violent men”; NRSV “the aggressive.”

15tn The LXX adds: “She who hates virtue makes a throne for dishonor; the idle will be destitute of means.” This reading is followed by several English versions (e.g., NAB, NEC, NRSV, TEV). C. H. Toy concludes that MT provides remnants of the original, but that the LXX does not provide the full meaning (Proverbs [ICC], 229).

16tn The implication is that the ruthless men will obtain wealth without honor, and therefore this is not viewed as success by the writer.

17tn Heb “man of kindness.” This contrasts the “kind person” and the “cruel person” (one who is fierce, cruel), showing the consequences of their dispositions.

18tn The term גֹּמֶל (gomel) means “to deal fully (or “adequately”) with” someone or something. The kind person will benefit himself.

19tn Heb “his own soul.” The term נֵफֶשׁ (nafesh, “soul”) is used as a synecdoche of part (= soul) for the whole (= person): “himself” (BDB 660 s.v. 4).

20tn Heb “brings trouble to his flesh.”

21tn There may be a conscious effort by the sage to contrast “soul” and “body”: He contrasts the benefits of kindness for the “soul” (translated “himself”) with the trouble that comes to the “flesh/body” (translated “himself”) of the cruel.

22tn The term is the masculine singular adjective used as a substantive.

23tn Heb “makes” (so NAB).

24tn Heb “wages of deception.”

25tn Whatever recompense or reward the wicked receive will not last, hence, it is deceptive (R. B. Y. Scott, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes [AB], 88).

26tn The participle “sowing” provides an implied comparison (the figure is known as hypocatastasis) with the point of practicing righteousness and inspiring others to do the same. What is sown will yield fruit (1 Cor 9:11; 2 Cor 9:6; Jas 3:18).

27tn In the term “reaps” does not appear in the Hebrew but has been supplied in the translation from context for the sake of smoothness.

28tn Heb “true” (so NASB, NRSV); KJV, NAB, NIV “sure.”
11:19 True righteousness leads to life, but the one who pursues evil pursues it to his own death.

11:20 The Lord abhors those who are perverse in heart, but those who are blameless in their ways are his delight.

11:21 Be assured that the evil person will certainly be punished, but the descendants of the righteous will not suffer unjust judgment.

11:22 Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who rejects discretion.

11:23 What the righteous desire leads only to good, but what the wicked hope for leads to wrath.

11:24 One person is generous and yet grows more wealthy, but another withholds more than he should and comes to poverty.

11:25 A generous person will be enriched, and the one who provides water for others will join the righteous.

1 tn Heb “the veritable of righteousness.” The adjective יָתַּאֲוַת (yəṯāʾav̄at, “right; honest; veritable”) functions substantivally as an attributive genitive, meaning “veritable righteousness.”

2 tn Heb “is to life.” The expression “leads to” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but the idiom implies it; it is supplied in the translation for smoothness.

3 tn The phrase “pursues it” does not appear in the Hebrew text but has been supplied in the translation from context.

4 sn “Life” and “death” describe the vicissitudes of this life but can also refer to the situation beyond the grave. The two paths head in opposite directions.

5 tn Heb “an abomination of the Lord.” The term הֵדֶרַח (ḥedorāḥ, “the Lord”) functions as a subjective genitive. Cf. NIV “detests”; NEV, TEV, CEV, NLT “hates.”

6 sn The word שֵׁרֶק (“crooked; twisted; perverted”) describes the wicked as having “twisted minds.” Their mentality is turned toward evil things.

7 tn Heb “those who are blameless of way.” The noun יָתַּאֲוַת (yəṯāʾav̄at, “way”) is a genitive of specification: “blameless in their way.”

8 sn The noun means “goodwill, favor, acceptance, will”; it is related to the verb רָצַה (ratsāḥ) which means “to be pleased with; to accept favorably.” These words are used frequently in scripture to describe what pleases the Lord, meaning what he accepts. In particular, sacrifices offered properly find acceptance with God (Ps 51:19). Here the lifestyle that is blameless pleases him.

9 tn The expression “hand to hand” refers the custom of striking hands to confirm an agreement (M. Anbar, “Proverbs 11:21,” in TJ, LXX 4:9).

10 tn Heb “will not be free.” The verb נָעַשׁ (naššāḥ) means “to be clean; to be empty.” In the Niphal it means “to be free of guilt; to be clean; to be innocent,” and therefore “to be exempt from punishment” (DBDB 667 s.v. Niph). The phrase “will not go unpunished” (cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV) is an example of tapeinosis (a negative statement that emphasizes the positive opposite statement): “will certainly be punished” (cf. TEV, CEV, NLT).

11 tn Heb “the seed of the righteous.” This is an idiom that describes a class of people who share the nature of righteousness (e.g., Isa 1:4; 65:23). The word “seed” (hypoctastasis) means “offspring.” Some take it literally, as if it meant that the children of the righteous will escape judgment (Saadia, a Jewish scholar who lived A.D. 882-942). The LXX translates it in a different sense: “he that sows righteousness will receive a faithful reward.”

12 tn Heb “will be delivered” (so NASB). The phrase “from unjust judgment” does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied by the idiom.

13 tn Heb “a ring of gold.” The noun זָהָב (zāḥāḇ, “gold”) is a genitive of material; the ring is made out of gold.

14 tn Heb “in a snout of a swine.” A beautiful ornament and a pig are as incongruous as a beautiful woman who has no taste or ethical judgment.

15 tn The verb “is” does not appear in the Hebrew text but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

16 tn Heb “turns away [from].”

17 tn Heb “taste.” The term can refer to physical taste (Exod 16:31), intellectual discretion (1 Sam 25:33), or ethical judgment (Ps 119:66). Here it probably means that she has no moral sensibility, no propriety, no good taste – she is unchaste. Her beauty will be put to wrong uses.

18 tn Heb “the desire of the righteous.” The noun נְפֶשׁ (nāḇēš) functions as an objective genitive: “what the righteous desire.”

19 tn The phrase “leads to” does not appear in the Hebrew text but has been supplied in the translation. The desire of the righteous (in itself good) ends in good things, whereas the hope of the wicked ends in wrath, i.e., divine judgment on them. Another interpretation is that the righteous desire is to do good things, but the wicked hope to produce wrath (cf. CEV “troubleshooters hope to stir up trouble”).

20 tn Heb “the hope of the wicked.” The noun נְפֶשׁ (nāḇēš) “expectation” functions as an objective genitive: “what the wicked hope for.”

21 tn The term “leads” does not appear in the Hebrew text in this line but is implied by the parallelism. It is supplied in the translation for clarity and smoothness.

22 tn Heb “There is one who scatters.” The participle פָּרֶס (parēs, “one who scatters”) refers to charity rather than farming or investments (and is thus a hypocatastasis). Cf. CEV “become rich by being generous.”

23 tn Heb “increases.” The verb means that he grows even more wealthy. This is a paradox: Generosity determines prosperity in God’s economy.

24 tn Heb “more than what is right.” This one is not giving enough, but saving for himself.

25 tn Heb “comes to lack.” The person who withholds will come to the diminishing of his wealth. The verse uses hyperbole to teach that giving to charity does not make anyone poor, and neither does refusal to give ensure prosperity.

26 tn Heb “the soul of blessing.” The genitive functions attributively; “Blessing” refers to the gift (Gen 33:11) or a special favor (Josh 15:19). The word פָּרֶס (parēs, “soul”) functions as a synecdoche of part (= soul) for the whole (= person); see BDB 660 s.v. 4.

27 tn Heb “will grow fat.” Drawing on the standard comparison of fatness and abundance (Deut 32:15), the term means “become rich, prosperous.”

28 tn Heb “will be filled.” A comparison between providing water for others with providing for those in need (e.g., Jer 31:25; Lam 3:15). The kind act will be reciprocated.
11:24 The one who is wise will hold grain, but the one who trusts in his riches will fall, and the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.

11:25 The one who troubles his family will inherit nothing, and the fool will be a servant to the wise person.

The ideas of the two halves of the verse are complementary. 11:26 The one who withholds grain, 4 but he will prize the one who sells it. 

11:27 The one who diligently seeks good seeks favor, but the one who searches for evil — it will come to him. 

11:28 The one who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.

11:29 The one who troubles his family will inherit nothing, and the fool will be a servant to the wise person.

11:30 The fruit of the righteous is like a tree producing life, and the one who wins souls is wise.

11:31 If the righteous are recompensed on earth, how much more, the wicked sinner!

12:1 The one who loves discipline loves knowledge, but the one who hates reproof is stupid.

12:2 A good person obtains favor from the Lord, but the Lord condemns a person with wicked schemes.

The phrase “for others” does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied by the causative Hiphil verb which normally takes a direct object; it is elided in the Hebrew for the sake of emphasis. It is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

This verb also means “to pour water,” and so continues the theme of the preceding participle: The one who gives refreshment to others will be refreshed. BDB 924 s.v. yu,’ “will himself also be watered” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). But the verb looks very much like a Hiphil of the root ykh, “to shoot; to pour.” So the editors of BHS suggest yikh (w‘ar).

The direct object suffix on the verb picks up on the emphasis absolute phrase: “they will curse him — the one who withholds grain.”

The proverb refers to a merchant who holds back his grain from the free market to raise prices when there is a shortage. The direct object suffix on the verb picks up on the emphasis absolute phrase: “for others” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.

The phrase “for others” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.

The figure is a hypocatastasis, an implied comparison.

The word “wind” (Sn, “leafage”) is a synecdoche of container (= house) for its contents (= family, household).

The verb akhar, “to trouble” refers to actions which make life difficult for one’s family (BDB 747 s.v.). He will be cut out of the family inheritance.

The implication from the parallelism is that the righteous do not trust in their own riches, but in the Lord.

The verb bet, “house,” the term l QT, “his house” is a synecdoche of container (= house) for its contents (= family, household).

The word “wind” (Sn, “leafage”) refers to what cannot be grasped (Prov 27:16; Eccl 1:14, 17). The figure is a hypocatastasis, comparing wind to what he inherits — nothing he can put his hands on. Cf. TCE “won’t inherit a thing.”

The “fool” here is the “troubler” of the first half. One who mismanages his affairs so badly so that there is nothing for the family may have to sell himself into slavery to the wise.
12:3 No one can be established through wickedness, but a righteous root cannot be moved.  
12:4 A noble wife is the crown of her husband, but the wife who acts shamefully is like rottenness in his bones.  
12:5 The plans of the righteous are just; the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.  
12:6 The words of the wicked lie in wait to shed innocent blood, but the words of the upright will deliver them.  
12:7 The wicked are overthrow* and perish, but the righteous household will stand.  
12:8 A person is praised in accordance with his wisdom, but the one who has a twisted mind is despised.  
12:9 Better is a person of humble standing who never has a servant than one who pretends to be somebody important yet has no food.  
12:10 A righteous person cares for the life of his animal, but even the most compassionate acts of the wicked are cruel.  
12:11 The one who works his field will have plenty of food, but whoever chases daydreams lacks wisdom.  
12:12 The wicked person desires a stronghold, with his wisdom, but the one who has a twisted mind is despised.  
12:9 Better is a person of humble standing who never has a servant than one who pretends to be somebody important yet has no food.  
12:10 A righteous person cares for the life of his animal, but even the most compassionate acts of the wicked are cruel.  
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1 tn Heb "a man cannot be."  
2 tn The Niphal imperfect of יב (cun, "to be established") refers to finding permanent "security" (so NRSV, TEV, CEV) before God. Only righteousness can do that.  
3 tn Heb "a root of righteousness." The genitive קֵרֶף (tšadigim, "righteousness") functions as an attributive adjective. The figure "root" (גֵּרֶף, shoresh) stresses the security of the righteous; they are firmly planted and cannot be uprooted (cf. NLT "the godly have deep roots"). The righteous are often compared to a tree (e.g., 11:30; Ps 1:3; 92:13).  
4 tn Heb "a wife of virtue"; NAB, NLT "a worthy wife." This noble woman (יְשֵׁשְׂרִית, Shet-khayil) is the subject of Prov 31. She is a "virtuous woman" (cf. KJV), a capable woman of noble character. She is contrasted with the woman who is disgraceful (יָפְתָח, m'tishash; "one who causes shame") or who lowers his standing in the community.  
5 sn The metaphor of the "crown" emphasizes that such a wife is a symbol of honor and glory.  
6 tn Heb "she;" the referent (the wife) has been specified in the translation for clarity.  
7 sn The simile means that the shameful acts of such a woman will eat away her husband's strength and influence and destroy his happiness.  
8 tn Heb "thoughts." This term refers not just to random thoughts, however, but to what is planned or devised.  
9 sn The plans of good people are directed toward what is right. Advice from the wicked, however, is deceitful and can only lead to trouble.  
10 sn This infinitive construct בַּאֵר (cave, "to lie in wait") expresses the purpose of their conversations. The idea of "lying in wait for blood" is an implied comparison (hypocatastasis): Their words are like an ambush intended to destroy (cf. NAB, NRSV "a deadly ambush"). The words of the wicked are here personified.  
11 tn Heb "for blood." The term "blood" is a metonymy of effect because being the person that they will attack and whose blood they will shed. After the construct "blood" is also an objective genitive.  
12 tn Heb "mouth." The term הַפֵּח (pēh, "mouth") is a metonymy of cause, signifying what the righteous say. The righteous can make a skillful defense against false accusations that are intended to destroy. The righteous, who have gained wisdom, can escape the traps set by the words of the wicked.  
13 sn This proverb is about the stability of the righteous in times of trouble. The term "overthrown" might allude to Gen 19:21.  
14 tn Heb "and they are not."  
15 tn Heb "the house of the righteous." The genitive תַּשְׁדִידָם (tšadidim) functions as an attributive adjective: "righteous house." The noun תֵית (beit, "house") functions as a syncodoche of container (= house) for the contents (= family, household; perhaps household possessions). Cf. NCV "a good person's family"; NLT "the children of the godly."  
16 tn Heb "a man."  
17 tn Heb "to the mouth of." This idiom means "according to" (BD BBS 805 s.v. פֶּה 6b; cf. KJV, NAB, NIV). The point is that praise is proportionate to wisdom.  
18 tn Heb "crooked of heart;" cf. NAB, NLT "a warped mind" (NIV similar). The noun הַפָּקָד (fēqad, "heart") is an attributive genitive. It functions as a metonymy of association for "mind; thoughts" (BD BBS 524 s.v. 3 and "will; volition" (BD BBS 524 s.v. 4). He does not perceive things as they are, so he makes all the wrong choices. His thinking is all wrong.  
19 sn Heb "one who is lightly regarded." The verb קָלָה (qalah) means "to be lightly esteemed; to be dishonored; to be degraded" (BD BBS 885 s.v.).  
20 tn The meaning of the phrase יָרַע לְבוֹ (yăr' laḇow) is ambiguous; the preposition is either possessive ("has a servant") or a reflexive indirect object ("is a servant for himself"); cf. NAB, TEV). Several versions (LXX, Vulgate, Syriac) read "and yet has a servant."  
21 tn Heb "who feigns importance." The term רָכָבָה (r'akhabād, from רָכַב, caved, "to be weighty; to be honored; to be important") is an example of the so-called "Hollywood" Hitpael which describes a person putting on an act (BD BBS 458 s.v. רָכַב Hilp.2).  
22 sn This individual lives beyond his financial means in a vain show to impress other people and thus cannot afford to put food on the table.  
23 tn Heb "knows;" NLT "concerned for the welfare of." The righteous take care of animals, not just people.  
24 tn Heb "but the mercies." The additional words appear in the translation for the sake of clarification. The line can be interpreted in two ways: (1) when the wicked exhibit a kind act, they do it in a cruel way, or (2) even the kindest of their acts is cruel by all assessments, e.g., stuffing animals with food to fatten them for market -- their "kindness" is driven by ulterior motives (J. H. Greenstone, Proverbs, 129).  
25 sn In the biblical period agriculture was the most common occupation for the people; so "working a field" describes a substantial occupation, but also represents working in general. Diligent work, not get-rich-quick schemes, is the key to ensuring income.  
26 tn Heb "will have his fill of" or "will be satisfied with."  
27 tn Heb "empty things" or "vain things." The term רֶפֶסֶךְ (rephesek) refers to worthless pursuits in an effort to make money. The fact that the participle used is "chase after" shows how elusive these are. Cf. NIV "fantasies"; NCV "empty dreams"; TEV "useless projects."  
28 tn Heb "heart." The term הַפָּקָד (fēqad, "heart") functions as a metonymy of association for wisdom (BD BBS 524 s.v. 3).  
29 sn This line is difficult to interpret. BDB connects the term רֶפֶסֶךְ (m’tasod) to לְפָנֵי (lifnei) which means (1) "snare; hunting-net" and (2) what is caught: "prey" (BD BBS 844-45 s.v. לְפָנֵי). This would function as a metonymy of cause for what the net catches: the prey. Or it may be saying that the wicked get caught in their own net, that is, reap the consequences of their own sins. On the other hand, HALOT 622 connects רֶפֶסֶךְ (m’tasod) to לְפָנֵי (lifnei m’tasudah, "mountain stronghold"); cf. NAB "the stronghold of evil men will be demolished"). The LXX
but the righteous root endures.  

12:13 The evil person is ensnared by the transgression of his speech, but the righteous person escapes out of trouble.

12:14 A person will be satisfied with good from the fruit of his words, and the work of his hands will be rendered to him.

12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own opinion, but the one who listens to advice is wise.

12:16 A fool’s annoyance is known at once, but the prudent overlooks an insult.

12:17 The faithful witness tells what is right, but a false witness speaks deceit.

12:18 Speaking recklessly is like the thrusts of a sword, but the words of the wise bring healing.

12:19 The one who tells the truth will endure forever, but the one who lies will last only for a moment.

12:20 Deceit is in the heart of those who plot evil, but those who promote peace have joy.
12:21 The righteous do not encounter any harm, but the wicked are filled with calamity.

12:22 The Lord abhors a person who lies, but those who deal truthfully are his delight.

12:23 The shrewd person conceals knowledge, but foolish people publicize folly.

12:24 The diligent person will rule, but the slothful will become a slave.

12:25 Anxiety in a person’s heart weighs him down, but an encouraging word brings him joy.

12:26 The righteous person is cautious in his friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

12:27 The lazy person does not roast his prey, but personal possessions are precious to the diligent.

12:28 In the path of righteousness there is life, but another path leads to death.

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1 Hebrew “is not allowed to meet to the righteous.”
2 Hebrew “all calamity.” The proper nuance of הָאָן (‘aven) is debated. It is normally understood metaphorically (effect) as “harm; trouble,” that is, the result/effect of wickedness (e.g., Gen 50:20). Rashi, a Jewish scholar who lived c. 1040-1105, took it as “wickedness,” its primary meaning: “the righteous will not be caught up in wickedness.”
3 The expression כֹּל חָרַךְ (‘al-mavet, ‘to be full of evil’) means (1) the wicked do much evil or (2) the wicked experience much calamity (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).
4 Hebrew “an abomination of the Lord.” The term סָנִים (‘sumim’), “the Lord”, is a subjective genitive.
5 Hebrew “lips of lying.” The genitive סָנִים (‘sumim’) functions as an attributive genitive: “lying lips.” The term “lips” functions as a synecdoche of part (= lips) for the whole (= person); “a liar.”
6 Hebrew “but does of truthfulness.” The term “truthfulness” is an objective genitive, meaning: “those who practice truth” or “those who act in good faith.” Their words and works are reliable.
7 The contrast between “delight/pleasure” and “abomination” is emphatic. What pleases the Lord is acting truthfully or faithfully.
8 Hebrew “a shrewd man” (so NAB); KJV, NIV “a prudent man”; NRSV “One who is clever.”
9 A shrewd person knows how to use knowledge wisely, and restrains himself from revealing all he knows. The term לְבֵנו (‘levirot’, “cover; hides”) does not mean that he never shares his knowledge, but discerns when it is not appropriate to speak.
10 Hebrew “the heart of fools.” The term לֵב (‘lev’, “heart”) functions as a synecdoche of part (= heart) for the whole (= person); “foolish people.” This type of fool despises correction and instruction. His intent is to proclaim all that he does foolishly. The Midrash translates it: “a prudent man; indeed, a shrewd man” (so NAB); KJV, NIV “a prudent man; indeed, a shrewd man” (so NAB); KJV, NIV “a prudent man; indeed, a shrewd man.”
11 Hebrew “a shrewd man,” “one who is clever.”
12 Hebrew “the heart of fools.” The term לֵב (‘lev’, “heart”) functions as a synecdoche of part (= heart) for the whole (= person); “foolish people.” This type of fool despises correction and instruction. His intent is to proclaim all that he does foolishly. The Midrash translates it: “a prudent man; indeed, a shrewd man.”
13 Hebrew “bows it [= his heart] down.” Anxiety weighs heavily on the heart, causing depression. The spirit is brought low.
14 Hebrew “makes it [= his heart] glad.” The similarly sounding terms סָנִים (‘sumim’, “weighs it down”) and סָנִים (‘sumim’, “makes it glad”) create a wordplay (paronomasia) that dramatically emphasizes the polar opposite emotional states: depression versus joy.
15 Hebrew “anxiety” (אָנוּס, d’agah) combines anxiety and fear – anxious fear (e.g., Jer 49:23; Ezek 4:16); and for the verb (e.g., Ps 38:18; Jer 17:8).
16 Hebrew “the heart of a man.”
17 Hebrew “bow[s] [his heart] down.” Anxiety weighs heavily on the heart, causing depression. The spirit is brought low.
18 Hebrew “good.” The Hebrew word “good” (טוֹב, tov) refers to what is beneficial for life, promotes life, creates life or protects life. The “good word” here would include encouragement, kindness, and insight – the person needs to regain the proper perspective on life and renew his confidence.
19 Hebrew “makes it [= his heart] glad.” The similarly sounding terms סָנִים (‘sumim’, “weighs it down”) and סָנִים (‘sumim’, “makes it glad”) create a wordplay (paronomasia) that dramatically emphasizes the polar opposite emotional states: depression versus joy.
20 Hebrew “line” has several possible translations: (1) The verb מַס (‘mas) can mean “to spy out; to examine,” which makes a good contrast to “lead astray” in the parallel colossus. (2) מַס could be the Hophal of מֵס (mas), “to set free; [Yahweh] makes it glad.” The term לֵב (‘lev’, “heart”) is a subjective genitive: “a heart.”
21 The MT reads מֵס (‘mas) from לֵב (‘lev), “to roast”?). On the other hand, several versions (LXX, Syriac, Vulgate) reflect a Hebrew לֵב הַפּוֹחַ (Hophal, Hiphil “to set free”; מֵס, “to be set free”): “the righteous is delivered from harm” (reading מֵס הַפּוֹחַ) (J. A. Emerton, “A Note on Proverbs 12:26,” ZAW 76 [1964]: 191-93). (3) Another option is, “the righteous guides his friend avert.”
22 Hebrew “floods broadcast their folly.”
23 Hebrew “the wealth of a man.”
24 Hebrew “no death.” This phrase may mean “immortality,” Those who enter the path of righteousness by faith and seek
13:1 A wise son accepts4 his father’s discipline,5 but a scoffer3 does not listen to rebuke. 13:2 From the fruit of his speech8 a person eats good things,6 but the faithless8 desire7 the fruit of violence.6 13:3 The one who guards his words9 guards his life, but10 whoever is talkative15 will come to ruin.12 13:4 The appetite14 of the sluggard14 craves15 but gets nothing, but the desire of the diligent will be abundantly satisfied.16 13:5 The righteous person hates anything false,17 but the wicked person acts in shameful disgrace.18 13:6 Righteousness19 guards the one who lives with integrity,20 but wickedness21 overthrows the sinner. 13:7 There is one who pretends to be rich22 and yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor23 and yet possesses great wealth24
to live righteously are on their way to eternal life. However, M. Dahood suggests that it means permanence ("immortality in Proverbs 12:28; Bib 41 [1960]: 176-81).
1 tn The term “accepts” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness and clarity.
2 tc G. R. Driver suggested reading this word as נפשׁ חָרֻצִים (nafsho charutsim, “allows himself to be disciplined”); see his “Hebrew Notes on Prophets and Proverbs,” JTS 41 (1940): 174. But this is not necessary at all; the MT makes good sense as it stands. Similarly, the LXX has “a wise son listens to his father.”
3 tn Heb “discipline of a father.”
4 tn Heb “lips” (so NIV; KJV “mouth.”) The term “lips” is a metonymy of cause for what the lips produce: speech.
5 tn Heb “he eats [what is] good.”
6 tn Heb “the desire of the faithless.” The noun “faithless” is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness and clarity.
7 tn The noun נפשׁ (nafsho, traditionally “soul”) has a broad range of meanings, and here denotes “appetite” (e.g., Ps 17:9; Prov 23:3; Eccl 2:24; Isa 5:14; Hab 2:5; BDB 660 s.v. 5.c) or (2) “desire” (e.g., Deut 12:20; Prov 13:4; 19:8; 21:10; BDB 660 s.v. 6.a).
8 tn Heb “violence.” The phrase “the fruit of” does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied by the parallelism. The term “violence” is probably a metonymy of cause: “violence” represents what violence gains – ill-gotten gains resulting from violent crime. The wicked desire what does not belong to them.
9 tc The LXX reads “the souls of the wicked perish untimely.”
10 tn The term “but” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.
11 tn Heb “opens wide his lips.” This is an idiomatic meaning “to be talkative” (BDB 832 s.v. ba’ash). Qal. Cf. NIV “speaks rashly”; TEV “a careless talker”; CEV “talk too much.”
12 sn Tight control over what one says prevents trouble (e.g., Prov 10:10; 17:28; Jas 3:1-12; Sir 28:25). Amenemope advises to “sleep a night before speaking” (3:15, ANET 422, n. 10). The old Arab proverb is appropriate: “Take heed that your tongue does not cut your throat” (O. Zockler, Proverbs, 134).
13 tn The noun נפשׁ (nafsho, traditionally “soul”) has a broad range of meanings, and here denotes “appetite” (e.g., Ps 17:9; Prov 23:3; Eccl 2:24; Isa 5:14; Hab 2:5; BDB 660 s.v. 5.c) or (2) “desire” (e.g., Deut 12:20; Prov 19:8; 21:10; BDB 660 s.v. 6.a).
14 sn The contrast is between the “soul (= appetite) of the sluggard” (בּוֹשׁ וְיַחְפִּיר, nefsho ‘aiset) and the “soul (= desire) of the diligent” (נְפֶשׁ חָרֻצִים, nefesh kharutsim) – what they each long for.

15 tn The Hiphael verb means “to last after; to crave.” A related verb is used in the Decalogue’s prohibition against coveting (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21).
16 tn Heb “will be made fat” (cf. KJV, NASB; NRSV “is richly supplied.”)
17 tn Heb “a word of falsehood.” The genitive “falsehood” functions as an attributive genitive. The construct noun נפשׁ (nafsho) means either “word” or “thing.” Hence, the phrase means “a false word” or “a false thing.”
18 tc The versions render this phrase variously: “is ashamed and without confidence” (LXX): “is ashamed and put to the blush” (Tg. Prov 13:5): “confounds and will be confounded” (Vulgate). The variety is due in part to confusion of הבש (ba’ash, “to stink”) and בוש (bosh, “to be ashamed.”). Cf. NASB “acts disgustingly and shamefully.”
19 tn Heb “acts shamefully and disgracefully.” The verb הבש (ba’ash) literally means “to cause a stink; to emit a stinking odor” (e.g., Exod 5:21; Eccl 10:1) and figuratively means “to display shame.” Together, they can be treated as a verbal hendiadys: “to act in disgraceful shame,” or more colorfully “to make a shameful smell,” or as W. McKane has it, “spread the smell of scandal” (Proverbs [OTL], 460). W. G. Plaut says, "Unhappily, the bad odor adheres not only to the liar but also to the one about whom he lies – especially when the lie is a big one” (Proverbs, 152).
20 sn Righteousness refers to that which conforms to law and order. One who behaves with integrity will be safe from consequences of sin.
21 tn Heb “blameless of way.” The term דְּרֵכָה (derakah) is a genitive of specification: “blameless in respect to his way.” This means living above reproach in their course of life. Cf. NASB “whose way is blameless”; NAB “who walks honestly.”
22 tn The Hitpael verb means “to last after; to crave.” A related verb is used in the Decalogue’s prohibition against coveting (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21).
23 sn Righteousness and wickedness are personified in this proverb to make the point of security and insecurity for the two courses of life.
24 sn The Hitpael of נשע (nash, “to be rich”) means “to pretend to be rich” (BDB 939 s.v. Hithpaal); this is another example of the “Hollywood Hitpael” – the Hitpael forms of hollow root verbs are the equivalent of Hithpaal stem forms.
25 sn The proverb seems to be a general observation on certain people in life, but it is saying more. Although there are times when such pretending may not be wrong, the proverb is instructing people to be honest. An empty pretentious display or a concealing of wealth can come to no good.
13:8 The ransom⁴ of a person’s⁵ life is his wealth, but the poor person hears no threat.³
13:9 The light⁷ of the righteous shines brightly,⁵ but the lamp of the wicked goes out.⁷
13:10 With pride comes only contention, but wisdom is with the well-advised.¹⁰
13:11 Wealth gained quickly¹¹ will dwindle away.¹²

but the one who gathers it little by little¹³ will become rich.¹⁴
13:12 Hope¹⁵ deferred¹⁶ makes the heart sick,¹⁷ but a longing fulfilled¹⁸ is like¹⁹ a tree of life.
13:13 The one who despises instruction¹²⁰ will pay the penalty,¹²¹ but whoever esteemsinstruction¹²² will be rewarded.ª⁴
13:14 Instruction¹⁵ from the wise,²⁶ is like²⁷ a life-giving fountain,²⁸ to turn²⁹ a person from deadly snares.³¹

¹ sn As the word “ransom” (ץַעַר, cofer) indicates, the rich are susceptible to kidnapping and robbery. But the poor man pays no attention to blackmail – he does not have money to buy off aggressors. So the rich person is exposed to legal attacks and threats of physical violence and must use his wealth as ransom.
² tn Heb “the life of a man.”
³ tn The term שָׁמַשׁ (šāmash) may mean (1) “rebuke” (so KJV, NASB) or (2) “threat” (so NIV; cf. ASV, NRSV, NLT). If “rebuke” is the sense here, it means that the burdens of society fall on the rich as well as on the poor. But the sense of “threat” better suits the context: The rich are threatened with extortion, but the poor are not (cf. CEV “the poor don’t have that problem”).
⁴ sn The images of “light” and “darkness” are used frequently in scripture. Here “light” is an implied comparison: “light” represents life, joy, and prosperity; “darkness” signifies adversity and death. So the “light of the righteous” represents the prosperous life of the righteous.
⁵ tn The verb יִשְׂמָח (yishmāḥ) is normally translated “to make glad; to rejoice.” But with “light” as the subject, it has the connotation “to shine brightly” (see G. R. Driver, “Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs,” Bib 32 [1951]: 180).
⁶ sn The lamp is an implied comparison as well, comparing the life of the wicked to a lamp that is going to be extinguished.
⁷ tc The LXX add, “Deceitful souls go astray in sins, but the righteous are pitiful and merciful.”
⁸ tn The verb יָכָל (yakhal) means “to go out [in reference to a fire or lamp]; to be extinguished.” The idea is that of being made extinct, snuffed out (cf. NIV, NLT). The imagery may have been drawn from the sanctuary where the flame was to be kept burning perpetually. Not so with the wicked.
⁹ sn The LXX add, “A crafty son will have no good thing, but a longing fulfilled is like a tree of life.” But the one who gathers it little by little will become rich.
10 tn The Niphal of יַעֲשֵׂה (yāʿasah, “to advise; to counsel”) means “to consult together; to take counsel.” It means being well-advised, receiving advice or consultation (cf. NCV “those who take advice are wise”).
11 tc The MT reads יְהֵבֶל (yehēvel, “from vanity”). The Greek and Latin versions (followed by RSV) reflect יַכְּלָב (yakhal, “in haste”) which exhibits metathesis. MT is the more difficult reading and therefore preferred. The alternate reading fits the parallelism better, but is therefore a less difficult reading.
12 tn Heb “wealth from vanity” (cf. KJV, ASV). The term יִשְׂכַל (yishkalah) literally means “vapor” and metaphorically refers to that which is unsubstantial, fleeting, or amount to nothing (BDB 210 s.v.). Used in antithesis with the expression “little by little,” it means either “without working for it” or “quickly.” Some English versions assume dishonest gain (cf. NASB, NIV, CEV).
13 tn Heb “will become small.” The verb יָקַע (nakā) means “to become small; to become diminished; to become few.” Money gained without work will diminish quickly, because it was come by too easily. The verb forms a precise contrast with יָכָל (yakhal), “to become much; to become many,” but in the Hiphil, “to multiply; to make much many; to cause increase,” but the one who gathers it little by little will become rich.
14 tn Heb “by hand”; cf. KJV, ASV, NASB “by labor.”
15 tn Heb “will increase.”
16 tn The word “hope” (יָקְחֵל, [yakhhal]) also has the implication of a tense if not anxious wait.
17 sn Failure in realizing one’s hopes can be depressing or discouraging. People can bear frustration only so long (W. G. Plaut, Proverbs, 153).
18 tn Heb “a desire that comes”; cf. CEV “a wish that comes true.”
19 tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.
20 tn Heb “the word.” The term “word” means teaching in general; its parallel “command” indicates that it is the more forceful instruction that is meant. Both of these terms are used for scripture.
21 tc The MT reads יָכְלָב (yakhal, “will he pay [for it]?”; cf. NAB, NIV) but the BHS editors suggest revocalizing the text to יָכָל (yakhal, “he will be broken [for it]”; cf. NRSV “bring destruction on themselves”).
22 tn Heb “will be pledged to it.” The Niphal of יִשָּׂמָּה (yishmaḥ) “to pledge” means “to be under pledge to pay the penalty” (BDB 286 s.v. Niph). Whoever despises teaching will be treated as a debtor – he will pay for it if he offends against the law.
23 tn Heb “he” or “that one” [will be rewarded].
24 tc The LXX adds: “A crafty son will have no good thing, but the affairs of a wise servant will be prosperous; and his path will be directed rightly.”
25 tc The term יָכְלָב (yakhal) in legal literature means “law,” but in wisdom literature often means “instruction; teaching” (BDB 435 s.v.; cf. NAV, NIV, NRSV “teaching”; NLT “advice”).
26 tn Heb “instruction of the wise.” The term יִשָּׂמָּה (yishmaḥ, “the wise”) is a genitive of source.
27 tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.
28 tc Heb “fountain of life” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV). The genitive יִשָּׂמָּה (yishmaḥ) functions as a genitive of material, similar to the expression “fountain of water.” The metaphor means that the teaching of the wise is life-giving. The second colon is the consequence of the first, explaining this metaphor.
29 tn The infinitive construct with preposition יִשָּׂמָּה (yishmaḥ, learned) gives the result (or, purpose) of the first statement. It could also be taken epexegetically, “by turning.”
30 tc The term “person” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.
31 tn Heb “snares of death” (so KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). The genitive יִשָּׂמָּה (yishmaḥ) functions as an attributive adjective. The term “snares” makes an implied comparison with hunting; death is like a hunter. W. McKane compares the idea to the Ugamic god Mot; the god of death, carrying people off to the realm of the departed (Proverbs [OTL], 455). The expression could also mean that the snares lead to death.
13:15 Keen insight⁵ wins favor, but the conduct⁶ of the unfaithful is harsh.⁴
13:16 Every shrewd⁸ person acts with knowledge, but a fool displays⁶ his folly.
13:17 An unreliable⁴ messenger falls⁮ into trouble, but a faithful envoy⁲ brings healing.
13:18 The one who neglects discipline ends up in poverty and shame, but the one who accepts reproof is honored.⁴⁵
13:19 A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but fools abhor⁵ turning away from evil.

⁴ tn Heb “good insight.” The expression עֲמִנֵי (emney) describes a person who has good sense, sound judgment, or wise opinions (BDB 968 s.v. עַמֵּן).
⁵ tn Heb “gives”; NASB “produces.”
⁶ tn Heb “way,” frequently for conduct, behavior, or lifestyle.
⁷ tn The MT reads יָרַע (yare), “to walk” (BDB 644 s.v. יָרַע). The root נִיר (nir) is employed (incorrectly) to his suffering.
⁸ tn The RSV changes this to a Hiphil to read, “plunges [men] into trouble.” But the text simply says the wicked messenger “falls into trouble,” perhaps referring to punishment for his bad service.
⁹ tn Or “evil.”
¹⁰ tn Heb “an envoy of faithfulness.” The genitive אבֵי אומּה (abey emah) functions as an attributive adjective: “faithful envoy.” The plural form אֶחָד (ekeh) is characteristically of abstract nouns. The term “envoy” (עָנָב, anav) suggests that the person is in some kind of govern- ment service (e.g., Mil 1932; Jer 49:14; cf. KJV, ASV “ambassador”). This individual can be trusted to “bring healing” – be successful in the mission. The wisdom literature of the ancient Near East has much to say about messengers.
¹¹ tn The verb “brings” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.
¹² tn The verb לָלָכ (lael) normally means “to let go; to neglect; to avoid; to reject” (BDB 828 s.v.).
¹³ tn The phrase “ends up in” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.
¹⁴ sn Honor and success are contrasted with poverty and shame; the key to enjoying the one and escaping the other is discipline and correction. W. McKane, Proverbs (OTL), 456, notes that it is a difference between a man of weight (pow- er and wealth, from the idea of “heavy” for “honor”) and the man of straw (lowly esteemed and poor).
¹⁶ tn Heb “walks.” When used with the preposition הַ (‘, “with”), the verb רָעָה (raah, “to walk”) means “to associate with” someone (BBD 234 s.v. רָעָה 1.2.b; e.g., Mic 6:8; Job 34:8). The active participle of רָאָה (‘ar) stresses continual, dutiful action. One should stay in close association with the wise, and move in the same direction they do.
¹⁷ tn The verb לָשָׂם (lasham) (‘ar) is the Niphal imperfect of רָעָה (raah, “to walk”) meaning “to suffer.” Several have attempted to parallel the repetition in the wordplay of the first colon. A. Guillaume has “he who associates with fools will be left a fool” (“A Note on the Roots בָּשָׂם, בר, and בְּשָׂם” in Hebrew.” JTS 15 [1964]: 294). Knox translated the Vulgate thus: “Fool he ends that fool befriends” (cited by D. Kidner, Proverbs [TOTC], 104).
¹⁸ tn Heb “evil.” The term רָעָה (raah, “evil”) here functions in a metonymical sense meaning “calamity.” “Good” is the general idea of good fortune or prosperity; the opposite, “evil,” is likewise “misfortune” (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV) or calamity.
¹⁹ sn This statement deals with recompense in absolute terms. It is this principle, without allowing for any of the exceptions that Proverbs itself acknowledges, that Job’s friends applied (incorrectly) to his suffering.
²⁰ tn Heb “good.”
²¹ sn In ancient Israel the idea of leaving an inheritance was a sign of God’s blessing; blessings extended to the righteous and not the sinners.
²² tn Heb “the children of children.”
²³ sn In the ultimate justice of God, the wealth of the wicked goes to the righteous after death (e.g., Ps 49:10, 17).
²⁴ tn Heb “fallow ground” (so NASB). The word רַעָה (raah) means “the tillable [or untilled; or fallow] ground.” The word נִיְר (nir) means “the eatable [or untilled] ground.” The LXX reads “the great enjoy wealth many years, but prosperity rewards the righteous.”
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³² sn Heb “fallow ground” (so NASB). The word רַעָה (raah) means “the tillable [or untilled; or fallow] ground.” The LXX reads “the great enjoy wealth many years, but some men perish little by little.” The Syriac reads “those who have no habituation waste wealth many years, and some waste it completely.” Tg. Prov 13:23 reads “the great man devours the land of the poor, and some men are taken away unjustly.” The Vulgate has “there is much food in the fresh land of the fathers, and for others it is collected without judgment.” C. H. Toy says that the text is corrupt (Proverbs [ICC], 277). Nevertheless, the MT makes sense: The ground could produce enough food for people if there were no injustice in the land. Poverty is unnecessary as long as there is justice and not injustice.
The one who spares his rod hates his child, but the one who loves his child is diligent indisciplining him. The righteous has enough food to satisfy his appetite, but the belly of the wicked lacks food.

Every wise woman builds her household, but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands. The one who walks in uprightness fears the Lord, but the one who is perverted in his ways despises him.

In the speech of a fool is a rod for his back, but the words of the wise protect them.

Where there are no oxen, the feeding trough is clean, but an abundant harvest is produced by strong oxen.

A truthful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies.

The scorner seeks wisdom but finds none, but understanding is easy for a discerning person.

Leave the presence of a foolish person, or you will not understand wise counsel.

The wisdom of the shrewd person is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deception.
14:9 Fools mock at reproof; but among the upright there is favor.
14:10 The heart knows its own bitterness, and with its joy no one else can share.
14:11 The household of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tents of the upright will flourish.
14:12 There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way that leads to death.
14:13 Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief.

deceive themselves." The parallelism would favor this, but there is little support for it. The word usually means "craft practiced on others." If the line is saying the fool is deceitful, there is only a loose antithesis between the cola.

1 to The LXX reads "houses of transgressors will owe purification." Tig. Prov. 14:9 has "guilt has its home among fools" (apparently reading מַשְׁא, lit. "lun").

2 tn Heb "guilt." The word שׂוּג (sugham) has a broad range of meanings: "guilt; reparation." According to Leviticus, when someone realized he was guilty he would bring a "reparation offering," a sin offering with an additional tribute for restitution (Lev 5:1-6). It would be left up to the guilty to come forward; it was for the kind of thing that only he would know, for which his conscience would bother him. Fools mock any need or attempt to make things right, to make restitution (cf. NIV, NRSV, NCV, TEV).

3 tn The word מַשְׁא (mash) means "fear; acceptance; pleasing." It usually means what is pleasing or acceptable to God. In this passage it either means that the upright try to make amends, or that the upright find favor for doing so. In Prov. 14:5 the term is used of God's response to a deed of power.

4 tn Heb "bitterness of its soul." The term "bitterness" is used of the mental suffering accompanying wrong action.

5 tn Heb "Man." (So KJV, NASB, NRSV).

6 tn The verb is the Hitpael of הָכַּתָּר (katar), which means "to take in pledge; to give in pledge; to exchange." Here it means "to share [in]." The proverb is saying that there are joys and sorrows that cannot be shared. No one can truly understand the deepest feelings of another.

7 tn Heb "house." The term "house" is a metonymy of subject, referring to their contents: families and family life.

8 tn The term "tent" is a metonymy here referring to the contents of the tent: families.

9 tn Heb "which is straight before a man." The proverb recalls the ways of the adulterous woman in chapter 5:19, and so the translation of "man" is retained. The first line does not say that the "way" that seems right is "vice," but the second line clarifies that. The individual can rationalize all he wants, but the result is still the same. The proverb warns that any evil activity can take any number of ways (plural) to destruction.

10 tn Heb "the ways of death" (so KJV, ASV). This construct phrase features a genitive of destiny: "ways that lead to, or end in, death." Here death means ruin (e.g., Prov 7:27; 16:25). The LXX adds "Hades," but the verse seems to be concerned with events of this life.

11 sn No joy is completely free of grief. There is a joy that is superficial and there is underlying pain that will remain after the joy is gone.

12 tn Heb "and its end, joy, is grief." The suffix may be regarded as an Aramaisms, a proleptic suffix referring to "joy." The phrase "may be" is not in the Hebrew but is supplied from the parallelism, which features an imperfect of possibility.

13 sn The meaning of יַכְתִּרוּ (yakhtiru), Hiphil imperfect of יָכַּתָּר (katar), is elusive. It may not mean "to be crowned" or "to crown themselves," but "to encircle" or "to embrace." BDB 509 s.v. יָכַּת (yakht) suggests "to throw out crowns" (throw out knowledge as a crown) or "to encompass knowledge," i.e., possess it (parallel to inherit).
14:19 Those who are evil will bow before those who are good, and the wicked will bow at the gates of the righteous.

14:20 A poor person is disliked even by his neighbors, but those who love the rich are many.

14:21 The one who despises his neighbor sins, but whoever is kind to the needy is blessed.

14:22 Do not those who devise evil go astray? But those who plan good exhibit faithful covenant love.

14:23 In all hard work there is profit, but merely talking about it only brings poverty.

14:24 The crown of the wise is their riches, but the folly of fools is folly.

14:25 A truthful witness rescues lives, but the one who breathes lies brings deception.

14:26 In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and it will be a refuge for his children.

14:27 The fear of the Lord is like a life-giving fountain to turn people from deadly snares.

14:28 A king's glory is the abundance of people, but the lack of subjects is the ruin of a ruler.

14:29 The one who is slow to anger has great understanding,
but the one who has a quick temper exalts folly.

14:30 A tranquil spirit revives the body, but envy rottens to the bones.

14:31 The one who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their lives.

14:32 The wicked will be thrown down in his trouble, but the righteous will never fall.

14:33 Wisdom rests in the heart of the discerning; it is known even in the heart of fools.

14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.

14:35 The king shows favor to a wise servant, but his wrath falls on one who acts shamefully.

15:1 A gentle response turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath.

15:2 The tongue of the wise treats knowledge correctly, but the mouth of the fool spouts out folly.

15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, and he sees every action.

1 sn The participle "exalts" means that this person brings folly to a full measure, lifts it up, brings it to the full notice of everyone.

2 tn Heb "hasty of spirit" (so KJV, ASV); NRSV, NLT "a hasty temper." One who has a quick temper or a short fuse will be evident to everyone, due to his rash actions.

3 tn Heb "heart of healing." The genitive לֵב ("heart") functions as an attributive adjective: "a healing heart." The term מִשְׁכֵּיל ("wise") is a metonymy for the emotional state of a person (BBB 660 s.v. 6). A healthy spirit is tranquil, bringing peace to the body (J. H. Greenestone, Proverbs, 158).

4 tn Heb "life of the flesh" (so KJV, ASV); NAB, NIV "gives life to the body." The verb מַיֵּשַׁ ("make good") means that this word describes an intense and sometimes violent excitement and desire that is never satisfied.

5 sn The phrase "shows favor" is contrasted with the term "oppresses." To "show favor" means to be gracious to (or treat kindly) those who do not deserve it or cannot repay it. It means "to lift up to raise up; to elevate." Here the upright dealings of the leaders and the people will lift up the people. The people's condition in that nation will be raised.

6 sn The term עָשַׁק ("flesh") of the first colon. One who is consumed with envy or "jealousy" (so NAB, NCV, TEV, NLT), depending on whether the object is out of bounds or within one's rights. In the good sense one might be consumed with zeal to defend the institution of marriage. But as envy or jealousy the word describes an intense and sometimes violent excitement and desire that is never satisfied.

7 tn The verb מַשְׂכִּיל ("one who acts wisely") and מַשְׂכִּיל ("wise") function as a metonymy of effect for a life-threatening situation.

8 sn The participle "exalts" means that this person brings folly to a full measure, lifts it up, brings it to the full notice of everyone.

9 sn The phrase "shows favor" is contrasted with the term "oppresses." To "show favor" means to be gracious to (or treat kindly) those who do not deserve it or cannot repay it. It means "to lift up to raise up; to elevate." Here the upright dealings of the leaders and the people will lift up the people. The people's condition in that nation will be raised.

10 sn The LXX negates the clause, saying it is "not known in fools" (cf. NAB, NRSV, TEV, NLT). Thomas connects the verb to the Arabic root "wa'd" and translates it "in fools it is suppressed." See D. Thomas, "The Root ṣaw in Hebrew," JTS 35 (1934): 302-3.

11 sn The righteous have hope in a just retribution — they know they will not fall back on in such times.

12 tn The LXX reads this as "in his integrity," as if it were יָטַב ("to make good") instead of "in his death." The LXX is followed by some English versions (e.g., NAB "in his honesty," NRSV "in their integrity," and TEV "by their integrity").

13 tn The LXX negates the clause, saying it is "not known in fools" (cf. NAB, NRSV, TEV, NLT). Thomas connects the verb to the Arabic root "wa'd" and translates it "in fools it is suppressed." See D. Thomas, "The Root ṣaw in Hebrew," JTS 35 (1934): 302-3.
15:4 Speech that heals is like a life-giving tree, but a perverse tongue breaks the spirit.

15:5 A fool rejects his father's discipline, but whoever heeds reproof shows good sense.

15:6 In the house of the righteous is abundant wealth, but the income of the wicked brings trouble.

15:7 The lips of the wise spread knowledge, but not so the heart of fools.

15:8 The Lord abhors the sacrifices of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

15:9 The Lord abhors the way of the wicked, but he loves those who pursue righteousness.

15:10 Severe discipline is for the one who abandons the way; the one who hates reproof will die.

15:11 Death and Destruction are before the Lord—how much more the hearts of humans?

15:12 The scorner does not love one who corrects him; he will not go to the wise.

16 sn J. H. Greenstone notes that if God will accept the prayers of the upright, he will accept their sacrifices; for sacrifice is an outer ritual and easily performed even by the wicked, but prayer is a private and inward act and not usually fabricated by unbelievers (Proverbs, 162).

17 sn Heb “[is] his pleasure.” The 3rd person masculine singular suffix functions as a subjective genitive: “he is pleased.” God is pleased with the prayers of the upright.

18 sn God hates the way of the wicked, that is, their lifestyle and things they do. God loves those who pursue righteousness, the Piel verb signifying a persistent pursuit. W. G. Plaut says, “He who loves God will be moved to an active, persistent, and even dangerous search for justice” (Proverbs, 170).

19 sn This line and the previous line are synonymous, then the one who abandons the way also refuses any correction, and so there is severe punishment. To abandon the way means to leave the life of righteousness which is the repeated subject of the book of Proverbs.

20 sn God hates the way of the wicked, that is, their lifestyle and things they do. God loves those who pursue righteousness, the Piel verb signifying a persistent pursuit. W. G. Plaut says, “He who loves God will be moved to an active, persistent, and even dangerous search for justice” (Proverbs, 170).

21 sn The two lines are parallel synonymously, so the “severe discipline” of the first colon is parallel to “will die” of the second. The expression פַּרְעֹר (musar ra‘), “severe discipline”) indicates a discipline that is catastrophic or harmful to life.

22 sn If this line and the previous line are synonymous, then the one who abandons the way also refuses any correction, and so there is severe punishment. To abandon the way means to leave the life of righteousness which is the repeated subject of the book of Proverbs.

23 sn Heb “Sheol and Abaddon” (יָרָאָה בַּעַד), so ASV, NASB, NRSV; cf. KJV “Hell and destruction”; NAB “the nether world and the abyss.” These terms represent the remote underworld and all the mighty powers that reside there (e.g., Prov 27:20; Job 26:6; Ps 139:8; Amos 9:2; Rev 9:11). The Lord knows everything about this remote region.

24 sn This is an understatement, the opposite being intended (a figure called tapeinosis). A scorner rejects any efforts to reform him.

25 tn The form תְּשׁוּבָה (t’shuvah, “return”), a Hiphil infinitive absolute. It could function as the object of the verb (cf. NIV, NRSV) or as a finite verb (cf. KJV, NASB, NLT). The latter has been chosen here because of the prepositional phrase following it, although that is not a conclusive argument.

26 tc The MT has כָּל (‘el, “to the wise”), suggesting seeking the advice of the wise. The LXX, however, has “with the wise,” suggesting תָּהּ (‘at).
15:13 A joyful heart\textsuperscript{4} makes the face cheerful, but by a painful heart the spirit is broken.\textsuperscript{2}
15:14 The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on folly.\textsuperscript{3}
15:15 All the days of the afflicted are bad,\textsuperscript{6} but one with a cheerful heart has a continual feast.\textsuperscript{8}
15:16 Better\textsuperscript{9} is little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth and turmoil\textsuperscript{10} with it.\textsuperscript{11}
15:17 Better a meal of vegetables where there is love\textsuperscript{12} than a fattened ox where there is hatred.\textsuperscript{13}

15:18 A quick-tempered person\textsuperscript{14} stirs up dissension, but one who is slow to anger\textsuperscript{15} calms a quarrel.\textsuperscript{17}
15:19 The way of the sluggard is like a hedge of thorns,\textsuperscript{18} but the path of the upright is like\textsuperscript{19} a highway.\textsuperscript{20}
15:20 A wise child\textsuperscript{21} brings joy to his father, but a foolish person\textsuperscript{22} despises his mother.
15:21 Folly is a joy to one who lacks sense,\textsuperscript{24} but one who has understanding\textsuperscript{25} follows an upright course.\textsuperscript{26}
15:22 Plans fail\textsuperscript{27} when there is no counsel,
but with abundant advisers they are established.\(^1\)

15:23 A person has joy\(^2\) in giving an appropriate answer,\(^3\) and a word at the right time\(^4\) – how good it is!\(^5\)

15:24 The path of life is upward\(^6\) for the wise person,\(^6\) to keep him from going downward to Sheol.\(^7\)

15:25 The **Lord** tears down the house of the proud,\(^8\)

but he maintains the boundaries of the widow.\(^10\)

15:26 The **Lord** abhors\(^11\) the plans\(^12\) of the wicked.\(^13\)

but pleasant words\(^14\) are pure.\(^15\)

15:27 The one who is greedy for gain\(^16\) troubles his household,\(^17\)

but whoever hates bribes\(^18\) will live.

15:28 The heart of the righteous considers\(^20\) how to answer,\(^22\)

but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.\(^23\)

15:29 The **Lord** is far\(^24\) from the wicked, but he hears\(^25\) the prayer of the righteous.\(^26\)

\(^{14}\) sn The contrast is between the "thoughts" and the "words." The thoughts that are designed to hurt people the **Lord** hates; words that are pleasant (\(\text{Heb}\) & \(\text{NAB}\), however, are pure (to him)). What is pleasant is delightful, lovely, enjoyable.

\(^{16}\) tc The MT simply has "but pleasant words are pure" (\(\text{Heb}\) "but pure [plural] are the words of pleasantness"). Some English versions add "to him" to make the connection to the first part (cf. \(\text{NAB}, \text{NIV}\)). The LXX has: "the sayings of the pure are held in honor." The Vulgate has: "pure speech will be confirmed by him as very beautiful." The NIV has paraphrased here: "but those of the pure are pleasing to him."

\(^{18}\) sn The participles "troubles" (\(\text{Heb}\), \(\text{arkh}\)) can have the connotation of making things difficult for the family, or completely ruining the family (cf. \(\text{NAB}\)). In Josh 7:1 Achan took some of the "banned things" and was put to death: Because he "troubled Israel," the \(\text{LXX}\) would "trouble" him (take his life, Josh 7:25).

\(^{20}\) tn Heb "the one who gains." The phrase \(\text{Heb} \text{ tseulkh hatau}\) is a participle followed by its cognate accusative. This refers to a person who is always making the big deal, getting the larger cut, or in a hurry to get rich. The verb, though, makes it clear that the gaining of a profit is by violence and usually unjust, since the root has the idea of "cut off; break off; gain by violence." The line is contrasted with hating bribes, and so the gain in this line may be through bribery.
15:30 A bright look\textsuperscript{4} brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the body.\textsuperscript{2} 
15:31 The person\textsuperscript{4} who hears the reproof that leads to life\textsuperscript{6} is at home\textsuperscript{6} among the wise.\textsuperscript{6} 
15:32 The one who refuses correction despises himself,\textsuperscript{7} but whoever hears\textsuperscript{8} reproof acquires understanding.\textsuperscript{5} 
15:33 The fear of the Lord provides wise instruction,\textsuperscript{10} and before honor comes humility.\textsuperscript{11} 
16:1 The intentions of the heart\textsuperscript{12} belong to a man,\textsuperscript{13} but the answer of the tongue\textsuperscript{14} comes from the Lord.\textsuperscript{16} 
16:2 All a person’s ways\textsuperscript{17} seem right\textsuperscript{18} in his own opinion,\textsuperscript{19} but the Lord evaluates\textsuperscript{20} the motives.\textsuperscript{21} 
16:3 Commit\textsuperscript{22} your works\textsuperscript{23} to the Lord, and your plans will be established.\textsuperscript{24} 
16:4 The Lord works\textsuperscript{25} everything for its own ends,\textsuperscript{26}—even the wicked for the day of disaster.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Heb} “light of the eyes” (so KJV, NRSV). The expression may indicate the gleam in the eyes of the one who tells the good news, as the parallel clause suggests. 

\textsuperscript{5} The suffix on the plural noun would be a subjective genitive: the works that you are doing, or here, the works that the person intends to say. The second view fits the contrast better. 

\textsuperscript{6} The syntax of the second clause shows that there is subordination: The figure (a hypocatastasis) of “weighing” signifies by comparison (hypocatastasis), as in rolling one’s burdens on the Lord (Pss 22:8 [9]; 37:5; and 55:22). It portrays complete dependence on the Lord that leads to life after death to determine righteousness. But in Hebrew thought it is an ongoing evaluation as well, not merely an evaluation after death. 

\textsuperscript{7} The Hebrew term translated “right” (\textit{ma}‘a\textit{m}) means “inoccent” (NIV) or “pure” (NAB, NRSV, NLT). It is used in the Bible for pure oils or undiluted liquids; here it means unmixed actions. Therefore on the one hand people rather naively conclude that their actions are fine. 

\textsuperscript{8} The Hebrew text reads תָּמַן (\textit{yiqqen le\textit{v}}), the participle of מָשָׁמ (\textit{anah}, “to acquire; to possess”) with its object, “heart.” The word “heart” is frequently a metonymy of subject, meaning all the capacities of the human spirit and/or mind. Here it refers to the ability to make judgments or discernment. 

\textsuperscript{9} The verb יִשְׁלַח (\textit{shelach}) means “to send” (KJV and NASB similar). The noun translated “wisdom” is an attributive genitive: “wise instruction.” 

\textsuperscript{10} The idea of the first line is similar to Prov 1:7 and 9:10. Here it may mean that the fear of the Lord results from the discipline of wisdom, just as easily as it may mean that the fear of the Lord leads to the discipline of wisdom. The second reading harmonizes with the theme in the book that the fear of the Lord is the starting point. 

\textsuperscript{11} The second clause is a parallel idea in that it stresses how one thing leads to another—humbly to honor. Humble submission in faith to the Lord brings wisdom and honor. 

\textsuperscript{12} Humans may set things in order, plan out what they are going to say, but God sovereignly enables them to put their thoughts into words. 

\textsuperscript{13} Here “the tongue” is a metonymy of cause in which the instrument of speech is put for what is said: the answer expressed. 

\textsuperscript{14} The contrasting prepositions enhance the contrasting ideas—the ideas belong to people, but the words come from the Lord.
16:5 The Lord abhors every arrogant person, and he will not go unpunished.

16:6 Through loyal love and truth iniquity is appeased; through fearing the Lord one avoids evil.

16:7 When a person's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he even reconciles his enemies to himself.

16:8 Better to have a little with righteousness than to have abundant income without justice.

16:9 A person plans his course, but the Lord directs his steps.

16:10 The divine verdict is in the words of the king, his pronouncements must not act treacherously against justice.

16:11 Honest scales and balances are from the Lord.

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1 tn Heb “an abomination of the Lord.” The term הַרְוָעָה (hərwah, “the Lord’s abhorrs.”)
2 tn Heb “every proud of heart”: NIV “all the proud of heart.”
3 sn These two words are often found together to form a nominal hendiadys: “faithful loyal love.” The couplet often characterizes the Lord, but here in parallel to the fear of the Lord it refers to the faithfulness of the believer. Such faith and faithfulness bring atonement for sin.
4 sn The LXX has inserted two couplets here: “The beginning of a good way is to do justly, // and it is more acceptable to God than to do sacrifices; // he who seeks the Lord will find knowledge with righteousness, // and they who rightly seek him will find peace.” C. H. Toy reminds the reader that there were many proverbs in existence that sounded similar to those in the book of Proverbs; these lines are in the Greek OT as well as in Sirach (Proverbs [ICC], 321.22).
5 tn The B-line continues the A-line, but explains what it means that they are an abomination to the Lord – he will punish them. “Will not go unpunished” is an understatement (taperinosis) to stress first that they will certainly be punished; those who humble themselves before God in faith will not be punished.
6 sn These two words are often found together to form a nominal hendiadys: “faithful loyal love.” The couplet often characterizes the Lord, but here in parallel to the fear of the Lord it refers to the faithfulness of the believer. Such faith and faithfulness bring atonement for sin.
7 tn Heb “is atoned”; KJV “is purged”; NAB “is expiated.” The verb is from קָפַר (qopher, “to atone; to expiate; to pacify; to appease”; HALOT 493-94 s.v. I ’qoph). This root should not be confused with the identically spelled, homonym II *קָפָר (qopher, “to cover over”; HALOT 494 s.v. II ’qoph). Atonement in the OT expiated sins, it did not merely cover them over (cf. NLT). C. H. Toy explains the meaning by saying that it affirms the divine anger against sin is turned away and man’s relation to God is as though he had not sinned (Proverbs [ICC], 322). Genuine repentance, demonstrated by loyalty and truthfulness, appeases the anger of God.
8 tn Heb “fear of the Lord.” The term הַרְוָעָה (hərwah, “the Lord’s abhorrs.”) functions as an objective genitive: “fearing the Lord.”
9 tn Heb “turns away from”; NASB “keeps away from.”
10 sn The Hebrew word translated “evil” (יַע, na) can in some contexts mean “calamity” or “disaster,” but here it seems more likely to mean “evil” in the sense of sin. Faithfulness to the Lord brings freedom from sin. The verse uses synonymous parallelism with a variant: One half speaks of atonement for sin because of the life of faith, and the other of avoidance of sin because of the fear of the Lord.
11 tn Heb “ways of a man.”
12 tn The first line uses an infinitive in a temporal clause, followed by its subject in the genitive case: “in the taking pleasure of the Lord” = “when the Lord is pleased with.” So the condition set down for the second colon is a lifestyle that is pleasing to God.
13 sn The referent of the verb in the second colon is unclear. The straightforward answer is that it refers to the person whose ways please the Lord – it is his lifestyle that disarms his enemies. W. McKane comments that the righteous have the power to mend relationships (Proverbs [OTL], 491; see, e.g., 10:13; 14:9; 15:1; 25:21-22). The life that is pleasing to God will be above reproach and find favor with others. Some would interpret this to mean that God makes his enemies to be at peace with him (cf. KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NLT). This is workable, but in this passage it would seem God would do this through the pleasing life of the believer (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV).
14 sn The lines contrast the modest income with the abundant income, but the real contrast is between righteousness and the lack of justice (or injustice). “Justice” is used for both legal justice and ethical conduct. It is contrasted with righteousness in 12:5 and 21:7; it describes ethical behavior in 21:3. Here the point is that unethical behavior tarnishes the great gain and will be judged by God.
15 sn This is another “better” saying; between these two things, the first is better. There are other options – such as righteousness with wealth – but the proverb is not concerned with that. A similar saying appears in Ammonemote 8:19-20 (ANET 422).
16 tn Heb “the heart of a man.” This stresses that it is within the heart that plans are made. Only those plans that are approved by God will succeed.
17 tn Heb “his way” (so KJV, NASB).
18 tn The verb הָקָם (qəwm, “to establish; to confirm”) with יִשָּׂע (is’adh, “step”) means “to direct” (e.g., Ps 119:133; Jer 10:23). This contrasts what people plan and what actually happens – God determines the latter.
19 sn “Steps” is an implied comparison, along with “way,” to indicate the events of the plan as they work out.
20 tn Heb “oracle” (so NAB, NIV) or “decision”; TEV “the king speaks with divine authority.” The term קְשַׁמ (qeshem) is used in the sense of “oracle; decision; verdict” (HALOT 1115-16 s.v.). The pronouncements of a king form an oracular sentence, as if he speaks for God; they are divine decisions (e.g., Num 22:7; 23:23; 2 Sam 14:20).
21 tn Heb “on the lips.” The term “lips” is a metonymy of cause referring to what the king says – no doubt what he says officially.
22 tn Heb “his mouth.” The term “mouth” is a metonymy of cause for what the king says: his pronouncements and legal decisions.
23 sn The second line gives the effect of the first: If the king delivers such oracle sayings קְשַׁמ (qeshem, translated “divine verdict”), then he must be careful in the decisions he makes. The imperfect tense then requires a modal nuance to stress the obligation of the king not to act treacherously against justice. It would also be possible to translate the verb as a jussive: Let the king not act treacherously against justice. For duties of the king, e.g., Psalm 72 and Isaiah 11. For a comparison with Ezekiel 21:23-26, see E. W. Davies, “The Meaning of qeshem in Prov 16:10,” Bib 61 (1980): 554-56.
24 tn Heb “a scale and balances of justice.” This is an attributive genitive, meaning “just scales and balances.” The law required that scales and measures be accurate and fair (Lev 19:36; Deut 25:13). Shrewd dishonest people kept light and heavy weights to make unfair transactions.
16:12 Doing wickedness is an abomination to kings, because a throne is established in righteousness.

16:13 The delight of kings is righteous counsel, and they love the one who speaks uprightly.

16:14 A king’s wrath is like a messenger of death, but a wise person appeases it.

16:15 In the light of the king’s face there is life, and his favor is like the clouds of the spring rain.

16:16 How much better it is to acquire wisdom than gold; to acquire understanding is more desirable than silver.

16:17 The highway of the upright is to turn away from evil; the one who guards his way safeguards his life.

16:18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

16:19 It is better to be lowly in spirit with the afflicted than to share the spoils with the proud.
16:20 The one who deals wisely⁵ in a matter⁴ will find success,⁶ and blessed⁴ is the one who trusts in the LORD.⁵
16:21 The one who is wise in heart⁶ is called⁰ discerning,⁰ and kind speech⁰ increases persuasiveness.⁰
16:22 Insight¹⁰ is like¹¹ a life-giving fountain¹² to the one who possesses it, but folly leads to the discipline of fools.¹³
16:23 A wise person’s heart¹⁴ makes his speech wise¹⁵ and it adds persuasiveness¹⁶ to his words.¹⁷

16:24 Pleasant words are like¹⁸ a honeycomb,¹⁹ sweet to the soul and healing²⁰ to the bones.
16:25 There is a way that seems right to a person,²¹ but its end is the way that leads to death.²²
16:26 A laborer’s²³ appetite²⁴ works on his behalf,²⁵ for his hunger²⁶ urges him to work.²⁷
16:27 A wicked scoundrel²⁸ digs up²⁹ evil, and his slander³⁰ is like a scorching fire.³¹

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¹⁰ tn Heb “he who is prudent” or “he who deals wisely” (cf. KJV). The proverb seems to be referring to wise business concerns and the reward for the righteous. One who deals wisely in a matter will find good results. R. N. Whybray sees a contrast here: “The shrewd man of business will succeed well, but the happy man is he who trusts the LORD” (Proverbs [CBC], 92). Synonymous parallelism is more appropriate.

²⁰ tn Or “he who gives heed to a word,” that is, “who listens to instruction” (cf. NIV, NLT).

²³ tn Heb “good” (so KJV, ASV).

²⁴ tn Although traditionally this word is translated “happy” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV, NLT), such a translation can be misleading because the word means far more than that. It describes the heavenly bliss that comes from knowing one is right with God and following God’s precepts. The “blessed” could be at odds with the world (Ps 1:1-3).

²⁵ tn Heb “and the one who trusts in the LORD — blessed is he.”

²⁶ tn Heb “wise of heart” (so NRSV).

²⁷ tn Heb “to the wise of heart, those who make wise decisions (‘heart’ being the metonymy), will gain a reputation of being the discerning ones.

²⁸ tn Heb “sweetness of lips.” The term “lips” is a metonymy of cause, meaning what is said. It is a genitive of specifics (“heart” being the metonymy), will gain a reputation of being the discerning ones.

²⁹ tn Heb “teaching” or “receptivity”; KJV “learning”; NIV “instruction.”

³⁰ tn The Hebrew noun הַשָּׂכָל (šekhel; prudence; insight); cf. KJV, NASB, NIV “understanding”; NAB, CEV “good sense”) is related to the verb that means “to have insight; to give attention to; to act circumspectly [or, prudently],” as well as “to prosper; to have success.” These words all describe the kind of wise action that will be successful.

³¹ tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

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sn This theme is taught elsewhere (e.g., Eccl 6:7; Eph 4:28; 6:7; 2 Thess 3:10-12).

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sn Those who are wise say wise things. The proverb uses synthetic parallelism: The first line asserts that the wise heart ensures that what is said is wise, and the second line adds that such a person increases the reception of what is said.

sn The simile stresses the devastating way that slander hurts people. W. McKane says that this one “digs for scandal and...propagates it with words which are abase with malice” (Proverbs [OTL], 494).
16:28 A perverse person4 spreads dissen-

sion, and a gossip separates the closest
friends.2

16:29 A violent person3 entices4 his neigh-
bor, and leads him down a path that is ter-
rible.5

16:30 The one who winks his eyes6 de-
vises perverse things, and7 one who compresses his lips8 brings about evil.

16:31 Gray hair is like a crown of glory;9 it is attained12 in the path of righte-

ousness.13

16:32 Better to be slow to anger14 than to
be a mighty warrior, and one who controls his temper15 is bet-

ter than16 one who captures a city.17

16:33 The dice are thrown into the lap, but their every decision19 is from the

Lord.20

17:1 Better is a dry crust of bread21 where there is quietness22 than a house full of feasting with strifec.23

17:2 A servant who acts wisely24 will rule

there is a commendable lesson about old people who can look back on a long walk with God through life and can anticipa-
tate unbroken fellowship with him in glory.

14 tn One who is “slow to anger” is a patient person (cf. NAB, NIV, NLT). This is explained further in the parallel line by the description of “one who rules his spirit” (הָיוֹנָה הַרְפֵּא, hawon harfay). This means the person has the emotions under control and will not “fly off the handle” quickly.

17 sn The saying would have had greater impact when mili-
tary prowess was held in high regard. It is harder, and there-

efore better, to control one’s passions than to do some great exploit on the battlefiel-
d.

18 tn “The lot is cast.” Because the ancient practice of “casting lots” is unfamiliar to many modern readers, the im-

agery has been updated to “throwing dice.”

21 sn The proverb concerns the practice of seeking divine leading through casting lots. For a similar lesson, see Amen-
emope (18, 19:16-17, in ANET 423).

23 tn The phrase “a dry piece of bread” is like bread without butter, a morsel of bread not dipped in vinegar mix (e.g., Ruth 2:14). It represents here a simple, humble meal.

24 sn The point concerns seeking God’s will through the practice. The Lord gives guidance in decisions that are sub-
mited to him.

25 sn The phrase “a dry piece of bread” is like bread without butter, a morsel of bread not dipped in vinegar mix (e.g., Ruth 2:14). It represents here a simple, humble meal.

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d.

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resents a place where there can be carefree ease because of the sense of peace and security. The Greek rendering sug-
gests that those translators read it as “peace.” Even if the fare is poor, this kind of setting is to be preferred.

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gests that those translators read it as “peace.” Even if the fare is poor, this kind of setting is to be preferred.
over an heir who behaves shamefully, and will share the inheritance along with the relatives.

17:3 The crucible is for refining silver and the furnace is for gold, likewise the Lord tests hearts.

17:4 One who acts wickedly pays attention to evil counsel; a liar listens to a malicious tongue.

17:5 The one who mocks the poor insults his Creator; whoever rejoices over disaster will not go unpunished.

17:6 Grandchildren are like a crown to the elderly, and the glory of children is their parents.

17:7 Excessive speech is not becoming for a fool; how much less are lies for a ruler!

17:8 A bribe works like a charm for the one who offers it; in whatever he does he succeeds.

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1 sn The parallelism indicates that “ruining over” and “sharing in the inheritance” means that the disgraceful son will be disinherited.

2 tn Heb “son.”

3 tn The form כיִיבִישׁ (qay·ḇi·šš) is a Hiphil participle, modifying בֵּן (ben). This original heil would then be one who caused shame or disgrace to the family, probably by showing a complete lack of wisdom in the choices he made.

4 tn Heb “in the midst of the brothers”; NIV “as one of the brothers.”

5 sn The noun פֶּסֶר (pē·ṣer) means “a place or instrument for refining” (cf. ASV, NASB “the refiner’s pot”). The related verb, which means “to melt, refine, smelt,” is used in scripture literally for refining and figuratively for the Lord’s purifying and cleansing and testing people.

6 tn The term “refining” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

7 sn The term מִרְעַה (mī·ra·h) describes one as “inclined, generous, noble” (BDB 622 s.v.). In this passage “glory” seems to be identified with the comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.

8 sn The Hiphil participle פֶּסֶר (pē·ṣer) indicates one who is a doer of evil. The line affirms that a person of this nature will eagerly listen to evil talk— it is part of his nature.

9 tn Heb “to the lip of evil”; ASV, NAB, NASB, NRSV “wicked lips.” The term פֶּסֶר (pē·ṣer) is a metonymy of cause for speech (what is said); the term “evil” is an attributive genitive. The same is true in the parallel line where the expression “to the tongue of destruction” (NASB “a destructive tongue”) means things that are said that destroy others.

10 tc The verb פֶּסֶר (pē·ṣer) is from פֶּסֶר (pē·ṣer, “to feed”); therefore, the suggested emendation is to take it from פֶּסֶר (pē·ṣer, “ear”) as a denominative verb, “to give ear; to listen to.” Two Hebrew texts have this variant.

11 sn Wicked, self-serving people find destructive speech appealing. They should be rebuked and not tolerated (Lev 19:17).

12 sn The parallelism helps define the subject matter: The one who “mocks the poor” (NAB, NASB, NIV) is probably one who “rejoices [NIV gloats] over disaster.” The poverty is here explained as a disaster that came to some. The topic of the parable is the person who mocks others by making fun of their misfortune.

13 sn The Hebrew word translated “insults” (קָרֶף, kherēf) means “reproach; taunt” (as with a cutting taunt); it describes words that show contempt for or insult God. The idea of reproaching the Creator may be mistaking and blaming God’s providential control of the world (C. H. Toy, Proverbs [ICC], 337). W. G. Plaut, however, suggests that mocking the poor means holding up their poverty as a personal failure and thus offending their dignity and their divine nature (Proverbs, 187).

14 sn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

15 sn The metaphor signifies that grandchildren are like a crown, that is, they are the “crowning glory” of life. The proverb comes from a culture that places great importance on the family in society and that values its heritage.

16 sn The noun פֶּסֶר (pē·ṣer) (cf. NIV) or “excellent” (cf. KJV, NASB; NLT “eloquent”) because the basic idea of the word is “remainder; excess,” but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.

17 sn The phrase “works like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.

18 sn The “fool” proper, described by the term פֶּסֶר (pē·ṣer) (nunav), occurs only here, in v. 21, and in 30:22 in the book. It describes someone who is godless and immoral in an overbearing way (e.g., 1 Sam 25:25; Ps 14:1). A fool should restrain his words lest his foolishness spew out.

19 sn This “ruler” (KJV, NASB: “prince”; NAB “noble”) is a gentleman with a code of honor, to whom truthfulness is second nature (W. McKane, Proverbs [OLT], 507). The word describes one as “inclined, generous, noble” (BDB 622 s.v.). It is cognate to the word for the “free will offering.” So for such a noble person lies are not suited. The argument is from the lesser to the greater — if fools shouldn’t speak lofty things, then honorable people should not lie (or, lofty people should not speak base things).

20 sn The phrase “works like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.

21 sn As C. H. Toy points out, the sage is merely affirming the proverb’s truth.

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17:9 The one who forgives an offense loves, but whoever repeats a matter separates close friends.

17:10 A rebuke makes a greater impression on a discerning person than a hundred blows on a fool.

17:11 An evil person seeks only rebellion, and so a cruel messenger will be sent against him.

17:12 It is better for a person to meet a mother bearing robbed of her cubs, than to encounter a fool in his folly.

17:13 As for the one who repays evil for good, evil will not leave his house.

17:14 Starting a quarrel is like letting out water; stop it before strife breaks out!

17:15 The one who acquits the guilty and the one who condemns the innocent—both of them are an abomination to the Lord.

17:16 Of what use is money in the hand of a fool, since he has no intention of acquiring wisdom?

17:17 A friend loves at all times,

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1 tn Heb “covers” (so NASB); NIV “covers over.” How people respond to the faults of others reveals whether or not they have love. The contrast is between one who “covers” (forgives, cf. NCV, NRSV) the fault of a friend and one who repeats news about it. The former promotes love because he cares about the person; the latter divides friends.

2 sn The participle נָחֵת (nakhah) means “seeks” in the sense of seeking to secure or procure or promote love. There can be no friendship without such understanding and discretion.

3 sn W. G. Plaut notes that harping on the past has destroyed many friendships and marriages (Proverbs, 188). W. McKane observes that this line refers to the person who breaks up friendships by his scandalous gossip, even if it is done with a kind of zeal for the welfare of the community, for those bent on rebellion will meet with retribution. The verse uses synonymous parallelism, so “friend” is an inclusio for “lover.”

4 sn Those bent on rebellion will meet with retribution. The messenger could very well be a merciless messenger from the king, but the expression could also figuratively describe something God sends—storms, pestilence, or any other misfortune.

5 tn Heb “Let a man meet” (so NASB); NLT “It is safer to meet him as he treated others.” The LXX has “The outpouring of words is the beginning of strife.” This would make it a warning against thoughtless talk.

6 tn The temporal clause is formed with the prepositional prefix ב (bet) means “to descend into; to make an impression on” someone.

7 tn The parallelism seems to be formal, with the idea simply continuing to the second line; the conjunction is therefore translated to reflect this. However, the proverb could be interpreted as an independent nominative absolute, with the formal sense “Let a rebuke make a greater impression on a discerning person than a hundred blows on a fool.”

8 tn The infinitive absolute פָּגוֹשׁ (mush) means “to depart; to remove.” It is related to the verb פָּגוֹשׁ (mush), “to be contentious; to be rebellious; to be refractory.” DBB 598 s.v. פָּגוֹשׁ translates the line “a rebellious man seeketh only evil” (so NASB).

9 tn parallelism “Let a man meet” (so NASB); NLT “It is safer to meet.” The infinitive absolute נָחֵת (nakhah) “to meet” functions as a substantive of advice. The bear meeting a man is less dangerous than a fool in his folly. It could be worded as a “betrayal” saying, but that formula is not found here.

10 sn The LXX has “The outpouring of words is the beginning of strife.” This would make it a warning against thoughtless talk.

11 tn The infinitive absolute צָהִד (zahad) “to meet” functions as a substantive of advice. The bear meeting a man is less dangerous than a fool in his folly. It could be worded as a “betrayal” saying, but that formula is not found here.

12 tn The second colon begins with כָּל (kāl), “and not.” This negative usually appears with volitives, so the fuller expression of the parallel line would be “and let not a fool in his folly (meet someone).” The words “to meet” are not in the Hebrew text, but are implied by the parallelism and are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

13 sn The human, who is supposed to be rational and intelligent, in such folly becomes more dangerous than the beast that in this case acts with good reason. As R. L. Alden comments, “Consider meeting a fool with a knife, or gun, or even behind the wheel of a car” (Proverbs, 134). See also E. Leewenstamm, “Remarks on Proverbs 17:12 and 20:27,” VT 37 (1967): 221-24. For a slightly different nuance cf. TEV “some fool busy with a stupid project.”

14 sn W. McKane envisions a situation where the fool comes to a sage with a fee in hand, supposing that he can acquire a career as a sage, and this gives rise to the biting comment here: Why does the fool have money in his hands? To buy wisdom when he has no brains? (Proverbs [OLT], 505).

15 sn The verse uses synonymous parallelism, so “friend” and “relative” are equated. Others, however, will take the verse with antithetical parallelism: W. G. Plaut argues that friendship is a spiritual relationship whereas a brother’s ties are based on a blood relationship—often adversity is the only
17:18 The one who lacks wisdom\(^4\) strikes hands in pledge,\(^4\) and puts up financial security\(^6\) for his neighbor.\(^6\)

17:19 The one who loves a quarrel loves transgression;\(^7\) whoever builds his gate high seeks destruction.\(^8\)

17:20 The one who has a perverse heart\(^9\) does not find good,\(^10\) and the one who is deceitful in speech\(^11\) falls into trouble.

17:21 Whoever brings a fool\(^22\) into the world\(^2\) does so\(^2\) to his grief, and the father of a fool has no joy.\(^15\)

17:22 A cheerful heart\(^16\) brings good healing,\(^3\) but a crushed spirit\(^18\) dries up the bones.\(^49\)

17:23 A wicked person receives a bribe secretly\(^20\) to pervert\(^21\) the ways of justice.

17:24 Wisdom is directly in front of\(^22\) the discerning person, but the eyes of a fool run\(^23\) to the ends of the earth.\(^54\)

17:25 A foolish child is a grief\(^25\) to his father, and bitterness to the mother who bore him.\(^26\)

17:26 It is terrible\(^27\) to punish\(^28\) a righteous person,
18:3 When a wicked person\(^1\) arrives, contentment\(^2\) shows up with him, and with shame comes\(^3\) a reproach.
18:4 The words of a person’s mouth are like\(^4\) deep waters, and the fountain of wisdom\(^5\) is like\(^6\) a flowing brook.
18:5 It is terrible\(^7\) to show partiality\(^8\) to the wicked,\(^9\) by depriving\(^10\) a righteous man of justice.

and to flog\(^1\) honorable men is wrong.\(^2\) The truly wise person\(^3\) restrains\(^4\) his words, and the one who stays calm\(^5\) is discerning.

Even a fool who remains silent is considered\(^6\) wise, and the one who holds his tongue is deemed discerning.\(^7\)

One who has isolated himself\(^8\) seeks his own desires,\(^9\) he rejects\(^10\) all sound judgment.

A fool takes no pleasure\(^11\) in understanding but only in disclosing\(^12\) what is on his mind.\(^13\)

\(^{1}\) tn The form is the Hiphil infinitive construct from נָכָה (nakhah, “to strike; to smite”). It may well refer to public beatings, so “flog” is used in the translation, since “strike” could refer to an individual’s action and “beat” could be taken to refer to competition.

\(^{2}\) tn Heb “[is] against uprightness.” The expression may be rendered “contrary to what is right.”

\(^{3}\) sn The two lines could be synonymous parallelism, but the second part is being used to show how wrong the first act would be – punishing the righteous makes about as much sense as beating an official of the court for doing what is just.

\(^{4}\) tn Heb “the one knowing knowledge.” The cognitive accurate underscores the significance of the particle – this is a truly knowledgeable person.

\(^{5}\) sn The participle קַחַה (khosekh) means “withholds; refrains; spares; holds in check,” etc. One who has knowledge speaks carefully.

\(^{6}\) tn Heb “cool of spirit.” This genitive of specification describes one who is “calm” (so NCV, TEV, CEV) or “even-tempered” (so NIV, NLT); he is composed.

\(^{7}\) tn The imperfect tense here denotes possibility: One who holds his tongue [may be considered] discerning.

\(^{8}\) tn The Niphal participle is used in the declarative/estimative sense with stative verbs: “to be discerning” (Qal) be comes “to be discerning” (Niphal). The proverb is teaching that silence is one evidence of wisdom, and that even a fool can thereby appear wise. D. Kidner says that a fool who takes this advice is no longer a complete fool (\textit{ICC}).

\(^{9}\) sn “Contempt” (\textit{neshar, kherpah}) accompanies the wicked; “reproach” (רֶשַׁע, reshut) goes with shame. This reproach refers to the critical rebukes and taunts of the community against a wicked person.

\(^{10}\) tn The term “comes” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

\(^{11}\) tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

\(^{12}\) sn The metaphor “deep waters” indicates either that the words have an inexhaustible supply or that they are profound.

\(^{13}\) tn There is debate about the nature of the parallelism between lines 4a and 4b. The major options are: (1) synonymous parallelism, (2) antithetical parallelism (e.g., NAB, NIV, NRSV). However, there is no external evidence for this emendation.

\(^{14}\) sn “Contempt” (neshar) accompanies the wicked; “reproach” (resha) is a perversion of justice.

\(^{15}\) sn This is an implied comparison (hypocatastasis), the fountain of wisdom being the person who speaks. The Greek version has “a burden of life” instead of “wisdom,” probably influenced from 10:11.

\(^{16}\) tn Heb “not good.” This is a figure known as tapeoiosis, a deliberate understatement to emphasize a worst-case scenario: “it is terrible!”

\(^{17}\) tn Heb “lifting up the face of” (רָאָשׁ, s\textit{h}et p\textit{ne}) means “to show partiality” in decisions (e.g., Deut 10:17; Mal 2:9); cf. CEV, NLT “to favor.” The verbal form is the Qal infinitive construct from חֵשֵׁם (heshem), which functions as the subject of the clause.

\(^{18}\) sn Or “the guilty,” since in the second colon “righteous” can also be understood in contrast as “innocent” (cf. NRSV, TEV, NLT).

\(^{19}\) tn Heb “to turn aside” (so ASV); NASB “to thrust aside.” The second half of the verse may illustrate this reprehensible action. The Hiphil infinitive construct נָהַם (naham) may serve either (1) as result, “showing partiality...so that the righteous are turned away,” or (2) as epexegetical infinitive, “showing partiality...by turning the righteous away.” The second is preferred in the translation. Depriving the innocent of their rights is a perversion of justice.
18:6 The lips of a fool enter into strife; and his mouth invites a flogging.

18:7 The mouth of a fool is his ruin, and his lips are a snare for his life.

18:8 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down into the person’s innermost being.

18:9 The one who is slack in his work is a brother to one who destroys.

18:10 The name of the Lord is like a strong tower; the righteous person runs to it and is set safely on high.

18:11 The wealth of a rich person is like a strong city; and it is like a high wall in his imagination.

18:12 Before destruction the heart of a person is proud, but humility comes before honor.

18:13 The one who gives an answer before he hears, it is a fool’s conceit; and before he listens — that is his folly and his shame.

18:14 A person’s spirit sustains him through sickness — but who can bear a crushed spirit?

1 sn The “lips” is a metonymy of cause, meaning what the fool says. The “mouth” in the second colon is likewise a metonymy for speech, what comes out of the mouth.

2 sn “Strife” is a metonymy of cause, it is the cause of the beating or flogging that follows. “Flogging” in the second colon is a metonymy of effect, the flogging is the effect of the strife. The two together give the whole picture.

3 tn Heb “calls for.” This is personification: What the fool says “calls for” a beating or flogging. The fool deserves punishment, but does not actually request it.

4 tn Heb “blows.” This would probably be physical beatings, either administered by the father or by society (e.g., also 19:25; Ps 141:5; cf. NAB, NIV, TEV, NLT). Today, however, “a beating” could be associated with violent criminal assault, whereas the context suggests punishment. Therefore “a flogging” is used in the translation, since that term is normally associated with disciplinary action.

5 tn Heb “his soul” (so KJV, NASB, NIV).

6 tn What a fool says can ruin him. Calamity and misfortune are like “choice morsels” (so KJV) that are received, they fall back on the will to live, but in depression even the will to live is gone.

7 sn The word יַמַּלְצִים (yamalhimim) occurs only here. It is related to a cognate verb meaning “to swallow greedily.” Earlier English versions took it from a Hebrew root הָלַם (halam, see the word ימִלְחָנוּם [milchamon] in v. 6) meaning “wounds” (so KJV). But the translation of “choice morsels” fits the idea of gossip better.

8 tn Heb “they go down [into] the innermost parts of the belly”; NASB “of the body.”

9 sn When the choice morsels of gossip are received, they go down like delicioussmack — into the innermost being. R. N. Whybray says, “There is a flaw in human nature that assures slander will be listened to” (Proverbs [CBC], 105).

10 tn Heb “Also, the one who.” Many commentators and a number of English versions omit the word “also.”

11 tn The form יֵשִׁבֶּה (yeshibeh) is the Hitpael participle, “showing oneself slack.” The verb means “to sink; to relax,” and in the causative stem “to let drop” the hands. This is the lazy person who does not even try to work.

12 sn These two troubling types, the slacker and the destroyer, are closely related.

13 tn Heb “possessor of destruction.” This idiom means “destroyer” (so ASV); KJV “a great waster”; NRSV “a vandal.”

14 sn The “name of the LoRD” is a metonymy of subject. The “name” here signifies not the personal name “Yahweh,” for that would be redundant in the expression “the name of Yahweh,” but the attributes of the LoRD (cf. Exod 34:5-7) — here his power to protect.

15 tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.

16 tn Heb “a tower of strength,” with “strength” regarded as attributive by most English versions. The metaphor “strong tower” indicates that God is a secure refuge. The figure is qualified in the second colon.

17 sn The metaphor of “running to the LoRD” refers to a whole-hearted and unwavering trust in God’s protection (e.g., Isa 40:31).

18 sn The lips is a metonymy of cause, meaning what the fool says. The “mouth” in the second colon is likewise a metonymy for speech, what comes out of the mouth.

19 sn “Strife” is a metonymy of cause, it is the cause of the beating or flogging that follows. “Flogging” in the second colon is a metonymy of effect, the flogging is the effect of the strife. The two together give the whole picture.

20 sn “Blows.” This would probably be physical beatings, either administered by the father or by society (e.g., also 19:25; Ps 141:5; cf. NAB, NIV, TEV, NLT). Today, however, “a beating” could be associated with violent criminal assault, whereas the context suggests punishment. Therefore “a flogging” is used in the translation, since that term is normally associated with disciplinary action.

21 sn Heb “his soul” (so KJV, NASB, NIV).

22 sn What a fool says can ruin him. Calamity and misfortune are like “choice morsels” (so KJV) that are received, they fall back on the will to live, but in depression even the will to live is gone.

23 tn Heb “calls for.” This is personification: What the fool says “calls for” a beating or flogging. The fool deserves punishment, but does not actually request it.

24 tn Heb “blows.” This would probably be physical beatings, either administered by the father or by society (e.g., also 19:25; Ps 141:5; cf. NAB, NIV, TEV, NLT). Today, however, “a beating” could be associated with violent criminal assault, whereas the context suggests punishment. Therefore “a flogging” is used in the translation, since that term is normally associated with disciplinary action.

25 sn The term “heart” is a metonymy of subject, referring to the seat of the spiritual and intellectual capacities – the mind, the will, the motivations and intentions. Proud ambitions and intentions will lead to a fall.

26 sn Poor listening and premature answering indicate that the person has a low regard for what the other is saying, or that he is too absorbed in his own ideas. The Mishnah lists this as the second characteristic of the uncultured person (m. Avot 5:7).

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The discerning person acquires knowledge, and the wise person seeks knowledge.

A person’s gift makes room for him, and leads him before important people.

The first to state his case seems right, until his opponent begins to cross-examine him.

A toss of a coin ends disputes, and settles the issue between strong opponents.

A relative offended is harder to reach than a strong city, and disputes are like the barred gates of a fortified citadel.

From the fruit of a person’s mouth his stomach is satisfied, with the product of his lips he is satisfied.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love its use will eat its fruit.

Footnotes:

1. Heb “discerning heart.” The term “heart” is a synecdoche of part (heart) for the whole (person); cf. TEV, NLT “intelligent people.” By paralleling “heart” and “ear” the proverb stresses the full acquisition of knowledge. The “ear” listens to instruction, and the heart considers what is heard to acquire knowledge.

2. Heb “the ear of the wise.” The term “ear” is a synecdoche of part (ear) for the whole (person); “wise person.”

3. This line features a mixed metaphor: The “ear” is pictured “seeking.” The “ear of the wise” actually means the wise person’s capacity to hear, and so the wise are seeking as they hear.

4. The Hebrew term translated “gift” is a more general term than “bribe” (shokhad), used in 17:8, 23. But it also has danger (e.g., 15:27; 21:14), for by giving gifts one might set himself apart from God.

5. The two verbs here show a progression, helping to form the synthetic parallelism. The gift first “makes room” (yarkhiv, yarkhin) for the person, that is, extending a place for him, and then “ushers him in” (yaron, yaronu) among the greats.

6. Heb “in his legal case”; NAB “who pleads his case first.”

7. The term “seems” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness (cf. KJV “seemeth”).

8. Heb “his neighbor”; NRSV “the other.”

9. Heb “comes and.” The Kethib is the imperfect אֲכֻפֻּנּוּ (ku’n), and the Qere is the conjunction with the participle/perfect tense form אֲכֻפֵּם (ku’m). The latter is reflected in most of the ancient versions. There is not an appreciable difference in the translations, except for the use of the conjunction.

10. The proverb is a continuous sentence teaching that there must be cross-examination to settle legal disputes. There are two sides in any disputes, and so even though the first to present his case sounds right, it must be challenged. The verb ניפָשָׁע (nifsha), translated “cross-examine”) is used for careful, diligent searching and investigating to know something (e.g., Ps 139:1).

11. Heb “casting the lot.” Because modern readers are not familiar with the ancient practice of casting lots, the image of the coin toss to decide an issue has been employed in the translation (cf. CEV “drawing straws”). Although the casting of lots is often compared to throwing dice, the translation “throwing dice ends disputes” in this context could be misunderstood to mean “participating in a game of dice ends disputes.”

12. The verb תָשָּׁב (shavhar) is the Hiphil imperfect from תָּשַׁב (shavhar), meaning “to cause to cease; to bring to an end; to end”; cf. NIV “settles disputes.” The assumption behind this practice and this saying is that providence played the determining role in the casting of lots. If both parties accepted this, then the issue could be resolved.

13. Heb “makes a separation” or “decides.” In the book of Proverbs this verb often has a negative connotation, such as separating close friends (e.g., 16:9). But here it has a positive nuance: Opponents are “separated” by settling the issue.

14. The word is the adjective, “mighty” (so KJV, NASB) used here substantially as the object of the preposition.

15. Heb “brother,” but this is not limited to actual siblings (cf. NRSV “any”; CEV, NLT “friend”).

16. The Niphal participle from יָפֹל (yapol) modifies “brother”: a brother transgressed, offended, sinned against.

17. The LXX has a clear antithetical proverb here: “A brother helps is like a strong hold, but disputes are like bars of a citadel.” Accordingly, the editors of BHS propose יָשָׁב (yashib) instead of יָפֹל (yapol), so also the other versions and the RSV. But since both lines use the comparison with a citadel (fortified/barred), the antithesis is problematic.

18. The phrase “is harder to reach” is supplied in the translation on the basis of the comparative יָפֹל (yapol). It is difficult to get into a fortified city; it is more difficult to reach an offended brother.

19. Heb “bars,” but this could be understood to mean “taverns,” so “barred gates” is employed in the translation.

20. The proverb is talking about changing a friend or a relative into an enemy by abuse or strife – the bars go up, as it were. And the “walls” that are erected are not easily torn down.

21. Two images are used in this proverb: the fruit of the mouth and the harvest of the lips. They are synonymous; the first is applied to the orchard and the second to the field. The “mouth” and the “lips” are metonymies of cause, and so both lines are speaking about speech that is productive.

22. Heb “his midst.” This is rendered “his stomach” because of the use of הבט (bati), “to be satisfied; to be sated; to be filled”, which is usually used with food (cf. KJV, ASV “belly”).

23. Productive speech is not just satisfying – it meets the basic needs of life. There is a practical return for beneficial words.

24. Heb “in the hand of.”


26. The referent of “it” must be the tongue, i.e., what the tongue says (= “its use”). So those who enjoy talking, indulging in it, must “eat” its fruit, whether good or bad. The expression “eating the fruit” is an implied comparison; it means accept the consequences of loving to talk (cf. TEV).
18:22 The one who finds a wife finds what is enjoyable, and receives a pleasurable gift from the Lord.

18:23 A poor person makes supplications, but a rich man answers harshly.

18:24 A person who has friends may be harmed by them, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

19:1 Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is perverse in his speech and is a fool.

19:2 It is dangerous without knowledge, and the one who acts hastily makes poor choices.

19:3 A person’s folly subverts his way, and his heart rages against the Lord.

19:4 Wealth adds many friends, but a poor person is separated from his friend.

19:5 A false witness will not go unpunished,
and the one who spouts out\(^1\) lies will not escape punishment.\(^5\)

19:6 Many people entreat the favor\(^3\) of a generous person,\(^4\)
and everyone is the friend\(^6\) of the person who gives gifts.\(^6\)

19:7 All the relatives\(^7\) of a poor person hate him;\(^8\)
how much more do his friends avoid him – he pursues them\(^9\) with words, but they do not respond.\(^10\)

19:8 The one who acquires wisdom\(^11\) loves himself.\(^12\)

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\(^1\) tn Heb “breathes out”; NAB “utters”; NIV “pours out.”

\(^2\) tn Heb “will not escape” (so NAB, NASB); NIV “will not go free.” Here “punishment” is implied, and has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

\(^3\) This proverb is a general statement, because on occasion there are false witnesses who go unpunished in this life (e.g., Prov 6:19; 14:5, 25; 19:9). The Talmud affirms, “False witnesses are contemptible even to those who hire them” (b. Sanhedrin 29b).

\(^4\) sn The Hebrew verb translated “entreat the favor” is often used to express prayer when God is the one whose favor is being sought. Here it is the prince who can grant requests.

\(^5\) sn The Hebrew verb translated “the face of a generous man” (nànuq) is a Piel imperfect of nànuq (khalu) meaning “to seek favor; to entreat favor; to mollify; to appease” (cf. NIV “pursue favor”). It literally means “making the face of someone sweet or pleasant,” as in stroking the face. To “entreat the favor” of someone is to induce him to show favor; the action aims at receiving gifts, benefits, or any other kind of giving.

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\(^12\) sn The Hebrew verb translated “entreat the favor” is often used to express prayer when God is the one whose favor is being sought. Here it is the prince who can grant requests.
but his favor is like dew on the grass. A foolish child is the ruin of his father, and a contentious wife is like a constant dripping.

19:14 A house and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent child is from the Lord.

19:15 Laziness brings on a deep sleep, and the idle person will go hungry.

19:16 The one who obeys commandments guards his life; the one who despises his ways will die.

19:17 The one who is gracious to the poor lends to the Lord, and the Lord will repay him for his good deed.

19:18 Discipline your child, for there is hope, but do not set your heart on causing his death.

19:19 A person with great anger bears the penalty, but if you deliver him from it once, you will have to do it again.

19:20 Listen to advice and receive discipline, that you may become wise by the end of your life.

1 sn The proverb makes an observation about a king’s power to terrify or to refresh. It advises people to use tact with a king.

2 tn Heb “a foolish son” (so KJV, NASB, CEV); NRSV “a stupid child.”

3 tn Heb “the contentions of a wife” (so KJV, NASB); NAB “the nagging of a wife.” The genitive could be interpreted (1) as genitive of source or subjective genitive – she is quarreling; or (2) it could be a genitive of specification, making the word “contentions of a nag, as in the present translation.

4 tn Heb “is a constant dripping.” The term “like” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity. The metaphor pictures water dripping (perhaps rain through the roof, cf. NRSV, CEV) in a continuous flow: it is annoying and irritating (e.g., Prov 27:15-16).

5 tc The LXX makes this moralistic statement for 13b: “vows paid out of hire of a harlot are not pure.” It is not based on the MT and attempts to reconstruct a text using this have been unsuccessful.

6 tn Heb “inheritance of fathers” (so KJV, ASV, NASB).

7 sn This statement describes a wife who has a skilful use of knowledge and discretion that proves to be successful. This contrasts with the preceding verse. The proverb is not concerned about unhappy marriages or bad wives (both of which exist); it simply affirms that when a marriage works out well one should credit it as a gift from God.

8 tn Heb “causes to fall” or “casts”; NAB “plunges…into.”

9 tn Or “complete inactivity;” the word הֲשׁמַר (shamer) can refer to a physical “deep sleep” (e.g., Gen 2:21; Jonah 1:5, 6), but it can also be used figuratively for complete inactivity, as other words for “sleep” can. Here it refers to lethargy or debility and moralindiscipline.

10 tn The two verbs are related in a metonymical sense: “deep sleep” is the cause of going hungry, and “going hungry” is the effect of deep sleep.

11 tn The verb שָׁמַר (shamar) is repeated twice in this line but with two different senses, creating a polysyndetic word-play: “he who obeys/keeps (רָשָׁם, shomer) the commandment safeguards/keeps (רָשָׁם, shomer) his life.”

12 sn The translation of the expression his ways could refer either (1) to the conduct of the individual himself, or (2) to the commandments as the Lord’s ways. If the latter is the case, then the punishment is more certain.

13 to The Kethib is רָשָׁם (rasham), “will be put to death,” while the Qere reads רָשָׁם (rasham, “will die”). The Qere is the preferred reading and is followed by most English versions.

14 sn The participle היה (hannah), “shows favor to” is related to the word for “gift.” The activity here is the kind favor shown poor people for no particular reason and with no hope of repayment. It is literally an act of grace.

15 tn The form נָמֶה (namah) is the Hiphil participle from נָמָה (namah) in construct; it means “to cause to borrow; to lend.” The expression here is “lender of the Lord.” The person who helps the poor becomes the creditor of God.

16 tn Heb “he.” The referent of the 3rd person masculine singular pronoun is the “LoRD” in the preceding line, which has been supplied here in the translation for clarity.

17 sn The promise of reward does not necessarily mean that the person who gives to the poor will get money back; the rewards in the book of Proverbs involve life and prosperity in general.

18 sn The translation understands כְּהַוָּה (kede) both as temporal and translate, “while there is hope” (so KJV, NASB, NCV, NRSV, NLT), meaning that discipline should be administered when the child is young and easily guided. In the causal reading of כְּהַוָּה, the idea seems to be that children should be disciplined because change is possible due to their youth and the fact that they are not set in their ways.

19 sn The translation understands כְּהַוָּה (kede) as causal. Some prefer to take כְּהַוָּה as temporal and translate, “while there is hope” (so KJV, NASB, NOV, NRSV, NLT), meaning that discipline should be administered when the child is young and easily guided. In the causal reading of כְּהַוָּה, the idea seems to be that children should be disciplined because change is possible due to their youth and the fact that they are not set in their ways.

20 tn The expression “do not lift up your soul/life” to his death may mean (1) “do not set your heart” on his death (cf. ASV, NASB, NAB, NRSV), or it may mean (2) “do not be a willing partner” (cf. NIV). The parent is to discipline a child, but he is not to take it to the extreme and destroy or kill the child.

21 sn The Hiphil infinitive construct רָמִיהוּ (remiu) means “taking it to heart” in this line. The traditional rendering was “and let not your soul spare for his crying.” This involved a different reading than “causing his death” (J. H. Greenstone, Proverbs, 206-7).

22 sn The Hebrew word means “indemnity, fine;” this suggests that the trouble could be legal, and the angry person has to pay for it.

23 tn The second colon of the verse is very difficult, and there have been many proposals as to its meaning: (1) “If you save [your enemy], you will add [good to yourself]”; (2) “If you [save your son by chastening], you may continue [ chasten- ment and so educate him]”; (3) “If you deliver [him by paying the fine for him once], you will have to do it again”; (4) “If you save [him this time], you will have to increase [the punishment later on].” All interpretations have to supply a considerable amount of material (indicated by brackets). Many English versions are similar to (3).

24 sn The advice refers in all probability to the teachings of the sages that will make one wise.

25 tn The proverb is one continuous thought, but the second half of the verse provides the purpose for the imperatives of the first half.

26 tn The imperfect tense has the nuance of a final imperfect in a purpose clause, and so is translated “that you may become wise” (cf. NAB, NRSV).

27 sn Heb “become wise in your latter end” (cf. KJV, ASV) which could obviously be misunderstood.
19:21 There are many plans\(^4\) in a person’s mind,\(^2\) but it\(^1\) is the counsel\(^14\) of the L ORD which will stand.

19:22 What is desirable\(^5\) for a person is to show loyal love,\(^6\) and a poor person is better than a liar.\(^7\)

19:23 Fearing the L ORD\(^6\) leads\(^2\) to life,\(^10\) and one who does so will live\(^11\) satisfied; he will not be afflicted\(^12\) by calamity.

19:24 The sluggard plunges\(^13\) his hand in the dish.

19:25 A scorners\(^{15}\) will be brought low; and as a result the simpleton\(^{16}\) will learn prudence;\(^17\) correct a discerning person, and as a result he will understand knowledge.\(^18\)

19:26 The one who robs\(^9\) his father\(^20\) and chases away his mother is a son\(^22\) who brings shame and disgrace.

19:27 If you stop listening to instruction, my child, you will stray\(^{23}\) from the words of knowledge.

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1 sn The plans (from the Hebrew verb קָסַח [qashah], “to think; to reckon; to devise”) in the human heart are many. But only those which God approves will succeed.

2 tn Heb “in the heart of a man” (cf. NAB, NIV). Here “heart” is used for the seat of thoughts, plans, and reasoning, so the translation uses “mind.” In contemporary English “heart” is more often associated with the seat of emotion than with the seat of planning and reasoning.

3 tn Heb “but the counsel of the L ORD, it will stand.” The construction draws attention to the “counsel of the L ORD”; it is an independent nominative absolute, and the resumptive indicative is the formal subject of the verb.

4 tn The antithetical parallelism compares “counsel” with “plans.” “Counsel of the L ORD” (כינני הצר, niti yehuah) is literally “the counsel” with the connotation of “plan” in this context (cf. NIV, NRSV, NLT “purpose”; NCV “p.”; TEV “the L ORD’s will”).

5 sn The point of the proverb is that the human being with many plans is uncertain, but the L ORD with a sure plan gives correct counsel.

6 tn Heb “[is] his loyal love”; NIV “unfailing love”; NRSV “loyalty.”

7 sn The second half of the proverb presents the logical inference: The liar would be without “loyal love” entirely, and so a person who wishes to do better is preferable to a person who makes promises and does not keep them.

8 tn Heb “the fear of the L ORD.” This expression features an objective genitive: “fearing the L ORD.”

9 tn The term “leads” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and style.

10 sn “Life” is probably a metonymy of subject for “blessings and prosperity in life.” The plural form often covers a person’s “lifetime.”

11 tn The subject of this verb is probably the one who fears the L ORD and enjoys life. So the proverb uses synthetic parallelism; the second half tells what this life is like – it is an abiding contentment that is not threatened by calamity (cf. NCV “unbothered by trouble”).

12 tn This word can be “visited” (so KJV, ASV). The verb פָּקַד (qapa‘) is often translated “visit.” It describes intervention that will change the destiny, if God “visits” it means he intervenes to bless or to curse. To be “visited by trouble” means that calamity will interfere with the course of life and change the direction or the destiny. Therefore this is not referring to a minor trouble that one might briefly experience. A life in the L ORD cannot be disrupted by such major catastrophes that would alter one’s destiny.

13 tn Heb “buries” (so many English versions); KJV “hideth”; NAB “loses.”

14 sn This humorous portrayal is an exaggeration, but the point is that laziness can overcome hunger. It would have a wider application for anyone who would start a project and then lack the interest or energy to finish it (R. N. Whybray, Proverbs [CBC], 111). Ibn Ezra proposes that the dish was empty, because the sluggard was too lazy to provide for himself.

15 tn The first imperfect (‘aph) is followed by another imperfect. It could be rendered: “strike a scorners [imperfect of instruction] and a simpleton will become prudent.” But the first of the parallel verbs can also be subordinated to the second as a temporal or conditional clause. Some English versions translate “beat” (NAB “if you beat an arrogant man”), but this could be understood to refer to competition rather than physical punishment. Therefore “flog” has been used in the translation, since it is normally associated with punishment or discipline.

16 sn Different people learn differently. There are three types of people in this proverb: the scorners with a closed mind, the simpleton with an empty mind, and the discerning person with an open mind (D. Kidner, Proverbs [TOTC], 135). The simpleton learns by observing a scoffer being punished, even though the punishment will have no effect on the scoffer.

17 sn The word is related to “shrewdness” (cf. 1:4). The simpleton will learn at least where the traps are and how to avoid them.

18 tn The second half begins with יִצְרוּ (yizro‘), the Hi phiil infinitive construct. This parallels the imperfect tense beginning the first half; it forms a temporal or conditional clause as well, so that the main verb is “he will understand.”

19 sn The discriminating person will learn from verbal rebukes. The contrast is caught in a wordplay in the Midrash: “For the wise a hint [r’mizo], for the fool a fist [kumezo]” (Mishle 22:6).

20 tn The construction joins the Piel participle יְשַׁבֵּא (yashve‘), “one who robs”) with the Hiphil imperfect יְשֻׁב (yashvah), “one who robs.” The imperfect given a progressive imperfect nuance matches the timeless description of the participle as a substantive.

21 sn “Father” and “mother” here represent a stereotypical word pair in the book of Proverbs, rather than describing separate crimes against each individual parent. Both crimes are against both parents.

22 tn The more generic “child” does not fit the activities described in the verse and so “son” is retained in the translation. In the ancient world a “son” was more likely than a daughter to behave as stated. Such behavior may reflect the wider application for anyone who would start a project and then lack the interest or energy to finish it (R. N. Whybray, Proverbs [CBC], 111). Ibn Ezra proposes that the dish was empty, because the sluggard was too lazy to provide for himself.

23 tn The second line has an infinitive construct יִשְׂתַחֲדוּ (lishchod) functions as the direct object of the imperative: “stop heeding…!” The infinitive construct לִשְׁתַּחֲדוּ (lishchadu) functions as the direct object of the imperative: “stop heeding…!” Of course in this proverb which shows the consequences of doing so, this is irony. The sage is instructing not to stop. The conditional protasis construction does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation.

24 tn The second line has an infinitive construct יִשָּׂרָה (lashor), meaning “to stray; to go astray; to err.” It indicates the result of the instruction – stop listening, and as a result you will go astray. The LXX took it differently: “A son who ceases to attend to discipline is likely to stray from words of knowledge.” RSV sees the final clause as the purpose of the instructions to be avoided: “do not listen to instructions to err.”
19:28 A crooked witness scorns justice, and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.

19:29 Judgments are prepared for scoffers, and floggings for the backs of fools.

20:1 Wine is a mocker and strong drink is a brawler; whoever goes astray by them is not wise.

20:2 The king’s terrifying anger is like the roar of a lion; whoever provokes him sins against himself.

20:3 It is an honor for a person to cease from strife, but every fool quarrels.

20:4 The sluggard will not plow during the planting season, so at harvest time he looks for the crop but has nothing.

20:5 Counsel in a person’s heart is like deep water, but an understanding person draws it out.

20:6 Many people profess their loyalty, but a faithful person who can find?

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1 tn Heb “a witness who is worthless and wicked” (}`}vala‘)) Cf. KJV “an ungodly witness”; NAB “an unprincipled witness”; NCV “an evil witness”; NASB “a rascally witness.”

2 tn The parallel line says the mouth of the wicked “gulps down” or “swallows” (יָבִיא, y’avia‘) iniquity. The verb does not seem to fit the line (or the proverb) very well. Some have emended the text to (יָבִיא, y’avia‘, “gushes”) as in 15:28 (cf. NAB “pours out”). Driver followed an Arabic balaga to get “enunciation,” which works well with the idea of a false witness (W. McKane, Proverbs (OTL), 529). As it stands, however, the line indicates that in what he says the wicked person accepts evil – and that could describe a false witness.

3 tc Some (cf. NAB) suggest emending the MT’s “judgments” (מִתְעַבְּרוֹ, mit‘ab’ro) to “rods” (מִיתֵֹבָר, miy’tov) or “purifying” (מָשַׁבְתָּן, mishav’tan). Nevertheless, this is not necessary if the term in the MT is interpreted figuratively. The LXX “scourges” might reflect a different interpretation of the same text. “Judgments” is a metonymy of cause and effect; the anger of a king that causes his anger that brings a judgment.

4 sn These are crooked or corrupt witnesses who willfully distort the facts and make a mockery of the whole legal process.

5 sn One cannot avoid conflict altogether, but the proverb is instructing that at the first sign of conflict the honorable thing to do is to find a way to end it.

6 tn Heb “breaks out.” The Hitpael of the verb בָּלָע (bala‘, “to expose; to lay bare”) means “to break out; to disclose oneself,” and so the idea of flaring up in a quarrel is clear. But there are also cognate connections to the idea of “showing the teeth; snarling” and so quarreling viciously.

7 sn The act of plowing is put for the whole process of planting a crop.

8 tn Heb “in the autumn”; ASV “by reason of the winter.” The noun means “autumn, harvest time.” The right time for planting was after the harvest and the rainy season of autumn and winter began.

9 tn The Piel of the verb מָשַׁבְתָּן (mishav’tan, “to ask”) means “to beg” or “to inquire carefully.” At the harvest time he looks for produce but there is none. The Piel might suggest, however, that because he did not plant, or did not do it at the right time, he is reduced to begging and will have nothing (cf. KJV, ASV; NASB “he begs during the harvest”).

10 sn The phrase “for the crop” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

11 sn The noun means “advice, counsel”; it can have the connotation of planning or making decisions. Those with understanding can sort out plans.

12 sn “In the heart of a man”; NRSV “in the human mind.”

13 tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.

14 sn The motives or plans of a person are “difficult to fathom”; it takes someone with understanding to discover and surface them (the verb in the last colon continues the idea of the bringing things to light).

15 sn The point of the rhetorical question is that a truly faithful friend is very difficult to find.
The righteous person behaves in integrity, blessed are his children after him.

A king sitting on the throne to judge separates out all evil with his eyes. Who can say, “I have kept my heart clean; I am pure from my sin”?

Diverse weights and diverse measures — the Lord abhors both of them.

Even a young man is known by his actions, whether his activity is pure and whether it is right.

The ear that hears and the eye that sees — the Lord has made them both. Do not love sleep, lest you become impoverished; open your eyes so that you might be satisfied with food.

“It’s worthless! It’s worthless!” says the buyer, but when he goes on his way, he boasts.

There is gold, and an abundance of rubies, but words of knowledge are like a precious jewel.

Character is demonstrated by actions at any age. But the emphasis of the book of Proverbs would also be that if the young child begins to show such actions, then the parents must try to foster and cultivate them; if not, they must try to develop them through teaching and discipline.

The proverb uses antithetical parallelism to teach that diligence leads to prosperity. It contrasts loving sleep with opening the eyes, and poverty with satisfaction. Just as “sleep” can be used for slothfulness or laziness, so opening the eyes can represent vigorous, active conduct.

The idioms of walking represent living is intensified here in this stem. This verbal stem means “to walk about; to walk to and fro.” The idiom of walking represents living being formed in his early life.

The verse not only credits God with making these faculties of hearing and sight and giving them to people, but it also emphasizes their spiritual use in God’s service.

The second line uses the image of winnowing (cf. NIV, NRSV) to state that the king’s judgment removes evil from the realm. The verb form זכיה (zikkiti, the Piel participle. It indicates purpose, “to separate out”) you will “be satisfied.”

The verse is a rhetorical question; it is affirming that no one can say this because no one is pure and free of sin.

The verse is usually taken as antithetical parallelism: “When a king sits on his throne to judge, he separates all evil with his eyes.” The idioms of walking represent living is intensified here in this stem. This verbal stem means “to walk about; to walk to and fro.” The idiom of walking represents living being formed in his early life.

The verse reflects standard procedure in the business world. When negotiating the transaction the buyer complains how bad the deal is for him, or how worthless the prospective purchase, but then later brags about what a good deal he got. The proverb will alert the inexperienced as to how things are done.

The image of the dishonest merchant who has different sets of weights and measures which are used to cheat customers. The Lord hates dishonesty in business transactions.

In the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs the Hebrew term ות (nu’ar) referred to an adolescent, a young person whose character was being formed in his early life.

The Hebrew verb נקט (nukfar) means “to recognize” more than simply “to know.” Certain character traits can be recognized in a child by what he does (cf. NCV “by their behavior”).
21:16 Take a man’s 4 garment 2 when he has given security for a stranger, 3 and when he gives surety for strangers, 4 hold him 5 in pledge.

21:17 Bread gained by deceit 6 tastes sweet to a person, 7 but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel. 8

21:18 Plans 9 are established by counsel; so 10 make war 11 with guidance.

21:19 The one who goes about gossiping 12 reveals secrets; therefore do not associate 13 with someone who is always opening his mouth. 14

21:20 The one who curses 15 his father and his mother, his lamp 16 will be extinguished in the blackest 17 darkness.

21:21 An inheritance gained easily 18 in the beginning will not be blessed 19 in the end. 20

21:22 Do not say, 21 “I will pay back 22 evil!”
Wait for the Lord, so that he may vindicate you.  
20:23 The Lord abhors differing weights, and dishonest scales are wicked.  
20:24 The steps of a person are ordained by the Lord—so how can anyone understand his own way?  
20:25 It is a snare for a person to rashly cry, "Holy!" and only afterward to consider what he has vowed.  
20:26 A wise king separates out the wicked; he turns the threshing wheel over them.  
20:27 The human spirit is like the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts.  
20:28 Loyal love and truth preserve a king, and his throne is upheld by loyal love.  
20:29 The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is gray hair.  
20:30 Beatings and wounds cleanse away evil,  

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4 sn To “wait” (מָרַק, qavveh) on the Lord requires faith in him, reliance on divine justice, and patience. It means that the wrongs done to a person will have to be endured for a time.  
2 sn After the imperative, the jussive is subordinated in a purpose clause: "wait for the Lord so that he may deliver you." The verb מָרַק (yosha) means "to save (KJV, ASV, NASB); to deliver (NI); to give victory;" in this context it means "deliver from the evil done to you," and so "vindicate" is an appropriate connotation. Cf. NCV "he will make things right."  
3 sn In Heb “an abomination of the Lord,” This expression features a subjective genitive: "the Lord abhors."  
4 sn In Heb "not good." This is a figure known as tapeinosis – a deponent verb to emphasize the worst-case scenario: "it is wicked!" (e.g., 11:1; 20:10).  
5 sn In Heb “the steps of a man," but "man" is the noun גֶּבֶר (gever, in pause), indicating an important, powerful person. BDB 149-50 s.v. suggests it is used of men in their role of defending women and children; if that can be validated, then the word "man" would then be classified as a potential imperfect; for the cart would easily serve the purpose (e.g., Isa 28:27-28).  
6 sn In Heb “from the Lord”; NRSV "ordered by the Lord"; NW "directed by the Lord."  
9 sn It would be a "snare" because it would lead people into financial difficulties; Leviticus 27 talks about foolish or rash vows.  
10 sn Heb “a man.”  
11 sn The verb is from לָשׁוּן (lu’ or לָשׁוֹן (lu’a’); it means "to talk wildly" (not to be confused with the homonym "to swallow"). It occurs here and in Job 6:3.  
12 sn Heb "reflect on." The person is to consider the vows before making them, to ensure that they can be fulfilled. Too many people take their vow or promise without thinking, and then later worry about how they will fulfill their vows.  
13 sn Heb "the vows" (so NASB; CEV "promises.").  
14 sn Heb "winnows" (so NAB, NASB, NRSV). The sage draws on the process of winnowing to explain how the king uncovers and removes wickedness. The verb from which the participle מָרַק (marak) is derived means "to separate; to winnow; to scatter;" the implied comparison means that the king will separate good people from bad people like wheat is separated from chaff. The image of winnowing is also used in divine judgment. The second line of the verse uses a detail of the process to make the point. Driving a wheel over the wheat represents the threshing process; the sharp iron wheels of the cart would easily serve the purpose (e.g., Isa 28:27-28).  
15 sn In the king has the wisdom/ability to destroy evil from his kingdom. See also D. W. Thomas, “Proverbs 20:26,” JTS 15 (1964): 155-56.  
16 sn The expression translated “the human spirit” is the Hebrew term נִשְׁמַת (nishmat), a feminine noun in construct. This is the inner spiritual part of human life that was breathed in at creation (Gen 2:7) and that constitutes humans as spiritual beings with moral, intellectual, and spiritual capacities.  
17 sn In The comparative "like" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.  
18 sn In The "lamp" is the metaphor in the line; it signifies that the human spirit functions as a conscience, enabling people to know and please God, and directing them in choices that will be life-giving. E. Loewenstamm unnecessarily reads נִר ("to plow") instead of נִשְׁמַת ("lamp") to say that God plows and encompasses the soul ("Remarks on Proverbs 17:12 and 20:27," VT 37 (1967): 233). The NW supplies a verb ("searches") from the second half of the verse, changing the emphasis somewhat.  
19 sn In Heb “all the chambers of the belly.” This means “the inner parts of the body” (BDB 293 s.v. נִשְׁמַת); cf. NASB “the innermost parts of his being.”  
22 sn In The first line uses two Hebrew words, אֲשֶׁר יִהְדָּא (yihda’ or khesed, “loyalty, love, and truth”), to tell where security lies. The first word is the covenant term for “loyal love; loving-kindness; mercy”; and the second is “truth” in the sense of what is reliable and dependable. The two words often are joined together to form a hendiadys: “faithful love.” That a hendiadys is intended here is confirmed by the fact that the second line uses only the critical word יִהְדָּא.  
23 sn In The Hebrew term חֶדֶר (cheder), the noun in construct, means “splendor; honor; ornament.” The latter sense is used here, since grey hair is like a crown on the head.  
24 sn Gray hair is a metonymy of adjunct; it represents everything valuable about old age – dignity, wisdom, honor, experience, as well as worry and suffering of life. At the very least, since they survived, they must know something. At the most, they were respected elders of the people.  
25 sn In The verb מָשַׁמַּת (masmah) means "to polish; to scour;" in the Hiphil it means "to cleanse away," but it is only attested here, and that in the Ketib reading of פִּתְרָה (pira’). The Qere has מָשַׁמַּת (ma’asah, "are means of cleansing"). The LXX has "blows and contusions fall on evil men, and stripes penetrate their inner beings”; the Latin has "the bruise of a wound differs a subject genitive: "the Lord."
and floggings cleanse\(^1\) the innermost being.\(^2\)

21:1 The king’s heart\(^3\) is in the hand\(^4\) of the Lord like channels of water;\(^6\) he turns it wherever he wants.

21:2 All of a person’s ways seem right in his own opinion,\(^6\) but the Lord evaluates\(^7\) the motives.\(^8\)

21:3 To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable\(^9\) to the Lord than sacrifice.\(^10\)

21:4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart — the agricultural product\(^11\) of the wicked is sin.

21:5 The plans of the diligent\(^12\) lead\(^13\) only to plenty,\(^14\) but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.\(^15\)

21:6 Making a fortune\(^16\) by a lying tongue is like\(^17\) a vapor driven back and forth;\(^18\) they seek death.\(^19\)

21:7 The violence\(^20\) done by the wicked\(^21\) will drag them away because\(^22\) they refuse to do what is right.\(^23\)

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\(^1\) tn The term “cleanse” does not appear in this line but is supplied in the translation in the light of the parallelism.

\(^2\) sn Physical punishment may prove spiritually valuable. Other proverbs say that some people will never learn from this kind of punishment, but in general this may be the only thing that works for some cases.

\(^3\) sn “Heart” is a metonymy of subject; it signifies the ability to make decisions, if not the decisions themselves.

\(^4\) sn “Hand” in this passage is a personification; the word is frequently used idiomatically for “power,” and that is the sense intended here.

\(^5\) tn “Channels of water” (מָׂקוֹשֵׁי, moqšeq) is an adverbial accusative, functioning as a figure of comparison — “like channels of water.” Cf. NAB “Like a stream”; NIV “watercourse”; NRSV, NLT “a stream of water.”

\(^6\) The farmer channels irrigation ditches where he wants them, where they will do the most good; so does the Lord with the king. No king is supreme; the Lord rules.

\(^7\) tn Heb “in his own eyes.” The term “eyes” is a metonymy for estimation, opinion, evaluation.

\(^8\) tn Heb “weighs” (so NASB, NIV, NRSV); NLT “examines”; NGV, TEV “judges.”

\(^9\) tn Heb “the hearts.” The term נֶפֶשׁ (nephes, “heart”) is used as a metonymy of association for thoughts and motives (BDB 660-61 s.v. 6-7). Even though people think they know themselves, the Lord evaluates motives as well (e.g., Prov 16:2).

\(^10\) tn The Niphal participle יַנִּיב (yanib, “to choose”) means “choice to the Lxx” or “chosen by the Lord,” meaning “acceptable to the Lord”; cf. TEV “pleases the Lord more.”

\(^11\) sn The Lord prefers righteousness above religious service (e.g., Prov 15:8; 21:29; 1 Sam 15:22; Ps 40:6-8; Is 1:11-17). This is not a rejection of ritual worship; rather, religious acts are without value apart from righteous living.

\(^12\) tn The word “diligent” is an adjective used substantival- ly. The related verb means “to cut, sharpen, decide;” so the adjective describes one who is “sharp” — one who acts decisively. The word “hasty” has the idea of being pressed or pressured into quick actions. So the text contrasts calculated expediency with unproductive haste. C. H. Toy does not like this contrast, and so proposes changing the latter to “lazy” (Proverbs [ICC], 399), but W. McKane rightly criticizes that as unnecessarily forming a pedestrian antithesis (Proverbs [OTL], 550).

\(^13\) tn The term “lead” is supplied in the translation.

\(^14\) tn The Hebrew noun translated “plenty” comes from the verb מָשָׁל (mashal), which means “to remain over.” So the calculated diligence will lead to abundance, prosperity.

\(^15\) tn Heb “lack; need; thing needed;” “to want.”

\(^16\) tn The first word of the verse is the noun meaning “doing, deed, work.” The BHS editors suggest reading with the LXX an active participle — “the one who makes” (cf. NAB “He who makes”). The second word means “treasure,” from the verb “lay up, store up.” It is an objective genitive here.

\(^17\) tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied for the sake of clarity.

\(^18\) tn The Hebrew יִנָּד (yanad) is properly “a driven vapor” (“driven” = the Niphal participle). The point of the metaphor is that the ill-gotten gains will vanish into thin air. The LXX has “pursues” (as if reading ἐρχόμενος, erkomenos); cf. NAB “chasing a bubble over deadly snares.”

\(^19\) tn The Hebrew has “seekers of death,” meaning [they that seek them] are seekers of death,” or that the fortune is “a fleeting vapor for those who seek death.” The sense is not readily apparent. The Greek and the Latin versions have “snares of death”; the form מַטַּיָּה (matyah) was read instead of מָשָּל (mashal). This reading does not make a more credible metaphor, and one must explain the loss of the letter ב (bet) in the textual variant. It is, however, slightly easier to interpret in the verse, and is followed by a number of English versions (e.g., NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). But whether the easier reading is the correct one in this case would be difficult to prove.

\(^20\) tn The “violence” (שׁוּד, shoud) drags away the wicked, probably either to do more sin or to their punishment. “Violence” here is either personified, or it is a metonymy of cause, meaning “the outcome of their violence” drags them away.

\(^21\) tn Heb “violence of the wicked.” This is a subjective genitive: “violence which the wicked do.”

\(^22\) tn The second colon of the verse is the causal clause, explaining why they are dragged away. They are not passive victims of their circumstances or their crimes. They choose to persist in their violence and so it destroys them.

\(^23\) tn Heb “they refuse to do justice” (so ASV); NASB “refuse to act with justice.”
21:8 The way of the guilty person is devious, but as for the pure, his way is upright.

21:9 It is better to live on a corner of the house top than in a house in company with a quarrelsome wife.

21:10 The appetite of the wicked desires evil; his neighbor is shown no favor in his eyes.

21:11 When a scorner is punished, the naive becomes wise; when a wise person is instructed, he gains knowledge.

21:12 The Righteous One considers the house of company, and a bribe given secretly, anger, and a bribe given secretly, strong wrath.

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1 sn The first line of the proverb is difficult. Since הֲפַכְפַּךְ (hafakhfakh) occurs only here it has been given much attention. The translation of “guilty” is drawn from an Arabic cognate meaning “to bear a burden” and so “to be sin laden” or “guilty” (cf. NASB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, NLT). G. R. Driver prefers to read the line as “a man crooked of ways is false” (Proverbs [ICC], 400). Whatever the reading, “guilty” or “proud” or “false,” the idea is that such people are devious. Bad people are underhand; good people are aboveboard (C. H. Toy, Proverbs [ICC], 400). Another way to analyze the line is to read it with the definition “strange, stranger”: “The way of a man and a stranger is perverse.” But this is underhanded and no satisfactory contrast to a bribe. Another suggestion is “the way of (usual) man is changeable and strange, but the pure fellow leads a straight and even course” (J. H. Greenstone, Proverbs, 244); cf. NLT “the innocent travel a straight road.”

2 sn The form הָפַכְפוֹךְ (hafakhfakh) is an adjective with an intensified meaning due to the duplication of the second and third radicals; it means “very devious; crooked” (from the verb to “overturn”). The repetition of the term “subdues” in the second line of the proverb is difficult. Since הָפַכְפוֹךְ (hafakhfakh) occurs only here it has been given much attention. The translation of “guilty” is drawn from an Arabic cognate meaning “to bear a burden” and so “to be sin laden” or “guilty” (cf. NASB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, NLT). G. R. Driver prefers to read the line as “a man crooked of ways is false” (Proverbs [ICC], 400). Whatever the reading, “guilty” or “proud” or “false,” the idea is that such people are devious. Bad people are underhand; good people are aboveboard (C. H. Toy, Proverbs [ICC], 400). Another way to analyze the line is to read it with the definition “strange, stranger”: “The way of a man and a stranger is perverse.” But this is underhanded and no satisfactory contrast to a bribe. Another suggestion is “the way of (usual) man is changeable and strange, but the pure fellow leads a straight and even course” (J. H. Greenstone, Proverbs, 244); cf. NLT “the innocent travel a straight road.”

3 sn The reference is probably to a small room that would be built on the flat housetop primarily for guests (e.g., 1 Kgs 17:19; 2 Kgs 4:10). It would be cramped and lonely – but peaceful in avoiding strife.

4 sn The “house of company” has received numerous interpretations. The word “company” or “companionship” would qualify “house” as a place to be shared. The BHS editors propose “spacious house,” which would call for a transposition of letters (cf. NAB “a roomy house”; NLT “a lovely home”). Such an emendation makes good sense, but has no external support.

5 sn In Heb “a wife of contentions”; KJV “a brawling woman”; TEV, CEV “a nagging wife.” The Greek version has no reference to a quarrelsome wife, but instead mentions justice in a common house.

6 sn The reference is probably to a small room that would be built on the flat housetop primarily for guests (e.g., 1 Kgs 17:19; 2 Kgs 4:10). It would be cramped and lonely – but peaceful in avoiding strife.

7 sn The “house of company” has received numerous interpretations. The word “company” or “companionship” would qualify “house” as a place to be shared. The BHS editors propose “spacious house,” which would call for a transposition of letters (cf. NAB “a roomy house”; NLT “a lovely home”). Such an emendation makes good sense, but has no external support.

8 sn The word has the meanings of “desire, crave, long for, lust after.” It usually has “soul” as its subject. The word is used in the Ten Commandments in the prohibition against coveting a neighbor’s house (Deut 5:18).

9 sn The form כְּחֻנָא (khaunah) is a Hophal imperfect from קָחָן (khaun); it means “to be shown mercy” – here negated to mean “he will not be shown mercy.” The person who lives to satisfy his own craving for evil will not be interested in meeting the needs of others.
21:15 Doing\(^1\) justice brings\(^2\) joy to the righteous
and terror\(^3\) to those who do evil.

21:16 The one who wanders\(^4\) from the way of wisdom\(^5\)
will end\(^6\) in the company of the departed.\(^7\)

21:17 The one who loves\(^8\) pleasure\(^9\) will be\(^10\) a poor person;\(^11\)
whenever loves wine and anointing oil\(^12\) will not be rich.

21:18 The wicked become\(^13\) a ransom\(^14\) for the righteous,
and the faithless\(^15\) are taken\(^16\) in the place of the upright.

21:19 It is better to live\(^17\) in a desert land\(^18\) than with a quarrelsome and easily-provoked\(^19\) woman.

21:20 There is desirable treasure and olive oil\(^20\) in the dwelling of the wise,
but a foolish person\(^21\) devours all he has.\(^22\)

21:21 The one who pursues righteousness and love\(^23\) finds life, bounty,\(^24\) and honor.

21:22 The wise person\(^25\) can scale\(^26\) the city of the mighty
and bring down the stronghold\(^27\) in which they trust.\(^28\)

\(^1\) tn The Qal infinitive construct נַשֵׁג (’asur) functions as the subject of the sentence.

\(^2\) tn The term “brings” is supplied in the translation; many English versions supply a simple copula (“is”).

\(^3\) sn The noun means “terror (NAB, NASB, NIV), destruction (KJV, ASV), ruin (cf. NCV),.” Its related verb means “be shatted, dismayed.” The idea of “dismay” (NRSV) or “terror” would make the better choice to contrast with “joy” in the first line, but “ruin” is also possible. Whenever justice prevails, whether in the courts or simply in society, the people who practice iniquity may be shaken into reality by fear (cf. CEV “crooks are terrified”).

\(^4\) tn The text uses “man” as the subject and the active participle צְדָקָה (’ôch) as the predicate. The image of “wandering off the path” signifies leaving a life of knowledge, prudence, and discipline.

\(^5\) sn Or “prudence”; KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV “understanding”; NJB “common sense.”

\(^6\) Heb “will remain” or “will rest.” The Hebrew word יָשָׁה (yashah) does not here carry any of the connotations of comforting repose in death that the righteous enjoy; it simply means “to remain; to reside; to dwell.” The choice of this verb might have an ironic twist to it, reminding the wicked what might have been.

\(^7\) sn The departed are the Shades (the Rephaim). The literal expression “will rest among the Shades” means “will be numbered among the dead.” So once again physical death is presented as the punishment for folly.

\(^8\) sn The participle “loves” (זָהֵב, ’ohav) indicates in this context that more is involved than the enjoyment of pleasure, for which there is no problem. The proverb is looking at “love” in the sense of needing and choosing, an excessive or uncon trollled indulgence in pleasure.

\(^9\) sn “Pleasure” is actually the Hebrew word “joy” (גָּדִים, simkhah). It is a metonymy of effect, the cause being the good life that brings the joy. In the second colon, “wine” and “oil” would be metonymies of cause, the particular things in life that bring joy. Therefore the figures in the lines work together to give the complete picture.

\(^10\) sn The phrase “will be” is supplied in the translation.

\(^11\) sn Heb “a man of poverty”; NRSV “will suffer want.”

\(^12\) sn In elaborate feasts and celebrations the wine was for drinking but the oil was for anointing (cf. NAB, NCV “per fume”). Both of these characterize the luxurious life (e.g., Ps 23:5; 104:15; Amos 6:6).

\(^13\) tn The term “become” is supplied in the translation.

\(^14\) sn The Hebrew word translated “ransom” (קֹפֶר, kofer) normally refers to the price paid to free a prisoner. R. N. Whybray (Proverbs [CBC], 121) gives options for the meaning of the verse: (1) If it means that the wicked obtain good things that should go to the righteous, it is then a despairing plea for justice (which would be unusual in the book of Proverbs); but if (2) it is taken to mean that the wicked suffers the evil he has prepared for the righteous, then it harmonizes with Proverbs elsewhere (e.g., 11:8). The ideal this proverb presents – and the future reality – is that in calamity the righteous escape and the wicked suffer in their place (e.g., Haman in the book of Esther).

\(^15\) tn Or “treacherous” (so ASV, NASB, NLT); NIV “the unfaithful.”

\(^16\) tn The phrase “are taken” does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for smoothness.

\(^17\) tn The Hebrew form צְדָקָה (shevet) is the infinitive construct of צֶדָקָה (yashah), functioning as the subject of the sentence.

\(^18\) sn The verse makes the same point as 21:9 and 25:24, but “desert land” is substituted. It would be a place sparsely settled and quiet, which people like.

\(^19\) tn The Hebrew noun קַשָּׁה (kesh) means “ vexation; anger.” The woman is not only characterized by a quarrelsome spirit, but also anger – she is easily vexed (cf. NAB “vexatious”; NASB “vexing”; ASV, NRSV “fretful”). The translation “easily-provoked” conveys this idea well.

\(^20\) tn The mention of “olive oil” (קָשָׁה, shemen) is problematic in the line – how can a fool devour it? Several attempts have been made to alleviate the problem. The NIV interprets “treasure” as “choice food,” so that food and oil would make more sense being swallowed. C. H. Toy (Proverbs [ICC], 406) suggests dropping “oil” altogether based on the reading in the LXX, but the Greek is too general for any support: It has “precious treasure will rest on the mouth of the sage.” W. McNake wants to change “oil” to an Arabic word “expensive” to read “desirable and rare wealth” (Proverbs [DUTL], 552), but this idea does not match the metaphor any better. The figure of “devouring” in the second line simply means the fool uses up whatever he has.

\(^21\) sn Heb “a fool of a man.”

\(^22\) sn Heb “he swallows it.” The imagery compares swallowing food with consuming one’s substance. The fool does not prepare for the future.

\(^23\) sn These two attributes, “righteousness” (צְדָקָה, ts’dakah) and “loyal love” (לֵבָד, l’dod) depict the life style of the covenant-blower who is pleasing to God and a blessing to others. The first term means that he will do what is right, and the second means that he will be faithful to the covenant community.

\(^24\) sn The Hebrew term translated “bounty” is צְדָקָה (ts’dakah) again, so there is a wordplay on the term in the verse. The first use of the word had the basic meaning of “conduct that conforms to God’s standard”; this second use may be understood as a metonymy of cause, indicating the provision or reward (“bounty”) that comes from keeping righteousness (cf. NIV “prosperity”; NCV “success”). The proverb is similar to Matt 5:6, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.”

\(^25\) tn Heb “the wise [one/man].”

\(^26\) sn The Qal perfect tense of עָלָה (’alah) functions in a potential nuance. Wisdom can be more effectual than physical strength.

\(^27\) sn In a war the victory is credited not so much to the infantry as to the tactician who plans the attack. Brilliant strat egy wins wars, even over apparently insuperable odds (e.g., Prov 24:5-6; Ecclesiastes 9:13:16; 2 Cor 10:4).

\(^28\) sn Heb “and bring down the strength of its confidence.” The word “strength” is a metonymy of adjunct, referring to the place of strength, i.e., “the stronghold.” “Confidence” is a gen-
21:23 The one who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps his life.2 from troubles.3
21:24 A proud4 and arrogant5 person, whose name is “Scoffer,”6 acts7 with overbearing pride.8
21:25 What the sluggard desires9 will kill him,10 for his hands11 refuse to work.
21:26 All day long he craves greedily,12 but the righteous gives and does not hold back.13

14 tn Heb “the sacrifice of the wicked” (so KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV). This is a subjective genitive. The foundational clause states that ritual acts of worship brought by the wicked (thus a subjective genitive) are detestable to God. The “wicked” refers here to people who are not members of the covenant (no faith) and are not following after righteousness (no acceptable works). But often they participate in sanctuary ritual, which amounts to hypocrisy.
15 tn This rhetorical device shows that if the act is abomination, the wicked heart is an even greater sin. It argues from the lesser to the greater.
16 tn The noun כָּפָנָה (zimunah) means “plan; device; wickedness”; here it indicates that the person is coming to the ritual with one’s ability to act. Some commentaries suggest that this would mean he comes with the sacrifice as a bribe to pacify his conscience for a crime committed, over which he has little remorse or intent to cease (cf. NLT “with ulterior motives”). In this view, people in ancient Israel came to think that sacrifices could be given for any reason without genuine submission to God.
17 tn Heb “a witness of lies,” an attributive genitive.
18 tn The Hebrew verb translated “will perish” (יָמַא, yoʿbed) could mean that the false witness will die, either by the hand of God or by the community. But it also could be taken in the sense that the false testimony will be destroyed. This would mean that “false witness” would be a metonymy of cause – what he says will perish (cf. NCV “will be forgotten”).
19 tn Heb “but a man who listens speaks forever.” The first part of it means (2) a true witness, one who reports what he actually hears. But it may also refer to (2) someone who listens to the false testimony given by the false witness. The NIV follows the suggestion of a homonym for the Hebrew word with the meaning “will perish/be destroyed”: “will be destroyed forever.” This suggests a synonymous pair of ideas rather than a contrast. Others accept antithetical parallelism. C. H. Toy suggested an idea like “be established” to contrast with “will perish” (Proverbs [ICC], 411). W. McKane suggested it meant the truthful witness “will speak to the end” without being put down (Proverbs [OLT], 556). It is simpler to interpret the words that are here in the sense of a contrast. The idea of speaking forever/to the end would then be hyperbolic.
20 tn Heb “a wicked man.”
21 tn Heb “he hardens his face.” To make the face firm or hard means to show boldness (BDB 738 s.v. פֶּתַח Hiph); cf. NRSV “put on a bold face.”
22 tn The “upright” is an independent nominative absolute; the pronoun becomes the formal (emphatic) subject of the verb.
23 tc The Kethib is the imperfect of גָּנֶה (kan), “he establishs.” This reading has the support of the Arabic, Latin, and Ig. Prov 21:29, and is followed by ASV. The Qere is the imperfect tense of בָּנָה (bin), “he understands; he discerns.” It has the support of the LXX and is followed by NIV, NCV, NRSL, NLT. The difficulty is that both make good sense in the passage and both have support. The contrast is between the wicked who shows a bold face (reflecting a hardened heart) and the upright who either gives thought to his ways (or solidifies his ways). The sense of the Qere may form a slightly better contrast, one between the outer appearance of boldness and the inner discernment of action.

24 tn sn “Mouth” and “tongue” are metonymies of cause, signifying what one says (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV).
25 tn This part could also be translated “keeps himself” (so NIV), for פָּשַׂע (fluff) often simply means “the whole person.” The participle ישמר (shomer) is repeated from the first line in the parallelism – to guard what is said is to guard against difficulty.
26 tn The “troubles” (חַיִּים, barot) here could refer to social and legal difficulties into which careless talk might bring someone (e.g., 13:3; 19:21). The word means “a straight, a bind, difficulty.” Careless and free talking could get the person into a tight spot.
27 tn The word פָּרַע (zad) “pride” is retained in the translation because it is often the symbol to express one’s ability of action.
28 tn sn The verb באָרַע (zadon) “overflow” is; the proud deal in an overflow of pride. Cf. NIV “the overflow of insolence.” The genitive specifies what the overflow is.
29 sn The word יָהִיר (yahir) means “overweening pride”; NLT “boundless arrogance.”
30 tn The word יָנְאָה (yanea) “scoffing” is repeated from the first line in the parallelism.
31 sn The portrait in this proverb is not merely of one who is outward appearance of boldness and the contrast, one between the outer appearance of boldness and the inner discernment of action.
32 tn tn “Hands” is figurative for the whole person, but “hands” is retained in the translation because it is often the symbol to express one’s ability of action.
33 tn The construction uses the Hitpael perfect tense רָכָּב (hit’avaḥ) followed by the cognate accusative רָכָּב (‘avah). It describes one who is consumed with craving for more. The verse has been placed with the preceding because of the literary connection with “desire/craving.”
34 tn The additional clause, “and does not hold back,” emphasizes that when the righteous gives he gives freely, without fearing that his generosity will bring him to poverty. This is the contrast with the one who is self-indulgent and craves for more.
There is no wisdom and there is no understanding, and there is no counsel against the Lord.  
A horse is prepared for the day of battle, but the victory is from the Lord.  
A good name is to be chosen rather than great wealth, good favor more than silver or gold.  
The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the Creator of them both.  
a shrewd person sees danger and hides himself, but the naive keep right on going and suffer for it.  

The reward for humility and fearing the Lord is riches and honor and life.  
The Hebrew term נאום (eqev, "reward") is related to the term meaning "heel"; it refers to the consequences the reward that follows (akin to the English expression "on the heels of").  
Humility is used here in the religious sense of "piety"; it is appropriately joined with "the fear of the Lord." Some commentators, however, make "the fear of the Lord" the first in the series of rewards for humility, but that arrangement is less likely.  
The verse uses a single sentence to state that all wisdom, understanding, and advice must be in conformity to the will of God (J. H. Greenstone, Proverbs, 232).  

The noun can refer to a broad range of ages (see BDB 654-55 s.v.; infant (Exod 2:6), weaned child (1 Sam 1:25), youth (Ps 9:9; 23:3), young man (Ps 127:1), and mature age (Gen 31:31). The related adjective לֶחֶם (lechem) means "to learn; to make experienced" (HALOT 334 s.v.), used in the related cognate languages.  

The verb הָנּוּ (hano) means "to train up; to dedicate" (BDB 335 s.v.; HALOT 334 s.v. נְנוּ). The verb is used elsewhere to refer to dedicating a house (Deut 20:5; 1 Kgs 8:63; 2 Chr 7:5). The related noun נֶנֶם (naneem) means "dedication; consecration" (HALOT 335 s.v.; Lev 7:5). The related noun נֶנֶמָּה (naneema) is used in reference to the dedication or consecration of an offering (Num 7:10; 31:1; 1 Chr 29:7), the wall of the temple (Neh 12:27). The related adjective נִנְנָה (naneha) describes "trained, tried, experienced" men (BDB 335 s.v.; Gen 14:14). In the related cognate languages the verb has similar meanings: Arabic "to train," Ethiopian "to initiate," and Aramaic IV "to learn; to make experienced" (HALOT 334 s.v.). This proverb pictures a child who is dedicated by parents to the Lord and morally trained to follow him. On the other hand, a popular expositional approach suggests that it means "to motivate." This view is based on a cognate Arabic root ل (among many other things) refers to the practice of rubbing the palate of a newborn child with date juice or olive oil to motivate the child to suck. While this makes an interesting sermon illustration, it is highly unlikely that this concept was behind this Hebrew verb. The Arabic meaning is late and secondary – the Arabic term did not have this meaning until nearly a millennium after this proverb was written.

The word נָעַשׁ (naash) is traditionally translated "child" here (so almost all English versions), but might mean "youth." The noun can refer to a broad range of ages (see BDB 654-55 s.v.; HALOT 707 s.v.; youth (Exod 2:2), weaned child (1 Sam 2:18), young child (Jer 1:6), freeborn (Gen 22:12), adolescent (Gen 37:2), or young man of marriageable age (Gen 31:14-19). The context focuses on the child's young, formative years. The Tal mud says this would be up to the age of twenty-four.
should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.\(^2\)

22:7 The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.\(^2\)

22:8 The one who sows iniquity will reap trouble, and the rod of his fury will end.\(^2\)

22:9 A generous person will be blessed,\(^8\) for he gives some of his food to the poor.\(^9\)

22:10 Drive out the scorner, and contention will leave; strife and insults will cease.\(^11\)

22:11 The one who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious\(^3\) will be his friend.\(^14\)

22:12 The eyes of the Lord protect knowledge,\(^16\) but he overthrows the words of the faithless person.\(^17\)

22:13 The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside! for he gives some of his food to the poor.

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\(^2\) tn The expression in Hebrew is מְלַאכָה מְלַאכָה (mal-"pt darko), which can be rendered “according to his way”; NEB “Start a boy on the right road.” The expression “his way” is “the way he should go”; it reflects the point the book of Proverbs is making that there is a standard of life to which he must attain. Saaadia, a Jewish scholar who lived a.d. 882-942, first suggested that this could mean the child should be trained according to his inclination or bent of mind. This may have some merit in practice, but it is not likely what the proverb had in mind. In the book of Proverbs there are only two ways that a person can go, the way of the wise or righteousness, and the way of the fool. One takes training, and the other does not.Ralbag, in fact, offered a satirical interpretation: “Train a child according to his evil inclinations (let him have his will) and he will continue in his evil way throughout life” (J. H. Greenstone, Proverbs, 213). However, this is forced.

\(^3\) sn This proverb, written in loose synonymous parallelism, instructs that the scorner should be removed because he causes strife. The “scorner” is ἐγνώκειτο (egnòkeito), the one the book of Proverbs says cannot be changed with discipline or correction, but despises and disrupts anything that is morally or socially constructive.

\(^4\) tc The LXX freely adds “when he sits in council (ἐν συνεδρίῳ, en sunedriw), he insults everyone.” The MT does not suggest that the setting is in a court of law; so the LXX addition is highly unlikely.

\(^5\) sn The “heart” is a metonymy of subject; it represents the intentions and choices that are made. “Pure of heart” uses “heart” as a genitive of specification. The expression refers to someone who has honest and clear intentions.

\(^6\) sn This individual is gracious or kind in what he says; thus the verse is commending honest intentions and gracious words.

\(^7\) tn The syntax of the line is somewhat difficult, because “grace of his lips” seems to be intruding on the point of the verse with little explanation. Therefore the LXX rendered it “The Lord loves the pure in heart; all who are blameless in their ways are acceptable to him.” This has very little correspondence with the Hebrew; nevertheless commentators attempt to reconstruct the verse using it, and the NAB follows the first clause of the LXX here. Some have suggested taking “king” as the subject of the whole verse (“the king loves...”), but this is forced.

\(^8\) sn The Lord in safeguarding true knowledge is an anthropomorphic expression; the omniscience of God is the intended meaning. When Scripture uses the “eyes” of the Lord, it usually means evaluation, superintending, or safeguarding.

\(^9\) sn There is a slight difficulty in that the abstract noun “knowledge” is used nowhere else in the book of Proverbs with the word “watch.” C. H. Toy (Proverbs [ICC], 418) wants to make a major change in the meaning: “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,” but there is no support for this and it reduces the line to a common idea. D. W. Thomas suggests changing the word “knowledge” to “lawsuit” based on an Arabic cognate (“A Note on יָדַע in Proverbs 22:12,” JTS 14 [1963]: 93-94).

\(^10\) sn The “eyes of the Lord” is an anthropomorphic expression; the omniscience of God is the intended meaning. When Scripture uses the “eyes” of the Lord, it usually means evaluation, superintending, or safeguarding.

\(^11\) tn There is a small difficulty in that the abstract noun “knowledge” is used nowhere else in the book of Proverbs with the word “watch.” C. H. Toy (Proverbs [ICC], 418) wants to make a major change in the meaning: “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,” but there is no support for this and it reduces the line to a common idea. D. W. Thomas suggests changing the word “knowledge” to “lawsuit” based on an Arabic cognate (“A Note on יָדַע in Proverbs 22:12,” JTS 14 [1963]: 93-94).

\(^12\) tn The object of the verb is the “words of the traitor (יֵדִיב, adive vogel);” cf. NASB “the words of the treacherous man.” What treacherous people say is treachery. In this context “traitor” refers to one who is “unfaithful” (cf. NIV). The proverb affirms that God in safeguarding true knowledge will frustrate deception from faithless people – what they say will not have its intended effect.

\(^13\) tn The proverb humorously describes the sluggard as making ridiculous excuses for not working – he might be eaten by a lion (e.g., 26:13). It is possible that “lion” is figurative, intended to represent someone who is like a lion, but this detracts from the humor of the exaggeration.
The Sayings of the Wise*

22:17 Incline your ear* and listen to the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my instruction. 13
22:18 For it is pleasing if you keep these sayings within you, and they are ready on your lips. 17
22:19 So that your confidence may be in the LORD, I am making them known to you today – even you.
22:20 Have I not written thirty sayings for you, sayings of counsel and knowledge, 21:21 to show you true and reliable words, 22 so that you may give accurate answers to those who sent you?
22:22 Do not exploit a poor person because he is poor; do not honor a man because he is mighty.

22:14 The mouth* of an adulteress is like a deep pit; the one against whom the LORD is angry will fall into it. 6
22:15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.
22:16 The one who oppresses the poor to increase his own gain and the one who gives to the rich – both end up only in poverty.

The term “sayings” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but the collection is referred to by the LXX as “the words of the wise” (.rf, Larat). The introduction is followed by thirty precepts of the sages in 22:17–24:22). Verses 17–21 form the introduction, and then the sayings begin in v. 22. After the thirty sayings are given, there are further sayings in 24:23–34. There is much literature on this material: see W. K. Simpson, ed., Literature of Ancient Egypt; ANET 412-425; and A. Cody, “Notes on Proverbs 22:21 and 22:23b,” Bib 61 (1980): 418-26.

1 sn A new collection of sayings begins here, forming the fourth section of the book of Proverbs. This collection is not like that of 1:1–9:18; here the introductory material is more personal than 1:1-7, and the style differs, showing great similarity to the Instruction of Amenemope in Egypt (especially the thirty precepts of the sages in 22:17–24:22). Verses 17-21 form the introduction, and then the sayings begin in v. 22.

2 sn Or “when” (so NIV).

3 sn Heb “knowledge” (so KJV, NASB); in this context it refers to the knowledge that is spoken by the wise, hence “instruction.”

4 sn Heb “the one who is cursed by the LORD” (cf. NASB). The construction uses the passive participle in construct with Yahweh. The “LORD” is genitive of agency after the passive form. The verb means “be indignant, express indignation.” So it is talking about one against whom the LORD is angry.

5 sn Heb “he will fall there.” The “falling” could refer to the curse itself or to the result of the curse.

6 sn The proverbs is saying that the Lord will use the seductive, deceptive words of the adulteress to bring about the downfall of one who is inclined to such folly.

7 sn The passive participle is figurative (implied comparison with “binding”); it means that folly forms part of a child’s nature (J. H. Greenstone, Proverbs, 238).

8 tn The “heart of a child” (לֶב־נָעַר, lev-na’ar) refers here to the natural inclination of a child to foolishness. The younger child is meant in this context, but the word can include youth. R. N. Whybray suggests that this idea might be described as a doctrine of “original folly” (Proverbs [CBC], 125). Cf. TEV “Children just naturally do silly, careless things.”

9 sn The word “rod” is a metonymy of adjunct; it represents physical chastening for direction or punishment, to suppress folly and develop potential. The genitive (“discipline”) may be taken as an attributive genitive (“a chastening rod”) or an objective genitive, “(a rod = punishment) that brings about correction/discipline.”

10 sn Heb “oppressing the poor, it is gain; giving to the rich, it is loss.” The Hebrew is cryptic, but two sins are mentioned here that will be punished by poverty: extortion and bribery. Perhaps the proverb is simply saying it is easy to oppress the poor for gain, but it is a waste of money to try to buy or bribe a patron (D. Kidner, Proverbs [TOTC], 149).
cause he is poor and do not crush the needy in court. 22:23 For the Lord will plead their case and will rob those who are robbing them.

22:24 Do not make friends with an angry person, and do not associate with a wrathful person, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare. 22:25 If you do not have enough to pay, your bed will be taken right out from under you! 22:26 Do not move an ancient boundary stone which was put in place by your ancestors, as it is the Lord’s.

22:29 Do you see a person skilled in his work? He will take his position before kings; he will not take his position before obscure people. 23:1 When you sit down to eat with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you, 23:2 and put a knife to your throat if you possess a large appetite. 23:3 Do not crave that ruler’s delicacies, for that food is deceptive. 23:4 Do not wear yourself out to become rich; be wise enough to restrain yourself. 23:5 When you gaze upon riches, they are gone, for they surely make wings for themselves, as is the case with your teacher’s child. 23:16 The fourth saying deals with respect for property that belongs to other people (cf. Instruction of Amenemope, chap. 6, 7:2-13 [ANET 422]).

23:21 The word translated “skilled” is general enough to apply to any crafts, but it may refer to a scribe or an official (R. N. Whybray, Proverbs [CBC], 134). 23:23 The verb form used twice here is הכסוי (hatsa‘), the Hitpael imperfect of כסהו (tutsa‘), which means “to set or station oneself; to take one’s stand” in this stem. With the form יתאמר (yit‘amar), it means “to present oneself before” someone; so here it has the idea of serving as a courtier in the presence of a king.

23:24 The fifth saying affirms that true skill earns recognition and advancement (cf. Instruction of Amenemope, chap. 30, 27:16-17 [ANET 424]).

23:26 The construction uses the imperfect tense of the infinitive absolute to emphasize the careful discernment required on such occasions. Cf. NIV “note well”; NLT “pay attention.”

23:27 Or “who,” referring to the ruler (so ASV, NAB, TEV).

23:28 The expression “put a knife to your throat” is an idiom that means “curb your appetite” or “control yourself” (cf. TEV). The instruction was from a time when people dealt with all-powerful tyrants. To enter the presence of such a person and indulge one’s appetites would be to take a very high risk.

23:29 When you sit down to eat with a person skilled in his work, do you see a person skilled in his work? He will take his position before kings; he will not take his position before obscure people.

23:30 The line gives the causal clause: The impressive feast is not what it appears to be; the king is not doing you a favor, but rather wants something from you or is observing you (K&D 17:140); cf. TEV “he may be trying to trick you.”

23:31 Verses 1-3 form the sixth saying about being cautious before rulers (cf. Instruction of Amenemope, chap. 23, 23:13-18). One should not get too familiar with rulers, for they always have ulterior motives. The Mishnah cites Gamaliel as always having ulterior motives. The Mishnah cites Gamaliel as always having ulterior motives. The Mishnah cites Gamaliel as always having ulterior motives. The Mishnah cites Gamaliel as always having ulterior motives.

23:32 The instruction is a warning that a ruler only draws someone into his court for his own purpose, but in their day of trouble he will not be there to help them (m. Abot 3:3). 23:33 Moving from your understanding cease.” In the context this means that the person should have enough understanding to stop wearing himself out trying to be rich (cf. NRSV “be wise enough to desist”). 23:34 The Kethib is המחשלו (huta‘i), “do your eyes fly [light] on it? The Qere is the Hiphil, המחסל (hita‘i) “do you cause your eyes to fly on it?” But the line is difficult. The question may be indirect: if you cast your eyes on it, it is gone — when you think you are close, it slips away.

23:35 The term “riches” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation based on the previous verse.
23:6 Do not eat the food of a stingy person, 3 do not crave his delicacies; 4 for he is like someone calculating the cost in his mind. 5 “Eat and drink,” he says to you, but his heart is not with you; 6 you will vomit up the little bit you have eaten, and will have wasted your pleasant words. 7 Do not speak in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words. 8 Do not move an ancient boundary stone, or take over the fields of the fatherless, 9 for their Protector is strong; he will plead their case against you. 10 Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to the words of knowledge. 11 Do not withhold discipline from a child; even if you strike him with the rod, he will not die. 12 If you strike him, you will deliver him from death. 13 My child, if your heart is wise, then my heart also will be glad; my soul will rejoice when your lips speak what is right. 14 Do not let your heart envy sinners, but rather be zealous in fearing the Lord all the time. 15 For surely there is a future; the Plan of the Lord is always successful.

1 sn This seventh saying warns people not to expend all their energy trying to get rich because riches are fleeting (cf. Instruction of Amememope, chap. 7, 9:10-11 which says, “they have made themselves wings like geese and have flown away to heaven”). In the ancient world the symbol of birds flying away signified fleeting wealth. 2 tn Heb “an evil eye.” This is the opposite of the “good eye” which meant the generous man. The “evil eye” refers to a person who is out to get everything for himself (cf. NASB, NCV, CEV “selfish”). It is ill-mannered and inhospitable (e.g., Prov 28:22). He is up to no good – even though he may appear to be a host. 3 tn The line is difficult; it appears to mean that the miser is the kind of person who has calculated the cost of everything in his mind as he offers the food. The LXX has: “Eating and drinking with him as if one should swallow a hair; do not introduce him to your company nor eat bread with him.” The Hebrew verb “to calculate” (šârû , šutâr) with a change of vocalization and of sibilant would yield “hair” (šûrû, šarâr) – “like a hair in the throat [šûlû, nefsût], so is he.” This would picture an irritating experience. The Instruction of Amememope uses “blocking the throat” in a similar saying (chap. 11, 14:7 [ANET 423]). The suggested change is plausible and is followed by NRSV, but the rare verb “to calculate” in the MT would be easier to defend on the basis of the canons of textual criticism because it is the more difficult reading. 4 sn In the phrase “the cost” does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied by the verb; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity. 5 tn Heb “soul.” 6 sn Eating and drinking with a selfish miser would be irritating and disgusting. The line is hyperbolic; the whole experience turns the stomach. 7 tn Or “your compliments” (so NASB, NIV); cf. TEV “your flattery.” 8 sn This is the eighth saying; it claims that it would be a mistake to accept hospitality from a stingy person. He is always thinking about the cost, his heart is not in it, and any attempt at pleasant conversation will be lost. 9 sn The mention of “the ears” emphasizes the concerted effort to get the person’s undivided attention. However, a fool rejects instruction and discipline. 10 sn Saying number nine indicates that wisdom is wasted on a fool. The literature of Egypt has no specific parallel to this one. 11 sn Or “encroach on” (NIV, NRSV); Heb “go into.” 12 tn The participle ḥāq (go‘el) describes a “kinsman redeemer.” Some English versions explicitly cite “God” (e.g., NCV, CEV) or “the Lord” (e.g. TEV). The Hebrew text describes a “kinsman-redeemer.” That individual would be a rich or powerful relative who can protect the family; he does this by paying off the debts of a poor relative, buying up the property of a relative who sells himself into slavery, marrying the widow of a deceased relative to keep the inheritance in the family, or taking vengeance on someone who harms a relative, that vengeance often resulting in delivering (“redeeming”) the relative from bondage. If there was no human “kinsman redeemer,” then the defenseless had to rely on God to perform these actions (e.g., Gen 46:18; Exod 6:6; Job 19:25; Isa 41–63). In the prophetic literature God is presented as the Redeemer in that he takes vengeance on the enemies (the Babylonians) to deliver his people (kin). In this proverb the Lord is probably the Protector of these people who will champion their cause and set things right. 13 sn This is the tenth saying; once again there is a warning not to encroach on other people’s rights and property, especially the defenseless (see v. 10; 22:22-23, 28). 14 sn Or “punish” (NIV). The syntax of these two lines suggests a conditional clause (cf. NCV, NRSV). 15 tn Heb “his soul.” The term ṣefār (nefesh , “soul”) functions as a synecdoche of part (= soul) for the whole (= person); see BDB 660 s.v. 4. 16 tn The term נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh) “end” (so KJV); ASV “a reward.” 17 sn This is strong; he will plead their case against you. 18 sn Or “punish” (NIV). The syntax of these two lines suggests a conditional clause (cf. NCV, NRSV). 19 tn Heb “his soul.” 20 sn This is the tenth saying; once again there is a warning not to encroach on other people’s rights and property, especially the defenseless (see v. 10; 22:22-23, 28). 21 sn This twelfth saying simply observes that children bring joy to their parents when they demonstrate wisdom. The quatrains is arranged in a chiastic structure (A:B:B’:A’): The first line (A) speaks of wisdom in the child, and it is paired with the last line (A’) which speaks of the child’s saying what is right. In between these brackets are two lines (B and B’) concerning joy to the parent. 22 sn The verb in this line is נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh); the Piel jussive negated. The verb means “to be jealous, to be zealous;” it describes passionate intensity for something. In English, if the object is illegitimate, it is called “envy”; if it is correct, it is called “zeal.” Here the warning is not to envy the sinners. The second colon could use the verb in the positive sense to mean “but rather let your passion burn for the fear of the Lord.”
and your hope will not be cut off.  
23:19 Listen, my child, and be wise, and guide your heart on the right way.  
23:20 Do not spend time among drunkards, among those who eat too much meat, because drunkards and gluttons become impoverished, and drowsiness clothes them with rags.  
23:21 Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.  
23:22 Acquire truth and do not sell it – wisdom, discipline, and understanding.  
23:23 The father of a righteous person will rejoice greatly; whoever fathers a wise child will have joy in him.  
23:25 May your father and your mother have joy; may she who bore you rejoice.  

23:26 Give me your heart, my son; and let your eyes observe my ways;  
23:27 for a prostitute is like a deep pit; a harlot is like a narrow well.  
23:28 Indeed, she lies in wait like a robber, and increases the unfaithful among men.  
23:29 Who has woes? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints?

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1 sn The saying is an understatement; far from being cut off, the “hope” will be realized in the end. So this saying, the thirteenth, advises people to be zealous for the fear of the Lord, their religion, rather than for anything that sinners have to offer.  
2 tn Heb “my son,” but the immediate context does not limit this to male children.  
3 sn The verb °הָיִן (e-yayin) means “to be light; to be worthless; to make light of.” Making light of something came to mean “to deride.” W. G. Plaut notes that excessive drinking and eating are usually associated with the lack of discipline. In the Mishnah they are used to mean associations. Drunkenness and gluttony represent the epitome of the lack of discipline, in the Mishnah they are used to measure a stubborn and rebellious son (m. Sanhedrin 8). W. G. Plaut notes that excessive drinking and eating are usually symptoms of deeper problems; we usually focus more on the drinking because it is dangerous to others (Proverbs, 241–42).  
4 sn This is the fourteenth saying, warning about poor associations. Drunkenness and gluttony represent the epitome of the lack of discipline. In the Mishnah they are used to measure a stubborn and rebellious son (m. Sanhedrin 8). W. G. Plaut notes that excessive drinking and eating are usually symptoms of deeper problems; we usually focus more on the drinking because it is dangerous to others (Proverbs, 241–42).  
5 sn The verb °כֵּלֵל (zulal) means “to be light; to be worthless; to make light of.” Making light of something came to mean “to deride.” W. G. Plaut notes that excessive drinking and eating are usually associated with the lack of discipline. In the Mishnah they are used to mean associations. Drunkenness and gluttony represent the epitome of the lack of discipline, in the Mishnah they are used to measure a stubborn and rebellious son (m. Sanhedrin 8). W. G. Plaut notes that excessive drinking and eating are usually symptoms of deeper problems; we usually focus more on the drinking because it is dangerous to others (Proverbs, 241–42).  
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7 sn Verses 26-28 comprise the seventeenth saying; it warns the young person to follow the instructions about temptations because there are plenty of temptresses lurking about.  
8 sn The sixteenth saying is an instruction to buy/acquire the kind of life that pleases God and brings joy to parents. “Getting truth” would mean getting training in the truth, and getting wisdom and understanding would mean developing the perception and practical knowledge of the truth.  
9 sn The Qere reading has the imperfect °כָּל (yagil) with the cognate accusative °לָכָה (lakha) which intensifies the meaning and the specific future of this verb.  
10 sn The term “child” is supplied for the masculine singular adjective here.  
11 tn The form °יַסָּמַק (yismakh) is clearly a short form and therefore a jussive (“may she...rejoice”); if this second verb is a jussive, then the parallel °יָגִיל (yagil) should be a jussive also (“may your father and your mother have joy”).
Who has wounds without cause? Who has dullness of the eyes? 23:30 Those who linger over wine, those who go looking for mixed wine. 23:31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly. 23:32 Afterward it bites like a snake, and stings like a viper. 23:33 Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will speak perverse things. 23:34 And you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, and like one who lies down on the top of the rigging. 23:35 You will say, "They have struck me, but I am not harmed! They beat me, but I did not know it. When will I awake? I will look for another drink." 24:1 Do not envy evil people, do not desire to be with them; 24:2 for their hearts contemplate violence, and their lips speak harm.

1 sn The Hebrew word translated “dullness” describes darkness or dullness of the eyes due to intoxication, perhaps “redness” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV); NIV, NCV, NLT “bloodshot eyes,” NAB understands the situation differently: “black eyes.” 2 sn The answer to the question posed in v. 29 is obviously one who drinks too much, which this verse uses metonyms to point out. Lingering over wine is an adjunct of drinking one who drinks too much, which this verse uses metonyms to point out. Lingering over wine is an adjunct of drinking more wine; and seeking mixed wine obviously means with the effect or the purpose of drinking it. 3 tn Heb “its eyes.” With CEV’s “bubbling up in the glass” one might think champagne was in view. 4 tn The expression is difficult, and is suspected of having been added from Song 7:10, although the parallel is not exact. The verb is the Hitpael imperfect of זָר (zar; balakkh); and the prepositional phrase uses the word “upright; equity; pleasing,” from יָשָׂר (yashar). KJV has “when it moveth itself aright;” much more helpful is ASV: “when it goeth down smoothly.” Most recent English versions are similar to ASV. The phrase obviously refers to the pleasing nature of wine. 5 tn Heb “its end”; NASB “At the last”; TEV (interactively) “The next morning.” 6 tn The feminine plural of זָר (zar, “strange things”) refers to the trouble one has in seeing and speaking when drunk. 7 tn Heb “heart.” The idiom here means “middle”; KJV “in the midst.” 8 sn The point of these similes is to compare being drunk with being seashocked. One who tries to sleep when at sea, or even worse, when up on the ropes of the mast, will be tossed back and forth. 9 tn The phrase “You will say” is supplied in the translation to make it clear that the drunkard is now speaking. 10 sn The line describes how one who is intoxicated does not feel the pain, even though beaten by others. He does not even remember it. 11 tn The last line has only “I will add I will seek it again.” The use of מָאָס (mas) signals a verbal hiendaiday with the next verb: “I will again seek it.” In this context the suffix on the verb refers to the wine – the drunkard wants to go and get another drink. 12 tn Heb “evil men,” although the context indicates a generic sense. 13 tn The Hitpael jussive is from the verb that means “to crave; to desire.” This is more of a coveting, an intense desire. 14 sn This nineteenth saying warns against evil associa-

tions. Evil people are obsessed with destruction and trouble. See on this theme 1:10-19; 3:31 and 23:17. D. Kidner observes that a close view of sinners is often a good antidote to envying them (Proverbs [TOTC], 153). 15 tn The preposition פָּה (pah, “by; through”) in these two lines indicates means. 16 sn The twentieth saying, vv. 3-4, concerns the use of wisdom for domestic enterprises. In Prov 9:1 wisdom was personified as a woman who builds a house, but here the emphasis is primarily on the building – it is a sign of security and prosperity (C. H. Toy, Proverbs [ICC], 4:42). One could still make a secondary application from this line for a household or “family” (cf. NCV, which sees this as a reference to the family. 17 sn The twenty-first saying seems to be concerned with the need for wisdom in warfare. In line with that, the word used here is יֶרָשׁ (yars), “mighty man; hero; warrior.” 18 tn The expression יְרוּם (yrm) employs a beth esseentiae, meaning he “is strong,” not “in strength.” 19 sn The point of the saying is that wise counsel is necessary in war. Victory, strategy, and counsel are more important than mere military strength – many great armies have been destroyed because of their unwise leaders. See on this theme 11:14; 20:18; and 21:22. 20 tc The MT reads יְרָשׁ (yrmot, “corals”) – wisdom to the fool is corals, i.e., an unattainable treasure. With a slight change in the text, removing the נ (alef), the reading is יַרְמוּת (yarmut, “high”), i.e., wisdom is too high – unattainable – for a fool. The internal evidence favors the emendation, which is followed by most English versions including KJV. 21 tn Heb “[city] gate,” a metonymy of subject, meaning what goes on in the gate – court cases and business transactions. So it is in these assemblies that the fool keeps quiet. The term “court” has been used in the translation for clarity. Some English versions do not emphasize the forensic connotation here: NCV “in a discussion”; NLT “When the leaders gather.” 22 sn The verse portrays a fool out of his element: In a serious moment in the gathering of the community, he does not even open his mouth (a metonymy of cause, meaning “speak”). Wisdom is too high for the fool – it is beyond his ability. 23 tn Heb “possessor of schemes”; NAB “an intriguer.” The picture of the wise person is graphic: He devises plans to do evil and is known as a schemer. Elsewhere the “schemes” are outrageous and lewd (e.g., Lev 18:7; Judg 20:6). Here the description portrays him as a cold, calculating, active person: “the fool is capable of intense mental activity but it adds up to sin” (W. McKane, Proverbs [OTT], 399). 24 tn Heb “the scheme of folly” (NIV similar). The genitive functions as an attributive genitive, meaning “foolish scheme.” But it could also be interpreted as a genitive of source, the scheme that comes from folly (or from the fool if “folly” were metonymical).
and the scorners are an abomination to people.\(^1\)

24:10 If you faint\(^2\) in the day of trouble,\(^3\)
your strength is small!\(^4\)

24:11 Deliver those being taken away to death,
and hold back those slipping to the slaughter.\(^5\)

24:12 If you say, “But we did not know about this,”
does not the one who evaluates\(^6\) hearts consider?
Does not the one who guards your life know?
Will he not repay each person according to his deeds?\(^7\)

24:13 Eat honey,\(^8\) my child, for it is good,
and honey from the honeycomb is sweet
to your taste.

24:14 Likewise, know\(^9\) that wisdom is sweet\(^10\) to your soul;
if you find it,\(^11\) you will have a future.\(^12\)

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\(^1\) In Hebrew “to a man”; cf. CEV “Everyone hates senseless fools.”

\(^2\) This describes evil people who flout all morality and goodness; sooner or later the public will have had enough of them.

\(^3\) In the causative stems it means “to let slacken; to let go; to refrain; to fail; to do nothing.” In the Hitpael stem BDB 952 s.v. defines it as “to show yourself slack.” It has also been rendered as “give up” (NCV, CEV); “fail” (NLT); “falter” (NIV). The colon implies a condition, “if you find it, you will have a future.”

\(^4\) The warning is against a deliberate, planned assault on their places of dwelling.

\(^5\) The verse completes the saying by affirming that people will rise up (or, will get up).

\(^6\) The idea of “slipping” (participle from נָשָׁא, mot) has troubled some commentators. G. R. Driver emends it to read “at the point of” (“Problems in Proverbs,” ZAW 50 [1932]: 146). But the MT as it stands makes good sense. The refer-

\(^7\) The idea of “slipping” (participle from נָשָׁא, mot) has troubled some commentators. G. R. Driver emends it to read

\(^8\) “after-part, end”). BDB 31 s.v. b says in a passage like this it means “a future,” i.e., a happy close of life, sometimes suggesting the idea of posternity promised to the righteous, often parallel to “hope.”

\(^9\) The word “wicked” could be taken as a vocative (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB, “O wicked man!”), but since the next line refers to the wicked this is unlikely. It serves better as an adversarial accusative (“like the wicked”).

\(^10\) The saying warns that it is futile and self-defeating to mistreat God’s people, for they survive – the wicked do not. The warning is against a deliberate, planned assault on their places of dwelling.

\(^11\) The clause beginning with נָשָׁא (kî) could be interpreted as causal or conditional, but in view of the significance of the next clause it seems better to take it as a concessive clause (“although”). Its verb then receives a modal nuance of possi-

\(^12\) The second qualified by “your heart” as the subject, signifying the heart of people (e.g., Lev 19:17-18). His judgment is not to be taken lightly, or personalized as a victory. If that were to happen, then the Lord might take pity on the enemies in their calamity, for he champions the downtrodden and defeat-

\(^13\) God holds people responsible for rescuing those who are in mortal danger. The use of “death” and “slaughter” seems rather strong in the passage, but they have been used before in the book for the destruction that comes through evil.

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\(^16\) The verse employs a paronomasia to underscore the point: “trouble” is צַר (tsarah), literally “a bind; a strait [or, narrow place];” “small” is צָר (tsar), with the same idea of “narrow” or “close.”

\(^17\) The test of strength is adversity, for it reveals how strong a person is. Of course a weak person can always plead adverse conditions in order to quit. This is the twenty-fourth saying.

\(^18\) The saying warns that it is futile and self-defeating to mistreat God’s people, for they survive – the wicked do not. The warning is against a deliberate, planned assault on their places of dwelling.

\(^19\) The second qualified by “your heart” as the subject, signifying the heart of people (e.g., Lev 19:17-18). His judgment is not to be taken lightly, or personalized as a victory. If that were to happen, then the Lord might take pity on the enemies in their calamity, for he champions the downtrodden and defeat-

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Further Sayings of the Wise

24:23 These sayings also are from the wise:
  To show partiality6 in judgment is terrible:7
  24:24 The one who says to the guilty,8 “You are innocent,”9 peoples will curse him, and nations will denounce10 him.
  24:25 But there will be delight11 for those

1 tn Heb “my son,” but there is no indication in the immediate context that this should be limited only to male children.
2 tn Heb “do not get mixed up with”; cf. TEV “Have nothing to do with”; NIV “do not join with.” The verb תָּרֹע (tā’āru) is used elsewhere meaning “to exchange; to take on pledge.” In the Hitpael stem it means “to have fellowship; to share; to associate with.” Some English versions (e.g., KJV) interpret as “to meddle” in this context, because “to have fellowship” is certainly not what is meant.
3 tn The form rendered “rebels” is difficult; it appears to be the Qal active participle, plural, from שָׁנָה (shanah), “to change” – “those who change.” The RV might have thought of the idea of “change” when they rendered it “political agitators.” The Syriac and Tg. Prov 24:21, have “fools,” the Latin has “detractors,” and the LXX reads, “do not disobey either of them,” referring to God and the king in the first line. Accordingly the ruin predicted in the next line would be the ruin that God and the king can inflict. If the idea of “changers” is retained, it would have to mean people who at one time feared God and the king but no longer do.
4 tn Heb “will rue” (so NASB).
5 tn Heb “the ruin of the two of them.” Judgment is sent on the rebels both by God and the king. The term פָּד (pad, “ruin; disaster”) is a metonymy of effect, the cause being the sentence of judgment (= “ruinous judgment” in the translation; cf. NLT “punishment”). The word “two of them” is a subjective genitive – they two bring the disaster on the rebels. The referents (the Lord and the king) have been specified in the translation. But the verbs “ruin” and “helpless” (e.g., TEV, CEV “a sign of true friendship”; NLT “an honor”).
6 tn The reward for living in peace under God in this world is imperfect tense promises that there will be “delight” to those who rebuke the wicked.
7 tn The verb יָכַח (yakhakh) means “to decide; to adjudge; to prove.” This word occurs frequently in the book of Proverbs meaning “to reprove” or “to rebuke.” It deals with disputes, legal or otherwise. It can refer to a charge against someone or starting a dispute (and so rebuke); it can mean quarrel, argue; and it can mean settle a dispute. In this context the first or last use would work: (1) reproving the wicked for what they do (cf. KJV, NASB, NRSV), or (2) convicting them in a legal setting (cf. NAB, NIV, NLT). In light of the previous forensic context the second sense is preferred here.
8 tn “The guilty” is supplied in the translation for clarity based on the preceding context. See the previous note on the word “convict.” If a non-forensic context is preferred for vv. 23-25, “wicked” would be supplied here.
9 tn The expression is בְּרֶכֶת־טוֹב (birkat-tov, “blessing of good”); the genitive “good” has to be an attributive genitive modifying “blessings.” The word is general enough to mean any number of things – rich, healthy, pleasing, etc. The parallelism here narrows the choice. Some English versions interpret the “blessing” here as prosperity (cf. TEV, CEV “a sign of true friendship”; NLT “an honor”).
10 tn The perfect tense with vav following the imperatives takes on the force of an imperative here.
11 sn The legal setting of these sayings continues with this warning against being a false accuser. The “witness” in this line is one who has no basis for his testimony. “Without cause” is the adverb from מְנַע (manah), which means “to be gracious.” The adverb means “without a cause; gratis; free.” It is also cognate to the word מִנְשָׁד (minashad, “grace” or “unmerited [or, undeserved] favor.” The connotation is that the opposite is due. So the adverb would mean that there was no cause, no justification for the witness, but that the evidence seemed to lie on the other side.
24:29 Do not say, “I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will pay him back according to what he has done.”

24:30 I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of one who lacks wisdom.

24:31 I saw that thorns had grown up all over it, the ground was covered with weeds, and its stone wall was broken down.

24:32 When I saw this, I gave careful consideration to it;

I received instruction from what I saw:

“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to relax, and your poverty will come like a bandit, and your need like an armed robber.”

**Proverbs of Solomon Collected by Hezekiah**

25:1 These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of King Hezekiah of Judah copied.

25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, and it is the glory of a king to search out a matter.

25:3 As the heaven is high and the earth is deep so the hearts of kings are unsearchable.

25:4 Remove the dross from the silver, and material for the silversmith will emerge;

25:5 remove the wicked from before the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness.

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1. In Heb “repay to the man.” The verb is דָּבָע (dabag), which in the Hiphil stem means “to restore; to repay; to return” (cf. TEV, CEV, NLT “I’ll get even”). The idea is that of repaying someone for what he did.

2. Rather than give in to the spirit of vengeance, one should avoid retaliation (e.g., Prov 20:22; Matt 5:43-45; Rom 12:9). According to the Talmud, Hillel said, “Do not do to others what you would not have them do unto you” (b. Sanhedrin 31a).

3. In Heb “lacks heart”; KJV “understanding”; NAB, NASB, NLT “sense.”

4. The Hebrew term יָשָׁה (yashah, traditionally “and, lo”) (KJV, ASV) is a deictic particle that calls attention to what comes next. “And look” is too abrupt here; “I saw” calls attention to the field that was noticed.

5. In Heb “its face” (so KJV, ASV).

6. In Heb “I set my heart.” The “heart” represents the mind and the will combined; to “set” the mind and will means to give careful consideration to what was observed.

7. In Heb “I looked, I received instruction.” There are four verbs in the two parts of this verse: “I saw… I set… I saw… I received.” The first two verbs in each half verse are the foundation for the next two. At the beginning of the verse the form is the preterite with the vav (ָו) consecutive; it can be subordinated as a temporal clause to the next verb, probably to be identified as a preterite with the vav – “when I saw, I put.” The next two verbs are both perfect tenses; their construction would parallel the first half of the verse, even though there are no conjunctions here – “[when] I saw, I received.”

8. The teacher makes several observations of the state of the sluggard that reveal that his continued laziness will result in poverty. The reminiscence used here may be a literary device to draw a fictional but characteristically true picture of the lazy person.

9. In Heb “a man of shield.” This could refer to an armed warrior (so NRSV) but in this context, in collocation with the other word for “robber” in the previous line, it must refer to an armed criminal.

10. This section of the book of Proverbs contains proverbs attributed to Solomon but copied by Hezekiah’s sages (between 715 B.C. and 687 B.C.). Some scholars conclude that this has no historical value other than to report the later disposition of people thought they came from Solomon’s time, but if that were the only consideration, then that in itself would have to be considered as a piece of historical informa-
25:6 Do not honor yourself before the king, and do not stand in the place of great men; 25:7 for it is better for him to say to you, “Come up here,” than to put you lower than a prince, whom your eyes have seen. 25:8 Do not go out hastily to litigation, or what will you do afterward when your neighbor puts you to shame? 25:9 When you argue a case with your neighbor, do not reveal the secret of another person, 25:10 lest the one who hears it put you to shame and your infamy will never go away. 25:11 Like apples of gold in settings of silver, and his conduct may be irreproachable, but he may be misled by unscrupulous courtiers” (Proverbs, 264).

The phrase “for him” is supplied in the translation for clarity. 2 sn This proverb, covering the two verses, is teaching that it is wiser to be promoted than to risk demotion by self-promotion. The point is clear: Trying to promote oneself could bring on public humiliation, but it would be an honor to have everyone in court hear the promotion by the king. 3 tn The two infinitives construct form the contrast in this “better” sayings; each serves as the subject of its respective clause. 4 tc Most modern commentators either omit this last line or attach it to the next verse. But it is in the text of the MT as well as the LXX, Syriac, Vulgate, and most modern English versions (although some of them do connect it to the following verse, e.g., NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). 5 tn Heb “do not go out hastily to strive”; the verb “to strive” means dispute in the legal context. The last clause of v. 7 “what your eyes have seen,” does fit very well with the initial clause of v. 8. It would then say: What you see, do not hesitate to court, but if the case was not valid, he would end up in disgrace. 6 sn The Hebrew verb רְבִיקָה (reikha) is often used in legal contexts; here the warning is not to go to court hastily lest it turn out badly. 7 tn The clause begins with� (pan, “lest”) which seems a bit out of place in this line. C. H. Toy suggests changing it to� (ki, “for”) to make a better connection, instead of supplying an elliptic: “lest it be said what...” (Proverbs [ICC], 461). 8 tn The verse begins with the direct object רֹחֲבָה (rokhlu, “your case”) followed by the imperative from the same root, רֹחֲב (rokh), “argue.” It is paralleled by the negated Piel jussive. The construction of the clauses indicates that the first colon is foundational to the second: “Argue...but do not reveal,” or better, “When you argue...do not reveal.” 9 sn The concern is that in arguing with one person a secret about another might be divulged, perhaps deliberately in an attempt to clear oneself. The point then is about damaging a friendship by involving the friend without necessity or warrant in someone else’s quarrel. 10 tn The noun רָצִינו (rachi, “injury; defamation; evil report; whispering”) is used of an evil report here (e.g., Gen 37:2), namely a true report of evil doing. So if a person betrays another person’s confidence, he will never be able to live down the bad reputation he made as one who betrays secrets (cf, NIV). 11 sn The verse uses emblematic parallelism, stating the simile in the first part and the point in the second. The meaning of the simile is not entirely clear, but it does speak of beauty, value, and artistry. The “apples of gold” (possibly citrons, quinces, oranges, or apricots) may refer to carvings of fruit in gold on columns.

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and a soft tongue\(^4\) can break a bone.\(^2\)

25:16 When you find\(^3\) honey, eat only what is sufficient for you; lest you become stuffed\(^4\) with it and vomit it up.\(^5\)

25:17 Don’t set foot too frequently\(^6\) in your neighbor’s house, lest he become weary\(^7\) of you and hate you.

25:18 Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow,\(^8\) so is the one who testifies against\(^9\) his neighbor as a false witness.\(^10\)

25:19 Like a bad tooth or a foot out of joint,\(^12\) so is confidence\(^12\) in an unfaithful person at the time of trouble.\(^13\)

25:20 Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day,\(^14\) or like vinegar poured on soda,\(^15\) so is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.\(^16\)

25:21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink,

25:22 for you will heap coals of fire on his head,\(^17\) and the Lord will reward you.\(^18\)

25:23 The north wind\(^19\) brings forth rain,
and a gossiping tongue brings forth an angry look.  

25:24 It is better to live on a corner of the house top than in a house in company with a quarrelsome wife.  

25:25 Like cold water to a weary person, so is good news from a distant land.  

25:26 Like a muddled spring and a polluted well, so is a righteous person who gives way before the wicked.  

25:27 It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable for people to seek their own glory.  

25:28 Like a city that is broken down and without a wall,
26:6 Like cutting off the feet or drinking violence; so is sending a message by the hand of a fool.

26:7 Like legs that hang limp from the lame, so is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

26:8 Like tying a stone in a sling, so is giving honor to a fool.

26:9 Like a thorn in the hand of a drunkard, so is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

26:10 Like an archer who wounds at random, so is the one who hires a fool or hires any passer-by.

26:11 Like a dog that returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.

26:12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

26:13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! A lion in the streets!"

26:14 Like a door that turns on its hinges, so a sluggard is a door that turns on its hinges.

which presents an aspect of the whole truth. One should not lower himself to the level of the fool, but there are times when the lesser of two evils is to do so, other than let the fool gain confidence that he is a wise person or be considered wise by others. Paul, for example, talked like a “fool” to correct the foolish ideas of the Corinthians (2 Cor 11:16-17; 12:11).

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26:14 Like a door that turns on its hinges.
so a sluggard turns5 on his bed.
26:15 The sluggard plunges6 his hand in
the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his
mouth.3
26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own estimation7
than seven people who respond with
good sense.8
26:17 Like one who grabs a wild dog by the
ears,9 so is the person passing by who becomes
furious9 over a quarrel not his own.
26:18 Like a madman8 who shoots
firebrands and deadly arrows,9
26:19 so is a person10 who deceives his
neighbor, and says, “Was I not only joking?”11
12 sn Gossip (that is, the one who goes around whispering and slandering) fuels contention just as wood fuels a fire. The point of the proverb is to prevent contention – if one takes away the cause, contention will cease (e.g., 18:8).
13 tn Heb “becomes silent.
14 sn Heb “a man of contentsions”; NCV, NRSV, NLT “a quarrelsome person.” The expression focuses on the person who is contentious by nature. His quarreling is like piling fuel on a fire that would otherwise go out. This kind of person not only starts strife, but keeps it going.
15 tn The Pilpel infinitive construct יִכְתַּבֵּר (‘kîtāḇer) from בָּרֵר (bārēr, “to be hot; to be scorched; to burn”) means “to kindle; to cause to flare up.”
16 sn The proverb is essentially the same as 18:8; it observes how appealing gossip is.
17 tn The traditional translation of “silver dross” (so KJV, ASV, NASB) never did make much sense because the parallel idea deals with hypocrisy – “fervent lips with an evil heart.” But silver dross would not be used over earthenware – instead it is discarded. Yet the MT clearly has “silver dross” (םִיגִים סֵיֶץ, kəsəf sīḡīm). Ugaritic turned up a word spasg which means “glaze,” and this found a parallel in Hittite zapgəja. H. L. Ginsberg rephrased the Hebrew text to k’sapsagim, “like glaze,” and this has been adopted by many commentators and recent English versions (e.g., NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). The final mem (mem) is then classified as an enclitic. See, among others, K. L. Barker, “The Value of Ugaritic for Old Testament Studies,” BSac 133 (1976): 128-29.
18 tn The word translated “fervent” actually means “burning, glowing;” the LXX has “flatttering lips” (as if from קֶצֶר [kesər] rather than קָסָ֫פָּן [kəspən]).
19 sn The analogy fits the line very well. Glaze makes a vessel look beautiful and certainly different from the clay that it actually is. So is one who has evil intent (“heart”) but covers it with glowing speech.
20 tn The Nupal imperfect from נָקָר (nakhir) means “to act [or, treat] as a foreigner [or, stranger]; to misconstrue; to disguise.” The direct object (“it”) is not present in the Hebrew text but is implied. In this passage it means that the hater speaks what is “foreign” to his thought; in other words, he dissembles.
21 tn Or “places; puts; lays up” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB).
22 tn Heb “within him” (so KJV, ASV) or “in his midst”; NAB “in his inmost being.”
23 sn Hypocritical words may hide a wicked heart. The proverb makes an observation: One who in reality despises other people will often disguise that with what he says.
26:25 When he speaks graciously, 2 do not believe him; for there are seven abominations within him.  
26:26 Though his hatred may be concealed by deceit, his evil will be uncovered in the assembly.  
26:27 The one who digs a pit will fall into it; the one who rolls a stone—it will come back on him.  
26:28 A lying tongue hates those crushed by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin.  

27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow; for you do not know what a day may bring forth.  
27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth;  
27:3 A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but vexation by a fool is more burdensome than the two of them.  
27:4 Wrath is cruel and anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?  
27:5 Better is open rebuke than hidden love.  

1 tn The particle ו (ki) is here interpreted with a temporal nuance. It is possible that it could be read as concessive (so NIV, NLT “Though”).  
2 tn The meaning of the rare Piel form of קָחָן (khanan) is “to make gracious; to make favorable.” The subject is בַּל (bal, “his voice”), a metonymy of cause for what he says. The idea is that what he says is very gracious in its content and its effect.  
3 sn It may be that the placing of this proverb in this setting is designed to point out that the person speaking graciously is this wicked person who conceals an evil heart. Otherwise it may have in mind a person who has already proven untrustworthy but protests in order to conceal his plans. But even if that were not the connection, the proverb would still warn the disciple not to believe someone just because it sounded wonderful. It will take great discernment to know if there is sincerity behind the person’s words.  
4 sn “Seven” is used in scripture as the complete number. In this passage it is not intended to be literally seven; rather, the expression means that there is complete or total abomination in his heart. Cf. TEV “his heart is filled to the brim with hate.”  
5 sn “Abomination” means something that is loathed. This is a description applied by the writer, for the hypocritical person would not refer to his plans this way.  
6 tn The referent is apparently the individual of vv. 24-25.  
7 tn The form יָסָק (yaskах) is the Hitpael imperfect (with asiliation); it is probably passive, meaning “is concealed,” although it could mean “conceals itself” (naturally). Since the proverb uses antithetical parallelism, an imperfect tense nuance of possibility (“may be concealed”) works well here. Cf. NIV “may be known.”  
8 sn The Hebrew verb means “to uncover,” here in the sense of “to reveal; to make known; to expose.” The verse is promising that the evil the person has done will be exposed publicly. The common belief that righteousness will ultimately triumph informs this saying.  
9 sn The verse is teaching talionic justice (“an eye for an eye,” etc.), and so the activities described should be interpreted as evil means to revenge. “Digging a pit” would mean laying a trap for someone (the figure of speech would be a metonymy of cause for the effect of ruining someone, if an actual pit is being dug); the figure would be hypocatastasis if digging a pit is being compared to laying a trap, but no pit is being dug. Likewise, “rolling a stone” on someone means to destroy that individual.  
10 tn Heb “the tongue of deception.” The subject matter of this proverb is deceptive speech. The “tongue of deception” (using a metonymy of cause with an attributive genitive) means that what is said is false. Likewise the “smooth mouth” means that what is said is smooth, flattering.  
11 sn The verse makes it clear that only pain and ruin can come from deception. The statement that the lying tongue “hates those crushed by it” suggests that the sentiments of hatred help the deceiver justify what he says about people. The ruin that he brings is probably on other people, but it could also be taken to include his own ruin.  
12 tn The form הַשָּׁבַע (hashabal) is the Hitpael jussive negated; it is from the common verb “to praise,” and so in this setting means “to praise oneself” or “to boast.”  
13 sn The verse rules out one’s overconfident sense of ability to control the future. No one can presume on the future.  
14 sn The expression “you do not know” balances the presumption of the first line, reminding the disciple of his ignorance and so the need for humility (e.g., Matt 6:34; Luke 12:20-21; Jas 4:13-16).  
15 tn Heb “a stranger.” This does not necessarily refer to a non-Israelite, as has been demonstrated before in the book of Proverbs, but these are people outside the familiar and accepted circles. The point is that such a person would be objective in speaking about your abilities and accomplishments.  
16 sn “Mouth” and “lips” are metonymies of cause; they mean “what is said.” People should try to avoid praising themselves. Self-praise can easily become a form of pride, even if it begins with trivial things. It does not establish a reputation; reputation comes from what others think about you.  
17 tn “a foreigner”; KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV “a stranger.”  
18 sn The subject matter is the vexation produced by a fool. The term זָעָם (za’am) means “vexation” (ASV); provocation (NAB, NASB, NV, NRSV); “anger” (KJV “wrath”) and usually refers to undeserved treatment. Cf. NLT “the resentment caused by a fool.”  
19 sn The same noun is used in 1 Sam 1:6, 16 for the “provocation” given to Hannah by Peninnah for being barren.  
20 sn The contrast is made between dealing with the vexation of a fool and physical labor (moving stones and sand). More tiring is the vexation of a fool, for the mental and emotional effort it takes to deal with it is more draining than physical labor. It is, in the sense of this passage, almost unbearable.  
21 tn Heb “fierceness of wrath and outpouring [= flood] of anger.” A number of English versions use “flood” here (e.g., NASB, NCV, NLT).  
22 tn The Hebrew term translated “jealousy” here probably has the negative sense of “envy” rather than the positive sense of “zeal.” It is a raging emotion (like “anger” and “wrath,” etc.), that “fierceness of wrath and outpouring” of anger. A number of English versions use “flood” here (e.g., NASB, NCV, NLT).  
23 tn The Hebrew term translated “jealousy” here probably has the negative sense of “envy” rather than the positive sense of “zeal.” It is a raging emotion (like “anger” and “wrath,” etc.), that “fierceness of wrath and outpouring” of anger. A number of English versions use “flood” here (e.g., NASB, NCV, NLT).
27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are excessive.

27:7 The one whose appetite is satisfied loathes honey, but to the hungry mouth every bitter thing is sweet.

27:8 Like a bird that wanders from its nest, so is a person who wanders from his home.

27:9 Ointment and incense make the heart rejoice, likewise the sweetness of one's friend from sincere counsel.

1 tn The Niphal participle of תָּאָמָן (‘aman) means "faithful; reliable; sure; trustworthy." The word indicates that the wounds from a friend "can be trusted" (so NIV, NCV) because they are meant to correct and not to destroy (e.g., 25:12; Deut 7:9; Job 12:20).

2 sn "Kisses" probably represents a metonymy of adjunct; the term describes any expressions or indications of affection. But coming from an enemy, they will be insincere – as indicated by their excessive number.

3 tn The form is תָּאָמָן (‘aman), the Niphal participle of תָּאָמָן (‘amman, "to be abundant"); Contemporary translations render this in a number of different ways: "deceitful" (NASB, NKJV); "profuse" (NRSV); "many" (NLT). But the idea of "excessive" or "numerous" fits very well. The kisses of an enemy cannot be trusted, no matter how often they are presented.

4 tn Traditionally, "soul" (so KJV, ASV). The Hebrew text uses נפש (nepesh) here for the subject – the full appetite (i.e., the whole person with all his appetites). Here its primary reference is to eating, but it has a wider application than that – possession, experience, education, and the like.

5 tn Here the term נפש (nepesh, traditionally, "soul") is used again, now in contrast to describe the "hungry appetite" (cf. NRSV, "ravenous appetite"), although "hungry mouth" might be more idiomatic for the idea. Those whose needs are great are more appreciative of things than those who are satisfied. The needy will be delighted even with bitter things.

6 tn The form נָדַד (noded) is the Qal participle from נָדָד (naddad), "to wander; to stray; to flutter; to retreat; to depart"; cf. NIV, NRSV, NLT "strays." It will be directly paralleled with the masculine participle in the second colon.

7 tn Heb "place" (so KJV, ASV); most other English versions translate it as "home." The reason for the wandering from the nest/place is not given, but it could be because of exile, eviction, business, or irresponsible actions. The saying may be generally observing that those who wander lack the security of their home and cannot contribute to their community (e.g., the massive movement of refugees). It could be portraying the unhappy plight of the wanderer without condemning him over the reason for the flight.

8 sn The first line of the proverb provides the emblem to the parallel point. The emblem is the joy that anointing oil (ointment) and incense bring, and the point is the value of the advice of a friend.

9 tn Some think the MT is unintelligible as it stands: "The sweetness of his friend from the counsel of the soul." The Latin version has "the soul is sweetened by the good counsels of a friend." D. W. Thomas suggests, "counsel of a friend make sweet the soul" ("Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs," VT 15 [1965]: 275). G. R. Driver suggests, "the counsel of a friend is sweeter than one's own advice" (literally, "more than the counsel of the soul"). He also suggests "more faith than of friends' faith." See G. R. Driver, "Hebrew Notes," ZAW 52 (1934): 54; idem, "Suggestions and Objections," ZAW 55 (1937): 69-70. The LXX reads "and the soul is rent by misfortunes." The MT, for want of better or more convincing readings, may be interpreted to mean something like "[Just as] ointment and incense brings joy to the heart, [so] the sweetness of one's friend [comes] from his sincere counsel."

10 sn The meaning of the verse is very difficult, although the translation is rather straightforward. It may simply be saying that people should retain family relationships but will discover that a friend who is available is better than a relative who is not. But C. H. Toy thinks that the verse is made up of three lines that have no connection: 10a instructs people to maintain relationships, 10b says not to go to a brother's house [only?], and 10c observes that a nearby friend is better than a far-away relative. C. H. Toy suggests a connection may have been there, but has been lost (Proverbs [ICC], 485-86). The conflict between 17:17 and 10b may be another example of presenting two sides of the issue, a fairly frequent occurrence in the book of Proverbs.

11 tn Heb "my son"; the reference to a "son" is retained in the translation here because in the following lines the advice is to avoid women who are prostitutes.

12 tn The verb is the cohortative of שָׁמַע (šama‘); after the two imperatives that provide the instruction, this form with the vav will indicate the purpose or result (indirect volitive sequence).

13 sn The expression anyone who taunts me refers to those who would reproach or treat the sage with contempt, condemning him as a poor teacher. Teachers are often criticized for the faults and weaknesses of their students, but any teacher criticized that way takes pleasure in pointing to those who have learned as proof that he has not labored in vain (e.g., 1 Thess 2:19-20; 3:8).

14 tn Heb "go on"; the word "right" is supplied in the translation to clarify the meaning: The naive person, oblivious to impending danger, meets it head on.

15 tn Heb "his garment." The reason for this is not explained clearly in the context. It is not similar to "garment when he has a neighbor nearby is better than a brother and do not enter your brother's house in the evening," which speaks of a very close relationship.

16 tn Or "for a strange (= adulterous) woman." Cf. KJV, ASV, NASB, NLT; NIV "a wayward woman."

17 tn This proverb is virtually identical to 20:16.

18 tn The verse begins with the Piel participle from בָּרַך (barach). It could be taken as the subject, with the resulting translation; "Blessing...will be counted as a curse." However, that would be rather novel. So it is preferable to take the first line as the condition ("if someone blesses") and the second as the consequence ("[then] it will be counted").

19 tn Heb "rising early in the morning" (so KJV, ASV). The infinitive explains the verb "bless," giving the circumstances of its action. The individual rises early to give his blessing.

20 sn The point of the proverb is that loud and untimely greetings are not appreciated. What was given as a "blessing" will be considered a "curse" – the two words being antonyms. The proverb makes the point that how, when, and why they say what they say is important too (D. Kidner, Proverbs [TOTC], 166).
27:15 A continual dripping on a rainy day and a contentious wife are alike.  
27:16 Whoever hides her hides the wind or grasps oil with his right hand.  
27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so a person sharpens his friend.  
27:18 The one who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and whoever takes care of his master will be honored.  
27:19 As in water the face is reflected as a face, so a person’s heart reflects the person.  
27:20 As Death and Destruction are never satisfied, so the eyes of a person are never satisfied.  
27:21 As the crucible is for silver and the furnace is for gold, so a person is proved by the praise he receives.

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1 sn A contentious woman is uncontrollable. The wind can gust at any moment; so too the contentious woman cannot complain or warn anyone. If anyone can hide the wind he can hide her.
2 sn The participle and verb both are from the root.coin. This combination could be translated “hiding her like hiding the wind.”
3 sn The Hebrew part in the translation to clarify the comparison.
4 sn This is a Qal imperfect of הָשָׁו (shavo); BDB 895 s.v. Sb defines it here as “call for = demand, require,” but acknowledge that it is probably corrupt. R. B. Y. Scott interprets it to mean “grasping” in the translation in light of the analogy.
5 sn The LXX took the Qal etymology to the whole versus, and translated it as “the north wind is a severe wind, but by its name is termed auspicious.” In this rendering the Hebrew text’s “oil” became “its name,” “right hand” became “auspicious,” and “grasp” became “called.”
6 tn The term “as” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation to emphasize the parallelism.
7 sn Righteousness is limited only to males.
8 tn “eyes of a man.” This expression describes what the individual has done in order to make the public acclamation. The verb may be a shortened form of the imperfect rather than a jussive.
9 tn Hebrew “and a man,” but the context does not indicate this should be limited to males only.
10 sn Tending fig trees requires closer attention than other plants; so the point here would be the diligent care that is required.
11 sn The principle is established in the first line with the emblem: Those who faithfully serve will be rewarded in kind. The second half of the proverb makes the point from this illustration.
12 sn The Hebrew participle translated “takes care of” (בָּשַׁה, basha) describes a careful watching over or looking after, a meticulous service, anticipating the needs and safeguarding the charge. Such a servant need not worry about his efforts going unrecognized and unrewarded (e.g., Prov 22:29; 2 Tim 2:6, 15).
13 sn The verse is somewhat cryptic and so has prompted many readings. The first line in the MT has “As water the face to the face.” The simplest and most probable interpretation is that clear water gives a reflection of the face (cf. NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). One creative but unconvincing suggestion is that of L. Kopf, who suggests the idea is of “water of face” (a construct). That it need not be a name, i.e., a face is not really human without shame, and a man without a heart is not human (“Arabische Etymologien und Parallelismen zum Bibelworterbuch,” VT 9 (1959): 260-61).
14 sn The second line has “so the heart of a man to a man” (cf. KJV, ASV). The present translation (along with many English versions) supplies “reflects” as a verb in the second line to emphasize the parallelism.
15 tn The term “as” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation in light of the analogy.
16 tn Countless generations of people have gone into the world below; yet “death” is never satisfied – it always takes more. The line personifies Death and Destruction. It forms the emblem in the parallelism.
17 tn Hebrew “eyes of a man.” This expression refers to the desires – what the individual looks longingly on. Ecclesiastes Rabba 1:34 (one of the rabbinic Midrashim) says, “No man dies and has one-half of what he wanted.”
18 sn Hebrew “He who fixes his eye is an abomination to the Lorp, and the un instructed do not restrain their tongues.” This is unlikely to be original.
19 sn Once again this proverb uses emblematic parallelism. The crucible and the furnace are used to refine and thus reveal the pure metals. The analogy is that praise will reveal the individual has done in order to make the public acclamation. The verse is somewhat cryptic and so has prompted many readings. The first line in the MT has “As water the face to the face.” The simplest and most probable interpretation is that clear water gives a reflection of the face (cf. NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). One creative but unconvincing suggestion is that of L. Kopf, who suggests the idea is of “water of face” (a construct). That it need not be a name, i.e., a face is not really human without shame, and a man without a heart is not human (“Arabische Etymologien und Parallelismen zum Bibelworterbuch,” VT 9 (1959): 260-61).
20 sn Hebrew “and a man,” but the context does not indicate this is limited only to males.
21 sn The verb “is proved” was supplied in the translation in view of the analogy. Many English versions supply “tested” for the same reason.
22 sn The proverb is saying that public praise is usually a good measure of the qualities and contributions of a person. The other side of it is that righteousness is often denounced, but the proverb is not addressing everything that people say.
27:22 If you should pound the fool in the mortar among the grain with the pestle, his foolishness would not depart from him.  
27:23 Pay careful attention to the condition of your herds, give careful attention to your herds, for richies do not last forever, nor does a crown last from generation to generation.  
27:25 When the hay is removed and new grass appears, and the grass from the hills is gathered in, the lambs will be for your clothing, and the goats will be for the price of a field.  
27:27 And there will be enough goat’s milk for your food, for the food of your household, and for the sustenance of your servant girls.

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28:1 The wicked person flees when there is no one pursuing, but the righteous person is as confident as a lion.  
28:2 When a country is rebellious it has many princes, but by someone who is discerning and knowledgeable order is maintained.  
28:3 A poor person who oppresses the weak is like a driving rain without food.
28:4 Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law contend with them.

28:5 Evil people do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it all.

28:6 A poor person who walks in his integrity is better than one who is perverse in his ways even though he is rich.

28:7 The one who keeps the law is a discerning child.

but a companion of gluttons brings shame to his parents.

28:8 The one who increases his wealth by increasing interest gathers it for someone who is gracious to the needy.

28:9 The one who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

28:10 The one who leads the upright astray in an evil way will himself fall into his own pit, but the blameless will inherit what is good.

28:11 A rich person is wise in his own eyes, but a discerning poor person can evaluate him properly.

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1 sn Some commentators do not think that the word refers to the Mosaic law, but to “instruction” or “teaching” in general (cf. NCV “who disobey what they have been taught”). However, the expression “keep the law” in the second line indicates that it is binding, which would not be true of teaching in general (J. Bright, “The Apodictic Prohibition: Some Observations,” JBL 92 [1973]: 185-204). Moreover, Proverbs 28:9 and 29:18 refer to the law, and this chapter has a stress on piety. But this does not mean “to engage in strife” (cf. NIV “resist them”). Tg. Prov 28:4 adds an explanatory expression, “so as to induce them to repent.”

2 sn The proverb gives the outcome and the evidence of those who forsake the law – “they praise the wicked.” This may mean (1) calling the wicked good or (2) justifying what the wicked do, for such people are no longer sensitive to evil.

3 tn The verb is the Hitpael imperfect of בָּאָרָה (garaḥ), which means “to stir up strife” but in this stem means “to engage in strife” (cf. NIV “resist them”). Tg. Prov 28:4 adds an explanatory expression, “so as to induce them to repent.”

4 tn Heb “men of evil”: the context does not limit this to males only, however.

5 sn The term translated “justice” is:"khonen (mishpat); it refers to the legal rights of people, decisions that are equitable in the community. W. G. Plaut observes that there are always those who think that “justice” is that which benefits them, otherwise it is not justice (Proverbs, 282).

6 tn The contrast (and the difference) is between the wicked and those who seek the Lord. Originally the idea of seeking the Lord meant to obtain an oracle (2 Sam 21:1), but then it came to mean devotion to God – seeking to learn and do his will. Only people who are interested in doing the Lord’s will can fully understand justice. Without that standard, legal activity can become self-serving.

7 sn This chapter, a lot of attention to the contrast between the poor and the rich, assuming an integrity for the poor that is not present with the rich; the subject is addressed in vv. 6, 8, 11, 20, 22, 25, and 27 (G. A. Chutter, “Riches and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs,” Crux 18 [1982]: 23-28).

8 tn The Hebrew term translated “ways” is in the dual, suggesting that the person has double ways, i.e., he is hypocritical. C. H. Toy does not like this idea and changes the form to the plural (Proverbs [ICC], 497), but his emendation is gratuitous and should be rejected.

9 tn Heb “and he is rich.” Many English versions treat this as a concessive clause (cf. KJV “though he be rich”).

10 sn This is another “better” saying, contrasting a poor person who has integrity with a rich person who is perverse. Of course there are rich people with integrity and perversity poor people, but that is not of interest here. If it came to the choices described here, honest poverty is better than corrupt wealth.

11 tn The Hebrew word could refer (1) to “instruction” by the father (cf. NCV) or (2) the Mosaic law (so most English versions). The chapter seems to be stressing religious obedience, so the referent is probably the law. Besides, the father’s teaching will be what the law demands, and the one who associates with gluttons is not abiding by the law.

12 tn Heb “son,” but the immediate context does not suggest limiting this only to male children.

13 sn The companion of gluttons shames his father and his family because such a life style as he now embraces is both unruled and antisocial.

14 tn Heb “father,” but the immediate context does not suggest limiting this only to the male parent.

15 tn Heb “by interest and increase” (so ASV; NASB “by interest and usury”; NAB “by interest and overcharge.” The two words seem to be synonyms; they probably form a nominal hendiadys, meaning “by increasing [exorbitant] interest.” The law prohibited making a commission or charging interest (Exod 22:25; Lev 25:36-37; Deut 23:20; Ps 15:5). If the poor needed help, the rich were to help them – but not charge them interest.

16 sn The term מַעְסֵר (khonen, “someone who shows favor”) is the active participle.

17 sn The verse is saying that in God’s justice wealth amassed unjustly will eventually go to the poor. God will take the wealth away from them and give it to people who will distribute it better to the poor.

18 sn The expression “turn away the ear from hearing” uses a metonymy to mean that this individual will not listen – it indicates a deliberate refusal to follow the instruction of the law.

19 sn It is hard to imagine how someone who willfully refuses to obey the law of God would pray according to the will of God. Such a person is more apt to pray for some physical thing or make demands on God. (Of course a prayer of repentance would be an exception and would not be an abomination to the Lord.)

20 sn C. H. Toy says, “If a man, on his part, is deaf to instruction, then God, on his part, is deaf to prayer” (Proverbs [ICC], 499). And W. McKane observes that one who fails to attend to God’s law is a wicked person, even if he is a man of prayer (Proverbs [OLT], 623).

21 sn This proverb is teaching that those who corrupt others will be destroyed, usually by their own devices, but those who manage to avoid being corrupted will be rewarded. According to this proverb the righteous can be led astray (e.g., 26:27).

22 sn Heb “a rich man,” although the context does not indicate that this is limited only to males.

23 sn The idiom “in his own eyes” means “in his own opinion,” “that is” or “in conceit.” The rich person thinks he is wise because he is rich, that he has made all the right choices.

24 sn The form נָבִיא (nabiah) means “he searches him” (cf. KJV, ASV) or “he examines him”; a potential imperfect nuance fits well here to indicate that a discerning person, even though poor, can search the flaws of the rich and see through the pretension and the false assumptions (cf. NAB, NASB, NIV “sees through him”). Several commentators have connected the word to the Arabic root ḫr, which means “despise” (D. W. Thomas, “Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs,” JTS 38 [1937]: 400-403), but that would be
28:12 When the righteous rejoice,° great is the glory, but when the wicked rise to power, people are sought out.°

28:13 The one who covers° his transgressions will not prosper,° but whoever confesses them and forsakes them will find mercy.°

28:14 Blessed is the one who is always cautious,°

28:15 Like° a roaring lion or a roving bear,° so is a wicked ruler over a poor people.°

28:16 The prince who is a great oppressor lacks wisdom,° but the one who hates° unjust gain will prolong his days.

28:17 The one who is tormented° by the murder° of another will flee to the pit;° let no one support him.

28:18 The one who walks blamelessly will be delivered.°

but whoever hardens his heart° will fall into evil.°

The form מְכַסֶּה (ba’alot) is the infinitive construct with the preposition indicating a temporal clause (“when...”); the “righteous” are the subject of this clause (subjective genitive). The term may be taken as a metonymy of adjunct – the righteous exult or rejoice because they are prosperous (cf. NLT “coast”).

The meaning of “sought out” (יָרָא, y’khuppas) indicates that people have gone into hiding. So the development of the ideas for this proverb requires in the first line that “rejoice” be connected with “triumph” that means they have come to power; and in the second line that “are sought out” means people have gone into hiding (cf. ASV, NIV, NRSV, NLT). C. H. Toy thinks this is too strained; he offers this rendering: “When the righteous are exalted there is great confidence, because the people have gone into hiding.”

The Hebrew participle provide the subject matter in this contrast. On the one hand is the person who covers over בַּעֲלֹץ (m’khussel) his sins. This means refusing to acknowledge them in confession, and perhaps rationalizing them away. On the other hand there is the one who both “confesses” (יְחֻפַּשׂ, modeh) and “forsakes” (בַּע, ‘ovev) the sin. To “confess” means to acknowledge them, to say the same thing about them that God does.

The verse contrasts the consequences of each. The person who refuses to confess will not prosper. This is an undeniable statement of speech. The one who says “fear” is opposite the truth, that eventually such a person will be undone and ruined. On the other hand, the penitent will find mercy. This expression is a metonymy of cause for the effect – although “mercy” is mentioned, what mercy provides is intended, i.e., forgiveness. In other passages the verb “conceal” is used of God’s forgiveness – he covers over the iniquity (Ps 32:1). Whoever acknowledges sin, God will cover it; whoever covers it, God will lay it open.

This verse is unique in the book of Proverbs; it captures the theology of forgiveness (e.g., Pss 32 and 51). Every part of the passage is essential to the point: Confession of sins as opposed to concealing them, coupled with a turning away from them, results in mercy.

Most commentators (and some English versions, e.g., NIV) assume that the participle מְפַחֵד (m’yfakhed, “fears”) means “fears the Lorp,” even though the term לֹא (lo) is not present in the text. Such an assumption would be more convincing if the word לֹא (yir’at) had been used. It is possible that the verse refers to fearing sin or its consequences. In other words, the one who is always apprehensive about the nature and consequences of sin will avoid sin and find God’s blessing. Of course the assumption that the phrase means “fear and consequences of sin will avoid sin and find God’s blessing” makes the verse a powerful exhortation. For the one who is always apprehensive about the nature and consequences of sin will avoid sin and find God’s blessing.

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° The form מְכַסֶּה (ba’alot) is the infinitive construct with the preposition indicating a temporal clause (“when...”); the “righteous” are the subject of this clause (subjective genitive). The term may be taken as a metonymy of adjunct – the righteous exult or rejoice because they are prosperous (cf. NLT “coast”).

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° The form מְכַס (m’khess) is the infinitive construct with the preposition indicating a temporal clause (“when...”); the “righteous” are the subject of this clause (subjective genitive). The term may be taken as a metonymy of adjunct – the righteous exult or rejoice because they are prosperous (cf. “coast”).
but whoever is perverse in his ways will fall\textsuperscript{14} at once.\textsuperscript{3}

28:19 The one who works his land will be satisfied with food,
but whoever chases daydreams\textsuperscript{4} will have his fill\textsuperscript{0} of poverty.

28:20 A faithful person\textsuperscript{9} will have an abundance of blessings,
but the one who hastens\textsuperscript{2} to gain riches will not go unpunished.

28:21 To show partiality\textsuperscript{8} is terrible,\textsuperscript{9}
for a person will transgress over the smallest piece of bread.\textsuperscript{10}

28:22 The stingy person\textsuperscript{11} hastens after riches
and does not know that poverty will overtake him.\textsuperscript{12}

28:23 The one who reproves\textsuperscript{13} another\textsuperscript{14} will
in the end\textsuperscript{15} find more favor
than the one who flatters\textsuperscript{40} with the tongue.

28:24 The one who robs\textsuperscript{37} his father and
mother and says, “There is no transgression,”
is a companion\textsuperscript{19} to the one\textsuperscript{19} who destroys.

28:25 The greedy person\textsuperscript{20} stirs up dissension,\textsuperscript{21}
but the one who trusts\textsuperscript{4} in the Lord will prosper.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{1} tn The Qal imperfect יִפְוֹל (yipol) is given a future translation in this context, as is the previous verb (“will be delivered”) because the working out of divine retribution appears to be coming in the subject of the sentence. The idea of “falling” could be a metonymy of adjunct (with the falling accompanying the ruin that comes to the person), or it may simply be a comparison between falling and being destroyed. Cf. NCV “will suddenly be ruined”; NLT “will be destroyed.”

\textsuperscript{2} tn The last word in the verse, רָעָשׂ (ra`as), means “in one [= at once (?)].” This may indicate a sudden fall, for falling “in a hurry” (the meaning of the Hiphil infinitive in this verse) makes no sense. W. McKane wishes to emend the text to read “into a pit” based on v. 10b (Proverbs [OTL], 622); this emendation is followed by NAB, NRSV.

\textsuperscript{3} tn Or “will have plenty of food” (Heb “bread”); so NAB, NASB, NCV.

\textsuperscript{4} tn Heb “empty things” or “vain things”; NRSV “follows worthless pursuits.”

\textsuperscript{5} sn Prosperity depends on diligent work and not on chasing empty dreams. The proverb is essentially the same as Prov 12:11 except for the last expression.

\textsuperscript{6} tn The repetition of the verb strengthens the contrast. Both halves of the verse use the verb יִשְׁבַּה (yisha`, “will be satisfied; will be filled with; will have enough”). It is positive in the first colon, but negative in the second – with an ironic twist to say one is “satisfied” with poverty.

\textsuperscript{7} tn The meaning of “faithful person,” although the context does not indicate this should be limited only to males.

\textsuperscript{8} sn The text does not qualify the nature of the faithfulness. While this would certainly have implications for the person’s righteous acts, its primary meaning may be his diligence and reliability in his work. His faithful work will bring the returns.

\textsuperscript{9} sn The proverb is not rebuking diligent labor. One who is exchange in the process who is the opposite of the faithful person. The first person is faithful to God and to the covenant community; the second is trying to get rich as quickly as possible, at the least without doing an honest day’s work and at the worst dishonestly. In a hurry to gain wealth, he falls into various schemes and will pay for it. Ig. Prov 28:20 interprets this to say he hastens through deceit and wrongdoing.

\textsuperscript{10} tn The construction uses the Hiphil infinitive יִשְׁבַּה (yisha`) as the subject; the sentence: “to have respect for [or recognize] persons is not good” (e.g., 24:23; 18:5; Deut 1:17; Lev 19:15). Such favoritism is “not good”; instead, it is a miscarriage of justice and is to be avoided.

\textsuperscript{11} tn Heb “not good.” This is a figure of speech known as tapetinosis – a deliberate understatement to emphasize a worst-case scenario: “it is terrible!”

\textsuperscript{12} tn The meaning and connection of the line is not readily clear. It could be taken in one of two ways: (1) a person can steal even a small piece of bread if hungry, and so the court should show some compassion, or it should show no partiality even in such a pathetic case; (2) a person could be bribed for a very small price (a small piece of bread being the figure representing this). This second view harmonizes best with the law. Heb “a man with an evil eye” (as opposed to the generous man who has a “good” eye). This individual is selfish, unkind, unsympathetic to others. He looks only to his own gain. Cf. NAB “The avaricious man”; NLT “A greedy person.”

\textsuperscript{13} tn The one who is hasty to gain wealth is involved in sin in some way, for which he will be punished by poverty. The idea of “hastening” after riches suggests a dishonest approach to acquiring wealth.

\textsuperscript{14} tn Or “rebukes” (NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV).

\textsuperscript{15} tn Heb “a man,” but the context does not indicate this should be limited only to males.

\textsuperscript{16} tn There is a problem with רָעָשׂ (ra`as), which in the MT reads “after me.” This could be taken to mean “after my instructions,” but that is forced. C. H. Toy suggests simply changing it to “after” or “afterward,” i.e., “in the end” (Proverbs [ICC], 504), a solution most English versions adopt. G. R. Driver suggested an Akkadian cognate ashura`, “common man,” reading “as a rebuker an ordinary man” (“Hebrew Notes,” ZAW 52 [1934]: 147).

\textsuperscript{17} tn The construction uses the Hiphil participle מַקְחָלֵי (makkhal`i, “makes smooth”) followed by the adverbial accusative “a smooth mind the faithful man” – he makes what he says smooth. This will be pleasing for the moment, but it will offer no constructive help like the rebuke would.

\textsuperscript{18} sn While the expression is general enough to cover any kind of robbery, the point seems to be that because it can be rationalized it may refer to prematurely trying to gain control of the family property through some form of pressure and in the process get the parents’ possessions and standing in the community. The culprit could claim what he does is not wrong because the estate would be his anyway.

\textsuperscript{19} tn The metaphor of “companion” here means that a person who would do this is just like the criminally destructive person. It is as if they were working together, for the results are the same.

\textsuperscript{20} tn Heb “man who destroys” (so NASB); TEV “no better than a common thief.”

\textsuperscript{21} tn Heb “wide of soul.” This is an idiom meaning “a greedy person.” The term נְפֶשׁ (nephesh, traditionally, “soul”) has here its more basic meaning of appetites (a person is a soul, a bundle of appetites; BDB 660 s.v. 5.a). It would mean “wide of appetite” (nephesh, thus “greedy.”

\textsuperscript{22} sn Breed “stirs up” the strife. This individual’s attitude and actions stir up dissension because people do not long tolerate him.

\textsuperscript{23} tn The construction uses the participle יִכִּית (yikkith) followed by the noun תִּפָּלָה (tiph`alah), which gives the sense of “relying confidently on the Lord.” This is the antithesis of the greedy person who pushes to get what he desires.

\textsuperscript{24} sn The verb פֶשֶׁם (dashem) means “to be fat,” and in the Piel/Pual stems “to make fat/to be made fat” (cf. KJV, ASV). The idea of being “fat” was symbolic of health and prosperity – the one who trusts in the Lord will be abundantly prosperous and fully gratified (cf. NRSV “will be enriched”).
28:26 The one who trusts in his own heart¹ is a fool,² but the one who walks in wisdom³ will escape.⁴

28:27 The one who gives to the poor will not lack,⁵ but whoever shuts his eyes to them⁶ will receive⁷ many curses.⁸

28:28 When the wicked gain control,⁹ people¹⁰ hide themselves;¹¹ but when they perish,¹² the righteous increase.¹³

29:1 The one who stiffens his neck¹⁴ after numerous rebukes¹⁵ will suddenly be destroyed¹⁶ without remedy.¹⁷

29:2 When the righteous become numerous,¹⁸ the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.¹⁹

29:3 The man²⁰ who loves wisdom brings joy to his father,²¹ but whoever associates²² with prostitutes wastes²³ his wealth.²⁴

29:4 A king brings stability²⁵ to a land²⁶ by justice, but one who exacts tribute²⁷ tears it...
down.

29:5 The one who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his steps.

29:6 In the transgression of an evil person there is a snare, but a righteous person can sing and rejoice.

29:7 The righteous person cares for the legal rights of the poor; the wicked does not understand such knowledge.

taxes that are demanded; this Hebrew word was used in Leviticus for offerings given to the priests, and in Ezekiel 45:16 for taxes. The point seems to be that this ruler or administrator is breaking the backs of the people with heavy taxes ortribute (e.g., 1 Sam 8:11-13), and this causes division and strife.

1 tn Heb “a man,” but the context here does not suggest that the proverb refers to males only.

2 tn The form is the Hiphil participle, literally “deals slanderously,” i.e., speaking evil of the steps that should be brought to one’s attention.

3 sn The flatterer is too smooth; his words are intended to gratify. In this proverb some malice is attached to the flattery, for the words prove to be deceptive.

4 sn The image of “spreading a net” for someone’s steps is an implied comparison (a figure of speech known as hyllo-tastasis): As one would literally spread a net, this individual’s flattery would come back to destroy him. A net would be spread to catch the prey, and so the idea is one of being caught and destroyed.

5 tn There is some ambiguity concerning the referent of “his steps.” The net could be spread for the other flatterer (cf. NRSV, “a net for the neighbor’s feet”; NLT, “their feet,” referring to others), or for the flatterer himself (cf. TEV ‘you set a trap for your steps’). Either idea would make the verse more powerful: in flattering someone the flatterer is getting himself into a trap (e.g., 2:16; 7:5; 26:28; 28:23).

6 tn The Syriac and Tg. Prov 29:6 simplify the meaning by writing it with a passive verb: “the evil man is ensnared by his guilt.” The metaphor of the snare indicates that the evil person will be caught in his own transgression.

7 fn The two verbs create some difficulty because the book of Proverbs usually duplicates verbs like this and because the first verb ידָון (yarun) is irregular. The BHS editors prefer to emend it to ידָע (yada’, “will rush”; cf. NAB “runs on joyfully”). W. McKane emends it to “exult” to form a hendiadys: “and he is angry and he laughs.” The construction uses the conjunctive vav to express alternate actions: “whether … or.”

8 sn These two verbs express the confidence of the righteous — they have no fears and so can sing. So the proverb is saying that only the righteous can enjoy a sense of security.

9 fn The form is an active participle, יָדוֹן (yarut), which typically describes “judgment,” but can also mean “strife” and “cause.” Here it refers to the “cause” of the poor (so KJV, ASV), their plea, their case, their legal rights. A righteous person is sympathetic to this.

10 fn The Hebrew word used here is יד (yad), which typically means “judgment,” but can also mean “strife” and “cause.” Here it refers to the “cause” of the poor (so KJV, ASV), their plea, their case, their legal rights. A righteous person is sympathetic to this.

11 tn Heb “men of scorn”; NAB “Arrogant men”; ASV, NRSV “Scorners”; NIV, NJV “Mockers.”

12 tn The verb means “to blow; to breathe” (BBB 806 s.v. נפש). In the Hiphil imperfect its meaning here is “to excite; to inflame” a city, as in blowing up a flame or kindling a fire. It is also used with “words” in 6:19 and 12:17 — they “puff out words.” Such scornful people make dangerous situations worse, whereas the wise calm things down (e.g., 2 Sam 20).

13 tn The term “city” is a metaphor of subject; it refers to the people in the city who can easily be set in an uproar by such scornful people.

14 tn Heb “a wise man … a foolish man.”

15 tn The verb פִּסֵחַ (phasakh) means “to judge.” In the Naphil stem it could be passive, but is more frequently reciprocal: “to enter into controversy” or “to go to court.” The word is usually used in connection with a lawsuit (so many recent English versions), but can also refer to any argument (e.g., 1 Sam 12:7; Lsa 43:26); cf. NAB “disputes”; NASB “has a controversy.”

16 tn The noun נַקֵחַ (nakkah) is a derivative of נָקַח (nakach, “to rest”) and so means “quietness” or “rest,” i.e., “peace.”

sn The proverb is saying that there will be no possibility of settling the matter in a calm way, no matter what mood the fool is in (e.g., Prov 26:4). R. N. Whybray says one can only cut the losses and have no further dealings with the fool (Proverbs [CBC], 168).

17 tn Heb “and he is angry and he laughs.” The construction uses the conjunctive vav to express alternate actions: “whether … or.”

18 tn Heb “men of bloods.” The Hebrew word for “blood” is written in the plural to reflect the shedding of blood. So the expression “men of bloods” means people who shed blood — murderers, bloodthirsty men, or those who would not hesitate to commit murder in order to get what they want.

19 sn The Hebrew word describes the “blameless” or “innocent” who maintain integrity. The bloodthirsty despise people who insist on decency and integrity.

20 tn Heb “and the upright seek his life.” There are two ways this second line can be taken. (1) One can see it as a continuation of the first line, meaning that the bloodthirsty men hate the innocent, but the righteous protect them (W. McKane, Proverbs [OTL], 637; cf. NAB, NASB, TEV). (2) One can take it as is a contrast: “but as for the upright, they seek his life” — a fairly straightforward rendering (cf. ASV). The difficulty here is that “seeking a life” is normally a hostile act, but it would here be positive: “seeking” a life to preserve it. The verse is saying that then say that the bloodthirsty hate the innocent, but the righteous protect them (W. McKane, Proverbs [OTL], 637; cf. NAB, NASB, TEV).

21 tn Heb “his spirit.” It has been commonly interpreted to mean “his anger” (ASV, NAB, NIV, NRSV), but it probably means more than that. The suffix gives full expression to his “soul,” whether it is anger or bitterness or frustration or any other emotion. He has no self-control.

22 fn The line is difficult. The MT has יָשַׁבְּחִים רֹאָיִם (b’khlor y’shabb’khennah), which literally means “steals it back.” The verb פָּרַח (parakh) means “to soothe; to still,” as with a storm, or here with the temper. But because רֹאָיִם (’akhor) does not fit very well with this verb, most commentators offer some suggested change. C. H. Toyn reads “anger” instead of “back” and translates the verb “restrain” following the LXX, which has “self-control” (Proverbs [ICC], 510). The idea of self-control is what is intended, but the changes suggested are not entirely warranted. A number of English versions have
Proverbs 29:12

If a ruler listens to lies, all his ministers will be wicked. The Lord gives light to the eyes of them both.

Proverbs 29:13

The poor person and the oppressor have this in common: but the one who keeps the law, blessed is he!
29:19 A servant cannot be corrected by words; for although he understands, there is no answer.

29:20 Do you see someone who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

29:21 If someone pampers his servant from youth, he will be a weakling in the end.

29:22 An angry person stirs up dissension, and a wrathful person is abounding in transgression.

29:23 A person’s pride will bring him low, but one who has a lowly spirit will gain honor.

29:24 Whoever shares with a thief is his own enemy; he hears the oath to testify, but does not talk.

29:25 The fear of people becomes a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord will be set on high.

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1 sn Servants could not be corrected by mere words; they had to be treated like children for they were frequently unresponsive. This, of course, would apply to certain kinds of servants. The Greek version translated this as “a stubborn servant.”

2 tn The Niphal imperfect here is best rendered as a potential imperfect – “cannot be corrected.” The second line of the verse clarifies that even though the servant understands the words, he does not respond. It will take more.

3 tn Heb “for he understands, but there is no answer.” The concessive idea (“although”) is taken from the juxtaposition of the two parts.

4 sn To say “there is no answer” means that this servant does not obey – he has to be trained in a different way.

5 tn Heb “a man,” but there is no indication in the immediate context that this should be limited only to males.

6 sn The focus of this proverb is on someone who is hasty in his words. This is the person who does not stop to think, but acts on the spur of the moment. To speak before thinking is foolishness.

7 sn Rash speech cannot easily be remedied. The prospects for a fool are better (e.g., Prov 26:12).

8 tn There is no conditional particle at the beginning of the verse; however, the relationship of the clauses, which lay down the condition first and then (with a vav) the consequences, indicates a conditional construction here. Cf. also NAB, NIV, NCV, TEV.

9 sn Rash speech cannot easily be remedied. The prospects for a fool are better (e.g., Prov 26:12).

10 tn Heb “a man of anger.” Here “anger” is an attributive (“an angry man”). This expression describes one given to or responsive. This is the person who does not stop to think, but acts on the spur of the moment. To speak before thinking is foolishness.

11 tn Heb “possessor of wrath.” Here “wrath” is an attributive (cf. ASV “a wrathful man”; KJV “a furious man”).

12 tn Heb “an abundance of transgression.” The phrase means “abounding in transgression” (BBB 913 s.v. z. 1.d)]. Not only does the angry person stir up dissension, but he also frequently causes sin in himself and in others (e.g., 14:17; 29:15; 16:32; 22:24).

13 tn Heb “pride of a man,” with “man” functioning as a possessive. There is no indication in the immediate context that this is restricted only to males.

14 tn There is a wordplay here due to the repetition of the root שְׁפַל (shaphel). In the first line the verb שָׁפֵל (shaphel) is the Hiphil imperfect of the root, rendered “will bring him low.” In the second line the word is used in the description of the “lowly of spirit,” תִּשְׁפִּילֶנּוּ (tishphilenu). The contrast works well: The proud will be brought “low,” but the one who is “lowly” will be honored. In this instance the wordplay can be preserved in the translation.

15 tn Heb “low in spirit”; KJV “humble in spirit.” This refers to an attitude of humility.

16 sn The Hebrew word translated “lowly” forms an implied comparison: To be humble is like being low, base, earth-bound; whereas pride is often compared to being high, lofty – at least in one’s own eyes.

17 sn The expression shares with a thief describes someone who is an “accomplice” (cf. NAB, NIV) because he is willing to share in the loot without taking part in the crime.

18 tn Heb “hates his soul.” The accomplice is working against himself, for he will be punished along with the thief if he is caught.

19 tn Heb “oath” or “imprecation”; ASV “adjuration.” This amounted to an “oath” or “curse” (cf. NAB “he hears himself put under a curse”; NRSV “one hears the victim’s curse”) either by or on behalf of the victim, that any witness to the crime must testify (cf. Lev 5:1). However, in this legal setting referring to “a victim’s curse” could be misleading (cf. also KJV “heareth cursing”), since it could be understood to refer to profanity directed against those guilty of the crime rather than an imprecation called down on a witness who refused to testify (as in the present proverb). The present translation specifies this as an “oath to testify.”

20 sn The oath to the witness is not an oath to tell the truth before a court of law in the modern sense. Instead it was a “curse” or “imprecation” expressed by the victim of the theft, or by the legal authorities, called down on any witness of the crime who kept silent or refused to testify (as here). According to Lev 5:1, if a witness does not speak up he is accountable for the crime. This person hears the adjuration, but if he speaks up he is condemned, and if he does not speak up he is guilty under the law. The proverb is an unusual one; it seems to be warning against getting mixed up in any way with the thief, for it will create a serious ethical dilemma.

21 tn Heb “the fear of man.” This uses an objective genitive to describe a situation where fearing what people might do or think controls one’s life. There is no indication in the immediate context that this should be limited only to males, so the translation uses the more generic “people” here.

22 tn Heb “gives [or yields, or produces];” NIV “will prove to be.”

23 sn “Snare” is an implied comparison; fearing people is like being in a trap – there is no freedom of movement or sense of security.

24 sn The image of being set on high comes from the military experience of finding a defensible position, a place of safety and security, such as a high wall or a mountain. Trusting in the Lord sets people free and gives them a sense of safety and security (e.g., Prov 10:27; 12:2).
29:26 Many people seek the face⁴ of a ruler, but it is from the Lord that one receives justice.⁵

29:27 An unjust person is an abomination to the righteous, and the one who lives an upright life⁶ is an abomination to the wicked.⁷

The Words of Agur⁴

30:1 The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh; an oracle:⁵

This⁸ man says:⁹ to Ithiel, to Ithiel and to Ukal.¹⁰

30:2 Surely I am more brutish¹¹ than any other human being,¹²

1 sn The idiom seek the face means to try to obtain favor from someone. According to the proverb, many people assume that true justice depends on the disposal of some earthly ruler. 2 tn Heb “but from the Lord [is] justice of a man.” The last part uses the construct state followed by the genitive, which here shows the advantage – it is justice for the person. The implication of the matter is that people should seek the Lord’s favor (rather than a human ruler’s) if they want true justice. 3 tn Heb “who is upright in the way” (so NASB; KJV and ASV are similar). Here “in the way” refers to the course of a person’s life, hence “who lives an upright life.” Cf. NAB “he who walks uprightly.” 4 sn The proverb makes a simple observation on life: The righteous detest the wicked, and the wicked detest the lifestyle of the righteous. Each is troublesome to the beliefs and the activities of the other. 5 sn This chapter has a title (30:1), Agur’s confession and petition (30:2-9), and a series of Agur’s admonitions (30:10-33). 6 tn The title מַשָּׂא (hammasa) means “the burden,” a frequently used title in prophetic oracles. It may be that the word is a place name, although it is more likely that it describes what follows as an important revelation. 7 sn The definite article is used here as a demonstrative, clarifying the reference to Agur. 8 sn The word translated “says” (נֶאֶה, n'ē) is a verbal noun; it is also a term that describes an oracle. It is usually followed by the subjective genitive: “the oracle of this man to Ithiel.” 9 tn There have been numerous attempts to reinterpret the first two verses of the chapter. The Greek version translated the names “Ithiel” and “Ukal,” resulting in “I am weary, O God, I am weary and faint” (C. C. Torrey, “Proverbs Chapter 30,” JBL 73 [1954]: 93-96). The LXX’s approach is followed by some English versions (e.g., NRSV, NLT). The Midrash tried through a clever etymologizing translation to attribute the works to Solomon (explained by W. G. Plaut, Proverbs, 259). It is most likely that someone other than Solomon wrote these sayings; they have a different, almost non-proverbial, tone to them. See P. Franklyn, “The Sayings of Agur in Proverbs 30: Piety or Skepticism,” ZAW 95 (1983): 239-52. 10 sn The particle ‘ב (ki) functions in an asseverative sense, “surely; indeed; truly” (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 73, §449). 11 sn The noun בָּעָר (ba‘ar) means “brutishness”; here it functions as a predicate adjective. It is followed by מֵאִישׁ (me‘ēsh) expressing comparative degree: “more than a man” or “more than any man,” with “man” used in a generic sense. He is saying that he has fallen beneath the level of mankind. Cf. NRSV “I am too stupid to be human.” 12 sn Heb “the understanding of a man,” with “man” used attributively here. 13 sn The construction uses repetition to make the point emphatically: “I do not know the knowledge of the Holy One.” Agur’s claim to being “brutish” is here clarified – he is not one of those who has knowledge or understanding of God. C. H. Toy thinks the speaker is being sarcastic in reference to others who may have claimed such knowledge (Proverbs [ICC], 521). 14 sn The epithet “the Holy One” is the adjective “holy” put in the masculine plural (as in 9:10). This will harmonize with the plural of majesty used to explain the plural with titles for God. However, NRSV takes the plural as a reference to the “holy ones,” presumably referring to angelic beings. 15 sn To make his point Agur includes five questions, these, like Job 38-41, or Proverbs 8:24-29, focus on the divine acts to show that it is absurd for a mere mortal to think that he can explain God’s work or compare himself to God. These questions display man’s limited ability to understand nature. The first question could be open to include humans, but may refer to God alone (as the other questions do). 16 sn The questions are filled with anthropomorphic language. The questioner is asking what humans have ever done this, but the meaning is that only God has done this. “Gathering the wind in his fists” is a way of expressing absolute sovereign control over the forces of nature. 17 sn The question is comparing the clouds of the heavens to garments (e.g., Job 26:8). T. T. Perowne writes, “Men bind up water in skins or bottles; God binds up the rain-floods in the thin, gauzy texture of the changing clouds, which yet by his power does not rend under its burden of waters.” 18 sn The ends of the earth is an expression often used in scripture as a metonymy of subject referring to the people who live in the ends of the earth, the far off and remote lands and islands. While that is possible here as well, this may simply be a synecdoche saying that God created the whole world, even the most remote and distant places. 19 sn The reference to “son” in this passage has prompted many suggestions down through the years: It was identified as Israel or the Jewish Midrashim, the Logos or demiurge by some of the philosophers and allegorical writers, as simple poetic parallelism without a separate identity by some critical scholars, and as Jesus by Christian commentators. Parallels with Ugaritic are interesting because Baal is referred to as a son, but that is bound up within the pantheon where there was a father god. Some of the Jewish commentators exhibit a strange logic in expressing what Christians would say is only their blindness to the full revelation: There is little cogency in this being a reference to Jesus because if there had been such a person at any time in the past he would have left some tradition about it through his descendants (J. H. Greenstone, Proverbs, 317). But Judaism has taught from the earliest times that Messiah was preexistent (especially in view of Micah 5 and Daniel 7); and the claims of Jesus in the Gospels bear this out. There is a hint here of the nature of the Messiah as Son, a hint that will later be revealed in full through the incarnation.
30:5 Every word of God is purified; he is like a shield for those who take refuge in him. 30:6 Do not add to his words, lest he reprove you, and prove you to be a liar.

30:7 Two things I ask from you; do not refuse me before I die: do not give me poverty or riches; feed me with my allotted portion of bread.

30:9 lest I become satisfied and act deceptively and say, “Who is the Lord?” Or lest I become poor and steal and demean the name of my God.

30:10 Do not slander a servant to his master, lest he curse you, and you are found guilty.

30:11 There is a generation who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers.

30:12 There is a generation who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not washed from their filthiness.

30:13 There is a generation whose eyes are so lofty, and whose eyelids are lifted up disdainfully.

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4 sn The text here uses an implied comparison (a figure of speech known as hypocatastasis): It compares the perfection of every word from God with some precious metal that has been refined and purified (e.g., Ps 12:6). The point is that God’s word is trustworthy; it has no defects and flaws, nothing false or misleading. The second half of the verse explains the significance of this point — it is safe to trust the Lord.

5 sn The line uses two more figures of speech to declare that God can be trusted for security and salvation. “Shield” is a simple metaphor — God protects. “Take refuge” is another implied comparison (hypocatastasis) — God provides spiritual rest and security for those who put their trust in him.

6 tn The form of the verb is a Niphal perfect tense with a vav consecutive from the root קזב (kazav, “to lie”). In this stem it has the ideas of “been made deceptive,” or “shown to be false” or “proved to be a liar.” One who adds to or changes the word of the Lord will be seen as a liar.

7 sn Wisdom literature often groups things in twos and fours, or in other numerical arrangements (e.g., Amos 1:3—2:6; Job 5:19; Prov 6:15–19).

8 tn Assuming that the contents of vv. 7–9 are a prayer, several English versions have supplied a vocative phrase: “O LORD” (NIV); “O God” (NLT); others have supplied a similar phrase without the vocative “O”: NCV, CEV “Lord”; TEV “God.”

9 tn The two words might form a hendiadys: “falsehood and lies” being equivalent to “complete deception.” The word קזב (kazav) means “false; empty; vain; to a false purpose.” The second word means “word of lying,” thus “a lying word.” Taken separately they might refer to false intentions and false words.

10 tn The word קבקש (khashash) means “to be disappointing; to deceive; to fail; to grow lean.” In the Piel stem it means “to deceive; to act deceitfully; to cringe; to disappoint.” The idea of acting deceitfully is illustrated in Hos 9:2 where it has the connotation of “disowning” or “refusing to acknowledge” (a meaning very close to its meaning here).

11 tn The Hebrew verb literally means “to take hold of; to seize”; this produces the idea of doing violence to the reputation of God.

12 tn The form תלשנ (talshen) is the Hiphil jussive with the negative נ (‘al); it is a denominative verb from the noun “tongue” (Heb “wag the tongue”). It means “to defame; to slander,” if the accusation is untrue. Some have suggested that the word might have the force of “denouncing” a slave to his master, accusing him before authorities (e.g., Deut 23:15–16). This proverb would then be a warning against meddling in the affairs of someone else.

13 sn If what was said were true, then there would be no culpability. But the implication here is that it was slander. And the effect of that slander will be a curse. The target of the slander will “curse” the person who slandered him (ונדל) in the Piel means “to treat lightly [or, with contempt]; to curse”), and culpability will result (the verb כזב means “to be guilty; to make a guilt offering [or, reparation offering]”). This word for guilt suggests a connection to the Levitical teaching that one who adds to or changes the word had to make reparations for damages done (Lev 5). Cf. NAS “you will have to pay the penalty”; NIV, NLT “you will pay for it.”

14 sn The next four verses all start with the Hebrew expression translated “There is a generation.” This is a series of denunciations of things that are dangerous in society without mentioning specific punishments or proscriptions. The word “generation” as used in this passage refers to a class or group of people.

15 sn The first observation is that there is a segment in society that lacks respect for parents. This uses the antonyms “curse” and [not] “bless” to make the point. To “curse” a parent could include treating them lightly, defaming them, or showing disrespect in general. To “bless” would mean to honor, respect, or enrich in some way, which is what should be done (e.g., Exod 21:17; Prov 20:20).

16 sn The verb רקבת (rakbat) means “to wash; to wash off; to be washed away” (RSV, NEB “purified”). The form used is the Hiphil jussive (with the negative נ ‘al); it is a denominative verb from the noun “tongue” (Heb “wag the tongue”). It means “to defame; to slander,” if the accusation is untrue. Some have suggested that the word might have the force of “denouncing” a slave to his master, accusing him before authorities (e.g., Deut 23:15–16). This proverb would then be a warning against meddling in the affairs of someone else.

17 sn The verbs “to be high” (translated “are...lofty”) and “to be lifted up” depict arrogance and disdain for others. To make this clear, the present translation supplies the adverb “disdainfully” at the end of the verse.

18 sn The verbs to be high” (translated “are...lofty”) and “to be lifted up” depict arrogance and disdain for others. The emphasis on the eyes and eyelids (parasyonyms in poetry) is employed because the glance, the look, is the immediate evidence of contempt for others (e.g., also 6:17 and Ps 131:1).
30:14 There is a generation whose teeth
are like² swords⁷ and whose molars⁸ are like knives
to devour⁹ the poor from the earth
and the needy from among the human race.

30:15 The leech¹⁰ has two daughters:⁶
"Give! Give!"¹⁷
There are three things that are never satisfied,
four¹⁰ that never say, "Enough"¹⁹ –

¹ tn The comparative “like” does not appear in the Hebrew
text, but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the transla-
tion for the sake of clarity.
² sn There are two figures used in each of these lines: teeth/great teeth and “swords/knives.” The term “teeth” is a
metonymy for the process of chewing and eating. This goes
with the figure of the second half of the verse that speaks
about “devouring” the poor – so the whole image of eating
and devouring the poor (comparing the leech to the sys-
tem) is implied by the metaphor (“like knives”).
³ sn It is difficult to know for certain what these four things
are that I do not understand: (1) all four things are hidden from
continued study; or (2) the first three serve as illustrations
of the fourth and greatest wonder, which concerns human
relationships and is slightly different than the first three.
⁴ sn There is a noticeable rhetorical sequence here: two
dughters, three things, four (see W. M. Roth, “The Numerical
Sequence x / x + 1 in the Old Testament,” VT 12 [1962]: 300-
311, and “Numerical Sayings in the Old Testament,” VT 13
[1965]: 86). W. McKane thinks the series builds to a climax
with the four, and in the four the barren woman is the focal
point, the other three being metaphors for her sexual desire
(Proverbs [OLT], 656). This interpretation is a minority view,
however, and has not won widespread support.
⁵ sn Throughout the book of Proverbs נִפְלְאוּ (nifløy, "falling") means
"wealth," but here it has the nuance of “sufficiency” (cf. TEV, CEV, NLT “satisfied”) or “enough” (BD BDB 223 s.v.).
⁶ tn The term נִפְלָא (nifla, “Sheol”) refers here to the realm
of the dead: “the grave” (so KJV, NIV, NLT); cf. TEV, CEV “the
world of the dead”; NAB “the nether world.”
⁷ sn There is no clear lesson made from these observations.
But one point that could be made is that greed, symbolized
by the leech, is as insatiable as all these other things. If that is
the case, the proverb would constitute a warning against the
insatiable nature of greed.
⁸ sn The “eye” as the organ that exhibits the inner feelings
most clearly, here represents a look of scorn or disdain that
speaks volumes (a metonymy of cause or of adjunct). It is
comparable to the "evil eye" which is stinginess (28:22).
⁹ tn The Hebrew word נִפְלָא (nifla, “obeying”) occurs
only here and in Gen 49:10; it seems to mean “to receive" in
the sense of “receiving instruction” or “obeying.” C. H. Toy
suggests emending to “to old age” (בַּשָּׂ Webseite, "sheol")
of the mother (Proverbs [ICC], 530). The LXX with γήρας (gēras, "old age") suggests that a root ḫaq had something to do with
white hair.” D. W. Thomas suggests a corruption from ḥaqat
to ḥaqet; it would have read, “The eye that mocks a father
and despoises an aged mother” (“A Note on נִפְלָא in Proverbs
30:17,” JTS 42 [1941]: 154-55); this is followed by NAB “or
scorns an aged mother.”
¹⁰ sn The sternest punishment is for the evil eye. The punish-
ment is talionic – eye for eye. The reference to the “valley”
may indicate a place where people are not be given decent
burials and the birds of prey pick the corpses clean. It is an
image the prophets use in judgment passages.
¹¹ tn The form נִפְלָא (nifla) is the Niphal perfect from נָפְלָא (naphla); the verb means “to fall,” as if extraordinary;
to be surpassing”; cf. NIV “too amazing.” The things men-
tioned are things that the sage finds incomprehensible (e.g.,
Gen 18:14; Judg 13:18; Ps 139:6; and Isa 9:6[5]). The things
mentioned are things that the sage finds incomprehensible
(as a sense of mystery in each area. Suggestions for the connections
between the four include: (1) all four things are hidden from
continued observation, for they are in majestick form and then gone; (2)
are all a mysterious means of propulsion or motiva-
tion; (3) they all describe the movement of one thing within
the sphere or domain of another; or (4) the first three serve
as illustrations of the fourth and greatest wonder, which con-
cerns human relationships and is slightly different than the
first three.
the way of a ship in the storm, and the way of a man with a woman. 30:20 This is the way of an adulterous woman:

she eats and wipes her mouth and says, "I have not done wrong." 30:21 Under three things the earth trembles, and under four things it cannot bear up:

under a servant who becomes king, under a fool who is stuffed with food, under an unloved woman who is married.

1 tn This last item in the series is the most difficult to understand. The MT reads יָרַשׁ (yârash), "the way of a man with a maid," so KJV, NASB. The last term does not in and of itself mean "virgin" but rather describes a young woman who is sexually ready for marriage. What is probably in view here is the wonder of human sexuality, for the preposition יָרַשׁ (yârash) in this sequence indicates that the "way of the man" is "with" the woman. This mystery might begin with the manner of obtaining the love of the young woman, but focuses on the most intimate part of human relationships. And all of this was amazing to the sage. All of it is part of God's creative plan and therefore can be enjoyed and appreciated without fully comprehending it.

2 sn Equally amazing is the insensitivity of the adulterous woman to the sin. The use of the word "way" clearly connects this and the preceding material. Its presence here also supports the interpretation of the final clause in v. 19 as referring to sexual intimacy. While that is a wonder of God's creation, so is the way that human nature has distorted it and ruined it.

3 sn The word clearly indicates that the woman is married and unchaste, but the text describes her as amoral as much as immoral – she sees nothing wrong with what she does.

4 sn The acts of "eating" and "wiping her mouth" are euphemistic; they employ an implied comparison between the physical act of eating and wiping one's mouth afterward on the one hand with sexual activity on the other hand (e.g., Prov 9:17).

5 sn This is the amazing part of the observation. It is one thing to sin, for everyone sins, but to dismiss the act of adultery so easily, as if it were no more significant than a meal, is incredibly brazen.

6 sn The Hebrew verb means "to rage; to quake; to be in tumult." The sage is using humorous and satirical hyperbole to say that the changes described in the following verses shake up the whole order of life. The sayings assume that the changes described in the following verses upset the order of life and shake up the whole order of life.

7 sn A servant coming to power could become a tyrant if he is unaccustomed to the use of such power, or he might retain a rudimentary tail. The simple "badger" (so NASB, NRSV, CEV) could lead to confusion with the badger, an entirely unrelated species of burrowing mammal related to weasels.

8 sn Modern scholars identify this creature with the rock badger (the Syrian hyrax), a small mammal that lives in the crevices of the rock. Its wisdom consists in its ingenuity to find a place of security.

9 tn The Hebrew term means "divided"; they go forward in orderly divisions, or ranks (C. H. Toy, Proverbs [ICC], 535). Joel 1:4 describes their order and uses it as a picture of a coming invasion (e.g., Joel 2:7, 8). Therefore the wisdom of the locust is in their order and cooperation.

10 sn The KJV, agreeing with Tg. Prov 30:28, translated this term as "spider." But almost all modern English versions and commentators, following the Greek and the Latin versions, have "lizard.

11 tn The point of this saying is that a weak creature like a lizard, that is so easily caught, cannot be prevented from getting into the most significant places.

12 tn Although the Hebrew noun translated "king" is singular here, it is traditionally translated as plural: "kings' palaces" (so KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV).

13 sn The form נְתוֹנָה (netohnâ) is the Hiphil participle, plural construct. It has the idea of "doing good [in] their step." They move about well, i.e., magnificently. The genie would be a genitive of specification.
The Words of Lemuel

31:1 The words of King Lemuel, a
oracle that his mother taught him:

31:2 O my son, O son of my womb, O son of my vows,
31:3 Do not give your strength to women,
or your ways to that which ruins kings.
31:4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine,
or for rulers to crave strong drink.

To do that will require “letting up” on anger.

10 sn Nothing else is known about King Lemuel aside from this mention in the book of Proverbs. Jewish legend identifies him as Solomon, making this advice from his mother Bathsheba, but there is no evidence for that. The passage is the only direct address to a king in the book of Proverbs — something that was the norm in wisdom literature of the ancient world (Leah L. Brunner, “King and Commoner in Proverbs and Near Eastern Sources,” Dor le Dor 10 [1982]: 210-19; Brunner argues that the advice is religious and not secular).

11 tn Some English versions take the Hebrew noun translated “oracle” here as a place name specifying the kingdom of King Lemuel; cf. NAB “king of Massa”; CEV “King Lemuel of Massa.”

12 tn The form מַעֲלֵה (mahal), normally the interrogative “what?” (so KJV, ASV, NASB) is best interpreted here as an exclamation. Tg. Prov 31:2 has “Woe!”

13 tn In all three occurrences in this verse the word “son” has the Aramaic spelling, רב (bar), rather than the Hebrew רב (ben). The repetition of the word “son” shows the seriousness of the warning; for the expression “son of my womb” and “son of my vows” are endearing epithets to show the great investment she has made in his religious place in God’s program. For a view that “son of my womb” should be “my own son,” see F. Deist, “Proverbs 31:1, A Case of Constant Mis-translation,” JNSL 6 (1978): 1-3; cf. TEV “my own dear son.”

14 sn The word translated “strength” refers to physical power here, i.e., “vigor” (so NAB) or “stamina.” It is therefore a metonymy of cause; the effect would be what spending this strength meant — sexual involvement with women. It would be easy for a king to spend his energy enjoying women, but that would be unwise.

15 sn The word “ways” may in general refer to the heart’s affection for or attention to, or it may more specifically refer to sexual intercourse. While in the book of Proverbs the term is an idiom for the course of life, in this context it must refer to the energy spent in this activity.

16 tn The construction uses Qal infinitive construct מַקְבֹּחַ (lamanakhot, “to wipe out; to blot out; to destroy”). The construction is somewhat strange, and so some interpreters suggest changing it to מַקְבֹּחַ (mokhath), “destroyers of kings”); cf. BDB 562 s.v. מַקְבֹּחַ Qal.3. Commentators note that the form is close to an Aramaic word that means “concoct,” and an Arabic word that is an indelicate description for women.

17 tn Heb “[It is] not for kings.”

18 sn This second warning for kings concerns the use of alcohol. If this passage is meant to prohibit any use of alcohol by kings, it would be unheard of in any ancient royal court. What is probably meant is an excessive and unwarranted use of alcohol, or a troubling need for it, so that the meaning is “to drink wine in excess” (cf. NLT “to guzzle wine”; CEV “should not get drunk”). The danger, of course, would be that excessive use of alcohol would cloud the mind and deprive a king of true administrative ability and justice.

19 tn The MT has הבט (bet), a Kethib/Qere reading. The Kethib is בֹּט (bot) but the Qere is בּ (by). Some follow the Qere and take the word as a shortened form of בּוֹט, “where?” This would mean the ruler would be always asking for drink (cf. ASV); Others reconstruct to יָבֶט (yaveh, “to desire; to crave”). In either case, the verse would be saying that a king is not to be want-
lest they drink and forget what is decreed, and remove from all the poor their legal rights.

Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those who are bitterly distressed, and remember their misery no more.

Open your mouth on behalf of those unable to speak for the legal rights of all the dying.

Open your mouth, judge in righteousness, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

The Wife of Noble Character

Who can find a wife of noble character?

One who can find a wife of noble character? Previously the noun כָּרָם (kharim, judgment) was used, signifying the legal rights or the pleas of the people. Now the imperative כָּרָם is used. It could be translated "judge," but in this context "judge the poor" could be misunderstood to mean "condemn." Here advocacy is in view, and so "plead the cause" is a better translation (cf. NASB, NIV, NRSV "defend the rights"). It was – and is – the responsibility of the king (ruler) to champion the rights of the poor and needy, who otherwise would be ignored and oppressed. They are the ones left destitute by the cruelties and inequalities of life (e.g., 2 Sam 14:4-11; 1 Kgs 3:16-28; Pss 45:3-5; 72:4; Isa 9:6-7).

The book of Proverbs comes to a close with this poem about the noble wife. A careful reading of the poem will show that it is extolling godly wisdom that is beneficial to the family and the society. Traditionally it has been interpreted as a paradigm for godly women. And while that is valid in part, there is much more here. The poem captures all the themes of wisdom that have been presented in the book and arranges them in this portrait of the ideal woman (Claudia V. Camp, Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs, 92-93). Any careful reading of the passage would have to conclude that if it were merely a paradigm for women what it portrays may well be out of reach – she is a wealthy aristocrat who runs an estate with servants and conducts business in affairs of real estate, vineyards, and merchandising, and also takes care of domestic matters and is involved with charity. Moreover, it says nothing about the woman’s personal relationship with her husband, her intellectual and emotional strengths, or her religious activities (E. Jacob, “Sagesse et Alphabet: Pr. 31:10-31,” Hommages à A. Dott-Sommer, 287-95). In general, it appears that what the “woman” of Proverbs 31 presents are the values of all that wisdom represents. The poem, then, plays an important part in the personification of wisdom so common in the ancient Near East. But rather than deify Wisdom as the other ANE cultures did, Proverbs simply describes wisdom as a woman. Several features will stand out in the study of this passage. First, it is an alphabetic arrangement of the virtues of wisdom (which is an acrostic poem). Such an acrostic was a way of organizing the thoughts and making them more memorable (M. H. Lichtenstein, “Chiasm and Symmetry in Proverbs 31,” CBEQ 44 [1982]: 202-11). Second, the passage is similar to hymns, but this one exults wisdom. A comparison with Psalm 111 will illustrate the similarities. Third, the passage has similarities with heroic literature. The vocabulary and the expres- sions often found in heroic literature and domestic scene. Putting these features together, one would conclude that Proverbs 31:10-31 is a hymn to Lady Wisdom, written in the heroic mode. Using this arrangement allows the sage to make all the lessons of wisdom in the book concrete and practical, it provides a polemic against the culture that saw women as merely decorative, and it depicts the greater heroism as moral and domestic rather than exploits on the battlefield. The poem certainly presents a pattern for women to follow. But it also presents a pattern for men to follow as well, for this is the message of the book of Proverbs in summary.

The poem begins with a rhetorical question (a figure of speech known as e ortasis). This is intended to establish the point that such a noble wife is rare. As with wisdom in the book of Proverbs, she has to be found.

The first word in the Hebrew text (אָשֶׁת, eshet) begins with ח (alef), the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

“A woman of valor.” This is the same expression used to describe Ruth (e.g., Ruth 3:11). The term חַיִל (khayil) here means “moral worth” (DBS 298 s.v.); cf. KJV “a virtuous woman.” Elsewhere the term is used of physical valor in battle, e.g., “mighty man of valor,” the land-owning aristocrat who could champion the needs of his people in times of peace or war (e.g., Judg 6:12). Here the title indicates that the woman
For her value⁵ is far more than rubies.

31:11 The heart of her husband has confidence⁶ in her, and he has no lack of gain.³

31:12 She brings him⁷ good and not evil⁸ all the days of her life.

31:13 She obtains⁶ wool and flax, and she is pleased to work with her hands.⁦

31:14 She is like⁹ the merchant ships,⁩ she brings her food from afar.

31:15 She also gets up⁵ while it is still night, and provides food for her household and a portion¹² to her female servants.

31:16 She considers¹³ a field and buys it; from her own income¹⁴ she plants a vineyard.

31:17 She begins¹⁵ her work vigorously, and she strengthens¹⁶ her arms.

31:18 She knows⁰ that her merchandise is good, and her lamp¹⁹ does not go out in the night.

31:19 Her hands¹⁹ take hold⁰ of the distaff, and her hands grasp the spindle.

possesses all the virtues, honor, and strength to do the things that the poem will set forth.

⁵ sn This line expresses that her value (Heb “her price”), like wisdom, is worth more than rubies (e.g., 3:15; 8:11).

⁶ tn The first word of the second line begins with י (yod), the second letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The verb יָדוֹת (yadôth) means “to trust; to have confidence in.” With the subject of the verb being “the heart of her husband,” the idea is strengthened – he truly trusts her. Cf. NCV “trusts her completely”; NIV “has full confidence in her.”

⁷ sn The Hebrew word used here for “gain” (רָבִי, shalal) is unique in its meaning. “Gain” in this instance could denote a plunder, which was a frequent occurrence in the Middle East. The phrase “gives food” in this context probably means “provides for” or “acts as a provider for.”

⁸ tn The word for “hands” is יָדוֹת (yadôth), the second half of the compound word יָדוֹת (yadôth) which means “to trust; to have confidence in.” With the subject of the verb being “the heart of her husband,” the idea is strengthened – he truly trusts her. Cf. NCV “trusts her completely”; NIV “has full confidence in her.”

⁹ sn The joining of these two words, “good” and “evil,” is frequent in the Bible; they contrast the prosperity and well-being of her contribution with what would be devastating and painful. The way of wisdom is always characterized by “good”; the way of folly is associated with “evil.”

¹⁰ tn The first word of the fourth line begins with צ ( Gimel), the third letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

¹¹ sn The joining of these two words, “good” and “evil,” is frequent in the Bible; they contrast the prosperity and well-being of her contribution with what would be devastating and painful. The way of wisdom is always characterized by “good”; the way of folly is associated with “evil.”

¹² sn The word שֶלֶךְ (shelēq) probably means “allotted portion of food” as before, but some suggest it means the task that is allotted to the servants, meaning that the wise woman gets up early enough to give out the work assignments (Τg. Prov 31:15, RSV, NRSV, TEV, NLT). That is possible, but seems an unnecessary direction for the line to take. Others, however, simply wish to delete this last colon, leaving two cola and not three, but that is unwarranted.

¹³ tn The first word of the seventh line begins with צ (Zayin), the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

¹⁴ sn The word “considers” means “to plan carefully” in accordance with her purposes. The word is often used in the book of Proverbs for devising evil, but here it is used positively of the woman’s wise investment.

¹⁵ tn Heb “from the fruit of her hands.” The expression employs two figures, “Hands” is a metonymy of cause, indicating the work she does. “Fruit” is a hypocatastasis, an implied comparison meaning what she produces, the income she earns. She is able to plant a vineyard from her income.

¹⁶ sn The expression “she makes her arm strong” parallels the first half of the verse and indicates that she gets down to her work with vigor and strength. There may be some indication here of “rolling up the sleeves” to ready the arms for the task, but that is not clear.

¹⁷ tn The first word of the ninth line begins with צ (Tet), the ninth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

¹⁸ sn This is the word for “taste.” It means her opinion or perception, what she has learned by experience and therefore seems right.

¹⁹ sn The line may be taken literally to mean that she is industrious throughout the night (“burning the midnight oil”) when she must in order to follow through a business deal (W. McKane, Proverbs [OTL], 668); cf. TEV. But the line could also be taken figuratively, comparing “her light” to the prosperity of her household – her whole life – which continues night and day.

¹⁰ tn The first word of the tenth line begins with צ (Zayin), the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

¹⁰ sn The verbs for “hands” are often paired in poetry; the first צ (Zayin), ק (Kaf) means the hand and the forearm and usually indicates strength, and the second כ (Kaf), ק (Kof) means the palm of the hand and usually indicates the more intricate activity.

²⁰ tn The verb שָלַל (shalal), the Piel perfect of the verb “to send,” means in this stem “to thrust out; to stretch out.” It is a stronger word than is perhaps necessary. It is a word that is also used in military settings to describe the firmness and forthrightness of the activity (Judg 5:26).
31:20 She extends her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hand to the needy.  
31:21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all of her household are clothed with scarlet.  
31:22 She makes for herself coverlets, her clothing is fine linen and purple.  
31:23 Her husband is well-known in the city gate when he sits with the elders of the land.  
31:24 She makes linen garments and sells them,  

and supplies the merchants with sashes.  
31:25 She is clothed with strength and honor, and she can laugh at the time to come.  
31:26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and loving instruction is on her tongue.  
31:27 She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
31:28 Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband also praises her:  
31:29 “Many daughters have done valiantly, but you surpass them all!”

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1 sn The parallel expressions here underscore her care for the needy. The first part uses “she spreads her palm” and the second “she thrusts out her hand,” repeating some of the vocabulary introduced in the last verse.  
2 tn The first word of the eleventh line begins with כ (kaf), the eleventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet.  
3 tn The construction uses the infinitive construct with the preposition and a pronominal suffix that serves as the subject (subjective genitive) to form a temporal clause. The fact here is that he “sits with the elders” means he is one of the elders; it means that the word “law” could here refer to “teaching” as it does frequently in the book of Proverbs, and the word “love,” which means “loyal, covenant love,” could have the emphasis on faithfulness, yielding the idea of “faithful teaching” to parallel “wisdom” (cf. NIV).  
4 sn “Snow” is a metonymy of adjunct; it refers to the cold weather when snow comes. The verse is saying that this time of the year is not a concern for the wise woman because the family is well prepared.  
5 sn The parallel expressions here underscore her care for the needy. The first part uses “she spreads her palm” and the second “she thrusts out her hand,” repeating some of the vocabulary introduced in the last verse.  
6 tn The first word of the thirteenth line begins with כ (kaf), the thirteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.  
7 sn “The fine linen” refers to expensive clothing (e.g., Gen 41:42), as does the “purple” (e.g., Exod 26:7; 27:9, 18). Garments indicated wealth and high rank (e.g., Song 3:5). The rich man in Luke 16:19 was clothed in fine linen and purple as well. The difference is that the wise woman is not a concern for the future because of all her industry and planning.  
8 tn The first word of the sixteenth line begins with כ (kaf), the sixteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.  
9 tn Heb “gate”; the term “city” has been supplied in the translation for clarity.  
10 tn The construction uses the infinitive construct with the preposition and a pronominal suffix that serves as the subject (subjective genitive) to form a temporal clause. The fact that he “sits with the elders” means he is one of the elders; he sits as a judge among the people.  
11 tn The first word of the fifteenth line begins with כ (kaf), the fifteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.  
12 sn The “fine linen” refers to expensive clothing (e.g., Gen 41:42), as does the “purple” (e.g., Exod 26:7; 27:9, 18). Garments indicated wealth and high rank (e.g., Song 3:5). The rich man in Luke 16:19 was clothed in fine linen and purple as well. The difference is that the wise woman is not a concern for the future because of all her industry and planning.  
13 sn The words “mouth” (“opens her mouth”) and “tongue” (“on her tongue”) here are also metonyms of cause, referring to her speaking.  
14 sn The Hebrew phrase בְּרֶשֶׁת (borash) is open to different interpretations. (1) The word “law” could here refer to “teaching” as it does frequently in the book of Proverbs, and the word “love,” which means “loyal, covenant love,” could have the emphasis on faithfulness, yielding the idea of “faithful teaching” to parallel “wisdom” (cf. NIV). (2) The word “love” should probably have more of the emphasis on its basic meaning of “loyal love, lovingkindness.” It also would be an attributive genitive, but its force would be that of “loving instruction” or “teaching with kindness.”  
15 sn The words “mouth” (“opens her mouth”) and “tongue” (“on her tongue”) here are also metonyms of cause, referring to her speaking.  
16 sn The expression “bread of idleness” refers to food that is gained through idleness, perhaps given or provided for her. In the description of the passage one could conclude that this woman did not have to do everything she did; and this line affirms that even though she is well off, she will eat the bread of her industrious activity.  
17 sn The deliberate action of “rising up” to call her blessed is the Hebrew way of indicating something important is about to be done that has to be prepared for.  
18 sn The text uses an independent nominative absolute to draw attention to her husband: “her husband, and he praises her.” Prominent as he is, her husband speaks in glowing terms of his noble wife.  
19 tn The first word of the twentieth line begins with ע (resh), the twentieth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.  
20 sn Or “women” (NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).  
21 sn The word is the same as in v. 10, “noble, valiant.”
Charm is deceitful and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.

Give her credit for what she has accomplished, and let her works praise her in the city gates.

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1 tn The first word of the twenty-first line begins with שׁ (shin), the twenty-first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The graphic distinction between שׁ (shin) and שׂ (sin) had not been made at the time the book of Proverbs was written; that graphic distinction was introduced by the Masoretes, ca. A.D. 1000.

2 sn The verse shows that “charm” and “beauty” do not endure as do those qualities that the fear of the Lord produces. Charm is deceitful: One may be disappointed in the character of the one with beauty. Beauty is vain (fleeting as a vapor): Physical appearance will not last. The writer is not saying these are worthless; he is saying there is something infinitely more valuable.

3 sn This chapter describes the wise woman as fearing the Lord. It is the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom – that was the motto of the book (1:7). Psalm 111:10 also repeats that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

4 tn The first word of the twenty-second line begins with ת (tav), the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

5 tn Heb “Give her from the fruit of her hands.” The expression “the fruit of her hands” employs two figures. The word “fruit” is a figure known as hypocatastasis, an implied comparison, meaning “what she produces.” The word “hand” is a metonymy of cause, meaning her efforts to produce things. So the line is saying essentially “give her her due.” This would either mean give her credit for what she has done (the option followed by the present translation; cf. TEV) or reward her for what she has done (cf. NAB, NIV, NLT).

6 sn Psalm 111 began with the imperative וַיִּהלְלוּ (halelu yahu, “praise the Lord”), and this poem ends with the jussive וַיִּהלְלוּהָ (vihaleluha, “and let [her works] praise her”). Psalm 111:2 speaks of God’s works, and this verse of the woman’s (or wisdom’s) works that deserve praise.

7 tn “Gates” is a metonymy of subject. It refers to the people and the activity that occurs in the gates – business dealings, legal transactions, and social meetings. The term “city” is supplied in the translation for clarity. One is reminded of the acclaim given to Ruth by Boaz: “for all the gate of my people knows that you are a noble woman [יִשָּׂרָאֵל, ‘eshet khayil]” (Ruth 3:11).