

# Proverbs

## Introduction to the Book

1:1 The Proverbs<sup>1</sup> of<sup>2</sup> Solomon<sup>3</sup> son of David,<sup>4</sup> king of Israel:<sup>5</sup>

1:2 To<sup>6</sup> learn<sup>7</sup> wisdom<sup>8</sup> and moral instruc-

tion,<sup>9</sup>  
and to discern<sup>10</sup> wise counsel.<sup>11</sup>  
1:3 To receive<sup>12</sup> moral instruction<sup>13</sup> in  
skillful living,<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The Hebrew noun translated “proverb” is derived from the root מָשַׁל (*mashal*) which means “likeness.” The related Niphal verb means “to be like, be comparable with,” e.g., “he is like [נִמְשַׁל, *nimshal*] 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.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The name שְׁלֹמֹה (*sh’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 others (e.g., 22:17-24:34; 30:1-33; 31:1-9) and perhaps collected by Solomon. The name also forms a phonetic wordplay on the similarly sounding word מִשְׁלֵי (*mishley*, “proverbs”), as if to say the name is almost synonymous with proverbs.

<sup>3</sup> **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; some sections are collections from different authors: the sayings of the wise (22:17-24:22), more sayings of the wise (24:23-34), the words of Agur (Prov 30:1-33) and Lemuel (Prov 31:1-9). The title does not imply that the book was in its final canonical form in the days of Solomon; the men of Hezekiah added a collection of Solomonic proverbs to the existing form of the book (25:1-29:27). The original 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 in the days of Solomon because they do not fit under the title; they are not “proverbs” *per se* (sentence sayings) but introductory admonitions (longer wisdom speeches). Chapters 1-9 could have been written by Solomon and perhaps added later by someone else. Or they could have been written by someone else and added later in the days of Hezekiah.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The designation “son of David” is in apposition to the name Solomon, as are the following nouns, further explaining the name.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The phrase “the king of Israel” is in apposition to the name Solomon.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The infinitive construct + ל (lamed) here designates purpose. 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.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to know.” The verb יָדַע (*yada’*) here means “to gain knowledge of” or “to become wise in” (BDB 394 s.v. 5). This term refers to experiential knowledge, not just cognitive knowledge; it includes the intellectual assimilation and practical use of what is acquired.

<sup>8</sup> **sn** The noun “wisdom” (חֵכְמָה, *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 35:26), 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 pro-

duced from one’s life.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “instruction.” The noun מוּסָר (*musar*) 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. מוּסָר; HALOT 557 s.v. מוּסָר). Its parallelism with חֵכְמָה (*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.”

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The infinitive construct + ל (*lamed*) here designates a second purpose of the book: to compare and to make proper evaluation of the sayings of the wise. The term בִּין (*bin*, “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.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “words of discernment.” The noun בִּינָה (*binah*, “discernment”) 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 לָהֲבִין (*l’havin*, “to discern”). The phrase “to discern words of discernment” refers to the ability (1) to distinguish truth from falsehood or (2) to understand wise sayings, such as in Proverbs.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The infinitive construct + ל (*lamed*) 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.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “instruction.” See note on the same term in 1:2.

<sup>14</sup> **tc** MT reads the genitive-construction phrase מוּסָר הַשִּׁבְלִי (*musar haskel*, “discipline of prudence”). Syriac adds *vav* (ו) and reads מוּסָר וְהַשִּׁבְלִי (*musar w’haskel*, “discipline and prudence”). MT is the more difficult reading in terms of syntax, so is preferred as the original reading.

**tn** *Heb* “discipline of prudence.” The term הַשִּׁבְלִי (*haskel*, “of 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 שָׁבַל is “to be prudent, circumspect,” and the Hiphil stem means “to give attention to, consider, ponder; have insight, understanding” (BDB 968 s.v. שָׁבַל). It is a synonym of חֵכְמָה (*khokhmah*, “wisdom”), but while חֵכְמָה focuses on living skillfully, שָׁבַל (*sakhal*) focuses on acting prudently. The word can also focus on the results of acting prudently: to have success (e.g., Isa 52:12). Elsewhere, the term describes the prudent actions of Abigail in contrast to her foolish husband Nabal (1 Sam 25).

in<sup>1</sup> righteousness,<sup>2</sup> justice,<sup>3</sup> and equity.<sup>4</sup>  
 1:4 To impart<sup>5</sup> shrewdness<sup>6</sup> to the morally  
 naive,<sup>7</sup>  
 and<sup>8</sup> a discerning<sup>9</sup> plan<sup>10</sup> to the young

person.<sup>11</sup>  
 1:5 (Let the wise also<sup>12</sup> hear<sup>13</sup> and gain<sup>14</sup>  
 instruction,  
 and let the discerning<sup>15</sup> acquire<sup>16</sup> guid-  
 ance!<sup>17</sup>)  
 1:6 To discern<sup>18</sup> the meaning of<sup>19</sup> a proverb  
 and a parable,<sup>20</sup>

**1 tn** Heb “righteousness and justice and equity.” The three nouns that follow “self-discipline of prudence” are adverbial accusatives 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 by the syntax; it is inserted in the translation for clarity.

**2 sn** The word “righteousness” (צֶדֶק, *tsedeq*) describes conduct that conforms to a standard. Elsewhere it is used in a concrete sense to refer to commercial weights and measures that conform to a standard (Deut 25:15). In the moral realm it refers to “righteous” conduct that conforms to God’s law.

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

**sn** The noun מִשְׁפָּט (mishpat, “justice, judgment”) refers to the ability to make a decision that is just (e.g., Deut 16:18; 1 Kgs 3:28). From this legal background, the term came to mean one’s right or precedent. The person with prudence will make decisions that are just and right.

**4 sn** The Hebrew noun translated “equity” comes from the root יָשָׁר (*yashar*) 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.

**5 tn** Heb “to give.” The infinitive construct + ל (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 noun אֲרָמָה (*arameh*) “prudence, shrewdness, craftiness” (BDB 791 s.v.) or “cleverness” (HALOT 886 s.v. 1) refers to a shrewd plan of action, viewed positively or negatively. It is used negatively of planned deception (Josh 9:4) and premeditated murder (Exod 21:14). The related adjective described the serpent as “shrewd, crafty, cunning” (Gen 3:1); it describes cunning plans (Job 5:12) and deception (Job 15:5). 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; 15:5; 19:25). There is no virtue for simpletons to be unaware in this world; they need to be wise as serpents. Proverbs provide a morally shrewd plan for life.

**7 tn** Heb “the naive” or “simpleton.” The substantival adjective פְּתִי (*peti*) means “simple; open-minded” in the sense of being open and easily influenced by either wisdom or folly (BDB 834 s.v.; HALOT 989 s.v. פְּתִי). The simpleton is easily enticed and misled (Prov 1:32; 7:7; 9:6; 22:3; 27:12); believes everything, including bad counsel (Prov 14:15); lacks moral prudence (Prov 8:5; 19:25); needs discernment (Prov 21:11); but is capable of learning (Prov 9:4, 16). The related verb means “to be wide open; open-minded; enticed, deceived” (BDB 834). The term describes one easily persuaded and gullible, open to any influence, good or bad (cf. NLT “the simpleminded”). This is the “wide-eyed youth” who is headed for trouble unless he listens to the counsel of wisdom.

**8 tn** 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.

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

**10 tn** The noun מְזִמָּה (*m’zimmah*) 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 זָמַם (*zamam*) means “to plan; to devise” (BDB 273 s.v.; HALOT 272 s.v. זָמַם; e.g., Gen 11:6). Here the nouns “knowledge and plan” (דַּעַת וְיִזְמוּת, *da’at um’zimmah*) form a hendiadys: knowledge of how to form and carry out a morally wise plan for life.

**11 tn** Heb “young man” or “youth.”

**12 tn** The term “also” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

**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.

**13 tn** The verb יִשְׁמָע (*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 יִוָּסֵף (*yosef*, “Let him add!”).

**14 tn** Heb “add.”

**15 tn** The Niphal substantival participle נִבֵּן (*navon*, “discerning”), rather than the noun, is used to describe a person who is habitually characterized by discernment. 1:5 forms a striking contrast to 1:4 – there was the simpleton and the youth, here the wise and discerning. Both need this book.

**16 tn** The Hiphil verb יוּסָף (*yosef*) is a jussive rather than an imperfect as the final short vowel (*segol*) and accent on the first syllable shows (BDB 415 s.v. יוּסָף Hiphil).

**17 tn** The noun תִּהְבִּילָה (*takhbulah*, “direction; counsel”) refers to moral guidance (BDB 287 s.v.). It is related to הִבֵּל (*khovel*, “sailor”), הִבֵּל (*khibel*, “mast”) and הִכֵּל (*khevel*, “rope; cord”), so BDB suggests it originally meant directing a ship by pulling ropes on the mast. It is used in a concrete sense of God directing the path of clouds (Job 37:12) and in a figurative sense of moral guidance (Prov 11:14; 20:18; 24:6). Here it refers to the ability to steer a right course through life (A. Cohen, *Proverbs*, 2).

**18 tn** The infinitive construct + ל (*lamed*) means “to discern” and introduces the fifth purpose of the book. It focuses on the benefits of proverbs from the perspective of the reader. By studying proverbs the reader will discern the hermeneutical key to understanding more and more proverbs.

**19 tn** The phrase “the meaning of” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

**20 tn** The noun מְלִיטָה (*m’litsah*) means “allusive expression; enigma” in general, and “proverb, parable” in particular (BDB 539 s.v.; HALOT 590 s.v.). The related noun מְלִיץ 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 מְלִיץ and Its Derivatives,” *VT* 5 (1955): 163-79.

the sayings of the wise<sup>4</sup> and their<sup>2</sup> riddles.<sup>3</sup>

*Introduction to the Theme of the Book*

1:7 Fearing the LORD<sup>4</sup> is the beginning<sup>5</sup> of moral knowledge,<sup>6</sup> but<sup>7</sup> fools<sup>8</sup> despise<sup>9</sup> wisdom and instruc-

**1 tn** This line functions in apposition to the preceding, further explaining the phrase “a proverb and a parable.”

**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 *khidah*, “riddle”) designates enigmatic sayings whose meaning is obscure or hidden, such as a riddle (Num 12:8; Judg 14:12, 19), allegory (Ezek 17:2), perplexing moral problem (Pss 49:5; 78:2), perplexing question (1 Kgs 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 sayings of the wise often take the form of riddles that must be discerned.

**4 tn** Heb “fear of the LORD.” The expression *yir'at yehovah*, “fear of Yahweh”) is a genitive-construct in which *yir'at* (“the LORD”) functions as an objective genitive: He is the object of fear. The term *yara* (“fear”) is the common word for fear in the OT and has a basic three-fold range of meanings: (1) “dread; terror” (Deut 1:29; Jonah 1:10), (2) “to stand in awe” (1 Kgs 3:28), (3) “to revere; to respect” (Lev 19:3). With the LORD as the object, it captures the polar opposites of shrinking back in fear and drawing close in awe and adoration. Both categories of meaning appear in Exod 20:20 (where the LORD descended upon Sinai amidst geophysical convulsions); Moses encouraged the Israelites not to be afraid of God arbitrarily striking them dead for no reason (“Do not fear!”) but informed the people that the LORD revealed himself in such a terrifying manner to scare them from sinning (“God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him in you so that you do not sin”). The fear of the LORD is expressed in reverential submission to his will – the characteristic of true worship. The fear of the LORD is the foundation for wisdom (9:10) and the discipline leading to wisdom (15:33). It is expressed in hatred of evil (8:13) and avoidance of sin (16:6), and so results in prolonged life (10:27; 19:23).

**5 tn** Heb *re'shit* (“beginning”) has a two-fold range of meaning (BDB 912 s.v.): (1) “beginning” = first step in a course of action (e.g., Ps 111:10; Prov 17:14; Mic 1:13) or (2) “chief thing” as the principal aspect of something (e.g., Prov 4:7). So fearing the LORD is either (1) the first step in acquiring moral knowledge or (2) the most important aspect of moral knowledge. The first option is preferred because 1:2-6 focuses on the acquisition of wisdom.

**6 tn** Heb “knowledge.” The noun *da'at*, “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 *musar*, “instruction, discipline”) and *khokhmah*, “wisdom, moral skill”).

**7 tn** The conjunction “but” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the antithetical parallelism. It is supplied in the translation for clarity.

**8 tn** The term *evil*, “fool”) refers to a person characterized by moral folly (BDB 17 s.v.). Fools lack understanding (10:21), do not store up knowledge (10:14), fail to attain wisdom (24:7), and refuse correction (15:5; 27:22). They are arrogant (26:5), talk loosely (14:3) and are contentious (20:3). They might have mental intelligence but they are morally foolish. In sum, they are stubborn and “thick-brained” (J. H. Greenstone, *Proverbs*, 6).

**9 tn** The verb of *bazah*, “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 gnomic perfect (what they always do in past, present and future). The latter is preferred; this describes a trait of fools, and elsewhere the book

tion.<sup>10</sup>  
1:8 Listen,<sup>11</sup> my child,<sup>12</sup> to the instruction<sup>13</sup> from<sup>14</sup> your father, and do not forsake the teaching<sup>15</sup> from<sup>16</sup> your mother.  
1:9 For they will be like<sup>17</sup> an elegant<sup>18</sup> garland<sup>19</sup> on<sup>20</sup> your head, and like<sup>21</sup> pendants<sup>22</sup> around<sup>23</sup> your neck.

*Admonition to Avoid Easy but Unjust Riches*

1:10 My child, if sinners<sup>24</sup> try to entice<sup>25</sup> you,

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 *shema*, “Listen!” forms an urgent exhortation which 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 (בני, *bene*) 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 *avikha*, “of your father”) may be classified as a genitive of source.

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

**16 tn** Heb “of.” The noun *immekha*, “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 *khen*, “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 attractive wreath.

**19 tn** The noun *livyah*, “wreath; garland”) refers to a headdress 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 *khatta* (“sinner”) is the common word for “sinner” in the OT. Because the related verb is used once of slingshot throwers who miss the mark (Judg 20:16), 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 *yafukha* (“(if) they attempt to persuade you”) The verb *patah* (“to persuade, entice”) a person to sin (BDB 834 s.v. פָּתָה 1; see, e.g., Judg 14:15; 16:5; Prov 16:29; Hos 2:16).

do not consent!<sup>1</sup>

**1:11** If they say, “Come with us!

We will<sup>2</sup> lie in wait<sup>3</sup> to shed blood;<sup>4</sup> we will ambush<sup>5</sup> an innocent person<sup>6</sup> capriciously.<sup>7</sup>

**1:12** We will swallow them alive<sup>8</sup> like Sheol,<sup>9</sup>

those full of vigor<sup>10</sup> like those going down to the Pit.

**1:13** We will seize<sup>11</sup> all kinds<sup>12</sup> of precious wealth;

we will fill our houses with plunder.<sup>13</sup>

**1:14** Join with us!<sup>14</sup>

**1 tc** The MT reads the root אָוַח (*avah*, “to be willing; to consent”). Some medieval Hebrew mss read the root בּוֹא (*bo*, “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 tn** This cohortative אָוַח (*ne’evah*) 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 tn** The verb אָוַח (*arav*, “to lie in wait”) it is used for planning murder (Deut 19:11), kidnapping (Judg 21:20), or seduction (Prov 23:28).

**4 tn** Heb “for blood.” The term דָּם (*dam*, “blood”) functions as a metonymy of effect for “blood shed violently” through murder (HALOT 224 s.v. 4).

**5 tn** Heb “lie in hiding.”

**6 tn** The term “innocent” (נָקִי, *naqi*) intimates that the person to be attacked is harmless.

**7 tn** Heb “without cause” (so KJV, NAB; NCV “just for fun.” The term רֵגַם (*khinnam*, “without cause”) emphasizes that the planned attack is completely unwarranted.

**8 tn** Heb “lives.” The noun חַיִּים (*khayyim*, “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 tn** The noun שְׁאוֹל (*sh’ol*) 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 בּוֹר (*vor*, “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 swallower.”

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

**11 tn** Heb “find.” The use of the verb מָצָא (*matsa*, “to find”) is deliberate understatement to rhetorically down-play the heinous act of thievery.

**12 tn** Heb “all wealth of preciousness.”

**13 tn** The noun שָׁלַל (*shalal*, “plunder”) functions as an adverbial accusative of material: “with plunder.” This term is normally used for the spoils of war (e.g., Deut 20:14; Josh 7:21; Judg 8:24, 25; 1 Sam 30:20) but here refers to “stolen goods” (so NCV, CEV; e.g., Isa 10:2; Prov 16:19; BDB 1022 s.v. 3). The enticement was to join a criminal gang and adopt a life of crime to enjoy ill-gotten gain (A. Cohen, *Proverbs*, 4). Cf. NAB, NRSV “booty”; TEV “loot.”

**14 tn** Heb “Throw in your lot with us.” This is a figurative expression (hypocatastasis) urging the naive to join their life of

We will all share<sup>15</sup> equally in what we steal.<sup>16</sup>

**1:15** My child, do not go down<sup>17</sup> their way,<sup>18</sup>

withhold yourself<sup>19</sup> from their path;<sup>20</sup>

**1:16** for they<sup>21</sup> are eager<sup>22</sup> to inflict harm,<sup>23</sup> and they hasten<sup>24</sup> to shed blood.<sup>25</sup>

**1:17** Surely it is futile to spread<sup>26</sup> a net in plain sight of<sup>27</sup> any bird,<sup>28</sup>

**1:18** but these men lie in wait for their own blood,<sup>29</sup>

crime and divide their loot equally. The noun גּוֹרָל (*goral*, “lot”) can refer to (1) lot thrown for decision-making processes, e.g., choosing the scapegoat (Lev 16:8), discovering a guilty party (Jonah 1:7) or allocating property (Josh 18:6); (2) allotted portion (Josh 15:1) and (3) allotted fate or future destiny (Prov 1:14; Dan 12:13; see BDB 174 s.v.). Here the criminals urged the lad to share their life. The verb תְּפִיל (*tappil*) is an imperfect of injunction: “Throw in...!” but might also be an imperfect of permission: “you may throw.” It functions metonymically as an invitation to join their life of crime: “share with us” (BDB 658 s.v. 3).

**15 tn** Heb “there will be to all of us.”

**16 tn** Heb “one purse” (so KJV, NAB, NRSV). The term כֵּיס (*kis*, “purse; bag”) is a synecdoche of container (= purse) for contents (= stolen goods). The adjective אֶחָד (*ekhad*, “one”) indicates that the thieves promised to share equally in what they had stolen.

**17 tn** Heb “do not walk.”

**18 tn** Heb “in the way with them.”

**19 tn** Heb “your foot.” The term “foot” (רֵגֶל, *regel*) is a synecdoche of part (= your foot) for the whole person (= yourself).

**20 sn** The word “path” (דֶּרֶךְ, *n’tivah*) like the word “way” (דֶּרֶךְ, *derekh*) is used as an idiom (developed from a hypocatastasis), meaning “conduct, course of life.”

**21 tn** Heb “their feet.” The term “feet” is a synecdoche of the part (= their feet) for the whole person (= they), stressing the eagerness of the robbers.

**22 tn** Heb “run.” The verb רוּץ (*ruts*, “run”) functions here as a metonymy of association, meaning “to be eager” to do something (BDB 930 s.v.).

**23 tn** Heb “to harm.” The noun רָע (*ra*) 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 948-49 s.v.). The parallelism with “swift to shed blood” suggests it means “to inflict harm, injury.”

**24 tn** The imperfect tense verbs may be classified as habitual or progressive imperfects describing their ongoing continual activity.

**25 tc** 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.

**26 tn** Heb “for the net to be spread out.” The Pual participle of יָרַח (*zarah*) means “to be spread” (HALOT 280 s.v. יָרַח pu.1). The subject of this verbal use of the participle is the noun הַרְשֵׁת (*harashet*, “the net”). It is futile for the net to be spread out in plain view of birds.

**27 tn** Heb “in the eyes of.”

**sn** 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 anyway and be trapped; the wicked act in a similar way.

**28 tn** Heb “all of the possessors of wings.”

**29 sn** 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!<sup>1</sup>  
**1:19** Such<sup>2</sup> are the ways<sup>3</sup> of all who gain profit unjustly;<sup>4</sup>  
 it<sup>5</sup> takes away the life<sup>6</sup> of those who obtain it!<sup>7</sup>

*Warning Against Disregarding Wisdom*

**1:20** Wisdom<sup>8</sup> calls out<sup>9</sup> in the street, she shouts loudly<sup>10</sup> in the plazas,<sup>11</sup>  
**1:21** at the head of the noisy<sup>12</sup> streets she

calls,  
 in the entrances of the gates in the city<sup>13</sup>  
 she utters her words:<sup>14</sup>  
**1:22** “How long will you simpletons<sup>15</sup>  
 love naiveté?<sup>16</sup>  
 How long<sup>17</sup> will mockers<sup>18</sup> delight<sup>19</sup> in  
 mockery<sup>20</sup>  
 and fools<sup>21</sup> hate knowledge?  
**1:23** If only<sup>22</sup> you will respond<sup>23</sup> to my  
 rebuke,<sup>24</sup>  
 then<sup>25</sup> I will pour<sup>26</sup> out my thoughts<sup>27</sup> to  
 you

**1 tn** Heb “their own souls.” The term נַפְשׁוֹת (*nefesh*, “soul”) is used as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life). The noun נַפְשׁוֹת often 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 כֵּן (*ken*, “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 tc** The MT reads אֲרָחוֹת (*orkhot*, “paths; ways”) as figure for mode of life): “so are the ways [or, paths] of all who gain profit unjustly.” The BHS editors suggest emending the text to אַחֲרֵיהֶם (*akhariy*, “end”) as figure for their fate) by simple metathesis between ה (khet) and ר (*resh*) and by orthographic confusion between י (*yod*) and ו (*vav*), both common scribal errors: “so is the fate of all who gain profit unjustly.” The external evidence supports MT, which is also the more difficult reading. It adequately fits the context which uses “way” and “path” imagery throughout 1:10-19.

**4 tn** Heb “those who unjustly gain unjust gain.” The participle בֹּצְעִים (*bovse’a*, “those who unjustly gain”) is followed by the cognate accusative of the same root בֹּצְעָה (*batsa*, “unjust gain”) to underscore the idea that they gained their wealth through heinous criminal activity.

**5 sn** The verb followed by the cognate noun usually means seeking gain in an unjust way (1 Sam 8:3), or for selfish purposes (Gen 37:26), or gaining by violence. The word may have the sense of covetousness.

**5 tn** The subject of the verb is the noun בֹּצְעִים (“unjust gain”), which is also the referent of the 3rd person masculine singular suffix on בְּעֵלָיו (*b<sup>e</sup>alav*, “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.

**6 tn** The term נַפְשׁוֹת (*nefesh*, “soul”) is used as a metonymy (= soul) of association (= life). The noun נַפְשׁוֹת often refers to physical “life” (Exod 21:23; Num 17:3; Judg 5:18; Prov 12:10; BDB 659 s.v. 3.c).

**7 tn** Heb “its owners.”

**8 tn** The noun חֵכְמָה (*khokhmah*, “wisdom”) is the abstract feminine plural form. It probably functions as a plural of intensity, stressing the all-embracing, elevated wisdom (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 272). As in 8:1-9:11, Wisdom is personified as a righteous woman in 1:20-33.

**9 sn** The verb רָנַן (*ranan*, “to cry out, give a ringing cry”) always expresses excitement, whether of joyful praise or lamentable sorrow (BDB 943 s.v.). Here it is an excited summons.

**10 tn** Heb “she gives her voice.” The expression means to shout loudly (BDB 679 s.v. נָתַן Qal.x).

**11 sn** The word רְבוֹתוֹת (*rkhovot*, “plazas”) refers to the wide plazas or broad open spaces near the gate where all the people assembled. The personification of wisdom as a woman crying out in this place would be a vivid picture of the public appeal to all who pass by.

**12 tc** MT reads חֲמוּמָה (*hommyot*, “noisy streets”); Qal participle feminine plural from חָמַח [hamah], “to murmur; to roar”), referring to the busy, bustling place where the street branches off from the gate complex. The LXX reads τευχῆων (*teicheōn*) which reflects חומות (*khomot*), “walls” (feminine plural noun from חָמַח [hamah], “wall”): “She proclaims on the summits of the walls.” MT is preferred because it is the more difficult form. The LXX textual error was caused by simple omission of yod (י). In addition, the LXX expands the verse to read, “she sits at the gates of the princes, at the gates of the city she boldly says.” The shorter MT reading is preferred.

**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 tn** Wisdom addresses three types of people: simpletons (פְּתִימִים, *p<sup>e</sup>tayim*), scoffers (לְעִימִים, *letsim*) and fools (בְּסִילִים, *k<sup>e</sup>silim*). For the term “simpleton” see note on 1:4. 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 “inanity.” The noun פְּתִיָּה (*peti*) means “simplicity; lack of wisdom” (BDB 834 s.v.; HALOT 989 s.v. II פְּתִיָּה). It is related to the term פְּתִימִים (*p<sup>e</sup>tayim*) “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 לְעִימִים (*leysim*, “scoffers; mockers”) comes from the root לָיַס (*lays*, “to scorn; to mock; to speak indirectly”) (BDB 539 s.v. לָיַס). 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 חָמַד (*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 לָהֶם (*lahem*, “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 “fool” (בְּסִילִים, *k<sup>e</sup>sil*) refers to the morally insensitive 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 הִנֵּה (*hinneh*, “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 שׁוּב (*shuv*, “to return; to respond; to repent”).

**24 sn** The noun תּוֹכַחַת (*tokhachat*, “rebuke”) 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”; CEV “correct you.”

**25 tn** Heb “Behold!”

**26 tn** The Hiphil cohortative of נָבַע (*nava*, “to pour out”) describes the speaker’s resolution to pour out wisdom on those who respond.

**27 tn** Heb “my spirit.” The term “spirit” (רוּחַ, *ruakh*) functions as a metonymy (= spirit) of association (= thoughts), as indicated by the parallelism with “my words” (דְּבָרַי, *d<sup>e</sup>baray*). The noun רוּחַ (*ruakh*, “spirit”) can have a cognitive nuance, e.g., “spirit of wisdom” (Exod 28:3; Deut 34:9). It is used metonymically for “words” (Job 20:3) and “mind” (Isa 40:13; Ezek 11:5; 20:32; 1 Chr 28:12; see BDB 925 s.v. רוּחַ 6). The “spirit of wisdom” produces skill and capacity necessary for success (Isa 1:1:2; John 7:37-39).

and<sup>1</sup> I will make<sup>2</sup> my words known to you.  
**1:24** However,<sup>3</sup> because<sup>4</sup> I called but you refused to listen,<sup>5</sup> because<sup>6</sup> I stretched out my hand<sup>7</sup> but no one paid attention,  
**1:25** because<sup>8</sup> you neglected<sup>9</sup> all my advice,  
 and did not comply<sup>10</sup> with my rebuke,  
**1:26** so<sup>11</sup> I myself will laugh<sup>12</sup> when disaster strikes you,<sup>13</sup>  
 I will mock when what you dread<sup>14</sup> comes,  
**1:27** when what you dread<sup>15</sup> comes like a whirlwind,<sup>16</sup>  
 and disaster strikes you<sup>17</sup> like a devastating storm,<sup>18</sup>

when distressing trouble<sup>19</sup> comes on you.  
**1:28** Then they will call to me, but I will not answer;  
 they will diligently seek<sup>20</sup> me, but they will not find me.  
**1:29** Because<sup>21</sup> they hated moral knowledge,<sup>22</sup>  
 and did not choose to fear the LORD,<sup>23</sup>  
**1:30** they did not comply with my advice, they spurned<sup>24</sup> all my rebuke.  
**1:31** Therefore<sup>25</sup> they will eat from the fruit<sup>26</sup> of their way,<sup>27</sup>  
 and they will be stuffed full<sup>28</sup> of their own counsel.  
**1:32** For the waywardness<sup>29</sup> of the

**1 tn** The conjunction “and” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

**2 tn** Here too the form is the cohortative, stressing the resolution of wisdom to reveal herself to the one who responds.

**3 tn** The term “however” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the contrast between the offer in 1:23 and the accusation in 1:24-25. It is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

**4 tn** The particle יגן (*ya'an*, “because”) introduces a causal clause which forms part of an extended protasis; the apodosis is 1:26.

**5 tn** The phrase “to listen” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

**6 tn** The term “because” does not appear in this line but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for clarity and smoothness.

**7 sn** This expression is a metonymy of adjunct; it is a gesture that goes with the appeal for some to approach.

**8 tn** Heb “and.”

**9 tn** The verb III פָּרַע means “to let go; to let alone” (BDB 828 s.v.). It can refer to unkempt hair of the head (Lev 10:6) or lack of moral restraint: “to let things run free” (Exod 32:25; Prov 28:19). Here it means “to avoid, neglect” the offer of wisdom (BDB 829 s.v. 2).

**10 tn** The verbs are characteristic perfects or indefinite pasts. For the word “comply, consent,” see 1:20.

**11 tn** The conclusion or apodosis is now introduced.

**12 sn** Laughing at the consequences of the fool’s rejection of wisdom does not convey hardness against the fool; 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).

**13 tn** Heb “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” (אֵיִד, *ed*) often refers to final life-ending calamity (Prov 6:15; 24:22; BDB 15 s.v. 3). The preposition ב (*bet*) focuses upon time here.

**14 tn** Heb “your dread” (so NASB); KJV “your fear”; NRSV “panic.” The 2nd person masculine singular suffix is a subjective genitive: “that which you dread.”

**15 tn** Heb “your dread.” See note on 1:31.

**16 sn** The term “whirlwind” (NAB, NIV, NRSV; cf. TEV, NLT “storm”) refers to a devastating storm and is related to the verb שָׁחַ (sho’, “to crash into ruins”; see BDB 996 s.v. שֹׁחַ). Disaster will come swiftly and crush them like a devastating whirlwind.

**17 tn** Heb “your disaster.” The 2nd person masculine singular suffix is an objective genitive: “disaster strikes you.”

**18 tn** Heb “like a storm.” The noun סוּפָה (*sufah*, “storm”) is often used in similes to describe sudden devastation (Isa 5:28; Hos 8:7; Amos 1:14).

**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 terms צָוָה (*tsuqah*) and צָרָה (*tsarah*) also form a wordplay (paronomasia) which also links them together.

**20 tn** Heb “look to.” The verb שָׁחַר (*shakhar*, “to look”) is used figuratively of intensely looking (=seeking) for deliverance out of trouble (W. L. Holladay, *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 366); cf. NLT “anxiously search for.” It is used elsewhere in parallelism with בָּקַשׁ (*baqash*, “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 שָׁחַר (*shakhar*, “dawn”; e.g., BDB 1007 s.v. שָׁחַר).

**21 tn** The causal particle כִּי (*takhat ki*, “for the reason that”) introduces a second accusation of sin and reason for punishment.

**22 tn** Heb “knowledge.” The noun דַּעַת (*da’at*, “knowledge”) refers to moral knowledge. See note on 1:7.

**23 tn** Heb “the fear of the LORD.” The noun is an objective genitive; the LORD is to be the object of fear. See note on 1:7.

**24 tn** The verb “spurned” (נָאֵץ, *na’ats*) 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 tn** The vav (ו) prefixed to the verb יִאֲכַל (*y’akhal*) functions in a consecutive logical sense: “therefore.”

**26 sn** The expression “eat the fruit of” is a figurative expression (hypocatastasis) that compares the consequences of sin to agricultural growth that culminates in produce. They will suffer the consequences of their sinful actions, that is, they will “reap” what they “sow.”

**27 sn** The words “way” (דֶּרֶךְ, *derekh*) and “counsel” (מוֹעֵצָה, *mo’etsah*) 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).

**28 tn** Heb “to eat to one’s fill.” The verb שָׂבַע (*savea’*) means (1) positive: “to eat one’s fill” so that one’s appetite is satisfied and (2) negative: “to eat in excess” as a glutton 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).

**29 tn** Heb “turning away” (so KJV). The term מְשֻׁוּבָה (*m’shuvat*, “turning away”) refers to moral defection and apostasy (BDB 1000 s.v.; cf. ASV “backsliding”). The noun מְשֻׁוּבָה (“turning away”) which appears at the end of Wisdom’s speech in 1:32 is from the same root as the verb תִּשְׁוּבוּ (*tashuvu*, “turn!”) which appears at the beginning of this speech in 1:23. This repetition of the root שׁוּב (*shuv*, “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<sup>1</sup> them,  
and the careless ease<sup>2</sup> of fools will de-  
stroy them.  
1:33 But the one who listens<sup>3</sup> to me will  
live in security,<sup>4</sup>  
and will be at ease<sup>5</sup> from the dread of  
harm.

*Benefits of Seeking Wisdom*<sup>6</sup>

2:1 My child,<sup>7</sup> if<sup>8</sup> you receive my words,  
and store up<sup>9</sup> my commands within you,  
2:2 by making<sup>10</sup> your ear<sup>11</sup> attentive to  
wisdom,

and<sup>12</sup> by turning<sup>13</sup> your heart<sup>14</sup> to under-  
standing,  
2:3 indeed, if<sup>15</sup> you call out for<sup>16</sup> discern-  
ment<sup>17</sup> –  
raise your voice<sup>18</sup> for understanding –  
2:4 if<sup>19</sup> you seek<sup>20</sup> it like silver,<sup>21</sup>  
and search for it<sup>22</sup> like hidden treasure,  
2:5 then you will understand<sup>23</sup> how to fear  
the LORD,<sup>24</sup>  
and you will discover<sup>25</sup> knowledge<sup>26</sup>  
about God.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>1</sup> sn The Hebrew verb “to kill” (הָרַג, *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.

<sup>2</sup> tn Heb “complacency” (so NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT); NAB “smugness.” The noun שְׁלוֹתָ (shalvatah) means (1) positively: “quietness; peace; ease” and (2) negatively: “self-sufficiency; complacency; careless security” (BDB 1017 s.v.), which is the sense here. It is “repose gained by ignoring or neglecting the serious responsibilities of life” (C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 29).

<sup>3</sup> tn The participle is used substantively here: “whoever listens” will enjoy the benefits of the instruction.

<sup>4</sup> tn The noun בְּטָחָה (betakh, “security”) functions as an adverbial 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.

<sup>5</sup> tn The verb שָׁאַן (sha’anan) a Palel perfect of שָׁאַן (sha’an) which means “to be at ease; to rest securely” (BDB 983 s.v. שָׁאַן). Elsewhere it parallels the verb “to be undisturbed” (Jer 30:10), so it means “to rest undisturbed and quiet.” The reduplicated Palel 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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 enablement for righteous living (20-22).

<sup>7</sup> tn Heb “my son.”

<sup>8</sup> 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 particle אִם (“az, “then”).

<sup>9</sup> sn The verb “to store up” (צָפַן, *tsafan*; cf. NAB, NLT “treasure”) in the second colon qualifies the term “receive” (קָבַץ, *laqakh*) 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).

<sup>10</sup> tn The Hiphil infinitive construct לְהִקְשִׁיב (lehaqshiv, “by making attentive”) functions as an epexegetical explanation of how one will receive the instruction.

<sup>11</sup> 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. אָזַן 2).

<sup>12</sup> tn The conjunction “and” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

<sup>13</sup> tn The Hiphil imperfect (“by turning”) continues the nuance introduced by the infinitive construct in the first colon (GKC 352 §114.r). 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.

<sup>14</sup> tn Or “mind” (the center of the will, the choice).

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb “summon.”

<sup>17</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>20</sup> tn The verb בָּקַשׁ (*baqash*) 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> sn The verb חָפַשׁ (*khafas*) 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.

<sup>23</sup> tn The verb בִּין (*bin*, “to perceive; to understand; to discern”) refers to ability to grasp, discern or be sensitive to what it means to fear the LORD.

<sup>24</sup> tn Heb “the fear of the LORD.” The noun is an objective genitive; the LORD is to be the object of fear and reverence.

<sup>25</sup> tn Heb “find” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>26</sup> tn The term דַּעַת (*da’at*, “knowledge”) goes beyond cognition; it is often used metonymically (cause) for obedience (effect); see, e.g., Prov 3:6, “in all your ways acknowledge him,” and BDB 395 s.v. This means that the disciple will follow God’s moral code; for to know God is to react ethically and spiritually to his will (e.g., J. H. Greenstone, *Proverbs*, 18).

<sup>27</sup> tn Heb “knowledge of God.” The noun is an objective genitive.

2:6 For<sup>1</sup> the LORD gives<sup>2</sup> wisdom,  
and from his mouth<sup>3</sup> comes<sup>4</sup> knowledge  
and understanding.

2:7 He stores up<sup>5</sup> effective counsel<sup>6</sup> for  
the upright,<sup>7</sup>  
and is like<sup>8</sup> a shield<sup>9</sup> for those who live<sup>10</sup>  
with integrity,<sup>11</sup>

2:8 to guard<sup>12</sup> the paths of the righteous<sup>13</sup>

**1 tn** This is a causal clause. The reason one must fear and know the LORD is that he is the source of true, effectual wisdom.

**2 tn** The verb is an imperfect tense which probably functions as a habitual imperfect describing a universal truth in the past, present and future.

**3 sn** This expression is an anthropomorphism; it indicates that the LORD is the immediate source or author of the wisdom. It is worth noting that in the incarnation many of these "anthropomorphisms" become literal in the person of the Logos, the Word, Jesus, who reveals the Father.

**4 tn** The verb "comes" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

**5 tc** The form is a *Kethib/Qere* reading. The *Kethib* יָצַן (*v<sup>e</sup>tsafan*; Qal perfect + *vav* consecutive) is supported by the LXX and Syriac. The *Qere* יִצְוֶן (*yitspon*; Qal imperfect) is supported by the Aramaic Targum of Prov 2:7 (the Aramaic translations of the Hebrew scriptures were called Targums) and Latin Vulgate. Internal evidence favors the imperfect; another imperfect appears in v. 6a with a similar sense. The *Qere* is normally preferred; the scribes are indicating that the received reading is corrupt. The *Kethib* reflects orthographic confusion between י (yod) and ו (vav). As in v. 6a, this Qal imperfect functions as a habitual imperfect describing a universal truth in past, present and future.

**sn** The verbal root יָצַן (*tsafan*, "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.

**6 tn** The noun תוֹשִׁיָּה (*tushiyah*) has a two-fold range of meanings: (1) "sound wisdom" (so KJV, NRSV); "effective counsel" and (2) result (metonymy of effect): "abiding success" (BDB 444 s.v.; W. L. Holladay, *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 388; cf. NIV "victory"). It refers to competent wisdom and its resultant ability to achieve moral success (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 80).

**7 sn** The Hebrew word translated "upright" (יָשָׁר, *yashar*) is one of the terms used for the righteous. It points to the right conduct of the believer – that which is right or pleasing in the eyes of God. It stresses that the life of the individual is upright, straightforward, and just. It is paralleled with "those who walk in integrity."

**8 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.

**9 tn** The word can be taken as in apposition explaining the subject of the first colon – the LORD is a shield, the LORD stores up. The word then is a metaphor for the protection afforded by the LORD.

**10 tn** Heb "walk." The verb "to walk" (הָלַךְ, *halakh*) is an idiom (based upon hypocatastasis: implied comparison) for habitual manner of life (BDB 234 s.v. 3.e).

**11 tn** Heb "those who walk of integrity." The noun תָּם (*tom*, "integrity") functions as a genitive of manner.

**12 tn** The infinitive construct לִנְצֹר (*lintsor*, "to guard") designates the purpose of the LORD giving "effective counsel" and being a "shield" to the upright. The verb נָצַר (*natsar*, "to guard") has a broad range of meanings: (1) to watch over, guard or protect a vineyard from theft (Prov 27:18); (2) to guard one's lips or heart from evil (Prov 4:23; 13:3); (3) to protect a person from moral or physical danger (Prov 2:8, 11; 4:6; 13:6; 20:28; 22:12; 24:12) and (4) to guard with fidelity = to observe commands, law or covenant (Prov 3:1, 21; 4:13; 5:2; 6:20; 28:7; see BDB 665-66 s.v.). Here God guards the way of the just, that is, the course and conduct of life from the influence of evil.

**13 tn** Heb "paths of righteousness." The word "righteous-

ness" is a possessive genitive, signifying the ways that the righteous take.

and to protect<sup>14</sup> the way of his pious ones.<sup>15</sup>  
2:9 Then you will understand<sup>16</sup> righteous-  
ness and justice  
and equity – every<sup>17</sup> good<sup>18</sup> way.<sup>19</sup>

2:10 For wisdom will enter your heart,<sup>20</sup>  
and moral knowledge<sup>21</sup> will be attractive<sup>22</sup>  
to you.<sup>23</sup>

2:11 Discretion<sup>24</sup> will protect you,<sup>25</sup>  
understanding will guard you,

ness" is a possessive genitive, signifying the ways that the righteous take.

**14 tn** The imperfect tense verb יִשְׁמֹר (*yishmor*, "to protect") continues the syntactical nuance of the preceding infinitive construct of purpose.

**15 tc** The *Kethib* is the singular noun + 3rd person masculine singular suffix הַיָּשָׁרִים (*khasido*) "his pious one." The *Qere* reads the plural noun + 3rd person masculine singular suffix הַיָּשָׁרִים (*khasidav*) "his pious ones." The LXX εὐλαβουμένων αὐτόν (*eulaboumenōn auton*) supports the *Qere* reading.

**tn** The noun תָּם (*khesed*, "the pious") describes those who show "covenantal faithful love" or "loyal love" to God and his people. The description of the righteous by this term indicates their active participation in the covenant, for which God has promised his protection.

**16 tn** Heb "discern." See preceding note on בִּין (*bin*) in 2:5.

**17 tn** The phrase "every good way" functions appositionally to the preceding triad of righteous attributes, further explaining and defining them.

**18 tn** Heb "every way of good." The term טוֹב (*tov*, "good") functions as an attributive genitive: "good way."

**19 tn** Heb "track"; KJV, NIV, NRSV "path." The noun מַעְגָּל (*ma'gal*) is used (1) literally of "wagon-wheel track; firm path" and (2) figuratively (as a metaphor) to describe the course of life (Pss 17:5; 23:3; 140:6; Prov 2:9, 15, 18; 4:11, 26; 5:6, 21; Isa 26:7; 59:8; see BDB 722-23 s.v. 2; KBL 2:609). It is related to the feminine noun אֶגְלָה (*agalah*, "cart") and the verb אָגַל (*agal* "to be round" (Qal) and "to roll" (Niphal)). As a wagon-wheel cuts a deep track in a much traversed dirt road, so a person falls into routines and habits that reveal his moral character. In Proverbs the "paths" of the righteous are characterized by uprightness and integrity.

**20 tn** The noun לֵב (*lev*, "heart") functions as a metonymy of association for "mind" and "thoughts" (BDB 524 s.v. 3). It represents the center of the inner life where the volition and emotions join to bring about actions. It is used here in parallelism with נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*, "soul"), for which see note.

**21 tn** Heb "knowledge." For the noun דַּעַת (*da'at*), see the note on 1:7.

**22 tn** Heb "pleasant." The verb יִנְעַם (*yin'am*, "to be pleasant") describes what is attractive. It is used of being physically attracted to one's lover (Song 7:7) or to a close friendship (2 Sam 1:26). Here wisdom becomes attractive to the righteous, that is, the righteous desires to acquire it.

**23 tn** Heb "your soul." The term נַפְשְׁךָ (*nafsh'ekha*, "your soul") functions as a synecdoche of part (= soul) for the whole person (= you); see BDB 660 s.v. 4.a.2. It also might function as a metonymy of association for emotions and passions (BDB 660 s.v. 6) or mental cognition (BDB 660 s.v. 7).

**24 tn** The word מְצִיטָה (*metsimma*, "discretion") is the ability to know the best course of action for achieving one's goal. It is knowledge and understanding with a purpose. This kind of knowledge enables one to make the right choices that will protect him from blunders and their consequences (cf. NLT "wise planning"; CEV "sound judgment").

**25 tn** Heb "will watch over you."



2:12 to deliver<sup>1</sup> you from the way of the wicked,<sup>2</sup>  
 from those<sup>3</sup> speaking perversity,<sup>4</sup>  
 2:13 who leave<sup>5</sup> the upright<sup>6</sup> paths  
 to walk on the dark<sup>7</sup> ways,  
 2:14 who delight<sup>8</sup> in doing<sup>9</sup> evil,<sup>10</sup>  
 they rejoice in perverse evil;<sup>11</sup>  
 2:15 whose paths<sup>12</sup> are morally crooked,<sup>13</sup>  
 and who are devious<sup>14</sup> in their ways;

2:16 to deliver you<sup>15</sup> from the adulteress,<sup>16</sup>  
 from the sexually loose woman<sup>17</sup> who  
 speaks flattering<sup>18</sup> words;<sup>19</sup>  
 2:17 who leaves<sup>20</sup> the husband<sup>21</sup> from her  
 younger days,<sup>22</sup>

**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, rescuing from enemies, plucking a brand 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” (רַע, *ra’*) 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** Heb “man.” The singular noun אִישׁ (*ish*, “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 תְּהַפְּכוֹת (*tahpukhot*) may denote a plurality of number (“perverse things”) or intensification: “awful perversity.” As here, it often refers to perverse speech (Prov 8:13; 10:31, 32; 23:33). It is related to the noun הֶפְּךָ (*hefekh*, “that which is contrary, perverse”) which refers to what is contrary to morality (Isa 29:16; Ezek 16:34; BDB 246 s.v. הֶפְּךָ). The related verb הִפַּךְ (*hafakh*, “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 bread-cakes (Judg 7:13; Hos 7:8) and (2) figuratively of perverting things so that they are morally upside down, so to speak (Jer 23:36). These people speak what is contrary to morality, wisdom, sense, logic or the truth.

**5 tn** The articular plural active participle functions as attributive adjective for אִישׁ (*ish*, “man”) in v. 12b, indicating that אִישׁ (“man”) is collective.

**6 tn** Heb “paths of uprightness.” The noun יָשָׁר (*yashar*, “uprightness; straightness”) is an attributive genitive. The moral life is described in Proverbs as the smooth, straight way (2:13; 4:11). The wicked abandons the clear straight path for an evil, crooked, uncertain path.

**7 tn** Heb “ways of darkness.” Darkness is often metaphorical for sinfulness, ignorance, or oppression. Their way of life lacks spiritual illumination.

**8 tn** The articular plural active participle functions as the second attributive adjective for אִישׁ (*ish*, “man”) in v. 12b.

**9 tn** The Qal infinitive construct is the complementary use of the form, expressing the direct object of the participle.

**10 tn** Or “harm.”

**11 tn** Heb “the perversity of evil” (so NASB). The noun רַע (*ra’*, “evil”) functions as an attributed genitive which is modified by the construct noun תְּהַפְּכוֹת (*tahpukhot*, “perversity”) which functions as an attributive adjective.

**12 tn** The noun in this relative clause is an accusative of specification: The evil people are twisted with respect to their paths/conduct.

**13 tn** Heb “crooked.” The adjective עִקְשָׁה (*iqqesh*, “crooked; twisted”) uses the morphological pattern of adjectives that depict permanent bodily defects, e.g., blindness, lameness. Their actions are morally defective and, apart from repentance, are permanently crooked and twisted.

**14 tn** The Niphal participle of לָזַם (*luz*, “devious; crooked”) describes conduct that is morally deceptive, crafty, and cunning (Isa 30:12).

**15 sn** This purpose clause introduced by לְהַצִּילֵךְ (*le’hatsilkha*, “to deliver you”) parallels the purpose clause introduced by לְהַצִּילֵךְ (“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 root זָר (*zur*, “to be a stranger”) sometimes refers to people who are ethnically foreign to Israel (Isa 1:7; Hos 7:9; 8:7) but it often refers to what is morally estranged from God or his covenant people (Pss 58:4; 78:30; BDB 266 s.v.). Referring to a woman, it means adulteress or prostitute (Prov 2:16; 5:3, 20; 7:5; 22:14; 23:33; see BDB 266 s.v. 2.b). It does not mean that she is a foreigner but that she is estranged from the community with its social and religious values (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 285). It describes her as outside the framework of the covenant community (L. A. Snijders, “The Meaning of זָר in the Old Testament: An Exegetical Study,” *OTS* 10 [1954]: 85-86). Here an Israelite woman is in view because her marriage is called a “covenant with God.” She is an adulteress, acting outside the legal bounds of the marriage contract.

**17 tn** Heb “alien woman.” The adjective נֹכְרִי (*nokhri*, “foreign; alien”) refers to (1) people who are ethnically alien to Israel (Exod 21:8; Deut 17:15; Judg 19:12; Ruth 2:10; 1 Kgs 11:1, 8; Ezra 10:2, 10, 11; see BDB 649 s.v. 1); (2) people who are morally alienated from God and his covenant people (Job 19:15; Ps 69:9; Prov 20:16; Eccl 6:2; Jer 2:21; see BDB 649 s.v. 3) and (3) as a technical term in Proverbs for a harlot or promiscuous woman as someone who is morally alienated from God and moral society (Prov 2:16; 5:20; 6:24; 7:5; 20:16; 23:27; 27:13; see BDB 649 s.v. 2). The description of the woman as a “strange woman” and now an “alien woman” is within the context of the people of Israel. She is a “foreigner” in the sense that she is a nonconformist, wayward and loose. It does not necessarily mean that she is not ethnically Israelite (though BDB notes that most harlots in Israel were originally chiefly foreigners by reason of their otherwise homeless condition).

**18 tn** Heb “makes smooth.” The Hiphil of הִקָּלַל (“to be smooth; to be slippery”) means (1) “to make smooth” (metal with hammer) and (2) “to use smooth words,” that is, to flatter (Pss 5:10; 36:3; Prov 2:16; 7:5; 28:23; 29:5; see BDB 325 s.v. 2; HALOT 322 s.v. הִקָּלַל hif.2). The related Arabic cognate verb means “make smooth, lie, forge, fabricate.” The seductive speech of the temptress is compared to olive oil (5:3) and is recounted (7:14-20).

**19 tn** Heb “whose words she makes smooth.” The phrase is a relative clause that does not have a relative pronoun. The antecedent of the 3rd person feminine singular suffix is clearly “the sexually loose woman” earlier in the line.

**sn** For descriptions of seductive speech, see Prov 5:3 where it is compared to olive oil, and 7:14-20 where such speech is recorded.

**20 tn** The construction is the active participle of עָזַב (*azav*) with the article, serving as an attributive adjective. The verb means “to forsake; to leave; to abandon.”

**21 tn** Heb “companion” (so NAB, NASB); NIV “partner.” The term אֲלוּף (*aluf*, “companion”) is from the root אָלַף (*alaf*, “to be familiar with; to cleave to”) and refers to a woman’s husband (Prov 2:17; Jer 3:4; see BDB 48 s.v. אֲלוּף 2). This noun follows the passive adjectival formation and so signifies one who is well-known.

**22 tn** Heb “of her youth.” The noun עֲוֵרָה (*ureha*, “her youth”) functions as a temporal genitive. The plural form is characteristic of nouns that refer to long periods of duration in the various stages of life. The time of “youth” encompasses the entire formative period within marriage.

and forgets her marriage covenant<sup>1</sup> made before God.<sup>2</sup>

2:18 For her house<sup>3</sup> sinks<sup>4</sup> down to death, and her paths lead<sup>5</sup> to the place of the departed spirits.<sup>6</sup>

**1 tn** *Heb* “the covenant.” This could refer to the Mosaic covenant that prohibits adultery, or more likely, as in the present translation, the marriage covenant (cf. also TEV, CEV). The lexicons list this use of “covenant” (בְּרִית, *b'rit*) 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).

**2 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.

**3 tn** Or “she sinks her house down to death.” The syntax of this line is difficult. The verb שָׁקְדָה is Qal perfect 3rd person feminine singular of שָׁקַד (“to sink down”) which must take a feminine singular subject – most likely the “loose woman” of 2:16-17. However, most English versions take בֵּיתָה (*betah*) “her house” (ms noun + 3rd person feminine singular suffix) as the subject (e.g., KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, CEV): “her house sinks down to death.” But בֵּיתָה “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 בֵּיתָה (“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 MT בֵּיתָה (“her house”) to the feminine singular noun נְתִיבָתָה (“her path”) which appears in 7:27, to recover a feminine subject for the verb: “her path sinks down to death.” However, the reading of the MT is supported by all the versions.

**4 tc** The MT reads שָׁקְדָה (Qal perfect 3rd person feminine singular of שָׁקַד “to sink down”): “she sinks her house down to death.” The LXX reflects שָׁקְדָה (*shatah*, Qal perfect 3rd person feminine singular of שָׁקַד “to place; to put”): “she established her house near death.” This is a matter of simple orthographic confusion between ח (*khet*) and ת (*tav*). The MT preserves the more difficult reading (see following note) so it is probably the original.

**5 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.

**6 tn** *Heb* “to the departed spirits” or “to the Rephaim.” The term רִפְּאִים (*rafa'im*, “Rephaim”) refers to spirits of the dead who are inhabitants of Sheol (BDB 952 s.v.; HALOT 1274-75 s.v. רִפְּאִים). It is used in parallelism with מֵתִים (*metim*, “the dead”) to refer to the departed spirits of the dead in Sheol (Ps 88:11; Isa 26:14). The Rephaim inhabit נַוֵּת (*navet*, “[place of] death”; Prov 2:18); שְׁאוֹל (*sheol*, “Sheol”; Job 26:5; Prov 9:18; Isa 14:9); “darkness and the land of forgetfulness” (Ps 88:14), and “the land of the Rephaim” (Isa 26:19). Scholars debate whether רִפְּאִים is derived from the root (1) רָפָא (*rafa*, “to heal”), meaning “the healers” or (2) רָפַח (*rafah*, “to be weak; to sink down”), meaning “the powerless ones” or “those who sink down (to Sheol)” (BDB 952 s.v.; HALOT 1274-75 s.v.). The related term occurs in Phoenician and Neo-Punic meaning “spirits of the dead” (*DISO* 282) and in Ugaritic referring to “spirits of the dead” who inhabited the underworld and were viewed as healers (*UT* 2346; *WUS* 2527). The Hebrew term is often translated “the shades” as a description of the shadowy existence of those who dwelling in Sheol who have lost their vitality (R. F. Schnell, *IDB* 4:35). Used here in parallelism with נַוֵּת (“[place of] death”), רִפְּאִים (“the Rephaim”) probably functions as a synecdoche of inhabitants (= the departed spirits of the dead) for the place inhabited (= Sheol). The point of this line is that those who fall prey to an adulteress will end up among the departed spirits in the realm of the dead. This might mean (1) physical death: he will get himself

2:19 None who go in to her will return,<sup>7</sup> nor will they reach the paths of life.<sup>8</sup>

2:20 So<sup>9</sup> you will walk in the way of good people,<sup>10</sup>

and will keep on the paths of the righteous.<sup>11</sup>

2:21 For the upright will reside in the land,

and those with integrity<sup>12</sup> will remain in it,

2:22 but the wicked<sup>13</sup> will be removed<sup>14</sup> from the land,

and the treacherous<sup>15</sup> will be torn away<sup>16</sup> from it.

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).

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

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

**9 tn** The conjunction לְמַעַן (*le'ma'an*, “so; as a result”) introduces the concluding result (BDB 775 s.v. מֵיָן 2; HALOT 614 s.v. מֵיָן 2.c) of heeding the admonition to attain wisdom (2:1-11) and to avoid the evil men and women and their destructive ways (2:12-19).

**10 tn** The noun “good” (טוֹבִים, *tovim*) does not function as an attributive genitive (“the good way”) because it is a plural noun and the term “way” (דֶּרֶךְ, *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.”

**11 tn** In the light of the parallelism, the noun “righteous” (צְדִיקִים, *tsadiqim*) functions as a genitive of possession rather than an attributive genitive.

**12 tn** *Heb* “the blameless” (so NASB, NIV); NAB “the honest”; NRSV “the innocent.” The term תְּמִימִים (*temimim*, “the blameless”) describes those who live with integrity. They are blameless in that they live above reproach according to the requirements of the law.

**13 tn** *Heb* “the guilty.” The term רָשָׁעִים (*resha'im*, “the wicked”) is from the root רָשַׁע (*rasha'*, “to be guilty”) and refers to those who are (1) guilty of sin: moral reprobates or (2) guilty of crime: criminals deserving punishment (BDB 957 s.v. רָשָׁע). 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 16:26; 35:31; 2 Sam 4:11). Here they will be “cut off” and “torn away” from the land.

**14 tn** *Heb* “cut off.” The verb כָּרַת (*karat*, “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 where the righteous dwell in security either through death or expulsion.

**15 tn** The word בְּגַד (*bagad*) means “to act treacherously” (BDB 93 s.v.; HALOT 108 s.v. בָּגַד). 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.

**16 tn** The consonantal form יִשְׁרוּ (*yshkv*) is vocalized in the MT as יִשְׁרוּ (*yiss'khu*, Qal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural from יָשַׁךְ, *nasakh*, “to tear away”) but this produces an awkward sense: “they [= the righteous in v. 20-21] will tear away the treacherous from it” (BDB 650 s.v. נָשַׁךְ). Due to the parallelism, the *BHS* editors suggest emending the form to יִשְׁכְּרוּ (*yinnaskhu*, Niphal imperfect 3rd person masculine plural): “the treacherous will be torn away from it.” However, *Tg. Prov* 2:22 points the form as יִשְׁכְּרוּ (*yushku*) 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<sup>A</sup>*

3:1 My child,<sup>2</sup> do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep<sup>3</sup> my commandments,  
 3:2 for they will provide<sup>4</sup> a long and full life,<sup>5</sup> and they will add well-being<sup>6</sup> to you.  
 3:3 Do not let truth and mercy<sup>7</sup> leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.<sup>8</sup>  
 3:4 Then you will find<sup>9</sup> favor and good understanding,<sup>10</sup> in the sight of God and people.<sup>11</sup>

3:5 Trust<sup>12</sup> in the LORD with all your

heart,<sup>13</sup> and do not rely<sup>14</sup> on your own understanding.<sup>15</sup>  
 3:6 Acknowledge<sup>16</sup> him in all your ways,<sup>17</sup> and he will make your paths straight.<sup>18</sup>  
 3:7 Do not be wise in your own estimation,<sup>19</sup> fear the LORD and turn away from evil.<sup>20</sup>  
 3:8 This will bring<sup>21</sup> healing to your body,<sup>22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> sn 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 emulating the wicked (31-35).

<sup>2</sup> tn Heb “my son” (likewise in vv. 11, 21).  
<sup>3</sup> tn The verb יָצַר (*yatsar*) is a Qal jussive and the noun לִבְךָ (*libbekha*, “your heart”) functions as the subject: “let your heart keep my commandments.”

<sup>4</sup> tn The phrase “they will provide” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but are supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

<sup>5</sup> tn Heb “length of days and years of life” (so NASB, NRSV). The idiom “length of days” refers to a prolonged life and “years of life” signifies a long time full of life, a life worth living (T. T. Perowne, *Proverbs*, 51). The term “life” refers to earthly felicity combined with spiritual blessedness (BDB 313 s.v. חַיִּים).

<sup>6</sup> tn The noun שְׁלוֹמִים (*shalom*, “peace”) here means “welfare, health, prosperity” (BDB 1022 s.v. 3). It can be used of physical health and personal well-being. It is the experience of positive blessing and freedom from negative harm and catastrophe.

<sup>7</sup> tn The two words חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת (*khased ve’emet*, “mercy and truth”) form a nominal hendiadys, the second word becoming an adjective: “faithful covenant love” or “loyal [covenant] love and faithfulness.”

<sup>8</sup> sn This involves two implied comparisons (hypocatastasis). One is a comparison of living out the duties and responsibilities taught with binding a chain around the neck, and the other is a comparison of the inward appropriation of the teachings with writing them on a tablet. So the teachings are not only to become the lifestyle of the disciple but his very nature.

<sup>9</sup> tn The form מִצְאָה (*um’etsa’*, “find”) is the 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).

<sup>10</sup> tn The noun שֵׂכֶל (*sekhel*, “understanding”) does not seem to parallel כֵּן (*khen*, “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 and understanding.” C. H. Toy (*Proverbs* [ICC], 59) suggests emending the MT’s שֵׂכֶל טוֹב (*sekhel-tov*, “good understanding”) to שֵׂמֵט טוֹב (*shem-tov*, “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.

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb “man.”

<sup>12</sup> sn The word בָּטַח (*b’atakh*, “trust”) 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 105 s.v. בָּטַח; HALOT 120 s.v. בָּטַח). 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-

ject of confidence.

<sup>13</sup> sn The “heart” functions as a metonymy of subject encompassing mind, emotions and will (BDB 524 s.v. לֵב 2).

<sup>14</sup> tn Heb “do not lean.” The verb שָׁעַן (*sha’an*, “to lean; to rely”) is used in (1) literal physical sense of leaning upon something for support and (2) figurative sense of relying upon someone or something for help or protection (BDB 1043 s.v.). Here it functions figuratively (hypocatastasis: implied comparison); relying on one’s own understanding is compared to leaning on something that is unreliable for support (e.g., Isa 10:20).

<sup>15</sup> tn Heb “your understanding.” The term בִּינָה (*binah*, “understanding”) is used elsewhere in this book of insight given by God from the instructions in Proverbs (Prov 2:3; 7:4; 8:14; 9:6, 10; 23:23). Here it refers to inherent human understanding that functions in relative ignorance unless supplemented by divine wisdom (Job 28:12-28; 39:26). The reflexive pronoun “own” is supplied in the translation to clarify this point. It is dangerous for a person to rely upon mere human wisdom (Prov 14:12; 16:25).

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb “know him.” The verb יָדַע (*yadah*, “to know”) includes mental awareness of who God is and the consequential submission to his lordship. To know him is to obey him. The sage is calling for a life of trust and obedience in which the disciple sees the LORD in every event and relies on him. To acknowledge the LORD in every event means trusting and obeying him for guidance in right conduct.

<sup>17</sup> tn The term דֶּרֶךְ (*derekh*, “way”) is figurative (hypocatastasis: implied comparison) referring to a person’s course of life, actions and undertakings (Prov 2:8; 3:6, 23; 11:5; 20:24; 29:27; 31:3; BDB 203 s.v. 5; cf. TEV “in everything you do”; NCV, NLT “in all you do”). This is a call for total commitment in trust for obedience in all things.

<sup>18</sup> tn The verb יָשָׁר (*yashar*) means “to make smooth; to make straight” (BDB 444 s.v.). This phrase means “to make the way free from obstacles,” that is, to make it successful (e.g., Isa 40:3). The straight, even road is the right road; God will make the way smooth for the believer.

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb “in your own eyes” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV); NLT “Don’t be impressed with your own wisdom.”

<sup>20</sup> sn The second colon clarifies the first. If one fears the LORD and turns away from evil, then he is depending on the LORD and not wise in his own eyes. There is a higher source of wisdom than human insight.

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb “it will be.” The form is Qal jussive of הָיָה (*hayah*) and is one of the rare uses of the volitive 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).

<sup>22</sup> tc Heb “your navel” (cf. KJV, ASV). MT reads שָׁרְרָה (*sharrekha*, “your navel”) which functions as a synecdoche of part (= navel) for the whole (= body), meaning “your body” (BDB 1057 s.v. שָׂר). The geminate noun שֵׁר (*sor*, “navel; navel-string [= umbilical cord]”) occurs only two other times in OT (Ezek 16:4; Song 7:3). The LXX reads σῶμα σῶμα (*ḥō sōmati sou*, “your body”). So the BHS editors suggest emending MT to the more commonly used terms בִּשְׂרָה (*b’sarekha*, “your flesh”) or שְׂאֲרָה (*sh’erekha*, “your body”). But this kind of emendation runs counter to the canons of textual criticism; normally the more difficult reading or rarer term is preferred as original rather than a smooth reading or common term. Since “navel” occurs only twice elsewhere, it is difficult to imagine that it would have been confused for these two more common terms and that a scribe would mistakenly write “your

and refreshment<sup>1</sup> to your inner self.<sup>2</sup>  
**3:9** Honor<sup>3</sup> the LORD from your wealth  
 and from the first fruits of all your crops;<sup>4</sup>  
**3:10** then your barns will be filled completely,<sup>5</sup>  
 and your vats<sup>6</sup> will overflow<sup>7</sup> with new wine.

**3:11** My child, do not despise discipline  
 from the LORD,<sup>8</sup>  
 and do not loathe<sup>9</sup> his rebuke.  
**3:12** For the LORD disciplines<sup>10</sup> those he  
 loves,

just as a father<sup>11</sup> disciplines<sup>12</sup> the son in  
 whom he delights.

### Blessings of Obtaining Wisdom

**3:13** Blessed<sup>13</sup> is the one<sup>14</sup> who finds<sup>15</sup>  
 wisdom,  
 and the one who obtains<sup>16</sup> understanding.  
**3:14** For her<sup>17</sup> benefit<sup>18</sup> is more profitable<sup>19</sup>  
 than silver,  
 and her<sup>20</sup> gain<sup>21</sup> is better<sup>22</sup> than gold.  
**3:15** She is more precious than rubies,  
 and none of the things<sup>23</sup> you desire<sup>24</sup> can  
 compare<sup>25</sup> with her.<sup>26</sup>

navel" instead. If MT "your navel" is a synecdoche for "your body," the LXX is not pointing to a different textual tradition but is merely interpreting MT accordingly. In similar fashion, the English versions which read "your body" are not rejecting the MT reading; they are merely interpreting the term as a figure (synecdoche) for "your body."

**1 tn** Heb "drink." The noun שִׁיקָי (shiqquy, "drink") is a figure: metonymy of cause (= drink) for the effect (= refreshment); see BDB 1052 s.v. Just as a drink of water would bring physical refreshment to one's body, trusting in God and turning away from evil will bring emotional refreshment to one's soul.

**2 tn** Heb "your bones." The term עֲצָמוֹתַיךְ ('atsmotekha, "your bones") functions as a synecdoche of part (= bones) for the whole person (= physical and moral aspects); cf. Pss 6:3; 35:10; Prov 3:8; 14:30; 15:30; 16:24; Isa 66:14 and BDB 782 s.v. עֲצָמָה 1.d. Scripture often uses the body to describe the inner person (A. R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel*, 67-8).

**3 tn** The imperative כַּבֵּד (kabbed, "honor") functions as a command, instruction, counsel or exhortation. To honor God means to give him the rightful place of authority by rendering to him gifts of tribute. One way to acknowledge God in one's ways (v. 6) is to honor him with one's wealth (v. 9).

**4 tn** Heb "produce." The noun תְּבוּאָה (t'vu'ah) has a two-fold range of meaning: (1) "product; yield" of the earth (= crops; harvest) and (2) "income; revenue" in general (BDB 100 s.v.). The imagery in vv. 9-10 is agricultural; however, all Israelites – not just farmers – were expected to give the best portion (= first fruits) of their income to LORD.

**5 tn** Heb "with plenty" (so KJV, NASB, NRSV); NIV "to overflowing." The noun שָׂבֵעַ (sava', "plenty; satiety") functions as an adverbial accusative of manner or contents: "completely."

**6 sn** This pictures the process of pressing grapes in which the upper receptacle is filled with grapes and the lower one catches the juice. The harvest of grapes will be so plentiful that the lower vat will overflow with grape juice. The pictures in v. 10 are metonymies of effect for cause (= the great harvest that God will provide when they honor him).

**7 tn** Heb "burst open." The verb פָּרַץ (parats, "to burst open") functions as hyperbole here to emphasize the fullness of the wine vats (BDB 829 s.v. 9).

**8 tn** Heb "the discipline of the LORD."

**9 tn** The verb קָיַן (qats) has a two-fold range of meaning: (1) "to feel a loathing; to abhor" and (2) "to feel a sickening dread" (BDB 880 s.v.). The parallelism with "do not despise" suggests the former nuance here. The common response to suffering is to loathe it; however, the righteous understand that it refines one's moral character and that it is a means to the blessing.

**10 tn** Heb "chastens." The verb יָכַח (yakhakh) here means "to chasten; to punish" (HALOT 410 s.v. יָכַח 1) or "to correct; to rebuke" (BDB 407 s.v. 6). The context suggests some kind of corporeal discipline rather than mere verbal rebuke or cognitive correction. This verse is quoted in Heb 12:5-6 to show that suffering in the service of the LORD is a sign of membership in the covenant community (i.e., sonship).

**11 tc** MT reads וְכַבֵּד (ukh'av, "and like a father") but the LXX reflects the Hiphil verb וַיִּכְבֵּד (y'vakh'iv, "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 tn** Although the word אֲשֵׁרִי ('ashre, "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 tn** Heb "the man" (also again in the following line).

**15 tn** 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 tn** 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 סָחָר (sakhra, "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. סָחָר qal.2). Here the noun is used figuratively to describe the moral benefit of wisdom.

**19 tn** The noun סָחָר ("profit") is repeated in this line for emphasis. The two usages draw upon slightly different nuances, creating a polysemantic 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 תְּבוּאָה (t'vu'ah, "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. 2.b).

**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 יָסַד (yasad, "to establish be like; 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<sup>1</sup> is in her right hand;  
 in her left hand are riches and honor.  
 3:17 Her ways are very pleasant,<sup>2</sup>  
 and all her paths are peaceful.  
 3:18 She is like<sup>3</sup> a tree of life<sup>4</sup> to those  
 who obtain her,<sup>5</sup>  
 and everyone who grasps hold of her will  
 be blessed.<sup>6</sup>

3:19 By wisdom the LORD laid the founda-  
 tion of the earth;<sup>7</sup>  
 he established the heavens by understand-  
 ing.<sup>8</sup>

3:20 By his knowledge the primordial sea<sup>9</sup>  
 was broken open,<sup>10</sup>  
 and the clouds drip down dew.<sup>11</sup>

3:21 My child, do not let them<sup>12</sup> escape  
 from your sight;

safeguard sound wisdom and discretion.<sup>13</sup>  
 3:22 So<sup>14</sup> they will give<sup>15</sup> life to you,<sup>16</sup>  
 and grace to adorn<sup>17</sup> your neck.<sup>18</sup>  
 3:23 Then you will walk on your way<sup>19</sup>  
 with security,  
 and you<sup>20</sup> will not stumble.<sup>21</sup>  
 3:24 When<sup>22</sup> you lie down you will not be  
 filled with fear,<sup>23</sup>  
 when<sup>24</sup> you lie down your sleep will be  
 pleasant.<sup>25</sup>  
 3:25 You will not be afraid<sup>26</sup> of sudden<sup>27</sup>  
 disaster,<sup>28</sup>  
 or when destruction overtakes<sup>29</sup> the  
 wicked.<sup>30</sup>

**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 דֶּרֶךְ (*derekh*, “way”) is repeated for emphasis. The noun נֵיחָם (*no am*, “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, suggesting that what was lost as a result of the Fall may be recovered through wisdom: long and beneficial life (R. Marcus, “The Tree of Life in Proverbs,” *JBL* 62 [1943]: 117-20).  
**5 tn** Heb “lay hold of her.”  
**6 tn** The singular participle בִּטְאוֹר (*m<sup>e</sup>ushar*, literally, “he will be blessed”) functions as a distributive singular for a plural subject (GKC 464 §145.J): “each and everyone will be blessed.” Not recognizing this point of syntax, the *BHS* editors unnecessarily suggest emending this singular form to the plural.  
**7 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).  
**8 sn** The theme of God’s use of wisdom in creation is developed in Prov 8:22-31. Because God established the world to operate according to the principle of wisdom it is impossible for anyone to live successfully in his world apart from the wisdom that only God can give.  
**9 sn** The word תְּרוּמוֹת (*ṯerumot*, “primordial sea”) alludes to the chaotic “deep” in Gen 1:2 (BDB 1063 s.v. תְּרוּמָה 3). This was viewed in the ancient world as a force to be reckoned with. However, God not only formed it but controls it (see J. Emerton, “Spring and Torrent in Ps 74:15,” *VT* 15 [1965]: 125).  
**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 and smoothness (e.g., RSV, NRSV, NIV, TEV, CEV). NIV takes the subject from the second colon and reverses the clauses to clarify that.

**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 נַפְשֶׁךָ (*nafshekha*, “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 דֶּרֶכְךָ (*darkekha*, “your way”) functions as an adverbial accusative of location: “on your way.”  
**20 tn** Heb “your foot.” The term רַגְלֶךָ (*ragl<sup>e</sup>kha*, “your foot”) functions as a synecdoche of part (= foot) for the whole person (= you).  
**21 sn** The verb נָגַף (*ragaf*, “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 (hypocatastasis) comparing stumbling on a stone in the path to making serious mistakes in life that bring harm.  
**22 tn** The particle אִם (*im*, “if”) here functions in its rare temporal sense (“when”) followed by an imperfect tense (e.g., Num 36:4; BDB 50 s.v. 1.b.4.b).  
**23 tn** Heb “terror.” The verb פָּחַד (*pakhad*, “terror”) describes emotion that is stronger than mere fear – it is dread.  
**24 tn** The construction of *vav* consecutive + perfect tense followed by *vav* (ו) consecutive + perfect tense depicts a temporal clause. The temporal nuance is also suggested by the parallelism of the preceding colon.  
**25 tn** The verb עָרְבָה (*orvah*) is from III עָרַב (“to be sweet; to be pleasing; to be pleasant”; BDB 787 s.v. III עָרַב). It should not be confused with the other five homonymic roots that are also spelled עָרַב (*arav*; see BDB 786-88).  
**26 tn** Heb “do not be afraid.” The negative exhortation אַל־תִּירָא (*al-tira*), “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 tn** Heb “terror of suddenness.” The noun פְּתָאוֹם (*pit’om*, “sudden”) functions as an attributive genitive: “sudden terror” (e.g., Job 22:10; BDB 837 s.v.).  
**28 tn** Heb “terror.” The noun פָּחַד (*pakhad*, “terror”) is a metonymy of effect for cause (= disaster); see BDB 808 s.v. 2. This is suggested by the parallelism with the noun מִשְׁחָת (*mishho’at*, “destruction”) in the following colon. The term פָּחַד (“terror”) often refers to the object (or cause) of terror (e.g., Job 3:25; 15:21; 22:10; 31:23; Pss 31:12; 36:2; Isa 24:18; Jer 48:44).  
**29 tn** Heb “or the destruction of the wicked when it comes.”  
**30 tn** Heb “destruction of the wicked.” The noun רְשָׁעִים (*resha’im*, “wicked ones”) probably functions as an objective genitive (the destruction that comes on the wicked) or a genitive of source (the destruction that the wicked bring on others).

3:26 for the LORD will be<sup>1</sup> the source of your confidence,<sup>2</sup> and he will guard your foot<sup>3</sup> from being caught in a trap.<sup>4</sup>

*Wisdom Demonstrated in Relationships with People*

3:27 Do not withhold good from those who need it,<sup>5</sup> when<sup>6</sup> you<sup>7</sup> have the ability<sup>8</sup> to help.<sup>9</sup>  
3:28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Go! Return tomorrow and I will give it," when<sup>10</sup> you have it with you at the time.<sup>11</sup>

**1** **tn** Or "the LORD will be at your side." Assuming that the noun *kesel* (*kesel*) is related to the root כָּסַל ("confidence"; BDB 492 s.v. כָּסַל 3), the preposition ב (*bet*) introduces the predicate noun כִּסְלֶךְ (*kislekha*, "your confidence") and functions as a *beth essentialiae* (GKC 379 §119.i) which emphasizes the quality or nature of the noun (BDB 88 s.v. ב 7; HALOT 104 s.v. ב 3): "the LORD will be your confidence." However, if the noun is related to לָכַס ("loins; side"; HALOT 489 s.v. ל כָּסַל 2), the preposition ב (*bet*) would function in a locative sense: "the LORD will be at your side." See **tn** on the following phrase "source of your confidence."

**2** **tn** Heb "your confidence" (so NAB, NIV, NRSV) or "at your side." There is debate whether the term כִּסְלֶךְ (*kesel*) is related to the root לָכַס "loins; side" (so HALOT 489 s.v. ל כָּסַל 2) or לָכַס "confidence" (so BDB 492 s.v. כָּסַל 3). The Vulgate relates it to לָכַס and offers "the LORD will be at your side (*atus*)." Others relate it to לָכַס "confidence" (e.g., Job 8:14; 31:24; Ps 78:7) and take it as a metonymy (= confidence) of adjunct (= object of confidence): "the LORD will be the source [or, *object*] of your confidence."

**3** **sn** The term רֶגְלֶךָ (*raglekha*, "your foot") functions as a synecdoche of part (= your foot) for the whole person (= you). This synecdoche develops the extended comparison between the hunter's snare and calamity that afflicts the wicked.

**4** **tn** Heb "from capture." The noun לָכֶד (*lakhed*, "capture; snare") occurs only here in OT (BDB 540 s.v.; HALOT 530 s.v. לָכֶד). It is figurative for the calamity of v. 25. God will protect the wise (or, righteous) from the consequences of sin (snares) that afflict the wicked.

**5** **tn** The MT has "from its possessors" and the LXX simply has "from the poor." C. H. Toy (*Proverbs* [ICC], 77) suggests emending the text to read "neighbors" (changing בְּגֵלְיִי [*be'alavi*] to רֵעִי, *re'ekha*) but that is gratuitous. The idea can be explained as being those who need to possess it, or as BDB 127 s.v. בְּגֵל has it with an objective genitive, "the owner of it" = the one to whom it is due.

**6** **tn** The infinitive construct with preposition ב (*bet*) introduces a temporal clause: "when...."

**7** **tc** The form יָדֶיךָ (*yadekha*) is a *Kethib/Qere* reading. The *Kethib* is the dual יָדֶיךָ ("your hands") and the *Qere* is the singular יָדְךָ (*yad'ekha*, "your hand"). Normally the *Qere* is preferred because it represents an alternate textual tradition that the Masoretes viewed as superior to the received text.

**tn** Heb "your hand." The term יָדְךָ ("your hand") functions as a synecdoche of part (= your hand) for the whole person (= you).

**8** **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 2:1). The noun אֵל (*el*) means "power" (BDB 43 s.v. 7), and יָד (*yad*, "hand") is used figuratively to denote "ability" (BDB 390 s.v. 2). 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

3:29 Do not plot<sup>12</sup> evil against your neighbor when<sup>13</sup> he dwells by you unsuspectingly.  
3:30 Do not accuse<sup>14</sup> anyone<sup>15</sup> without legitimate cause,<sup>16</sup> if he has not treated you wrongly.  
3:31 Do not envy a violent man,<sup>17</sup> and do not choose to imitate<sup>18</sup> any of his ways;  
3:32 for one who goes astray<sup>19</sup> is an abomination<sup>20</sup> to the LORD, but he reveals<sup>21</sup> his intimate counsel<sup>22</sup> to the upright.  
3:33 The LORD's curse<sup>23</sup> is on the

are supplied in the translation for clarity.

**12** **tn** The verb תְּרִישׁ (*karash*) means "to cut in; to engrave; to plough; to devise." The idea of plotting is metaphorical for working, practicing or fabricating (BDB 360 s.v.).

**13** **tn** The *vav* (ו) prefixed to the pronoun introduces a disjunctive circumstantial clause: "when...."

**14** **sn** The term רִיב (*riv*) can mean "quarrel" or "legal accusation" (BDB 936 s.v.). Both ideas would work but the more technical legal accusation fits the context better. This is a warning to not bring legal accusations against anyone without a legitimate reason.

**15** **tn** Heb "a man."

**16** **tn** Heb "gratuitously"; NIV, TEV "for no (+ good NCV) reason." The adverb חִנָּם (*khinam*) means "without cause, undeservedly," especially of groundless hostility (HALOT 334 s.v. 3; BDB 336 s.v. c).

**17** **tn** Heb "a man of violence." The noun חָמָס (*khamas*, "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.).

**18** **tn** Heb "do not choose."

**19** **tn** The basic meaning of the verb לוּ (*luz*) 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. לוּ nif; BDB 531 s.v. Niphal).

**20** **tn** Heb "abomination of the LORD." The term יְהוָה (*yehvah*, "the LORD") functions as a genitive of respect: "abomination to the LORD." It is loathsome or detestable to him. Things that are repugnant to the LORD are usually the most heinous of crimes and gross violations of rituals.

**21** **tn** Heb "but 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 "his counsel." The noun סוֹד (*sod*) can refer to (1) "intimate circle" of friends and confidants, (2) "confidential discussion" among friends and confidants, or "secret counsel" revealed from one confidant to another and kept secret and (3) relationship of "intimacy" with a person (BDB 691 s.v.; HALOT 745 s.v.). God reveals his secret counsel to the heavenly assembly (Job 15:8; Jer 23:18, 22) and his prophets (Amos 3:7). God has brought the angels into his "intimate circle" (Ps 89:8). Likewise, those who fear the LORD enjoy an intimate relationship with him (Job 29:4; Ps 25:14; Prov 3:32). The perverse are repugnant to the LORD, but he takes the upright into his confidence and brings him into his intimate circle.

**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 בְּאֵרָה (*me'erah*, "curse") connotes banishment or separation from the place of blessing. It is the antonym of בְּרָכָה (*brakhah*, "blessing"). The curse of God brings ruin and failure to crops, land in general, an individual, or the nation (Deut 28:20; Mal 2:2; 3:9; see BDB 76 s.v. בְּאֵרָה; HALOT 541 s.v.).

household<sup>1</sup> of the wicked,<sup>2</sup>  
but he blesses<sup>3</sup> the home<sup>4</sup> of the right-  
eous.<sup>5</sup>

3:34 Although<sup>6</sup> he is scornful to arrogant  
scoffers,<sup>7</sup>

yet<sup>8</sup> he shows favor to the humble.<sup>9</sup>

3:35 The wise inherit honor,  
but he holds fools up<sup>10</sup> to public con-  
tempt.<sup>11</sup>

*Admonition to Follow Righteousness and Avoid  
Wickedness*<sup>12</sup>

4:1 Listen, children,<sup>13</sup> to a father's in-  
struction,<sup>14</sup>  
and pay attention so that<sup>15</sup> you may gain<sup>16</sup>  
discernment.

4:2 Because I give<sup>17</sup> you good instruc-  
tion,<sup>18</sup>

do not forsake my teaching.

4:3 When I was a son to my father,<sup>19</sup>  
a tender only child<sup>20</sup> before my mother,

4:4 he taught me, and he said to me:

“Let your heart lay hold of my words;  
keep my commands so that<sup>21</sup> you will  
live.

4:5 Acquire wisdom, acquire understand-  
ing;

do not forget and do not turn aside from  
the words I speak.<sup>22</sup>

4:6 Do not forsake wisdom,<sup>23</sup> and she will  
protect you;

love her, and she will guard you.

4:7 Wisdom is supreme<sup>24</sup> –

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “house.” The term *בֵּית* (*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).

<sup>2</sup> **sn** The term “wicked” is singular; the term “righteous” in the second half of the verse is plural. In scripture such changes often hint at God’s reluctance to curse, but eagerness to bless (e.g., Gen 12:3).

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The term “bless” (*בָּרַךְ*, *barakh*) is the antithesis of “curse.” A blessing is a gift, enrichment, or endowment. The blessing of God empowers one with the ability to succeed, and brings vitality and prosperity in the material realm, but especially in one’s spiritual relationship with God.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “habitation.” The noun *נֶחֱדָה* (*naveh*, “habitation; abode”), which is the poetic parallel to *בֵּית* (*bet*, “house”), usually refers to the abode of a shepherd in the country: “habitation” in the country (BDB 627 s.v. *נֶחֱדָה*). It functions as a synecdoche of container (= habitation) for the contents (= people in the habitation and all they possess).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The Hebrew is structured chiasmally (AB:BA): “The curse of the Lord / is on the house of the wicked // but the home of the righteous / he blesses.” The word order in the translation is reversed for the sake of smoothness and readability.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The particle *אֲמַן* (*im*, “though”) introduces a concessive clause: “though....”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he mocks those who mock.” The repetition of the root *לִיץ* (*lits*, “to scorn; to mock”) connotes poetic justice; the punishment fits the crime. Scoffers are characterized by arrogant pride (e.g., Prov 21:24), as the antithetical parallelism with “the humble” here emphasizes.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The prefixed *vav* (ו) introduces the apodosis to the concessive clause: “Though ... yet ...”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The Hebrew is structured chiasmally (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.

<sup>10</sup> **tc** MT reads *מְרִימִים* (*merim*, “he lifts up”): singular Hiphil participle of *רָם* (*rum*, “to rise; to exalt”), functioning verbally with the Lord as the implied subject: “but he lifts up fools to shame.” The LXX and Vulgate reflect the plural *מְרִימִים* (*m<sup>r</sup>rimim*, “they exalt”) with “fools” (*בְּסִילִים*, *kesilim*) as the explicit subject: “but fools exalt shame.” The textual variant was caused by haplography or dittography of *ם* (depending on whether MT or the alternate tradition is original).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The noun *קָלוֹן* (*qalon*, “ignominy; dishonor; contempt”) is from *קָלַח* (*qalah*) which is an alternate form of *קָלַל* (*qalal*) 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.

<sup>12</sup> **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).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “sons.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “discipline.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The Qal infinitive construct with preposition *ל* (*lamed*) indicates the purpose/result of the preceding imperative.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “know” (so KJV, ASV).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The perfect tense has the nuance of instantaneous perfect; the sage is now calling the disciples to listen. It could also be a perfect of resolve, indicating what he is determined to do.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The word *לִקְחָהּ* (*leqakh*, “instruction”) can be subjective (instruction acquired) or objective (the thing being taught). The latter fits best here.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Or “a boy with my father.”

<sup>20</sup> **tc** The LXX introduces the ideas of “obedient” and “beloved” for these two terms. This seems to be a free rendering, if not a translation of a different Hebrew textual tradition. The MT makes good sense and requires no emendation.

**tn** *Heb* “tender and only one.” The phrase *רַךְ יְהִידִי* (*rakh v<sup>e</sup>yakhid*, “tender and only one”) is a hendiadys meaning “tender only child.” The adjective *רַךְ* (*rakh*) means “tender; delicate” (BDB 940 s.v. *רַךְ*), and describes a lad who is young and undeveloped in character (e.g., 2 Sam 3:39). The adjective *יְהִידִי* (*yakhid*) means “only one” (BDB 402 s.v. *יְהִידִי*) and refers to a beloved and prized only child (e.g., Gen 22:2).

<sup>21</sup> **tn** The imperative with the *vav* expresses volitional sequence after the preceding imperative: “keep and then you will live,” meaning “keep so that you may live.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “from the words of my mouth” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV); TEV, CEV “what I say.”

**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.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “her”; the 3rd person feminine singular referent is personified “wisdom,” which has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** The absolute and construct state of *רֵאשִׁית* (*re’shit*) are identical (BDB 912 s.v.). Some treat *רֵאשִׁית הַחֵבֶה* (*re’shit khokhmah*) as a genitive-construct phrase: “the beginning of wisdom” (cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV). Others take *רֵאשִׁית* as an absolute functioning as predicate and *הַחֵבֶה* as the subject: “wisdom is the first/chief thing” (cf. KJV, ASV). The context here suggests the predicate.

so<sup>1</sup> acquire wisdom,  
and whatever you acquire,<sup>2</sup> acquire un-  
derstanding!<sup>3</sup>  
4:8 Esteem her highly<sup>4</sup> and she will exalt  
you;  
she will honor you if you embrace her.  
4:9 She will place a fair<sup>5</sup> garland on your  
head;  
she will bestow<sup>6</sup> a beautiful crown<sup>7</sup> on  
you.”  
4:10 Listen, my child,<sup>8</sup> and accept my  
words,  
so that<sup>9</sup> the years of your life will be  
many.<sup>10</sup>  
4:11 I will guide you<sup>11</sup> in the way of wis-  
dom  
and I will lead you in upright paths.<sup>12</sup>  
4:12 When you walk, your steps<sup>13</sup> will not  
be hampered,<sup>14</sup>

and when you run,<sup>15</sup> you will not stumble.  
4:13 Hold on to instruction,<sup>16</sup> do not let  
it go;  
protect it,<sup>17</sup> because it is your life.  
4:14 Do not enter the path of the wicked  
or walk<sup>18</sup> in the way of those who are  
evil.  
4:15 Avoid it, do not go on it;  
turn away from it, and go on.<sup>19</sup>  
4:16 For they cannot sleep unless they  
cause harm;<sup>20</sup>  
they are robbed of sleep<sup>21</sup> until they make  
someone stumble.<sup>22</sup>  
4:17 For they eat bread<sup>23</sup> gained from  
wickedness<sup>24</sup>  
and drink wine obtained from violence.<sup>25</sup>  
4:18 But the path of the righteous is like  
the bright morning light,<sup>26</sup>

**1 tn** The term “so” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness and style.

**2 tn** The noun קָיָן (*qinyan*) means “thing got or acquired; ac-  
quisition” (BDB 889 s.v.). With the preposition that denotes  
price, it means “with (or at the price of) all that you have ac-  
quired.” The point is that no price is too high for wisdom – give  
everything for it (K&D 16:108).

**3 tc** The verse is not in the LXX; some textual critics delete  
the verse as an impossible gloss that interrupts vv. 6 and 8  
(e.g., C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 88).

**4 tn** The verb is the Pilpel imperative from קָלַל (*salal*, “to lift  
up; to cast up”). So the imperative means “exalt her; esteem  
her highly; prize her.”

**5 sn** The personification of wisdom continues with the be-  
stowal of a wreath for the head (e.g., 1:9). The point is that  
grace will be given to the individual like a wreath about the  
head.

**6 tn** The verb מָגַן (*magan*) is a Piel (denominative) verb from  
the noun “shield.” Here it means “to bestow” (BDB 171 s.v.).

**7 sn** This verse uses wedding imagery: The wife (wisdom)  
who is embraced by her husband (the disciple) will place the  
wedding crown on the head of her new bridegroom. Wisdom,  
like a virtuous wife, will crown the individual with honor and  
grace.

**8 tn** Heb “my son” (likewise in v. 20).

**9 tn** The *vav* prefixed to the imperfect verb follows an imper-  
ative; this volitive sequence depicts purpose/result.

**10 tn** Heb “and the years of life will be many for you.”

**11 tn** The form הִרְתִּיךָ (*horeitika*) is the Hiphil perfect with a  
suffix from the root יָרָה (*arah*, “to guide”). This and the par-  
allel verb should be taken as instantaneous perfects, trans-  
lated as an English present tense: The sage is now instructing  
or pointing the way.

**sn** The verb יָרָה (*arah*) means “to teach; to instruct; to  
guide.” This is from the same root as the Hebrew word for  
“law” (*torah*). See G. R. Driver, “Hebrew Notes,” VT 1 (1951):  
241-50; and J. L. Crenshaw, “The Acquisition of Knowledge in  
Israelite Wisdom Literature,” WW 7 (1986): 9.

**12 tn** Heb “in the tracks of uprightness”; cf. NAB “on  
straightforward paths.” Both the verb and the object of the  
preposition make use of the idiom – the verb is the Hiphil per-  
fect from דָּרַךְ (*derekh*, related to “road; way”) and the object is  
“wagon tracks, paths.”

**13 sn** The noun צִעְדְּךָ (*tsa’adekha*, “your steps”) and the  
temporal infinitive בְּלִבְתֶּךָ (*belekht’kha*, “when you walk”) use  
the idiom of walking to represent the course of life. On that  
course there will be no obstacles; the “path” will be straight  
– morally and practically.

**14 tn** The verb צָרָר (*tsarar*, “to be narrow; to be constricted”) refers to that which is narrow or constricted, signifying dis-  
tress, trouble, adversity; that which was wide-open or broad

represents freedom and deliverance.

**15 sn** 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 pro-  
gress (e.g., Isa 40:31).

**16 tn** Heb “discipline.”

**17 tn** The form נִצְרָה (*nits’reha*, from נָצַר, *natsar*) has an  
anomalous doubled letter (see GKC 73 §20.h).

**18 tn** The verb אָשַׁר (*ashar*, “to walk”) is not to be confused  
with the identically spelled homonym אָשַׁר “to pronounce hap-  
py” as in BDB 80 s.v. אָשַׁר.

**19 sn** The verb עָבַר (*avar*, “to cross over; to travel through”)  
ends both cola. In the first it warns against going on wrong  
paths; in the second it means “to go your own way,” but may  
hint that the way will cross over the wrong way. The rapid se-  
quence of commands stresses the urgency of the matter.

**20 sn** The verb is רָעַע (*ra’a’*), which means “to do evil; to  
harm.” The verse is using the figure of hyperbole to stress the  
preoccupation of some people with causing trouble. R. L. Al-  
den says, “How sick to find peace only at the price of another  
man’s misfortune” (*Proverbs*, 47).

**21 sn** Heb “their sleep is robbed/seized”; these expressions  
are metonymical for their restlessness in plotting evil.

**22 sn** The Hiphil imperfect (*Kethib*) means “cause to stum-  
ble.” This idiom (from hypocatastasis) means “bring injury/  
ruin to someone” (BDB 505-6 s.v. כָּשַׁל Hiph.1).

**23 tn** The noun is a cognate accusative stressing that they  
consume wickedness.

**24 tn** Heb “the bread of wickedness” (so KJV, NAB, NIV,  
NRSV). There are two ways to take the genitives: (1) genitives  
of apposition: wickedness and violence are their food and  
drink (cf. TEV, CEV, NLT), or (2) genitives of source: they de-  
rive their livelihood from the evil they do (C. H. Toy, *Proverbs*  
[ICC], 93).

**25 tn** Heb “the wine of violence” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV).  
This is a genitive of source, meaning that the wine they drink  
was plundered from their violent crime. The Hebrew is struc-  
tured in an AB:BA chiasm: “For they eat the bread of wicked-  
ness, and the wine of violence they drink.” The word order in  
the translation is reversed for the sake of smoothness and  
readability.

**26 tn** Heb “like light of brightness.” This construction is an  
attributive genitive: “bright light.” The word “light” (אֹר, *or*) re-  
fers to the early morning light or the dawn (BDB 21 s.v.). The  
point of the simile is that the course of life that the righteous  
follow is like the clear, bright morning light. It is illumined,  
clear, easy to follow, and healthy and safe – the opposite of  
what darkness represents.



growing brighter and brighter<sup>1</sup> until full day.<sup>2</sup>

**4:19** The way of the wicked is like gloomy darkness;<sup>3</sup> they do not know what causes them to stumble.<sup>4</sup>

**4:20** My child, pay attention to my words; listen attentively<sup>5</sup> to my sayings.

**4:21** Do not let them depart<sup>6</sup> from your sight,

guard<sup>7</sup> them within your heart;<sup>8</sup>  
**4:22** for they are life to those who find them and healing to one's entire body.<sup>9</sup>  
**4:23** Guard your heart with all vigilance,<sup>10</sup> for from it are the sources<sup>11</sup> of life.

**4:24** Remove perverse speech<sup>12</sup> from your mouth;<sup>13</sup>

keep devious talk far from your lips.<sup>14</sup>

**4:25** Let your eyes look directly<sup>15</sup> in front of you

and let your gaze<sup>16</sup> look straight before you.

**4:26** Make the path for your feet<sup>17</sup> level,<sup>18</sup> so that<sup>19</sup> all your ways may be established.<sup>20</sup>

**4:27** Do not turn<sup>21</sup> to the right or to the left; turn yourself<sup>22</sup> away from evil.<sup>23</sup>

*Admonition to Avoid Seduction to Evil<sup>24</sup>*

**5:1** My child,<sup>25</sup> be attentive to my wisdom, pay close attention<sup>26</sup> to my understanding,

**5:2** in order to safeguard<sup>27</sup> discretion,<sup>28</sup> and that your lips may guard knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The construction uses the Qal active participle of הלך (halakh) in a metaphorical sense to add the idea of continuance or continually to the participle הולך (holekh). Here the path was growing light, but the added participle signifies continually.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb "until the day is established." This expression refers to the coming of the full day or the time of high noon.

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The simile describes ignorance or spiritual blindness, sinfulness, calamity, despair.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb "in what they stumble."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb "incline your ear." The verb הטה (hat) is the Hiphil imperative from נטה (natah, Hiphil: "to turn to; to incline"). The idiom "to incline the ear" gives the picture of "lean over and listen closely."

**sn** Commentators note the use of the body in this section: ear (v. 20), eyes (v. 21), flesh (v. 22), heart (v. 23), lips (v. 24), eyes (v. 25), feet (v. 26), and hands and feet (v. 27). Each is a synecdoche of part representing the whole; the total accumulation signifies the complete person in the process.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The Hiphil form יליו (yalizu) follows the Aramaic with gemination. The verb means "to turn aside; to depart" (intransitive Hiphil or inner causative).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Or "keep" (so KJV, NIV, NRSV and many others).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The words "eyes" and "heart" are metonymies of subject representing the faculties of each. Cf. CEV "think about it all."

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb "to all of his flesh."

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb "more than all guarding." This idiom means "with all vigilance." The construction uses the preposition מן (min) to express "above; beyond," the word "all" and the noun "prison; guard; act of guarding." The latter is the use here (BDB 1038 s.v. מִשְׁמָר).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The word תוצאות (tots'ot, from יצא, yatsa') means "outgoings; extremities; sources." It is used here for starting points, like a fountainhead, and so the translation "sources" works well.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb "crookedness." The noun עקשיות ('iqq'shut) refers to what is morally twisted or perverted. Here it refers to things that are said (cf. NAB "dishonest talk"; NRSV "crooked speech"). The term "mouth" functions as a metonymy of cause for perverse speech. Such perverse talking could be subtle or blatant.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb "crookedness of mouth."

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "deviousness of lips put far from you."

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The jussives in this verse are both Hiphil, the first from the verb "to gaze; to look intently [or, carefully]," (נָבַט, navat) and the second from the verb "to be smooth, straight" (יָשַׁר, yashar).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb "your eyelids." The term "eyelids" is often a poetic synonym for "eye" (it is a metonymy of adjunct, something connected with the eye put for the eye that sees); it may intensify the idea as one might squint to gain a clearer look.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb "path of your foot."

<sup>18</sup> **sn** The verb is a denominative Piel from the word פָּלַס (peles), "balance; scale." In addition to telling the disciple to keep focused on a righteous life, the sage tells him to keep his path level, which is figurative for living the righteous life.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The vav prefixed to the beginning of this dependent clause denotes purpose/result following the preceding imperative.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The Niphal jussive from בָּן (ban, "to be fixed; to be established; to be steadfast") continues the idiom of walking and ways for the moral sense in life.

<sup>21</sup> **sn** The two verbs in this verse are from different roots, but nonetheless share the same semantic domain. The first verb is תָּס (tes), a jussive from נָטָה (natah), which means "to turn aside" (Hiphil); the second verb is the Hiphil imperative of סָר (sar), which means "to cause to turn to the side" (Hiphil). The disciple is not to leave the path of righteousness, but to stay on the path he must leave evil.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb "your foot" (so NAB, NIV, NRSV). The term רַגְלֶךָ (ragl'ekha, "your foot") is a synecdoche of part (= foot) for the whole person (= "yourself").

<sup>23</sup> **tc** The LXX adds, "For the way of the right hand God knows, but those of the left hand are distorted; and he himself will make straight your paths and guide your goings in peace." The ideas presented here are not out of harmony with Proverbs, but the section clearly shows an expansion by the translator. For a brief discussion of whether this addition is Jewish or early Christian, see C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* (ICC), 99.

<sup>24</sup> **sn** In this chapter the sage/father exhorts discretion (1, 2) then explains how to avoid seduction (3-6); this is followed by a second exhortation to prevention (7, 8) and an explanation that obedience will avoid ruin and regret (9-14); finally, he warns against sharing love with strangers (15-17) but to find it at home (18-23). For an analysis of the chapter, see J. E. Goldingay, "Proverbs V and IX," *RB* 84 (1977): 80-93.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** The text again has "my son." In this passage perhaps "son" would be the most fitting because of the warning against going to the adulterous woman. However, since the image of the adulterous woman probably represents all kinds of folly (through personification), and since even in this particular folly the temptation works both ways, the general address to either young men or women should be retained. The text was certainly not intended to convey that only women could seduce men.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** Heb "incline your ear" (so NAB, NRSV); NLT "listen carefully."

<sup>27</sup> **tn** Heb "keep, protect, guard."

<sup>28</sup> **sn** This "discretion" is the same word in 1:4; it is wise, prudential consideration, careful planning, or the ability to devise plans with a view to the best way to carry them out. If that ability is retained then temptations to digress will not interfere.

5:3 For the lips<sup>1</sup> of the adulterous woman drip honey,  
and her seductive words<sup>2</sup> are smoother than olive oil,  
5:4 but in the end<sup>3</sup> she is bitter<sup>4</sup> as worm-wood,<sup>5</sup>  
sharp as a two-edged<sup>6</sup> sword.  
5:5 Her feet go down to death;  
her steps lead straight to the grave.<sup>7</sup>  
5:6 Lest<sup>8</sup> she should make level the path leading to life,<sup>9</sup>  
her paths are unstable<sup>10</sup> but she does not know it.<sup>11</sup>  
5:7 So now, children,<sup>12</sup> listen to me;  
do not turn aside from the words I speak.<sup>13</sup>

5:8 Keep yourself<sup>14</sup> far<sup>15</sup> from her,  
and do not go near the door of her house,  
5:9 lest you give your vigor<sup>16</sup> to others  
and your years to a cruel person,  
5:10 lest strangers devour<sup>17</sup> your strength,<sup>18</sup>  
and your labor<sup>19</sup> benefit<sup>20</sup> another man's house.  
5:11 And at the end of your life<sup>21</sup> you will groan<sup>22</sup>  
when your flesh and your body are wasted away.<sup>23</sup>  
5:12 And you will say, "How I hated discipline!  
My heart spurned reproof!  
5:13 For<sup>24</sup> I did not obey my teachers<sup>25</sup>  
and I did not heed<sup>26</sup> my instructors.<sup>27</sup>  
5:14 I almost<sup>28</sup> came to complete ruin<sup>29</sup>  
in the midst of the whole congregation!"<sup>30</sup>

<sup>1</sup> sn "Lips" is a metonymy of cause, referring to her words. Dripping honey is an implied comparison between the product and her words, which are flattering and smooth (cf. Song 4:11). See M. Dahood, "Honey That Drips. Notes on Proverbs 5:2-3," *Bib* 54 (1973): 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> tn Heb "her palate." The word תֶּךְ (*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."

<sup>3</sup> 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).

<sup>4</sup> sn The verb "to be bitter" (מָרַר, *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.

<sup>5</sup> 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 point is that there was sweetness when the tryst had alluring glamour, but afterward it had an ugly ring (W. G. Plaut, *Proverbs*, 74).

<sup>6</sup> 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 with 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.

<sup>7</sup> tn The term שְׂאוֹל (*she'ol*, "grave") is paralleled to "death," so it does not refer here to the realm of the unblessed.

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.

<sup>8</sup> tn The particle פֶּן (*pen*) means "lest" (probably from "for the aversion 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.

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb "the path of life." The noun חַיִּים (*khayyim*, "of life") functions as a genitive of direction ("leading to").

<sup>10</sup> sn The verb נָוַה (*nua*) means "to quiver; to waver; to tremble"; cf. KJV "her ways are moveable"; NAB "her paths will ramble"; NLT "She staggers down a crooked trail." The ways of the adulterous woman are unstable (BDB 631 s.v.).

<sup>11</sup> 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 לֹא תָרַע in Proverbs v 6," *JTS* 37 (1936): 59.

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb "sons."

<sup>13</sup> tn Heb "the words of my mouth" (so KJV, NAB, NRSV).

<sup>14</sup> tn Heb "your way."

<sup>15</sup> sn There is a contrast made between "keep far away" (וּלֹא-תִקְרַב, *al-tiqrav*) and "do not draw near" (וְהִתְקַרְבְּ, *harkheq*).

<sup>16</sup> sn The term הוֹד (*hod*, "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.

<sup>17</sup> tn Or "are sated, satisfied."

<sup>18</sup> tn The word כֹּחַ (*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.

<sup>19</sup> tn "labor, painful toil."

<sup>20</sup> tn The term "benefit" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb "at your end."

<sup>22</sup> tn The form is the perfect tense with the vav consecutive; it is equal to a specific future within this context.

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).

<sup>23</sup> tn Heb "in the finishing of your flesh and your body." The construction uses the Qal infinitive construct of בָּלָה (*calah*) in a temporal clause; the verb means "be complete, at an end, finished, spent."

<sup>24</sup> tn The vav that introduces this clause functions in an explanatory sense.

<sup>25</sup> tn The Hebrew term מוֹרֵי (*moray*) 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").

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> tn The form is the Piel plural participle of לָמַד (*lamad*) used substantively.

<sup>28</sup> tn The expression כִּמְאֵת (*kim'at*) 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."

<sup>29</sup> tn Heb "I was in all evil" (cf. KJV, ASV).

<sup>30</sup> tn 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.<sup>1</sup>  
5:16 Should your springs be dispersed<sup>2</sup>  
outside,  
your streams of water in the wide plazas?  
5:17 Let them be for yourself<sup>3</sup> alone,  
and not for strangers with you.<sup>4</sup>  
5:18 May your fountain be blessed,<sup>5</sup>  
and may you rejoice<sup>6</sup> in your young wife<sup>7</sup>  
—  
5:19 a loving doe,<sup>8</sup> a graceful deer;  
may her breasts satisfy you at all times,  
may you be captivated<sup>9</sup> by her love al-  
ways.  
5:20 But why should you be captivated,<sup>10</sup>  
my son, by an adulteress,  
and embrace the bosom of a different  
woman?<sup>11</sup>

5:21 For the ways of a person<sup>12</sup> are in front  
of the LORD's eyes,  
and the LORD<sup>13</sup> weighs<sup>14</sup> all that person's<sup>15</sup>  
paths.  
5:22 The wicked<sup>16</sup> will be captured by his<sup>17</sup>  
own iniquities,<sup>18</sup>  
and he will be held<sup>19</sup> by the cords of his  
own sin.<sup>20</sup>  
5:23 He will die because<sup>21</sup> there was no  
discipline;  
because of the greatness of his folly<sup>22</sup> he  
will reel.<sup>23</sup>

*Admonitions and Warnings against Dangerous  
and Destructive Acts<sup>24</sup>*

6:1 My child,<sup>25</sup> if you have made a  
pledge<sup>26</sup> for your neighbor,

<sup>1</sup> **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).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The verb means "to be scattered; to be dispersed"; here the imperfect takes a deliberative nuance in a rhetorical question.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The ל (lamed) preposition denotes possession: "for you" = "yours." The term לְבַדְּךָ (l'vadekha) is appositional, underscoring the possession as exclusive.

<sup>4</sup> **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.

<sup>5</sup> **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 בָּרַךְ, *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.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The form is a Qal imperative with a vav (ו) of sequence; after the jussive of the first half this colon could be given an equivalent translation or logically subordinated.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Or "in the wife you married when you were young" (cf. NCV, 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."

<sup>8</sup> **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.

**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.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The verb שָׁגָה (*shagah*) 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).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** In the interrogative clause the imperfect has a deliberative nuance.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* "foreigner" (so ASV, NASB), but this does not mean that the woman is non-Israelite. This term describes a woman who is outside the moral boundaries of the covenant community – she is another man's wife, but since she acts

with moral abandonment she is called "foreign."

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* "man."

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* "he"; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** BDB 814 s.v. מָאָלָה 2 suggests that the participle מְאָלָה (*m'palles*) 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 "weighs" since it is a denominative from the noun for "balance, scale"; the LORD weighs or examines the actions.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* "all his"; the referent (the person mentioned in the first half of the verse) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>16</sup> **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* [CC], 117).

<sup>17</sup> **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.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* "his own iniquities will capture the wicked." The translation shifts the syntax for the sake of smoothness and readability.

<sup>19</sup> **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.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The Hebrew is structured chiasmically: "his own iniquities will capture the wicked, by the cords of his own sin will he be held."

<sup>21</sup> **tn** The preposition ב (bet) is used in a causal sense: "because" (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV).

<sup>22</sup> **sn** The word אִוְלָתוֹ (*ivvalto*, "his folly") is from the root אָוַל (*evil*, "foolish; fool"). The noun אִוְלָתוֹ (*ivvet*, "folly") describes foolish and destructive activity. It lacks understanding, destroys what wisdom builds, and leads to destruction if it is not corrected.

<sup>23</sup> **sn** The verb שָׁגָה (*shagah*, "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.

<sup>24</sup> **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).

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* "my son" (likewise in vv. 3, 20).

<sup>26</sup> **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 (רֵי, *zar*), perhaps a misfit in the community. The one who pledged security for this one was simply gullible.

and<sup>1</sup> have become a guarantor<sup>2</sup> for a stranger,<sup>3</sup>  
**6:2** if<sup>4</sup> you have been ensnared<sup>5</sup> by the words you have uttered,<sup>6</sup> and have been caught by the words you have spoken,  
**6:3** then, my child, do this in order to deliver yourself,<sup>7</sup> because you have fallen into your neighbor's power:<sup>8</sup> go, humble yourself,<sup>9</sup> and appeal firmly<sup>10</sup> to your neighbor.

**6:4** Permit no sleep to your eyes<sup>11</sup> or slumber to your eyelids.  
**6:5** Deliver yourself like a gazelle from a snare,<sup>12</sup> and like a bird from the trap<sup>13</sup> of the fowler.

**6:6** Go to the ant, you sluggard,<sup>14</sup> observe its ways and be wise!  
**6:7** It has no commander, overseer, or<sup>15</sup> ruler,  
**6:8** yet it prepares its food in the summer; it gathers at the harvest what it will eat.<sup>16</sup>  
**6:9** How long, you sluggard, will you lie there?  
 When will you rise from your sleep?<sup>17</sup>  
**6:10** A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to relax,<sup>18</sup>  
**6:11** and your poverty will come like a robber,<sup>19</sup> and your need like an armed man.<sup>20</sup>

**1 tn** The conjunction “and” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

**2 tn** *Heb* “struck your hands”; NIV “have struck hands in pledge”; NASB “have given a pledge.” The guarantee of a pledge was signaled by a handshake (e.g., 11:15; 17:18; 22:26).

**3 tn** *Heb* “stranger.” The term זָר (zur, “stranger”) probably refers to a neighbor who was not well-known. Alternatively, it could describe a person who is living outside the norms of convention, a moral misfit in the community. In any case, this “stranger” is a high risk in any financial arrangement.

**4 tn** The term “if” does not appear in this line but is implied by the parallelism. It is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

**5 tn** The verb יָקַשׁ (yaqash) means “to lay a bait; to lure; to lay snares.” In the Niphal it means “to be caught by bait; to be ensnared” – here in a business entanglement.

**6 tn** *Heb* “by the words of your mouth.” The same expression occurs at the end of the following line (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). Many English versions vary the wording slightly, presumably for stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy (e.g., NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

**7 tn** The syntactical construction of imperative followed by an imperative + vav consecutive denotes purpose: “in order to be delivered.” The verb means “to deliver oneself, be delivered” in the Niphal. The image is one of being snatched or plucked quickly out of some danger or trouble, in the sense of a rescue, as in a “brand snatched [Hophal stem] from the fire” (Zech 3:2).

**8 tn** *Heb* “have come into the hand of your neighbor” (so NASB; cf. KJV, ASV). The idiom using the “hand” means that the individual has come under the control or the power of someone else. This particular word for hand is used to play ironically on its first occurrence in v. 1.

**9 tn** In the Hitpaal the verb רָפַס (rafas) means “to stamp oneself down” or “to humble oneself” (cf. KJV, NASB, NIV). BDB 952 s.v. Hithp suggests “become a suppliant.” G. R. Driver related it to the Akkadian cognate rapasu, “trample,” and interpreted as trampling oneself, swallowing pride, being unremitting in effort (“Some Hebrew Verbs, Nouns, and Pronouns,” *JTS* 30 [1929]: 374).

**10 tn** *Heb* “be bold.” The verb רָהַב (rahav) means “to act stormily; to act boisterously; to act arrogantly.” The idea here is a strong one: storm against (beset, importune) your neighbor. The meaning is that he should be bold and not take no for an answer. Cf. NIV “press your plea”; TEV “beg him to release you.”

**11 tn** *Heb* “do not give sleep to your eyes.” The point is to go to the neighbor and seek release from the agreement immediately (cf. NLT “Don’t rest until you do”).

**12 tn** *Heb* “from the hand.” Most translations supply “of the hunter.” The word “hand” can signify power, control; so the meaning is that of a gazelle freeing itself from a snare or a trap that a hunter set.

**13 tc** *Heb* “hand” (so KJV, NAB, NRSV). Some mss and versions have it as “trap,” which may very well represent an interpretation too.

**14 sn** The sluggard (נְעִיל, *’atsel*) is the lazy or sluggish person (cf. NCV “lazy person”; NRSV, NLT “lazybones”).

**15 tn** The conjunction vav (ו) here has the classification of alternative, “or” (R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 71, §433).

**16 tc** The LXX adds a lengthy section at the end of the verse on the lesson from the bee: “Or, go to the bee and learn how diligent she is and how seriously she does her work – her products kings and private persons use for health – she is desired and respected by all – though feeble in body, by honoring wisdom she obtains distinction.” The Greek translator thought the other insect should be mentioned (see C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 124).

**tn** *Heb* “its food.”

**17 sn** The use of the two rhetorical questions is designed to rebuke the lazy person in a forceful manner. The sluggard is spending too much time sleeping.

**18 sn** The writer might in this verse be imitating the words of the sluggard who just wants to take “a little nap.” The use is ironic, for by indulging in this little rest the lazy one comes to ruin.

**19 tn** *Heb* “like a wayfarer” or “like a traveler” (cf. KJV). The LXX has “swiftness like a traveler.” It has also been interpreted as a “highwayman” (cf. NAB) or a “dangerous assailant.” W. McKane suggests “vagrant” (*Proverbs* [OTL], 324); cf. NASB “vagabond.” Someone traveling swiftly would likely be a robber.

**20 tn** The Hebrew word for “armed” is probably connected to the word for “shield” and “deliver” (שׁוּן וְנָתַן). G. R. Driver connects it to the Arabic word for “bold; insolent,” interpreting its use here as referring to a beggar or an insolent man (“Studies in the Vocabulary of the Old Testament, IV,” *JTS* 33 [1933]: 38-47).

6:12 A worthless and wicked person<sup>1</sup> walks around saying perverse<sup>2</sup> things;<sup>3</sup>

6:13 he winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, and points with his fingers;<sup>4</sup>

6:14 he plots evil with perverse thoughts<sup>5</sup> in his heart, he spreads contention<sup>6</sup> at all times.

6:15 Therefore, his disaster will come suddenly; in an instant<sup>7</sup> he will be broken, and there will be no remedy.

6:16 There are six things that the LORD hates, even<sup>8</sup> seven<sup>9</sup> things that are an abomination to him:<sup>10</sup>

6:17 haughty eyes,<sup>11</sup> a lying

tongue,<sup>12</sup> and hands that shed innocent blood,<sup>13</sup> 6:18 a heart that devises wicked plans,<sup>14</sup> feet that are swift to run<sup>15</sup> to evil, 6:19 a false witness who pours out lies,<sup>16</sup> and a person who spreads discord<sup>17</sup> among family members.<sup>18</sup>

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

6:21 Bind them<sup>19</sup> on your heart continually; fasten them around your neck.

<sup>1</sup> **sn** The terms describe one who is both worthless and wicked. Some suggest that בְּלִיעַל (b<sup>l</sup>lyya'al) is a compound of the negative בְּלִי (b<sup>l</sup>i) and a noun יַעַל (ya'al, "profit; worth"). Others suggest that the root is from בָּעַל (ba'al, "lord [of goats]") or a derivative of בָּלַע (bala) with reduplication ("confusion" or "engulfing ruin"), or a proper name from Babylonian *Billu*. See B. Otzen, *TDOT* 2:131-36; and D. W. Thomas, "בְּלִיעַל in the Old Testament," *Biblical and Patristic Studies in Memory of Robert Pierce Casey*, 11-19. Whatever the etymology, usage shows that the word 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 NIV similar). The present instruction will focus on the devious practice of such wicked and worthless folk.

<sup>2</sup> **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."

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb "walks around with a perverse mouth." The term "mouth" is a metonymy of cause, an organ of speech put for what is said. This is an individual who says perverted or twisted things.

<sup>4</sup> **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 making insinuations. W. McKane suggests from the presence of כְּחוֹשֶׁת (*khoshesh*) in v. 14 that there may be some use of magic here (*Proverbs* [OTL], 325).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The noun is an adverbial accusative of manner, explaining the circumstances that inform his evil plans.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The word "contention" is from the root דִּין (*din*); the noun means "strife, contention, quarrel." The normal plural form is represented by the *Qere*, and the contracted form by the *Kethib*.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** This word is a substantive that is used here as an adverbial accusative – with suddenness, at an instant.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The conjunction has the explicative use here (R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 71, §434).

<sup>9</sup> **sn** This saying involves a numerical ladder, paralleling six things with seven things (e.g., also 30:15, 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]: 300-311; and his "Numerical Sayings in the Old Testament," *VT* 13 [1965]: 86).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb "his soul."

<sup>11</sup> **sn** The expression "high/ lofty [רְמוֹת, *ramot*] 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.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** 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 14:14), and of a deceiver who betrays (Ps 109:2). The LORD hates deceptive speech because it is destructive (26:28).

<sup>13</sup> **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).

<sup>14</sup> **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).

<sup>15</sup> **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.

**sn** The word "feet" is here a synecdoche, a part for the whole. Being the instruments of movement, they represent the swift and eager actions of the whole person to do some harm.

<sup>16</sup> **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).

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

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb "brothers," although not limited to male siblings only. Cf. NRSV, CEV "in a family"; TEV "among friends."

**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").

<sup>19</sup> **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,<sup>1</sup> they<sup>2</sup> will guide you;  
when you lie down, they will watch over you;  
when you wake up,<sup>3</sup> they will talk<sup>4</sup> to you.  
6:23 For the commandments<sup>5</sup> are like<sup>6</sup> a lamp,<sup>7</sup>  
instruction is like a light,  
and rebukes of discipline are like<sup>8</sup> the road leading to life,<sup>9</sup>  
6:24 by keeping<sup>10</sup> you from the evil woman,<sup>11</sup>  
from the smooth tongue of<sup>12</sup> the loose woman.<sup>13</sup>  
6:25 Do not lust<sup>14</sup> in your heart for her

beauty,  
and do not let her captivate you with her alluring eyes;<sup>15</sup>  
6:26 for on account<sup>16</sup> of a prostitute one is brought down to a loaf of bread,  
but the wife of another man<sup>17</sup> preys on your precious life.<sup>18</sup>  
6:27 Can a man hold<sup>19</sup> fire<sup>20</sup> against his chest<sup>21</sup>  
without<sup>22</sup> burning his clothes?  
6:28 Can<sup>23</sup> a man walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?  
6:29 So it is with<sup>24</sup> the one who has sex

**1 tn** The verbal form is the Hitpael infinitive construct with a preposition and a suffixed subjective genitive to form a temporal clause. The term הָלַךְ (*halakh*) in this verbal stem means “to go about; to go to and fro.” The use of these terms in v. 22 also alludes to Deut 6:7.

**2 tn** *Heb* “it will guide you.” The verb is singular and the instruction is the subject.

**3 tn** In both of the preceding cola an infinitive construct was used for the temporal clauses; now the construction uses a perfect tense with *vav* (ו) consecutive. The verb would then be equivalent to an imperfect tense, but subordinated to a temporal clause here.

**4 sn** The Hebrew verb means “talk” in the sense of “to muse; to complain; to meditate”; cf. TEV, NLT “advise you.” Instruction bound to the heart will speak to the disciple on awaking.

**5 tn** *Heb* “the commandment” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV).

**6 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.

**7 sn** The terms “lamp,” “light,” and “way” are all metaphors. The positive teachings and commandments will illumine or reveal to the disciple the way to life; the disciplinary correctives will provide guidance into fullness of life.

**8 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.

**9 tn** *Heb* “the way of life” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV); NIV, NLT “the way to life.” The noun “life” is a genitive following the construct “way.” It could be an attributive genitive modifying the kind of way/course of life that instruction provides, but it could also be objective in that the course of life followed would produce and lead to life.

**10 tn** The infinitive construct is exegetical here, explaining how these teachings function as lights: “by keeping you.” This verse is the transition from the general admonition about heeding the teachings to the practical application.

**11 tc** The word translated “woman” is modified by רַע (*ra'*, “evil”) in the sense of violating the codes of the community and inflicting harm on others. The BHS editors propose changing it to read “strange woman” as before, but there is not support for that. Some commentaries follow the LXX and read רַע as “wife of a neighbor” (cf. NAB; also NRSV “the wife of another”; CEV “someone else’s wife”) but that seems to be only a clarification.

**12 tn** The word “tongue” is not in construct; the word “foreign woman” is in apposition to “smooth of tongue,” specifying whose it is. The word “smooth” then is the object of the preposition, “tongue” is the genitive of specification, and “foreign woman” in apposition.

**13 sn** The description of the woman as a “strange woman” and now a “loose [*Heb* “foreign”] woman” is within the context of the people of Israel. She is a “foreigner” in the sense that she is a nonconformist, wayward, and loose. It does not necessarily mean that she is not ethnically an Israelite.

**14 tn** The negated jussive gives the young person an immediate warning. The verb חָמַד (*khamad*) means “to desire,” and

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 seat of the will and the emotions – is only the heart reaching out after the sin.

**15 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.

**16 tn** The word בָּנִי (*b'ad*) may be taken either as “on account of” (= 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 can bring 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.

**17 tn** *Heb* “the wife of a man.”

**18 tn** These two lines might be an example of synthetic parallelism, that is, “A, what’s more B.” The A-line describes the detrimental moral 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.

**19 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.

**20 sn** “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” (אֵשׁ, *esh*) plays on the words “man” (אִישׁ, *ish*) and “woman” (אִשָּׁה, *ishah*); 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 יָד (yod) and הָ (he), the two main letters of the holy name *Yah*. But if the LORD is removed from the relationship, that is, if these two letters are removed, all that is left is the אֵשׁ – 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).

**21 tn** *Heb* “snatch up fire into his bosom.”

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

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

**24 tn** *Heb* “thus is the one.”

with<sup>1</sup> his neighbor's wife;  
no one<sup>2</sup> who touches<sup>3</sup> her will escape<sup>4</sup>  
punishment.<sup>5</sup>  
**6:30** People<sup>6</sup> do not despise a thief when  
he steals  
to fulfill his need<sup>7</sup> when he is hungry.  
**6:31** Yet<sup>8</sup> if he is caught<sup>9</sup> he must repay<sup>10</sup>  
seven times over,  
he might even have to give<sup>11</sup> all the  
wealth of his house.  
**6:32** A man who commits adultery with a  
woman lacks wisdom,<sup>12</sup>  
whoever does it destroys his own life.<sup>13</sup>  
**6:33** He will be beaten and despised,<sup>14</sup>  
and his reproach will not be wiped away;<sup>15</sup>  
**6:34** for jealousy kindles<sup>16</sup> a husband's<sup>17</sup>  
rage,

and he will not show mercy<sup>18</sup> when he  
takes revenge.  
**6:35** He will not consider<sup>19</sup> any compensa-  
tion,<sup>20</sup>  
he will not be willing, even if you multi-  
ply the compensation.<sup>21</sup>

*Admonition to Avoid the Wiles of the Adulteress*<sup>22</sup>

**7:1** My child,<sup>23</sup> keep my words  
and treasure up my commands in your  
own keeping.<sup>24</sup>  
**7:2** Keep my commands<sup>25</sup> so that you may  
live,<sup>26</sup>  
and obey<sup>27</sup> my instruction as your most  
prized possession.<sup>28</sup>  
**7:3** Bind them on your forearm;<sup>29</sup>  
write them on the tablet of your heart.<sup>30</sup>  
**7:4** Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"<sup>31</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb "who goes in to" (so NAB, NASB). The Hebrew verb בוא (*bo*), "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."

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb "anyone who touches her will not."

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The verb "touches" is intended here to be a euphemism for illegal sexual contact (e.g., Gen 20:6).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb "will be exempt from"; NASB, NLT "will not go unpunished."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The verb is ינקה (*yinnaqeh*), the Niphal imperfect from נקה (*naqah*, "to be empty; to be clean"). From it we get the adjectives "clean," "free from guilt," "innocent." The Niphal 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 be exempt from punishment" [here], and (4) "to be free; to be exempt from obligation" (Gen 24:8).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb "they do not despise."

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb "himself" or "his life." Since the word נפש (*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.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The term "yet" is supplied in the translation.

<sup>9</sup> **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 imperfect.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The imperfect tense has an obligatory nuance. The verb in the Piel means "to repay; to make restitution; to recompense"; cf. NCV, TEV, CEV "must pay back."

<sup>11</sup> **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. The verb functions as an imperfect of possibility: "he might even give."

<sup>12</sup> **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."

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb "soul." The noun נפש (*nefesh*, "soul") functions as a metonymy of association for "life" (BDB 659 s.v. 3.c.).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "He will receive a wound and contempt."

<sup>15</sup> **sn** Even though the text has said that the man caught in adultery ruins 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).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The word "kindles" was supplied in the translation; both "rage" and "jealousy" have meanings connected to heat.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb "a man's."

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The verb חמל (*khamal*) 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").

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb "lift up the face of," meaning "regard."

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The word rendered "compensation" is כפר (*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.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** BDB 1005 s.v. שוהו suggests that this term means "hush money" or "bribe" (cf. NIV, NRSV, NLT). C. H. Toy takes it as legal compensation (*Proverbs* [ICC], 142).

<sup>22</sup> **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).

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb "my son."

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb "within you" (so NASB, NIV); KJV, ASV, NRSV "with you." BDB 860 s.v. בן Qal.1 suggests that "within you" means "in your own keeping."

<sup>25</sup> **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.

<sup>26</sup> **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," or "and you will live."

<sup>27</sup> **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).

<sup>28</sup> **tn** Heb "the little man in your eye." Traditionally this 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, where the object focused on – a man – is reflected in miniature. The point is that the teaching must be the central focus of the disciple's vision and attention.

<sup>29</sup> **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.

<sup>30</sup> **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.

<sup>31</sup> **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 you<sup>1</sup> from the  
adulterous<sup>2</sup> woman,  
from the loose woman<sup>3</sup> who flatters you<sup>4</sup>  
with her words.<sup>5</sup>

7:6 For at the window of my house  
through my window lattice I looked out  
7:7 and I saw among the naive –  
I discerned among the youths<sup>6</sup> –  
a young man<sup>7</sup> who lacked wisdom.<sup>8</sup>  
7:8 He was passing by the street near her  
corner,  
making his way<sup>9</sup> along the road to her  
house<sup>10</sup>  
7:9 in the twilight, the evening,<sup>11</sup>  
in the dark of the night.<sup>12</sup>  
7:10 Suddenly<sup>13</sup> a woman came out to  
meet him!  
She was dressed like a prostitute<sup>14</sup> and  
with secret intent.<sup>15</sup>

7:11 (She is loud and rebellious,  
she<sup>16</sup> does not remain<sup>17</sup> at home –  
7:12 at one time outside, at another<sup>18</sup> in the  
wide plazas,  
and by every corner she lies in wait.)  
7:13 So she grabbed him and kissed him,  
and with a bold expression<sup>19</sup> she said to  
him,  
7:14 “I have<sup>20</sup> fresh meat at home;<sup>21</sup>  
today I have fulfilled my vows!  
7:15 That is why I came out to meet you,  
to look for you,<sup>22</sup> and I found you!  
7:16 I have spread my bed with elegant  
coverings,<sup>23</sup>  
with richly colored fabric<sup>24</sup> from Egypt.  
7:17 I have perfumed my bed  
with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.  
7:18 Come, let’s drink deeply<sup>25</sup> of love-  
making<sup>26</sup> until morning,

this chapter certainly prepares for that personification.

**1** **tn** The infinitive construct with the preposition shows the purpose of associating closely with wisdom: Wisdom will obviate 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 loose morals – an adulteress or wayward woman. H. Ringgren and W. Zimmerli, however, suggest that she is also a promoter of a pagan cult, but that is not entirely convincing (*Sprüche/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.”

**9** **tn** This *young man who lacked wisdom* is one of the simpletons, 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).

**10** **tn** The verb *יָצַד* (*tsa’ad*) means “to step; to march.” It suggests 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.

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

**12** **tn** *Heb* “in the evening of the day.”

**13** **tn** *Heb* “in the middle of the night, and dark”; KJV “in the black and dark night”; NRSV “at the time of night and darkness.”

**14** **tn** The particle *הִנֵּה* (*v<sup>h</sup>himneh*) 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....”

**15** **tn** *Heb* “with the garment of a prostitute.” The noun *שִׂיחַ* (*shihh*, “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.

**16** **tn** *Heb* “kept secret of heart”; cf. ASV, NRSV “wily of heart.” The verbal form is the passive participle from *נָסַר* (*nat-sar*) in construct. C. H. Toy lists the suggestions of the commentators: false, malicious, secret, subtle, excited, hypocrit-

ical (*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.

**17** **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.

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

**19** **tn** The repetition of the noun “time, step,” usually translated “now, this time,” signifies here “at one time...at another time” (BDB 822 s.v. *פְּנֵים* 3.e).

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

**21** **tn** *Heb* “with me.”

**22** **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 7:11-21). Apparently the sacrificial worship meant as little to this woman spiritually as does Christmas to modern hypocrites who follow in her pattern. By expressing 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 customer.

**23** **tn** *Heb* “to look diligently for your face.”

**24** **tn** *Heb* “with spreads.” The sentence begins with the cognate accusative: “with spreads I have spread my bed.” The construction enhances the idea – she has covered her bed.

**25** **tn** The feminine noun means “dark-hued stuffs” (BDB 310 s.v. *הַחֲבוּת*). The form is a passive participle from a supposed root *חָבַט* (*khatab*), which in Arabic means to be of a turbid, dusky color mixed with yellowish red. Its Aramaic cognate means “variegated”; cf. NAB “with brocaded cloths of Egyptian linen.” BDB’s translation of this color is unsatisfactory: “with dark hued stuffs of yarn from Egypt.”

**26** **tn** The form *נִרְוַח* (*nirveh*) is the plural cohortative; following 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.”

**27** **tn** *Heb* “loves.” The word *דָּד* (*dod*) 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<sup>4</sup> with sexual intercourse.<sup>2</sup>

**7:19** For my husband<sup>3</sup> is not at home;<sup>4</sup> he has gone on a journey of some distance.

**7:20** He has taken a bag of money with him;<sup>5</sup> he will not return until<sup>6</sup> the end of the month.<sup>7</sup>

**7:21** She persuaded him<sup>8</sup> with persuasive words;<sup>9</sup> with her smooth talk<sup>10</sup> she compelled him.<sup>11</sup>

**7:22** Suddenly he went<sup>12</sup> after her like an ox that goes to the slaughter, like a stag prancing into a trapper's snare<sup>13</sup>

**7:23** till an arrow pierces his liver<sup>14</sup> – like a bird hurrying into a trap, and he does not know that it will cost him his life.<sup>15</sup>

**7:24** So now, sons,<sup>16</sup> listen to me,

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The form is the Hitpa'el cohortative of עָלַם ('*alas*'), which means "to rejoice." Cf. NIV "let's enjoy ourselves."

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* "with love."

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the man." The LXX interpreted it as "my husband," taking the article to be used as a possessive. Many English versions do the same.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* "in his house."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* "in his hand."

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* "he will come back at."

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* "new moon." Judging from the fact that the husband took a purse of money and was staying away until the next full moon, the woman implies that they would be safe in their escapade. If v. 9 and v. 20 are any clue, he could be gone for about two weeks – until the moon is full again.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* "she turned him aside." This expression means that she persuaded him. This section now begins the description of the capitulation, for the flattering speech is finished.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The term עֲקָאֵה (‘*eqqah*’) was used earlier in Proverbs for wise instruction; now it is used ironically for enticement to sin (see D. W. Thomas, "Textual and Philological Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs," VTSup 3 [1955]: 280-92).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* "smooth of her lips"; cf. NAB "smooth lips"; NASB "flattering lips." The term "lips" is a metonymy of cause representing what she says.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The verb means "to impel; to thrust; to banish," but in this stem in this context "to compel; to force" into some action. The imperfect tense has the nuance of progressive imperfect to parallel the characteristic perfect of the first colon.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The participle with "suddenly" gives a more vivid picture, almost as if to say "there he goes."

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The present translation follows R. B. Y. Scott (*Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes* [AB], 64). This third colon of the verse would usually be rendered, "fettlers to the chastening of a fool" (KJV, ASV, and NASB are all similar). But there is no support that עֲקָאֵה ('*ekhes*') means "fettlers." 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 bonds."

<sup>14</sup> **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*).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** 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.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The literal translation "sons" works well here in view of

and pay attention to the words I speak.<sup>17</sup>

**7:25** Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways –

do not wander into her pathways;

**7:26** for she has brought down<sup>18</sup> many fatally wounded,

and all those she has slain are many.<sup>19</sup>

**7:27** Her house is the way to the grave,<sup>20</sup> going down<sup>21</sup> to the chambers<sup>22</sup> of death.

### *The Appeal of Wisdom*<sup>23</sup>

**8:1** Does not wisdom call out?

Does not understanding raise her voice?

**8:2** At the top<sup>24</sup> of the elevated places along the way,

the warning. Cf. KJV, NAB, NRSV "children."

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the words of my mouth."

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* "she has caused to fall."

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* "numerous" (so NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT) or "countless."

<sup>20</sup> **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.

<sup>21</sup> **sn** *Her house is the way to the grave.* The young man's life is not destroyed in one instant; it is taken from him gradually as he enters into a course of life that will leave him as another victim of the wages of sin. The point of the warning is to prevent such a course from starting. Sin can certainly be forgiven, but the more involvement in this matter the greater the alienation from the healthy community.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The Qal active participle modifies "ways" to Sheol. The "road," as it were, descends to the place of death.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** "Chambers" is a hypocaustasis, 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."

<sup>24</sup> **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 on 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; and R. Marcus, "On Biblical Hypostases of Wisdom," *HUCA* 23 [1950-1951]: 157-71). Many have equated wisdom in this chapter with Jesus Christ. This connection works only in so far as Jesus reveals the nature of the Father, just as Proverbs presents wisdom as an attribute of God. Jesus' claims included wisdom (Matt 12:42) and a unique knowledge of God (Matt 11:25-27). He even personified wisdom in a way that was similar to Proverbs (Matt 11:19). Paul saw the fulfillment of wisdom in Christ (Col 1:15-20; 2:3) and affirmed that Christ became our wisdom in the crucifixion (1 Cor 1:24, 30). So this personification in Proverbs provides a solid foundation for the similar revelation of wisdom in Christ. But because wisdom is a creation of God in Proverbs 8, it is unlikely that wisdom here is to be identified with Jesus Christ. The chapter unfolds in three cycles: After an introduction (1-3), wisdom makes an invitation (4, 5) and explains that she is noble, just, and true (6-9); she then makes another invitation (10) and explains that she is valuable (11-21); and finally, she tells how she preceded and delights in creation (22-31) before concluding with the third invitation (32-36).

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* "head." The word רֹאשׁ ('*ro'sh*,' "head") refers to the highest area or most important place in the elevated area. The contrast with chapter 7 is striking. There the wayward woman lurked at the corners in the street at night; here wisdom is at the highest point in the open places in view of all.

at the intersection<sup>1</sup> of the paths she takes  
her stand;  
8:3 beside the gates opening into<sup>2</sup> the city,  
at the entrance of the doorways she cries  
out.<sup>3</sup>  
8:4 “To you, O people,<sup>4</sup> I call out,  
and my voice calls<sup>5</sup> to all mankind.<sup>6</sup>  
8:5 You who are naive, discern<sup>7</sup> wisdom!  
And you fools, understand discernment!<sup>8</sup>  
8:6 Listen, for I will speak excellent  
things,<sup>9</sup>  
and my lips will utter<sup>10</sup> what is right.  
8:7 For my mouth<sup>11</sup> speaks truth<sup>12</sup>  
and my lips<sup>13</sup> hate wickedness.<sup>14</sup>  
8:8 All the words of my mouth are righ-  
teous,<sup>15</sup>  
there is nothing in them twisted<sup>16</sup> or

crooked.  
8:9 All of them are clear<sup>17</sup> to the discern-  
ing  
and upright to those who find knowledge.  
8:10 Receive my instruction<sup>18</sup> rather than<sup>19</sup>  
silver,  
and knowledge rather than choice gold.  
8:11 For wisdom is better than rubies,  
and desirable things cannot be compared<sup>20</sup>  
to her.  
8:12 “I, wisdom, live with prudence,<sup>21</sup>  
and I find<sup>22</sup> knowledge and discretion.  
8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate<sup>23</sup> evil;  
I hate arrogant pride<sup>24</sup> and the evil way  
and perverse utterances.<sup>25</sup>  
8:14 Counsel and sound wisdom belong  
to me;<sup>26</sup>

**1 tn** Heb “at the house of the paths.” The “house” is not literal here, but refers to where the paths meet (cf. ASV, NIV), that is, the “crossroads” (so NAB, NRSV, NLT).

**2 tn** Heb “at the mouth of.”

**3 tn** The cry is a very loud ringing cry that could not be missed. The term נָנַן (*nanan*) means “to give a ringing cry.” It is often only a shrill sound that might come with a victory in battle, but its use in the psalms for praise shows that it also can have clear verbal content, as it does here. For wisdom to stand in the street and give such a ringing cry would mean that it could be heard by all. It was a proclamation.

**4 tn** Heb “men.” Although it might be argued in light of the preceding material that males would be particularly addressed by wisdom here, the following material indicates a more universal appeal. Cf. TEV, NLT “to all of you.”

**5 tn** The verb “calls” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of style.

**6 tn** Heb “sons of man.” Cf. NAB “the children of men”; NCV, NLT “all people”; NRSV “all that live.”

**7 tn** The imperative of בִּין (*bin*) means “to understand; to discern.” The call is for the simple to understand what wisdom is, not just to gain it.

**8 tn** Heb “heart.” The noun לֵב (*lev*, “heart”) often functions metonymically for wisdom, understanding, discernment.

**9 tn** Heb “noble” or “princely.” Wisdom begins the first motivation by claiming to speak noble things, that is, excellent things.

**10 tn** Heb “opening of my lips” (so KJV, NASB). The noun “lips” is a metonymy of cause, with the organ of speech put for what is said.

**11 tn** Heb “roof of the mouth.” This expression is a metonymy of cause for the activity of speaking.

**12 tn** The word “truth” (אֱמֶת, *emet*) is derived from the verbal root אָמַן (*aman*) which means “to support.” There are a number of derived nouns that have the sense of reliability: “pillars,” “master craftsman,” “nurse,” “guardian.” Modifiers related to this group of words includes things like “faithful,” “surely,” “truly” (*amen*). In the derived stems the verb develops various nuances: The Niphal has the meanings of “reliable, faithful, sure, steadfast,” and the Hiphil has the meaning “believe” (i.e., consider something dependable). The noun “truth” means what is reliable or dependable, firm or sure.

**13 sn** Wise lips detest wickedness; wisdom hates speaking wicked things. In fact, speaking truth results in part from detesting wickedness.

**14 tn** Heb “wickedness is an abomination to my lips” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV).

**15 tn** The phrase could be rendered with an understood ellipsis: “all the words of my mouth [are said] in righteousness”; or the preposition could be interpreted as a *beth essentialiae*: “all the words of my mouth are righteousness.”

**16 sn** The verb פָּתַל (*patal*) means “to twist.” In the Niphal it means “to wrestle” (to twist oneself). It was used in Gen 30:8 for the naming of Naphtali, with the motivation for the name from this verb: “with great struggling.” Here it describes speech that is twisted. It is a synonym for the next word, which

means “twisted; crooked; perverse.”

**17 tn** Heb “front of.” Describing the sayings as “right in front” means they are open, obvious, and clear, as opposed to words that might be twisted or perverse. The parallel word “upright” means “straight, smooth, right.” Wisdom’s teachings are in plain view and intelligible for those who find knowledge.

**18 tn** Heb “discipline.” The term refers to instruction that trains with discipline (e.g., Prov 1:2).

**19 tn** Heb “and not” (so KJV, NASB); NAB “in preference to.”

**20 tn** The verb יִשְׁווּ (*yishvu*, from שָׁוָה, *shavah*) can be rendered “are not comparable” or in a potential nuance “cannot be compared” with her.

**21 tn** The noun is “shrewdness,” i.e., the right use of knowledge in special cases (see also the discussion in 1:4); cf. NLT “good judgment.” The word in this sentence is an adverbial accusative of specification.

**22 tn** This verb form is an imperfect, whereas the verb in the first colon was a perfect tense. The perfect should be classified as a gnomic perfect, and this form a habitual imperfect, because both verbs describe the nature of wisdom.

**23 tn** The verb שָׂנְאָה (*sane*) means “to hate.” In this sentence it functions nominally as the predicate. Fearing the LORD is hating evil.

**sn** The verb translated “hate” has the basic idea of rejecting something spontaneously. For example, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (Mal 1:2b, 3a). It frequently has the idea of disliking or loathing (as English does), but almost always with an additional aspect of rejection. To “hate evil” is not only to dislike it, but to reject it and have nothing to do with it.

**24 tn** Since both גְּאוּן (*ge’ah*, “pride”) and גְּאוֹן (*ga’on*, “arrogance; pride”) are both from the same verbal root גָּאָה (*ga’ah*, “to rise up”), they should here be interpreted as one idea, forming a nominal hendiadys: “arrogant pride.”

**25 tn** Heb “and a mouth of perverse things.” The word “mouth” is a metonymy of cause for what is said; and the noun תְּהַפְּכוֹת (*thapukhot*, “perverse things”) means destructive things (the related verb is used for the overthrowing of Sodom).

**26 tc** In the second half of v. 14 instead of אֲנִי (*ani*) the editors propose reading simply לִי (*li*) as the renderings in the LXX, Latin, and Syriac suggest. Then, in place of the לִי that comes in the same colon, read לִי (*li*). While the MT is a difficult reading, it can be translated as it is. It would be difficult to know exactly what the ancient versions were reading, because their translations could have been derived from either text. They represent an effort to smooth out the text.

**tn** Heb “To me [belong] counsel and sound wisdom.” The second colon in the verse has: “I, understanding, to me and might.”

**sn** In vv. 14-17 the pronouns come first and should receive greater prominence – although it is not always easy to do this with English.

I possess understanding and might.  
**8:15** Kings reign by means of me,  
 and potentates<sup>4</sup> decree<sup>5</sup> righteousness;  
**8:16** by me princes rule,  
 as well as nobles and<sup>3</sup> all righteous  
 judges.<sup>4</sup>  
**8:17** I love<sup>5</sup> 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,<sup>6</sup>  
 and what I produce<sup>7</sup> 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<sup>8</sup> those who love me  
 to inherit wealth,  
 and that I may fill<sup>9</sup> their treasuries.<sup>10</sup>

**8:22** The LORD created<sup>11</sup> me as the begin-  
 ning<sup>12</sup> of his works,<sup>13</sup>  
 before his deeds of long ago.  
**8:23** From eternity I was appointed,<sup>14</sup>  
 from the beginning, from before the  
 world existed.<sup>15</sup>  
**8:24** When there were no deep oceans<sup>16</sup> I  
 was born,<sup>17</sup>  
 when there were no springs overflowing<sup>18</sup>  
 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,<sup>19</sup>

**1 tn** The verb רָזַן (*razan*) 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 יָרַדְקָהּ (*y<sup>h</sup>khoqu*) is related to the noun יָרַדְקָהּ (*khoq*), which is a “statute; decree.” The verb is defined as “to cut in; to inscribe; to decree” (BDB 349 s.v. יָרַדְקָהּ). 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 2:1-3). But 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 the same root, and then in v. 16 with both “princes” and “rule” being cognate. The repetition of sounds and meanings strengthens the statements.

**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 tc** 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” (שָׂנְאָה, *shaneh*) the verb “love” (אָהַב, *ahav*) 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 hendiadys 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 hypocatastasis, 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 vav on the 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 קָנָה (*qanah*) 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 “possess” 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 (*IBHS* 174-75 §10.2.3c).

**13 tn** Heb “his way” (so KJV, NASB). The word “way” is an idiom (implied comparison) for the actions of God.

**sn** The claim of wisdom in this passage is that she was foundational to all that God would do.

**14 tn** The first parallel verb is נִסְּכֵתִי (*nissakhti*), “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 “existed” 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 deeps” (תְּהוֹמוֹת, *t<sup>h</sup>homot*) 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 כֹּהֲלֵתִי (*kholaliti*), “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 קָנָה (*qanah*) 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<sup>1</sup> of the dust of the world.  
**8:27** When he established the heavens, I  
 was there;  
 when he marked out the horizon<sup>2</sup> over the  
 face of the deep,  
**8:28** when he established the clouds  
 above,  
 when the fountains of the deep grew  
 strong,<sup>3</sup>  
**8:29** when he gave the sea his decree  
 that the waters should not pass over his  
 command,<sup>4</sup>  
 when he marked out the foundations of  
 the earth,  
**8:30** then I was<sup>5</sup> beside him as a master  
 craftsman,<sup>6</sup>  
 and I was his delight<sup>7</sup> day by day,  
 rejoicing before him at all times,  
**8:31** rejoicing in the habitable part of his  
 earth,<sup>8</sup>  
 and delighting<sup>9</sup> in its people.<sup>10</sup>

**8:32** “So now, children,<sup>11</sup> listen to me;  
 blessed are those who keep my ways.  
**8:33** Listen to my instruction<sup>12</sup> so that you  
 may be wise,<sup>13</sup>  
 and do not neglect it.  
**8:34** Blessed is the one<sup>14</sup> who listens to me,  
 watching<sup>15</sup> at my doors day by day,

waiting<sup>16</sup> beside my doorway.<sup>17</sup>  
**8:35** For the one who finds me finds<sup>18</sup> life  
 and receives<sup>19</sup> favor from the LORD.  
**8:36** But the one who does not find me<sup>20</sup>  
 brings harm<sup>21</sup> to himself;<sup>22</sup>  
 all who hate me<sup>23</sup> love death.”

*The Consequences of Accepting Wisdom or Folly*<sup>24</sup>

**9:1** Wisdom has built her house;  
 she has carved out its seven pillars.<sup>25</sup>  
**9:2** She has prepared her meat,<sup>26</sup> she has  
 mixed her wine;  
 she also has arranged her table.<sup>27</sup>

ing epeexegetically in the sentence. It explains how the person will listen to wisdom.

**16 tn** Heb “keeping” or “guarding.”

**17 tn** Heb “at the posts of my doors” (so KJV, ASV).

**18 tc** 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 sinning [against] me.” The verb *חָטָא* (*khata*’, “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 social and physical harm and violence.

**sn** *Brings harm*. Whoever tries to live without wisdom is inviting all kinds of disaster into his life.

**22 tn** Heb “his soul.”

**23 tn** The basic idea of the verb *שָׂנֵא* (*sane*’, “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.

**24 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).

**25 sn** 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. Bostrom, *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.

**26 tn** Heb “she has killed her killing.” Cf. KJV “hath killed her beasts”; NAB “has dressed her meat”; NASB “has prepared her food.”

**27 sn** Wisdom has prepared a sumptuous banquet in this house and sends out her maids to call the simple to come and eat (M. Lichtenstein, “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.

**1 tn** Here *רֵאשִׁית* (*ro’sh*) means “beginning” with reference to time (BDB 911 s.v. 4.b).

**2 sn** The infinitive construct *בָּרַוְרוּ* (*b<sup>e</sup>khuqo*, “to cut; to engrave; to mark”) and the noun *חֹרֶן* (*khug*, “horizon; circle”) form a paronomasia in the line.

**3 tn** To form a better parallel some commentators read this infinitive *בָּנִיתָ* (*ba’azoz*), “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 *אָמוֹן* (*amon*). Several suggestions have been made: “master craftsman” (cf. ASV, NASB, NIV, NRSV), “nursing child” (cf. NCV), “foster father.” R. B. Y. Scott chooses “faithful” – a binding or living link (“Wisdom in Creation: The *Amon* of Proverbs 8:30,” *VT* 10 [1960]: 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 suffix; the Hebrew does not.

**8 tn** The two words are synonymous in general and so could be taken to express a superlative idea – the “whole world” (cf. NIV, NCV). But *תְּבִילָה* (*tevel*) also means the inhabited world, and so the construct may be interpreted as a partitive genitive.

**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 construction 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 *לִשְׁקֹד* (*lishqod*) is the infinitive construct serv-

9:3 She has sent out her female servants; she calls out on the highest places<sup>1</sup> of the city.

9:4 “Whoever is naive, let him turn in here,<sup>2</sup> she says<sup>2</sup> to those<sup>3</sup> who lack understanding.<sup>4</sup>

9:5 “Come, eat<sup>5</sup> some of my food, and drink some of the wine I have mixed.<sup>6</sup>

9:6 Abandon your foolish ways<sup>7</sup> so that you may live,<sup>8</sup> and proceed<sup>9</sup> in the way of understanding-ing.”

9:7 Whoever corrects<sup>10</sup> a mocker is asking for<sup>11</sup> insult;<sup>12</sup> whoever reproves a wicked person receives<sup>13</sup> abuse.

9:8 Do not reprove<sup>14</sup> a mocker or<sup>15</sup> he will hate you;

reprove a wise person and he will love you.

9:9 Give instruction<sup>16</sup> to a wise person,<sup>17</sup> and he will become wiser still; teach<sup>18</sup> a righteous person and he will add to his<sup>19</sup> learning.

9:10 The beginning<sup>20</sup> of wisdom is to fear the LORD,<sup>21</sup> and acknowledging<sup>22</sup> the Holy One<sup>23</sup> is understanding.

9:11 For because<sup>24</sup> of me your days will be many, and years will be added<sup>25</sup> to your life.

9:12 If you are wise, you are wise to your own advantage,<sup>26</sup> but if you are a mocker,<sup>27</sup> you alone must<sup>28</sup> bear it.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The text uses two synonymous terms in construct to express the superlative degree.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lacking of heart she says to him.” The pronominal suffix is a resumptive pronoun, meaning, “she says to the lacking of heart.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “him.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “heart”; cf. NIV “to those who lack judgment.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The construction features a cognate accusative (verb and noun from same root). The preposition ב (bet) has the partitive use “some” (GKC 380 §119.m).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The final verb actually stands in a relative clause although the relative pronoun is not present; it modifies “wine.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The expressions “eat” and “drink” carry the implied comparison forward; they mean that the simple are to appropriate the teachings of wisdom.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** There are two ways to take this word: either as “fools” or as “foolish ways.” The spelling for “foolishness” in v. 13 differs from this spelling, and so some have taken that as an indicator that this should be “fools.” But this could still be an abstract plural here as in 1:22. Either the message is to forsake fools (i.e., bad company; cf. KJV, TEV) or forsake foolishness (cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The two imperatives are joined with *vav*; this is a volitive sequence in which result or consequence is expressed.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The verb means “go straight, go on, advance” or “go straight on in the way of understanding” (BDB 80 s.v. אָצִיֶר).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The active participle יוֹסֵר (*yoser*) describes one who tries to correct by means of instruction and discipline; it is paralleled by the Hiphil participle which refers to someone who rebukes or reproves another. Anyone trying this on these types of people would be inviting trouble.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “receives for himself.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The word means “dishonor” or “disgrace.” It is paralleled with מוֹבִיז (*mumoz*), translated “abuse.” The latter term means “blemish,” although some would emend the text to read “reproach.” The MT is figurative but not impossible to interpret: Whoever tries to rebuke a wicked person will receive only insults and perhaps physical attack.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The verb “receives” is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** 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.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lest he hate you.” The particle לֵא (*pen*, “lest”) expresses fear or precaution (R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 79, §476). The antonyms “love” and “hate” suggest that the latter means “reject” and the former means “choosing and embracing.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The noun “instruction” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The parallelism shows what Proverbs will repeatedly stress, that the wise person is the righteous person.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The Hiphil verb normally means “to cause to know, make known,” but here the context suggests “to teach” (so many English versions).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The term “his” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied for the sake of smoothness and clarity.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The difference between תְּחִלָּתָהּ (*ʾkhillat*) here and רֵאשִׁיתָהּ (*reʾshit*) of 1:7, if there is any substantial difference, is that this term refers to the starting point of wisdom, and the earlier one indicates the primary place of wisdom (K&D 16:202).

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “fear of the LORD.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “knowledge of the Holy One” (so ASV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>23</sup> **tn** The word is in the plural in the Hebrew (literally “holy ones”; KJV “the holy”). It was translated “holy men” in *Tg.* Prov 9:10. But 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).

<sup>24</sup> **tn** The preposition ב (bet) here may have the causal sense (R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 45, §247), although it could also be means (Williams, 44, §243).

<sup>25</sup> **tn** The verb וְיִסְפַּף (*vʾyosif*) is the Hiphil imperfect, third masculine plural, but because there is no expressed subject the verb may be taken as a passive.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** The text simply has the preposition ל (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).

<sup>27</sup> **tn** 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.”

<sup>28</sup> **tn** 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).

<sup>29</sup> **tn** The LXX has an addition: “Forsake folly, that you may reign forever; and seek discretion and direct understanding in knowledge.”

**9:13** The woman called Folly<sup>1</sup> is brash,<sup>2</sup> she is naive<sup>3</sup> and does not know<sup>4</sup> anything.<sup>5</sup>  
**9:14** So she sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city,  
**9:15** calling out<sup>6</sup> to those who are passing by her<sup>7</sup> in the way,<sup>8</sup> who go straight<sup>9</sup> on their way.  
**9:16** “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here,” she says to those who lack understanding.<sup>10</sup>  
**9:17** “Stolen waters<sup>11</sup> are sweet, and food obtained in secret<sup>12</sup> is pleasant!”

**1 tn** Heb “a woman of foolishness.” This could be translated as “foolish woman,” taking the genitive as attributive (cf. KJV, ASV, NRSV). But in view of the contrast with the personification of wisdom, this word probably also represents a personification and so can be taken as a genitive of apposition, the woman who is folly, or “the woman, Folly” (cf. NIV). For clarity and stylistic reasons the word “called” has been supplied in the translation.

**2 tn** The meaning of the word comes close to “riotous.” W. McKane describes her as restless and rootless (*Proverbs* [OTL], 366).

**3 tn** The noun means “foolishness” (cf. KJV “simple”; NAB “inane”). Here it could be classified as a metonymy of adjunct, or as a predictive apposition (when a substantive is used in place of a noun; see R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 15, §67).

**4 tn** The ignorance here in Proverbs must be moral ignorance. But see D. W. Thomas for the idea that the verb means “become still,” “be at rest,” yielding here the idea of restless (“A Note on חָלַל” in Proverbs 9<sup>13</sup>,” *JTS* 4 [1953]: 23-24).

**5 tc** The text of v. 13 has been difficult for translators. The MT has, “The foolish woman is boisterous, simplicity, and knows not what.” The LXX reads, “A foolish and impudent woman comes to lack a morsel, she who knows not shame.” The Syriac has, “a woman lacking in discretion, seductive.” *Tg. Prov* 9:13 translates it, “a foolish woman and a gadabout, ignorant, and she knows not good.” The Vulgate has, “a woman foolish and noisy, and full of wiles, and knowing nothing at all.”

**6 tn** The infinitive construct “calling out” functions epexegetically in the sentence, explaining how the previous action was accomplished.

**7 tn** The term “her” does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

**8 tn** The noun is a genitive of location after the construct participle. Its parallel word is also an adverbial accusative of location.

**9 tn** The participle modifies the participle in the first colon. To describe the passers-by in this context as those “who go straight” means that they are quiet and unwary.

**10 tn** This expression is almost identical to v. 4, with the exception of the addition of conjunctions in the second colon: “and the lacking of understanding and she says to him.” The parallel is deliberate, of course, showing the competing appeals for those passing by.

**11 sn** The offer is not wine and meat (which represented wisdom), but water that is stolen. The “water” will seem sweeter than wine because it is stolen – the idea of getting away with something exciting appeals to the baser instincts. In Proverbs the water imagery was introduced earlier in 5:15-19 as sexual activity with the adulteress, which would seem at the moment more enjoyable than learning wisdom. Likewise bread will be drawn into this analogy in 30:20. So the “calling out” is similar to that of wisdom, but what is being offered is very different.

**12 tn** Heb “bread of secrecies.” It could mean “bread [eaten in] secret places,” a genitive of location; or it could mean “bread [gained through] secrets,” a genitive of source, the secrecies being metonymical for theft. The latter makes a better parallelism in this verse, for bread (= sexually immoral behav-

**9:18** But they do not realize<sup>13</sup> that the dead<sup>14</sup> are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.<sup>15</sup>

*The First Collection of Solomon Proverbs*<sup>16</sup>

**10:1** The Proverbs of Solomon:

A wise child<sup>17</sup> makes a father rejoice,<sup>18</sup> but a foolish child<sup>19</sup> is a grief to his mother.<sup>20</sup>

**10:2** Treasures gained by wickedness<sup>21</sup> do not profit, but righteousness<sup>22</sup> delivers from mortal danger.<sup>23</sup>

ior) gained secretly would be like stolen water.

**13 tn** Heb “he does not know.”

**14 sn** The “dead” are the *Rephaim*, the “shades” or dead persons who lead a shadowy existence in Sheol (e.g., Prov 2:18-19; Job 3:13-19; Ps 88:5; Isa 14:9-11). This approximates an “as-if” motif of wisdom literature: The ones ensnared in folly are as good as in Hell. See also Ptaḥ-hotep’s sayings (*ANET* 412-414).

**15 tc** The LXX adds to the end of v. 18: “But turn away, linger not in the place, neither set your eye on her: for thus will you go through alien water, but abstain from alien water, drink not from an alien fountain, that you may live long, that years of life may be added to you.”

**sn** The text has “in the depths of Sheol” (בְּעִמְקֵי שְׁאוֹל, *b<sup>e</sup>imqe sh<sup>e</sup>ol*). The parallelism stresses that those who turn to this way of life are ignorant and doomed. It may signal a literal death lying ahead in the not too distant future, but it is more likely an analogy. The point is that the life of folly, a life of undisciplined, immoral, riotous living, runs counter to God’s appeal for wisdom and leads to ruin. That is the broad way that leads to destruction.

**16 sn** Beginning with ch. 10 there is a difference in the form of the material contained in the book of Proverbs. No longer are there long admonitions, but the actual proverbs, short aphorisms dealing with right or wrong choices. Other than a few similar themes grouped together here and there, there is no arrangement to the material as a whole. It is a long collection of approximately 400 proverbs.

**17 tn** Heb “son.”

**18 tn** The imperfect tense describes progressive or habitual action, translated here with an English present tense. These fit the nature of proverbs which are general maxims, and not necessarily absolutes or universal truths. One may normally expect to find what the proverb notes, and one should live according to its instructions in the light of those expectations, but one should not be surprised if from time to time there is an exception. The fact that there may be an exception does not diminish the need to live by the sayings.

**19 tn** Heb “son.”

**20 tn** Heb “grief of his mother.” The noun “grief” is in construct, and “mother” is an objective genitive. The saying declares that the consequences of wisdom or folly affects the parents.

**21 tn** Heb “treasures of wickedness” (so KJV, ASV); NASB “ill-gotten gains”; TEV “Wealth that you get by dishonesty.”

**22 sn** The term “righteousness” here means honesty (cf. TEV). Wealth has limited value even if gained honestly, but honesty delivers from mortal danger.

**23 tn** Heb “death.” This could refer to literal death, but it is probably figurative here for mortal danger or ruin.

**10:3** The LORD satisfies<sup>4</sup> the appetite<sup>2</sup> of the righteous, but he thwarts<sup>3</sup> the craving<sup>4</sup> of the wicked.

**10:4** The one who is lazy<sup>5</sup> becomes poor,<sup>6</sup> but the one who works diligently<sup>7</sup> becomes wealthy.<sup>8</sup>

**10:5** The one who gathers crops<sup>9</sup> in the summer is a wise<sup>10</sup> son, but the one who sleeps<sup>11</sup> during the harvest

is a son who brings shame to himself.<sup>12</sup>

**10:6** Blessings<sup>13</sup> are on the head of the righteous, but the speech<sup>14</sup> of the wicked conceals<sup>15</sup> violence.<sup>16</sup>

**10:7** The memory<sup>17</sup> of the righteous is a blessing, but the reputation<sup>18</sup> of the wicked will rot.<sup>19</sup>

**10:8** The wise person<sup>20</sup> accepts instructions,<sup>21</sup> but the one who speaks foolishness<sup>22</sup> will come to ruin.<sup>23</sup>

**10:9** The one who conducts himself<sup>24</sup> in integrity<sup>25</sup> will live<sup>26</sup> 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 *tapeinosis* – 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. 5.a; see, e.g., Pss 63:6; 107:9; Prov 27:7; Isa 56:11; 58:10; Jer 50:19; Ezek 7:19). The term could denote “desire” (BDB 660 s.v. 6.a) which would include the inner urge for success. By contrast, the wicked live unfulfilled lives – as far as spiritual values are concerned.

**3 tn** *Heb* “thrusts away” (cf. ASV, NASB); NLT “refuses to satisfy.” The verb הדרף (*hadaf*) 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. This word תהה (*havvah*, “craving”) means “desire” 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 slackness.” The genitive noun רמייה (*remiyah*, “slackness”) 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 physical labor. 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 רשע (*ra'sh*, “poor”) which is the plene spelling of רש (*rash*, “poor [person]”); HALOT 1229-30 s.v. ריש. Both Tg. Prov 10:4 and LXX reflect an alternate vocalization ריש (*rish*, “poverty”) which is from the same root, and essentially means the same thing.

**tn** *Heb* “causes poverty.” The expression is literally, “the palm of slackness causes poverty.”

**7 tn** *Heb* “but the hand of the diligent” (so KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV). The genitive noun חרואטים (*khaurutim*, “diligence”) functions as an attributive adjective: “a diligent hand.” The noun חרואטים (*khaurutim*) uses the plural form because the plural is often used for abstract moral qualities. The term יד (*yad*, “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.

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

**9 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.

**10 tn** *Heb* “prudent.” The term מַשְׂכִּיל (*maskil*) refers to a wise and so successful person. He seizes the opportunity, knowing the importance of the season.

**11 sn** The term “sleeps” is figurative, an 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.

**12 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.”

**13 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”).

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

**15 tn** *Heb* “covers.” Behind the speech of the wicked is aggressive violence (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 422).

**16 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” (cf. KJV, ASV, NIV).

**17 sn** “Memory” (זכר, *zekher*) 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. שם 2.b).

**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.

**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.

**20 tn** *Heb* “the wise of heart” (so NASB, NRSV). The genitive noun לב (*lev*, “heart”) functions as an attributive adjective: “the wise heart.” The term לב 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. 3.b).

**21 tn** *Heb* “commandments.”

**22 tn** *Heb* “fool of lips.” The phrase is a genitive 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.

**23 tn** The Niphal verb לָבַט (*lavat*) 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.

**24 tn** *Heb* “he who walks.” The idiom is used widely in both OT and NT for conduct, behavior, or lifestyle.

**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<sup>1</sup> will be found out.

**10:10** The one who winks<sup>2</sup> his<sup>3</sup> eye causes<sup>4</sup> trouble, and the one who speaks foolishness<sup>5</sup> will come to ruin.

**10:11** The teaching<sup>6</sup> of the righteous is a fountain of life,<sup>7</sup> but the speech<sup>8</sup> of the wicked conceals<sup>9</sup> violence.<sup>10</sup>

**10:12** Hatred<sup>11</sup> stirs up dissension, but love covers all transgressions.<sup>12</sup>

**10:13** Wisdom is found in the words<sup>13</sup> of the discerning person,<sup>14</sup> but the one who lacks wisdom<sup>15</sup> will be disciplined.<sup>16</sup>

**1** **tn** *Heb* "he who perverts his ways" (so NASB); NIV "who takes crooked paths" (NLT similar). The Piel participle מְעַקֵּשׁ (*m<sup>e</sup>aqqesh*) means "make crooked; twisted; perverse." It is stronger than simply taking crooked paths; it refers to perverting the ways. The one who is devious will not get away with it.

**2** **tn** The term (קָרַט, *qarats*) describes a person 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 talk. Both are to be avoided.

**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." The term "lips" is a metonymy of cause (= lips) for effect (= speech). The word for fool (אֲוִיל, *'evil*) refers to someone who despises knowledge and discernment.

**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 beneficial to life or life-giving. Their words are life-giving but the words of the wicked are violent. See R. B. Y. Scott, "Wise and Foolish, Righteous and Wicked," *VT* 29 (1972): 145-65.

**8** **tn** *Heb* "the mouth." The term מֶה (peh, "mouth") functions as a metonymy of cause for speech.

**9** **tn** *Heb* "covers." Behind the speech of the wicked is aggressive violence (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 422).

**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 NAB, NASB, 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 לֵב (*lev*, "heart") functions as a genitive of specification: "lacking in respect to heart." The term לֵב 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. 3.a).

**16** **tn** *Heb* "a rod is for the back of the one lacking heart."

**10:14** Those who are wise<sup>17</sup> store up<sup>18</sup> knowledge,

but foolish speech<sup>19</sup> leads to imminent<sup>20</sup> destruction.

**10:15** The wealth of a rich person is like<sup>21</sup> a fortified city,<sup>22</sup> but the poor are brought to ruin<sup>23</sup> by<sup>24</sup> their poverty.

**10:16** The reward<sup>25</sup> which the righteous receive<sup>26</sup> is life; the recompense<sup>27</sup> which the wicked receive<sup>28</sup> is judgment.<sup>29</sup>

The term שֵׁבֶט (*shevet*, "rod") functions figuratively: synecdoche of specific (= rod of discipline) for general (= discipline in general). The term גַּב (gev, "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** **sn** The verb יָצַף (*tsafan*, "to store up; to treasure") may mean (1) the wise acquire and do not lose wisdom (cf. NAB, NIV, TEV), or (2) they do not tell all that they know (cf. NCV), 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 מֶה (*peh*, "mouth") functions as a metonymy of cause for speech. The genitive אֲוִיל (evil, "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 עָוִ (oz, "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 דָּלִים (*dalim*, "of the 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 NAB); NASB, NIV "wages." The noun פְּעֻלָּה (*p<sup>e</sup>ullah*) 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 תְּבוּאָה (*t<sup>e</sup>vu'at*, "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."

**29** **tn** *Heb* "sin." The term חַטָּאת (*khatta't*, "sin") functions as a metonymy of cause (= sin) for effect (= punishment). In contrast to the righteous who receive a reward, the wicked receive punishment for their sin (cf. NASB, NIV, NCV). See D. W. Thomas, "The Meaning of חַטָּאת in Proverbs X.16," *JTS* 15 (1964): 295-96.



10:17 The one who heeds instruction<sup>1</sup> is on the way to<sup>2</sup> life, but the one who rejects<sup>3</sup> rebuke goes astray.

10:18 The one who conceals hatred utters lies,<sup>4</sup> and the one who spreads<sup>5</sup> slander<sup>6</sup> is certainly<sup>7</sup> a fool.

10:19 When words abound, transgression is inevitable,<sup>8</sup> but the one who restrains<sup>9</sup> his words<sup>10</sup> is wise.

10:20 What the righteous say<sup>11</sup> is like<sup>12</sup> the best<sup>13</sup> silver, but what the wicked think<sup>14</sup> is of little value.<sup>15</sup>

10:21 The teaching<sup>16</sup> of the righteous feeds<sup>17</sup> many, but fools die<sup>18</sup> for lack of wisdom.<sup>19</sup>

10:22 The blessing<sup>20</sup> from the LORD<sup>21</sup> makes a person rich,<sup>22</sup> and he adds no sorrow<sup>23</sup> to<sup>24</sup> it.

10:23 Carrying out a wicked scheme<sup>25</sup> is enjoyable<sup>26</sup> to a fool, and so is wisdom for the one who has discernment.<sup>27</sup>

10:24 What the wicked fears<sup>28</sup> will come on him; what the righteous desire<sup>29</sup> will be granted.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>1</sup> tn Heb “discipline.” The noun מוסר (*musar*) has a basic two-fold range of meanings: (1) “discipline” (so NIV; NAB “admonition”; NCV, NLT “correction”) and (2) “instruction” (BDB 416 s.v.; so KJV, NASB, NRSV). The wise person listens to instruction (first colon); however, the fool will not even take discipline to heart (second colon).

<sup>2</sup> tn The term is a genitive of location indicating the goal (BHS 147-48 §9.5.2f).

<sup>3</sup> sn The contrast with the one who holds fast to discipline is the one who forsakes or abandons reproof or correction. Whereas the first is an example, this latter individual causes people to wander from the true course of life, that is, causes them to err.

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb “lips of falsehood.” The genitive noun שָׁקֵר (*shaqer*, “falsehood”) functions as an attributive genitive. The noun “lips” is a metonymy of cause for speech produced by lips. The one who shows friendliness while concealing hatred is a liar (e.g., Ps 28:3).

<sup>5</sup> tn Heb “causes to go out.” The Hiphil of יָצָא (*yatsa*) literally means “to cause to go out” (BDB 424 s.v. Hiph.1). This may refer to speech (“to utter”) in the sense of causing words to go out of one’s mouth, or it may refer to slander (“to spread”) in the sense of causing slander to go out to others.

<sup>6</sup> tn The word דִּבְבָה (*dibbah*) means “whispering; defamation; evil report” (BDB 179 s.v.). Cf. NAB “accusations”; TEV “gossip.”

<sup>7</sup> sn 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 423, 429).

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb “he is a fool.” The independent personal pronoun הוּא (*hu*’, “he”) is used for emphasis. This is reflected in the translation as “certainly.”

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb “does not cease.” It is impossible to avoid sinning in an abundance of words – sooner or later one is bound to say something wrong.

<sup>10</sup> tn Or “holds his lips under control.” The verb כָּשַׁךְ (*khasakh*) means “to withhold; to restrain; to hold in check” (BDB 362 s.v.). The related Arabic term is used in reference to placing a piece of wood in the mouth of a goat to prevent it from sucking (HALOT 359 s.v. רוּסָךְ).

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb “his lips” (so KJV, NAB, NASB); NIV “his tongue.” The term “lips” is a metonymy of cause for speech.

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb “the lips of the righteous.” The term “lips” functions as a metonymy of cause for speech. This contrasts the tongue (metonymy of cause for what they say) with the heart (metonymy of subject for what they intend). What the righteous say is more valuable than what the wicked intend.

<sup>13</sup> tn The comparative “like” is not in the Hebrew text but is implied by the metaphor; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

<sup>14</sup> tn Or “pure”; Heb “choice.”

<sup>15</sup> tn Heb “the heart of the wicked” (so KJV, NAB, NIV). The term “heart” functions as a metonymy of cause for thoughts. The term לֵב (*lev*, “heart”) often refers to the seat of thoughts, will and emotions (BDB 524 s.v. 3-4).

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb “like little.” This expression refers to what has

little value: “little worth” (so KJV, NAB, NRSV; cf. BDB 590 s.v. כֵּנֶסֶת 2.d). The point of the metaphor is clarified by the parallelism: Silver is valuable; the heart of the wicked is worth little. Tg. Prov 10:20 says it was full of dross, a contrast with choice silver.

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb “lips.” The term “lips” functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said (or in this case taught).

<sup>17</sup> tn The verb רָעָה (*ra’ah*) means “to feed” or “to shepherd” (e.g., Gen 48:15). What they say will meet the needs of many.

<sup>18</sup> tn 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.

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb “heart.” The term לֵב (*lev*, “heart”) functions as a metonymy of association for wisdom and knowledge (BDB 524 s.v. 3.a).

<sup>20</sup> tn The term בְּרָכָה (*berakhah*, “blessing”) refers to a gift, enrichment or endowment from the LORD.

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb “of the LORD.” The term יְהוָה (*yehvah*, “the LORD”) functions here as a genitive of source.

<sup>22</sup> tn Heb “makes rich” (so NASB); NAB “brings wealth.” The direct object “a person” does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied by the Hiphil verb; it is supplied in the translation.

<sup>23</sup> tn Heb “toil.” The noun עָצֵב (*etsav*) has a basic two-fold range of meanings: (1) “toil; labor” which produces pain and sorrow, and (2) “pain; sorrow” which is the result of toil and labor (BDB 780 s.v.). This is the word used of the curse of “toil” in man’s labor (Gen 3:17) and the “pain” in the woman’s child-bearing (Gen 3:16). God’s blessing is pure and untarnished – it does not bring physical pain or emotional sorrow.

<sup>24</sup> tn Heb “with.”

<sup>25</sup> tn Heb “doing a plan.” The noun זִמְמָה (*zimmah*, “plan”) is often used pejoratively of a scheme to do wickedness. It is used elsewhere for planning lewdness, murder, incest, adultery, idolatry, and licentiousness. Any planned gross impropriety gives the fool pleasure. The verb עָשָׂה (*asah*, “to do”) here means “to carry out (a plan)” (BDB 794 s.v.).

<sup>26</sup> tn Heb “like sport” (so NASB, NRSV). The noun שְׂוֹק (*s’khaq*, “sport”) is used elsewhere to refer to what is exhilarating and pleasurable (BDB 966 s.v.). As W. G. Plaut says, it is like child’s play (Proverbs, 132). For the fool evil brings such enjoyment; for the discerning wisdom does.

<sup>27</sup> tn Heb “a man of discernment.”

<sup>28</sup> tn Heb “the dread of the wicked.” The noun רָשָׁע (*rasha*’, “wicked”) is a subjective genitive. The noun מְגֹרֵת (*m’gorat*) refers to “the feared thing,” that is, what the wicked dread. The wicked are afraid of the consequences of their sinful actions; however, they cannot escape these consequences.

<sup>29</sup> tn Heb “the desire of the righteous.” The noun יְדִידִי (*tsadiq*, “righteous”) is a subjective genitive.

<sup>30</sup> tn Heb “it will give.” When used without an expressed subject, the verb יָתַן (*yitten*) has a passive nuance: “it will be granted.”

**10:25** When the storm<sup>1</sup> passes through, the wicked are swept away,<sup>2</sup> but the righteous are an everlasting foundation.<sup>3</sup>

**10:26** Like vinegar to the teeth and like smoke to the eyes,<sup>4</sup> so is the sluggard to those<sup>5</sup> who send him.

**10:27** Fearing the LORD<sup>6</sup> prolongs life,<sup>7</sup> but the life span<sup>8</sup> of the wicked will be shortened.<sup>9</sup>

**10:28** The hope<sup>10</sup> of the righteous is joy, but the expectation of the wicked will remain unfulfilled.<sup>11</sup>

**10:29** The way of the LORD<sup>12</sup> is like<sup>13</sup> a stronghold for the upright,<sup>14</sup> but it is destruction<sup>15</sup> to evildoers.<sup>16</sup>

**10:30** The righteous will never be moved, but the wicked will not inhabit the land.<sup>17</sup>

**10:31** The speech<sup>18</sup> of the righteous bears the fruit of wisdom,<sup>19</sup> but the one who speaks perversion<sup>20</sup> will be destroyed.<sup>21</sup>

**10:32** The lips of the righteous know<sup>22</sup> what is pleasing,<sup>23</sup> but the speech<sup>24</sup> of the wicked is perverse.

**11:1** The LORD abhors<sup>25</sup> dishonest scales,<sup>26</sup> but an accurate weight<sup>27</sup> is his delight.

**11:2** When pride<sup>28</sup> comes,<sup>29</sup> then comes disgrace,<sup>30</sup>

**1 sn** The word for “storm wind” comes from the root סוף (*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.”

**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.

**4 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, irritating experience; and smoke to the eyes is an unpleasant experience that hinders progress.

**5 tn** The participle is plural, and so probably should be taken in a distributive sense: “to each one who sends him.”

**6 tn** Heb “the fear of the LORD.” The term יְהוָה (‘*yhvah*, “the LORD”) functions as an objective genitive.

**7 tn** Heb “days” (so KJV, ASV).

**8 tn** Heb “years.” The term “years” functions as a synecdoche of part (= years) for the whole (= lifespan).

**9 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.

**10 sn** This proverb contrasts the hopes of the righteous and the wicked. The righteous will see their hopes fulfilled. The saying is concerned with God’s justice. The words תְּהִלָּה (*tokhelet*, from תָּהִל, *yakhal*) and תִּקְוָה (*tiqvat*, from קָוָה, *qavah*) are synonyms, both emphasizing eager expectations, longings, waiting in hope.

**11 tn** Heb “will perish”; NAB “comes to nought.”

**12 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).

**13 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.

**14 tn** Heb “for the one with integrity” (לְאִתּוֹ, *latom*).

**15 tn** Or “ruin” (so NIV).

**16 tn** Heb “those who practice iniquity.”

**17 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.

**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 נוֹב (*nuv*) means “to bear fruit.” It is used figuratively of the righteous; they produce wisdom and righteousness. The term חֵכְמוֹת (*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 תְּהַפְּכוֹת (*tahpukhot*, “perversions”) functions as a genitive of content; it refers to what the tongue says – perverse things. The plural form depicts a plural of character. The term לָשׁוֹן (*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 perverse speech. The term תְּהַפְּכוֹת (“perversions”) refers to those who turn things upside down, overthrow, or pervert what is right.

**21 tn** Heb “will be cut off” (so NAB, NRSV, 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 יְהוָה (‘*yhvah*, “the LORD”) 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 שָׁלֵם, *shalem*). It was one that would give an honest, accurate measurement.

**28 tn** Heb “presumptuousness.” This term is from the root יָדָה, *zid* (or יָדָה, *zud*) which means “to boil; to seethe; to act proudly; to act presumptuously.” The idea is that of boiling over the edge of the pot, signifying overstepping the boundaries (e.g., Gen 25:29).

**29 tn** The verbs show both the sequence and the correlation. The first is the perfect tense of בָּוֹא (*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.

**30 sn** This proverb does not state how the disgrace will come, but affirms that it will follow pride. The proud will be brought down.

but with humility<sup>1</sup> comes<sup>2</sup> wisdom.  
**11:3** The integrity of the upright guides them,<sup>3</sup>  
 but the crookedness of the unfaithful destroys them.<sup>4</sup>  
**11:4** Wealth does not profit in the day of wrath,<sup>5</sup>  
 but righteousness delivers from mortal danger.<sup>6</sup>  
**11:5** The righteousness of the blameless will make straight their way,<sup>7</sup>  
 but the wicked person will fall by his own wickedness.<sup>8</sup>  
**11:6** The righteousness of the upright will deliver them,<sup>9</sup>  
 but the faithless will be captured<sup>10</sup> by their own desires.<sup>11</sup>  
**11:7** When a wicked person dies, his expectation perishes,<sup>12</sup>  
 and the hope of his strength<sup>13</sup> perishes.<sup>14</sup>

**1 tn** Heb “modesty”; KJV, ASV “the lowly.” The adjective צנוּת (ts<sup>nu</sup>im, “modest”) is used as a noun; this is an example of antimetonymy 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 צננ (tsana, “to be modest; to be humble”) describes those who are reserved, retiring, modest. The plural form is used for the abstract idea of humility.

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

**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.

**4 tc** The form is a *Kethib/Qere* reading. The *Qere* יִשְׁדָּם (y<sup>s</sup>hadem) is an imperfect tense with the pronominal suffix. The *Kethib* וְיִשְׁדָּם (y<sup>s</sup>hadam) is a perfect tense with a vav prefixed and a pronominal suffix. The *Qere* is supported by the versions.

**5 sn** The “day of wrath” refers to divine punishment in this life (R. N. Whybray, *Proverbs* [CBC], 67; e.g., also Job 21:30; Ezek 7:19; Zeph 1:18). Righteousness and net wealth is more valuable in anticipating judgment.

**6 tn** Heb “from death.”

**7 tn** Heb “his way.”

**8 sn** The righteous will enjoy security and serenity throughout life. Righteousness makes the path straight; wickedness destroys the wicked.

**9 sn** The contrast is between being rescued or delivered (נָצַל, *natsal*) and being captured (לָקַח, *lakhad*). Righteousness is freeing; [evil] desires are enslaving.

**10 tn** Heb “taken captive” (so NRSV); NIV, TEV “are trapped.”

**11 tn** Heb “but by the desire of the faithless are they taken captive.”

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

**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.

**13 tc** There are several suggested changes for this word אֹנִיָּה (onim, “vigour” 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. Jg. Prov 11:7 rendered it “who practice crookedness,” deriving it from the first root which means “wickedness.”

**14 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

**11:8** The righteous person is delivered<sup>15</sup>  
 out of trouble,  
 and the wicked turns up in his stead.<sup>16</sup>  
**11:9** With his speech<sup>17</sup> the godless person<sup>18</sup>  
 destroys<sup>19</sup> his neighbor,  
 but by knowledge<sup>20</sup> the righteous will be  
 delivered.  
**11:10** When the righteous do well,<sup>21</sup> the  
 city rejoices;<sup>22</sup>  
 when the wicked perish, there is joy.  
**11:11** A city is exalted by the blessing pro-  
 vided from<sup>23</sup> the upright,  
 but it is destroyed by the counsel<sup>24</sup> of the  
 wicked.<sup>25</sup>  
**11:12** The one who denounces<sup>26</sup> his neigh-

come.

**15 tn** The verb is the Niphal perfect from the first root הָלַץ (*khalats*), meaning “to draw off; to withdraw,” and hence “to be delivered.”

**sn** The verse is not concerned with the problem of evil and the suffering of the righteous; it is only concerned with the principle of divine justice.

**16 tn** The verb is masculine singular, so the subject cannot be “trouble.” The trouble from which the righteous escape will come on the wicked – but the Hebrew text literally says that the wicked “comes [= arrives; turns up; shows up] in the place of the righteous.” Cf. NASB “the wicked takes his place”; NRSV “the wicked get into it instead”; NIV “it comes on the wicked instead.”

**17 tn** Heb “with his mouth.” The term פֶּה (*peh*, “mouth”) functions as a metonymy of cause for speech.

**18 sn** The Hebrew word originally meant “impious, godless, polluted, profane.” It later developed the idea of a “hypocrite” (Dan 11:32), one who conceals his evil under the appearance of godliness or kindness. This one is a false flatterer.

**19 sn** The verb שָׁחַת (*shakhat*) means “to destroy; to ruin” (e.g., the destruction of Sodom in Gen 13:10). The imperfect tense is probably not an habitual imperfect (because the second colon shows exceptions), but probably a progressive imperfect (“this goes on”) or potential imperfect (“they can do this”).

**20 sn** The antithetical proverb states that a righteous person can escape devastating slander through knowledge. The righteous will have sufficient knowledge and perception to see through the hypocrisy and avoid its effect.

**21 tn** The text has “in the good בְּטוֹב (b<sup>e</sup>tov) of the righteous,” meaning when they do well, when they prosper. Cf. NCV, NLT “succeed”; TEV “have good fortune.”

**22 sn** The verb תִּהְלֵץ (*ta<sup>h</sup>lots*, “to rejoice; to exult”) is paralleled with the noun רִינָה (*rinnah*, “ringing cry”). The descriptions are hyperbolic, except when the person who dies is one who afflicted society (e.g., 2 Kgs 11:20; Esth 8:15). D. Kidner says, “However drab the world makes out virtue to be, it appreciates the boon of it in public life” (*Proverbs* [TOTC], 91).

**23 tn** Heb “the blessing of the upright.” This expression features either an objective or subjective genitive. It may refer to the blessing God gives the upright (which will benefit society) or the blessing that the upright are to the city. The latter fits the parallelism best: The blessings are the beneficent words and deeds that the righteous perform.

**24 tn** Heb “mouth.” The term פֶּה (*peh*, “mouth”) functions as a metonymy of cause for counsel, as the parallelism suggests.

**25 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.

**26 tn** Heb “despises” (so NASB) or “belittles” (so NRSV). The participle בָּז (baz, from בָּזַח, *buz*) means “to despise; 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.

bor lacks wisdom,<sup>1</sup>  
but the one who has discernment<sup>2</sup> keeps  
silent.<sup>3</sup>

**11:13** The one who goes about slandering  
others<sup>4</sup> reveals<sup>5</sup> secrets,  
but the one who is trustworthy<sup>6</sup> conceals  
a matter.

**11:14** When there is no guidance<sup>7</sup> a nation  
falls,  
but there is success<sup>8</sup> in the abundance of  
counselors.

**11:15** The one who puts up security for a  
stranger<sup>9</sup> will surely have trouble,<sup>10</sup>  
but whoever avoids<sup>11</sup> shaking hands<sup>12</sup>  
will be secure.

**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.

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

**2 tn** Heb “a man of discernment.”

**3 sn** The verb translated “keeps silence” (יַחַרֵּשׁ, *yakharish*) 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.

**4 tn** 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 (רָכַח, *rakhal*) means “to go about” from one person to another, either for trade or for gossip.

**5 tn** The participle מְגַלֵּה (m<sup>g</sup>*galeh*) means “uncovering” or “revealing” secrets.

**sn** This is the intent of a person who makes disparaging comments about others – he cannot wait to share secrets that should be kept.

**6 tn** 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.

**7 tn** The word תְּהִלּוּת (*takhlulot*, “guidance; direction”) is derived from the root תָּכַל (khalal, “rope-pulling” and “steering” or “directing” a ship; BDB 286 s.v.). 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.

**8 tn** Heb “victory.” This term תְּשׁוּׁאָה (*teshu’ah*) 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 advice. This assumes that the counselors are wise.

**9 sn** 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.

**10 tn** The sentence begins with the Niphal imperfect and the cognate רָעַיְרוּ (ra’-yeroa’), stressing that whoever does this “will certainly suffer hurt.” The hurt in this case will be financial responsibility for a bad risk.

**11 tn** Heb “hates.” The term שָׂנֵא (*shoneh*) means “to reject,” and here “to avoid.” The participle is substantival, functioning as the subject of the clause. The next participle, תִּקְיֵם (*toq’im*, “striking hands”), is its object, telling what is hated. The third participle בּוֹטֵחַ (*boteakh*, “is secure”) functions verbally.

**12 tn** 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.

**11:16** A generous woman<sup>13</sup> gains honor,  
and ruthless men<sup>14</sup> seize wealth.<sup>15</sup>

**11:17** A kind person<sup>16</sup> benefits<sup>17</sup> himself,<sup>18</sup>  
but a cruel person brings himself trouble.<sup>19</sup>

**11:18** The wicked person<sup>20</sup> earns<sup>21</sup> deceitful wages,<sup>22</sup>  
but the one who sows<sup>23</sup> righteousness  
reaps<sup>24</sup> a genuine<sup>25</sup> reward.<sup>26</sup>

**13 tn** Heb “a woman of grace.” The genitive כֶּן (*khen*, “grace”) functions as an attributive adjective. The contrast is between “a gracious woman” (אִשֶּׁת־כֶּן, *eshet-khen*), 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.

**14 tn** Heb “those who are terrifying.” The term קִרְיָיו (*arits*) 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.”

**15 tc** 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, NEB, 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).

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

**16 tn** Heb “man of kindness.”

**sn** This contrasts the “kind person” and the “cruel person” (one who is fierce, cruel), showing the consequences of their dispositions.

**17 tn** The term גָּמַל (*gomel*) means “to deal fully [or “adequately”] with” someone or something. The kind person will benefit himself.

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

**19 tn** Heb “brings trouble to his flesh.”

**sn** 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.

**20 tn** The form is the masculine singular adjective used as a substantive.

**21 tn** Heb “makes” (so NAB).

**22 tn** Heb “wages of deception.”

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

**23 sn** The participle “sowing” provides an implied comparison (the figure is known as hypocatstasis) 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).

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

**25 tn** Heb “true” (so NASB, NRSV); KJV, NAB, NIV “sure.”

**26 sn** A wordplay (paronomasia) occurs between “deceptive” (שָׂקֵר, *shaqer*) and “reward” (שֶׁכֶר, *sekher*), underscoring the contrast by the repetition of sounds. The wages of the wicked are deceptive; the reward of the righteous is sure.

**11:19** True<sup>1</sup> righteousness leads to<sup>2</sup> life, but the one who pursues evil pursues it<sup>3</sup> to his own death.<sup>4</sup>

**11:20** The LORD abhors<sup>5</sup> those who are perverse in heart,<sup>6</sup> but those who are blameless in their ways<sup>7</sup> are his delight.<sup>8</sup>

**11:21** Be assured that<sup>9</sup> the evil person will certainly be punished,<sup>10</sup> but the descendants of the righteous<sup>11</sup> will not suffer unjust judgment.<sup>12</sup>

**11:22** Like a gold ring<sup>13</sup> in a pig's snout<sup>14</sup> is<sup>15</sup> a beautiful woman who rejects<sup>16</sup> discretion.<sup>17</sup>

**11:23** What the righteous desire<sup>18</sup> leads<sup>19</sup> only to good, but what the wicked hope for<sup>20</sup> leads<sup>21</sup> to wrath.

**11:24** One person is generous<sup>22</sup> and yet grows more wealthy,<sup>23</sup> but another withholds more than he should<sup>24</sup> and comes to poverty.<sup>25</sup>

**11:25** A generous person<sup>26</sup> will be enriched,<sup>27</sup> and the one who provides water<sup>28</sup> for

**1 tn** *Heb* "the veritable of righteousness." The adjective כֵּן (*ken*, "right; honest; veritable") functions substantivally as an attributive genitive, meaning "veritable righteousness" = true righteousness (BDB 467 s.v. 2; HALOT 482 s.v. 1 כֵּן 2.b). One medieval Hebrew ms, LXX, and Syriac read בֵּן (*ben*), "son of righteousness." That idiom, however, usually introduces bad qualities ("son of worthlessness"). Others interpret it as "righteousness is the foundation of life." KB identifies the form as a participle and reads it as "steadfast in righteousness," but the verb does not otherwise exist in the Qal. W. McKane reads it as כָּן (*kan*, from כָּן, *kan*) and translates it "strive after" life (*Proverbs* [OTL], 435).

**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 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 יְהוָה (y<sup>h</sup>*whv*, "the LORD") functions as a subjective genitive. Cf. NIV "detests"; NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT "hates."

**6 sn** The word עֲקִיָּשׁ ("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 דֶּרֶךְ (*derekh*, "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 רָצָה (*ratsah*) 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; 16:15; 16:15; יד ליד, "sur le champ"; *Bib* 53 [1972]: 537-38). *Tg. Prov* 11:21 interprets it differently: "he who lifts up his hand against his neighbor will not go unpunished."

**10 tn** *Heb* "will not be free." The verb יָקָה (*yaqah*) 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" (BDB 667 s.v. Niph). The phrase "will not go unpunished" (cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV) is an example of tautology (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" (hypocatastasis) 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 (*zahav*, "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 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 תַּאֲוָה (*ta'avah*) 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 "troublemakers hope to stir up trouble").

**20 tn** *Heb* "the hope of the wicked." The noun תִּקְוַת (*tiqvah*) "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 מִפְזֵר (*me'fazzar*, "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 a gift (Gen 33:11) or a special favor (Josh 15:19). The term נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*, "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** The verb מָרַח (*marveh*, "to be saturated; to drink one's fill") draws 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.

others<sup>1</sup> will himself be satisfied.<sup>2</sup>  
**11:26** People will curse<sup>3</sup> the one who withholds grain,<sup>4</sup>  
 but they will praise<sup>5</sup> the one who sells it.<sup>6</sup>  
**11:27** The one who diligently seeks<sup>7</sup> good seeks favor,  
 but the one who searches<sup>8</sup> for evil – it will come to him.<sup>9</sup>  
**11:28** The one who trusts in his riches will fall,  
 but the righteous<sup>10</sup> will flourish like a green leaf.<sup>11</sup>  
**11:29** The one who troubles<sup>12</sup> his family<sup>13</sup> will inherit nothing,<sup>14</sup>  
 and the fool<sup>15</sup> will be a servant to the

wise person.<sup>16</sup>  
**11:30** The fruit of the righteous is like<sup>17</sup> a tree producing life,<sup>18</sup>  
 and the one who wins souls<sup>19</sup> is wise.<sup>20</sup>  
**11:31** If the righteous are recompensed on earth,<sup>21</sup>  
 how much more<sup>22</sup> the wicked sinner!<sup>23</sup>  
**12:1** The one who loves discipline loves knowledge,<sup>24</sup>  
 but the one who hates reproof is stupid.<sup>25</sup>  
**12:2** A good person obtains favor from the LORD,  
 but the LORD<sup>26</sup> condemns a person with wicked schemes.<sup>27</sup>

**1 tn** 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.

**2 tn** 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. יָרַח lists the form יִרְיָא (*yore*) as a Hophal imperfect of יָרַח (*yavah*, the only occurrence) and translates it “will himself also be watered” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). But the verb looks very much like a Hiphil of the root יָרָא (*yara*, “to shoot; to pour”). So the editors of BHS suggest יִרְיָא (*yu’ar*).

**3 tn** The direct object suffix on the verb picks up on the emphatic absolute phrase: “they will curse him – the one who withholds grain.”

**4 sn** The proverb refers to a merchant who holds back his grain from the free market to raise prices when there is a great need for the produce. It is assumed that merchants are supposed to have a social conscience.

**5 tn** Heb “but a blessing is for the head of the one who sells.” The parallelism with “curse” suggests that בְּרָכָה (*berakhah*) “blessing” means “praise.”

**6 tn** Heb “for the head of the one who sells.” The term “head” functions as a synecdoche of part (= head) for the whole (= person). The head is here emphasized because it is the “crowning” point of praise. The direct object (“it”) is not in the Hebrew text but is implied.

**7 tn** Two separate words are used here for “seek.” The first is שָׁקַח (*shakhar*, “to seek diligently”) and the second is בָּקַשׁ (*baqash*, “to seek after; to look for”). Whoever is seeking good is in effect seeking favor – from either God or man (e.g., Ps 5:12; Isa 49:8).

**8 tn** The participle דֹּרֵשׁ (*doresh*) means “to seek; to inquire; to investigate.” A person generally receives the consequences of the kind of life he seeks.

**9 tn** The verb is the imperfect tense, third feminine singular, referring to “evil,” the object of the participle.

**10 sn** The implication from the parallelism is that the righteous do not trust in their own riches, but in the LORD.

**11 tn** Heb “leafage” or “leaf” (cf. KJV “as a branch”); TEV “leaves of summer”; NLT “leaves in spring.” The simile of a leaf is a figure of prosperity and fertility throughout the ancient Near East.

**12 tn** The verb עָבַר (*’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.

**13 tn** Heb “his house.” The term בַּיִת (*bet*, “house”) is a synecdoche of container (= house) for its contents (= family, household).

**14 tn** Heb “the wind” (so KJV, NCV, NLT); NAB “empty air.” The word “wind” (רוּחַ, *ruakh*) refers to what cannot be grasped (Prov 27:16; Eccl 1:14, 17). The figure is a hypocatstasis, comparing wind to what he inherits – nothing he can put his hands on. Cf. CEV “won’t inherit a thing.”

**15 sn** 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.

The ideas of the two halves of the verse are complementary.

**16 tn** Heb “to the wise of heart.” The noun לֵב (*lev*, “heart”) is an attributed genitive: “wise heart.” The term לֵב (“heart”) also functions as a synecdoche of part (= heart) for the whole (= person); see BDB 525 s.v. 7.

**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** Heb “tree of life” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV). The noun חַיִּים (*khayyim*, “life”) is genitive of product. What the righteous produce (“fruit”) is like a tree of life – a long and healthy life as well as a life-giving influence and provision for others.

**19 tc** The Leningrad Codex mistakenly vocalized שׁ (*sin* or *shin*) as שׁ (*sin*) instead of שׁ (*shin*) in the term נְפִישׁוֹת (*nefashot*) which is vocalized as נְפִישׁוֹת (*nefasot*, “souls”) in the other medieval Hebrew mss and early printed editions of the Masoretic Text.

**20 tc** The MT reads חַכָּם (*khakham*, “wise”) and seems to refer to capturing (לָקַח, *laqakh*; “to lay hold of; to seize; to capture”) people with influential ideas (e.g., 2 Sam 15:6). An alternate textual tradition reads חַמָּס (*khamas*) “violent” (reflected in the LXX and Syriac) and refers to taking away lives: “but the one who takes away lives (= kills people) is violent” (cf. NAB, NRSV, TEV). The textual variant was caused by orthographic confusion of כּ (*samek*) and כַּ (*ka*), and metathesis of מ (*mem*) between the 2nd and 3rd consonants. If the parallelism is synonymous, the MT reading fits; if the parallelism is antithetical, the alternate tradition fits. See D. C. Snell, “Taking Souls” in Proverbs 11:30, VT 33 (1983): 362-65.

**21 tc** The LXX introduces a new idea: “If the righteous be scarcely saved” (reflected in 1 Pet 4:18). The Greek translation “scarcely” could have come from a Vorlage of בָּטָרָה (*batsarah*, “deficiency” or “want”) or בָּטַרָה (*batsar*, “to cut off; to shorten”) perhaps arising from confusion over the letters. The verb “receive due” could only be translated “saved” by an indirect interpretation. See J. Barr, “בָּטָרָה ~ ΜΟΛΙΣ: Prov. XI.31, I Pet. IV.18,” JSS 20 (1975): 149-64.

**22 tn** This construction is one of the “how much more” arguments – if this be true, how much more this (arguing from the lesser to the greater). The point is that if the righteous suffer for their sins, certainly the wicked will as well.

**23 tn** Heb “the wicked and the sinner.” The two terms may form a hendiadys with the first functioning adjectivally: “the wicked sinner.”

**24 sn** Those who wish to improve themselves must learn to accept correction; the fool hates/rejects any correction.

**25 sn** The word בָּעִרָה (*ba’ar*, “brutish; stupid”) normally describes dumb animals that lack intellectual sense. Here, it describes the moral fool who is not willing to learn from correction. He is like a dumb animal (so the term here functions as a hypocatstasis: implied comparison).

**26 tn** Heb “but he condemns”; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

**27 tn** Heb “a man of wicked plans.” The noun מְזִמּוֹת (*m<sup>z</sup>zimmot*, “evil plans”) functions as an attributive genitive: “an evil-scheming man.” Cf. NASB “a man who devises evil”; NAB “the schemer.”

12:3 No one<sup>1</sup> can be established<sup>2</sup> through wickedness, but a righteous root<sup>3</sup> cannot be moved. 12:4 A noble wife<sup>4</sup> is the crown<sup>5</sup> of her husband, but the wife<sup>6</sup> who acts shamefully is like rottenness in his bones.<sup>7</sup> 12:5 The plans<sup>8</sup> of the righteous are just; the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.<sup>9</sup> 12:6 The words of the wicked lie in wait<sup>10</sup> to shed innocent blood,<sup>11</sup> but the words<sup>12</sup> of the upright will deliver them. 12:7 The wicked are overthrown<sup>13</sup> and perish,<sup>14</sup> but the righteous household<sup>15</sup> will stand. 12:8 A person<sup>16</sup> is praised in accordance

with<sup>17</sup> his wisdom, but the one who has a twisted mind<sup>18</sup> is despised. 12:9 Better is a person of humble standing<sup>19</sup> who nevertheless has a servant,<sup>20</sup> than one who pretends to be somebody important<sup>21</sup> yet has no food. 12:10 A righteous person cares for<sup>22</sup> the life of his animal, but even the most compassionate acts<sup>23</sup> of the wicked are cruel. 12:11 The one who works<sup>24</sup> his field will have plenty<sup>25</sup> of food, but whoever chases daydreams<sup>26</sup> lacks wisdom.<sup>27</sup> 12:12 The wicked person desires a stronghold,<sup>28</sup>

**1 tn** Heb “a man cannot be.”  
**2 tn** The Niphal imperfect of כָּן (*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 צְדִיקִים (*tsadiqim*, “righteousness”) functions as an attributive adjective. The figure “root” (שָׁרֵשׁ, *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 (אִשְׁת־חַיִל, *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 (מְבִישָׁה, *m<sup>e</sup>vishah*; “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 tn** The infinitive construct אֶרֶב (*erav*, “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 “are a deadly ambush”). The words of the wicked are here personified.  
**11 tn** Heb “for blood.” The term “blood” is a metonymy of effect, the cause 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 פֶּה (*peh*, “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 צְדִיקִים (*tsadiqim*) functions as an attributive adjective: “righteous house.” The noun בַּיִת (*bet*, “house”) functions as a synecdoche 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” (BDB 805 s.v. פִּה 6.b.(b); 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 לֵב (*lev*, “heart”) is an attributive genitive. It functions as a metonymy of association for “mind; thoughts” (BDB 524 s.v. 3) and “will; volition” (BDB 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 tn** Heb “one who is lightly regarded.” The verb קָלָה (*qalah*) means “to be lightly esteemed; to be dishonored; to be degraded” (BDB 885 s.v.).  
**20 tn** The meaning of the phrase לוֹ עֶבֶד (*lo<sup>v</sup> eved lo*) 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 מְתַקְבֵּד (*m<sup>e</sup>takkabed*, from כָּבֵד, *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 (BDB 458 s.v. כָּבֵד Hitp.2).  
**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.  
**22 tn** Heb “knows”; NLT “concerned for the welfare of.” The righteous take care of animals, not just people.  
**23 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).  
**24 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.  
**25 tn** Heb “will have his fill of” or “will be satisfied with.”  
**26 tn** Heb “empty things” or “vain things.” The term רֵיקָה (*reqim*) refers to worthless pursuits in an effort to make money. The fact that the particle used is “chase after” shows how elusive these are. Cf. NIV “fantasies”; NCV “empty dreams”; TEV “useless projects.”  
**27 tn** Heb “heart.” The term לֵב (*lev*, “heart”) functions as a metonymy of association for wisdom (BDB 524 s.v. 3).  
**28 tn** This line is difficult to interpret. BDB connects the term מְצוּדָה (*m<sup>e</sup>tsud*) to לוֹ מְצוּדָה which means (1) “snare; hunting-net” and (2) what is caught: “prey” (BDB 844-45 s.v. לוֹ מְצוּדָה). 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 מְצוּדָה (*m<sup>e</sup>tsud*) to לוֹ מְצוּדָה (*m<sup>e</sup>tsud*), “mountain stronghold”; cf. NAB “the stronghold of evil men will be demolished”). The LXX

but the righteous root<sup>1</sup> endures.<sup>2</sup>

**12:13** The evil person is ensnared<sup>3</sup> by the transgression of his speech,<sup>4</sup> but the righteous person escapes out of trouble.<sup>5</sup>

**12:14** A person will be satisfied with good from the fruit of his words,<sup>6</sup> and the work of his hands<sup>7</sup> will be rendered to<sup>8</sup> him.

**12:15** The way of a fool<sup>9</sup> is right<sup>10</sup> in his own opinion,<sup>11</sup> but the one who listens to advice is wise.<sup>12</sup>

**12:16** A fool's annoyance<sup>13</sup> is known at

once,<sup>14</sup>

but the prudent<sup>15</sup> overlooks<sup>16</sup> an insult.

**12:17** The faithful witness<sup>17</sup> tells what is right,<sup>18</sup>

but a false witness<sup>19</sup> speaks<sup>20</sup> deceit.

**12:18** Speaking recklessly<sup>21</sup> is like the thrusts of a sword, but the words<sup>22</sup> of the wise bring<sup>23</sup> healing.<sup>24</sup>

**12:19** The one who tells the truth<sup>25</sup> will endure forever, but the one who lies<sup>26</sup> will last only for a moment.<sup>27</sup>

**12:20** Deceit is in the heart of those who plot evil,<sup>28</sup> but those who promote peace<sup>29</sup> have joy.

translated it as: "The desires of the wicked are evil." The Syriac has: "The wicked desire to do evil." The Latin expands it: "The desire of the wicked is a defense of the worst [things, or persons]." C. H. Toy suggests emending the text to read "wickedness is the net of bad men" (*Proverbs* [ICC], 250).

**1** **tn** Heb "the root of righteousness." The genitive נְדִיבִים (*tsadiqim*, "righteousness") functions as an attributive adjective. The wicked want what belongs to others, but the righteous continue to flourish.

**2** **tc** The MT reads יָתַן (*yitten*, "gives," from יָתַן [*natan*, "to give"]), and yields an awkward meaning: "the root of the righteous gives." The LXX reads "the root of the righteous endures" (cf. NAB). This suggests a Hebrew *Vortage* of אֵיתָן (*'etan*, "constant; continual"; HALOT 44-45 s.v. אֵיתָן 2) which would involve the omission of א (*alef*) in the MT. The metaphor "root" (נֶשֶׁךְ, *shoresh*) is often used in Proverbs for that which endures; so internal evidence supports the alternate tradition.

**3** **tc** MT reads the noun מִוְשָׁע (*moqesh*, "bait; lure"). The LXX, Syriac and Tg. Prov 12:13 took it as a passive participle ("is ensnared"). The MT is the more difficult reading and so is preferred. The versions appear to be trying to clarify a difficult reading.

**tn** Heb "snare of a man." The word "snare" is the figurative meaning of the noun מִוְשָׁע ("bait; lure" from יָקַשׁ [*yagash*, "to lay a bait, or lure"]).

**4** **tn** Heb "transgression of the lips." The noun "lips" is a genitive of specification and it functions as a metonymy of cause for speech: sinful talk or sinning by talking. J. H. Greenstone suggests that this refers to litigation; the wicked attempt to involve the innocent (*Proverbs*, 131).

**5** **sn** J. H. Greenstone suggests that when the wicked become involved in contradictions of testimony, the innocent is freed from the trouble. Another meaning would be that the wicked get themselves trapped by what they say, but the righteous avoid that (*Proverbs*, 131).

**6** **tn** Heb "fruit of the lips." The term "fruit" is the implied comparison, meaning what is produced; and "lips" is the metonymy of cause, referring to speech. Proper speech will result in good things.

**7** **tn** Heb "the work of the hands of a man."

**8** **tc** The *Kethib* has the Qal imperfect, "will return" to him (cf. NASB); the *Qere* preserves a Hiphil imperfect, "he/one will restore/render" to him (cf. KJV, ASV). The *Qere* seems to suggest that someone (God or people) will reward him in kind. Since there is no expressed subject, it may be translated as a passive voice.

**9** **sn** *The way of a fool* describes a headlong course of actions ("way" is an idiom for conduct) that is not abandoned even when wise advice is offered.

**10** **sn** The fool believes that his own plans and ideas are perfect or "right" (יָשָׁר, *yashar*); he is satisfied with his own opinion.

**11** **tn** Heb "in his own eyes."

**12** **tn** Or "a wise person listens to advice" (cf. NIV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

**13** **tn** Heb "The fool, at once his vexation is known." This rhetorically emphatic construction uses an independent nominative absolute, which is then followed by the formal subject with a suffix. The construction focuses attention on "the fool," then states what is to be said about him.

**14** **tn** Heb "on the day" or "the same day."

**sn** The fool is impatient and unwise, and so flares up immediately when anything bothers him. W. McKane says that the fool's reaction is "like an injured animal and so his opponent knows that he has been wounded" (*Proverbs* [OTL], 442).

**15** **tn** Heb "shrewd."

**16** **tn** Heb "covers." The verb כָּסָה (*casah*) means "covers" in the sense of ignores or bides his time. The point is not that he does not respond at all, but that he is shrewd enough to handle the criticism or insult in the best way – not instinctively and irrationally.

**17** **tn** The text has "he pours out faithfully"; the word rendered "faithfully" or "reliably" (אֱמוּנָה, *'emunah*) is used frequently for giving testimony in court, and so here the subject matter is the reliable witness.

**18** **tn** Heb "righteousness."

**19** **tn** Heb "witness of falsehoods." The genitive noun functions attributively, and the plural form depicts habitual action or moral characteristic. This describes a person who habitually lies. A false witness cannot be counted on to help the cause of justice.

**20** **tn** The term "speaks" does not appear in this line but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for clarity and smoothness.

**21** **tn** The term מִוְשָׁע (*bofeh*) means "to speak rashly [or, thoughtlessly]" (e.g., Lev 5:4; Num 30:7).

**22** **tn** Heb "the tongue" (so NAB, NIV, NRSV). The term לָשׁוֹן (*lashon*, "tongue") functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said.

**23** **tn** The term "brings" does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

**24** **sn** *Healing* is a metonymy of effect. Healing words are the opposite of the cutting, irresponsible words. What the wise say is faithful and true, gentle and kind, uplifting and encouraging; so their words bring healing.

**25** **tn** Heb "a lip of truth." The genitive אֱמֶת (*'emet*, "truth") functions as an attributive adjective: "truthful lip." The term שִׁפְתַי (*'sfat*, "lip") functions as a synecdoche of part (= lip) for the whole (= person): "truthful person." The contrast is between "the lip of truth" and "the tongue of lying."

**26** **tn** Heb "a tongue of deceit." The genitive שָׁקֵר (*shaqer*, "deceit") functions as an attributive genitive. The noun לָשׁוֹן (*lashon*, "tongue") functions as a synecdoche of part (= tongue) for the whole (= person): "lying person."

**27** **tn** Heb "while I would twinkle." This expression is an idiom meaning "only for a moment." The twinkling of the eye, the slightest movement, signals the brevity of the life of a lie (hyperbole). But truth will be established (תִּקּוֹן, *tikon*), that is, be made firm and endure.

**28** **sn** The contrast here is between "evil" (= pain and calamity) and "peace" (= social wholeness and well-being); see, e.g., Pss 34:14 and 37:37.

**29** **tn** Heb "those who are counselors of peace." The term שְׁלוֹמָה (*shalom*, "peace") is an objective genitive, so the genitive-construct "counselors of peace" means those who advise, advocate or promote peace (cf. NAB, NIV).



12:21 The righteous do not encounter<sup>1</sup> any harm,<sup>2</sup> but the wicked are filled with calamity.<sup>3</sup>  
 12:22 The LORD<sup>4</sup> abhors a person who lies,<sup>5</sup> but those who deal truthfully<sup>6</sup> are his delight.<sup>7</sup>  
 12:23 The shrewd person<sup>8</sup> conceals<sup>9</sup> knowledge, but foolish people<sup>10</sup> publicize folly.<sup>11</sup>  
 12:24 The diligent<sup>12</sup> person<sup>13</sup> will rule, but the slothful<sup>14</sup> will become a slave.<sup>15</sup>

12:25 Anxiety<sup>16</sup> in a person's heart<sup>17</sup> weighs him down,<sup>18</sup> but an encouraging<sup>19</sup> word brings him joy.<sup>20</sup>  
 12:26 The righteous person is cautious in his friendship,<sup>21</sup> but the way of the wicked leads them astray.  
 12:27 The lazy person does not roast<sup>22</sup> his prey, but personal possessions<sup>23</sup> are precious to the diligent.  
 12:28 In the path of righteousness there is life, but another path leads to death.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb "is not allowed to meet to the righteous."  
<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb "all calamity." The proper nuance of אָוֶן (*aven*) is debated. It is normally understood metonymically (effect) as "harm; trouble," that is, the result/effect of wickedness (e.g., Gen 50:20). Rashi, a Jewish scholar who lived A.D. 1040-1105, took it as "wickedness," its primary meaning; "the righteous will not be caught up in wickedness."  
<sup>3</sup> **tn** The expression מְלֵא עָוֶן (mal'eu ra', "to be full of evil") means (1) the wicked do too much evil or (2) the wicked experience much calamity (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).  
<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb "an abomination of the LORD." The term יְהוָה (*yhvah*, "the LORD") is a subjective genitive.  
<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb "lips of lying." The genitive שֹׁקֵר (*shaqer*, "lying") functions as an attributive genitive: "lying lips." The term "lips" functions as a synecdoche of part (= lips) for the whole (= person): "a liar."  
<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb "but doers 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.  
<sup>7</sup> **sn** The contrast between "delight/pleasure" and "abomination" is emphatic. What pleases the LORD is acting truthfully or faithfully.  
<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb "a shrewd man" (so NAB); KJV, NIV "a prudent man"; NRSV "One who is clever."  
<sup>9</sup> **sn** A shrewd person knows how to use knowledge wisely, and restrains himself from revealing all he knows.  
<sup>10</sup> **sn** The term מְכַסֵּה (*koseh*, "covers; hides") does not mean that he never shares his knowledge, but discerns when it is and is not appropriate to speak.  
<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb "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 – which is folly. W. McKane says that the more one speaks, the less likely he is able to speak effectively (*Proverbs* [OTL], 422). Cf. TEV "stupid people advertise their ignorance"; NLT "fools broadcast their folly."  
<sup>12</sup> **sn** The noun אִיִּלֵּת (*ivelet*, "foolishness; folly") is the antithesis of perception and understanding. It is related to the noun אִיִּל (*evil*, "fool"), one who is morally bad because he despises wisdom and discipline, mocks at guilt, is licentious and quarrelsome, and is almost impossible to rebuke.  
<sup>13</sup> **tn** **tn** The term דִּלְיָן (*kharats*, "diligent") means (1) literally: "to cut; to sharpen," (2) figurative: "to decide" and "to be diligent." It is used figuratively in Proverbs for diligence. The semantic development of the figure may be understood thus: "cut, sharpen" leads to "act decisively" which leads to "be diligent." By their diligent work they succeed to management. The diligent rise to the top, while the lazy sink to the bottom.  
<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "the hand of the diligent." The term "hand" is a synecdoche of part (= hand) for the whole (= person): diligent person. The hand is emphasized because it is the instrument of physical labor; it signifies the actions and the industry of a diligent person – what his hand does.  
<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb "deceitful." The term refers to one who is not diligent; this person tries to deceive his master about his work, which he has neglected.  
<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb "will be for slave labor." The term מַס (*mas*, "slave labor") refers to a person forced into labor from slavery.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The word "anxiety" (אָנִיָּהּ, *d'e'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).  
<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb "the heart of a man."  
<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb "bows it [= his heart] down." Anxiety weighs heavily on the heart, causing depression. The spirit is brought low.  
<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb "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.  
<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb "makes it [= his heart] glad." The similarly sounding terms יַשְׁכַּחַנָּה (*yashkhenah*, "weighs it down") and יַשְׂמֵחַ (*ysamm'khenah*, "makes it glad") create a wordplay (paronomasia) that dramatically emphasizes the polar opposite emotional states: depression versus joy.  
<sup>21</sup> **tn** The line has several possible translations: (1) The verb יָתַר (*yater*) can mean "to spy out; to examine," which makes a good contrast to "lead astray" in the parallel colon. (2) יָתַר could be the Hophal of נָתַר (*natar*, Hiphil "to set free"; Hophal "to be set free"): "the righteous is delivered from harm" [reading *mera`ah*] (J. A. Emerton, "A Note on Proverbs 12:26," ZAW 76 [1964]: 191-93). (3) Another option is, "the righteous guides his friend aright" (cf. NRSV, NLT).  
<sup>22</sup> **tc** The MT reads יָתַר (*yakharokh*) from II כָּרַח (*kharakh*, "to roast"?). On the other hand, several versions (LXX, Syriac, Vulgate) reflect a Hebrew Vorlage of יָדַר (*yadrikh*) from דָּרַח (*darakh*, "to gain"), meaning: "a lazy person cannot catch his prey" (suggested by Gensmer; cf. NAB). The MT is the more difficult reading, being a *hapax legomenon*, and therefore should be retained; the versions are trying to make sense out of a rare expression.  
<sup>23</sup> **tn** The verb II כָּרַח (*kharakh*) is a *hapax legomenon*, appearing in the OT only here. BDB suggests that it means "to start; to set in motion" (BDB 355 s.v.). The related Aramaic and Syriac verb means "to scorch; to parch," and the related Arabic verb means "to roast; to scorch by burning"; so it may mean "to roast; to fry" (HALOT 353 s.v. כָּרַח). The lazy person can't be bothered cooking what he has hunted. The Midrash sees an allusion to Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25. M. Dahood translates it: "the languid man will roast no game for himself, but the diligent will come on the wealth of the steppe" ("The Hapax *harak* in Proverbs 12:27," *Bib* 63 [1982]: 60-62). This hyperbole means that the lazy person does not complete a project.  
<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb "the wealth of a man."  
<sup>25</sup> **tc** The consonants אֶלְמֵיִת (*el-mvet*) are vocalized by the MT as אֶלְמֵיִת (*al-mavet*, "no death"), meaning: "the journey of her path is no-death" = immortality. However, many medieval Hebrew mss and all the versions vocalize it as אֶלְמֵיִת (*el-mavet*, "to death"), meaning: "but another path leads to death" (cf. NAB, NCV). W. McKane adopts this reading, and suggests that MT is a scribal change toward eternal life (*Proverbs* [OTL], 451-52). Others adopt this reading because they do not find the term "life" used in Proverbs for eternal life, nor do they find references to immortality elsewhere in Proverbs.  
<sup>26</sup> **tn** Heb "no death." This phrase may mean "immortality." Those who enter the path of righteousness by faith and seek

**13:1** A wise son accepts<sup>1</sup> his father's discipline,<sup>2</sup> but a scoffer<sup>3</sup> does not listen to rebuke.  
**13:2** From the fruit of his speech<sup>4</sup> a person eats good things,<sup>5</sup> but the faithless<sup>6</sup> desire<sup>7</sup> the fruit of violence.<sup>8</sup>  
**13:3** The one who guards his words<sup>9</sup> guards his life, but<sup>10</sup> whoever is talkative<sup>11</sup> will come to ruin.<sup>12</sup>  
**13:4** The appetite<sup>13</sup> of the sluggard<sup>14</sup>

craves<sup>15</sup> but gets nothing, but the desire of the diligent will be abundantly satisfied.<sup>16</sup>  
**13:5** The righteous person hates anything false,<sup>17</sup> but the wicked person acts in shameful disgrace.<sup>18</sup>  
**13:6** Righteousness<sup>19</sup> guards the one who lives with integrity,<sup>20</sup> but wickedness<sup>21</sup> overthrows the sinner.  
**13:7** There is one who pretends to be rich<sup>22</sup> and yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor<sup>23</sup> and yet possesses great wealth.<sup>24</sup>

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 מְיֻסָּר (*m'yussar*, "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."

**tn Heb** "discipline of a father."

**3 sn** The "scoffer" is the worst kind of fool. He has no respect for authority, reviles worship of God, and is unteachable because he thinks he knows it all. The change to a stronger word in the second colon – "rebuke" (נָעַר, *ga'ar*) – shows that he does not respond to instruction on any level. Cf. NLT "a young mocker," taking this to refer to the opposite of the "wise son" in the first colon.

**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 a subjective genitive: "the faithless desire...."

**7 tn** The noun נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*, 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.

**tc** The LXX reads "the souls of the wicked perish untimely." The MT makes sense as it stands.

**9 tn Heb** "mouth" (so KJV, NAB). The term פֶּה (*peh*, "mouth") functions as a metonymy of cause for speech.

**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 idiom meaning "to be talkative" (BDB 832 s.v. פָּתַח בְּשֵׁף 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" (5:15; 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 נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*, 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" (נֶפֶשׁוֹ הַשֹּׁמֵר, *nefesho 'atsel*) and the "soul (= desire) of the diligent" (נֶפֶשׁ הַדְּלִיגִים, *nefesh kharutim*) – what they each long for.

**15 tn** The Hitpael verb means "to lust 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 דְבַר (*davar*) 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 בָּאֵשׁ (*ba'sh*, "to stink") and בוֹשׁ (*bosh*, "to be ashamed"). Cf. NASB "acts disgustingly and shamefully."

**tn Heb** "acts shamefully and disgracefully." The verb בָּאֵשׁ (*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 act shamefully" (BDB 92 s.v.). The verb יִתְבַּשֵּׁשׂ (*yitbassh*) means "to display shame." Together, they can be treated as a verbal hendiads: "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).

**19 sn** Righteousness refers to that which conforms to law and order. One who behaves with integrity will be safe from consequences of sin.

**20 tn Heb** "blameless of way." The term דָּרֵךְ (*darekh*) 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."

**21 sn** Righteousness and wickedness are personified in this proverb to make the point of security and insecurity for the two courses of life.

**22 tn** The Hitpael of עָשָׂר (*ashar*, "to be rich") means "to pretend to be rich" (BDB 799 s.v. עָשָׂר Hitp); this is the so-called "Hollywood Hitpael" function which involves "acting" or pretending to be something one is not.

**23 tn** The Hitpael of רוּשׁ (*rush*, "to be poor") means "to pretend to be poor" (BDB 930 s.v. Hitpale); this is another example of the "Hollywood Hitpael" – the Hitpale forms of hollow root verbs are the equivalent of Hitpael stem forms.

**24 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 ransom<sup>1</sup> of a person's<sup>2</sup> life is his wealth,  
but the poor person hears no threat.<sup>3</sup>  
13:9 The light<sup>4</sup> of the righteous shines brightly,<sup>5</sup>  
but the lamp<sup>6</sup> of the wicked goes out.<sup>7</sup>  
13:10 With pride<sup>8</sup> comes only<sup>9</sup> contention,  
but wisdom is with the well-advised.<sup>10</sup>  
13:11 Wealth gained quickly<sup>11</sup> will dwindle away,<sup>12</sup>

but the one who gathers it little by little<sup>13</sup> will become rich.<sup>14</sup>  
13:12 Hope<sup>15</sup> deferred<sup>16</sup> makes the heart sick,<sup>17</sup>  
but a longing fulfilled<sup>18</sup> is like<sup>19</sup> a tree of life.  
13:13 The one who despises instruction<sup>20</sup> will pay the penalty,<sup>21</sup>  
but whoever esteems instruction<sup>22</sup> will<sup>23</sup> be rewarded.<sup>24</sup>  
13:14 Instruction<sup>25</sup> from the wise<sup>26</sup> is like<sup>27</sup> a life-giving fountain,<sup>28</sup>  
to turn<sup>29</sup> a person<sup>30</sup> from deadly snares.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>1</sup> sn As the word "ransom" (בִּפְרוֹ, *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 oppressors. So the rich person is exposed to legal attacks and threats of physical violence and must use his wealth as ransom.

<sup>2</sup> tn Heb "the life of a man."

<sup>3</sup> tn The term יְבִירָה (*g<sup>c</sup>arah*) 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 the dangers. But the sense of "threat" better fits the context: The rich are threatened with extortion, but the poor are not (cf. CEV "the poor don't have that problem").

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> tn The verb יִצְמַח (*yismah*) 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).

<sup>6</sup> sn The lamp is an implied comparison as well, comparing the life of the wicked to a lamp that is going to be extinguished.

<sup>7</sup> tc The LXX adds, "Deceitful souls go astray in sins, but the righteous are pitiful and merciful."

<sup>8</sup> tn The verb דָּהַר (*da'akh*) 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.

<sup>9</sup> sn The parallelism suggests *pride* here means contempt for the opinions of others. The wise listen to advice rather than argue out of stubborn pride.

<sup>10</sup> tn The particle רַק (*raq*, "only") modifies the noun "contention" – only contention can come from such a person.

<sup>11</sup> tn The Niphal of יָצַד (*ya'ats*, "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").

<sup>12</sup> tc The MT reads מְהֵבֵל (*mehevel*, "from vanity"). The Greek and Latin versions (followed by RSV) reflect מְהֵבֵל (*m<sup>h</sup>ehal*, "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.

<sup>13</sup> tn Heb "wealth from vanity" (cf. KJV, ASV). The term הֵבֵל (*hevel*) literally means "vapor" and figuratively 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).

<sup>14</sup> tn Heb "will become small." The verb בָּקַע (*ba'at*) 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 רָבָה (*ravah*), "to become much; to become many," but in the Hiphil, "to multiply; to make much many; to cause increase."

<sup>13</sup> tn Heb "by hand"; cf. KJV, ASV, NASB "by labor."

<sup>14</sup> tn Heb "will increase."

<sup>15</sup> sn The word "hope" (תּוֹקֵהַת [tokhelet] from יָחַל [yakhal]) also has the implication of a tense if not anxious wait.

<sup>16</sup> tn The verb is the Pual participle from מָשַׁח (*mashakh*, "to draw; to drag").

<sup>17</sup> sn Failure in realizing one's hopes can be depressing or discouraging. People can bear frustration only so long (W. G. Plaut, *Proverbs*, 153).

<sup>18</sup> tn Heb "a desire that comes"; cf. CEV "a wish that comes true."

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> tc The MT reads יִהְיֶה לָהֶם (yekhavel, "he will pay [for it]"); cf. NAB, NIV) but the BHS editors suggest rewording the text to יִהְיֶה לָהֶם (y<sup>h</sup>khaval, "he will be broken [for it]"); cf. NRSV "bring destruction on themselves").

<sup>22</sup> tn Heb "will be pledged to it." The Niphal of קָבַל (*khaval*) "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.

<sup>23</sup> tn Heb "fears a commandment"; NIV "respects a commandment."

<sup>24</sup> tn Heb "he" or "that one" [will be rewarded].

<sup>25</sup> 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."

<sup>26</sup> tn The term תּוֹרָה (*torah*) in legal literature means "law," but in wisdom literature often means "instruction; teaching" (BDB 435 s.v.); cf. NAV, NIV, NRSV "teaching"; NLT "advice."

<sup>27</sup> tn Heb "instruction of the wise." The term יָחָם (*khakham*, "the wise") is a genitive of source.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> tn Heb "fountain of life" (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV). The genitive חַיִּים (*khayyim*) 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.

<sup>30</sup> tn The infinitive construct with preposition לְ (*lamed*) gives the result (or, purpose) of the first statement. It could also be taken epexegetically, "by turning."

<sup>31</sup> tn The term "person" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

<sup>32</sup> tn Heb "snares of death" (so KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). The genitive מְנוֹת (*mavet*) 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 Ugaritic 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 insight<sup>1</sup> wins<sup>2</sup> favor,  
but the conduct<sup>3</sup> of the unfaithful is  
harsh.<sup>4</sup>

13:16 Every shrewd<sup>5</sup> person acts with  
knowledge,

but a fool displays<sup>6</sup> his folly.

13:17 An unreliable<sup>7</sup> messenger falls<sup>8</sup> into  
trouble,<sup>9</sup>

but a faithful envoy<sup>10</sup> brings<sup>11</sup> healing.

13:18 The one who neglects<sup>12</sup> discipline  
ends up in<sup>13</sup> poverty and shame,  
but the one who accepts reproof is hon-  
ored.<sup>14</sup>

13:19 A desire fulfilled is sweet to the  
soul,

but fools abhor<sup>15</sup> turning away from evil.

13:20 The one who associates<sup>16</sup> with the  
wise grows wise,

but a companion of fools suffers harm.<sup>17</sup>

13:21 Calamity<sup>18</sup> pursues sinners,

but prosperity rewards the righteous.<sup>19</sup>

13:22 A benevolent<sup>20</sup> person leaves an in-  
heritance<sup>21</sup> for his grandchildren,<sup>22</sup>  
but the wealth of a sinner is stored up for  
the righteous.<sup>23</sup>

13:23 There is abundant food in the field<sup>24</sup>  
of the poor,  
but it is swept away by injustice.<sup>25</sup>

**1 tn** Heb “good insight.” The expression שְׂכֵל־טוֹב (*sekhel-tov*) describes a person who has good sense, sound judgment, or wise opinions (BDB 968 s.v. שְׂכֵל).

**2 tn** Heb “gives”; NASB “produces.”

**3 tn** Heb “way,” frequently for conduct, behavior, or lifestyle.

**4 tc** The MT reads אֵתֵן (*etan*, “enduring; permanent; perennial”; BDB 450 s.v. יָתַן 1). Several scholars suggest that the text here is corrupt and the reading should be “harsh; hard; firm; rugged” (BDB 450 s.v. 2). G. R. Driver suggested that לֹא (*lo*, “not”) was dropped before the word by haplography and so the meaning would have been not “enduring” but “passing away” (“Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs,” *Bib* 32 [1951]: 181). The LXX, Syriac, and Tg. Prov 13:15 reflect a Hebrew Vorlage of תִּהְיוּבָר (to’veb) “are destroyed.” The BHS editors suggest emending the text to אֵתֵדָם (*edam*) “their calamity” from אֵדָר (*ed*, “calamity, distress”; BDB 15 s.v.): “the way of the faithless [leads to] their calamity.” The idea of “harsh” or “hard” could also be drawn from a meaning of the word in the MT meaning “firm,” that is, enduring.

**5 sn** The shrewd person knows the circumstances, dangers and pitfalls that lie ahead. So he deals with them wisely. This makes him cautious.

**6 tn** Heb “spreads open” [his folly]. W. McKane suggests that this is a figure of a peddler displaying his wares (*Proverbs* [OTL], 456; cf. NAB “the fool peddles folly”). If given a chance, a fool will reveal his foolishness in public. But the wise study the facts and make decisions accordingly.

**7 tn** Heb “bad.”

**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 אֲמוּנִים (*emunim*, “faithfulness”) functions as an attributive adjective: “faithful envoy.” The plural form אֲמוּנִים (literally, “faithfulnesses”) is characteristic of abstract nouns. The term “envoy” (*isir*) suggests that the person is in some kind of government service (e.g., Isa 18:2; 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 III פָּרַע (*para*) normally means “to let go; to let alone” and here “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 (power and wealth, from the idea of “heavy” for “honor”) and the man of straw (lowly esteemed and poor).

**15 tn** Heb “an abomination of fools.” The noun בְּסִילִים (*k<sup>s</sup>silim*, “fools”) functions as a subjective genitive: “fools hate to turn away from evil” (cf. NAB, TEV, CEV). T. T. Perowne says: “In spite of the sweetness of good desires accomplished, fools will not forsake evil to attain it” (*Proverbs*, 103). Cf. Prov 13:12; 29:27.

**16 tn** Heb “walks.” When used with the preposition אִתְּ (*et*, “with”), the verb הִלַּךְ (*halakh*, “to walk”) means “to associate with” someone (BDB 234 s.v. הִלַּךְ II.3.b; e.g., Mic 6:8; Job 34:8). The active participle of הִלַּךְ (“to walk”) stresses continual, durative action. One should stay in close association with the wise, and move in the same direction they do.

**17 tn** The verb form יָרַע (*yerao*) is the Niphal imperfect of רָעַע (*ra’u*), meaning “to suffer hurt.” 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 יָרַע, רָעַע, and רָעַע 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 (*ra’ah*, “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 נֵיר (*nir*) means “the tillable [or untilled; or fallow] ground.” BDB 644 s.v. says this line could be rendered: “abundant food [yields] the fallow ground of poor men” (i.e., with the LORD’s blessing).

**25 tc** The MT reads “there is what is swept away because [there is] no justice” (וְיֵשׁ נִשְׁפֵּה בְּלֹא מִשְׁפָּט) *yesh nispeh b’lo’ mishpat*. The LXX reads “the great enjoy wealth many years, but some men perish little by little.” The Syriac reads “those who have no habitation 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.

13:24 The one who spares his rod<sup>1</sup> hates<sup>2</sup> his child,<sup>3</sup> but the one who loves his child<sup>4</sup> is diligent<sup>5</sup> in disciplining<sup>6</sup> him.  
 13:25 The righteous has enough food to satisfy his appetite,<sup>7</sup> but the belly of the wicked lacks food.<sup>8</sup>  
 14:1 Every wise woman<sup>9</sup> builds<sup>10</sup> her household,<sup>11</sup> but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands.  
 14:2 The one who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD,<sup>12</sup> but the one who is perverted in his ways<sup>13</sup> despises him.  
 14:3 In<sup>14</sup> the speech<sup>15</sup> of a fool is a rod for his back,<sup>16</sup>

but the words<sup>17</sup> of the wise protect them.  
 14:4 Where there are no oxen, the feeding trough is clean, but an abundant harvest is produced by strong oxen.<sup>18</sup>  
 14:5 A truthful witness<sup>19</sup> does not lie, but a false witness<sup>20</sup> breathes out lies.<sup>21</sup>  
 14:6 The scorner<sup>22</sup> seeks wisdom but finds none,<sup>23</sup> but understanding is easy<sup>24</sup> for a discerning person.  
 14:7 Leave the presence of a foolish person,<sup>25</sup> or<sup>26</sup> you will not understand<sup>27</sup> wise counsel.<sup>28</sup>  
 14:8 The wisdom of the shrewd person<sup>29</sup> is to discern<sup>30</sup> his way, but the folly of fools is deception.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>1</sup> sn R. N. Whybray cites an Egyptian proverb that says that “boys have their ears on their backsides; they listen when they are beaten” (*Proverbs* [CBC], 80). Cf. Prov 4:3-4, 10-11; Eph 6:4; Heb 12:5-11.

<sup>2</sup> sn The importance of parental disciplining is stressed by the verbs “hate” and “love.” “Hating” a child in this sense means in essence abandoning or rejecting him; “loving” a child means embracing and caring for him. Failure to discipline a child is tantamount to hating him – not caring about his character.

<sup>3</sup> tn Heb “his son.”

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb “him”; the referent (his child) is specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>5</sup> tn Heb “seeks him.” The verb שָׁחַר (*shahar*, “to be diligent; to do something early”; BDB 1007 s.v.) could mean “to be diligent to discipline,” or “to be early or prompt in disciplining.” See G. R. Driver, “Hebrew Notes on Prophets and Proverbs,” *JTS* 41 (1940): 170.

<sup>6</sup> tn The noun מוֹסֵר (*musar*, “discipline”) functions as an adverbial accusative of reference: “he is diligent in reference to discipline.”

<sup>7</sup> tn The noun נֶפֶשׁ (traditionally “soul”; cf. KJV, ASV) here means “appetite” (BDB 660 s.v. 5.a).

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb “he will lack.” The term “food” is supplied in the translation as a clarification. The wicked may go hungry, or lack all they desire, just as the first colon may mean that what the righteous acquire proves satisfying to them.

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb “wise ones of women.” The construct phrase הַכֹּסֵם בְּיָמֵיהֶם (*khakhmot nashim*) features a wholistic genitive: “wise women.” The plural functions in a distributive sense: “every wise woman.” The contrast is between wise and foolish women (e.g., Prov 7:10-23; 31:10-31).

<sup>10</sup> tn The perfect tense verb in the first colon functions in a gnomic sense, while the imperfect tense in the second colon is a habitual imperfect.

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb “house.” This term functions as a synecdoche of container (= house) for contents (= household, family).

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb “fear of the LORD.” The term יהוה (*yhwh*, “the LORD”) functions as an objective genitive.

<sup>13</sup> tn Heb “crooked of ways”; NRSV “devious in conduct.” This construct phrase features a genitive of specification: “crooked in reference to his ways.” The term “ways” is an idiom for moral conduct. The evidence that people fear the LORD is uprightness; the evidence of those who despise him is the devious ways.

<sup>14</sup> tn The preposition ב (bet) may denote (1) exchange: “in exchange for” foolish talk there is a rod; or (2) cause: “because of” foolish talk.

<sup>15</sup> sn The noun פֶּה (*peh*, “mouth”) functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said (“speech, words, talk”).

<sup>16</sup> tc The MT reads גִּאְוָה (*ga'avah*, “pride”) which creates an awkward sense “in the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride” (cf. KJV, ASV). The BHS editors suggest emending the form to מוֹד (*mod*, “disciplining-rod”) to create tighter parallelism and irony: “in the mouth of a fool is a rod for the back” (e.g., Prov 10:13). What the fools says will bring discipline.

tn Heb “a rod of back.” The noun גֹּב functions as a genitive of specification: “a rod for his back.” The fool is punished because of what he says.

<sup>17</sup> tn Heb “lips.” The term “lips” is a metonymy of cause, meaning what they say. The wise by their speech will find protection.

<sup>18</sup> tn Heb “the strength of oxen.” The genitive שׁוֹר (*shor*, “oxen”) functions as an attributed genitive: “strong oxen.” Strong oxen are indispensable for a good harvest, and for oxen to be strong they must be well-fed. The farmer has to balance grain consumption with the work oxen do.

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb “a witness of faithfulness.” The genitive functions in an attributive sense: “faithful witness” (so KJV, NRSV); TEV “reliable witness.”

<sup>20</sup> tn Heb “a witness of falsehood.” The genitive functions in an attributive sense: “false witness.”

<sup>21</sup> sn This saying addresses the problem of legal testimony: A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness does lie – naturally. The first colon uses the verb קָזַב (*kazav*, “to lie”) and the second colon uses the noun קְזָב (*kazav*, “lie; falsehood”).

<sup>22</sup> sn The “scorner” (לֵצֵן, *lets*) is intellectually arrogant; he lacks any serious interest in knowledge or religion. He pursues wisdom in a superficial way so that he can appear wise. The acquisition of wisdom is conditioned by one’s attitude toward it (J. H. Greenstone, *Proverbs*, 149).

<sup>23</sup> tn Heb “and there is not.”

<sup>24</sup> sn The Niphal of קָלַל (*qalal*) means “to appear light; to appear trifling; to appear easy.”

<sup>25</sup> tn Heb “a man, a stupid fellow.”

<sup>26</sup> tn Heb “and.” The *vav* (ו) that introduces this clause may be understood as meaning “or....”

<sup>27</sup> tc The MT reads וְיָדַעְתָּ יְדֵי יְדֵי־יָדָא (*uval-yada' ta*, “you did not know [the lips of knowledge]”). It must mean that one should leave the fool because he did not receive knowledge from what fools said. *Tg.* Prov 14:7 freely interprets the verse: “for there is no knowledge on his lips.” The LXX reflects a Hebrew *Vorlage* of וְיִלְכְּדוּן לְפִי (*ukh'le-da'at*, “[wise lips] are weapons of discretion”). The textual variant involves wrong word division and orthographic confusion between ב (bet) and כ (kaf). C. H. Toy emends the text: “for his lips do not utter knowledge” as in 15:7 (*Proverbs* [ICC], 285). The MT is workable and more difficult.

<sup>28</sup> tn Heb “lips of knowledge” (so KJV, ASV). “Lips” is the metonymy of cause, and “knowledge” is an objective genitive (speaking knowledge) or attributive genitive (knowledgeable speech): “wise counsel.”

<sup>29</sup> tn Or “the prudent [person]” (cf. KJV, NASB, NIV).

<sup>30</sup> tn The Hiphil infinitive construct denotes purpose. Those who are shrewd will use it to give careful consideration to all their ways.

<sup>31</sup> tn The word means “deception,” but some suggest “self-deception” here (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 466; and D. W. Thomas, “Textual and Philological Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs,” *VTSup* 3 [1955]: 286); cf. NLT “fools

14:9 Fools mock<sup>4</sup> at reparation,<sup>2</sup>  
but among the upright there is favor.<sup>3</sup>  
14:10 The heart knows its own bitterness,<sup>4</sup>  
and with its joy no one else<sup>5</sup> can share.<sup>6</sup>  
14:11 The household<sup>7</sup> of the wicked will  
be destroyed,  
but the tent<sup>8</sup> of the upright will flourish.  
14:12 There is a way that seems right to a  
person,<sup>9</sup>  
but its end is the way that leads to death.<sup>10</sup>  
14:13 Even in laughter the heart may  
ache,<sup>11</sup>  
and the end<sup>12</sup> of joy may be<sup>13</sup> 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 tñ** The noun "fools" is plural but the verb "mock" is singular. This has led some to reverse the line to say "guilty/guilt-offering mocks fools" (C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 287); see, e.g., Isa 1:14; Amos 5:22. But lack of agreement between subject and verb is not an insurmountable difficulty.

**2 tc** The LXX reads "houses of transgressors will owe purification." *Tg. Prov* 14:9 has "guilt has its home among fools" (apparently reading לִין לִין, *lin lin*).

**tn Heb** "guilt." The word אָשָׁם (*'asham*) 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 רָצוֹן (*ratson*) means "favor; 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.

**4 tn Heb** "bitterness of its soul."

**5 tn Heb** "stranger" (so KJV, NASB, NRSV).

**6 tn** The verb is the Hitpael of אָרַב (*'arav*), 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.

**sn** Personal integrity ensures domestic stability and prosperity, while lack of such integrity (= wickedness) will lead to the opposite.

**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."

**sn** The proverb recalls the ways of the adulterous woman in chapters 1-9, 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 Aramaism, a proleptic suffix referring to "joy."

**13 tn** The phrase "may be" is not in the Hebrew but is supplied from the parallelism, which features an imperfect of possibility.

14:14 The backslider<sup>14</sup> will be paid back<sup>15</sup>  
from his own ways,  
but a good person will be rewarded<sup>16</sup> for  
his.

14:15 A naive person<sup>17</sup> believes every-  
thing,  
but the shrewd person discerns his steps.<sup>18</sup>

14:16 A wise person is cautious<sup>19</sup> and  
turns from evil,  
but a fool throws off restraint<sup>20</sup> and is  
overconfident.<sup>21</sup>

14:17 A person who has a quick temper<sup>22</sup>  
does foolish things,  
and a person with crafty schemes<sup>23</sup> is  
hated.<sup>24</sup>

14:18 The naive inherit<sup>25</sup> folly,  
but the shrewd<sup>26</sup> are crowned<sup>27</sup> with  
knowledge.

**14 tn Heb** "a turning away of heart." The genitive לֵב (*lev*, "heart") functions as an attributive adjective: "a backslidden heart." The term סוּג (*sug*) means "to move away; to move backwards; to depart; to backslide" (BDB 690 s.v. סוּג). This individual is the one who backslides, that is, who departs from the path of righteousness.

**15 tn Heb** "will be filled"; cf. KJV, ASV. The verb ("to be filled, to be satisfied") here means "to be repaid," that is, to partake in his own evil ways. His faithlessness will come back to haunt him.

**16 tn** The phrase "will be rewarded" does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

**17 sn** The contrast is with the simpleton and the shrewd. The simpleton is the young person who is untrained morally or intellectually, and therefore gullible. The shrewd one is the prudent person, the one who has the ability to make critical discriminations.

**18 tn Heb** "his step"; cf. TEV "sensible people watch their step."

**19 tn Heb** "fears." Since the holy name (Yahweh, translated "the LORD") is not used, it probably does not here mean fear of the LORD, but of the consequences of actions.

**20 tn** The Hitpael of אָוַר (*'avar*, "to pass over") means "to pass over the bounds of propriety; to act insolently" (BDB 720 s.v.; cf. ASV "beareth himself insolently").

**21 tn** The verb בָּקָה here denotes self-assurance or overconfidence. Fools are not cautious and do not fear the consequences of their actions.

**22 sn** The proverb discusses two character traits that are distasteful to others – the quick tempered person ("short of anger" or impatient) and the crafty person ("man of devices"). C. H. Toy thinks that the proverb is antithetical and renders it "but a wise man endures" (*Proverbs* [ICC], 292). In other words, the quick-tempered person acts foolishly and loses people's respect, but the wise man does not.

**23 tn Heb** "a man of devices."

**24 tc** The LXX reads "endures" (from נָסָה, *nasa'*) rather than "is hated" (from שָׂנֵא, *sane'*). This change seems to have arisen on the assumption that a contrast was needed. It has: "a man of thought endures." Other versions take מְצִימוֹת (*m<sup>c</sup>zimmot*) in a good sense, but antithetical parallelism is unwarranted here.

**25 tc** G. R. Driver, however, proposed reading the verb as "are adorned" from יָדָה (*'yadah*, "Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs," *Bib* 32 [1951]: 181). A similar reading is followed by a number of English versions (e.g., NAB, NRSV, NLT).

**sn** The proverb anticipates what the simple will receive, assuming they remain simpletons.

**26 tn** Or "prudent" (KJV, NASB, NIV); NRSV, TEV "clever."

**27 tn** The meaning of יָכִיתוּ (*yakhtiru*, Hiphil imperfect of כָּתַר, *katar*) is elusive. It may not mean "to be crowned" or "to crown themselves," but "to encircle" or "to embrace." BDB 509 s.v. כָּתַר Hiph 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<sup>1</sup> before those who are good, and the wicked will bow<sup>2</sup> at the gates<sup>3</sup> of the righteous.

14:20 A poor person is disliked<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>5</sup> evil go astray?<sup>7</sup>

But those who plan good exhibit<sup>6</sup> faithful covenant love.<sup>7</sup>

14:23 In all hard work<sup>8</sup> there is profit, but merely talking about it<sup>9</sup> only brings<sup>10</sup> poverty.<sup>11</sup>

14:24 The crown of the wise is their riches,<sup>12</sup> but the folly<sup>13</sup> of fools is folly.

14:25 A truthful witness<sup>14</sup> rescues lives,<sup>15</sup> but the one who breathes lies brings<sup>16</sup> deception.<sup>17</sup>

14:26 In the fear of the LORD one has<sup>18</sup> strong confidence,<sup>19</sup> and it will be a refuge<sup>20</sup> for his children.

14:27 The fear of the LORD<sup>21</sup> is like<sup>22</sup> a life-giving fountain,<sup>23</sup> to turn<sup>24</sup> people<sup>25</sup> from deadly snares.<sup>26</sup>

14:28 A king's glory is<sup>27</sup> the abundance of people, but the lack of subjects<sup>28</sup> is the ruin<sup>29</sup> of a ruler.

14:29 The one who is slow to anger has great understanding,

<sup>1</sup> tn Many versions nuance the perfect tense verb שָׁחָה (*shakhakh*) as a characteristic perfect. But the proverb suggests that the reality lies in the future. So the verb is best classified as a prophetic perfect (cf. NASB, NIV, CEV, NLT): Ultimately the wicked will acknowledge and serve the righteous – a point the prophets make.

<sup>2</sup> tn The phrase “will bow” does not appear in this line but is implied by the parallelism; it is supplied in the translation for clarity and smoothness.

<sup>3</sup> sn J. H. Greenstone suggests that this means that they are begging for favors (*Proverbs*, 154).

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb “hated.” The verse is just a statement of fact. The verbs “love” and “hate” must be seen in their connotations: The poor are rejected, avoided, shunned – that is, hated, but the rich are sought after, favored, embraced – that is, loved.

<sup>5</sup> sn The verb חָרַשׁ (*kharash*) means (1) literally: “to cut in; to engrave; to plow,” describing the work of a craftsman; and (2) figuratively: “to devise,” describing the mental activity of planning evil (what will harm people) in the first colon, and planning good (what will benefit them) in the second colon.

<sup>6</sup> tn The term “exhibit” does not appear in the Hebrew, but is supplied in the translation for clarity and smoothness.

<sup>7</sup> tn Heb “loyal-love and truth.” The two terms אֱמֶת וְחֶסֶד (*khesed ve’emet*) often form a hendiadys: “faithful love” or better “faithful covenant love.”

<sup>8</sup> sn The Hebrew term עֲצֻב (*etsav*, “painful toil; labor”) is first used in scripture in Gen 3:19 to describe the effects of the Fall. The point here is that people should be more afraid of idle talk than of hard labor.

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb “word of lips.” This construct phrase features a genitive of source (“a word from the lips”) or a subjective genitive (“speaking a word”). Talk without work (which produces nothing) is contrasted with labor that produces something.

<sup>10</sup> tn The term “brings” does not appear in the Hebrew, but is supplied in the translation for clarity and smoothness.

<sup>11</sup> sn The noun מְחֹסֵר (*makhzor*, “need; thing needed; poverty”) comes from the verb חָסַר “to lack; to be lacking; to decrease; to need.” A person given to idle talk rather than industrious work will have needs that go unmet.

<sup>12</sup> sn C. H. Toy suggests that this line probably means that wealth is an ornament to those who use it well (*Proverbs* [ICC], 269). J. H. Greenstone suggests that it means that the wisdom of the wise, which is their crown of glory, constitutes their wealth (*Proverbs*, 155).

<sup>13</sup> tc The MT reads אֵיֶלֶת (*ivelet*, “folly”). The editors of BHS propose emending the text to וְהָיָה (v<sup>h</sup>*liyat*, “but the wealth”), as suggested by the LXX. See M. Rotenberg, “The Meaning of אֵיֶלֶת in Proverbs,” *Les* 25 (1960-1961): 201. A similar emendation is followed by NAB (“the diadem”) and NRSV (“the garland”).

<sup>14</sup> tn Heb “a witness of truth”; cf. CEV “an honest witness.”

<sup>15</sup> tn The noun נַפְשׁוֹת (*n<sup>f</sup>ashot*) often means “souls,” but here “lives” – it functions as a metonymy for life (BDB 659 s.v. נָפֵשׁ 3.c).

<sup>16</sup> tn The setting of this proverb is the courtroom. One who tells the truth “saves” מַצִּיל (*mitsil*, “rescues; delivers”) the lives of those falsely accused.

<sup>17</sup> tn The term “brings” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity. Also possible, “is deceitful.”

<sup>18</sup> tc Several commentators suggest emending the text from the noun מִרְמָה (*mirmah*, “deception”) to the participle מְרַמֶּה (*m<sup>r</sup>ameh*, “destroys”). However, this revocalization is not necessary because the MT makes sense as it stands: A false witness destroys lives.

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb “In the fear of the LORD [is] confidence of strength.” The phrase “one has” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

<sup>20</sup> tn Heb “confidence of strength.” This construct phrase features an attributive genitive: “strong confidence” (so most English versions; NIV “a secure fortress”).

<sup>21</sup> sn The fear of the LORD will not only provide security for the parent but will also be a refuge for children. The line recalls Exod 20:5-6 where children will reap the benefits of the righteous parents. The line could also be read as “he [= God] will be a refuge for the children.”

<sup>22</sup> tn The verse is similar to Prov 13:14 except that “the fear of the LORD” has replaced “the teaching of the wise.”

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> tn Heb “fountain of life.”

<sup>25</sup> tn The infinitive construct with prefixed ל (*lamed*) indicates the purpose/result of the first line; it could also function epexegetically, explaining how fear is a fountain: “by turning....”

<sup>26</sup> tn The term “people” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

<sup>27</sup> tn Heb “snares of death” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT); CEV “deadly traps.”

<sup>28</sup> tn The preposition serves as the *beth essentiae* – the glory is the abundant population, not in it.

<sup>29</sup> tn Heb “people.” Cf. NLT “a dwindling nation.”

<sup>30</sup> sn The word means “ruin; destruction,” but in this context it could be a metonymy of effect, the cause being an attack by more numerous people that will bring ruin to the ruler. The proverb is purely a practical and secular saying, unlike some of the faith teachings in salvation history passages.

but the one who has a quick temper<sup>1</sup> exalts<sup>2</sup> folly.

**14:30** A tranquil spirit<sup>3</sup> revives the body,<sup>4</sup> but envy<sup>5</sup> is rottenness to the bones.<sup>6</sup>

**14:31** The one who oppresses<sup>7</sup> the poor insults<sup>8</sup> his Creator, but whoever shows favor<sup>9</sup> to the needy honors him.

**14:32** The wicked will be thrown down in his trouble,<sup>10</sup>

but the righteous have refuge<sup>11</sup> even in the threat of death.<sup>12</sup>

**14:33** Wisdom rests in the heart of the discerning; it is known<sup>13</sup> even in the heart<sup>14</sup> of fools

**14:34** Righteousness exalts<sup>15</sup> a nation, but sin is a disgrace<sup>16</sup> to any people.

**14:35** The king shows favor<sup>17</sup> to a wise<sup>18</sup> servant, but his wrath falls<sup>19</sup> on one who acts shamefully.

**15:1** A gentle response<sup>20</sup> turns away anger, but a harsh word<sup>21</sup> stirs up wrath.<sup>22</sup>

**15:2** The tongue of the wise<sup>23</sup> treats knowledge correctly,<sup>24</sup>

but the mouth of the fool spouts out<sup>25</sup> folly.

**15:3** The eyes of the LORD<sup>26</sup> are in every place,

<sup>1</sup> **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 temperate to everyone, due to his rash actions.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** The participle “exalts” (מְרִים, *merim*) means that this person brings folly to a full measure, lifts it up, brings it to the full notice of everybody.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “heart of healing.” The genitive מְרַפֵּא (marpe, “healing”) functions as an attributive adjective: “a healing heart.” The term לֵב (*lev*, “heart”) is a metonymy for the emotional state of a person (BDB 660 s.v. 6). A healthy spirit is tranquil, bringing peace to the body (J. H. Greenstone, *Proverbs*, 158).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “life of the flesh” (so KJV, ASV); NAB, NIV “gives life to the body.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The term קִנְיָה (*qin’ah*, “envy”) refers to passionate zeal 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 institutions of the sanctuary. But as envy or jealousy the word describes an intense and sometimes violent excitement and desire that is never satisfied.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “rotteness of bones.” The term “bones” may be a synecdoche representing the entire body; it is in contrast with “flesh” of the first colon. One who is consumed with envy finds no tranquility or general sense of health in body or spirit.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The verb מַשְׁחָה (*ashaq*) normally means “to oppress” (as in many English versions). However, here it might mean “to slander.” See J. A. Emerton, “Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs,” *JTS* 20 (1969): 202-22.

<sup>8</sup> **sn** In the Piel this verb has the meaning of “to reproach; to taunt; to say sharp things against” someone (cf. NIV “shows contempt for”). By oppressing the poor one taunts or mistreats God because that person is in the image of God – hence the reference to the “Creator.” To ridicule what God made is to ridicule God himself.

<sup>9</sup> **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 is treatment that is *gratis*. This honors God because he commanded it to be done (Prov 14:21; 17:5; 19:17).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The prepositional phrase must be “in his time of trouble” (i.e., when catastrophe comes). Cf. CEV “In times of trouble the wicked are destroyed.” A wicked person has nothing to fall back on in such times.

<sup>11</sup> **sn** The righteous have hope in a just retribution – they have a place of safety even in death.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The LXX reads this as “in his integrity,” as if it were בְּתוֹר (b<sup>o</sup>tumo) instead of “in his death” (בְּמוֹתוֹ, b<sup>o</sup>moto). The LXX is followed by some English versions (e.g., NAB “in his honesty,” NRSV “in their integrity,” and TEV “by their integrity”).

**tn** Heb “in his death.” The term “death” may function as a metonymy of effect for a life-threatening situation.

<sup>13</sup> **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 *wd* and translates it “in fools it is suppressed.” See D. W. Thomas, “The Root ודיע in Hebrew,” *JTS* 35 (1934): 302-3.

**sn** The second line may be ironic or sarcastic. The fool, eager to appear wise, blurts out what seems to be wisdom, but

in the process turns it to folly. The contrast is that wisdom resides with people who have understanding.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “in the inner part”; ASV “in the inward part”; NRSV “in the heart of fools.”

<sup>15</sup> **sn** The verb מַרְבִּים (*marbem*, translated “exalts”) is a Polel imperfect; 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.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The term is the homonymic root יָחַשׁ (*kheshed*, “shame; reproach”; BDB 340 s.v.), as reflected by the LXX translation. Rabbinic exegesis generally took it as לֶחֶם יָחַשׁ (“loyal love; kindness”) as if it said, “even the kindness of some nations is a sin because they do it only for a show” (so Rashi, a Jewish scholar who lived A.D. 1040-1105).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “the favor of a king.” The noun “king” functions as a subjective genitive: “the king shows favor....”

<sup>18</sup> **sn** The wise servant is shown favor, while the shameful servant is shown anger. Two Hiphil participles make the contrast: מַשְׁכִּיל (*maskil*, “wise”) and מְבַשֵּׁשׁ (*mevish*, “one who acts shamefully”). The wise servant is a delight and enjoys the favor of the king because he is skillful and clever. The shameful one botches his duties; his indiscretions and incapacity expose the master to criticism (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 470).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “is” (so KJV, ASV).

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb “soft answer.” The adjective רַךְ (*rakh*, “soft; tender; gentle”; BDB 940 s.v.) is more than a mild response; it is conciliatory, an answer that restores good temper and reasonableness (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 477). Gideon illustrates this kind of answer (Judg 8:1-3) that brings peace.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “word of harshness”; KJV “grievous words.” The noun מַצְרִיב (*etsav*, “pain, hurt”) functions as an attributive genitive. The term מַצְרִיב refers to something that causes pain (BDB 780 s.v. I מַצְרִיב). For example, Jephthah’s harsh answer led to war (Judg 12:1-6).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “raises anger.” A common response to painful words is to let one’s temper flare up.

<sup>23</sup> **sn** The contrast is between the “tongue of the wise” and the “mouth of the fool.” Both expressions are metonymies of cause; the subject matter is what they say. How wise people are can be determined from what they say.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Or “makes knowledge acceptable” (so NASB). The verb יָטַיַב (*teiv*, Hiphil imperfect of יָטַב [*yataw*, “to be good”]) can be translated “to make good” or “to treat in a good [or, excellent] way” (C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 303). M. Dahood, however, suggests emending the text to תִּטִּיף (*teitif*) which is a cognate of מָטַף (*mataf*, “drip”), and translates “tongues of the sages drip with knowledge” (*Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Philology*, 32-33). But this change is gratuitous and unnecessary.

<sup>25</sup> **sn** The Hiphil verb יָבִיט (*yabiat*) means “to pour out; to emit; to cause to bubble; to belch forth.” The fool bursts out with reckless utterances (cf. TEV “spout nonsense”).

<sup>26</sup> **sn** The proverb uses anthropomorphic language to describe God’s exacting and evaluating knowledge of all people.



keeping watch<sup>1</sup> on those who are evil and those who are good.

**15:4** Speech<sup>2</sup> that heals<sup>3</sup> is like<sup>4</sup> a life-giving tree,<sup>5</sup>

but a perverse tongue<sup>6</sup> breaks the spirit.

**15:5** A fool rejects his father's discipline, but whoever heeds reproof shows good sense.<sup>7</sup>

**15:6** In the house<sup>8</sup> of the righteous is abundant wealth,<sup>9</sup>

but the income of the wicked brings trouble.<sup>10</sup>

**15:7** The lips of the wise spread<sup>11</sup> knowledge,

but not so the heart of fools.<sup>12</sup>

**15:8** The LORD abhors<sup>13</sup> the sacrifices<sup>14</sup> of the wicked,<sup>15</sup>

but the prayer<sup>16</sup> of the upright pleases him.<sup>17</sup>

**15:9** The LORD abhors<sup>18</sup> the way of the wicked, but he loves those<sup>19</sup> who pursue<sup>20</sup> righteousness.

**15:10** Severe discipline<sup>21</sup> is for the one who abandons the way; the one who hates reproof<sup>22</sup> will die.

**15:11** Death and Destruction<sup>23</sup> are before the LORD –

how much more<sup>24</sup> the hearts of humans!<sup>25</sup>

**15:12** The scorner does not love<sup>26</sup> one who corrects him;<sup>27</sup> he will not go to<sup>28</sup> the wise.

**1** tn The form צופות (*tsopot*, "watching") is a feminine plural participle agreeing with "eyes." God's watching eyes comfort good people but convict evil.

**2** tn Heb "a tongue." The term "tongue" is a metonymy of cause for what is produced: speech.

**3** tn Heb "a tongue of healing." A healing tongue refers to speech that is therapeutic or soothing. It is a source of vitality.

**4** 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.

**5** tn Heb "tree of life."

**6** tn Heb "perversion in it." The referent must be the tongue, so this has been supplied in the translation for clarity. A tongue that is twisted, perverse, or deceitful is a way of describing deceitful speech. Such words will crush the spirit (e.g., Isa 65:14).

**7** tn Heb "is prudent" (so KJV, NASB, NRSV); NCV, NLT "is wise." Anyone who accepts correction or rebuke will become prudent in life.

**8** tn The term בית (*bet*, "house") functions as an adverbial accusative of location.

**9** sn The Hebrew noun רִכְזִין (*khosen*) means "wealth; treasure." Prosperity is the reward for righteousness. This is true only in so far as a proverb can be carried in its application, allowing for exceptions. The Greek text for this verse has no reference for wealth, but talks about amassing righteousness.

**10** tn Heb "will be troubled." The function of the Niphal participle may be understood in two ways: (1) substantival use: abstract noun meaning "disturbance, calamity" (BDB 747 s.v. נָכַר) or passive noun meaning "thing troubled," or (2) verbal use: "will be troubled" (HALOT 824 s.v. נִזַּח).

**11** tc The verb of the first colon is difficult because it does not fit the second very well – a heart does not "scatter" or "spread" knowledge. On the basis of the LXX, C. H. Toy (*Proverbs* [ICC], 305) suggests a change to יָצִיר (*yits'ru*, "they preserve"). The Greek evidence, however, is not strong. For the second line the LXX has "hearts of fools are not safe," apparently taking לֹא־יָבִין (*lo'-khen*) as "unstable" instead of "not so." So it seems futile to use the Greek version to modify the first colon to make a better parallel, when the Greek has such a different reading in the second colon anyway.

**12** sn The phrase "the heart of fools" emphasizes that fools do not comprehend knowledge. Cf. NCV "there is no knowledge in the thoughts of fools."

**13** tn Heb "an abomination of the LORD." The term יְרֵה (*yehvah*, "the LORD") functions as a subjective genitive: "the LORD abhors." Cf. NIV "The Lord detests"; NCV, NLT "the Lord hates"; CEV "the Lord is disgusted."

**14** tn Heb "sacrifice" (so many English versions).

**15** sn The sacrifices of the wicked are hated by the LORD because the worshipers are insincere and blasphemous (e.g., Prov 15:29; 21:3; 28:9; Ps 40:6-8; Isa 1:10-17). In other words, the spiritual condition of the worshiper determines whether or not the worship is acceptable to God.

**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** tn 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** tn Heb "an abomination of the LORD." The term יְרֵה (*yehvah*, "the LORD") functions as a subjective genitive: "the LORD abhors."

**19** tn Heb "the one who" (so NRSV).

**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** tn The two lines are parallel synonymously, so the "severe discipline" of the first colon is parallel to "will die" of the second. The expression מוֹסָרָא רַע (*musarra' 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** tn Heb "Sheol and Abaddon" (שְׁאוֹל וְאַבְדּוֹן (*sh'ol va'adon*); 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** tn The construction אַף כִּי (*af ki*, "how much more!") introduces an argument from the lesser to the greater: If all this is open before the LORD, how much more so human hearts. "Hearts" here is a metonymy of subject, meaning the motives and thoughts (cf. NCV "the thoughts of the living").

**25** tn Heb "the hearts of the sons of man," although here "sons of man" simply means "men" or "human beings."

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

**27** tn Heb The form הוֹכֵחַ (*hokheakh*) is 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.

**28** tc The MT has אֵל (*el*, "to [the wise]"), suggesting seeking the advice of the wise. The LXX, however, has "with the wise," suggesting אֵת (*et*).

15:13 A joyful heart<sup>1</sup> makes the face cheerful,<sup>2</sup>  
but by a painful heart the spirit is broken.  
15:14 The discerning heart seeks knowledge,  
but the mouth of fools feeds on folly.<sup>3</sup>  
15:15 All the days<sup>4</sup> of the afflicted<sup>5</sup> are bad,<sup>6</sup>  
but one with<sup>7</sup> a cheerful heart has a continual feast.<sup>8</sup>  
15:16 Better<sup>9</sup> is little with the fear of the LORD  
than great wealth and turmoil<sup>10</sup> with it.<sup>11</sup>  
15:17 Better a meal of vegetables where there is love<sup>12</sup>  
than a fattened ox where there is hatred.<sup>13</sup>

15:18 A quick-tempered person<sup>14</sup> stirs up dissension,  
but one who is slow to anger<sup>15</sup> calms<sup>16</sup> a quarrel.<sup>17</sup>  
15:19 The way of the sluggard is like a hedge of thorns,<sup>18</sup>  
but the path of the upright is like<sup>19</sup> a highway.<sup>20</sup>  
15:20 A wise child<sup>21</sup> brings joy to his father,  
but a foolish person<sup>22</sup> despises<sup>23</sup> his mother.  
15:21 Folly is a joy to one who lacks sense,<sup>24</sup>  
but one who has understanding<sup>25</sup> follows an upright course.<sup>26</sup>  
15:22 Plans fail<sup>27</sup> when there is no counsel,

<sup>1</sup> tn The contrast in this proverb is between the “joyful heart” (*Heb* “a heart of joy,” using an attributive genitive) and the “painful heart” (*Heb* “pain of the heart,” using a genitive of specification).

<sup>2</sup> sn The verb יָצַב (*yativ*) normally means “to make good,” but here “to make the face good,” that is, there is a healthy, favorable, uplifted expression. The antithesis is the pained heart that crushes the spirit. C. H. Toy observes that a broken spirit is expressed by a sad face, while a cheerful face shows a courageous spirit (*Proverbs* [ICC], 308).

<sup>3</sup> tn The idea expressed in the second colon does not make a strong parallelism with the first with its emphasis on seeking knowledge. Its poetic image of feeding (a hypocatastasis) would signify the acquisition of folly – the fool has an appetite for it. D. W. Thomas suggests the change of one letter, ר (*resh*) to ד (*dalet*), to obtain a reading יָדָה (*vid'eh*); this he then connects to an Arabic root *da'* a with the meaning “sought, demanded” to form what he thinks is a better parallel (“Textual and Philological Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs,” *VTSup* 3 [1955]: 285). But even though the parallelism is not as precise as some would prefer, there is insufficient warrant for such a change.

<sup>4</sup> sn The “days” represent what happens on those days (metonymy of subject).

<sup>5</sup> tn The contrast is between the “afflicted” and the “good of heart” (a genitive of specification, “cheerful/healthy heart/spirit/attitude”).

sn The parallelism suggests that the *afflicted* is one afflicted within his spirit, for the proverb is promoting a healthy frame of mind.

<sup>6</sup> tn Or “evil”; or “catastrophic.”

<sup>7</sup> tn “one with” is supplied.

<sup>8</sup> sn The image of a *continual feast* signifies the enjoyment of what life offers (cf. TEV “happy people...enjoy life”). The figure is a hypocatastasis; among its several implications are joy, fulfillment, abundance, pleasure.

<sup>9</sup> sn One of the frequent characteristics of wisdom literature is the “better” saying; it is a comparison of different but similar things to determine which is to be preferred. These two verses focus on spiritual things being better than troubled material things.

<sup>10</sup> sn *Turmoil* refers to anxiety; the fear of the LORD alleviates anxiety, for it brings with it contentment and confidence.

<sup>11</sup> sn Not all wealth has turmoil with it. But the proverb is focusing on the comparison of two things – fear of the LORD with little and wealth with turmoil. Between these two, the former is definitely better.

<sup>12</sup> tn *Heb* “and love there.” This clause is a circumstantial clause introduced with *vav*, that becomes “where there is love.” The same construction is used in the second colon.

<sup>13</sup> sn Again the saying concerns troublesome wealth: Loving relationships with simple food are better than a feast where there is hatred. The ideal, of course, would be loving family and friends with a great meal in addition, but this proverb is only comparing two things.

<sup>14</sup> tn *Heb* “a man of wrath”; KJV, ASV “a wrathful man.” The term “wrath” functions as an attributive genitive: “an angry person.” He is contrasted with the “slow of anger,” so he is a “quick-tempered person” (cf. NLT “a hothead”).

<sup>15</sup> tn *Heb* “slow of anger.” The noun “anger” functions as a genitive of specification: slow in reference to anger, that is, slow to get angry, patient.

<sup>16</sup> tn The Hiphil verb יָשַׁקֵּת (*yashqit*) means “to cause quietness; to pacify; to allay” the strife or quarrel (cf. NAB “allays discord”). This type of person goes out of his way to keep things calm and minimize contention; his opposite thrives on disagreement and dispute.

<sup>17</sup> sn The fact that רִיב (*riv*) is used for “quarrel; strife” strongly implies that the setting is the courtroom or other legal setting (the gates of the city). The hot-headed person is eager to turn every disagreement into a legal case.

<sup>18</sup> tn *Heb* “like an overgrowth”; NRSV “overgrown with thorns”; cf. CEV “like walking in a thorn patch.” The point of the simile is that the path of life taken by the lazy person has many obstacles that are painful – it is like trying to break through a hedge of thorns. The LXX has “strewn with thorns.”

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> sn The contrast to the “thorny way” is the highway, the Hebrew word signifying a well built-up road (סָלַל, *satal*, “to heap up”). The upright have no reason to swerve, duck, or detour, but may expect “clear sailing.” Other passages pair these two concepts, e.g., Prov 6:10; 10:26; 28:19.

<sup>21</sup> tn *Heb* “son.”

<sup>22</sup> tn *Heb* “a fool of a man,” a genitive of specification.

<sup>23</sup> sn The proverb is almost the same as 10:1, except that “despises” replaces “grief.” This adds the idea of the callousness of the one who inflicts grief on his mother (D. Kidner, *Proverbs* [TOTC], 116).

<sup>24</sup> tn The Hebrew text reads לֶחֶם־לֵב (*lakhasar-lev*, “to one who lacks heart”). The Hebrew term “heart” represents the mind, the place where proper decisions are made (cf. NIV “judgment”). The one who has not developed this ability to make proper choices finds great delight in folly.

<sup>25</sup> tn *Heb* “a man of understanding” (so KJV, NIV); NLT “a sensible person.”

<sup>26</sup> tn The Hebrew construction is יִישַׁר־לֶכֶת (*yasher-lakhet*, “makes straight [to] go”). This is a verbal hendiadys, in which the first verb, the Piel imperfect, becomes adverbial, and the second form, the infinitive construct of הָלַךְ, *halakh*, becomes the main verb: “goes straight ahead” (cf. NRSV).

<sup>27</sup> tn *Heb* “go wrong” (so NRSV, NLT). The verb is the Hiphil infinitive absolute from פָּרַר, *parar*, which means “to break; to frustrate; to go wrong” (*HALOT* 975 s.v. פָּרַר 2). The plans are made ineffectual or are frustrated when there is insufficient counsel.

but with abundant advisers they are established.<sup>1</sup>

**15:23** A person has joy<sup>2</sup> in giving an appropriate answer,<sup>3</sup> and a word at the right time<sup>4</sup> – how good it is!

**15:24** The path of life is upward<sup>5</sup> for the wise person,<sup>6</sup>

to<sup>7</sup> keep him from going downward to Sheol.<sup>8</sup>

**15:25** The LORD tears down the house of the proud,<sup>9</sup> but he maintains the boundaries of the widow.<sup>10</sup>

**15:26** The LORD abhors<sup>11</sup> the plans<sup>12</sup> of the wicked,<sup>13</sup>

but pleasant words<sup>14</sup> are pure.<sup>15</sup>

**15:27** The one who is greedy for gain<sup>16</sup> troubles<sup>17</sup> his household,<sup>18</sup>

but whoever hates bribes<sup>19</sup> will live.

**15:28** The heart of the righteous considers<sup>20</sup> how<sup>21</sup> to answer,<sup>22</sup>

but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.<sup>23</sup>

**15:29** The LORD is far<sup>24</sup> from the wicked, but he hears<sup>25</sup> the prayer of the righteous.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **sn** The proverb says essentially the same thing as 11:14, but differently.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “joy to the man” or “the man has joy.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “in the answer of his mouth” (so ASV); NASB “in an apt answer.” The term “mouth” is a metonymy of cause for what he says. But because the parallelism is loosely synonymous, the answer given here must be equal to the good word spoken in season. So it is an answer that is proper or fitting.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “in its season.” To say the right thing at the right time is useful; to say the right thing at the wrong time is counterproductive.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** There is disagreement over the meaning of the term translated “upward.” The verse is usually taken to mean that “upward” is a reference to physical life and well-being (cf. NCV), and “going down to Sheol” is a reference to physical death, that is, the grave, because the concept of immortality is said not to appear in the book of Proverbs. The proverb then would mean that the wise live long and healthy lives. But W. McKane argues (correctly) that “upwards” in contrast to Sheol, does not fit the ways of describing the worldly pattern of conduct and that it is only intelligible if taken as a reference to immortality (*Proverbs* [OTL], 480). The translations “upwards” and “downwards” are not found in the LXX. This has led some commentators to speculate that these terms were not found in the original, but were added later, after the idea of immortality became prominent. However, this is mere speculation.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “to the wise [man],” because the form is masculine.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The term לָמַעַן (*lema’an*, “in order to”) introduces a purpose clause; the path leads upward in order to turn the wise away from Sheol.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “to turn from Sheol downward”; cf. NAB “the nether world below.”

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The “proud” have to be understood here in contrast to the widow, and their “house” has to be interpreted in contrast to the widow’s territory. The implication may be that the “proud” make their gain from the needy, and so God will set the balance right.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** The LORD administers justice in his time. The LORD champions the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the needy. These people were often the prey of the proud, who would take and devour their houses and lands (e.g., 1 Kgs 21; Prov 16:19; Isa 5:8-10).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “an abomination of the LORD.” The term יָרָה (*hah*, “the LORD”) functions as a subjective genitive: “the LORD abhors.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The noun מַחְשָׁבוֹת (*makhshavot*) means “thoughts” (so KJV, NIV, NLT), from the verb חָשַׁב (*khashav*, “to think; to reckon; to devise”). So these are intentions, what is being planned (cf. NAB “schemes”).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The word רַע (“evil; wicked”) is a genitive of source or subjective genitive, meaning the plans that the wicked devise – “wicked plans.”

<sup>14</sup> **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 (נָאֵם, *no’am*), however, are pure (to him). What is pleasant is delightful, lovely, enjoyable.

<sup>15</sup> **tc** The MT simply has “but pleasant words are pure” (Heb “but pure [plural] are the words of pleasantness”). Some English versions add “to him” to make the connection to the first part (cf. NAB, 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.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “the one who gains.” The phrase בּוֹעֵץ בָּטָא (*boeseakh batsa’*) 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.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** The participle “troubles” (עָבַר, *’okher*) can have the connotation of making things difficult for the family, or completely ruining the family (cf. NAB). In Josh 7:1 Achan took some of the “banned things” and was put to death: Because he “troubled Israel,” the LORD would “trouble” him (take his life, Josh 7:25).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “his house.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “gifts” (so KJV). Gifts can be harmless enough, but in a setting like this the idea is that the “gift” is in exchange for some “profit [or, gain].” Therefore they are bribes (cf. ASV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT), and to be hated or rejected. Abram, for example, would not take anything that the king of Sodom had to offer, “lest [he] say, ‘I have made Abram rich’” (Gen 14:22-24).

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The verb יָחַד (*vehgeh*) means “to muse; to meditate; to consider; to study.” It also involves planning, such as with the wicked “planning” a vain thing (Ps 2:1, which is contrasted with the righteous who “meditate” in the law [1:2]).

<sup>21</sup> **tn** The word “how” is supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>22</sup> **tc** The LXX reads: “the hearts of the righteous meditate faithfulness.”

**sn** The advice of the proverb is to say less but better things. The wise – here called the righteous – are cautious in how they respond to others. They think about it (heart = mind) before speaking.

<sup>23</sup> **sn** The form is plural. What they say (the “mouth” is a metonymy of cause) is any range of harmful things.

<sup>24</sup> **sn** To say that the LORD is “far” from the wicked is to say that he has made himself unavailable to their appeal – he does not answer them. This motif is used by David throughout Psalm 22 for the problem of unanswered prayer – “Why are you far off?”

<sup>25</sup> **sn** The verb “hear” (שָׁמַע, *shama*) has more of the sense of “respond to” in this context. If one “listens to the voice of the LORD,” for example, it means that he obeys the LORD. If one wishes God to “hear his prayer,” it means he wishes God to answer it.

<sup>26</sup> **sn** God’s response to prayer is determined by the righteousness of the one who prays. A prayer of repentance by the wicked is an exception, for by it they would become the righteous (C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 316).

**15:30** A bright look<sup>1</sup> brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the body.<sup>2</sup>  
**15:31** The person<sup>3</sup> who hears the reproof that leads to life<sup>4</sup> is at home<sup>5</sup> among the wise.<sup>6</sup>  
**15:32** The one who refuses correction despises himself,<sup>7</sup> but whoever hears<sup>8</sup> reproof acquires understanding.<sup>9</sup>  
**15:33** The fear of the LORD provides wise instruction,<sup>10</sup> and before honor comes humility.<sup>11</sup>  
**16:1** The intentions of the heart<sup>12</sup> belong to a man,<sup>13</sup> but the answer of the tongue<sup>14</sup> comes from<sup>15</sup>

the LORD.<sup>16</sup>  
**16:2** All a person's ways<sup>17</sup> seem right<sup>18</sup> in his own opinion.<sup>19</sup> but the LORD evaluates<sup>20</sup> the motives.<sup>21</sup>  
**16:3** Commit<sup>22</sup> your works<sup>23</sup> to the LORD, and your plans will be established.<sup>24</sup>  
**16:4** The LORD works<sup>25</sup> everything for its own ends<sup>26</sup> – even the wicked for the day of disaster.<sup>27</sup>

**1 tc** The LXX has “the eye that sees beautiful things.” D. W. Thomas suggests pointing נִמְרוֹ (*m<sup>o</sup>ror*) as a Hophal participle, “a fine sight cheers the mind” (“Textual and Philological Notes,” 205). But little is to be gained from this change.

**tn 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.

**2 tn Heb** “makes fat the bones”; NAB “invigorates the bones.” The word “bones” is a metonymy of subject, the bones representing the whole body. The idea of “making fat” signifies by comparison (hypocatastasis) with fat things that the body will be healthy and prosperous (e.g., Prov 17:22; 25:25; Gen 45:27-28; and Isa 52:7-8). Good news makes the person feel good in body and soul.

**3 tn Heb** “ear” (so KJV, NRSV). The term “ear” is a synecdoche of part (= ear) for the whole (= person).

**4 tn** “Life” is an objective genitive: Reproof brings or preserves life. Cf. NIV “life-giving rebuke”; NLT “constructive criticism.”

**5 tn Heb** “lodges.” This means to live with, to be at home with.

**6 sn** The proverb is one full sentence; it affirms that a teachable person is among the wise.

**7 sn** To “despise oneself” means to reject oneself as if there was little value. The one who ignores discipline is not interested in improving himself.

**8 tn Or** “heeds” (so NAB, NIV); NASB “listens to.”

**9 tn** The Hebrew text reads לֵב קוֹנֵה לֵב (*qoneh lev*), the participle קוֹנֵה (*qanah*, “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.

**10 tn Heb** “[is] instruction of wisdom” (KJV and NASB similar). The noun translated “wisdom” is an attributive genitive: “wise instruction.”

**sn** 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.

**11 tn Heb** “[is] humility” (so KJV). The second clause is a parallel idea in that it stresses how one thing leads to another – humility to honor. Humble submission in faith to the LORD brings wisdom and honor.

**12 tn Heb** “plans of the heart” (so ASV, NASB, NIV). The phrase לֵב מְעַבְרֵי לֵב (*ma'arkeh-lev*) means “the arrangements of the mind.”

**sn** 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.

**13 tn Heb** “[are] to a man.”

**14 tn** Here “the tongue” is a metonymy of cause in which the instrument of speech is put for what is said: the answer expressed.

**15 sn** The contrasting prepositions enhance the contrasting ideas – the ideas belong to people, but the words come from the LORD.

**16 sn** There are two ways this statement can be taken: (1) what one intends to say and what one actually says are the same, or (2) what one actually says differs from what the person intended to say. The second view fits the contrast better. The proverb then is giving a glimpse of how God even confounds the wise. When someone is trying to speak [“answer” in the book seems to refer to a verbal answer] before others, the LORD directs the words according to his sovereign will.

**17 tn Heb** “ways of a man.”

**18 sn** The Hebrew term translated “right” (*zak*) means “innocent” (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.

**19 tn Heb** “in his eyes.”

**20 tn** The figure (a hypocatastasis) of “weighing” signifies “evaluation” (e.g., Exod 5:8; 1 Sam 2:3; 16:7; Prov 21:2; 24:12). There may be an allusion to the Egyptian belief of weighing the heart after death to determine righteousness. But in Hebrew thought it is an ongoing evaluation as well, not merely an evaluation after death.

**21 tn Heb** “spirits” (so KJV, ASV). This is a metonymy for the motives, the intentions of the heart (e.g., 21:2 and 24:2).

**sn** Humans deceive themselves rather easily and so appear righteous in their own eyes, but the proverb says that God evaluates motives and so he alone can determine if the person's ways are innocent.

**22 tc** The MT reads גָּל (*gol*, “commit”) from the root גָּלַגַּל (*galal*, “to roll”). The LXX and Tg. Prov 16:3 have “reveal” as if the root were גָּלַגַּל (*galah*, “to reveal”).

**tn Heb** “roll.” The verb לָגַל (“to commit”) is from the root גָּלַגַּל (“to roll”). The figure of rolling (an implied comparison or hypocatastasis), as in rolling one's burdens on the LORD, is found also in Pss 22:8 [9]; 37:5; and 55:22. It portrays complete dependence on the LORD. This would be accomplished with a spirit of humility and by means of diligent prayer, but the plan must also have God's approval.

**23 tn** The suffix on the plural noun would be a subjective genitive: “the works you are doing,” or here, “the works that you want to do.”

**24 tn** The syntax of the second clause shows that there is subordination: The *vav* וַיִּכְנֹעַ (*v<sup>y</sup>ikonu*) coming after the imperative of the first clause expresses that this clause is the purpose or result. People should commit their works in order that the LORD may establish them. J. H. Greenstone says, “True faith relieves much anxiety and smooths many perplexities” (*Proverbs*, 172).

**25 sn** The Hebrew verb translated “works” (פָּעַל, *pa'al*) means “to work out; to bring about; to accomplish.” It is used of God's sovereign control of life (e.g., Num 23:23; Isa 26:12).

**26 tn Heb** “for its answer.” The term לַמַּאֲנֵהוּ (*lamma'anehu*) has been taken to mean either “for his purpose” or “for its answer.” The Hebrew word is מַאֲנֵה (*ma'aneh*, “answer”) and נֹתֵן לַמַּאֲנֵה (*l<sup>o</sup>ma'an*, “purpose”). So the suffix likely refers to “everything” (כֹּל, *kol*). God ensures that everyone's actions and the consequences of those actions correspond – certainly the wicked for the day of calamity. In God's order there is just retribution for every act.

**27 sn** This is an example of synthetic parallelism (“A, what's more B”). The A-line affirms a truth, and the B-line expands on it with a specific application about the wicked – whatever disaster comes their way is an appropriate correspondent for their life.

16:5 The LORD abhors<sup>1</sup> every arrogant person,<sup>2</sup> rest assured<sup>3</sup> that they will not go unpunished.<sup>4</sup>  
 16:6 Through loyal love and truth<sup>5</sup> iniquity is appeased,<sup>6</sup> through fearing the LORD<sup>7</sup> one avoids<sup>8</sup> evil.<sup>9</sup>  
 16:7 When a person's<sup>10</sup> ways are pleasing to the LORD,<sup>11</sup> he<sup>12</sup> even reconciles his enemies to

himself<sup>13</sup>  
 16:8 Better to have a little with righteousness<sup>14</sup> than to have abundant income without justice.<sup>15</sup>  
 16:9 A person<sup>16</sup> plans his course,<sup>17</sup> but the LORD directs<sup>18</sup> his steps.<sup>19</sup>  
 16:10 The divine verdict<sup>20</sup> is in the words<sup>21</sup> of the king, his pronouncements<sup>22</sup> must not act treacherously<sup>23</sup> against justice.  
 16:11 Honest scales and balances<sup>24</sup> are from the LORD;

**1 tn** Heb “an abomination of the LORD.” The term יהוה (y<sup>h</sup>hvhah, “the LORD”) is a subjective genitive: “the LORD abhors.”

**2 tn** Heb “every proud of heart”; NIV “all the proud of heart.” “Heart” is the genitive of specification; the phrase is talking about people who have proud hearts, whose ideas are arrogant. These are people who set themselves presumptuously against God (e.g., 2 Chr 26:16; Ps 131:1; Prov 18:12).

**3 tn** Heb “hand to hand.” This idiom means “you can be assured” (e.g., Prov 11:21).

**4 tc** The LXX has inserted two couplets here: “The beginning of a good way is to do justly, // and it is more acceptable with 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).

**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 (tapeinosis) to stress first that they will certainly be punished; those who humble themselves before God in faith will not be punished.

**5 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.

**6 tn** Heb “is atoned”; KJV “is purged”; NAB “is expiated.” The verb is from כָּפַר (kafar, “to atone; to expiate; to pacify; to appease”; HALOT 493-94 s.v. כָּפַר). This root should not be confused with the identically spelled Homonym כָּבַר (kafar, “to cover over”; HALOT 494 s.v. כָּבַר). Atonement in the OT expiated sins, it did not merely cover them over (cf. NLT). C. H. Toy explains the meaning by saying it affirms that 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 against one’s sin.

**7 tn** Heb “fear of the LORD.” The term יהוה (y<sup>h</sup>hvhah, “the LORD”) functions as an objective genitive: “fearing the LORD.”

**8 tn** Heb “turns away from”; NASB “keeps away from.”

**9 sn** The Hebrew word translated “evil” (רַע, ra’) 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.

**10 tn** Heb “ways of a man.”

**11 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.

**12 tn** 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).

**13 tn** Heb “even his enemies he makes to be at peace with him.”

**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 Amenemope 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 כָּוַן (kwn, “to establish; to confirm”) with צִדֵּק (tsa’ad, “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 קֶשֶׁם (qesem) 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 oracular sayings (קֶשֶׁם, qesem, 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 qesem 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.

all the weights<sup>1</sup> in the bag are his handiwork.

**16:12** Doing wickedness<sup>2</sup> is an abomination to kings, because a throne<sup>3</sup> is established in righteousness.

**16:13** The delight of kings<sup>4</sup> is righteous counsel,<sup>5</sup> and they love the one who speaks<sup>6</sup> uprightly.<sup>7</sup>

**16:14** A king's wrath<sup>8</sup> is like<sup>9</sup> a messenger of death,<sup>10</sup> but a wise person appeases it.<sup>11</sup>

**16:15** In the light of the king's face<sup>12</sup> there is life, and his favor is like the clouds<sup>13</sup> of the spring rain.<sup>14</sup>

**1** tn Heb "stones."

**2** sn The "wickedness" mentioned here (רָשָׁע, *resha'*) might better be understood as a criminal act, for the related word "wicked" can also mean the guilty criminal. If a king is trying to have a righteous administration, he will detest any criminal acts.

**3** tn The "throne" represents the administration, or the decisions made from the throne by the king, and so the word is a metonymy of adjunct (cf. NLT "his rule").

**4** tn The MT has the plural, even though the verb "loves" is masculine singular. The ancient versions and two Hebrew mss read "a king."

**5** tn Heb "lips of righteousness"; cf. NAB, NIV "honest lips." The genitive "righteousness" functions as an attributive adjective. The term "lips" is a metonymy of cause for what is said: "righteous speech" or "righteous counsel."

**6** tn The MT has the singular participle followed by the plural adjective (which is here a substantive). The editors of BHS wish to follow the ancient versions in making the participle plural, "those who speak uprightly."

**7** sn The verse is talking about righteous kings, of course – they love righteousness and not flattery. In this proverb "righteous" and "upright" referring to what is said means "what is right and straight," i.e., the truth (cf. NCV).

**8** sn This proverb introduces the danger of becoming a victim of the king's wrath (cf. CEV "if the king becomes angry, someone may die"). A wise person knows how to pacify the unexpected and irrational behavior of a king. The proverb makes the statement, and then gives the response to the subject.

**9** 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.

**10** tn The expression uses an implied comparison, comparing "wrath" to a messenger because it will send a message. The qualification is "death," an objective genitive, meaning the messenger will bring death, or the message will be about death. E.g., 1 Kgs 2:25, 29-34 and 46. Some have suggested a comparison with the two messengers of Baal to the god Mot ("Death") in the Ugaritic tablets (H. L. Ginsberg, "Baal's Two Messengers," BASOR 95 [1944]: 25-30). If there is an allusion, it is a very slight one. The verse simply says that the king's wrath threatens death.

**11** tn The verb is כָּפַר (*kapar*), which means "to pacify; to appease" and "to atone; to expiate" in Levitical passages. It would take a wise person to know how to calm or pacify the wrath of a king – especially in the ancient Near East.

**12** tn Heb "the light of the face of the king." This expression is a way of describing the king's brightened face, his delight in what is taking place. This would mean life for those around him.

**13** sn The proverb is the antithesis of 16:14.

**13** tn Heb "cloud."

**14** tn Heb "latter rain" (so KJV, ASV). The favor that this expression represents is now compared to the cloud of rain that comes with the "latter" rain or harvest rain. The point is that

**16:16** How much better it is to acquire<sup>15</sup> wisdom than gold; to acquire understanding is more desirable<sup>16</sup> than silver.

**16:17** The highway<sup>17</sup> of the upright is to turn<sup>18</sup> away from evil; the one who guards<sup>19</sup> his way safeguards his life.<sup>20</sup>

**16:18** Pride<sup>21</sup> goes<sup>22</sup> before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.<sup>23</sup>

**16:19** It is better to be lowly in spirit<sup>24</sup> with the afflicted than to share the spoils<sup>25</sup> with the proud.

the rain cloud was necessary for the successful harvest; likewise the king's pleasure will ensure the success and the productivity of the people under him. E.g., also Psalm 72:15-17; the prosperity of the land is portrayed as a blessing on account of the ideal king.

**15** tn The form קָנָה (*qānōh*) is an infinitive; the Greek version apparently took it as a participle, and the Latin as an imperative – both working with an unpointed קָנָה, the letter ה (he) being unexpected in the form if it is an infinitive construct (the parallel clause has קָנוּת [qānōt] for the infinitive, but the ancient versions also translate that as either a participle or an imperative).

**16** tn The form is a Niphal participle, masculine singular. If it is modifying "understanding" it should be a feminine form. If it is to be translated, it would have to be rendered "and to acquire understanding is to be chosen more than silver" (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). Many commentaries consider it superfluous. NIV and NCV simply have "to choose understanding rather than silver!"

**17** sn The point of righteous living is made with the image of a highway, a raised and well-graded road (a hypocatastasis, implying a comparison between a highway and the right way of living).

**18** tn The form סוּר (*sur*) is a Qal infinitive; it indicates that a purpose of the righteous life is to turn away from evil. "Evil" here has the sense of sinful living. So the first line asserts that the well-cared-for life avoids sin.

**19** sn The second half of the verse uses two different words for "guard"; this one is נָצַר (*notser*) "the one who guards his way," and the first is שָׁמַר (*shomer*) "the one who guards his life" (the order of the words is reversed in the translation). The second colon then explains further the first (synthetic parallelism), because to guard one's way preserves life.

**20** tc The LXX adds three lines after 17a and one after 17b: "The paths of life turn aside from evils, and the ways of righteousness are length of life; he who receives instruction will be prosperous, and he who regards reproofs will be made wise; he who guards his ways preserves his soul, and he who loves his life will spare his mouth."

**21** sn The two lines of this proverb are synonymous parallelism, and so there are parasynonyms. "Pride" is paired with "haughty spirit" ("spirit" being a genitive of specification); and "destruction" is matched with "a tottering, falling."

**22** tn Heb "[is] before destruction."

**23** sn Many proverbs have been written in a similar way to warn against the inevitable disintegration and downfall of pride. W. McKane records an Arabic proverb: "The nose is in the heavens, the seat is in the mire" (*Proverbs* [OTL], 490).

**24** tn Heb "low of spirit"; KJV "of an humble spirit." This expression describes the person who is humble and submissive before the LORD and therefore inoffensive. It is always necessary to have a humble spirit, whether there is wealth or not.

**25** tn Heb "than to divide plunder." The word "plunder" implies that the wealth taken by the proud was taken violently and wrongfully – spoils are usually taken in warfare. R. N. Whybray translates it with "loot" (*Proverbs* [CBC], 95). The proud are in rebellion against God, overbearing and oppressive. One should never share the "loot" with them.

**16:20** The one who deals wisely<sup>1</sup> in a matter<sup>2</sup> will find success,<sup>3</sup> and blessed<sup>4</sup> is the one who trusts in the LORD.<sup>5</sup>

**16:21** The one who is wise in heart<sup>6</sup> is called<sup>7</sup> discerning, and kind speech<sup>8</sup> increases persuasiveness.<sup>9</sup>

**16:22** Insight<sup>10</sup> is like<sup>11</sup> a life-giving fountain<sup>12</sup> to the one who possesses it, but folly leads to the discipline of fools.<sup>13</sup>

**16:23** A wise person's heart<sup>14</sup> makes his speech wise<sup>15</sup> and it adds persuasiveness<sup>16</sup> to his words.<sup>17</sup>

**16:24** Pleasant words are like<sup>18</sup> a honeycomb,<sup>19</sup> sweet to the soul and healing<sup>20</sup> to the bones.

**16:25** There is a way that seems right to a person,<sup>21</sup> but its end is the way that leads to death.<sup>22</sup>

**16:26** A laborer's<sup>23</sup> appetite<sup>24</sup> works on his behalf,<sup>25</sup>

for his hunger<sup>26</sup> urges him to work.<sup>27</sup>

**16:27** A wicked scoundrel<sup>28</sup> digs up<sup>29</sup> evil, and his slander<sup>30</sup> is like a scorching fire.<sup>31</sup>

**1 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.

**2 tn** Or "he who gives heed to a word," that is, "who listens to instruction" (cf. NIV, NLT).

**3 tn** *Heb* "good" (so KJV, ASV).

**4 tn** Although traditionally this word is translated "happy" (cf. KJV, ASV, NAB, 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).

**5 tn** *Heb* "and the one who trusts in the LORD - blessed is he."

**6 tn** *Heb* "wise of heart" (so NRSV).

**7 tn** *Heb* "to the wise of heart it will be called discerning." This means that the wise of heart, those who make wise decisions ("heart" being the metonymy), will gain a reputation of being the discerning ones.

**8 tn** *Heb* "sweetness of lips." The term "lips" is a metonymy of cause, meaning what is said. It is a genitive of specification. The idea of "sweetness" must be gracious and friendly words. The teaching will be well-received because it is both delightful and persuasive (cf. NIV "pleasant words promote instruction").

**9 tn** *Heb* "teaching" or "receptivity"; KJV "learning"; NIV "instruction."

**10 tn** The Hebrew noun *שֵׂכֶל* (*sekhel*, "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.

**11 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.

**12 tn** *Heb* "fountain of life." The point of the metaphor is that like a fountain this wisdom will be a constant provision for living in this world.

**13 tn** *Heb* "the discipline of fools [is] folly." The "discipline" (*מוּסָר*, *musar*) in this proverb is essentially a requital for sin (hence "punishment," so NIV, NCV, NRSV); discipline which is intended to correct is normally rejected and despised by fools. So the line is saying that there is very little that can be done for or with the fool (cf. NLT "discipline is wasted on fools").

**14 tn** Or "mind" (cf. NCV, NRSV, NLT).

**15 tn** *Heb* "makes wise his mouth," with "mouth" being a metonymy of cause for what is said: "speech."

**16 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.

**17 tn** *Heb* "to his lips." The term "lips" functions as a metonymy of cause for what is said.

**18 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.

**19 sn** The metaphor of honey or the honeycomb is used elsewhere in scripture, notably Ps 19:10 [11]. Honey was used in Israel as a symbol of the delightful and healthy products of the land - "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Deut 6:3).

**20 sn** Two predicates are added to qualify the metaphor: The pleasant words are "sweet" and "healing." "Soul" includes in it the appetites, physical and spiritual; and so sweet to the "soul" would summarize all the ways pleasant words give pleasure. "Bones" is a metonymy of subject, the bony framework representing the whole person, body and soul. Pleasant words, like honey, will enliven and encourage the whole person. One might recall, in line with the imagery here, how Jonathan's eyes brightened when he ate from the honeycomb (1 Sam 14:27).

**21 tn** *Heb* "There is a way that is right before a man [to the face of a man]."

**22 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." This proverb is identical to 14:12.

**23 sn** The word for "laborer" and "labors" emphasizes the drudgery and the agony of work (*אָמַל*, *'amal*). For such boring drudgery motivations are necessary for its continuance, and hunger is the most effective. The line is saying that the appetites are working as hard as the laborer.

**24 tn** *Heb* "soul." The term *נֶפֶשׁ* (*nefesh*) here means "appetite," functioning as a metonymy; the "inner soul" of a person representing his appetite (BDB 660 s.v. 5a; see, e.g., Pss 63:6; 107:9; Prov 13:25; 16:24; 27:7; Isa 56:11; 58:10; Jer 50:19; Ezek 7:19). This is suggested by the parallelism with "hunger."

**25 tn** *Heb* "labors for him" (so NAB).

**26 tn** *Heb* "his mouth" (so KJV, NAB). The term "mouth" is a metonymy for hunger or eating. The idea of the proverb is clear - the need to eat drives people to work.

**27 tc** The LXX has apparently misread *פִּיְהוּ* (*pihu*) and inserted the idea of "ruin" for the laborer: "he drives away ruin." This influenced the Syriac to some degree; however, its first clause understood "suffering" instead of "labor": "the person who causes suffering suffers."

**sn** This theme is taught elsewhere (e.g., Eccl 6:7; Eph 4:28; 6:7; 2 Thess 3:10-12).

**28 tn** *Heb* "a man of belial." This phrase means "wicked scoundrel." Some translate "worthless" (so ASV, NASB, CEV), but the phrase includes deep depravity and wickedness (C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 125-26).

**29 tn** *Heb* "digs up" (so NASB). The "wicked scoundrel" finds out about evil and brings it to the surface (Prov 26:27; Jer 18:20). What he digs up he spreads by speech.

**30 tn** *Heb* "on his lips" (so NAB) The term "lips" is a metonymy of cause. To say that "evil" is on his lips means that he talks about the evil he has dug up.

**31 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 ablaze with misanthropy" (*Proverbs* [OTL], 494).

16:28 A perverse person<sup>1</sup> spreads dissen-  
sion,  
and a gossip separates the closest  
friends.<sup>2</sup>  
16:29 A violent person<sup>3</sup> entices<sup>4</sup> his neigh-  
bor,  
and leads him down a path that is ter-  
rible.<sup>5</sup>  
16:30 The one who winks his eyes<sup>6</sup> de-  
vises perverse things,  
and<sup>7</sup> one who compresses his lips<sup>8</sup> brings  
about<sup>9</sup> evil.  
16:31 Gray hair is like<sup>10</sup> a crown of glory;<sup>11</sup>  
it is attained<sup>12</sup> in the path of righteous-  
ness.<sup>13</sup>

**1 tn** Heb “a man of perverse things”; NAB “an intriguer.” This refers to someone who destroys lives. The parallelism suggests that he is a “slanderer” or “gossip” – one who whispers and murmurs (18:8; 26:20, 22).

**2 tn** The term אָלוֹף (*aluf*) refers to a “friend” or “an intimate associate.” The word has other possible translations, including “tame” or “docile” when used of animals. Rashi, a Jewish scholar who lived A.D. 1040-1105, took it in the later sense of “prince,” saying that such speech alienates the Prince, namely God. But that is a forced interpretation of the line.

**3 tn** Heb “man of violence.” He influences his friends to-ward violence. The term חָמָס (*khamas*, “violence”) often refers to sins against society, social injustices, and crimes.

**4 tn** The verb in the first colon is the Piel imperfect, and the form in the second is the Hiphil perfect; the first is a habitual imperfect, and the second a gnomic perfect. The first verb, “to persuade, seduce, entice,” is the metonymy of cause; the second verb, “to lead,” is the metonymy of effect, the two together forming the whole process.

**5 tn** Heb “not good” (so KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV); NLT “a harmful path.” The expression “a way that is not good” is an example of tautology – a deliberate understatement for the sake of emphasis: It is terrible. This refers to crime and violence. The understatement is used to warn people away from villains and to remind them to follow a good path.

**6 tn** The participle נָצְהָה (*otseh*) describes one as shutting his eyes (cf. KJV, ASV). This could mean simply “closing the eyes,” or it could refer to “winking” (so many English versions). The proverb is saying that facial expressions often reveal if someone is plotting evil (e.g., 6:13-14).

**7 tn** The conjunction “and” does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied by the synonymous parallelism.

**8 tn** The participle גָּרַס (*gorets*) indicates that the person involved is pinching, compressing, or biting his lips (cf. NIV “purses his lips”).

**9 tn** The verb is a Piel perfect; it means “complete, finish, bring to an end.” The two cola may form the whole process: The first line has “to devise” evil, and the second has “he completes” evil. BDB, however, classifies this use of the Piel as “to accomplish in thought” meaning “to determine” something (BDB 478 s.v. קָדַד 1f). In that case the two lines would have synonymous ideas, i.e., using facial expressions to plan evil actions.

**10 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.

**11 sn** The proverb presents the ideal, for it is not concerned with old people who may be evil. The KJV tried to qualify the interpretation by making the second half of the verse a conditional clause (“if it be found in the way of righteousness”). This is acceptable but unnecessary. The book of Proverbs is simply laying out the equity of longevity for righteousness and premature death for wicked people. In this line “gray hair” is a metonymy of adjunct/effect, representing old age; and the “glorious crown” (taking the genitive as attributive) provides a fitting metaphor to compare the hair on the head with a crown.

**12 tn** Heb “it is found” (so NASB) or “it will be found.”

**13 sn** While the proverb presents a general observation,

16:32 Better to be slow to anger<sup>14</sup> than to  
be a mighty warrior,  
and one who controls his temper<sup>15</sup> is bet-  
ter than<sup>16</sup> one who captures a city.<sup>17</sup>  
16:33 The dice are thrown into the lap,<sup>18</sup>  
but their every decision<sup>19</sup> is from the  
LORD.<sup>20</sup>  
17:1 Better is a dry crust of bread<sup>21</sup> where  
there is quietness<sup>22</sup>  
than a house full of feasting with strife.<sup>23</sup>  
17:2 A servant who acts wisely<sup>24</sup> will rule

there is a commendable lesson about old people who can look back on a long walk with God through life and can anticipate 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” (וּמֹשֵׁל בְּרוּחֵוּ, *umoshel b<sup>e</sup>rukho*), meaning “controls his temper.” This means the person has the emotions under control and will not “fly off the handle” quickly.

**15 tn** Heb “who rules his spirit” (so NASB).

**16 tn** The phrase “is better than” does not appear in this line in the Hebrew text, but is implied by the parallelism.

**17 sn** The saying would have had greater impact when military prowess was held in high regard. It is harder, and therefore better, to control one’s passions than to do some great exploit on the battlefield.

**18 tn** Heb “the lot is cast.” Because the ancient practice of “casting lots” is unfamiliar to many modern readers, the imagery has been updated to “throwing dice.”

**sn** The proverb concerns the practice of seeking divine leading through casting lots. For a similar lesson, see Amenemope (18, 19:16-17; in ANET 423).

**19 tn** Heb “all its decision.”

**20 sn** The point concerns seeking God’s will through the practice. The Lord gives guidance in decisions that are submitted to him.

**21 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.

**22 tn** Heb “and quietness in it”; the construction functions as a circumstantial clause: “in which there is quietness” or “with quietness.”

**sn** The Hebrew word means “quietness” or “ease.” It represents a place where there can be carefree ease because of the sense of peace and security. The Greek rendering suggests that those translators read it as “peace.” Even if the fare is poor, this kind of setting is to be preferred.

**23 tn** The house is described as being full of “sacrifices of strife” (זִבְחֵי רִיב, *zivkhi-riv*). The use of “sacrifices” suggests a connection with the temple (as in 7:14) in which the people may have made their sacrifices and had a large amount meat left over. It is also possible that the reference is simply to a sumptuous meal (Deut 12:15; Isa 34:6; Ezek 39:17). It would be rare for Israelites to eat meat apart from festivals, however. In the construction the genitive could be classified as a genitive of effect, the feast in general “bringing about strife,” or it could simply be an attributive genitive, “a feast characterized by strife.” Abundance often brings deterioration of moral and ethical standards as well as an increase in envy and strife.

**24 sn** The setting is in the ancient world where a servant rarely advanced beyond his or her station in life. But there are notable exceptions (e.g., Gen 15:3 where the possibility is mentioned, 1 Chr 2:35 where it changed through marriage, and 2 Sam 16:1-4; 19:24-30, with the story of Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth). This proverb focuses on a servant who is wise, one who uses all his abilities effectively – a Joseph figure.



over<sup>1</sup> an heir<sup>2</sup> who behaves shamefully,<sup>3</sup> and will share the inheritance along with the relatives.<sup>4</sup>

17:3 The crucible<sup>5</sup> is for refining<sup>6</sup> silver and the furnace<sup>7</sup> is for gold, likewise<sup>8</sup> the LORD tests<sup>9</sup> hearts.

17:4 One who acts wickedly<sup>10</sup> pays attention to evil counsel,<sup>11</sup> a liar listens<sup>12</sup> to a malicious tongue.<sup>13</sup>

17:5 The one who mocks the poor<sup>14</sup> insults<sup>15</sup> his Creator; whoever rejoices over disaster will not go unpunished.

17:6 Grandchildren<sup>16</sup> are like<sup>17</sup> a crown<sup>18</sup> to the elderly, and the glory<sup>19</sup> of children is their parents.<sup>20</sup>

17:7 Excessive<sup>21</sup> speech<sup>22</sup> is not becoming for a fool;<sup>23</sup>

how much less are lies<sup>24</sup> for a ruler!<sup>25</sup>

17:8 A bribe works like<sup>26</sup> a charm<sup>27</sup> for the one who offers it;<sup>28</sup> in whatever he does<sup>29</sup> he succeeds.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>1</sup> sn The parallelism indicates that “ruling over” and “sharing in the inheritance” means that the disgraceful son will be disinherited.

<sup>2</sup> tn Heb “son.”

<sup>3</sup> tn The form מְבִישׁ (*mevish*) is a Hiphil participle, modifying בֶּן (*ben*). This original heir 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.

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb “in the midst of the brothers”; NIV “as one of the brothers.”

<sup>5</sup> sn The noun מַצְרֵף (*matsref*) means “a place or instrument for refining” (cf. ASV, NASB “the refining 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> sn The term כּוּר (*cur*) describes a “furnace” or “smelting pot.” It can be used figuratively for the beneficial side of affliction (Isa 48:10).

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb “and.” Most English versions treat this as an adverbial (“but”).

<sup>9</sup> sn The participle בּוֹחַ (*bokhen*, “tests”) in this emblematic parallelism takes on the connotations of the crucible and the furnace. When the Lord “tests” human hearts, the test, whatever form it takes, is designed to improve the value of the one being tested. Evil and folly will be removed when such testing takes place.

<sup>10</sup> tn The Hiphil participle מְרַע (*mera*) 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.

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb “to the lip of evil”; ASV, NAB, NASB, NRSV “wicked lips.” The term “lip” is a metonymy of cause for speech (what is said); the term “evil” is an attributive genitive. The same will be 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.

<sup>12</sup> tc The verb מְזַיֵּן (*mezin*) is from זָיַן (*zir*, “to feed”); therefore, the suggested emendation is to take it from אָזַן (*ozen*, “ear”) as a denominative verb, “to give ear; to listen to.” Two Hebrew mss have this variant.

<sup>13</sup> sn Wicked, self-serving people find destructive speech appealing. They should be rebuked and not tolerated (Lev 19:17).

<sup>14</sup> 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 hereby 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.

<sup>15</sup> sn The Hebrew word translated “insults” (מְרַף, *kheref*) 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).

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb “children of children [sons of sons].”

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> tn The noun תִּפְאֵרֶת (*tif'arat*) means “beauty; glory” (BDB 802 s.v.). In this passage “glory” seems to be identified with “glorying; boasting”; so a rendering that children are proud of their parents would be in order. Thus, “glory of children” would be a subjective genitive, the glorying that children do.”

<sup>20</sup> tc The LXX has inserted: “To the faithful belongs the whole world of wealth, but to the unfaithful not an obolus.” It was apparently some popular sentiment at the time.

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb “their fathers.”

<sup>22</sup> tn The word יָתֵר (*yeter*) could be rendered either “arrogant” (cf. NIV) or “excellent” (cf. KJV, NASB; NLT “eloquent”) because the basic idea of the word is “remainder; excess,” from the verb “be left over.” It describes “lofty” speech (arrogant or excellent) that is not suited for the fool. The Greek version, using *pista*, seems to support the idea of “excellent,” and makes a contrast: “words that are excellent do not fit a fool.” The idea of arrogance (NIV) fits if it is taken in the sense of lofty, heightened, or excessive language.

<sup>23</sup> tn “A lip of excess.” The term “lip” is a metonymy for what is said.

<sup>24</sup> sn The “fool” proper, described by the term נָבֵל (*naval*), 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.

<sup>25</sup> tn Heb “speech of falsehood”; NRSV “false speech.”

<sup>26</sup> 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* [OTL], 507). The word describes one as “inclined, generous, noble” (BDB 622 s.v. נָדָב). 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).

<sup>27</sup> tn 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.

<sup>28</sup> tn Heb “a stone of favors”; NAB, NRSV “a magic stone.” The term שֹׁחַד (*shokhad*, “bribe”) could be simply translated as “a gift,” but the second half of the verse says that the one who offers it is successful. At best it could be a gift that opens doors; at worst it is a bribe. The word שֹׁחַד is never used of a disinterested gift, so there is always something of the bribe in it (e.g., Ps 15:5; Isa 1:23). Here it is “a stone that brings favor,” the genitive being the effect or the result of the gift. In other words, it has magical properties and “works like a charm.”

<sup>29</sup> tn Heb “in the eyes of its owner.”

<sup>30</sup> tn Heb “in all that he turns”; NASB, NIV “wherever he turns.”

<sup>31</sup> sn As C. H. Toy points out, the sage is merely affirming a point without making a comment – those who use bribery meet with widespread success (*Proverbs* [ICC], 341). This does not amount to an endorsement of bribery.

17:9 The one who forgives<sup>1</sup> an offense seeks<sup>2</sup> love, but whoever repeats a matter separates close friends.<sup>3</sup>  
 17:10 A rebuke makes a greater impression on<sup>4</sup> a discerning person than a hundred blows on a fool.<sup>5</sup>  
 17:11 An evil person seeks only rebellion,<sup>6</sup> and so<sup>7</sup> a cruel messenger<sup>8</sup> will be sent against him.  
 17:12 It is better for a person to meet<sup>9</sup> a mother bear being robbed of her cubs, than<sup>10</sup> to encounter<sup>11</sup> a fool in his folly.<sup>12</sup>

17:13 As for the one who repays<sup>13</sup> evil for good, evil will not leave<sup>14</sup> his house.<sup>15</sup>  
 17:14 Starting a quarrel<sup>16</sup> is like letting out water;<sup>17</sup> stop it before strife breaks out!<sup>18</sup>  
 17:15 The one who acquits the guilty and the one who condemns the innocent<sup>19</sup> – both of them are an abomination to the LORD.<sup>20</sup>  
 17:16 Of what<sup>21</sup> use is money in the hand of a fool,<sup>22</sup> since he has no intention<sup>23</sup> of acquiring wisdom?<sup>24</sup>  
 17:17 A friend<sup>25</sup> loves at all times,

**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 מְבַקֵּשׁ (*m'vakesh*) 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 it will destroy love and trust (*Proverbs* [OTL], 508-9).

**4 tn** Heb “goes in deeper” (cf. NASB, NRSV). The verb נָחַת (*nakhet*) “to go down; to descend” with the preposition בְּ (*bet*) means “to descend into; to make an impression on” someone.

**5 tn** The form is the Hiphil infinitive of נָחַת (*nakhah*) with the comparative מִן, *min*. The word “fool” then would be an objective genitive – more than blows to/on a fool.

**6 sn** The proverb is set up in a cause and effect relationship. The cause is that evil people seek rebellion. The term מָרִי (*m'ri*) means “rebellion.” It is related to the verb מָרָה (*marah*, “to be contentious; to be rebellious; to be refractory”). BDB 598 s.v. מָרָה translates the line “a rebellious man seeketh only evil” (so NASB).

**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 antithetical just as easily.

**8 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.

**9 tn** Heb “Let a man meet” (so NASB); NLT “It is safer to meet.” The infinitive absolute מִיָּמֵת (*pagosh*, “to meet”) functions as a jussive of advice. The bear meeting a man is less dangerous than a fool in his folly. It could be worded as a “better” saying, but that formula is not found here.

**10 tn** The second colon begins with וְאֵל (*v'al*), “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].”

**11 tn** 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.

**12 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. Loewenstamm, “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.”

**13 tn** The sentence begins with the participle מְשִׁיב (*meshiv*, “the one who repays”). The whole first colon may be taken as an independent nominative absolute, with the formal sentence to follow. Some English versions have made the first colon a condition by supplying “if” (NAB, NIV, TEV, NLT).

**14 tn** The verb מוּשָׁב (*mush*) means “to depart; to remove.” The *Kethib* is a Hiphil, which would yield a meaning of “to take away”; so the *Qere*, which is the Qal, makes more sense in the line.

**15 sn** The proverb does not explain whether God will turn evil back on him directly or whether people will begin to treat him as he treated others.

**16 tn** Heb “the beginning of a quarrel”; TEV, CEV “The start of an argument.”

**17 tn** The verse simply begins with “letting out water.” This phrase is a metaphor, but most English versions have made it a simile (supplying “like” or “as”). R. N. Whybray takes it literally and makes it the subject of the clause: “stealing water starts a quarrel” (*Proverbs* [CBC], 100). However, the verb more likely means “to let out, set free” and not “to steal,” for which there are clearer words.

**sn** The image involves a small leak in a container or cistern that starts to spurt out water. The problem will get worse if it is not stopped. Strife is like that.

**tc** The LXX has “The outpouring of words is the beginning of strife.” This would make it a warning against thoughtless talk.

**18 tn** The temporal clause is formed with the prepositional “before,” the infinitive construct, and the following subjective genitive. The verb גָּלַהּ (*gala*) means “to expose; to lay bare,” and in the Hitpael “to disclose oneself; to break out.”

**19 tn** Heb “he who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous” (so NASB). The first colon uses two Hiphil participles, מְצַדִּיק (*matsdiq*) and מְרַשֵּׁיעַ (*marshia*). The first means “to declare righteous” (a declarative Hiphil), and the second means “to make wicked [or, guilty]” or “to condemn” (i.e., “to declare guilty”). To declare someone righteous who is a guilty criminal, or to condemn someone who is innocent, are both abominations for the Righteous Judge of the whole earth.

**20 tn** Heb “an abomination of the LORD.”

**21 tn** Heb “why this?” The term זֶה (*zeh*) is an enclitic use of the demonstrative pronoun for emphasis: “why ever” would this happen?

**22 sn** The sense seems to be “What good is money” since what the fool needs cannot be bought? The verse is a rhetorical question stating that money would be wasted on a fool.

**23 tn** Heb “there is no heart”; NASB “he has no (+ common TEV) sense”; NLT “has no heart for wisdom.”

**24 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* [OTL], 505).

**25 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

and a relative<sup>1</sup> is born to help in adversity.<sup>2</sup>  
**17:18** The one who lacks wisdom<sup>3</sup> strikes hands in pledge,<sup>4</sup> and puts up financial security<sup>5</sup> for his neighbor.<sup>6</sup>  
**17:19** The one who loves a quarrel loves transgression;<sup>7</sup> whoever builds his gate high seeks destruction.<sup>8</sup>  
**17:20** The one who has a perverse heart<sup>9</sup> does not find good,<sup>10</sup> and the one who is deceitful in speech<sup>11</sup> falls into trouble.  
**17:21** Whoever brings a fool<sup>12</sup> into the world<sup>13</sup> does so<sup>14</sup> to his grief, and the father of a fool has no joy.<sup>15</sup>

thing that brings brothers together (*Proverbs*, 189).

**1** tn Heb "a brother."  
**2** tn Heb "is born for adversity." This is not referring to sibling rivalry but to the loyalty a brother shows during times of calamity. This is not to say that a brother only shows loyalty when there is trouble, nor that he always does in these times (e.g., 18:19, 24; 19:7; 27:10). The true friend is the same as a brotherly relation – in times of greatest need the loyal love is displayed.  
**3** tn Heb "heart"; KJV, ASV "a man void of understanding"; NIV "a man lacking in judgment."  
**4** tn The phrase "in pledge" is supplied for the sake of clarification.  
**5** tn The line uses the participle עֲרַב ('orev) with its cognate accusative עֲרַבָה ('arubah), "who pledges a pledge."  
**6** sn It is foolish to pledge security for someone's loans (e.g., Prov 6:1-5).  
**7** tn Heb "the one who loves transgression the one who loves a quarrel." There is some ambiguity in the first line. The meaning would not differ greatly if either were taken as the subject, but the parallelism suggests that the proverb is about a quarrelsome and arrogant person who loves sin and invites destruction.  
**8** tn Some have taken this second line literally and interpreted it to mean he has built a pretentious house. Probably it is meant to be figurative: The gate is the mouth (the figure would be hypocastasis) and so to make it high is to say lofty things – he brags too much (e.g., 1 Sam 2:3; Prov 18:12; 29:23); cf. NCV, TEV, NLT. C. H. Toy (*Proverbs* [ICC], 348) wishes to emend פִּתְחוֹ ('pitkho, "his gate") to פִּי ('piv, "his mouth"), but that is unnecessary since the idea can be obtained by interpretation.  
**9** tn The verse parallels two descriptions of the wicked person: "crooked/perverse of heart" (genitive of specification), and "turned away in his tongue" (deceitful). The first phrase describes twisted intentions. The second, using the Niphal participle ("one turned away") with "tongue," the metonymy of cause, describes one who has turned away from speaking truth. Cf. NLT "the twisted tongue tumbles into trouble."  
**10** tn The phrase "does not find good" is a figure (tapeinosis) meaning, "will experience calamity." The wicked person can expect trouble ahead.  
**11** tn Heb "tongue"; NIV "whose tongue is deceitful."  
**12** sn Here the Hebrew terms כְּסִיל (k'sil) and נָבֵל (naval) are paired. The first one, which occurs about fifty times in the book, refers to a dullard, whether it be in spiritual, intellectual, or moral matters. The second word, rare in the book, primarily focuses on religious folly – it refers to the practical atheist, the one who lives as if there is no God.  
**13** tn The form simply means "bears" or "gives birth to," but since it is masculine it could be rendered "fathers" (cf. NASB "he who begets a fool"; NIV "To have a fool for a son"). The form for "fool" is masculine, but the proverb is not limited only to male children (cf. NCV "It is sad to have a foolish child").  
**14** tn The phrase "does so" is supplied for the sake of clarification.  
**15** sn Parents of fools, who had hoped for children who

**17:22** A cheerful heart<sup>16</sup> brings good healing,<sup>17</sup> but a crushed spirit<sup>18</sup> dries up the bones.<sup>19</sup>  
**17:23** A wicked person receives a bribe secretly<sup>20</sup> to pervert<sup>21</sup> the ways of justice.  
**17:24** Wisdom is directly in front of<sup>22</sup> the discerning person, but the eyes of a fool run<sup>23</sup> to the ends of the earth.<sup>24</sup>  
**17:25** A foolish child is a grief<sup>25</sup> to his father, and bitterness to the mother who bore him.<sup>26</sup>  
**17:26** It is terrible<sup>27</sup> to punish<sup>28</sup> a righteous person,

would be a credit to the family, find only bitter disappointment (cf. TEV "nothing but sadness and sorrow").  
**16** sn Heb "a heart of rejoicing"; KJV "a merry heart"; NAB, NASB "a joyful heart." This attributive genitive refers to the mind or psyche. A happy and healthy outlook on life brings healing.  
**17** tc The word "healing" is a hapax legomenon; some have suggested changes, such as to Arabic *jihatu* ("face") or גִּיּוּה (g'viah, "body") as in the Syriac and Tg. Prov 17:22, but the MT makes sense as it is and should be retained.  
**18** tn Heb "it causes good a healing." This means it promotes healing.  
**19** sn The "crushed spirit" refers to one who is depressed (cf. NAB "a depressed spirit"). "Crushed" is figurative (an implied comparison) for the idea that one's psyche or will to go on is beaten down by circumstances.  
**20** sn The "bones" figuratively represent the whole body encased in a boney framework (metonymy of subject). "Fat bones" in scripture means a healthy body (3:8; 15:30; 16:24), but "dried up" bones signify unhealthiness and lifelessness (cf. Ezek 37:1-4).  
**21** sn The fact that the "gift" is given secretly (Heb "from the bosom" בְּחֵיבִי, mekheq; so NASB) indicates that it was not proper. Cf. NRSV "a concealed bribe"; TEV, CEV, NLT "secret bribes."  
**22** tn The form לְהַטּוֹת ('lhattot) is the Hiphil infinitive construct of נָתַח (natah), meaning "to thrust away," i.e., to "pervert." This purpose clause clarifies that the receiving of the "gift" is for evil intent.  
**23** tn The verse begins with אֶת־פְּנֵי מְבִין ('et-p'nei mevin), "before the discerning" or "the face of the discerning." The particle אֶת here is simply drawing emphasis to the predicate (IBHS 182-83 §10.3.2b). Cf. NIV "A discerning man keeps wisdom in view."  
**24** tn The term "run" does not appear in the Hebrew text, but is supplied for the sake of clarification.  
**25** sn To say that "the eyes of the fool run to the ends of the earth" means that he has no power to concentrate and cannot focus his attention on anything. The language is hyperbolic. Cf. NCV "the mind of a fool wanders everywhere."  
**26** sn The Hebrew noun means "vexation, anger, grief."  
**27** tn Heb "to the one who bore him." Because the participle is feminine singular in Hebrew, this has been translated as "the mother who bore him."  
**28** tn The proverb is similar to v. 21, 10:1, and 15:20.  
**29** tn Heb "not good." This is an example of tapeinosis – an understatement that implies the worst-case scenario: "it is terrible."  
**30** tn The verb עֲנִישׁ, here a Qal infinitive construct, properly means "to fine" (cf. NAB, NRSV, NLT) but is taken here to mean "to punish" in general. The infinitive functions as the subject of the clause.

and to flog<sup>4</sup> honorable men is wrong.<sup>2</sup>  
**17:27** The truly wise person<sup>3</sup> restrains<sup>4</sup> his words,  
 and the one who stays calm<sup>5</sup> is discerning.  
**17:28** Even a fool who remains silent is considered<sup>6</sup> wise,  
 and the one who holds his tongue is deemed discerning.<sup>7</sup>  
**18:1** One who has isolated himself<sup>8</sup> seeks his own desires;<sup>9</sup>  
 he rejects<sup>10</sup> all sound judgment.  
**18:2** A fool takes no pleasure<sup>11</sup> in understanding  
 but only in disclosing<sup>12</sup> what is on his mind.<sup>13</sup>

**1 tn** The form is the Hiphil infinitive construct from נָכַח (*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.

**3 tn** *Heb* “the one knowing knowledge.” The cognate accusative underscores the meaning of the participle – this is a truly knowledgeable person.

**4 sn** The participle חוֹשֵׁךְ (*khosekh*) means “withholds; restrains; refrains; spares; holds in check,” etc. One who has knowledge speaks carefully.

**5 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.

**6 tn** The imperfect tense here denotes possibility: One who holds his tongue [may be considered] discerning.

**7 tn** The Niphal participle is used in the declarative/estimative sense with stative verbs: “to be discerning” (Qal) becomes “to be declared 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 (*Proverbs* [TOTC], 127). He does not, of course, become wise – he just hides his folly.

**8 tn** The Niphal participle functions substantively and has a reflexive nuance: “one who has separated himself” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). He is not merely anti-social; he is a problem for society since he will defy sound judgment. The Mishnah uses the verse to teach the necessity of being part of a community because people have social responsibilities and need each other (*m. Avot* 2:4).

**9 tn** The MT has “seeks [his own] desire[s].” The translation in the LXX represents a Hebrew *Vorlage* of לְהַאֲזִיחַ (*le’o’azah*) instead of לְהַאֲזִיחַ (*le’o’azah*); this could be translated “seeks his own occasion,” that is, “his own pretext” (C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 354; cf. NAB). The MT makes sense as it stands and the emendation is not really necessary.

**10 tn** *Heb* “breaks out”; NRSV “showing contempt for”; NLT “snarling at.” This individual breaks out in contention against sound judgment. He is in opposition to society (e.g., Prov 17:14; 20:3).

**11 sn** This expression forms an understatement (*tapeinosis*); the opposite is the point – he detests understanding or discernment.

**12 tn** The Hitpael infinitive construct בְּהִגְלוֹת (*b<sup>h</sup>higalot*) functions nominally as the object of the preposition. The term means “reveal, uncover, betray.” So the fool takes pleasure “in uncovering” his heart.

**13 tn** *Heb* “his heart.” This is a metonymy meaning “what is on his mind” (cf. NAB “displaying what he thinks”; NRSV “expressing personal opinion”). This kind of person is in love

**18:3** When a wicked person<sup>14</sup> arrives, contempt<sup>15</sup> shows up with him,  
 and with shame comes<sup>16</sup> a reproach.  
**18:4** The words of a person’s mouth are like<sup>17</sup> deep waters,<sup>18</sup>  
 and<sup>19</sup> the fountain of wisdom<sup>20</sup> is like<sup>21</sup> a flowing brook.<sup>22</sup>  
**18:5** It is terrible<sup>23</sup> to show partiality<sup>24</sup> to the wicked,<sup>25</sup>  
 by depriving<sup>26</sup> a righteous man of justice.

with his own ideas and enjoys spewing them out (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 515). It is the kind of person who would ask a question, not to learn, but to show everyone how clever he is (cf. TEV).

**14 tc** The MT has “a wicked [person].” Many commentators emend the text to הַשֵּׁטַח (*resha*, “wickedness”) which makes better parallelism with “shame” (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 521; R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes* [AB], 112; C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 355; cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV). However, there is no external evidence for this emendation.

**15 sn** “Contempt” (בוז, *buz*) accompanies the wicked; “reproach” (חֶרְפָּה, *kherpah*) goes with shame. This reproach refers to the critical rebukes and taunts of the community against a wicked person.

**16 tn** The term “comes” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity and smoothness.

**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 sn** The metaphor “deep waters” indicates either that the words have an inexhaustible supply or that they are profound.

**19 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, NCV) or (3) formal parallelism. Normally a vav (ו) would begin an antithetical clause; the structure and the ideas suggest that the second colon continues the idea of the first half, but in a parallel way rather than as additional predicates. The metaphors used in the proverb elsewhere describe the wise.

**20 sn** This is an implied comparison (*hypocatastasis*), the fountain of wisdom being the person who speaks. The Greek version has “fountain of life” instead of “wisdom,” probably influenced from 10:11.

**21 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.

**22 sn** The point of this metaphor is that the wisdom is a continuous source of refreshing and beneficial ideas.

**23 tn** *Heb* “not good.” This is a figure known as *tapeinosis*, a deliberate understatement to emphasize a worst-case scenario: “it is terrible!”

**24 tn** The idiom “lifting up the face of” (שִׁיתָ פָּנֶיךָ, *s<sup>e</sup>et p<sup>h</sup>ene*) 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 נָסַח; (*nasa*’), which functions as the subject of the clause.

**25 tn** Or “the guilty,” since in the second colon “righteous” can also be understood in contrast as “innocent” (cf. NRSV, TEV, NLT).

**26 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 לְהַטּוֹת (*le’hatot*) may serve either (1) as result, “showing partiality...so that the righteous are turned away,” or (2) as expegetical 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<sup>1</sup> enter into strife,<sup>2</sup> and his mouth invites<sup>3</sup> a flogging.<sup>4</sup>  
 18:7 The mouth of a fool is his ruin, and his lips are a snare for his life.<sup>5</sup>  
 18:8 The words of a gossip<sup>6</sup> are like choice morsels;<sup>7</sup> they go down into the person's innermost being.<sup>8</sup>  
 18:9 The one who<sup>9</sup> is slack<sup>10</sup> in his work is a brother<sup>11</sup> to one who destroys.<sup>12</sup>  
 18:10 The name of the LORD<sup>13</sup> is like<sup>14</sup> a strong tower;<sup>15</sup> the righteous person runs<sup>16</sup> to it and is set

safely on high.<sup>17</sup>  
 18:11 The wealth<sup>18</sup> of a rich person is like<sup>19</sup> a strong city,<sup>20</sup> and it is like a high wall in his imagination.<sup>21</sup>  
 18:12 Before destruction the heart<sup>22</sup> of a person is proud, but humility comes<sup>23</sup> before honor.<sup>24</sup>  
 18:13 The one who gives an answer<sup>25</sup> before he listens<sup>26</sup> – that is his folly and his shame.<sup>27</sup>  
 18:14 A person's spirit<sup>28</sup> sustains him through sickness – but who can bear<sup>29</sup> a crushed spirit?<sup>30</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> tn Heb “his soul” (so KJV, NASB, NIV).

sn What a fool says can ruin him. Calamity and misfortune can come to a person who makes known his lack of wisdom by what he says. It may be that his words incite anger, or merely reveal stupidity; in either case, he is in trouble.

<sup>6</sup> tn Or “slanderer”; KJV, NAB “talebearer”; ASV, NRSV “whisperer.”

<sup>7</sup> tn The word בַּתְּלִימִים (*kēmitlahimim*) 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 לְמַחְלָהּ [L<sup>m</sup> *mahalumot*] in v. 6) meaning “wounds” (so KJV). But the translation of “choice morsels” fits the idea of gossip better.

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb “they go down [into] the innermost parts of the belly”; NASB “of the body.”

sn When the choice morsels of gossip are received, they go down like delicious food – 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).

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb “Also, the one who.” Many commentators and a number of English versions omit the word “also.”

<sup>10</sup> tn Heb מִתְרַפֵּה (*mitrappēh*) 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.

<sup>11</sup> sn These two troubling types, the slacker and the destroyer, are closely related.

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb “possessor of destruction.” This idiom means “destroyer” (so ASV); KJV “a great waster”; NRSV “a vandal.”

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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).

<sup>17</sup> tn Heb “is high” or “is inaccessible.” This military-type expression stresses the effect of the trust – security, being out of danger (see HALOT 1305 s.v. שָׁבַח). Other scriptures will supply the ways that God actually protects people who trust him.

<sup>18</sup> sn This proverb forms a contrast with the previous one. The rich, unlike the righteous, trust in wealth and not in God.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> tn Heb “city of his strength”; NIV “fortified city.” This term refers to their place of refuge, what they look to for security and protection in time of trouble.

<sup>21</sup> tc The MT reads בְּמַשְׁכִּיתוֹ (*b<sup>m</sup>maskito*, “in his imaginations”). The LXX, Tg. Prov 18:11, and the Latin reflect בְּמִשְׁכַּתוֹ בְּתוֹ (*bimsukato*, “like a fence [or, high wall]”) that is, wealth provides protection. The MT reading, on the other hand, suggests that this security is only in the mind.

tn The proverb is an observation saying, reporting a common assumption without commenting on it. The juxtaposition with the last verse is a loud criticism of this misguided faith. The final word בְּמַשְׁכִּיתוֹ (“in his imaginations”) indicates that one’s wealth is a futile place of refuge.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> tn Heb “[is] before honor”; cf. CEV “humility leads to honor.”

<sup>24</sup> sn The way to honor is through humility (e.g., Prov 11:2; 15:33; 16:18). The humility and exaltation of Jesus provides the classic example (Phil 2:1-10).

<sup>25</sup> tn Heb “returns a word”; KJV “He that answereth a matter.”

<sup>26</sup> 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).

<sup>27</sup> tn Heb “it is folly to him and shame.” The verse uses formal parallelism, with the second colon simply completing the thought of the first.

<sup>28</sup> tn Heb “the spirit of a man.” Because the verb of this clause is a masculine form, some have translated this line as “with spirit a man sustains,” but that is an unnecessary change.

<sup>29</sup> sn This is a rhetorical question, asserting that very few can cope with depression.

<sup>30</sup> sn The figure of a “crushed spirit” (ASV, NAB, NCV, NRSV “a broken spirit,” comparing depression to something smashed or crushed) suggests a broken will, a loss of vitality, despair, and emotional pain. In physical sickness one can fall back on the will to live, but in depression even the will to live is gone.

**18:15** The discerning person<sup>1</sup> acquires knowledge,  
and the wise person<sup>2</sup> seeks<sup>3</sup> knowledge.  
**18:16** A person's gift<sup>4</sup> makes room for him,  
and leads him<sup>5</sup> before important people.  
**18:17** The first to state his case<sup>6</sup> seems<sup>7</sup> right,  
until his opponent<sup>8</sup> begins to<sup>9</sup> cross-examine him.<sup>10</sup>  
**18:18** A toss of a coin<sup>11</sup> ends<sup>12</sup> disputes,

and settles the issue<sup>13</sup> between strong opponents.<sup>14</sup>  
**18:19** A relative<sup>15</sup> offended<sup>16</sup> is harder to reach than<sup>17</sup> a strong city,  
and disputes are like the barred gates<sup>18</sup> of a fortified citadel.<sup>19</sup>  
**18:20** From the fruit of a person's mouth<sup>20</sup> his stomach is satisfied,<sup>21</sup>  
with the product of his lips is he satisfied.  
**18:21** Death and life are in the power<sup>22</sup> of the tongue,<sup>23</sup>  
and those who love its use<sup>24</sup> will eat its fruit.

**1 tn** 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 tn** Heb “the ear of the wise.” The term “ear” is a synecdoche of part (= ear) for the whole (= person): “wise person.”

**sn** The wise continually seek more knowledge. D. Kidner says, “Those who know most know best how little they know” (*Proverbs* [TOTC], 129).

**3 sn** 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 sn** The Hebrew term translated “gift” is a more general term than “bribe” (שֹׁחַד, *shokhad*), used in 17:8, 23. But it also has danger (e.g., 15:27; 21:14), for by giving gifts one might learn how influential they are and use them for bribes. The proverb simply states that a gift can expedite matters.

**5 sn** The two verbs here show a progression, helping to form the synthetic parallelism. The gift first “makes room” (יַרְכִּיב, *yarkhib*) for the person, that is, extending a place for him, and then “ushers him in” (יַחְנֵנוּ, *yakhenu*) among the greats.

**6 tn** Heb “in his legal case”; NAB “who pleads his case first.”

**7 tn** The term “seems” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness (cf. KJV “seemeth”).

**8 tn** Heb “his neighbor”; NRSV “the other.”

**9 tn** Heb “comes and.” The *Kethib* is the imperfect יָבֵא (*yavo*), and the *Qere* is the conjunction with the participle/perfect tense form וָבֵא (*uva*). 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 sn** 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 יַחְרֹץ (*haqar*, translated “cross-examines”) is used for careful, diligent searching and investigating to know something (e.g., Ps 139:1).

**11 tn** 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 tn** Heb The verb יַשְׁבִּית (*yashbit*) is the Hiphil imperfect from שָׁבַת (*shavat*), 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 tn** 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 tn** The word is the adjective, “mighty” (so KJV, NAB, NASB) used here substantively as the object of the preposition.

**15 tn** Heb “brother,” but this is not limited to actual siblings (cf. NRSV “an ally”; CEV, NLT “friend”).

**16 tn** The Niphal participle from פָּשַׁע (*pasha*) modifies “brother”: a brother transgressed, offended, sinned against.

**17 tc** The LXX has a clear antithetical proverb here: “A brother helped is like a stronghold, but disputes are like bars of a citadel.” Accordingly, the editors of BHS propose מוֹשִׁיעַ (*moshia*) instead of נִפְשָׁה (*nifsha*), so also the other versions and the RSV. But since both lines use the comparison with a citadel (fortified/barred), the antithesis is problematic.

**tn** The phrase “is harder to reach” is supplied in the translation on the basis of the comparative מִן (*min*). It is difficult to get into a fortified city; it is more difficult to reach an offended brother.

**18 tn** Heb “bars,” but this could be understood to mean “taverns,” so “barred gates” is employed in the translation.

**19 sn** 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.

**20 sn** 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.

**21 tn** Heb “his midst.” This is rendered “his stomach” because of the use of שָׁבַע (*sava*), “to be satisfied; to be sated; to be filled”), which is usually used with food (cf. KJV, ASV “belly”).

**sn** Productive speech is not just satisfying – it meets the basic needs of life. There is a practical return for beneficial words.

**22 tn** Heb “in the hand of.”

**23 sn** What people say can lead to life or death. The *Midrash on Psalms* shows one way the tongue [what is said] can cause death: “The evil tongue slays three, the slanderer, the slandered, and the listener” (*Midrash Tehillim* 52:2). See J. G. Williams, “The Power of Form: A Study of Biblical Proverbs,” *Semeia* 17 (1980): 35-38.

**24 tn** 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<sup>1</sup> a wife finds what is enjoyable,<sup>2</sup> and receives a pleasurable gift<sup>3</sup> from the LORD.<sup>4</sup>

18:23 A poor person makes supplications,<sup>5</sup> but a rich man answers harshly.<sup>6</sup>

18:24 A person who has friends<sup>7</sup> may be harmed by them,<sup>8</sup> but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

19:1 Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity<sup>9</sup> than one who is perverse in his speech<sup>10</sup> and is a fool.<sup>11</sup>

19:2 It is dangerous<sup>12</sup> to have zeal<sup>13</sup> without knowledge, and the one who acts hastily<sup>14</sup> makes poor choices.<sup>15</sup>

19:3 A person's folly<sup>16</sup> subverts<sup>17</sup> his way, and<sup>18</sup> his heart rages<sup>19</sup> against the LORD.

19:4 Wealth adds many friends, but a poor person is separated<sup>20</sup> from his friend.<sup>21</sup>

19:5 A false witness<sup>22</sup> will not go unpunished,

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The verb מָצָא (*matsa'*, translated "finds") is used twice in the first colon. It is paralleled by the verb בָּרַח (*puq*, translated "receives") in the second colon, which carries the same nuance as the preceding verbs. The first perfect tense verb might function in a hypothetical or conditional sense: "If a man finds...then he finds." But taken as a principle the nuances of the verbs would be gnomic or characteristic.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* "good." The term טוֹב (*tov*, "good; enjoyable; fortune") might be an allusion to Gen 2:18, which affirms that it is not good for man to be alone. The word describes that which is pleasing to God, beneficial for life, and abundantly enjoyable.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* "what is pleasant." The noun רַצוֹן (*ratson*, "what is pleasing") is often interpreted in a religious-theological sense here: "receives favor from the LORD" (cf. KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV). However, this term is probably referring to the pleasure that a person enjoys in marriage, so it should be understood in a nonreligious, marital sense: "pleasure" (e.g., Esth 1:8; HALOT 1282 s.v. 1); cf. CEV "she is a gift from the Lord."  
<sup>sn</sup> The parallelism is formal; the second line of the verse continues the first but explains it further: Finding a spouse, one receives a pleasurable gift from God.

<sup>4</sup> **tc** The LXX adds this embellishment to complete the thought: "Whoever puts away a good wife puts away good, and whoever keeps an adulteress is foolish and ungodly."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* "speaks supplications"; NIV "pleads for mercy." The poor man has to ask for help because he has no choice (cf. CEV). The Hebrew term תַּחֲנוּן (*takhanun*) is a "supplication for favor" (related to the verb חָנַן [*khanan*], "to be gracious; to show favor"). So the poor man speaks, but what he speaks is a request for favor.

<sup>6</sup> **sn** The rich person responds harshly to the request. He has hardened himself against such appeals because of relentless demands. The proverb is an observation saying; it simply describes the way the world generally works, rather than setting this out as the ideal.

<sup>7</sup> **tc** The construction is "a man of friends" (cf. NASB) meaning a man who has friends (a genitive of the thing possessed). C. H. Toy, however, suggests reading יֵשׁ (*yesh*) instead of אִישׁ (*ish*), along with some of the Greek mss, the Syriac, and Tg. Prov 18:24. It would then say "there are friends" who are unreliable (*Proverbs* [ICC], 366); cf. NLT. However, the MT should be retained here.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The text simply has לְהִרְעֵיב (*le'hירו'ea*), which means "for being crushed" or "to be shattered" (but not "to show oneself friendly" as in the KJV). What can be made of the sentence is that "a man who has [many] friends [may have them] for being crushed" – the infinitive giving the result (i.e., "with the result that he may be crushed by them").

<sup>9</sup> **sn** People should follow honesty even if it leads to poverty (e.g., Prov 18:23; 19:22).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* "lips." The term "lips" is a metonymy for what one says with his lips. The expression "perverse in his lips" refers to speech that is morally perverted. Some medieval Hebrew mss, the Syriac, and Tg. Prov 19:1 have "his ways" rather than "his lips" (e.g., Prov 28:6); cf. NAB.

<sup>11</sup> **tc** The Syriac and Tg. Prov 19:1 read "rich" instead of MT "fool." This makes tighter antithetical parallelism than MT and is followed by NAB. However, the MT makes sense

as it stands; this is an example of metonymical parallelism. The MT reading is also supported by the LXX. The Hebrew construction uses הוֹיָא (*hu'ia*), "and he [is]," before "fool." This may be rendered "one who is perverse while a fool" or "a fool at the same time."

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* "not good." This is a figure known as tapeinosis (a deliberate understatement to emphasize a worst-case scenario): "it is dangerous!"

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The interpretation of this line depends largely on the meaning of נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*) which has a broad range of meanings: (1) the breathing substance of man, (2) living being, (3) life, (4) person, (5) seat of the appetites, (6) seat of emotions and passions, (7) activities of intellect, emotion and will, (8) moral character, etc. (BDB 659-61 s.v.). In light of the synonymous parallelism, the most likely nuance here is "zeal, passion" (HALOT 713 s.v. 8). NIV takes the word in the sense of "vitality" and "drive" – "it is not good to have zeal without knowledge" (cf. NCV, TEV, and NLT which are all similar).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* "he who is hasty with his feet." The verb אָרַץ (*'uts*) means "to be pressed; to press; to make haste." The verb is followed by the preposition בְּ (*bet*) which indicates that with which one hastens – his feet. The word "feet" is a synecdoche of part for the whole person – body and mind working together (cf. NLT "a person who moves too quickly").

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* "misses the goal." The participle רוֹחֵט (*khote'*) can be translated "sins" (cf. KJV, ASV), but in this context it refers only to actions without knowledge, which could lead to sin, or could lead simply to making poor choices (cf. NAB "blunders"; NASB "errs"; NCV "might make a mistake").

<sup>sn</sup> The basic meaning of the verb is "to miss a goal or the way." D. Kidner says, "How negative is the achievement of a man who wants tangible and quick rewards – he will miss the way (*Proverbs* [TOTC], 132).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the folly of a man."

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The verb סָבַח (*salaf*) normally means "to twist; to pervert; to overturn," but in this context it means "to subvert" (BDB 701 s.v.); cf. ASV "subverteth."

<sup>sn</sup> J. H. Greenstone comments: "Man's own failures are the result of his own folly and should not be attributed to God" (*Proverbs*, 201).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The clause begins with *vav* on the nonverb phrase "against the LORD." While clause structure and word order is less compelling in a book like *Proverbs*, this fits well as a circumstantial clause indicating concession.

<sup>19</sup> **sn** The "heart raging" is a metonymy of cause (or adjunct); it represents the emotions that will lead to blaming God for the frustration. Genesis 42:28 offers a calmer illustration of this as the brothers ask what God was doing to them.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The Niphal imperfect probably should be taken in the passive sense (the poor person is deserted by his "friend," cf. NAB, NIV) rather than as a direct middle (the poor person deserted his friend).

<sup>21</sup> **sn** This proverb simply makes an observation on life: People pursue wealthy folk hoping that they can gain something from the rich, but the poor are deserted even by friends, who fear that the poor will try to gain something from them.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* "a witness of lies." This expression is an attributive genitive: "a lying witness" (cf. CEV "dishonest witnesses"). This is paralleled by "the one who pours out lies."

and the one who spouts out<sup>1</sup> lies will not escape punishment.<sup>2</sup>

19:6 Many people entreat the favor<sup>3</sup> of a generous person,<sup>4</sup> and everyone is the friend<sup>5</sup> of the person who gives gifts.<sup>6</sup>

19:7 All the relatives<sup>7</sup> of a poor person hate him;<sup>8</sup>

how much more do his friends avoid him –

he pursues them<sup>9</sup> with words, but they do not respond.<sup>10</sup>

19:8 The one who acquires wisdom<sup>11</sup> loves himself;<sup>12</sup>

the one who preserves understanding will prosper.<sup>13</sup>

19:9 A false witness will not go unpunished, and the one who spouts out<sup>14</sup> lies will perish.<sup>15</sup>

19:10 Luxury is not appropriate<sup>16</sup> for a fool;<sup>17</sup>

how much less for a servant to rule over princes!<sup>18</sup>

19:11 A person's wisdom<sup>19</sup> makes him slow to anger,<sup>20</sup> and it is his glory<sup>21</sup> to overlook<sup>22</sup> an offense.

19:12 A king's wrath is like<sup>23</sup> the roar of a lion,<sup>24</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “breathes out”; NAB “utters”; NIV “pours out.”

<sup>2</sup> **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.

**sn** 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).

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The verb יָחַל (y<sup>h</sup>kh<sup>l</sup>) is a Piel imperfect of חָלַח (*khalah*) meaning “to seek favor; to entreat favor; to mollify; to appease”; cf. NIV “curry 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 success.

**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.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “the face of a generous man”; ASV “the liberal man.” The term “face” is a synecdoche of part (= face) for the whole (= person).

<sup>5</sup> **sn** The proverb acknowledges the fact of life, but it also reminds people of the value of gifts in life, especially in business or in politics.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “a man of gifts.” This could be (1) attributive genitive: a man characterized by giving gifts or (2) objective genitive: a man who gives gifts (*IBHS* 146 §9.5.2b).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “brothers,” but not limited only to male siblings in this context.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “hate him.” The verb שָׂנֵא (*sane*) may be nuanced “reject” here (metonymy of effect, cf. CEV). The kind of “dislike” or “hated” family members show to a poor relative is to have nothing to do with him (NIV “is shunned”). If relatives do this, how much more will the poor person's friends do so.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The direct object “them” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation for the sake of smoothness.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “not they.” The last line of the verse is problematic. The preceding two lines are loosely synonymous in their parallelism, but the third adds something like: “he pursues [them with] words, but they [do] not [respond].” Some simply say it is a corrupt remnant of a separate proverb and beyond restoration. The basic idea does make sense, though. The idea of his family and friends rejecting the poor person reveals how superficial they are, and how they make themselves scarce. Since they are far off, he has to look for them “with words” (adverbial accusative), that is, “send word” for help. But they “are nowhere to be found” (so NIV). The LXX reads “will not be delivered” in place of “not they” – clearly an attempt to make sense out of the cryptic phrase, and, in the process, showing evidence for that text.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “heart.” Most English versions translate as “wisdom,” but cf. NAB “intelligence.” This refers to a mind that works (e.g., Prov 7:7; 9:4).

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “his own soul.” The expression “loves his soul” means that he is paying attention to his needs or taking care of his life (cf. NAB “is his own best friend”). This expression works with its parallel to provide the whole idea: “loving the soul” is the metonymy of the cause for prospering, and “pros-

pering” is the metonymy of the effect (of loving).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “finds good” (similar KJV, NASB); NCV “will succeed.” The MT reads לִמְסוֹ (*limso*), a Qal infinitive construct. The LXX (as well as the other major early versions) renders it as a future, which reflects a *Vorlage* of יָמְסָא (*yimtsa*). The infinitive is used here in a modal sense, meaning “is destined to” or “is certain of” finding good in life.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “breathes out”; NAB “utters”; NIV “pours out.”

<sup>15</sup> **sn** The verse is the same as v. 5, except that the last word changes to the verb “will perish” (cf. NCV “will die”; CEV, NLT “will be destroyed”; TEV “is doomed”).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The form מְרִיב (*na'veh*) is an adjective meaning “seemingly; comely” in the older English versions like KJV, ASV, “fitting” in more recent ones (e.g., NASB, NIV, NRSV). The verbal root מָרַב only occurs in the Piel stem, but it also has the basic meaning of “being fitting; being comely.” In this sentence the form is a predicate adjective.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** The verse is simply observing two things that are mistakes. It is not concerned with a fool who changes and can handle wealth, or a servant who changes to become a nobleman. It is focused on things that are incongruous.

<sup>18</sup> **sn** In the ancient world the prince would be trained for his rule (hence, one of the original purposes of Proverbs). A slave ruling over princes would be arrogant and cruel, or foolish and unwise. For other unbearable things, e.g., 11:22; 17:7; 26:1; and 30:21-23.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Or “prudence,” the successful use of wisdom in discretion. Cf. NAB, NRSV, NLT “good sense.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The Hippil perfect of אָרַךְ (*arakh*, “to be long”) means “to make long; to prolong.” Patience and slowness to anger lead to forgiveness of sins.

<sup>21</sup> **sn** “Glory” signifies the idea of beauty or adornment. D. Kidner explains that such patience “brings out here the glowing colours of a virtue which in practice may look drably unassertive” (*Proverbs* [TOTC], 133).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “to pass over” (so KJV, ASV); NCV, TEV “ignore.” The infinitive construct מְבַר (*avor*) functions as the formal subject of the sentence. This clause provides the cause, whereas the former gave the effect – if one can pass over an offense there will be no anger.

**sn** W. McKane says, “The virtue which is indicated here is more than a forgiving temper; it includes also the ability to shrug off insults and the absence of a brooding hypersensitivity.... It contains elements of toughness and self-discipline; it is the capacity to stifle a hot, emotional rejoinder and to sleep on an insult” (*Proverbs* [OTL], 530).

<sup>23</sup> **sn** The verse contrasts the “rage” of the king with his “favor” by using two similes. The first simile presents the king at his most dangerous – his anger (e.g., 20:2; Amos 3:4). The second simile presents his favor as beneficial for life (e.g., 16:14-15; 28:15).

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb “is a roaring like a lion.”



but his favor is like dew on the grass.<sup>1</sup>  
**19:13** A foolish child<sup>2</sup> is the ruin of his father,  
 and a contentious wife<sup>3</sup> is like<sup>4</sup> a constant dripping.<sup>5</sup>  
**19:14** A house and wealth are inherited from parents,<sup>6</sup>  
 but a prudent wife<sup>7</sup> is from the LORD.  
**19:15** Laziness brings on<sup>8</sup> a deep sleep,<sup>9</sup>  
 and the idle person<sup>10</sup> will go hungry.<sup>11</sup>  
**19:16** The one who obeys commandments guards<sup>12</sup> his life;  
 the one who despises his ways<sup>13</sup> will die.<sup>14</sup>  
**19:17** The one who is gracious<sup>15</sup> to the poor lends<sup>16</sup> to the LORD,

<sup>1</sup> **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.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* "a foolish son" (so KJV, NAB, NIV, CEV); NRSV "a stupid child."

<sup>3</sup> **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 quarrelling; or (2) it could be a genitive of specification, making the word "contentions" a modifier, as in the present translation.

<sup>4</sup> **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 dropping (perhaps rain through the roof, cf. NRSV, CEV) in a continuous flow: It is annoying and irritating (e.g., Prov 27:15-16).

<sup>5</sup> **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.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* "inheritance of fathers" (so KJV, ASV, NASB).

<sup>7</sup> **sn** This statement describes a wife who has a skillful 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.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* "causes to fall" or "casts"; NAB "plunges...into."

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Or "complete inactivity"; the word תרדמה (*tardemah*) 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 morbidity.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The expression נפש רמיה (*nēfesh rēmiyyah*) can be translated "the soul of deceit" or "the soul of slackness." There are two identical feminine nouns, one from the verb "beguile," and the other from a cognate Arabic root "grow loose." The second is more likely here in view of the parallelism (cf. NIV "a shiftless man"; NAB "the sluggard"). One who is slack, that is, idle, will go hungry.

<sup>11</sup> **sn** The two lines are related in a metonymical sense: "deep sleep" is the cause of going hungry, and "going hungry" is the effect of deep sleep.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The verb שומר (*shamar*) is repeated twice in this line but with two different senses, creating a polysemantic wordplay: "he who obeys/keeps (שומר), *shomer*" the commandment safeguards/keeps (שומר), *shomer* his life."

<sup>13</sup> **sn** 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.

<sup>14</sup> **tc** The *Kethib* is ימות (*yamut*), "will be put to death," while the *Qere* reads ימות (*yamut*, "will die"). The *Qere* is the preferred reading and is followed by most English versions.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** The participle רותן (*khonen*, "shows favor to") is related to the word for "grace." 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.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The form מלוה (*maveh*) is the Hiphil participle from לָוָה

and the LORD<sup>17</sup> will repay him<sup>18</sup> for his good deed.<sup>19</sup>  
**19:18** Discipline your child, for<sup>20</sup> there is hope,  
 but do not set your heart<sup>21</sup> on causing his death.<sup>22</sup>  
**19:19** A person with great anger bears the penalty,<sup>23</sup>  
 but if you deliver him from it once, you will have to do it again.<sup>24</sup>  
**19:20** Listen to advice<sup>25</sup> and receive discipline,  
 that<sup>26</sup> you may become wise<sup>27</sup> by the end of your life.<sup>28</sup>

(*lavah*) 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.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* "he." The referent of the 3rd person masculine singular pronoun "the LORD" in the preceding line, which has been supplied here in the translation for clarity.

<sup>18</sup> **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.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* "and his good deed will repay him." The word גָּמְלוֹ (*g'mulo*) could be (1) the subject or (2) part of a double accusative of the verb. Understanding it as part of the double accusative makes better sense, for then the subject of the verb is God. How "his deed" could repay him is not immediately obvious.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The translation understands כִּי (*ki*) as causal. Some prefer to take כִּי 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 כִּי, 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.

<sup>21</sup> **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, NAB, NASB, 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.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The Hiphil infinitive construct הִבִּיתוֹ (*h'bito*) 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).

<sup>23</sup> **sn** The Hebrew word means "indemnity, fine"; this suggests that the trouble could be legal, and the angry person has to pay for it.

<sup>24</sup> **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 [chastisement 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).

<sup>25</sup> **sn** The *advice* refers in all probability to the teachings of the sages that will make one wise.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** The proverb is one continuous thought, but the second half of the verse provides the purpose for the imperatives of the first half.

<sup>27</sup> **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).

<sup>28</sup> **tn** *Heb* "become wise in your latter end" (cf. KJV, ASV) which could obviously be misunderstood.

19:21 There are many plans<sup>1</sup> in a person's mind,<sup>2</sup> but it<sup>3</sup> is the counsel<sup>4</sup> of the LORD which will stand.  
 19:22 What is desirable<sup>5</sup> for a person is to show loyal love,<sup>6</sup> and a poor person is better than a liar.<sup>7</sup>  
 19:23 Fearing the LORD<sup>8</sup> leads<sup>9</sup> to life,<sup>10</sup> and one who does so will live<sup>11</sup> satisfied; he will not be afflicted<sup>12</sup> by calamity.  
 19:24 The sluggard plunges<sup>13</sup> his hand in the dish,

**1 sn** The *plans* (from the Hebrew verb הִשָּׁב [khashav], “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 LORD, it will stand.” The construction draws attention to the “counsel of the LORD”; it is an independent nominative absolute, and the resumptive independent pronoun is the formal subject of the verb.

**4 tn** The antithetical parallelism pairs “counsel” with “plans.” “Counsel of the LORD” (עֲצַת יְהוָה, *atsat yehovah*) is literally “advice” or “counsel” with the connotation of “plan” in this context (cf. NIV, NRSV, NLT “purpose”; NCV “plan”; TEV “the Lord’s will”).

**sn** The point of the proverb is that the human being with many plans is uncertain, but the LORD with a sure plan gives correct counsel.

**5 tn** Heb “the desire of a man” (so KJV). The noun in construct is תַּאֲוָה (*ta'avah*), “desire [of].” Here it refers to “the desire of a man [= person].” Two problems surface here, the connotation of the word and the kind of genitive. “Desire” can also be translated “lust,” and so J. H. Greenstone has “The lust of a man is his shame” (*Proverbs*, 208). But the sentence is more likely positive in view of the more common uses of the words. “Man” could be a genitive of possession or subjective genitive – the man desires loyal love. It could also be an objective genitive, meaning “what is desired for a man.” The first would be the more natural in the proverb, which is showing that loyal love is better than wealth.

**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 poverty would be better than this. A poor 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 LORD.” This expression features an objective genitive: “fearing the LORD.”

**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 tn** Here “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 LORD 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** Heb “he will not be visited” (so KJV, ASV). The verb בָּקַר (*paqad*) 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 LORD 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.”

and he will not even bring it back to his mouth!<sup>14</sup>

19:25 Flog<sup>15</sup> a scorner, and as a result the simpleton<sup>16</sup> will learn prudence;<sup>17</sup> correct a discerning person, and as a result he will understand knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

19:26 The one who robs<sup>19</sup> his father<sup>20</sup> and chases away his mother

is a son<sup>21</sup> who brings shame and disgrace.

19:27 If you stop listening to<sup>22</sup> instruction, my child, you will stray<sup>23</sup> from the words of knowledge.

**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 Hiphil imperfect תִּבַּח (*takeh*) is followed by another imperfect. It could be rendered: “strike a scorner [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 *scorner* 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 הוֹכִיחַ (*hokhiakh*), the Hiphil 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.”

**sn** The discerning 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 [*kurmezol*]” (*Mishle* 22:6).

**19 tn** The construction joins the Piel participle מְשַׁדֵּד (*m<sup>s</sup>shaded*, “one who robs”) with the Hiphil imperfect בְּרִיחַ (*avriakh*, “causes to flee” = chases away). The imperfect given a progressive imperfect nuance matches the timeless description of the participle as a substantive.

**20 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.

**21 tn** The more generic “child” does not fit the activities described in this 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 son wanting to take over his father’s lands prematurely.

**22 tn** Heb “Stop listening...!” The infinitive construct לִשְׁמָע (*lishmoa*) functions as the direct object of the imperative: “stop heeding [or, listening to].” 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.

**23 tn** The second line has an infinitive construct לִשְׁטוֹת (*lishgot*), 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<sup>1</sup> scorns justice, and the mouth of the wicked devours<sup>2</sup> iniquity.  
 19:29 Judgments<sup>3</sup> are prepared for scorners, and floggings for the backs of fools.  
 20:1 Wine<sup>4</sup> is a mocker<sup>5</sup> and strong drink is a brawler; whoever goes astray by them is not wise.<sup>6</sup>  
 20:2 The king's terrifying anger<sup>7</sup> is like the roar of a lion; whoever provokes him<sup>8</sup> sins against himself.<sup>9</sup>

20:3 It is an honor for a person<sup>10</sup> to cease<sup>11</sup> from strife, but every fool quarrels.<sup>12</sup>  
 20:4 The sluggard will not plow<sup>13</sup> during the planting season,<sup>14</sup> so at harvest time he looks<sup>15</sup> for the crop<sup>16</sup> but has nothing.  
 20:5 Counsel<sup>17</sup> in a person's heart<sup>18</sup> is like<sup>19</sup> deep water,<sup>20</sup> but an understanding person<sup>21</sup> draws it out.  
 20:6 Many people profess their loyalty,<sup>22</sup> but a faithful person<sup>23</sup> – who can find?<sup>24</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “a witness who is worthless and wicked” (עֵד בְּלִיַּיאָל, *’ed belyya’al*). Cf. KJV “an ungodly witness”; NAB “an unprincipled witness”; NCV “an evil witness”; NASB “a rascally witness.”

**sn** These are crooked or corrupt witnesses who willfully distort the facts and make a mockery of the whole legal process.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The parallel line says the mouth of the wicked “gulps down” or “swallows” (יבלע, *yavala’*) iniquity. The verb does not seem to fit the line (or the proverb) very well. Some have emended the text to יביג (yavia’, “gushes”) as in 15:28 (cf. NAB “pours out”). Driver followed an Arabic *balaga* to get “enunciates,” 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.

<sup>3</sup> **tc** Some (cf. NAB) suggest emending the MT’s “judgments” (from שָׁפֵט, *shafat*) to “rods” (from שָׁבֵט, *shavat*); however, this is not necessary if the term in the MT is interpreted figuratively. The LXX “scourges” might reflect a different Vorlage, but it also could have been an interpretive translation from the same text. “Judgments” is a metonymy of cause and refers to the punishment that the scoffer is to receive.

<sup>4</sup> **sn** The drinks are wine and barley beer (e.g., Lev 10:9; Deut 14:26; Isa 28:7). These terms here could be understood as personifications, but better as metonymies for those who drink wine and beer. The inebriated person mocks and brawls.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The two participles לֵץ (*lets*, “mocker”) and הוֹמֵחַ (*homeh*, “brawler”) are substantives; they function as predicates in the sentence. Excessive use of intoxicants excites the drinker to boisterous behavior and aggressive attitudes – it turns them into mockers and brawlers.

<sup>6</sup> **sn** The proverb does not prohibit the use of wine or beer; in fact, strong drink was used at festivals and celebrations. But intoxication was considered out of bounds for a member of the covenant community (e.g., 23:20-21, 29-35; 31:4-7). To be led astray by their use is not wise.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “the terror of a king” (so ASV, NASB); The term “terror” is a metonymy of effect for cause: the anger of a king that causes terror among the people. The term “king” functions as a possessive genitive: “a king’s anger” (cf. NIV “A king’s wrath”; NLT “The king’s fury”).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The verb הוֹמֵחַ (from הוֹמֵחַ, *hitabbero*) is problematic; in the MT the form is the Hitpael participle with a pronominal suffix, which is unusual, for the direct object of this verb usually takes a preposition first: “is angry with.” The LXX rendered it “angers [or, irritates].”

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The expression “sins against himself” has been taken by some to mean “forfeits his life” (so NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV) or “endangers his life” (cf. NCV, NLT). That may be the implication of getting oneself in trouble with an angry king (cf. TEV “making him angry is suicide”).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “man.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “cessation” (שָׁבַת, *shevet*); NAB “to shun strife”; NRSV “refrain from strife.”

**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.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “breaks out.” The Hitpael of the verb גָּלַגַּל (*gala’*, “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 quarrelling viciously.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** The act of plowing is put for the whole process of planting a crop.

<sup>14</sup> **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.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The Piel of the verb שָׁאַל (*sha’al*, “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”).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The phrase “for the crop” does not appear in the Hebrew but is implied; it is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** The noun means “advice, counsel”; it can have the connotation of planning or making decisions. Those with understanding can sort out plans.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “in the heart of a man”; NRSV “in the human mind.”

<sup>19</sup> **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.

<sup>20</sup> **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 figure with the sense of bringing the plans to the surface and sorting them out).

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “a man of understanding”; TEV “someone with insight”; NLT “the wise.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “many a man calls/proclaims a man of his loyal love.” The Syriac and Ṭg. Prov 20:6 render the verb as passive: “many are called kind.” Other suggestions include: “most men meet people who will do them occasional kindnesses” (RSV); “many men profess friendship” (C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* [ICC], 384); “many men invite only the one who has shown them kindness.” The simplest interpretation in this context is “many proclaim [themselves to be] a kind person (= a loyal friend).” The contrast is between many who claim to be loyal friends and the one who actually proves to be faithful.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** The shift to the expression “a man of faithfulness[es]” in the second line indicates that of all those who claim to show faithful love, it is rare to find one who is truly reliable (as the word אֱמוּנִים [*’emunim*] indicates clearly); cf. NAB, NRSV “one worthy of trust.”

<sup>24</sup> **sn** The point of the rhetorical question is that a truly faithful friend is very difficult to find.

20:7 The righteous person<sup>1</sup> behaves in integrity;<sup>2</sup> blessed are his children after him.<sup>3</sup>  
 20:8 A king sitting on the throne to judge<sup>4</sup> separates out<sup>5</sup> all evil with his eyes.<sup>6</sup>  
 20:9 Who can say,<sup>7</sup> “I have kept my heart clean,<sup>8</sup> I am pure<sup>9</sup> from my sin”?  
 20:10 Diverse weights and diverse measures<sup>10</sup> – the LORD abhors<sup>11</sup> both of them.  
 20:11 Even a young man<sup>12</sup> is known<sup>13</sup> by his actions,

whether his activity is pure and whether it is right.<sup>14</sup>  
 20:12 The ear that hears and the eye that sees<sup>15</sup> – the LORD has made them both.<sup>16</sup>  
 20:13 Do not love sleep,<sup>17</sup> lest you become impoverished; open your eyes so that<sup>18</sup> you might be satisfied with food.<sup>19</sup>  
 20:14 “It’s worthless! It’s worthless!”<sup>20</sup> says the buyer,<sup>21</sup> but when he goes on his way, he boasts.<sup>22</sup>  
 20:15 There is gold, and an abundance of rubies, but<sup>23</sup> words of knowledge<sup>24</sup> are like<sup>25</sup> a precious jewel.

**1 sn** Two terms describe the subject of this proverb: “righteous” and “integrity.” The first describes the person as a member of the covenant community who strives to live according to God’s standards; the second emphasizes that his lifestyle is blameless.

**2 tn** *Heb* “walks in his integrity” (so NASB); cf. NIV “leads a blameless life.” The Hitpa’el participle of הָלַךְ (*halakh*) means “to walk about; to walk to and fro.” The idiom of walking representing living is intensified here in this stem. This verbal stem is used in scripture to describe people “walking with” God.

**3 sn** The nature and the actions of parents have an effect on children (e.g., Exod 20:4-6); if the parents are righteous, the children will enjoy a blessing – the respect and the happiness which the parent reflects on them.

**4 tn** The infinitive construct is לִיָּד; it indicates purpose, “to judge” (so NIV, NCV) even though it does not have the preposition with it.

**5 tn** 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 מְזַרְזֵהוּ (*m<sup>2</sup>zarehu*), the Piel participle. It has been translated “to sift; to winnow; to scatter” and “to separate” – i.e., separate out evil from the land. The text is saying that a just government roots out evil (cf. NAB “dispels all evil”), but few governments have been consistently just.

**6 sn** The phrase *with his eyes* indicates that the king will closely examine or look into all the cases that come before him.

**7 sn** The verse is a rhetorical question; it is affirming that no one can say this because no one is pure and free of sin.

**8 tn** The verb form זָכִיתָ (*zikkiti*) is the Piel perfect of זָכַה (*zakhah*, “to be clear; to be clean; to be pure”). The verb has the idea of “be clear, justified, acquitted.” In this stem it is causative: “I have made my heart clean” (so NRSV) or “kept my heart pure” (so NIV). This would be claiming that all decisions and motives were faultless.

**9 sn** The Hebrew verb translated “I am pure” (טָהַר, *taher*) is a Levitical term. To claim this purity would be to claim that moral and cultic perfection had been attained and therefore one was acceptable to God in the present condition. Of course, no one can claim this; even if one thought it true, it is impossible to know all that is in the heart as God knows it.

**10 tn** The construction simply uses repetition to express different kinds of weights and measures: “a stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah.”

**11 tn** *Heb* “an abomination of the LORD.” The phrase features a subjective genitive: “the LORD abhors.”

**sn** Behind this proverb is 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.

**12 sn** In the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs the Hebrew term נַעַר (*na’ar*) referred to an adolescent, a young person whose character was being formed in his early life.

**13 sn** The Hebrew verb נָכַר (*nakhar*) 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”).

**14 sn** 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.

**15 sn** The first half of the verse refers to two basic senses that the LORD has given to people. C. H. Toy, however, thinks that they represent all the faculties (*Proverbs* [ICC], 388). But in the book of Proverbs seeing and hearing come to the fore. By usage “hearing” also means obeying (15:31; 25:12), and “seeing” also means perceiving and understanding (Isa 6:9-10).

**16 sn** 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.

**17 sn** 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 have caught on in modern usage as well – things like “open your eyes” or “asleep on the job.”

**18 tn** The second line uses two imperatives in a sequence (without the *vav* [ו]) “open your eyes” and then (or, in order that) you will “be satisfied.”

**19 tn** *Heb* “bread” (so KJV, ASV, NRSV), although the term often serves in a generic sense for food in general.

**20 tn** *Heb* “[It is] bad, [it is] bad.” Since “bad” can be understood in some modern contexts as a descriptive adjective meaning “good,” the translation uses “worthless” instead – the real point of the prospective buyer’s exclamation.

**21 sn** This proverb 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.

**22 tn** The Hitpa’el imperfect of הָלַל (*halal*) means “to praise” – to talk in glowing terms, excitedly. In this stem it means “to praise oneself; to boast.”

**23 tn** The verse is usually taken as antithetical parallelism: There may be gold and rubies but the true gem is knowledge. However, C. H. Toy arranges it differently: “store of gold and wealth of corals and precious vessels – all are wise lips” (*Proverbs* [ICC], 388). But this uses the gems as metaphors for wise speech, and does not stress the contrast between wealth and wisdom.

**24 tn** *Heb* “lips of knowledge.” The term “lips” is a metonymy for speaking, and “knowledge” could be either an attributive genitive or objective genitive: “knowledgeable lips.” Lips that impart knowledge are the true jewel to be sought.

**25 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.

**20:16** Take a man's<sup>1</sup> garment<sup>2</sup> when he has given security for a stranger,<sup>3</sup> and when he gives surety for strangers,<sup>4</sup> hold him<sup>5</sup> in pledge.  
**20:17** Bread gained by deceit<sup>6</sup> tastes sweet to a person,<sup>7</sup> but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.<sup>8</sup>  
**20:18** Plans<sup>9</sup> are established by counsel, so<sup>10</sup> make war<sup>11</sup> with guidance.  
**20:19** The one who goes about gossiping<sup>12</sup> reveals secrets; therefore do not associate<sup>13</sup> with someone

who is always opening his mouth.<sup>14</sup>  
**20:20** The one who curses<sup>15</sup> his father and his mother, his lamp<sup>16</sup> will be extinguished in the blackest<sup>17</sup> darkness.  
**20:21** An inheritance gained easily<sup>18</sup> in the beginning will not be blessed<sup>19</sup> in the end.<sup>20</sup>  
**20:22** Do not say,<sup>21</sup> "I will pay back<sup>22</sup> evil!"

**1 tn** Heb "his garment."  
**2 sn** Taking a garment was the way of holding someone responsible to pay debts. In fact, the garment was the article normally taken for security (Exod 22:24-26; Deut 24:10-13). Because this is a high risk security pledge (e.g., 6:1-5), the creditor is to deal more severely than when the pledge is given by the debtor for himself.  
**3 tc** The *Kethib* has the masculine plural form, נְכָרִים (*nakhrim*), suggesting a reading "strangers." But the *Qere* has the feminine form נְכָרִיָּה (*nakhriyyah*), "strange woman" or "another man's wife" (e.g., 27:13). The parallelism would suggest "strangers" is the correct reading, although theories have been put forward for the interpretation of "strange woman" (see below).  
**sn** The one for whom the pledge is taken is called "a stranger" and "foreign." These two words do not necessarily mean that the individual or individuals are non-Israelite – just outside the community and not well known.  
**4 tn** M. Dahod argues that the cloak was taken in pledge for a harlot (cf. NIV "a wayward woman"). Two sins would then be committed: taking a cloak and going to a prostitute ("To Pawn One's Cloak," *Bib* 42 [1961]: 359-66; also Snijders, "The Meaning of נָחַ, 85-86). In the MT the almost identical proverb in 27:13 has a feminine singular form here.  
**5 tn** Or "hold it" (so NIV, NCV).  
**6 tn** Heb "bread of deceit" (so KJV, NAB). This refers to food gained through dishonest means. The term "bread" is a synecdoche of specific for general, referring to anything obtained by fraud, including food.  
**7 tn** Heb "a man."  
**8 sn** The image of food and eating is carried throughout the proverb. Food taken by fraud seems sweet at first, but afterward it is not. To end up with a mouth full of gravel (a mass of small particles; e.g., Job 20:14-15; Lam 3:16) implies by comparison that what has been taken by fraud will be worthless and useless and certainly in the way (like food turning into sand and dirt).  
**9 tn** The noun form is plural, but the verb is singular, suggesting either an abstract plural or a collective plural is being used here.  
**10 tn** The clause begins with *vav* (ו) on "with guidance." But the clause has an imperative for its main verb. One could take the imperfect tense in the first colon as an imperfect of injunction, and then this clause would be also instructional. But the imperfect tense is a Niphal, and so it is better to take the first colon as the foundational clause and the second colon as the consequence (cf. NAB): If that is true, then you should do this.  
**11 sn** There have been attempts by various commentators to take "war" figuratively to mean life's struggles, litigation, or evil inclinations. But there is no need and little justification for such interpretations. The proverb simply describes the necessity of taking counsel before going to war.  
**12 sn** The word describes a slanderer (NASB), a tale-bearer (KJV, ASV), or an informer. BDB 940.s.v. נִבְּלִי says the Hebrew expression "goers of slander" means slanderous persons. However, W. McKane observes that these people are not necessarily malicious – they just talk too much (*Proverbs* [OTL], 537).  
**13 tn** The form is the Hitpa'el imperfect (of prohibition or instruction) from אָרַב (*arav*). BDB 786-88 lists six roots with these radicals. The first means "to mix," but only occurs in

derivatives. BDB 786 lists this form under the second root, which means "to take on a pledge; to exchange." The Hitpa'el is then defined as "to exchange pledges; to have fellowship with [or, share]." The proverb is warning people to have nothing to do with gossips.  
**14 tn** The verb פָּתַח (*poth*) is a homonym, related to פָּתַח (*patah*, "to be naive; to be foolish"; HALOT 984-85 s.v. פָּתַח) or פָּתַח ("to open [the lips]; to chatter"; HALOT 985 s.v. פָּתַח). So the phrase יִפְתָּח שִׁפְתָּיו may be understood either (1) as HALOT 985 s.v. פָּתַח suggests, "one opens his lips" = he is always talking/gossiping, or (2) as BDB suggests, "one who is foolish as to his lips" (he lacks wisdom in what he says; see BDB 834 s.v. פָּתַח 1, noted in HALOT 984 s.v. פָּתַח 1). The term "lips" is a metonymy of cause for what is said: gossip. If such a person is willing to talk about others, he will be willing to talk about you, so it is best to avoid him altogether.  
**15 tn** The form is the Piel participle of קָלַל (*qalal*), which means "to be light"; in the Piel stem it means "to take lightly; to treat as worthless; to treat contemptuously; to curse." Under the Mosaic law such treatment of parents brought a death penalty (Exod 21:17; Lev 20:9; Deut 27:16).  
**16 tn** "His lamp" is a figure known as hypocatastasis (an implied comparison) meaning "his life." Cf. NLT "the lamp of your life"; TEV "your life will end like a lamp."  
**sn** For the lamp to be *extinguished* would mean death (e.g., 13:9) and possibly also the removal of posterity (R. N. Whybray, *Proverbs* [CBC], 115).  
**17 tc** The *Kethib*, followed by the LXX, Syriac, and Latin, has בְּאִישׁוֹן (*b'e'ishon*), "in the pupil of the eye darkness," the dark spot of the eye. But the *Qere* has בְּאִישׁוֹן (*be'eshun*), probably to be rendered "pitch" or "blackest," although the form occurs nowhere else. The meaning with either reading is approximately the same – deep darkness, which adds vividly to the figure of the lamp being snuffed out. This individual's destruction will be total and final.  
**18 tc** The *Kethib* reads מְבִקְהֵלֶת (*m'bukhelet*), "gotten by greed" (based on a cognate Syriac verb, "to be greedy"), but the *Qere* is מְבִקְהֵלֶת (*m'vohélet*), "gotten hastily [or, quickly]." A large number of mss and the ancient versions read with the *Qere* (cf. KJV, ASV "gotten hastily"; NAB "gained hastily"; NIV "quickly gained"; NRSV "quickly acquired").  
**sn** If the inheritance is obtained quickly, it could mean prematurely (e.g., Luke 15:12) or cruelly (Prov 19:26). The inheritance is gained without labor or without preparation.  
**19 tn** The form is the Pual imperfect, "will not be blessed," suggesting that divine justice is at work.  
**sn** The Hebrew verb means "enriched, made fruitful, prospered." Whatever the *inheritance* was, it will not reach its full potential or even remain permanent.  
**20 tn** Heb "in its end"; KJV, ASV "the end thereof."  
**21 tn** The verse is directly instructive; it begins with the negated jussive in the first colon, and follows with the imperative in the second. It warns that the righteous should not take vengeance on the wicked, for only God can do that.  
**22 tn** The form is the Piel cohortative of resolve – "I am determined to pay back." The verb שָׁלַם (*shalem*) means "to be complete; to be sound." In this stem, however, it can mean "to make complete; to make good; to require; to recompense" (KJV, ASV). The idea is "getting even" by paying back someone for the evil done.

Wait<sup>4</sup> for the LORD, so that he may vindicate you.<sup>2</sup>

**20:23** The LORD abhors<sup>3</sup> differing weights, and dishonest scales are wicked.<sup>4</sup>

**20:24** The steps of a person<sup>5</sup> are ordained by<sup>6</sup> the LORD – so how can anyone<sup>7</sup> understand his own<sup>8</sup> way?

**20:25** It is a snare<sup>9</sup> for a person<sup>10</sup> to rashly cry,<sup>11</sup> “Holy!” and only afterward to consider<sup>12</sup> what he has vowed.<sup>13</sup>

**20:26** A wise king separates out<sup>14</sup> the

wicked; he turns the threshing wheel over them.<sup>15</sup>

**20:27** The human spirit<sup>16</sup> is like<sup>17</sup> the lamp<sup>18</sup> of the LORD, searching all his innermost parts.<sup>19</sup>

**20:28** Loyal love and truth<sup>20</sup> preserve a king, and his throne is upheld by loyal love.<sup>21</sup>

**20:29** The glory<sup>22</sup> of young men is their strength, and the splendor<sup>23</sup> of old men is gray hair.<sup>24</sup>

**20:30** Beatings and wounds cleanse away<sup>25</sup> evil,

**1 sn** To “wait” (יָחַד, *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 tn** After the imperative, the jussive is subordinated in a purpose or result clause: “wait for the LORD so that he may deliver you.” The verb יָצַע (*yosha*) means “to save (KJV, ASV, NASB); to deliver (NIV); 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 tn** Heb “an abomination of the LORD.” This expression features a subjective genitive: “the LORD abhors.”

**4 tn** Heb “not good.” This is a figure known as tapeinosis – a deliberate understatement to emphasize a worst-case scenario: “it is wicked!” (e.g., 11:1; 20:10).

**5 tn** Heb “the steps of a man,” but “man” is the noun גֵּר (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 a translation of “man” would be appropriate here. But the line seems to have a wider, more general application. The “steps” represent (by implied comparison) the course of life (cf. NLT “the road we travel”).

**6 tn** Heb “from the LORD”; NRSV “ordered by the Lord”; NIV “directed by the Lord.”

**7 sn** To say that one’s steps are *ordained* by the LORD means that one’s course of actions, one’s whole life, is divinely prepared and sovereignly superintended (e.g., Gen 50:26; Prov 3:6). Ironically, man is not actually in control of his own steps.

**7 tn** The verse uses an independent nominative absolute to point up the contrast between the mortal and the immortal: “and man, how can he understand his way?” The verb in the sentence would then be classified as a potential imperfect; and the whole question rhetorical. It is affirming that humans cannot understand very much at all about their lives.

**8 tn** Heb “his way.” The referent of the third masculine singular pronoun is unclear, so the word “own” was supplied in the translation to clarify that the referent is the human individual, not 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 tn** Heb “a man.”

**11 tn** The verb is from לָעַת (lu) or לָעַע (la’a); it means “to talk wildly” (not to be confused with the homonym “to swallow”). It occurs here and in Job 6:3.

**sn** This refers to speaking rashly in dedicating something to the sanctuary by calling it “Holy.”

**12 tn** Heb “reflect on.” The person is to consider the vows before making them, to ensure that they can be fulfilled. Too many people make their vow or promise without thinking, and then later worry about how they will fulfill their vows.

**13 tn** Heb “the vows” (so NASB); CEV “promises.”

**14 tn** 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 מְזַרְחֵם (*m<sup>z</sup>zarah*) 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 tn** 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 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 “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 נִיר (*nir*, “to plow”) instead of נֵר (*ner*, “lamp”) to say that God plows and examines the soul (“Remarks on Proverbs 17:12 and 20:27,” *VT* 37 [1967]: 233). The NIV supplies a verb (“searches”) from the second half of the verse, changing the emphasis somewhat.

**19 tn** Heb “all the chambers of the belly.” This means “the inner parts of the body” (BDB 293 s.v. הֶדְדֵר; cf. NASB “the innermost parts of his being.”

**20 tn** The first line uses two Hebrew words, תְּהִלָּה *kheshed* ve’emet, “loyal 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 תְּהִלָּה.

**21 sn** The emphasis is on the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:11-16; Ps 89:19-37). It is the LORD and his faithful love for his covenant that ultimately makes the empire secure. But the enjoyment of divine protection requires the king to show loyal love as well.

**22 tn** The Hebrew term תִּפְאֵרֶת (*tif'eret*) means “beauty; glory”; in a context like this it means “honor” in the sense of glorying or boasting (BDB 802 s.v. 3.b).

**23 tn** The Hebrew term הֶדְדֵר (*hadar*), the noun in construct, means “splendor; honor; ornament.” The latter sense is used here, since gray 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 the sages and elders of the people.

**25 tc** The verb מָרַח (*marah*) means “to polish; to scour”; in the Hiphil it means “to cleanse away,” but it is only attested here, and that in the *Kethib* reading of תְּמִיּוּק (*tamiq*). The *Qere* has תְּמִרוּק (*tamruq*, “are a 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 cleanses away evil things.” C. H. Toy suggests emending the text to read “stripes cleanse the body, and blows the inward parts” or “cosmetics purify the body, and blows the soul” (*Proverbs* [ICC], 397). Cf. CEV “can knock all of the evil out of you.”

and floggings cleanse<sup>1</sup> the innermost being.<sup>2</sup>

**21:1** The king's heart<sup>3</sup> is in the hand<sup>4</sup> of the LORD like channels of water;<sup>5</sup> he turns it wherever he wants.

**21:2** All of a person's ways seem right in his own opinion,<sup>6</sup>

but the LORD evaluates<sup>7</sup> the motives.<sup>8</sup>

**21:3** To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable<sup>9</sup> to the LORD than sacrifice.<sup>10</sup>

**21:4** Haughty eyes and a proud heart – the agricultural product<sup>11</sup> of the wicked is sin.

**21:5** The plans of the diligent<sup>12</sup> lead<sup>13</sup> only to plenty,<sup>14</sup>

but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.<sup>15</sup>

**21:6** Making a fortune<sup>16</sup> by a lying tongue is like<sup>17</sup> a vapor driven back and forth;<sup>18</sup> they seek death.<sup>19</sup>

**21:7** The violence<sup>20</sup> done by the wicked<sup>21</sup> will drag them away because<sup>22</sup> they refuse to do what is right.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The term “cleanse” does not appear in this line but is supplied in the translation in the light of the parallelism.

<sup>2</sup> **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.

<sup>3</sup> **sn** “Heart” is a metonymy of subject; it signifies the ability to make decisions, if not the decisions themselves.

<sup>4</sup> **sn** “Hand” in this passage is a personification; the word is frequently used idiomatically for “power,” and that is the sense intended here.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** “Channels of water” (פַּלְגֵי, *palge*) 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.”

**sn** 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; and the LORD rules.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “in his own eyes.” The term “eyes” is a metonymy for estimation, opinion, evaluation.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “weighs” (so NASB, NIV, NRSV); NLT “examines”; NCV, TEV “judges.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the hearts.” The term לֵב (*lev*, “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).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The Niphal participle בָּחַר (*bakhar*, “to choose”) means “choice to the LORD” or “chosen of the LORD,” meaning “acceptable to the LORD”; cf. TEV “pleases the Lord more.”

<sup>10</sup> **sn** The LORD prefers righteousness above religious service (e.g., Prov 15:8; 21:29; 1 Sam 15:22; Ps 40:6-8; Isa 1:11-17). This is not a rejection of ritual worship; rather, religious acts are without value apart from righteous living.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the tillage [רֵב, *nir*] of the wicked is sin” (so NAB). The subject picks up the subjects of the first half of the verse, indicating they are equal – the tillage consists of the arrogance and pride. The word “tillage” is figurative, of course, signifying that the agricultural product (the point of the comparison) of the wicked is sin. The relationship between the ideas is then problematic. Are pride and arrogance what the wicked produce? Some (ASV, NASB, NIV, NRSV) have followed the LXX and Tg. Prov 21:4 to read “lamp” instead (נֵר, *ner*), but that does not solve the difficulty of the relationship between the expressions. It does, however, say that the life (= lamp), which is arrogance and pride, is sin.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The word “diligent” is an adjective used substantivally. 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 expeditiousness 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).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The term “lead” is supplied in the translation.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The Hebrew noun translated “plenty” comes from the verb יָתַר (*yatar*), which means “to remain over.” So the calculated diligence will lead to abundance, prosperity.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lack; need; thing needed”; NRSV “to want.”

<sup>16</sup> **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.

<sup>17</sup> **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.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The Hebrew הֵבֵל נִדָּף (*hevel nidaf*) 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 רָדַף, *rodef*); cf. NAB “chasing a bubble over deadly snares.”

<sup>19</sup> **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 מוֹקְשֵׁי (*moq'she*) was read instead of מִבְּקֵשֵׁי (*m'vqashe*). 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.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The “violence” (שָׂדֶה, *shod*) 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.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “violence of the wicked.” This is a subjective genitive: “violence which the wicked do.”

<sup>22</sup> **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.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “they refuse to do justice” (so ASV); NASB “refuse to act with justice.”

21:8 The way of the guilty person<sup>1</sup> is devious,<sup>2</sup>  
but as for the pure,<sup>3</sup> his way is upright.  
21:9 It is better to live on a corner of the  
housetop<sup>4</sup>  
than in a house in company<sup>5</sup> with a quar-  
relsome wife.<sup>6</sup>  
21:10 The appetite<sup>7</sup> of the wicked desires<sup>8</sup>  
evil;  
his neighbor is shown no favor<sup>9</sup> in his  
eyes.

**1 tn** The first line of the proverb is difficult. Since *vazar* (וָזַר) 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 [zar]” (“Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs,” *Bib* 32 [1951]: 185). C. H. Toy adopts the meaning of “proud” (*Proverbs* [ICC], 400). Whatever the reading, “guilty” or “proud” or “false,” the idea is that such people are devious. Bad people are underhanded; 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 unclear, and would form no satisfactory contrast to 8b. 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 tn** The form *hafaḥfakḥ* (הַפַּחְפַּחִי) 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”).

**3 tn** If this translation stands, then the construction is formed with an independent nominative absolute, resumed by the suffixed noun as the formal subject. It draws attention to the “pure” or “innocent” person in contrast to the previously mentioned wicked.

**4 tn** English versions which translate the Hebrew term as “roof” here sometimes produce amusing images for modern readers: TEV “Better to live on the roof”; CEV “It’s better to stay outside on the roof of your house.”

**5 tn** 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.

**5 tn** 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.

**6 tn** *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.

**7 tn** *Heb* “soul.” The Hebrew text uses *nefesh* (נֶפֶשׁ), traditionally, “soul”) as the formal subject of the sentence – “the soul of a wicked man desires.” This term has at its core the idea of appetites, and so its use here underscores that the cravings are deep-seated (DBD 660 s.v. 5), and the translation “appetite” reflects this.

**8 tn** The word has the meanings of “desire, crave, long for, just 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 tn** The form *yukhanan* (יָחַן) is a Hophal imperfect from *khanan* (כָּחַן); 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.

21:11 When a scorner is punished, the naive<sup>10</sup> becomes wise;  
when a wise person is instructed,<sup>11</sup> he gains knowledge.  
21:12 The Righteous One<sup>12</sup> considers<sup>13</sup> the house<sup>14</sup> of the wicked;  
he overthrows the wicked to their ruin.<sup>15</sup>  
21:13 The one who shuts his ears<sup>16</sup> to the cry<sup>17</sup> of the poor,  
he too will cry out and will not be answered.<sup>18</sup>  
21:14 A gift given<sup>19</sup> in secret subdues<sup>20</sup> anger,  
and a bribe given secretly<sup>21</sup> subdues<sup>22</sup> strong wrath.<sup>23</sup>

**10 sn** The contrast here is between the simple and the wise. The simple gain wisdom when they see the scorner punished; the wise gains knowledge through instruction. The scorner does not change, but should be punished for the benefit of the simple (e.g., Prov 19:25).

**11 tn** *Heb* “in the instructing of the wise.” The construction uses the Hiphil infinitive construct *haskil* (הַשְׁכִּיל) with a preposition to form a temporal clause (= “when”). The word “wise” (*khakham*, חָכָם) after it is the subjective genitive. The preposition *lamed* (ל) on the form is probably dittography from the ending of the infinitive.

**12 tn** In the book of Proverbs, the Hebrew term *ysadiq* (יְסַדִּיק) normally refers to a human being, and that is a possible translation here (cf. KJV, ASV, NAB), although it would have to refer to a righteous person who was a judge or a ruler with the right to destroy the wicked. Many commentators and English versions simply interpret this as a reference to God (cf. NIV, NRSV, TEV, NLT).

**13 tn** The form *maskil* (מַשְׁכִּיל) is now used with the meaning “to consider; to give attention to; to ponder.” It is the careful scrutiny that is given to the household of the wicked before judgment is poured out on them.

**14 tn** *Heb* “house.” This term probably means “household” here – the family. One way to read the line is that the righteous judge (human or divine) takes into consideration the wicked person’s family before judging the wicked person. The other – and more plausible – interpretation is that the judge considers the household of the wicked and then on the basis of what was observed judges them.

**15 tn** *Heb* “to evil” (i.e., catastrophe); cf. NLT “to disaster.”

**16 sn** The imagery means “pay no attention to” the cry for help or “refuse to help,” so it is a metonymy of cause for the effect.

**17 sn** “Cry” here would be a metonymy of effect for the cause, the cause being the great needs of the poor.

**18 sn** The proverb is teaching that those who show mercy will receive mercy. It involves the principle of talmic justice – those who refuse the needs of others will themselves be refused when they need help (so Luke 16:19-31).

**19 sn** The synonymous parallelism joins the more neutral term “gift” with the more specific “bribe.” D. Kidner notes that this underscores how hard it is to tell the difference between them, especially since they accomplish similar things (*Proverbs* [TOTC], 143).

**20 tn** The word *kafah* (כָּפָה) occurs only here; it means “to subdue,” but in New Hebrew it means “to overturn; to compel.” The *BHS* editors suggest a change to *kavah* (כָּוָה), “to be quenched,” based on Symmachus and *Tg. Prov* 21:14, but there is no substantial improvement in the text’s meaning with such a change.

**21 tn** *Heb* “a bribe in the bosom” (so NASB). This refers to a gift hidden in the folds of the garment, i.e., given secretly (cf. NIV “a bribe concealed in the cloak”).

**22 tn** The repetition of the term “subdues” in the second line is supplied in the translation.

**23 tc** The LXX offers a moralizing translation not too closely tied to the MT: “he who withholds a gift stirs up violent wrath.”



21:15 Doing<sup>1</sup> justice brings<sup>2</sup> joy to the righteous and terror<sup>3</sup> to those who do evil.  
 21:16 The one who wanders<sup>4</sup> from the way of wisdom<sup>5</sup> will end up<sup>6</sup> in the company of the departed.<sup>7</sup>  
 21:17 The one who loves<sup>8</sup> pleasure<sup>9</sup> will be<sup>10</sup> a poor person;<sup>11</sup> whoever loves wine and anointing oil<sup>12</sup> will not be rich.  
 21:18 The wicked become<sup>13</sup> a ransom<sup>14</sup> for the righteous,

and the faithless<sup>15</sup> are taken<sup>16</sup> in the place of the upright.  
 21:19 It is better to live<sup>17</sup> in a desert land<sup>18</sup> than with a quarrelsome and easily-provoked<sup>19</sup> woman.  
 21:20 There is desirable treasure and olive oil<sup>20</sup> in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish person<sup>21</sup> devours all he has.<sup>22</sup>  
 21:21 The one who pursues righteousness and love<sup>23</sup> finds life, bounty,<sup>24</sup> and honor.  
 21:22 The wise person<sup>25</sup> can scale<sup>26</sup> the city of the mighty and bring down the stronghold<sup>27</sup> in which they trust.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The Qal infinitive construct עָשׂוֹת (*asot*) functions as the subject of the sentence.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The term “brings” is supplied in the translation; many English versions supply a simple copula (“is”).

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The noun means “terror (NAB, NASB, NIV), destruction (KJV, ASV), ruin (cf. NCV).” Its related verb means “be shattered, 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”).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The text uses “man” as the subject and the active participle רֹתֵקָה (*to'eh*) as the predicate. The image of “wandering off the path” signifies leaving a life of knowledge, prudence, and discipline.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Or “prudence”; KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV “understanding”; NLT “common sense.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “will remain” or “will rest.” The Hebrew word נָח (*nuakh*) 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.

<sup>7</sup> **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.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The participle “loves” (אוֹהֵב, *’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 uncontrolled indulgence in pleasure.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** “Pleasure” is actually the Hebrew word “joy” (שִׂמְחָה, *simkha*). 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.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The phrase “will be” is supplied in the translation.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “a man of poverty”; NRSV “will suffer want.”

<sup>12</sup> **sn** In elaborate feasts and celebrations the wine was for drinking but the oil was for anointing (cf. NAB, NCV “perfume”). Both of these characterize the luxurious life (e.g., Ps 23:5; 104:15; Amos 6:6).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The term “become” is supplied in the translation.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** The Hebrew word translated “ransom” (כֹּפֶר, *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).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Or “treacherous” (so ASV, NASB, NLT); NIV “the unfaithful.”

<sup>16</sup> **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.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The Hebrew form שֹׁבֵת (*shevet*) is the infinitive construct of יָשַׁב (*yashav*), functioning as the subject of the sentence.

<sup>18</sup> **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.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The Hebrew noun כָּעָס (*ka'as*) 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.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The mention of “olive oil” (שֶׁמֶן, *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. McKane wants to change “oil” to an Arabic word “expensive” to read “desirable and rare wealth” (*Proverbs* [OTL], 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.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “a fool of a man.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he swallows it.” The imagery compares swallowing food with consuming one’s substance. The fool does not prepare for the future.

<sup>23</sup> **sn** These two attributes, “righteousness” (יְדִיקָה, *ts<sup>e</sup>daqah*) and “loyal love” (חֶסֶד, *hesed*) depict the life style of the covenant-believer 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.

<sup>24</sup> **sn** The Hebrew term translated “bounty” is עֲדָקָה (*ts<sup>e</sup>daqah*) 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.”

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* “The wise [one/man].”

<sup>26</sup> **tn** The Qal perfect tense of עָלָה (*alah*) functions in a potential nuance. Wisdom can be more effectual than physical strength.

<sup>27</sup> **sn** In a war the victory is credited not so much to the infantry as to the tactician who plans the attack. Brilliant strategy wins wars, even over apparently insuperable odds (e.g., Prov 24:5-6; Eccl 9:13-16; 2 Cor 10:4).

<sup>28</sup> **tn** *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<sup>1</sup> keeps his life<sup>2</sup> from troubles.<sup>3</sup>  
 21:24 A proud<sup>4</sup> and arrogant<sup>5</sup> person, whose name is “Scoffer,”<sup>6</sup> acts<sup>7</sup> with overbearing pride.<sup>8</sup>  
 21:25 What the sluggard desires<sup>9</sup> will kill him,<sup>10</sup> for his hands<sup>11</sup> refuse to work.  
 21:26 All day long he craves greedily,<sup>12</sup> but the righteous gives and does not hold back.<sup>13</sup>

21:27 The wicked person’s sacrifice<sup>14</sup> is an abomination; how much more<sup>15</sup> when he brings it with evil intent!<sup>16</sup>  
 21:28 A lying witness<sup>17</sup> will perish,<sup>18</sup> but the one who reports accurately speaks forever.<sup>19</sup>  
 21:29 A wicked person<sup>20</sup> shows boldness with his face,<sup>21</sup> but as for the upright,<sup>22</sup> he discerns<sup>23</sup> his ways.

itive of worth; the stronghold is their confidence, it is appropriate for the confidence of the city.

**1 sn** “Mouth” and “tongue” are metonymies of cause, signifying what one says (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV).

**2 tn** This part could also be translated “keeps himself” (so NIV), for *nefesh* (נֶפֶשׁ) often simply means “the whole person.” The participle שֹׁמֵר (*shomer*) is repeated from the first line in the parallelism – to guard what is said is to guard against difficulty.

**3 sn** The “troubles” (צָרָה, *tsarot*) here could refer to social and legal difficulties into which careless talk might bring someone (e.g., 13:3; 18:21). The word means “a strait, a bind, difficulty.” Careless and free talking could get the person into a tight spot.

**4 tn** The word זֶד (*zed*, “proud”) comes from the verb זָדַד (*zid*, “to boil up; to seethe; to act proudly [or, presumptuously].” Just as water boiling up in a pot will boil over, so the presumptuous person “oversteps” the boundaries.

**5 tn** The word יָהִיר (*yahir*) means “haughty,” that is, to be or show oneself to be presumptuous or arrogant.

**6 tn** Heb “proud haughty scorners his name” (KJV similar). There are several ways that the line could be translated: (1) “Proud, arrogant – his name is scoffer” or (2) “A proud person, an arrogant person – ‘Scoffer’ is his name.” BDB 267 s.v. דָּ suggests, “A presumptuous man, [who is] haughty, scoffer is his name.”

**7 tn** Heb “does.” The Qal active participle “does” serves as the main verb, and the subject is “proud person” in the first line.

**8 tn** The expression בְּעִבְרַת זָדוֹן (*be’evrat zaddon*) means “in the overflow of insolence.” The genitive specifies what the overflow is; the proud deal in an overflow of pride. Cf. NIV “overweening pride”; NLT “boundless arrogance.”

**9 tn** The portrait in this proverb is not merely of one who is self-sufficient, but one who is insolent, scornful, and arrogant.

**9 tn** Heb “the desire of the sluggard” (so ASV, NASB). This phrase features a subject genitive: “what the sluggard desires.” The term תַּאֲוָה (*ta’ava*, “desire; craving”) is a metonymy of cause. The craving itself will not destroy the sluggard, but what will destroy him is what the craving causes him to do or not to do. The lazy come to ruin because they desire the easy way out.

**10 tn** The verb מְבַיֵּטֵנוּ (*me’bitenu*) is the Hiphil imperfect with a suffix: “will kill him.” It is probably used hyperbolically here for coming to ruin (cf. NLT), although it could include physical death.

**11 sn** “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.

**12 tn** The construction uses the Hitpael perfect tense הִתְאַוָּה (*hit’ava*) followed by the cognate accusative תַּאֲוָה (*ta’ava*). 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.”

**13 sn** 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.

**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 sn** 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 זִמְמָה (*zimmah*) means “plan; device; wickedness”; here it indicates that the person is coming to the ritual with “sinful purpose.” Some commentators 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” (יִאָּבֵד, *yo’abed*) 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 may mean (1) 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], 41.1). W. McKane suggested it meant the truthful witness “will speak to the end” without being put down (*Proverbs* [OTL], 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. קָיָה 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 בִּין (*bin*), “he establishes.” This reading has the support of the Syriac, Latin, and Tg. Prov 21:29, and is followed by ASV. The *Qere* is the imperfect tense of בִּין (*bin*), “he understands; he discerns.” It has the support of the LXX and is followed by NIV, NCV, NRSV, 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.

21:30 There is no wisdom and there is no understanding, and there is no counsel against<sup>1</sup> the LORD.<sup>2</sup>

21:31 A horse is prepared for the day of battle,

but the victory is from the LORD.<sup>3</sup>

22:1 A good name<sup>4</sup> is to be chosen<sup>5</sup> rather than great wealth,

good favor<sup>6</sup> more than silver or gold.

22:2 The rich and the poor meet together;<sup>7</sup> the LORD is the Creator of them both.<sup>8</sup>

22:3 A shrewd person<sup>9</sup> sees danger<sup>10</sup> and hides himself,

but the naive keep right on going<sup>11</sup> and suffer for it.<sup>12</sup>

22:4 The reward<sup>13</sup> for humility<sup>14</sup> and fearing the LORD<sup>15</sup>

is riches and honor and life.

22:5 Thorns and snares<sup>16</sup> are in the path of the perverse, but the one who guards himself keeps far from them.

22:6 Train<sup>17</sup> a child<sup>18</sup> in the way that he

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The form לַיָּגֵד (*l'neged*) means "against; over against; in opposition to." The line indicates they cannot in reality be in opposition, for human wisdom is nothing in comparison to the wisdom of God (J. H. Greenstone, *Proverbs*, 232).

<sup>2</sup> **sn** The verse uses a single sentence to state that all wisdom, understanding, and advice must be in conformity to the will of God to be successful. It states it negatively – these things cannot be in defiance of God (e.g., Job 5:12-13; Isa 40:13-14).

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* "of the LORD." The victory being "of the LORD" means that it is accomplished by him. Ultimate success comes from the LORD and not from human efforts. The faithful have acknowledged this down through the ages, even though they have been responsible and have prepared for the wars. Without this belief there would have been no prayer on the eve of battle (e.g., Ps 20:7 and 33:17).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* "a name." The idea of the name being "good" is implied; it has the connotation here of a reputation (cf. TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** "To be chosen rather than" is a translation of the Niphal participle with the comparative degree taken into consideration. Cf. CEV "worth much more than."

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* "favor of goodness." This is a somewhat difficult expression. Some English versions render the phrase "favor is better than silver or gold" (so NASB, NRSV) making it parallel to the first colon. But if "good" is retained as an attributive modifier, then it would mean one was well thought of, or one had engaging qualities (cf. ASV "loving favor; NLT "high esteem"). This fits with the idea of the reputation in the first colon, for a good name would bring with it the favor of others.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The form of the verb is the Niphal perfect of פָּגַשׁ (*pagash*); it means "to meet together [or, each other]" (cf. KJV, ASV). The point is that rich and poor live side by side in this life, but they are both part of God's creation (cf. NAB, NASB "have a common bond"). Some commentators have taken this to mean that they should live together because they are part of God's creation, but the verb form will not sustain that meaning.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* "all." The LORD is sovereign over both groups, that is, he has had the final say whether a person is rich or poor. People would do well to treat all people with respect, for God can as easily reduce the rich to poverty as raise up the poor to wealth.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The contrast is between the "shrewd" (prudent) person and the "simpleton." The shrewd person knows where the dangers and pitfalls are in life and so can avoid them; the naive person is unwary, untrained, and gullible, unable to survive the dangers of the world and blundering into them.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* "evil," a term that is broad enough to include (1) "sin" as well as (2) any form of "danger" (NIV, NCV, NRSV, NLT) or "trouble" (TEV, CEV). The second option is more likely what is meant here: The naive simpleton does not see the danger to be avoided and so suffers for it.

<sup>11</sup> **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 (cf. TEV "will walk right into it").

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The verb אָנַשׁ (*anash*) means "to fine" specifically. In

the Niphal stem it means "to be fined," or more generally, "to be punished." In this line the punishment is the consequence of blundering into trouble – they will pay for it.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term עֶקֶב (*eqev*, "reward") is related to the term meaning "heel"; it refers to the consequences or the reward that follows (akin to the English expression "on the heels of").

<sup>14</sup> **tn** "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 here.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the fear of the LORD." This is an objective genitive; the LORD is the object of the fear.

<sup>16</sup> **tc** Because MT reading צַמִּים (*tsimmim*, "thorns") does not make a very good match with "traps," it has created some difficulty for interpreters. The word "thorns" may be obscure, but it is supported by the LXX ("prickly plants") and an apparent cognate "thorns" in Num 33:55 and Josh 23:13. But some (including the editors of BHS) suggest changing it to צַמִּים (*tsammim*, "traps" changing a נ [nun] to a מ [mem]). But BDB 855 s.v. צַמִּים acknowledges that this word is a doubtful word, attested only a couple of times in Job (e.g., 18:9). W. McKane traces a development from the idea of צַן (*tsen*, "basket; trap") to support this change (*Proverbs* [OTL], 565). The present translation (like many other English versions) has retained "thorns," even though the parallelism with "traps" is not very good; as the harder reading it is preferred. The variant readings have little textual or philological support, and simplify the line.

**sn** "Thorns and snares" represent the dangers and threats to life. They would be implied comparisons (hypocatastasis): As a path strewn with thorns and traps, life for the wicked will be filled with dangers and difficulties.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The verb יָנַח (*khanakh*) means "to train up; to dedicate" (BDB 335 s.v.; HALOT 334 s.v. יָנַח). 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 יָנִיחָה (*khanukhah*) means "dedication; consecration" (BDB 335 s.v.; HALOT 334 s.v.), and is used in reference to the dedication or consecration of altars (Num 7:10; 2 Chr 7:9), the temple (Ps 30:1), and town walls (Neh 12:27). The related adjective יָנִיחַ (*khanikh*) describes "trained, tried, experienced" men (BDB 335 s.v.; Gen 14:14). In the related cognate languages the verb has similar meanings: Aramaic "to train," Ethiopic "to initiate," and Arabic 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 II which (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.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The term יָנַח (*na'ar*) 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.); infant (Exod 2:6), weaned child (1 Sam 1:24), young child (Jer 1:6), lad (Gen 22:12), adolescent (Gen 37:2), or young man of marriageable age (Gen 34:19). The context focuses on the child's young, formative years. The Talmud says this would be up to the age of twenty-four.

should go,<sup>1</sup>  
and when he is old he will not turn from  
it.<sup>2</sup>  
22:7 The rich rule over<sup>3</sup> the poor,  
and the borrower is servant<sup>4</sup> to the lender.  
22:8 The one who sows<sup>5</sup> iniquity will reap  
trouble,  
and the rod of his fury<sup>6</sup> will end.  
22:9 A generous person<sup>7</sup> will be blessed,<sup>8</sup>

for he gives some of his food<sup>9</sup> to the poor.  
22:10 Drive out the scorner<sup>10</sup> and conten-  
tion will leave;  
strife and insults will cease.<sup>11</sup>  
22:11 The one who loves a pure heart<sup>12</sup>  
and whose speech is gracious<sup>13</sup> – the king  
will be his friend.<sup>14</sup>  
22:12 The eyes of the LORD<sup>15</sup> guard  
knowledge,<sup>16</sup>  
but he overthrows the words of the faith-  
less person.<sup>17</sup>  
22:13 The sluggard says, “There is a lion<sup>18</sup>  
outside!

**1 tn** The expression in Hebrew עֲלֵפִי דַרְכֵי (‘*al-pi 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. Saadia, 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*, 234). C. H. Toy says the expression means “in accordance with the manner of life to which he is destined (*Proverbs* [ICC], 415). W. McKane says, “There is only one right way – the way of life – and the educational discipline which directs young men along this way is uniform” (*Proverbs* [OTL], 564). This phrase does not describe the concept perpetuated by a modern psychological interpretation of the verse: Train a child according to his personality trait.

**2 sn** The expected consequence of such training is that it will last throughout life. The sages were confident of the character-forming quality of their training. However, proverbs are not universal truths. One can anticipate positive results from careful child-training – but there may be an occasional exception.

**3 sn** The proverb is making an observation on life. The synonymous parallelism matches “rule over” with “servant” to show how poverty makes people dependent on, or obligated to, others.

**4 tn** Or “slave” (so NAB, NASB, NRSV, TEV, CEV). This may refer to the practice in Israel of people selling themselves into slavery to pay off debts (Exod 21:2-7).

**5 sn** The verse is making an implied comparison (a figure of speech known as hypocoastasis) between sowing and sinning. One who sins is like one who sows, for there will be a “harvest” or a return on the sin – trouble.

**6 tc** There is a variant reading in the LXX; instead of “the rod of his wrath” it reads “the punishment of his deeds.” C. H. Toy wishes to emend שֶׁבַע (*shevet*) שֶׁבַר (*shever*), “the produce of his work” (*Proverbs* [ICC], 416). But the Hebrew text is not obscure, and שֶׁבַר does not exactly mean “produce.” The expression “rod of his wrath” may not follow the imagery of 8a very closely, but it is nonetheless understandable. The “rod” is a symbol of power; “wrath” is a metonymy of cause indicating what wrath will do, and an objective genitive. The expression signifies that in reaping trouble for his sins this person will no longer be able to unleash his fury on others. The LXX adds: “A man who is cheerful and a giver God blesses” (e.g., 2 Cor 9:7).

**7 tn** Heb “good of eye.” This expression is an attributed genitive meaning “bountiful of eye” (cf. KJV, ASV “He that hath a bountiful eye”). This is the opposite of the “evil eye” which is covetous and wicked. The “eye” is a metonymy representing looking well to people’s needs. So this refers to the generous person (cf. NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

**8 tn** The form בֵּרַךְ (*vorakh*) is a Pual imperfect (here in pause) of בָּרַךְ (*barakh*); the word means “blessed” in the sense of “enriched,” implying there is a practical reward for being generous to the poor.

**9 sn** It is from his own food that he gives to the poor. Of the many observations that could be made, it is worth noting that in blessing this kind of person God is in fact providing for the poor, because out of his blessing he will surely continue to share more.

**10 sn** This proverb, written in loose synonymous parallelism, instructs that the scorner should be removed because he causes strife. The “scorner” is לֵץ (*lets*), 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.

**11 tc** The LXX freely adds “when he sits in council (ἐν συνέδριῳ, *en sunedriō*), he insults everyone.” The MT does not suggest that the setting is in a court of law; so the LXX addition is highly unlikely.

**12 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.

**13 tn** Heb “grace of his lips” (so KJV, ASV). The “lips” are a metonymy of cause representing what is said; it also functions as a genitive of specification.

**sn** This individual is gracious or kind in what he says; thus the verse is commending honest intentions and gracious words.

**14 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.

**15 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.

**16 tn** 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 to read “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 רָצַת in Proverbs 22:12,” *JTS* 14 [1963]: 93-94).

**17 tn** The object of the verb is the “words of the traitor” (בְּרַי בִּגְדָה, *divre vaged*); cf. NASB “the words of the treacherous man.” What treacherous people say is treachery. In this context “traitor, treacherous” refers to one who is “unfaithful” (cf. NIV).

**sn** The proverb affirms that God in safeguarding true knowledge will frustrate deception from faithless people – what they say will not have its intended effect.

**18 sn** 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.

I will be killed in the middle of the streets!<sup>1</sup>

**22:14** The mouth<sup>2</sup> of an adulteress is like<sup>3</sup> a deep pit,<sup>4</sup> the one against whom the LORD is angry<sup>5</sup> will fall into it.<sup>6</sup>

**22:15** Folly is bound up<sup>7</sup> in the heart of a child,<sup>8</sup> but the rod of discipline<sup>9</sup> 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<sup>10</sup> – both end up only in poverty.

*The Sayings of the Wise*<sup>11</sup>

**22:17** Incline your ear<sup>12</sup> and listen to the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my instruction.<sup>13</sup>

**22:18** For it is pleasing if<sup>14</sup> you keep these sayings<sup>15</sup> within you, and<sup>16</sup> they are ready on your lips.<sup>17</sup>

**22:19** So that<sup>18</sup> your confidence may be in the LORD, I am making them known to you today<sup>19</sup> – even you.

**22:20** Have I not written thirty sayings<sup>20</sup> for you, sayings<sup>21</sup> of counsel and knowledge,

**22:21** to show you true and reliable words,<sup>22</sup> so that you may give accurate answers<sup>23</sup> to those who sent you?

**22:22** Do not exploit<sup>24</sup> a poor person be-

<sup>1</sup> **tc** The LXX changes the phrase to read “murderers in the street” to form a better parallelism, possibly because the verb רצח (*ratsakh*) is used only of humans, not wild animals. The NIV attempts to solve the problem by making the second line a separate claim by the sluggard: “or, ‘I will be murdered in the streets!’”

<sup>2</sup> **sn** The word “mouth” is a metonymy of cause; it refers to the seductive speech of the strange woman (e.g., 2:16-22; and chs. 5, 7).

<sup>3</sup> **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.

<sup>4</sup> **sn** The point of the metaphor is that what the adulteress says is like a deep pit. The pit is like the hunter’s snare; it is a trap that is difficult to escape. So to succumb to the adulteress – or to any other folly this represents – is to get oneself into a difficulty that has no easy escape.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *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.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “will fall there.” The “falling” could refer to the curse itself or to the result of the curse.

**sn** The proverb 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.

<sup>7</sup> **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).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The “heart of a child” (לִבְנֵי-אֵר, *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.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** 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”).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *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).

<sup>11</sup> **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. 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.

<sup>12</sup> **sn** To “incline the ear” means to “listen carefully” (cf. NCV); the expression is metonymical in that the ear is the instrument for hearing. It is like telling someone to lean over to hear better.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “knowledge” (so KJV, NASB); in this context it refers to the knowledge that is spoken by the wise, hence “instruction.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Or “when” (so NIV).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “keep them,” referring to the words of the wise expressed in these sayings. The referent has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The term “and” does not appear in the Hebrew but is supplied in the translation.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** If the teachings are preserved in the heart/mind of the disciple, then that individual will always be ready to speak what was retained.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The form לִיְהוֹת (*lihyot*, “to be”) is the infinitive construct indicating the purpose (or result) of the teaching (cf. NASB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “I cause you to know.” The term “today” indicates that the verb should have the instantaneous nuance, and so an English present tense is used in the translation (“am making...known”).

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Older English versions and a few more recent ones render this phrase as either “excellent things” following the *Qere* (so KJV, ASV, NASB, NKJV), “officers,” or “heretofore” [day before yesterday], following the *Kethib*. However (as in most recent English versions) the *Qere* should be rendered “thirty,” referring to the number in the collection (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>21</sup> **tn** The term “sayings” does not appear in the Hebrew text but is supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to cause you to know the truth of words of truth” (NASB similar).

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to return true words”; NAB “a dependable report”; NIV “sound answers.”

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Two negated jussives form the instruction here: אַל-תִּגְזַל (*al-tigzal*, “do not exploit”) and אַל-תִּדְאֶקֶה (*ve’al-tidakke*, “do not crush”).

**sn** Robbing or oppressing the poor is easy because they are defenseless. But this makes the crime tempting as well

cause he is poor  
and do not crush the needy in court,<sup>1</sup>  
22:23 for the LORD will plead their case<sup>2</sup>  
and will rob those who are robbing<sup>3</sup>  
them.  
22:24 Do not make friends with an angry  
person,<sup>4</sup>  
and do not associate with a wrathful person,  
22:25 lest you learn<sup>5</sup> his ways  
and entangle yourself in a snare.<sup>6</sup>  
22:26 Do not be one who strikes hands in  
pledge  
or who puts up security for debts.  
22:27 If you do not have enough to pay,  
your bed<sup>7</sup> will be taken<sup>8</sup> right out from  
under you!<sup>9</sup>  
22:28 Do not move an ancient boundary  
stone<sup>10</sup>  
which was put in place by your ancestors.<sup>11</sup>

22:29 Do you see a person skilled<sup>12</sup> in his  
work?  
He will take his position before kings;  
he will not take his position<sup>13</sup> before ob-  
scure people.<sup>14</sup>  
23:1 When you sit down to eat with a  
ruler,  
consider carefully<sup>15</sup> what<sup>16</sup> is before you,  
23:2 and put a knife to your throat<sup>17</sup>  
if you possess a large appetite.<sup>18</sup>  
23:3 Do not crave that ruler's<sup>19</sup> delicacies,  
for<sup>20</sup> that food is deceptive.<sup>21</sup>  
23:4 Do not wear yourself out to become  
rich;  
be wise enough to restrain yourself.<sup>22</sup>  
23:5 When you gaze upon riches,<sup>23</sup> they  
are gone,  
for they surely make wings for them-  
selves,

as contemptible. What is envisioned may be in bounds legally (just) but out of bounds morally.

**1 tn** Heb "in the gate" (so KJV); NAB, NASB, NRSV "at the gate." The "gate" of the city was the center of activity, the place of business as well as the place for settling legal disputes. The language of the next verse suggests a legal setting, so "court" is an appropriate translation here.

**2 tn** The construction uses the verb יָרִיב (*yariv*) with its cognate accusative. It can mean "to strive," but here it probably means "to argue a case, plead a case" (cf. KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV). How the LORD will do this is not specified – either through righteous people or by direct intervention.

**3 tn** The verb קָבַע (*qava*), "to rob; to spoil; to plunder" is used here in both places to reflect the principle of talionic justice. What the oppressors did to the poor will be turned back on them by the LORD.

**4 tn** Heb "possessor of anger." This expression is an idiom for "wrathful person" or "an angry person" (cf. NAB "a hot-headed man"; NLT "short-tempered people"). These are people characterized by anger, meaning the anger is not a rare occurrence with them.

**5 tn** The verb פָּרַחְתָּ לָהֶם (*pen-te'elaf*) is translated "lest you learn." The idea is more precisely "become familiar with his ways." The construction indicates that if one associates with such people he will become like them (cf. TEV "you might learn their habits").

**6 sn** The warning in this proverb is to avoid associating with a hothead because his influence could be fatal (a similar idea is found in the Instruction of Amenemope, chap. 9, 11:13-14 [ANET 423]).

**7 tn** The "bed" may be a metonymy of adjunct, meaning the garment that covers the bed (e.g., Exod 22:26). At any rate, it represents the individual's last possession (like the English expression "the shirt off his back").

**8 tn** Heb "If you cannot pay, why should he take the bed from under you?" This rhetorical question is used to affirm the statement. The rhetorical interrogative לָמָּה (*lamah*, "why?") appears in MT but not in the ancient versions; it may be in the Hebrew text by dittography.

**9 sn** The third saying deals with rash vows: If people foolishly pledge what they have, they could lose everything (e.g., 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; there is no Egyptian parallel).

**10 sn** Moving a boundary stone was (and still is) a major problem. The boundaries that were established by the forefathers were to be preserved, but no law would stop such violations if people lacked integrity (e.g., Deut 19:14; 27:17; 1 Kgs 21:16-19). Boundaries in Israel were sacred because God owned the land and he apportioned the property to the tribes. To extend one's property illegally by moving a neighbor's boundary marker was a violation of covenant and oath. Of course, disputes could arise when both sides claim their ancestors established a boundary.

**11 tn** Heb "your fathers" (so NAB, NASB).

**sn** The fourth saying deals with respect for property that belongs to other people (cf. Instruction of Amenemope, chap. 6, 7:12-13 [ANET 422]).

**12 sn** 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).

**13 tn** The verb form used twice here is יָיַצַב (*yiyatsev*), the Hitpa'el imperfect of יָצַב (*yatsav*), which means "to set or station oneself; to take one's stand" in this stem. With the form לִפְנֵי (*life*) it means "to present oneself before" someone; so here it has the idea of serving as a courtier in the presence of a king.

**14 sn** The fifth saying affirms that true skill earns recognition and advancement (cf. Instruction of Amenemope, chap. 30, 27:16-17 [ANET 424]).

**15 tn** The construction uses the imperfect tense of instruction with the infinitive absolute to emphasize the careful discernment required on such occasions. Cf. NIV "note well"; NLT "pay attention."

**16 tn** Or "who," referring to the ruler (so ASV, NAB, TEV).

**17 sn** 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.

**18 tn** Heb "lord of appetite." The idiom בַּעַל נֶפֶשׁ (*ba'al nefesh*) refers to someone who possesses a large appetite (cf. NAB "a ravenous appetite"). A person with a big appetite is in danger of taking liberties when invited to court.

**19 tn** Heb "his"; the referent (the ruler mentioned in v. 1) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

**20 sn** The final 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 17:104); cf. TEV "he may be trying to trick you."

**21 sn** 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 warning that a ruler only draws someone into his court for his purpose, but in their day of trouble he will not be there to help them (*m. Abot* 2:3).

**22 tn** Heb "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 tc** The *Kethib* is הָתֵיבָה (*hata'uf*), "do your eyes fly [light] on it?" The *Qere* is the Hiphil, הָתֵיבָה (*hata'if*) "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.

**tn** The term "riches" is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation based on the previous verse.

and fly off into the sky like an eagle!<sup>1</sup>  
**23:6** Do not eat the food of a stingy person,<sup>2</sup>  
do not crave his delicacies;  
**23:7** for he is<sup>3</sup> like someone calculating  
the cost<sup>4</sup> in his mind.<sup>5</sup>  
“Eat and drink,” he says to you,  
but his heart is not with you;  
**23:8** you will vomit up<sup>6</sup> the little bit you  
have eaten,  
and will have wasted your pleasant  
words.<sup>7</sup>  
**23:9** Do not speak in the ears of a fool,<sup>8</sup>  
for he will despise the wisdom of your  
words.<sup>9</sup>  
**23:10** Do not move an ancient boundary  
stone,  
or take over<sup>10</sup> the fields of the fatherless,  
**23:11** for their Protector<sup>11</sup> is strong;

he will plead their case against you.<sup>12</sup>  
**23:12** Apply<sup>13</sup> your heart to instruction  
and your ears to the words of knowledge.  
**23:13** Do not withhold discipline from a  
child;  
even if you strike him with the rod, he  
will not die.  
**23:14** If you strike<sup>14</sup> him with the rod,  
you will deliver him<sup>15</sup> from death.<sup>16</sup>  
**23:15** My child,<sup>17</sup> if your heart is wise,  
then my heart also will be glad;  
**23:16** my soul<sup>18</sup> will rejoice  
when your lips speak what is right.<sup>19</sup>  
**23:17** Do not let your heart envy<sup>20</sup> sinners,  
but rather be zealous in fearing the LORD<sup>21</sup>  
all the time.  
**23:18** For surely there is a future,<sup>22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **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.

<sup>2</sup> **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”). He 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.

<sup>3</sup> **tc** 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 is as if one should swallow a hair; do not introduce him to your company nor eat bread with him.” The Hebrew verb “to calculate” (שָׁאַר, *sha’ar*) with a change of vocalization and of sibilant would yield “hair” (שֵׁאַר, *se’ar*) – “like a hair in the throat [נֶפֶשׁ, *nefesh*], so is he.” This would picture an irritating experience. The Instruction of Amememope uses “blocking the throat” in a similar saying (chapt. 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.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** 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.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “soul.”

<sup>6</sup> **sn** Eating and drinking with a selfish miser would be irritating and disgusting. The line is hyperbolic; the whole experience turns the stomach.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Or “your compliments” (so NASB, NIV); cf. TEV “your flattery.”

**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.

<sup>8</sup> **sn** The mention of “the ears” emphasizes the concerted effort to get the person’s undivided attention. However, a fool rejects instruction and discipline.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** Saying number nine indicates that wisdom is wasted on a fool. The literature of Egypt has no specific parallel to this one.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Or “encroach on” (NIV, NRSV); *Heb* “go into.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The participle גֹּאֵל (*go’el*) describes a “kinsman redeemer.” Some English versions explicitly cite “God” (e.g., NCV, CEV) or “the Lord” (e.g. TEV).

**sn** The Hebrew term 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 48:16; 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.

<sup>12</sup> **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).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “bring.” The Hiphil imperative “come; enter” means “to apply the heart,” to use the heart or mind in the process. The same would be true in the second half: “to bring the ears” would mean to listen very carefully. Cf. TEV “Pay attention.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Or “punish” (NIV). The syntax of these two lines suggests a conditional clause (cf. NCV, NRSV).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “his soul.” The term נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*, “soul”) functions as a synecdoche of part (= soul) for the whole (= person); see BDB 660 s.v. 4.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The term שְׂאוֹל (*she’ol*, “Sheol”) in this context probably means “death” (so NIV, NCV, NLT) and not the realm of the departed (wicked) spirits (cf. NAB “the nether world”). In the wisdom of other lands, Ahiqar 6:82 says, “If I strike you, my son, you will not die.” The idea is that discipline helps the child to a full life; if the child dies prematurely, it would be more than likely a consequence of not being trained by discipline. In the book of Proverbs the “death” mentioned here could be social as well as physical.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “my son,” although the context does not limit this exhortation to male children.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “my kidneys”; in biblical Hebrew the term was used for the innermost being, the soul, the central location of the passions. Cf. NASB, NIV “my inmost being.”

<sup>19</sup> **sn** This twelfth saying simply observes that children bring joy to their parents when they demonstrate wisdom. The quatrain is arranged in a chiasmic structure (AB: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.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The verb in this line is אֲלִי־יָקֵן (*’al-yeqanne*), 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.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the fear of the LORD.” This expression features an objective genitive: “fearing the LORD.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “end” (so KJV); ASV “a reward.”

and your hope will not be cut off.<sup>1</sup>

**23:19** Listen, my child,<sup>2</sup> and be wise, and guide your heart on the right way.

**23:20** Do not spend time<sup>3</sup> among drunkards,<sup>4</sup>

among those who eat too much<sup>5</sup> meat, **23:21** because drunkards and gluttons become impoverished, and drowsiness<sup>6</sup> clothes them with rags.<sup>7</sup>

**23:22** Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

**23:23** Acquire<sup>8</sup> truth and do not sell it – wisdom, and discipline, and understanding.

**23:24** The father of a righteous person will rejoice greatly,<sup>9</sup> whoever fathers a wise child<sup>10</sup> will have joy in him.

**23:25** May your father and your mother have joy; may she who bore you rejoice.<sup>11</sup>

**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 tn** Heb “do not be among,” but in the sense of “associate with” (TEV); “join” (NIV); “consort...with” (NAB).

**4 tn** The verb סָבָא (sava) means “to imbibe; to drink largely.” The participial construction here, סֹבְאֵי יַיִן (sov’e-yayin), describes “drunkards” (cf. NLT) which is somewhat stronger than saying it refers to “people who drink too much” (cf. NIV, TEV).

**5 tn** The verb זָלַל (zalat) means “to be light; to be worthless; to make light of.” Making light of something came to mean “to be lavish with; to squander,” especially with regard to food. So it describes “gluttons” primarily, but in the expression there is also room for the person who wastes a lot of food as well.

**6 tn** Here “drowsiness” is a metonymy of effect or adjunct, put for the drunkenness and gluttony that causes it. So all of it, the drunkenness and the drowsiness that comes from it, brings on the ruin (cf. CEV “you will end up poor”). Likewise, “rags” is a metonymy of adjunct, associated with the poverty brought on by a dissolute lifestyle.

**7 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).

**8 tn** Heb “buy” (so KJV, NASB, NIV, NLT); CEV “Invest in truth.”

**9 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 tc** The Qere reading has the imperfect יָגִיל (yagil) with the cognate accusative יָגִיל (gil) which intensifies the meaning and the specific future of this verb.

**10 tn** The term “child” is supplied for the masculine singular adjective here.

**11 tn** The form תִּגַּל (tagel) is clearly a short form and therefore a jussive (“may she...rejoice”); if this second verb is a jussive, then the parallel וְיִגַּלְהָ (yismakh) should be a jussive also (“may your father and your mother have joy”).

**23:26** Give me your heart, my son,<sup>12</sup>

and let your eyes observe my ways;

**23:27** for a prostitute is like<sup>13</sup> a deep pit; a harlot<sup>14</sup> is like<sup>15</sup> a narrow well.<sup>16</sup>

**23:28** Indeed, she lies in wait like a robber,<sup>17</sup>

and increases the unfaithful<sup>18</sup> among men.<sup>19</sup>

**23:29** Who has woe?<sup>20</sup> Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints?

**12 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.

**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 tn** Heb “foreign woman” (so ASV). The term נֹכְרִיָּא (nokhriyyah, “foreign woman”) often refers to a prostitute (e.g., Prov 2:6; 5:20; 6:24; 7:5). While not all foreign women in Israel were prostitutes, their prospects for economic survival were meager and many turned to prostitution to earn a living. Some English versions see this term referring to an adulteress as opposed to a prostitute (cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

**15 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.

**16 sn** In either case, whether a prostitute or an adulteress wife is involved, the danger is the same. The metaphors of a “deep pit” and a “narrow well” describe this sin as one that is a trap from which there is no escape. The “pit” is a gateway to Sheol, and those who enter are as good as dead, whether socially or through punishment physically.

**17 tn** The noun כְּתֵף (khetef) is defined by BDB 369 s.v. as “prey,” but this is the only occurrence of the word. The related verb BDB 368-69 s.v. כָּתַף (khat) defines as “to seize; to snatch away” (with an Aramaic cognate meaning “to break in pieces” [Pa], and an Arabic word “death”). But the only occurrence of that word is in Job 9:12, where it is defined as “seizes.” So in this passage the noun could have either a passive sense (what is seized = prey), or an active sense (the one who seizes = a robber, bandit). The traditional rendering is “prey” (KJV); most modern English versions have the active sense (“robber” or similar; cf. NIV “like a bandit”). Since the prepositional phrase (the simile) is modifying the woman, the active sense works better in the translation.

**18 tn** The participle means “unfaithful [men]” (masculine plural); it could also be interpreted as “unfaithfulness” in the abstract sense. M. Dahood interprets it to mean “garments” (which would have to be repointed), saying that she collects garments in pledge for her service (M. Dahood, “To Pawn One’s Cloak,” *Bib* 42 [1961]: 359-66). But that is far-fetched; it might have happened on occasion, but as a common custom it is unlikely. Besides that, the text in the MT makes perfectly good sense without such a change.

**sn** Such a woman makes more people prove unfaithful to the law of God through her practice.

**19 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.

**20 sn** The eighteenth saying is about excessive drinking. The style changes here as the sage breaks into a vivid use of the imagination. It begins with a riddle describing the effects of drunkenness (v. 29) and gives the answer in v. 30; instructions follow in v. 31, with the consequences described in v. 32; the direct address continues in vv. 33 and 34; and the whole subject is concluded with the drunkard’s own words in v. 35 (M. E. Andrews, “Variety of Expression in Proverbs 23:29-35,” *VT* 28 [1978]: 102-3).



Who has wounds without cause? Who has dullness<sup>4</sup> of the eyes?

**23:30** Those who linger over wine, those who go looking for mixed wine.<sup>2</sup>

**23:31** Do not look on the wine when it is red,

when it sparkles<sup>3</sup> in the cup, when it goes down smoothly.<sup>4</sup>

**23:32** Afterward<sup>5</sup> it bites like a snake, and stings like a viper.

**23:33** Your eyes will see strange things,<sup>6</sup> and your mind will speak perverse things.

**23:34** And you will be like one who lies down in the midst<sup>7</sup> of the sea, and like one who lies down on the top of the rigging.<sup>8</sup>

**23:35** You will say,<sup>9</sup> “They have struck me, but I am not harmed!

They beat me, but I did not know it!<sup>10</sup> When will I awake? I will look for another drink.”<sup>11</sup>

**24:1** Do not envy evil people,<sup>12</sup> do not desire<sup>13</sup> to be with them;

**24:2** for their hearts contemplate violence, and their lips speak harm.<sup>14</sup>

**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 metonymies 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 eye gives.” 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 הָלַךְ (*halakh*); and the prepositional phrase uses the word “upright; equity; pleasing,” from יָשָׁר (*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 (interpretingly) “The next morning.”

**6 tn** The feminine plural of זָרָה (*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 seasick. 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 הוֹסִיף (*osif*) signals a verbal hendiadys 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-

**24:3** By<sup>15</sup> wisdom a house is built,<sup>16</sup> and through understanding it is established;

**24:4** by knowledge its rooms are filled with all kinds of precious and pleasing treasures.

**24:5** A wise warrior<sup>17</sup> is strong,<sup>18</sup> and a man of knowledge makes his strength stronger;

**24:6** for with guidance you wage your war, and with numerous advisers there is victory.<sup>19</sup>

**24:7** Wisdom is unattainable<sup>20</sup> for a fool; in court<sup>21</sup> he does not open his mouth.<sup>22</sup>

**24:8** The one who plans to do evil will be called a scheming person.<sup>23</sup>

**24:9** A foolish scheme<sup>24</sup> is sin,

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 בְּ (*bet*, “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], 442). 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 גִּבּוֹר (*geber*), “mighty man; hero; warrior.”

**18 tn** The expression בָּטוּחַ (*ba’oz*) employs a *beth essentialis*, 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 1:1; 14; 20:18; and 21:22.

**20 tc** The MT reads רָמוֹת (*ra’mot*, “corals”) – wisdom to the fool is corals, i.e., an unattainable treasure. With a slight change in the text, removing the א (*alef*), the reading is רְמוֹת (*ramot*, “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 wicked 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* [OTL], 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 scorner is an abomination to people.<sup>1</sup>

**24:10** If you faint<sup>2</sup> in the day of trouble,<sup>3</sup> your strength is small!<sup>4</sup>

**24:11** Deliver those being taken away to death, and hold back those slipping to the slaughter.<sup>5</sup>

**24:12** If you say, “But we did not know about this,”

does not the one who evaluates<sup>6</sup> hearts consider?

Does not the one who guards your life know?

Will he not repay each person according to his deeds?<sup>7</sup>

**24:13** Eat honey,<sup>8</sup> my child, for it is good, and honey from the honeycomb is sweet to your taste.

**24:14** Likewise, know<sup>9</sup> that wisdom is sweet<sup>10</sup> to your soul; if you find it,<sup>11</sup> you will have a future,<sup>12</sup>

and your hope will not be cut off.

**24:15** Do not lie in wait like the wicked<sup>13</sup> against the place where the righteous live;

do not assault<sup>14</sup> his home.

**24:16** Although<sup>15</sup> a righteous person may fall seven times, he gets up again, but the wicked will be brought down<sup>16</sup> by calamity.

**24:17** Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,<sup>17</sup>

and when he stumbles do not let your heart rejoice,

**24:18** lest the LORD see it, and be displeased,<sup>18</sup>

and turn his wrath away from him.<sup>19</sup>

**24:19** Do not fret because of evil people or be envious of wicked people,

**24:20** for the evil person has no future,<sup>20</sup> and the lamp of the wicked will be extinguished.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to a man”; cf. CEV “Everyone hates senseless fools.”

**sn** This describes evil people who flout all morality and goodness; sooner or later the public will have had enough of them.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “show yourself slack” (NASB similar). The verb רָפַח (*rifah*) means “to sink; to relax.” 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, for which the second part of the verse is the apodosis.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The verse employs a paronomasia to underscore the point: “trouble” is צָרָה (*tsarah*), literally “a bind; a strait [or, narrow] place”; “small” is צָר (*tsar*), with the same idea of “narrow” or “close.”

<sup>4</sup> **sn** 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.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The idea of “slipping” (participle from מוֹט, *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 reference would be general, viz., to help any who are in mortal danger or who might be tottering on the edge of such disaster – whether through sin, or through disease, war, or danger. Several English versions (e.g., NASB, NIV, NRSV) render this term as “staggering.”

**sn** 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.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “weighs” (so NASB, NIV, NRSV) meaning “tests” or “evaluates.”

<sup>7</sup> **sn** The verse completes the saying by affirming that people will be judged responsible for helping those in mortal danger. The verse uses a series of rhetorical questions to affirm that God knows our hearts and we cannot plead ignorance.

<sup>8</sup> **sn** The twenty-sixth saying teaches that one should develop wisdom because it has a profitable future. The saying draws on the image of honey; its health-giving properties make a good analogy to wisdom.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** D. W. Thomas argues for a meaning of “seek” in place of “know” (“Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs,” JTS 38 [1937]: 400-403).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The phrase “is sweet” is supplied in the translation as a clarification.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The term “it” is supplied in the translation.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “there will be an end.” The word is אַחֲרַיִת (*akhrit*,

“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 posterity promised to the righteous, often parallel to “hope.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** 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 adverbial accusative (“like the wicked”).

<sup>14</sup> **sn** 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.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The clause beginning with כִּי (*ki*) 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 possibility. The apodosis is then “and he rises up,” which could be a participle or a perfect tense; although he may fall, he gets up (or, will get up).

**sn** The righteous may suffer adversity or misfortune any number of times – seven times here – but they will “rise” for virtue triumphs over evil in the end (R. N. Whybray, *Proverbs* [CBC], 140).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The verb could be translated with an English present tense (“are brought down,” so NIV) to express what happens to the wicked in this life, but since the saying warns against being like the wicked, their destruction is more likely directed to the future.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** The saying (vv. 17, 18) warns against gloating over the misfortune of one’s enemies. The prohibition is formed with two negated jussives “do not rejoice” and “let not be glad,” the second qualified by “your heart” as the subject, signifying the inner satisfaction of such a defeat.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and [it is] evil in his eyes.”

<sup>19</sup> **sn** The judgment of God should strike a note of fear in 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 defeated. These are probably personal enemies; the imprecation psalms and the prophetic oracles present a different set of circumstances for the downfall of God’s enemies – even the book of Proverbs says that brings joy to the community.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “there is no end [i.e., future] for the evil.”

<sup>21</sup> **sn** The saying warns against envying the wicked; v. 19 provides the instruction, and v. 20 the motivation. The motivation is that there is no future hope for them – nothing to envy, or as C. H. Toy explains, there will be no good outcome for their lives (*Proverbs* [ICC], 449). They will die suddenly, as the implied comparison with the lamp being snuffed out signifies.

24:21 Fear the LORD, my child,<sup>1</sup> as well as the king,  
and do not associate<sup>2</sup> with rebels,<sup>3</sup>  
24:22 for suddenly their destruction will  
overtake them,<sup>4</sup>  
and who knows the ruinous judgment  
both the LORD and the king can bring?<sup>5</sup>

*Further Sayings of the Wise*

24:23 These sayings also are from the  
wise:  
To show partiality<sup>6</sup> in judgment is ter-  
rible;<sup>7</sup>  
24:24 The one who says to the guilty,<sup>8</sup>  
“You are innocent,”<sup>9</sup>  
peoples will curse him, and nations will  
denounce<sup>10</sup> him.  
24:25 But there will be delight<sup>11</sup> for those

who convict<sup>12</sup> the guilty,<sup>13</sup>  
and a pleasing blessing<sup>14</sup> will come on  
them.

24:26 Like a kiss on the lips<sup>15</sup>  
is the one who gives an honest answer.  
24:27 Establish your work outside and get  
your fields ready;  
afterward build<sup>16</sup> your house.<sup>17</sup>  
24:28 Do not be a witness against your  
neighbor without cause,<sup>18</sup>  
and do not deceive with your words.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “my son,” but there is no indication in the immediate context that this should be limited only to male children.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “do not get mixed up with”; cf. TEV “Have nothing to do with”; NIV “do not join with.” The verb עָרַב (*arav*) 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.

<sup>3</sup> **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 *JG*. 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.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “will rise” (so NASB).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the ruin of the two of them.” Judgment is sent on the rebels both by God and the king. The term פִּיד (*pid*, “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 for clarity.

**sn** The reward for living in peace under God in this world is that those who do will escape the calamities that will fall on the rebellious. Verse 21a is used in 1 Peter 2:17, and v. 22 is used in Romans 13:1-7 (v. 4). This is the thirtieth and last of this collection.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to recognize faces”; KJV, ASV “to have respect of persons”; NLT “to show favoritism.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “not good.” This is a figure known as tapeinosis – a deliberate understatement to emphasize a worst-case scenario: “it is terrible!”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The word means “wicked; guilty” or “criminal”; the contrast could be “wicked – righteous” (cf. KJV, ASV, NAB, NASB) or “innocent – guilty” (cf. NIV, TEV, CEV). Since this line follows the statement about showing partiality in judgment, it involves a forensic setting. Thus the statement describes one who calls a guilty person innocent or acquitted.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Or “righteous”; the same Hebrew word may be translated either “innocent” or “righteous” depending on the context.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The verb means “to be indignant.” It can be used within the range of “have indignation,” meaning “loathe” or “abhor,” or express indignation, meaning “denounce” or “curse.” In this passage, in collocation with the previous term “curse,” the latter is intended (cf. NAB, NIV, NLT).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The verb means “to be pleasant; to be delightful.” The

imperfect tense promises that there “will be delight” to those who rebuke the wicked.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The verb יָבִיחַ (*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.

<sup>13</sup> **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.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The expression בִּרְכַת־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. NAB, TEV, CEV).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the one who returns right words kisses the lips.” This is an implied comparison for giving an honest answer. Honesty is like a kiss. The kiss would signify love, devotion, sincerity, and commitment (in that culture) – an outward expression of what is in the heart. It is an apt illustration of telling the truth. Some English versions now replace the figure to avoid cultural misunderstanding (cf. TEV, CEV “a sign of true friendship”; NLT “an honor”).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The perfect tense with *vav* following the imperatives takes on the force of an imperative here.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** If the term “house” is understood literally, the proverb would mean that one should be financially secure before building a house (cf. NLT). If “house” is figurative for household (metonymy of subject: children or family), the proverb would mean that one should have financial security and provision before starting a family. Some English versions suggest the latter meaning by using the word “home” for “house” (e.g., TEV, CEV).

<sup>18</sup> **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 כִּחַן (*khanan*), which means “to be gracious.” The adverb means “without a cause; gratis; free.” It is also cognate to the word חַן (“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.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lips.” The term “lips” is a metonymy of cause; it means “what is said.” Here it refers to what is said in court as a false witness.

**24:29** Do not say, “I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will pay him back<sup>1</sup> according to what he has done.”<sup>2</sup>

**24:30** I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of one who lacks wisdom.<sup>3</sup>

**24:31** I saw<sup>4</sup> that thorns had grown up all over it, the ground<sup>5</sup> was covered with weeds, and its stone wall was broken down.

**24:32** When I saw this, I gave careful consideration to it.<sup>6</sup>

I received instruction from what I saw:<sup>7</sup>

**24:33** “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to relax,

**24:34** and your poverty will come like a bandit, and your need like an armed robber.”<sup>8</sup>

*Proverbs of Solomon Collected by Hezekiah*

**25:1** These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of King Hezekiah of Judah copied.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “repay to the man.” The verb is שָׁבַע (*shuv*), 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.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** 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).

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lacks heart”; KJV “understanding”; NAB, NASB, NLT “sense.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term הִיבַחְתִּי (ʿ*hinneh*, 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.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “its face” (so KJV, ASV).

<sup>6</sup> **sn** *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.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *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.” It is clear that 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.”

**sn** 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.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *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.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** 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 that 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-

**25:2** It is the glory of God<sup>10</sup> to conceal<sup>11</sup> a matter, and it is the glory of a king to search out a matter.

**25:3** As the heaven is high<sup>12</sup> and the earth is deep

so the hearts of kings are unsearchable.<sup>13</sup>

**25:4** Remove the dross from the silver, and material<sup>14</sup> for the silversmith will emerge;

**25:5** remove the wicked from before the king,<sup>15</sup> and his throne<sup>16</sup> will be established in righteousness.<sup>17</sup>

tion. But if the reference is an earlier note in the collection, then it becomes more valuable for consideration. The proverbs in these lines differ from the earlier ones in that these are multiple line sayings using more similes; chapters 28-29 are similar to 10-16, but chapters 25-27 differ in having few references to God.

**10 sn** The proverb provides a contrast between God and the king, and therein is the clue to the range of application involved. The interest of the king is ruling or administering his government; and so the subject matter is a contrast to the way God rules his kingdom.

**11 sn** The two infinitives form the heart of the contrast – “to conceal a matter” and “to search out a matter.” God’s government of the universe is beyond human understanding – humans cannot begin to fathom the intentions and operations of it. But it is the glory of kings to search out matters and make them intelligible to the people. Human government cannot claim divine secrecy; kings have to study and investigate everything before making a decision, even divine government as far as possible. But kings who rule as God’s representatives must also try to represent his will in human affairs – they must even inquire after God to find his will. This is their glorious nature and responsibility. For more general information on vv. 2-27, see G. E. Bryce, “Another Wisdom ‘Book’ in Proverbs,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 145-57.

**12 tn** *Heb* “heavens for height and earth for depth.” The proverb is clearly intending the first line to be an illustration of the second – it is almost emblematic parallelism.

**13 sn** The proverb is affirming a simple fact: The king’s plans and decisions are beyond the comprehension of the common people. While the king would make many things clear to the people, there are other things that are “above their heads” or “too deep for them.” They are unsearchable because of his superior wisdom, his caprice, or his need for secrecy. Inscrutability is sometimes necessary to keep a firm grip on power.

**14 tn** The Hebrew כֵּלִי (*keli*) means “vessel; utensil” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). But purging dross from silver does not produce a “vessel” for the silversmith. Some versions therefore render it “material” (e.g., NIV, NRSV). The LXX says “that it will be entirely pure.” So D. W. Thomas reads כְּלִי (*kali*) and translates it “purified completely” (“Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs,” *VT* 15 [1965]: 271-79; cf. NAB). W. McKane simply rearranges the line to say that the smith can produce a work of art (*Proverbs* [OTL], 580; cf. TEV “a thing of beauty”). The easiest explanation is that “vessel” is a metonymy of effect, “vessel” put for the material that goes into making it (such metonymies occur fairly often in Psalms and Proverbs).

**15 sn** These two verses present first an illustration and then the point (so it is emblematic parallelism). The passage uses imperatives to teach that the wicked must be purged from the kingdom.

**16 sn** “Throne” is a metonymy of subject (or adjunct); it is the symbol of the government over which the king presides (cf. NCV, TEV).

**17 sn** When the king purges the wicked from his court he will be left with righteous counselors and his government therefore will be “established in righteousness” – it will endure through righteousness (cf. NLT “made secure by justice”). But as J. H. Greenstone says, “The king may have perfect ideals

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<sup>1</sup> to say to you, “Come up here,”<sup>2</sup> than to put you lower<sup>3</sup> before a prince, whom your eyes have seen.<sup>4</sup>  
25:8 Do not go out hastily to litigation,<sup>5</sup> or<sup>6</sup> what will you do afterward when your neighbor puts you to shame?  
25:9 When you argue a case<sup>7</sup> with your neighbor, do not reveal the secret of another person,<sup>8</sup>  
25:10 lest the one who hears it put you to shame and your infamy<sup>9</sup> will never go away.  
25:11 Like apples of gold in settings of silver,<sup>10</sup>

so is a word skillfully spoken.<sup>11</sup>  
25:12 Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold,<sup>12</sup> so is a wise reprover to the ear of the one who listens.<sup>13</sup>  
25:13 Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest,<sup>14</sup> so is a faithful messenger to those who send him, for he refreshes the heart<sup>15</sup> of his masters.  
25:14 Like cloudy skies and wind that produce no rain,<sup>16</sup> so is the one who boasts<sup>17</sup> of a gift not given.<sup>18</sup>  
25:15 Through patience<sup>19</sup> a ruler can be persuaded,<sup>20</sup>

and his conduct may be irreproachable, but he may be misled by unscrupulous courtiers” (Proverbs, 264).

**1 tn** 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 take hastily to court, but if the case was not valid, he would end up in disgrace.

**sn** The Hebrew verb ריב (*riv*) is often used in legal contexts; here the warning is not to go to court hastily lest it turn out badly.

**6 tn** The clause begins with פן (*pen*, “lest”) which seems a bit out of place in this line. C. H. Toy suggests changing it to כי (*ki*, “for”) to make a better connection, instead of supplying an ellipsis: “lest it be said what...” (Proverbs [ICC], 461).

**7 tn** The verse begins with the direct object ריבך (*ribkha*, “your case”) followed by the imperative from the same root, ריב (*riv*, “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.”

**8 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.

**9 tn** The noun דִּבְבָה (*dibbah*, “infamy; 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).

**10 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.

**11 tn** Heb “on its wheels.” This expression means “aptly, fittingly.” The point is obviously about the immense value and memorable beauty of words used skillfully (R. N. Whybray, Proverbs [CBC], 148). Noting the meaning of the term and the dual form of the word, W. McKane suggests that the expression is metaphorical for the balancing halves of a Hebrew parallel wisdom saying: “The *stichos* is a wheel, and the sentence consisting of two wheels is a ‘well-turned’ expression” (Proverbs [OTL], 584). The line then would be describing a balanced, well-turned saying, a proverb; it is skillfully constructed, beautifully written, and of lasting value.

**12 sn** This saying is another example of emblematic parallelism; the first half is the simile, and the second half makes the point from it: A wise rebuke that is properly received is of lasting value. The rebuke in the ear of an obedient student is like ornaments of fine jewelry.

**13 tn** The “ear of the listener” refers to the obedient disciple, the one who complies with the reproof he hears. Cf. KJV, ASV, NAB “an obedient ear.”

**14 sn** The emblem in the parallelism of this verse is the simile of the first line. Because snow at the time of harvest would be rare, and probably unwelcome, various commentators have sought to explain this expression. R. N. Whybray suggests it may refer to snow brought down from the mountains and kept cool in an ice hole (Proverbs [CBC], 148); this seems rather forced. J. H. Greenstone following Rashi, a Jewish scholar who lived A.D. 1040-1105, suggests it might refer to the refreshing breeze that comes from snow-capped mountains (Proverbs, 260). C. H. Toy suggests a snow-cooled drink (Proverbs [ICC], 464), and W. McKane an application of ice water to the forehead (Proverbs [OTL], 585). Some English versions replace “snow” with “water” (cf. TEV “cold water”; CEV “cool water”). These all attempt to explain the simile, but the point is clear enough: A faithful servant is refreshing to his master. The analogy could be hypothetical – as refreshing as the coolness of snow *would be* in harvest time.

**15 tn** Heb “he restores the life [or, soul] of his masters.” The idea suggests that someone who sends the messenger either entrusts his life to him or relies on the messenger to resolve some concern. A faithful messenger restores his master’s spirit and so is “refreshing.”

**16 sn** The emblem now is one of clouds and winds that would be expected to produce rain; they gain attention and raise people’s expectations but prove to be disappointing when no rain is forthcoming, and hence could be thought of as deceitful.

**17 tn** The form מִתְהַלֵּל (*mithallel*) is the Hitpaal participle of the well-known word for “praise,” but in this stem it means “to praise oneself” or “to boast.” The description of “windbag” seems appropriate in this context.

**18 tn** Heb “a gift of falsehood.” This would mean that the individual brags about giving a gift, when there is no gift.

**19 tn** Heb “long of anger” or “forbearance” (so NASB).

**20 tn** The two imperfect verbs in this line may be nuanced as potential imperfections because what is described could happen, but does not do so as a rule.

and a soft tongue<sup>1</sup> can break a bone.<sup>2</sup>

**25:16** When you find<sup>3</sup> honey, eat only what is sufficient for you, lest you become stuffed<sup>4</sup> with it and vomit it up.<sup>5</sup>

**25:17** Don't set foot too frequently<sup>6</sup> in your neighbor's house, lest he become weary<sup>7</sup> of you and hate you.

**25:18** Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow,<sup>8</sup> so is the one who testifies against<sup>9</sup> his neighbor as a false witness.<sup>10</sup>

**25:19** Like a bad tooth or a foot out of joint,<sup>11</sup> so is confidence<sup>12</sup> in an unfaithful person

at the time of trouble.<sup>13</sup>

**25:20** Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day,<sup>14</sup>

or like vinegar poured on soda,<sup>15</sup> so is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.<sup>16</sup>

**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,<sup>17</sup>

and the LORD will reward you.<sup>18</sup>

**25:23** The north wind<sup>19</sup> brings forth rain,

**1 tn** The "tongue" is a metonymy of cause; and so the expression here refers to soft or gentle speech. This fits well with the parallel idea of patience ("long of anger") – through a calm patient persuasion much can be accomplished. Some English versions relate this figure directly to the persuasion of a ruler in the previous line (cf. TEV "can even convince rulers").

**2 sn** The idea of breaking a bone uses the hardest and most firm part of the body in contrast to the "softness of the tongue." Both are figurative, forming a comparison. A gentle speech can break down any stiff opposition.

**3 tn** The verse simply begins "you have found honey." Some turn this into an interrogative clause for the condition laid down (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB, NLT); most make the form in some way subordinate to the following instruction: "when you find...eat."

**4 tn** The verb means "to be satisfied; to be sated; to be filled." Here it means more than satisfied, since it describes one who overindulges and becomes sick. The English verb "stuffed" conveys this idea well.

**5 sn** The proverb warns that anything overindulged in can become sickening. The verse uses formal parallelism to express first the condition and then its consequences. It teaches that moderation is wise in the pleasures of life.

**6 tn** *Heb* "make your foot rare." The verb is *הִקָּר* (*hoqar*), the Hiphil imperative of *קָרַר* (*yaqar*, "to be rare; to be precious"). To "make one's foot rare" would mean to keep the visits to a minimum as well as making them valuable – things increase in value, according to the nuances of this word, when they are rare.

**7 tn** *Heb* "gets full." This verb means "to be sated; to be satisfied; to be filled." It is often used with reference to food, but here it refers to frequent visits that wear out one's welcome (cf. NLT).

**8 sn** The first line identifies the emblem of the proverb: False witnesses are here compared to deadly weapons because they can cause the death of innocent people (e.g., Exod 20:16; Deut 5:20; and Prov 14:5).

**9 tn** The verb *נִקְּדָה* (*anah*) followed by the preposition *בְּ* (*bet*) with its object means "to testify against" (answer against someone). With the preposition *לְ* (*lamed*) it would mean "to testify for" someone. Here the false witness is an adversary, hence the comparison with deadly weapons.

**10 tn** While *עֵד* (*ed*) could be interpreted as "evidence" (a meaning that came from a metonymy – what the witness gives in court), its normal meaning is "witness." Here it would function as an adverbial accusative, specifying how he would answer in court.

**11 sn** The similes in this emblematic parallelism focus on things that are incapable of performing certain activities – they are either too painful to use or are ineffective.

**12 tn** Since there is no preposition to clarify the construction, there are two ways to take the term *בְּבִטְחוֹ* (*mivtakh*, "confidence") in the context. It can either refer (1) to reliance on an unfaithful person, or it can refer (2) to that on which the unfaithful person relies. C. H. Toy argues for the second, that what the faithless person relies on will fail him in the time of trouble (*Proverbs* [ICC], 466). This view requires a slight

change in the MT to make "confidence" a construct noun (i.e., the confidence of the faithless); the first view, which fits better the MT as it stands, says that "confidence [in] a faithless person" is like relying on a decaying tooth or a lame foot. This is the view preferred in most English versions, including the present one.

**13 tn** *Heb* "in the day of trouble"; KJV, NASB "in time of trouble."

**14 tc** The consonants of the Hebrew text of this verse are similar to the consonants in v. 19. The LXX has a much longer reading: "Like vinegar is bad for a wound, so a pain that afflicts the body afflicts the heart. Like a moth in a garment, and a worm in wood, so the pain of a man wounds the heart" (NRSV follows much of the LXX reading; NAB follows only the second sentence of the LXX reading). The idea that v. 20 is a dittogram is not very convincing; and the Greek version is too far removed to be of help in the matter.

**15 tn** The second simile mentions pouring vinegar on soda. The LXX has "scab," but that does not fit as a sensitive thing. The reference is to sodium carbonate (natural in Egypt) which can be neutralized with vinegar.

**16 sn** It is inappropriate and counterproductive to sing songs to a heavy heart. One needs to be sensitive to others (e.g., 1 Sam 19:9).

**17 sn** The imagery of the "burning coals" represents pangs of conscience, more readily effected by kindness than by violence. These coals produce the sharp pain of contrition through regret (e.g., 18:19; 20:22; 24:17; Gen 42-45; 1 Sam 24:18-20; Rom 12:20). The coals then would be an implied comparison with a searing conscience.

**18 sn** The second consequence of treating enemies with kindness is that the LORD will reward the act. The fact that this is promised shows that the instruction here belongs to the religious traditions of Israel.

**19 sn** One difficulty here is that it is the west wind that brings rain to Israel (e.g., 1 Kgs 18:41-44). C. H. Toy suggests that the expression is general, referring to a northwest wind – unless it is an error (*Proverbs* [ICC], 468). J. P. M. van der Ploeg suggests that the saying originated outside the land, perhaps in Egypt ("Prov 25:23," VT 3 [1953]: 189-92). But this would imply it was current in a place where it made no sense. R. N. Whybray suggests that the solution lies with the verb "brings forth" (*הִרְוֶה*, *h'roleh*); he suggests redefining it to mean "repels, holds back" (cf. KJV "driveth away"). Thus, the point would be that the north wind holds back the rain just as an angry look holds back slander (*Proverbs* [CBC], 149). But the support for this definition is not convincing. Seeing this as a general reference to northerly winds is the preferred solution.

and a gossiping tongue<sup>1</sup> brings forth<sup>2</sup> an angry look.<sup>3</sup>

**25:24** It is better to live on a corner of the housetop than in a house in company with a quarrelsome wife.<sup>4</sup>

**25:25** Like cold water to a weary person,<sup>5</sup> so is good news from a distant land.<sup>6</sup>

**25:26** Like a muddied<sup>7</sup> spring and a polluted<sup>8</sup> well, so is a righteous person who gives way<sup>9</sup> before the wicked.

**25:27** It is not good<sup>10</sup> to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable for people to seek their own glory.<sup>11</sup>

**25:28** Like a city that is broken down and without a wall,

so is a person who cannot control his temper.<sup>12</sup>

**26:1** Like snow in summer or rain in harvest,

so honor<sup>13</sup> is not fitting for a fool.<sup>14</sup>

**26:2** Like a fluttering bird or like a flying swallow,

so a curse without cause<sup>15</sup> does not come to rest.<sup>16</sup>

**26:3** A whip for the horse and a bridle for the donkey,

and a rod for the backs of fools!<sup>17</sup>

**26:4** Do not answer a fool according to his folly,<sup>18</sup>

lest you yourself also be like him.<sup>19</sup>

**26:5** Answer a fool according to his folly,<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “a tongue of secret” or “a hidden tongue,” referring to someone who goes around whispering about people behind their backs (cf. KJV, NAB, NASB, NRSV “a backbiting tongue”).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The phrase “brings forth” does not appear in Hebrew in this line but is implied by the parallelism with the previous line; it is supplied here in the translation for clarity.

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The verse implies a comparison between the two parts to make the point that certain things automatically bring certain results. Gossiping words will infuriate people as easily as the northerly winds bring the cold rain.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** This proverb is identical with 21:9; see the notes there.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “a weary [or, faint] soul” (so NASB, NIV); KJV, ASV, NRSV “a thirsty soul,” but “soul” here refers to the whole person.

<sup>6</sup> **sn** The difficulty of getting news of any kind from a distant land made its reception all the more delightful when it was good (e.g., Gen 45:27; Prov 15:30).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The Niphal participle is from רָפַס (rafas), which means “to stamp; to tread; to foul by treading [or, by stamping].” BDB 952 s.v. defines it here as a “fountain befouled.” The picture is one of a spring of water where men and beasts gather and muddy it by their trampling in and out of it.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The Hophal participle from שָׁחַת (shakhat, “to ruin; to destroy; to corrupt”) provides a general description – the well has been “ruined” or “corrupted” (so ASV) and is therefore unusable.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The verb נָתַת (nat) means “to give way; to move.” This probably refers to the integrity of the righteous being lost – comparing it to moving [off course]. T. T. Perowne writes, “To see a righteous man moved from his steadfastness through fear or favour in the presence of the wicked is as disheartening as to find the stream turbid and defiled at which you were longing to quench your thirst” (*Proverbs*, 161). But the line may refer to the loss of social standing and position by the righteous due to the plots of the wicked – just as someone muddied the water, someone made the righteous slip from his place.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** This is a figure of speech known as tapeinosis – a deliberate understatement to emphasize a worst-case scenario: “it is bad!”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “and the investigation of their glory is not glory.” This line is difficult to understand but it forms an analogy to honey – glory, like honey, is good, but not to excess. The LXX rendered this, “it is proper to honor notable sayings.” A. A. MacIntosh suggests, “He who searches for glory will be distressed” (“A Note on Prov 25:27,” VT 20 [1970]: 112-14). G. E. Bryce has “to search out difficult things is glorious” (“Another Wisdom Book” in *Proverbs*, JBL 91 (1972): 145-47). R. C. Van Leeuwen suggests, “to seek difficult things is as glory” (“Proverbs 25:27 Once Again,” VT 36 [1986]: 105-14). The Hebrew is cryptic, but not unintelligible: “seeking their glory [is not] glory.” It is saying that seeking one’s own glory is dishonorable.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “whose spirit lacks restraint” (ASV similar). A person whose spirit (רוּחַ, ruakh) “lacks restraint” is one who is given to outbursts of passion, who lacks self-control (cf. NIV, NRSV, CEV, NLT). This person has no natural defenses but reveals his true nature all the time. The proverb is stating that without self-control a person is vulnerable, like a city without defenses.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** “Honor” in this passage probably means respect, external recognition of worth, accolades, advancement to high position, etc. All of these would be out of place with a fool; so the sage is warning against elevating or acclaiming those who are worthless. See also J. A. Emerton, “Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs,” VT 15 (1965): 271-79.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** The first twelve verses of this chapter, Prov 26:1-12, are sometimes called “the Book of Fools” because they deal with the actions of fools.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “causeless curse” (KJV similar) describes an undeserved curse (cf. NIV, NRSV). The Hebrew word translated “causeless” is the adverb from כְּחָנָן (khanan); it means “without cause; gratuitous.”

**sn** This proverb is saying that a curse that is uttered will be powerless if that curse is undeserved. It was commonly believed in the ancient world that blessings and curses had power in themselves, that once spoken they were effectual. But scripture makes it clear that the power of a blessing or a curse depends on the power of the one behind it (e.g., Num 22:38; 23:8). A curse would only take effect if the one who declared it had the authority to do so, and he would only do that if the curse was deserved.

<sup>16</sup> **tc** The MT has the negative with the verb “to enter; to come” to mean “will not come” (לֹא יָבִיֵא, lo’ tavo’). This is interpreted to mean “will not come to rest” or “will not come home.” Some commentators have taken the Qere reading of לוֹ (lo) instead, and read it as “will come home to him.” This is also a little difficult, but it gives the idea that an undeserved curse will come [back] to him [who gave it]. Just as a bird will fly around and eventually come home, so will the undeserved curse return on the one who gave it. This is plausible, but there is no referent for the suffix, making it syntactically difficult.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** A fool must be disciplined by force like an animal – there is no reasoning. The fool is as difficult to manage as the donkey or horse.

<sup>18</sup> **sn** One should not answer a fool’s foolish questions in line with the fool’s mode of reasoning (J. H. Greenstone, *Proverbs*, 274).

<sup>19</sup> **sn** The person who descends to the level of a fool to argue with him only looks like a fool as well.

<sup>20</sup> **sn** The apparent contradiction with the last verse has troubled commentators for some time. The Rabbis solved it by saying that v. 4 referred to secular things, but v. 5 referred to sacred or religious controversies. While this does not resolve the issue, it does give a sound application for the two verses together – in negligible issues one should just ignore the stupid person, but in issues that matter the fool must be dealt with, lest credence be given to what he says (W. G. Plaut, *Proverbs*, 266). The text presents two proverbs each of

lest he be wise in his own estimation.<sup>1</sup>

**26:6** Like cutting off the feet or drinking violence,<sup>2</sup> so is sending<sup>3</sup> a message by the hand of a fool.<sup>4</sup>

**26:7** Like legs that hang limp<sup>5</sup> from the lame,

so<sup>6</sup> is a proverb<sup>7</sup> in the mouth of fools.

**26:8** Like tying a stone in a sling,<sup>8</sup> so is giving honor to a fool.

**26:9** Like a thorn<sup>9</sup> that goes into the hand of a drunkard, so is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.<sup>10</sup>

**26:10** Like an archer who wounds at random,<sup>11</sup>

so is the one who hires<sup>12</sup> a fool or hires any passer-by.

**26:11** Like a dog that returns to its vomit,<sup>13</sup> so a fool repeats his folly.<sup>14</sup>

**26:12** Do you see<sup>15</sup> a man wise in his own eyes?<sup>16</sup>

There is more hope for a fool<sup>17</sup> than for him.

**26:13** The sluggard<sup>18</sup> says, “There is a lion in the road!

A lion in the streets!”<sup>19</sup>

**26:14** Like<sup>20</sup> a door that turns on its hinges,<sup>21</sup>

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).

**1** tn Heb “in his own eyes” (so NAB, NASB, NIV).

**2** sn Sending a messenger on a mission is like having another pair of feet. But if the messenger is a fool, this proverb says, not only does the sender not have an extra pair of feet – he cuts off the pair he has. It would not be simply that the message did not get through; it would get through incorrectly and be a setback! The other simile uses “violence,” a term for violent social wrongs and injustice. The metaphorical idea of “drinking” violence means suffering violence – it is one’s portion. So sending a fool on a mission will have injurious consequences.

**3** tn The participle could be taken as the subject of the sentence: “the one who sends...cuts off...and drinks.”

**4** sn The consequence is given in the first line and the cause in the second. It would be better not to send a message at all than to use a fool as messenger.

**5** tn Heb “like the legs which hang down from the lame” (so NASB). The is *דָּבַי* (*dabyu*), from *דָּלַל* (*dalal*, “to hang; to be low; to languish”) although the spelling of the form indicates it would be from *דָּלַח* (*dalah*, “to draw” [water]). The word indicates the uselessness of the legs – they are there but cannot be used. Luther gave the verse a fanciful but memorable rendering: “Like dancing to a cripple, so is a proverb in the mouth of the fool.”

**6** tn The proverb does not begin with a *בְּ* (*bet*) preposition to indicate a simile, but the analogy within the verse makes it clear that the first line is the emblem. The conjunction *vav* then indicates the equation – “so.”

**7** sn As C. H. Toy puts it, the fool is a “proverb-monger” (*Proverbs* [ICC], 474); he handles an aphorism about as well as a lame man can walk. The fool does not understand, has not implemented, and cannot explain the proverb. It is useless to him even though he repeats it.

**8** tn The translation “like tying a stone in a sling” seems to make the most sense, even though the word for “sling” occurs only here.

sn The point is that only someone who does not know how a sling works would do such a stupid thing (R. N. Whybray, *Proverbs* [CBC], 152). So to honor a fool would be absurd; it would be counterproductive, for he would still be a fool.

**9** sn The picture is one of seizing a thornbush and having the thorn pierce the hand (*עָלָה בְּיָדוֹ*, *alah v<sup>h</sup>yad*). A drunk does not know how to handle a thornbush because he cannot control his movements and so gets hurt (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 599). C. H. Toy suggests that this rather means a half-crazy drunken man brandishing a stick (*Proverbs* [ICC], 475). In this regard cf. NLT “a thornbush brandished by a drunkard.”

**10** sn A fool can read or speak a proverb but will be intellectually and spiritually unable to handle it; he will misapply it or misuse it in some way. In doing so he will reveal more of his folly. It is painful to hear fools try to use proverbs.

**11** tn Heb “who wounds everyone” (so NASB). A similar rendering is given by ASV, NAB, NIV, NRSV, and NLT; it is the only one that makes sense out of a verse that most commentators consider hopelessly corrupt. That is not to say it is the correct rendering, only that it makes sense as a required negative statement in a proverb. The first line has *רַב מְכוֹלֵי-כָל* (*rav m<sup>h</sup>kholel-col*). The first word, *רַב* (*rav*), can mean “archer,” “master,” or “much.” The verb *מְכוֹלֵל* (*m<sup>h</sup>kholel*) can mean “to wound” or “to bring forth.” The possibilities are: “a master performs [or, produces] all,” “a master injures all,” “an archer wounds all,” or “much produces all.” The line probably should be stating something negative, so the idea of an archer injuring or wounding people [at random] is preferable. An undisciplined hireling will have the same effect as an archer shooting at anything and everything (cf. NLT “an archer who shoots recklessly”).

**12** tn The participle *שֹׂכֵר* (*shokher*) is rendered here according to its normal meaning “hires” or “pays wages to.” Other suggestions include “one who rewards a fool” (derived from the idea of wages) and “one who stops a fool” (from a similar word).

**13** sn The simile is graphic and debasing (cf. 2 Peter 2:22).

**14** sn The point is clear: Fools repeat their disgusting mistakes, or to put it another way, whenever we repeat our disgusting mistakes we are fools. The proverb is affirming that no matter how many times a fool is warned, he never learns.

**15** tn The verse simply uses a perfect tense. The meaning of the verse would be the same if this were interpreted as an affirmation rather than as an interrogative. The first line calls such a person to one’s attention.

**16** tn Heb “in his own eyes” (so NAB, NASB, NIV).

sn The subject matter of the verse is the person who is wise in his own opinion. Self-conceit is actually part of the folly that the book of Proverbs criticizes; those who think they are wise even though they are not are impossible to help. For someone to think he is wise when he is not makes him a conceited ignoramus (W. G. Plaut, *Proverbs*, 268).

**17** sn Previous passages in the book of Proverbs all but deny the possibility of hope for the fool. So this proverb is saying there is absolutely no hope for the self-conceited person, and there might be a slight hope for the fool – he may yet figure out that he really is a fool.

**18** sn The Book of Fools covered vv. 1-12. This marks the beginning of what may be called the Book of Sluggards (vv. 13-16).

**19** tn Heb “in the broad plazas”; NAB, NASB “in the square.” This proverb makes the same point as 22:13, namely, that the sluggard uses absurd excuses to get out of work. D. Kidner notes that in this situation the sluggard has probably convinced himself that he is a realist and not a lazy person (*Proverbs* [TOTC], 163).

**20** tn The comparative “like” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied from context in the translation.

**21** sn The sluggard is too lazy to get out of bed – although he would probably rationalize this by saying that he is not at his best in the morning. The humor of the verse is based on an analogy with a door – it moves back and forth on its hinges but goes nowhere. Like the door to the wall, the sluggard is



so a sluggard turns<sup>1</sup> on his bed.  
**26:15** The sluggard plunges<sup>2</sup> his hand in the dish;  
 he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.<sup>3</sup>  
**26:16** The sluggard is wiser in his own estimation<sup>4</sup>  
 than seven people who respond with good sense.<sup>5</sup>  
**26:17** Like one who grabs a wild dog by the ears,<sup>6</sup>  
 so is the person passing by who becomes furious<sup>7</sup> over a quarrel not his own.  
**26:18** Like a madman<sup>8</sup> who shoots firebrands and deadly arrows,<sup>9</sup>  
**26:19** so is a person<sup>10</sup> who deceives his neighbor,  
 and says, “Was I not only joking?”<sup>11</sup>

**26:20** Where there is no wood, a fire goes out,  
 and where there is no gossip,<sup>12</sup> contention ceases.<sup>13</sup>  
**26:21** Like charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire,  
 so is a contentious person<sup>14</sup> to kindle strife.<sup>15</sup>  
**26:22** The words of a gossip are like delicious morsels;  
 they go down into a person’s innermost being.<sup>16</sup>  
**26:23** Like a coating of glaze<sup>17</sup> over earthenware  
 are fervent<sup>18</sup> lips with an evil heart.<sup>19</sup>  
**26:24** The one who hates others disguises<sup>20</sup> it with his lips,  
 but he stores up<sup>21</sup> deceit within him.<sup>22</sup>

“hinged” to his bed (e.g., Prov 6:9-10; 24:33).

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The term “turns” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation from the parallelism.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “buries” (so many English versions); KJV “hideth”; NAB “loses.”

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The proverb is stating that the sluggard is too lazy to eat; this is essentially the same point made in 19:24 (see the note there).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “in his eyes.” The lazy person thinks that he has life all figured out and has chosen the wise course of action – but he is simply lazy. J. H. Greenstone says, for example, “Much anti-intellectualism may be traced to such rationalization for laziness” (*Proverbs*, 269).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The term means “taste; judgment.” The related verb means “to taste; to perceive,” that is, “to examine by tasting,” or examine by experiencing (e.g., Ps 34:9). Here the idea is expressed with the participle in construct, “those returners [of] good sense,” those who answer tastefully, with discretion. Cf. NIV “who (+ can NRSV) answer discreetly.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “grabs the ears of a dog. The word “wild” has been supplied in the translation to make clear that these were not domesticated pets. CEV, to accomplish the same point, has “a mad dog,” but there is no indication of that in context.

<sup>7</sup> **sn** Someone who did this ran a serious risk of injury or harm. Dogs were not domestic pets in the ancient Near East; they were scavengers that ran in packs like jackals.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The word מִתְעַבֵּר (*mit’abber*) means “to put oneself in a fury” or “become furious” (BDB 720 s.v.). The Latin version apparently assumed the verb was עָרַב (*‘arav*), for it has the sense of “meddle” (so also NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV). However, the MT reading could easily fit the verse, referring to anyone passing by who gets furious over a fight that is not his.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The term כִּמְתִילֵהָ (*kimtilleha*) is the Hitpael participle of the quadrilateral verbal root לָהָה (*lhleah*), which means “to amaze; to startle” (BDB 529 s.v.). Here it functions as a substantive – the object of the preposition – and has the meaning of “madman” (cf. NRSV “maniac”). This is the only occurrence of the term.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “arrows and death” (so KJV, NASB). This expression can be understood as a nominal hendiadys: “deadly arrows” (so NAB, NIV).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “man.”

<sup>12</sup> **sn** The subject of this proverb is not simply a deceiver, but one who does so out of jest, or at least who claims he was joking afterward. The participle מִשְׂתַּחֵק has the idea of “laughing, mocking”; in this context it might convey the idea of “kidding” or “joking.” The point is that such practical joking is immature and often dangerous. To the foolish deceiver it might all seem like fun, like sport, but it can destroy people. One cannot trifle with dangerous weapons, or put them in irresponsible hands; likewise one cannot trifle with human relationships. W. G. Plaut notes, “The only worthwhile humor is that which laughs with, not at others” (*Proverbs*, 270).

<sup>13</sup> **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).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “becomes silent.”

<sup>15</sup> **sn** *Heb* “a man of contentions”; 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.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The Pilel infinitive construct לְתַרְתֵּר (*l’tarkhar*) from תָּרַר (*kharar*, “to be hot; to be scorched; to burn”) means “to kindle; to cause to flare up.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The proverb is essentially the same as 18:8; it observes how appealing gossip is.

<sup>18</sup> **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” כֶּסֶף סִיגִים, *kesef sigim*). Ugaritic turned up a word *spsg* which means “glaze,” and this found a parallel in Hittite *zapzagalya*. H. L. Ginsberg repointed 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 ם (*mem*) is then classified as enclitic. See, among others, K. L. Barker, “The Value of Ugaritic for Old Testament Studies,” *BSac* 133 (1976): 128-29.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The word translated “fervent” actually means “burning, glowing”; the LXX has “flattering lips” (as if from חָלָהָ *[khalaha]*) rather than דָּלָהָ *[dalah]*).

<sup>20</sup> **sn** The analogy fits the second 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.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** The Niphal imperfect from נָחַר (*nakhar*) 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.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Or “places; puts; lays up” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB).

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “within him” (so KJV, ASV) or “in his midst”; NAB “in his inmost being.”

**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<sup>1</sup> he speaks graciously,<sup>2</sup> do not believe him,<sup>3</sup> for there are seven<sup>4</sup> abominations<sup>5</sup> within him.  
 26:26 Though his<sup>6</sup> hatred may be concealed<sup>7</sup> by deceit, his evil will be uncovered<sup>8</sup> in the assembly.  
 26:27 The one who digs a pit<sup>9</sup> will fall into it; the one who rolls a stone – it will come back on him.  
 26:28 A lying tongue<sup>10</sup> hates those crushed by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin.<sup>11</sup>

27:1 Do not boast<sup>12</sup> about tomorrow;<sup>13</sup> for you do not know<sup>14</sup> what a day may bring forth.  
 27:2 Let another<sup>15</sup> praise you, and not your own mouth;<sup>16</sup> someone else,<sup>17</sup> and not your own lips.  
 27:3 A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but vexation<sup>18</sup> by a fool is more burdensome<sup>19</sup> than the two of them.  
 27:4 Wrath is cruel and anger is overwhelming,<sup>20</sup> but who can stand before jealousy?<sup>21</sup>  
 27:5 Better is open<sup>22</sup> rebuke than hidden<sup>23</sup> love.

**1 tn** The particle כִּי (*ki*) is here interpreted with a temporal noun. It is also possible that it could be read as concessive (so NIV, NLT “Though”).

**2 tn** The meaning of the rare Piel form of קָנַן (*khanan*) is “to make gracious; to make favorable.” The subject is קוֹלוֹ (*qolo*, “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** The number “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 תִּכְסֶּה (*tikkasseh*) is the Hitpaal imperfect (with assimilation); 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, NLT).

**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 in their intent. “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 hypocaustasis 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 אֶל־תִּתְהַלַּל (*al-tithallel*) is the Hitpaal 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 word “tomorrow” is a metonymy of subject, meaning what will be done tomorrow, or in the future in general.

**15 sn** The expression “you do not know” balances the presumption of the first line, reminding the disciple of his ignorance and therefore his need for humility (e.g., Matt 6:34; Luke 12:20; Jas 4:13-16).

**16 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.

**17 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.

**18 tn** “a foreigner”; KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV “a stranger.”

**19 tn** The subject matter is the vexation produced by a fool. The term כַּעַס (*ca’as*) means “vexation” (ASV); provocation” (NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV); “anger” (KJV “wrath”) and usually refers to undeserved treatment. Cf. NLT “the resentment caused by a fool.”

**20 sn** The same noun is used in 1 Sam 1:6, 16 for the “provocation” given to Hannah by Peninnah for being barren.

**21 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.

**22 tn** Heb “fierceness of wrath and outpouring [= flood] 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,” this word has nuances of heat, intensity) that defies reason at times and can be destructive like a consuming fire (e.g., 6:32-35; Song 8:6-7). The rhetorical question is intended to affirm that no one can survive a jealous rage. (Whether one is the subject who is jealous or the object of the jealousy of someone else is not so clear.)

**24 tn** Heb “revealed” or “uncovered” (Pual participle from גָּלַה, *galah*). This would specify the reproof or rebuke as direct, honest, and frank, whether it was coming from a friend or an enemy.

**25 tn** The Hebrew term translated “hidden” (a Pual participle from סָתַר, *satar*) refers to a love that is carefully concealed; this is contrasted with the open rebuke in the first line. What is described, then, is someone too timid, too afraid, or not trusting enough to admit that reproof is a genuine part of love (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 610). It is a love that is not expressed in proper concern for the one loved. See also, e.g., 28:23 and 29:3.

27:6 Faithful<sup>1</sup> are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses<sup>2</sup> of an enemy are excessive.<sup>3</sup>

27:7 The one whose appetite<sup>4</sup> is satisfied loathes honey, but to the hungry mouth<sup>5</sup> every bitter thing is sweet.

27:8 Like a bird that wanders<sup>6</sup> from its nest, so is a person who wanders from his home.<sup>7</sup>

27:9 Ointment and incense make the heart rejoice,<sup>8</sup> likewise the sweetness of one's friend from sincere counsel.<sup>9</sup>

27:10 Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend, and do not enter your brother's house in the day of your disaster; a neighbor nearby is better than a brother far away.<sup>10</sup>

27:11 Be wise, my son,<sup>11</sup> and make my heart glad, so that I may answer<sup>12</sup> anyone who taunts me.<sup>13</sup>

27:12 A shrewd person sees danger and hides himself, but the naive keep right on going<sup>14</sup> and suffer for it.

27:13 Take a man's<sup>15</sup> garment when he has given security for a stranger, and when he gives surety for a stranger,<sup>16</sup> hold him in pledge.<sup>17</sup>

27:14 If someone blesses<sup>18</sup> his neighbor with a loud voice early in the morning,<sup>19</sup> it will be counted as a curse to him.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> tn The Niphal participle of אָמַן (*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).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> tn The form is נִקְיָרוֹת (*na'itarot*), the Niphal participle of נָתַר (*atar*, "to be abundant"). Contemporary translations render this rare form 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.

<sup>4</sup> tn Traditionally, "soul" (so KJV, ASV). The Hebrew text uses נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*) here for the subject – the full appetite ["soul"]. The word refers to 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.

<sup>5</sup> tn Here the term נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*, 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.

<sup>6</sup> tn The form נִדְרַת (*nodedet*) is the Qal participle from נָדַד (*nadad*), "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 column.

<sup>7</sup> tn Heb "place" (so KJV, ASV); most other English versions translate as "home."

sn 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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, "counsels 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 than of fragrant wood." 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."

<sup>10</sup> 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?] when disaster strikes, 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> tn The verb is the cohortative of שָׁוַב (*shuv*); after the two imperatives that provide the instruction, this form with the *vav* will indicate the purpose or result (indirect volitive sequence).

<sup>13</sup> 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).

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> tn Heb "his garment."

<sup>16</sup> tn Or "for a strange (= adulterous) woman." Cf. KJV, ASV, NASB, NLT; NIV "a wayward woman."

<sup>17</sup> tn This proverb is virtually identical to 20:16.

<sup>18</sup> tn The verse begins with the Piel participle from בָּרַךְ (*barach*). It could be taken as the subject, with the resulting translation: "Blessing... will be counted as a curse." However, that would be rather awkward. 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").

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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<sup>1</sup> are alike.<sup>2</sup>  
 27:16 Whoever hides her hides the wind<sup>3</sup> or grasps<sup>4</sup> oil with his right hand.<sup>5</sup>  
 27:17 As<sup>6</sup> iron sharpens<sup>7</sup> iron, so a person<sup>8</sup> sharpens his friend.<sup>9</sup>  
 27:18 The one who tends a fig tree<sup>10</sup> will eat its fruit,<sup>11</sup> and whoever takes care of<sup>12</sup> his master

**1 tn** Heb “a wife of contentions” (an attributive genitive). Cf. NAB, NIV “a quarrelsome wife”; NLT “a nagging wife.”

**2 tn** The form נִשְׁתָּוָה (*nishtavah*) is classified by BDB as a Nitpael perfect from the root שָׁוָה (*shavah*, “to be like; to resemble”; BDB 1001 s.v. I שָׁוָה). The form also has metathesis before the sibilant. The LXX interprets it as “Drops drive a man out of his house on a wintry day; so a railing woman also drives him out of his own house.”

**3 tn** The participle and verb both are from the root יָסָה (*tsafan*, “to hide”). This combination could be translated “hiding her is [like] hiding the wind.”

**sn** A contentious woman is uncontrollable. The wind can gust at any moment; so too the contentious woman can nag or complain without warning. If anyone can hide the wind he can hide her.

**4 sn** The verb is the Qal imperfect of קָרָה (*qarah*); BDB 895 s.v. 5.b defines it here as “call for = demand, require,” but acknowledge that it is probably corrupt. R. B. Y. Scott interprets it to mean “grasping” oil in the hand, an expression he compares to the modern “butterfingers” (*Proverbs, Ecclesiastes* [AB], 163). Others have interpreted it to mean “betrays” – “ointment of his right hand betrays itself,” meaning its smell persists. However, the connection to the proverb does not seem obvious with that interpretation.

**5 tc** The LXX took an etymologizing approach to the whole verse and translated it “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 clarify the comparison.

**7 tn** BDB classifies the verb in the first colon as a Qal apocopated jussive of יָחַד (*khadah*, “to grow sharp”; BDB 292 s.v.), and the verb in the second half of the verse (יָחַד, *yakhad*) as a Hiphil apocopated jussive. The difference would be: “let iron by means of iron grow sharp, and let a man sharpen the countenance of his friend.” But it makes more sense to take them both as Hiphil forms, the first being in pause. Other suggestions have been put forward for the meaning of the word, but the verb “sharpens” fits the context the best, and is followed by most English versions. The verb may be a shortened form of the imperfect rather than a jussive.

**8 tn** Heb “and a man,” although the context does not indicate this should be limited to males only.

**9 tn** Heb “sharpens the face of his friend.” The use of the word “face” (cf. KJV, ASV “countenance”) would here emphasize that it is the personality or character that is being sharpened. Constructive criticism sharpens character. Use of the wits in interaction that makes two people sharp as a razor (W. McKane, *Proverbs* [OTL], 615); another example, from the Talmud, is that of two students sharpening each other in the study of the Torah (b. *Ta’anit* 7a).

**10 tn** Snding 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 tn** The Hebrew participle translated “takes care of” (שָׁמַר, *shomer*) 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).

will be honored.

27:19 As in water the face is reflected as a face,<sup>13</sup> so a person’s heart<sup>14</sup> reflects the person.  
 27:20 As<sup>15</sup> Death and Destruction are never satisfied,<sup>16</sup> so the eyes of a person<sup>17</sup> are never satisfied.<sup>18</sup>  
 27:21 As the crucible is for silver and the furnace is for gold,<sup>19</sup> so a person<sup>20</sup> is proved<sup>21</sup> by the praise he receives.<sup>22</sup>

**13 tn** 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 “water of face” (a construct) and that it means shame or modesty, i.e., a face is not really human without shame, and a man without a heart is not human (“Arabische Etymologien und Parallelen zum Bibelwörterbuch,” VT 9 [1959]: 260-61).

**14 tn** 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.

**sn** In the parallelism this statement means that a person’s heart is the true reflection of that person. It is in looking at the heart, the will, the choices, the loves, the decisions, the attitudes, that people come to self-awareness.

**15 tn** The term “as” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation in light of the analogy.

**16 sn** 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** Heb “eyes of a man.” This expression refers to the desires – what the individual looks longingly on. *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 1:34 (one of the rabbinic Midrashim) says, “No man dies and has one-half of what he wanted.”

**18 tc** The LXX contains a scribal addition: “He who fixes his eye is an abomination to the LORD, and the uninstructed 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 person because others will examine and evaluate what an individual has done in order to make the public acclamation.

**20 tn** Heb “and a man,” but the context does not indicate this is limited only to males.

**21 tn** The verb “is proved” was supplied in the translation in view of the analogy. Many English versions supply “tested” for the same reason.

**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.

**22 tn** Heb “by [the] praise of him.” The pronominal suffix is an objective genitive, meaning “the praise about him” (= “the praise he receives”). Some commentators would take the suffix as a subjective genitive, meaning “the praise he gives”; this would mean people stand revealed by what they praise (D. Kidner, *Proverbs* [TOTC], 168). That does not seem to work as well with the emblem of the first line which indicates being tested. The LXX adds a couplet: “The heart of the transgressor seeks evil, but the upright heart seeks knowledge.”

27:22 If you should pound<sup>4</sup> the fool in the mortar among the grain<sup>2</sup> with the pestle, his foolishness would not depart from him.<sup>3</sup>

27:23 Pay careful attention to<sup>4</sup> the condition of your flocks,<sup>5</sup>

give careful attention<sup>6</sup> to your herds,

27:24 for riches do not last<sup>7</sup> forever, nor does a crown last<sup>8</sup> from generation to generation.

27:25 When the hay is removed and new grass appears, and the grass from the hills is gathered in, 27:26 the lambs will be for your clothing, and the goats will be for the price of a field.<sup>9</sup>

27:27 And there will be enough goat's milk for your food,<sup>10</sup> for the food of your household, and for the sustenance<sup>11</sup> of your servant girls.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The verb means "to pound" in a mortar with a pestle (cf. NRSV "Crush"; NLT "grind"). The imperfect is in a conditional clause, an unreal, hypothetical condition to make the point.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term רִיפּוֹת (*rifot*) refers to some kind of grain spread out to dry and then pounded. It may refer to barley groats (coarsely ground barley), but others have suggested the term means "cheeses" (BDB 937 s.v.). Most English versions have "grain" without being more specific; NAB "grits."

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The LXX contains this paraphrase: "If you scourge a fool in the assembly, dishonoring him, you would not remove his folly." This removes the imagery of mortar and pestle from the verse. Using the analogy of pounding something in a mortar, the proverb is saying even if a fool was pounded or pulverized, meaning severe physical punishment, his folly would not leave him – it is too ingrained in his nature.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The sentence uses the infinitive absolute and the imperfect from יָדַע (*yada'*, "to know"). The imperfect here has been given the obligatory nuance, "you must know," and that has to be intensified with the infinitive.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the faces of your flock."

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The idiom is "place [it on] your heart" or "take to heart." Cf. NLT "put your heart into."

**sn** The care of the flock must become the main focus of the will, for it is the livelihood. So v. 23 forms the main instruction of this lengthy proverb (vv. 23-27).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* "riches are not forever" (so KJV, NASB); TEV "wealth is not permanent." The term "last" is supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The conjunction and the particle indicate that the same nuance continues here in the second colon, and so "last" has been supplied here as well.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** Verse 25 is the protasis and v. 26 the apodosis. The two verses say that when the harvest is taken in, then the grass will grow, and they can sell and use their livestock. The lambs will provide clothing, and the goats when sold will pay for land.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** This part of the proverb shows the proper interplay between human labor and divine provision. It teaches people to take care of what they have because it will not last forever.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* "life"; KJV, NAB "maintenance"; NRSV "nourishment."

28:1 The wicked person flees when there is no one pursuing,<sup>12</sup> but the righteous person is as confident<sup>13</sup> as a lion.

28:2 When a country is rebellious<sup>14</sup> it has many princes,<sup>15</sup>

but by someone who is discerning and knowledgeable<sup>16</sup> order is maintained.<sup>17</sup>

28:3 A poor person<sup>18</sup> who oppresses the weak is like<sup>19</sup> a driving rain without food.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>12</sup> **sn** The line portrays the insecurity of a guilty person – he flees because he has a guilty conscience, or because he is suspicious of others around him, or because he fears judgment.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The verb בָּטַח (*batakh*) means "to trust; to be secure; to be confident." Cf. KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT "bold."

**sn** The righteous, who seek to find favor with God and man, have a clear conscience and do not need to look over their shoulders for avengers or law enforcers. Their position is one of confidence, so that they do not flee.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** The Hebrew word translated "rebellious" has rebellion as its basic meaning, and that is the idea here. The proverb is describing a time when sinfulness brings about social and political unrest.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* "many are its princes" (so NASB).

**sn** In such a chaotic time there will be many rulers, either simultaneously or in a rapid sequence. The times of the judges or the days of the northern kings of Israel provide examples.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* "a man who understands [and] knows"; NRSV "an intelligent ruler"; NLT "wise and knowledgeable leaders."

<sup>17</sup> **tc** The LXX reads (probably from a different underlying Hebrew text): "It is the fault of a violent man that quarrels start, but they are settled by a man of discernment." For a survey of suggestions, see C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* (ICC), 495, and W. McKane, *Proverbs* (OTL), 630.

**tn** This last line is difficult. The MT has כֵּן יֵאָרֶיךָ (*ken ya'arikh*). The verb means "to prolong," but כֵּן (*ken*) is open to several possibilities for meaning. J. H. Greenstone's interpretation of it as a noun from the Hollow root כָּן (*kun*) with a meaning of "established order" is what is expected here (*Proverbs*, 293).

**sn** For a study of the verses in chapters 28 and 29 concerning kings and governments, see B. V. Malchow, "A Manual for Future Monarchs," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 238-45.

<sup>18</sup> **tc** The MT reads "a poor man," גֵּבֶר רָשָׁע (*geber rash*); cf. KJV, NASB, NLT. The problem is that the poor in the book of Proverbs is not an oppressor and does not have the power to be such. So commentators assume the word is incorrect. By a slight change to רָשָׁע (*rasha'*) the reading becomes "a wicked ruler" [*Heb* "a wicked mighty man"]. There is no textual support for this change. The LXX, however, reads, "A courageous man oppresses the poor with impieties." If "a poor man" is retained, then the oppression would include betrayal – one would expect a poor man to have sympathy for others who are impoverished, but in fact that is not the case. It is a sad commentary on human nature that the truly oppressed people can also be oppressed by other poor people.

<sup>19</sup> **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.

<sup>20</sup> **sn** "Food" is a metonymy of effect here. The picture is of the driving rain that should cause crops to grow so that food can be produced – but does not (some English versions assume the crops are destroyed instead, e.g., NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT). The point the proverb is making is that a show of strength may not produce anything except ruin.

28:4 Those who forsake the law<sup>1</sup> praise the wicked,<sup>2</sup> but those who keep the law contend<sup>3</sup> with them.  
 28:5 Evil people<sup>4</sup> do not understand justice,<sup>5</sup> but those who seek the LORD<sup>6</sup> understand it all.  
 28:6 A poor person<sup>7</sup> who walks in his integrity is better than one who is perverse in his ways<sup>8</sup> even though<sup>9</sup> he is rich.<sup>10</sup>  
 28:7 The one who keeps the law<sup>11</sup> is a discerning child,<sup>12</sup>

but a companion of gluttons brings shame<sup>13</sup> to his parents.<sup>14</sup>  
 28:8 The one who increases his wealth by increasing interest<sup>15</sup> gathers it for someone who is gracious<sup>16</sup> to the needy.  
 28:9 The one who turns away his ear<sup>17</sup> from hearing the law, even his prayer<sup>18</sup> is an abomination.<sup>19</sup>  
 28:10 The one who leads the upright astray in an evil way will himself fall into his own pit,<sup>20</sup> but the blameless will inherit what is good.<sup>21</sup>  
 28:11 A rich person<sup>22</sup> is wise in his own eyes,<sup>23</sup> but a discerning poor person can evaluate him properly.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **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.

<sup>2</sup> **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.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The verb is the Hitpael imperfect of נָדַח (*garah*), 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 expansion, "so as to induce them to repent."

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb "men of evil"; the context does not limit this to males only, however.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The term translated "justice" is מִשְׁפָּט (*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).

<sup>6</sup> **sn** 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.

<sup>7</sup> **sn** This chapter gives 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," *Cruz* 18 [1982]: 23-28).

<sup>8</sup> **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.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb "and he is rich." Many English versions treat this as a concessive clause (cf. KJV "though he be rich").

<sup>10</sup> **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 perverse poor people, but that is not of interest here. If it came to the choices described here, honest poverty is better than corrupt wealth.

<sup>11</sup> **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.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb "son," but the immediate context does not suggest limiting this only to male children.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** The companion of gluttons shames his father and his family because such a life style as he now embraces is both unruly and antisocial.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "father," but the immediate context does not suggest limiting this only to the male parent.

<sup>15</sup> **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.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The term מְיָדוֹן (*khonen*, "someone who shows favor") is the active participle.

**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.

<sup>17</sup> **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.

<sup>18</sup> **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.)

<sup>19</sup> **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* [OTL], 623).

<sup>20</sup> **sn** The image of falling into a pit (a figure of speech known as hypocatastasis, involving implied comparison) is meant to say that the evil to which he guides people will ultimately destroy him.

<sup>21</sup> **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).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb "a rich man," although the context does not indicate that this is limited only to males.

<sup>23</sup> **sn** The idiom "in his own eyes" means "in his own opinion," that is, his self conceit. The rich person thinks he is wise because he is rich, that he has made all the right choices.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** The form יִתְבַּרְרֵנּוּ (*yakhq<sup>r</sup>rennu*) 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 *hqr*, which means "to 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,<sup>1</sup> great is the glory,<sup>2</sup> but when the wicked rise to power, people are sought out.<sup>3</sup>

28:13 The one who covers<sup>4</sup> his transgressions will not prosper,<sup>5</sup> but whoever confesses them and forsakes them will find mercy.<sup>6</sup>

28:14 Blessed is the one who is always cautious,<sup>7</sup>

but whoever hardens his heart<sup>8</sup> will fall into evil.

28:15 Like<sup>9</sup> a roaring lion or a roving bear,<sup>10</sup>

so is a wicked ruler over a poor people.<sup>11</sup>

28:16 The prince who is a great oppressor lacks wisdom,<sup>12</sup> but the one who hates<sup>13</sup> unjust gain will prolong his days.

28:17 The one who is tormented<sup>14</sup> by the murder<sup>15</sup> of another will flee to the pit;<sup>16</sup> let no one support him.

28:18 The one who walks blamelessly will be delivered.<sup>17</sup>

both predictable and flat.

**1 tn** The form בָּעֲלֹטִים (*ba'elots*) is the infinitive construct with the preposition indicating a temporal clause ("when..."); the "righteous" are the subject of this clause (subjective genitive). The word may be taken as a metonymy of adjunct – the righteous exult or rejoice because they are prosperous (cf. NLT "succeed").

**2 sn** "Glory" here may have the sense of elation and praise.

**3 tn** The meaning of "sought out" (יִחַפּוּ, *y<sup>h</sup>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, but when the wicked come into power men hide themselves" (*Proverbs* [ICC], 500). For the verb G. R. Driver posits an Arabic cognate *hafasa*, "prostrated; trampled on" ("Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs," *Bib* 32 [1951]: 192-93), which gives a clearer result of wicked rule, but is perhaps unnecessary (e.g., Prov 28:28; 29:2). See J. A. Emerton, "Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs," *JTS* 20 (1969): 202-20.

**4 tn** The Hebrew participles provide the subject matter in this contrast. On the one hand is the person who covers over (כִּסְּהוּ, *m<sup>h</sup>khasseh*) 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" (מִדְּבַר, *m<sup>h</sup>deh*) and "forsakes" (זָנַח, *'azeh*) the sin. To "confess" sins means to acknowledge them, to say the same thing about them that God does.

**5 sn** The verse contrasts the consequences of each. The person who refuses to confess will not prosper. This is an understatement (a figure of speech known as tapeinosis); the opposite is 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.

**6 sn** 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.

**7 tn** Most commentators (and some English versions, e.g., NIV) assume that the participle כִּפְּרוּ (*m<sup>h</sup>fakhed*, "fears") means "fears the LORD," even though "the LORD" is not present in the text. Such an assumption would be more convincing if the word יִירָא (*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 the LORD" could be correct as well. There would be little difference in the outcome; in either case sin would be avoided.

**8 sn** The one who "hardens his heart" in this context is the person who refuses to fear sin and its consequences. The image of the "hard heart" is one of a stubborn will, unyielding and unbending (cf. NCV, TEV, NLT). This individual will fall into sin.

**9 tn** The term "like" is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation for clarity and smoothness.

**10 sn** The comparison uses animals that are powerful, terrifying, insensitive, and in search of prey. Because political tyrants are like this, animal imagery of this sort is also used in Dan 7:1-8 for the series of ruthless world powers.

**11 sn** A poor nation under the control of political tyrants who are dangerous and destructive is helpless. The people of that nation will crumble under them because they cannot meet their demands and are of no use to them.

**12 tn Heb** "A prince lacking of understanding [is] also a great oppressor" (both KJV, ASV similar) The last clause, "and a great oppressor," appears to modify "the prince." There is little difference in meaning, only in emphasis. The LXX has "lacks income" (reading תְּבוּנוֹת [t<sup>h</sup>bu'ot] instead of תְּבוּנוֹת [t<sup>h</sup>vunot]). C. H. Toy (*Proverbs* [ICC], 501) suggests deleting the word for "prince" altogether, but this emendation is gratuitous.

**13 tc** This follows the Qere reading of the participle which is singular (as opposed to the plural). The implication is that this one is also a ruler, paralleling the first half. But since he "hates" (= rejects) unjust gain he will extend [his] days, meaning he will enjoy a long and happy life (cf. NIV, NRSV, CEV).

**14 tn** The form is the Qal passive participle. The verb means "to oppress; to wrong; to extort"; here the idea of being "oppressed" would refer to the burden of a guilty conscience (hence "tormented"; cf. NAB, NRSV "burdened"). Some commentators have wanted to emend the text to read "suspected," or "charged with," or "given to," etc., but if the motive is religious and not legal, then "oppressed" or "tormented" is preferred.

**15 sn** The text has "the blood of a life"; blood will be the metonymy of effect for the murder, the shedding of blood.

**16 tn** The verse is cryptic; it simply says that he will "flee to the pit." Some have taken the "pit" to refer to the place of detention for prisoners, but why would he flee to that place? It seems rather to refer to death. This could mean that (1) since there is no place for him to go outside of the grave, he should flee to the pit (cf. TEV, NLT), or (2) he will be a fugitive until he goes to the grave (cf. NASB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, CEV). Neither one of these options is easily derived from the text. The verse seems to be saying that the one who is guilty of murder will flee, and no one should assist him. The meaning of "the pit" is unresolved.

**17 tn** The form is the Niphal imperfect of יָשַׁע (*yasha*), "will be saved"). In all probability this refers to deliverance from misfortune. Some render it "kept safe" (NIV) or "will be safe" (NRSV, TEV). It must be interpreted in contrast to the corrupt person who will fall.

but whoever is perverse in his ways will fall<sup>1</sup> at once.<sup>2</sup>

**28:19** The one who works his land will be satisfied with food,<sup>3</sup>

but whoever chases daydreams<sup>4</sup> will have his fill<sup>5</sup> of poverty.

**28:20** A faithful person<sup>6</sup> will have an abundance of blessings,  
but the one who hastens<sup>7</sup> to gain riches will not go unpunished.

**28:21** To show partiality<sup>8</sup> is terrible,<sup>9</sup> for a person will transgress over the smallest piece of bread.<sup>10</sup>

**28:22** The stingy person<sup>11</sup> hastens after riches

and does not know that poverty will overtake him.<sup>12</sup>

**28:23** The one who reproves<sup>13</sup> another<sup>14</sup> will in the end<sup>15</sup> find more favor than the one who flatters<sup>16</sup> with the tongue.

**28:24** The one who robs<sup>17</sup> his father and mother and says, “There is no transgression,”  
is a companion<sup>18</sup> to the one<sup>19</sup> who destroys.

**28:25** The greedy person<sup>20</sup> stirs up dissension,<sup>21</sup>

but the one who trusts<sup>22</sup> in the LORD will prosper.<sup>23</sup>

**1 tn** The Qal imperfect יפול (*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 suddenly in the future. 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.”

**2 tn** The last word in the verse, בְּאֶחָד (*b'e'ekhat*), means “in one [= at once (?)].” This may indicate a sudden fall, for falling “in one” (the literal meaning) 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.

**3 tn** Or “will have plenty of food” (*Heb* “bread”); so NAB, NASB, NCV.

**4 tn** *Heb* “empty things” or “vain things”; NRSV “follows worthless pursuits.”

**5 tn** 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.

**6 tn** The repetition of the verb strengthens the contrast. Both halves of the verse use the verb יִשְׂבֵּעַ (*yisba'*), “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.

**6 tn** *Heb* “a man of faithfulness,” although the context does not indicate this should be limited only to males.

**7 tn** 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.

**7 tn** The proverb is not rebuking diligent labor. One who is eager to get rich quickly 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. *Tg.* Prov 28:20 interprets this to say he hastens through deceit and wrongdoing.

**8 tn** The construction uses the Hiphil infinitive הִכָּר (*haken*) as the subject of 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.

**9 tn** *Heb* “not good.” This is a figure of speech known as tapinosis – a deliberate understatement to emphasize a worst-case scenario: “it is terrible!”

**10 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.

**11 tn** *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.”

**12 sn** 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.

**13 tn** Or “rebukes” (NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV).

**14 tn** *Heb* “a man,” but the context does not indicate this should be limited only to males.

**15 tn** There is a problem with אַחֲרַי (*‘akharay*), 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 *ahuru*, “common man,” reading “as a rebuker an ordinary man” (“Hebrew Notes,” ZAW 52 [1934]: 147).

**16 tn** The construction uses the Hiphil participle מְחַלֵּק (*makhliq*, “makes smooth”) followed by the adverbial accusative of means, the metonymy “tongue” – he makes what he says smooth. This will be pleasing for the moment, but it will offer no constructive help like the rebuke would.

**17 tn** 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 reducing 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.

**18 sn** 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.

**19 tn** *Heb* “man who destroys” (so NASB); TEV “no better than a common thief.”

**20 tn** *Heb* “wide of soul.” This is an idiom meaning “a greedy person.” The term נִשְׂחַף (*nefesh*, 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” – a deliberate understatement to emphasize a worst-case scenario: “it is terrible!”

**21 sn** Greed “stirs up” the strife. This individual’s attitude and actions stir up dissension because people do not long tolerate him.

**22 tn** The construction uses the participle בּוֹטֵחַ (*boteakh*) followed by עַל־יְהוָה (*‘al-yehvah*), 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.

**23 tn** The verb דָּשַׁן (*dashen*) 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 heart<sup>1</sup> is a fool, but the one who walks in wisdom<sup>2</sup> will escape.<sup>3</sup>  
 28:27 The one who gives to the poor will not lack,<sup>4</sup> but whoever shuts his eyes to them<sup>5</sup> will receive<sup>6</sup> many curses.<sup>7</sup>  
 28:28 When the wicked gain control,<sup>8</sup> people<sup>9</sup> hide themselves,<sup>10</sup> but when they perish,<sup>11</sup> the righteous increase.  
 29:1 The one who stiffens his neck<sup>12</sup> after

numerous rebukes<sup>13</sup> will suddenly be destroyed<sup>14</sup> without remedy.<sup>15</sup>  
 29:2 When the righteous become numerous,<sup>16</sup> the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.<sup>17</sup>  
 29:3 The man<sup>18</sup> who loves wisdom brings joy to his father,<sup>19</sup> but whoever associates<sup>20</sup> with prostitutes wastes<sup>21</sup> his wealth.<sup>22</sup>  
 29:4 A king brings stability<sup>23</sup> to a land<sup>24</sup> by justice, but one who exacts tribute<sup>25</sup> tears it

**1 sn** The idea of “trusting in one’s own heart” is a way of describing one who is self-reliant. C. H. Toy says it means to follow the untrained suggestions of the mind or to rely on one’s own mental resources (*Proverbs* [ICC], 505). It is arrogant to take no counsel but to rely only on one’s own intelligence.

**2 sn** The idiom of “walking in wisdom” means to live life according to the acquired skill and knowledge passed on from the sages. It is the wisdom from above that the book of Proverbs presents, not the undisciplined and uninformed wit and wisdom from below.

**3 tn** The verb form יָלַט (*yimmalet*) is the Niphal imperfect; the form means “to escape.” In this context one would conclude that it means “to escape from trouble,” because the one who lives in this life by wisdom will escape trouble, and the one who trusts in himself will not.

**4 sn** The generous individual will be rewarded. He will not lack nor miss what he has given away to the poor.

**5 tn Heb** “hides his eyes”; “to them” is supplied in the translation to indicate the link with the poor in the preceding line. Hiding or closing the eyes is a metonymy of cause or of adjunct, indicating a decision not to look on and thereby help the poor. It could also be taken as an implied comparison, i.e., not helping the poor is like closing the eyes to them.

**6 tn** The term “receives” is not in the Hebrew text but is implied, and is supplied in the translation.

**7 sn** The text does not specify the nature or the source of the curses. It is natural to think that they would be given by the poor who are being mistreated and ignored. Far from being praised for their contributions to society, selfish, stingy people will be reviled for their heartless indifference.

**8 tn Heb** “the wicked rise,” referring to an accession to power, as in a government. Cf. TEV “come to power”; NLT “take charge.”

**sn** The proverb is essentially the same as 28:12 (e.g., Prov 11:10; 29:2, 16). It refers to the wicked “rising to power” in government.

**9 tn Heb** “a man” or “mankind” in a generic sense.

**10 tn** The form is the Niphal imperfect of סָתַר (*satar*, “to hide”); in this stem it can mean “to hide themselves” or “to go into hiding.” In either case the expression would be a hyperbole; the populace would not go into hiding, but they would tread softly and move about cautiously. G. R. Driver suggests the Akkadian *sataru* instead, which means “to demolish,” and is cognate to the Aramaic “to destroy.” This would produce the idea that people are “destroyed” when the wicked come to power (“Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs,” *Bib* 32 [1951]: 192-93). That meaning certainly fits the idea, but there is no reason for the change because the MT is perfectly readable as it is and makes good sense.

**11 tn** The two clauses have parallel constructions: They both begin with infinitives construct with prepositions functioning as temporal clauses, followed by subjective genitives (first the wicked, and then the pronoun referring to them). This heightens the antithesis: “when the wicked rise...when they perish.”

**12 tn** The idiom “to harden the neck” (מִקְשָׁה עֵרֶךְ, *maqsheh-’oref*) is the idea of resisting the rebukes and persisting in obstinacy (e.g., Exod 32:9). The opposite of a “stiff neck” would be the bending back, i.e., submission.

**13 tn** The Hebrew construction is אִישׁ תּוֹכַחְתּוֹ (*ish tokhakhot*, “a man of rebukes”), meaning “a man who has (or receives) many rebukes.” This describes a person who is deserving of punishment and who has been given many warnings. The text says, then, “a man of rebukes hardening himself.”

**14 sn** The stubborn person refuses to listen; he will suddenly be destroyed when the calamity strikes (e.g., Prov 6:15; 13:18; 15:10).

**15 tn** Or “healing” (NRSV).

**16 tn** The Hebrew form בִּרְבוֹת (*birvot*) is the Qal infinitive construct of רָבָה (*ravah*) with a ב (*bet*) preposition, forming a temporal clause with a subjective genitive following it. It is paralleled in the second colon by the same construction, showing the antithesis: וּבְמִשְׁחָל (*uvimshol*), “and when the wicked rule.” Some commentators wish to change the first verb to make it parallel this more closely, e.g., רָדָה (*radah*, “to rule”), but that would be too neat and is completely unsupported. The contrast is between when the righteous increase and when the wicked rule. It is not hard to see how this contrast works out in society.

**17 tn** The Niphal verb אָנַח (*anakh*) means “to sigh; to groan,” usually because of grief or physical and emotional distress. The word is a metonymy of effect; the cause is the oppression and distress due to evil rulers.

**18 tn Heb** “a man.” Here “man” is retained in the translation because the second colon mentions prostitutes.

**19 tn** Or “causes his father to rejoice”; NAB “makes his father glad.”

**20 tn** The active participle רֹעֵה (*ro’eh*) is from the second root רָעָה (*ra’ah*), meaning “to associate with.” The verb occurs only a few times, and mostly in the book of Proverbs. It is related to רֵעֵה (*re’eh*, “friend; companion; fellow”). To describe someone as a “companion” or “friend” of prostitutes is somewhat euphemistic; it surely means someone who is frequently engaging the services of prostitutes.

**21 tn** The Hebrew verb אָבַד (*’abbed*) means “destroys”; it is the Piel imperfect of the verb that means “to perish.”

**22 sn** Wealth was seen as a sign of success and of God’s blessings, pretty much as it always has been. To be seen as honorable in the community meant one had acquired some substance and kept his reputation. It would be a disgrace to the family to have a son who squandered his money on prostitutes (e.g., Prov 5:10; 6:31).

**23 tn** The form is the Hiphil imperfect of the verb עָמַד (*amad*, “to stand”), hence, “to cause to stand.” It means that the king makes the nation “stand firm,” with “standing firm” being a figure for strength, security, and stability. Cf. NCV “makes his country (the nation CEV) strong.”

**24 tn** Or “country.” This term functions as a metonymy of subject for the people in the land.

**25 tn** The Hebrew text reads אִישׁ תְּרוּמוֹת (*ish t’rumot*, “a man of offerings”), which could refer to a man who “receives gifts” or “gives gifts.” Because of its destructive nature on the country, here the phrase must mean that he receives or “exact” the money (cf. NRSV “makes heavy exactions”). This seems to go beyond the ordinary taxation for two reasons: (1) this ruler is a “man of offerings,” indicating that it is in his nature to do this, and (2) it tears down the country. The word “offerings” has been taken to refer to gifts or bribes (cf. NASB, NIV, CEV, NLT), but the word itself suggests more the idea of tribute or

down.

**29:5** The one<sup>1</sup> who flatters<sup>2</sup> his neighbor spreads a net<sup>3</sup> for his steps.<sup>4</sup>

**29:6** In the transgression of an evil person there is a snare,<sup>5</sup> but a righteous person can sing<sup>6</sup> and rejoice.<sup>7</sup>

**29:7** The righteous person cares for<sup>8</sup> the legal rights<sup>9</sup> of the poor;

the wicked does not understand such<sup>10</sup> knowledge.

**29:8** Scornful people<sup>11</sup> inflame<sup>12</sup> a city,<sup>13</sup> but those who are wise turn away wrath.

**29:9** If a wise person<sup>14</sup> goes to court<sup>15</sup> with a foolish person, there is no peace<sup>16</sup> whether he is angry or laughs.<sup>17</sup>

**29:10** Bloodthirsty people<sup>18</sup> hate someone with integrity,<sup>19</sup>

as for the upright, they seek his life.<sup>20</sup>

**29:11** A fool lets fly with all his temper,<sup>21</sup> but a wise person keeps it back.<sup>22</sup>

taxes that are demanded; this Hebrew word was used in Leviticus for offerings given to the priests, and in Ezek 45:16 for taxes. The point seems to be that this ruler or administrator is breaking the backs of the people with heavy taxes or tribute (e.g., 1 Sam 8:11-18), 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 smoothly," i.e., smoothing over things 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 destructive.

**3 sn** The image of "spreading a net" for someone's steps is an implied comparison (a figure of speech known as hypocatastasis): As one would literally spread a net, this individual's flattery will 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.

**4 tn** There is some ambiguity concerning the referent of "his steps." The net could be spread for the one flattered (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 yourself"). The latter 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).

**5 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.

**6 tc** The two verbs create some difficulty because the book of Proverbs does not usually duplicate verbs like this and because the first verb יָרַח (*yarun*) is irregular. The BHS editors prefer to emend it to יָרַח (*yarun*, "will rush"; cf. NAB "runs on joyfully"). W. McKane emends it to "exult" to form a hendiadys: "is deliriously happy" (*Proverbs* [OTL], 638). G. R. Driver suggests changing the word to יָדֹן (*yadon*) based on two Hebrew mss and an Arabic cognate *dana*, "continue." He translates it "but the righteous remains and rejoices" ("Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs," *Bib* 32 [1951]: 193-94). None of these changes are particularly helpful. The verb is unusual for a geminate root, but Gesenius shows several places where the same pattern can be seen in other geminate verbs (GKC 180 §67.g). In light of this it is preferable to retain the reading of the MT here.

**7 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.

**8 tn** The form is an active participle, יָדַע (*yodea'*); it describes the righteous as "knowing, caring for, having sympathetic knowledge for, or considering favorably" the legal needs of the poor. Cf. NAB "has a care for"; NASB "is concerned for."

**9 tn** The Hebrew word used here is דִּין (*din*), 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.

**10 tn** The term "such" is supplied in the translation for clarification. It is not simply any knowledge that the wicked do not understand, but the knowledge mentioned in the first colon. They do not understand the "sympathetic knowledge" or "concern" for the cause of the poor.

**11 tn** Heb "men of scorn"; NAB "Arrogant men"; ASV, NRSV "Scoffers"; NIV, NLT "Mockers."

**12 tn** The verb means "to blow; to breathe" (BDB 806 s.v. בָּוַח). 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 metonymy 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 שָׁפַט (*shafat*) means "to judge." In the Niphal 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 an argument (e.g., 1 Sam 12:7; Isa 43:26); cf. NAB "disputes"; NASB "has a controversy."

**16 tn** The noun נַחַת (*nakhat*) is a derivative of נָח (*nuakh*, "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 also "seek the life of the upright" (cf. NIV, NRSV). The difficulty is that the suffix is singular but the apparent referent is plural. (2) One can take it as 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 would 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 fool gives full expression to his "soul," whether it is anger or bitterness or frustration or any other emotions. He has no self-control.

**22 tn** The line is difficult. The MT has בִּזְכוּתוֹ יִשְׁבֹּתוּהוּ (*b<sup>e</sup>khor y<sup>e</sup>shabb<sup>k</sup>khenhah*), which literally means "steals it back." The verb יִשְׁבֹּתוּ (*shavakhi*) means "to soothe; to still," as with a storm, or here with the temper. But because אִכְרוֹר (*akhor*) does not fit very well with this verb, most commentators offer some suggested change. C. H. Toy 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

**29:12** If a ruler listens to<sup>1</sup> lies,<sup>2</sup>  
all his ministers<sup>3</sup> will be wicked.<sup>4</sup>  
**29:13** The poor person and the oppressor<sup>5</sup>  
have this in common.<sup>6</sup>  
the LORD gives light<sup>7</sup> to the eyes of them  
both.  
**29:14** If a king judges the poor in truth,<sup>8</sup>  
his throne<sup>9</sup> will be established forever.  
**29:15** A rod and reproof<sup>10</sup> impart<sup>11</sup> wis-  
dom,  
but a child who is unrestrained<sup>12</sup> brings  
shame<sup>13</sup> to his mother.<sup>14</sup>

“holds it back” (e.g., NASB, NRSV, NLT), and this fits the Hebrew as well as any.

**1 tn** The Hiphil participle מַקְשִׁיב (maqshiv) means “to give attention to; to regard; to heed.” Cf. NASB, NCV, TEV “pays attention to.”

**sn** Such a ruler would become known as one who could be lied to, because he paid attention to lies.

**2 tn** Heb “word of falsehood” or “lying word.” Cf. TEV “false information.”

**3 tn** The verb שָׁרַת (sharat) means “to minister; to serve.” The Piel plural participle here refers to servants of the king who attend to him – courtiers and ministers (cf. NIV, NRSV, TEV, CEV “officials”; NLT “advisers”). This, his entourage, will have to resort to evil practices to gain his favor if he is swayed by such lies.

**4 tn** The servants of the monarch adjust to their ruler; when they see that court flattery and deception are effective, they will begin to practice it and in the end become wicked (e.g., Prov 16:10; 20:8; 25:2).

**5 tn** Heb “a man of oppressions”; KJV “the deceitful man.” The noun תֵּקַח (tokh) means “injury; oppression” (BDB 1067 s.v.). Such men were usually the rich and powerful. The Greek and the Latin versions have “the debtor and creditor.”

**6 tn** The verb פָּגַשׁ (pagash) means “to meet; to encounter.” In the Niphal it means “to meet each other; to meet together” (cf. KJV, ASV). The focus in this passage is on what they share in common.

**7 sn** The expression gives light to the eyes means “gives them sight” (cf. NIV). The expression means that by giving them sight the LORD gives them the light of life (e.g., Job 33:30; Ps 13:3). God creates and controls them all. So in spite of their circumstances in life, all people receive their life from God.

**8 tn** The king must judge “in truth” (בְּאֵמֶת, be’emet). Some have interpreted this to mean “faithfully” (KJV, ASV) but that is somewhat unclear. The idea is that the poor must be treated fairly and justly (cf. NIV “with fairness”; NRSV “with equity”); “truth” is that which corresponds to the standard of the law revealed by God. There must be no miscarriage of justice for these people simply because they are poor.

**9 sn** The term “throne” is a metonymy of subject; it represents the dynasty, the reign of this particular king and his descendants. The qualification of the enduring administration is its moral character. The language of this proverb reflects the promise of the Davidic Covenant (e.g., Prov 16:12; 20:28; 25:5; 31:5).

**10 tn** The word “rod” is a metonymy of cause, in which the instrument being used to discipline is mentioned in place of the process of disciplining someone. So the expression refers to the process of discipline that is designed to correct someone. Some understand the words “rod and reproof” to form a hendiadys, meaning “a correcting [or, reproving] rod” (cf. NAB, NIV “the rod of correction”).

**11 tn** Heb “gives” (so NAB).

**12 tn** The form is a Pual participle; the form means “to let loose” (from the meaning “to send”; cf. KJV, NIV “left to himself”), and so in this context “unrestrained.”

**13 sn** The Hebrew participle translated “brings shame” is a metonymy of effect; the cause is the unruly and foolish things that an unrestrained child will do.

**14 sn** The focus on the mother is probably a rhetorical variation for the “parent” (e.g., 17:21; 23:24-25) and is not meant

**29:16** When the wicked increase,<sup>15</sup> trans-  
gression increases,  
but the righteous will see<sup>16</sup> their downfall.  
**29:17** Discipline your child, and he will  
give you rest;<sup>17</sup>  
he will bring you<sup>18</sup> happiness.<sup>19</sup>  
**29:18** When there is no prophetic vision<sup>20</sup>  
the people cast off restraint,<sup>21</sup>  
but the one who keeps the law,<sup>22</sup> blessed  
is he!<sup>23</sup>

to assume that only the mother will do the training and endure the shame for a case like this (e.g., 13:24; 23:13).

**15 tn** The verb רָבָה (ravah), which is repeated twice in this line, means “to increase.” The first occurrence here is usually taken to mean that when the wicked increase they hold the power (cf. NRSV, NLT “are in authority”; TEV, CEV “are in power”). The text does not explain the details, only that when the wicked increase sin will increase in the land.

**16 sn** The Hebrew verb translated “see” in this context indicates a triumph: The righteous will gaze with satisfaction, or they will look on the downfall of the wicked triumphantly (e.g., Pss 37:4 and 112:8). The verse is teaching that no matter how widespread evil may be, the righteous will someday see its destruction.

**17 tn** The verb, a Hiphil imperfect with a suffix, could be subordinated to the preceding imperative to form a purpose clause (indirect volitive classification): “that he may give you rest.” The same then could apply to the second part of the verse.

**18 tn** Heb “your soul.” The noun נַפְשֶׁךָ (nafshekha, “your soul”) is a synecdoche of part (= inner soul) for the whole person (= you); see, e.g., Isa 43:4; 51:23; BDB 600 s.v. 4.a.2.

**19 sn** The parallelism of this verse is synthetic; the second half adds the idea of “delight/pleasure” to that of “rest.” So a disciplined child will both relieve anxiety (“give...rest”) and bring happiness to the parents.

**20 tn** Heb “no vision.” The Hebrew word “vision” (from the verb כָּחַזַח [khozach, “to see”]) refers to divine communication to prophets (as in 1 Sam 3:1) and not to individual goals or plans. C. H. Toy sees a problem here: The most calamitous period of Israel’s history was when prophetic vision was at its height, whereas people were often more obedient when God was silent. He also notes that in the book of Proverbs there is no mention of prophetic teaching with wisdom as a guide. So he emends the word to “guidance” following the LXX (Proverbs [ICC], 512). The TEV has “guidance”; the NIV retains “revelation.” It must be stated that the prophetic ministry was usually in response to the calamitous periods, calling the people back to God. Without them the downward rush to anarchy and destruction would have been faster than with these prophetic calls from God.

**21 tn** The verb פָּרַע (para) means “to let go; to let alone.” It occurs here in the Niphal with the meaning of “[the people] are let loose,” meaning, they cast off restraint (e.g., Exod 32:25). Cf. NLT “run wild.”

**22 sn** The law here refers to scripture, the concrete form of revelation. So the two halves of the verse provide the contrast: When there is no prophetic revelation there is chaos, but those who keep the revelation contained in scripture find blessing.

**23 tn** There is a tendency among commentators and English versions to translate אֲשֵׁרְהוּ (ashrehu) as “happy is he!” (cf. KJV, ASV, NAB, NASB, TEV, NLT). But “happy” can be a misleading translation. The Hebrew word refers to a heavenly bliss, an inner joy, that comes from knowing one is right with God and experiencing his blessing. “Happiness,” on the other hand, depends on what happens.

29:19 A servant<sup>1</sup> cannot be corrected<sup>2</sup> by words,  
for although<sup>3</sup> he understands, there is no answer.<sup>4</sup>  
29:20 Do you see someone<sup>5</sup> who is hasty in his words?<sup>6</sup>  
There is more hope for a fool than for him.<sup>7</sup>  
29:21 If<sup>8</sup> someone pampers his servant from youth,  
he will be a weakling<sup>9</sup> in the end.  
29:22 An angry person<sup>10</sup> stirs up dissension,  
and a wrathful person<sup>11</sup> is abounding in transgression.<sup>12</sup>  
29:23 A person's pride<sup>13</sup> will bring him

low.<sup>14</sup>  
but one who has a lowly spirit<sup>15</sup> will gain honor.  
29:24 Whoever shares with a thief<sup>16</sup> is his own enemy;<sup>17</sup>  
he hears the oath to testify,<sup>18</sup> but does not talk.  
29:25 The fear of people<sup>19</sup> becomes<sup>20</sup> a snare,<sup>21</sup>  
but whoever trusts in the LORD will be set on high.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **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."

<sup>2</sup> **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.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* "for he understands, but there is no answer." The concessive idea ("although") is taken from the juxtaposition of the two parts.

<sup>4</sup> **sn** To say "there is no answer" means that this servant does not obey – he has to be trained in a different way.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* "a man," but there is no indication in the immediate context that this should be limited only to males.

<sup>6</sup> **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.

<sup>7</sup> **sn** Rash speech cannot easily be remedied. The prospects for a fool are better (e.g., Prov 26:12).

<sup>8</sup> **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.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The word מָגוֹן (*magon*) is a *hapax legomenon*; accordingly, it has been given a variety of interpretations. The LXX has "grief," and this has been adopted by some versions (e.g., NIV, NCV). The idea would be that treating the servant too easily for so long would not train him at all, so he will be of little use, and therefore a grief. J. Reider takes the word to mean "weakling" from the Arabic root *na'na* ("to be weak"), with a noun/adjective form *muna'ana* ("weak; feeble"); see his "Etymological Studies in Biblical Hebrew," VT 4 [1954]: 276-95. This would give a different emphasis to the sentence, but on the whole not very different than the first. In both cases the servant will not be trained well. Rashi, a Jewish scholar who lived A.D. 1040-1105, had the translation "a master." The servant trained this way will assume authority in the household even as the son. This may be behind the KJV translation "son" (likewise ASV, NASB). *Tg.* Prov 29:21 and the Syriac have "to be uprooted," which may reflect a different text entirely.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* "a man of anger." Here "anger" is an attributive ("an angry man"). This expression describes one given to or characterized by anger, not merely temporarily angry. The same is true of the next description.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* "possessor of wrath." Here "wrath" is an attributive (cf. ASV "a wrathful man"; KJV "a furious man").

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* "an abundance of transgression." The phrase means "abounding in transgression" (BDB 913 s.v. רַב 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; 15:18; 16:32; 22:24).

<sup>13</sup> **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.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** There is a wordplay here due to the repetition of the root שָׁפַל (*shafel*). In the first line the verb תִּשְׁפַּלְנִי (*tishplennu*) 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," שְׁפַל־רוּחַ (*sh'fal-ruakh*). 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.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* "low in spirit"; KJV "humble in spirit." This refers to an attitude of humility.

**sn** The Hebrew word translated "lowly" forms an implied comparison: To be humble is like being low, base, earthbound; whereas pride is often compared to being high, lofty – at least in one's own eyes.

<sup>16</sup> **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.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* "hates his soul." The accomplice is working against himself, for he will be punished along with the thief if he is caught.

<sup>18</sup> **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 "he 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."

**sn** The *oath to testify* was 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.

<sup>19</sup> **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.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* "gives [or yields, or produces]"; NIV "will prove to be."

<sup>21</sup> **sn** "Snare" is an implied comparison; fearing people is like being in a trap – there is no freedom of movement or sense of security.

<sup>22</sup> **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 face<sup>1</sup> of a ruler,  
but it is from the LORD that one receives justice.<sup>2</sup>  
29:27 An unjust person is an abomination to the righteous,  
and the one who lives an upright life<sup>3</sup> is an abomination to the wicked.

*The Words of Agur*<sup>4</sup>

30:1 The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh; an oracle:<sup>5</sup>  
This<sup>6</sup> man says<sup>7</sup> to Ithiel, to Ithiel and to Ukal:<sup>8</sup>

30:2 Surely<sup>9</sup> I am more brutish<sup>10</sup> than any other human being,<sup>11</sup>

and I do not have human understanding;<sup>12</sup>  
30:3 I have not learned wisdom,  
nor do I have knowledge<sup>13</sup> of the Holy One.<sup>14</sup>  
30:4 Who has ascended into heaven, and then descended?<sup>15</sup>  
Who has gathered up the winds in his fists?<sup>16</sup>  
Who has bound up the waters in his cloak?<sup>17</sup>  
Who has established all the ends of the earth?<sup>18</sup>  
What is his name, and what is his son's name?<sup>19</sup> – if you know!

<sup>1</sup> **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 disposition of some earthly ruler.

<sup>2</sup> **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.

<sup>3</sup> **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.”

**sn** The proverb makes a simple observation on life: The righteous detest the wicked, and the wicked detest the life-style of the righteous. Each is troublesome to the beliefs and the activities of the other.

<sup>4</sup> **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).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The title *הַמָּסָא׳* (*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.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The definite article is used here as a demonstrative, clarifying the reference to Agur.

<sup>7</sup> **sn** The word translated “says” (*אָמַר*, *n’um*) 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.”

<sup>8</sup> **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*, 299). 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.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The particle *כִּי* (*ki*) functions in an asseverative sense, “surely; indeed; truly” (R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 73, §449).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The noun *בָּעָר* (*ba’ar*) means “brutishness”; here it functions as a predicate adjective. It is followed by *מֵאִישׁ* (*me’ish*) 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.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “than man.” The verse is using hyperbole; this individual feels as if he has no intelligence at all, that he is more brutish than any other human. Of course this is not true, or he would not be able to speculate on the God of the universe

at all.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the understanding of a man,” with “man” used attributively here.

<sup>13</sup> **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).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** 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.

<sup>15</sup> **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 mankind’s limitations and God’s incomparable nature. The first question could be open to include humans, but may refer to God alone (as the other questions do).

<sup>16</sup> **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.

<sup>17</sup> **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.”

<sup>18</sup> **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.

<sup>19</sup> **sn** The reference to “son” in this passage has prompted many suggestions down through the years: It was identified as Israel in 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. It seems best to say that 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;<sup>1</sup> he is like<sup>2</sup> a shield for those who take refuge in him.<sup>3</sup>

**30:6** Do not add to his words, lest he reprove you, and prove you to be a liar.<sup>4</sup>

**30:7** Two things<sup>5</sup> I ask from you;<sup>6</sup> do not refuse me before I die:

**30:8** Remove falsehood and lies<sup>7</sup> far from me;

do not give me poverty or riches, feed me with my allotted portion<sup>8</sup> of bread,<sup>9</sup>

**30:9** lest I become satisfied and act deceptively<sup>10</sup>

and say, “Who is the LORD?”

Or lest I become poor and steal and demean<sup>11</sup> the name of my God.

**30:10** Do not slander<sup>12</sup> a servant to his master,

lest he curse you, and you are found guilty.<sup>13</sup>

**30:11** There is a generation<sup>14</sup> who curse their fathers

and do not bless their mothers.<sup>15</sup>

**30:12** There is a generation who are pure in their own eyes

and yet are not washed<sup>16</sup> from their filthiness.<sup>17</sup>

**30:13** There is a generation whose eyes are so lofty,<sup>18</sup>

and whose eyelids are lifted up disdainfully.<sup>19</sup>

**1 sn** The text here uses an implied comparison (a figure of speech known as hypocatstasis): 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.

**2 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.

**3 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 (hypocatstasis) – God provides spiritual rest and security for those who put their trust in him.

**4 tn** The form of the verb is a Niphal perfect tense with a *vav* consecutive from the root כָּבַד (*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.

**5 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 6:16–19).

**6 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.”

**7 tn** The two words might form a hendiadys: “falsehood and lies” being equivalent to “complete deception.” The word אֲרִיזָה 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.

**8 tn** The word חֵק (*khog*) means “statute”; it is also used of a definite assignment in labor (Exod 5:14; Prov 31:15), or of a set portion of food (Gen 47:22). Here it refers to food that is the proper proportion for the speaker.

**9 sn** Agur requested an honest life (not deceitful) and a balanced life (not self-sufficient). The second request about his provision is clarified in v. 9.

**10 tn** The verb כָּהַשׁ (*kakhash*) means “to be disappointing; to deceive; to fail; to grow lean.” In the Piel stem it means “to deceive; to act deceptively; to cringe; to disappoint.” The idea of acting deceptively 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 תִּלְשֵׁן (*talshen*) is the Hiphil jussive (with the negative אַל, *’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 tn** 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 will be a curse – the person who is the target of the slander will “curse” the person who slandered him (קָלַל [*qalal*] in the Piel means “to treat lightly [or, with contempt]; to curse”), and culpability will result (the verb נִטַּח means “to be guilty; to make a guilt offering [or, reparation offering]”). This word for guilt suggests a connection to the Levitical teaching that the guilty had to make reparation for damages done (Lev 5). Cf. NAB “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 tn** The verb רָחַץ (*rakhats*) means “to wash; to wash off; to wash away; to bathe.” It is used of physical washing, ceremonial washings, and hence figuratively of removing sin and guilt through confession (e.g., Isa 1:16). Here the form is the Pual perfect (unless it is a rare old Qal passive, since there is no Piel and no apparent change of meaning from the Qal).

**sn** The point of the verse is that there are people who observe outer ritual and think they are pure (טָהוֹר [*tahor*] is the Levitical standard for entrance into the sanctuary), but who pay no attention to inner cleansing (e.g., Matt 23:27).

**17 sn** *Filthiness* often refers to physical uncleanness, but here it refers to moral defilement. Zech 3:3–4 uses it metaphorically as well for the sin of the nation (e.g., Isa 36:12).

**18 tn** *Heb* “how high are its eyes!” This is a use of the interrogative pronoun in exclamatory sentences (R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 25, §127).

**19 tn** *Heb* “its eyelids are lifted up,” a gesture indicating arrogance and contempt or disdain for others. To make this clear, the present translation supplies the adverb “disdainfully” at the end of the verse.

**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 like<sup>1</sup> swords<sup>2</sup> and whose molars<sup>3</sup> are like knives to devour<sup>4</sup> the poor from the earth and the needy from among the human race.

**30:15** The leech<sup>5</sup> has two daughters:<sup>6</sup> “Give! Give!”<sup>7</sup>

There are three things that are never satisfied,  
four<sup>8</sup> that never say, “Enough”<sup>9</sup> –

**1 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.

**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 chewing refers to destroying the poor (an implied comparison). The figures of “swords/knives” are metaphors within this image. Comparing teeth to swords means that they are sharp and powerful. The imagery captures the rapacity of their power.

**3 tn** Heb “teeth” (so NRSV) or “jaw teeth” (so KJV, ASV, NASB) or perhaps “jawbone.” This is a different Hebrew word for “teeth” than the one in the previous line; if it refers to “jaw teeth” then a translation like “molars” would be appropriate, although this image might not fit with the metaphor (“like knives”) unless the other teeth, the incisors or front teeth, are pictured as being even longer (“like swords”).

**4 tn** The Hebrew form לִעְכּוֹל (*le'ekhol*) is the Qal infinitive construct; it indicates the purpose of this generation's ruthless power – it is destructive. The figure is an implied comparison (known as hypocatstasis) between “devouring” and “destroying.”

**5 sn** The next two verses describe insatiable things, things that are problematic to normal life. The meaning of v. 15a and its relationship to 15b is debated. But the “leech” seems to have been selected to begin the section because it was symbolic of greed – it sucks blood through its two suckers. This may be what the reference to two daughters calling “Give! Give!” might signify (if so, this is an implied comparison, a figure known as hypocatstasis).

**6 sn** As one might expect, there have been various attempts to identify the “two daughters.” In the Rabbinic literature some identified *Alukah* (the “leech”) with *Sheol*, and the two daughters with paradise and hell, one claiming the righteous and the other the unrighteous; others identified *Alukah* with Gehenna, and the two daughters with heresy and government, neither of which is ever satisfied (*Midrash Tehillim* quoted by Rashi, a Jewish scholar who lived A.D. 1040-1105, and in the Talmud, *b. Avodah Zarah* 17a). J. J. Glueck suggests that what is in view is erotic passion (and not a leech) with its two maidens of burning desire crying for more (“Proverbs 30:15a,” *VT* 14 [1964]: 367-70). F. S. North rightly criticizes this view as gratuitous; he argues for the view of a leech with two suckers (“The Four Insatiabiles,” *VT* 15 [1965]: 281-82).

**7 tn** The two imperatives הַב הַב (*hav hav*, “give, give,” from הָבַב, *yahav*) correspond to the two daughters, and form their appeal. This would then be a personification – it is as if the leech is crying out, “Give! Give!”

**8 sn** There is a noticeable rhetorical sequence here: two daughters, 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* [OTL], 656). This interpretation is a minority view, however, and has not won widespread support.

**9 tn** Throughout the book of Proverbs הוֹן (*hon*) means

**30:16** the grave,<sup>10</sup> the barren womb,<sup>11</sup> land that is not satisfied with water, and fire that never says, “Enough!”<sup>12</sup>

**30:17** The eye<sup>13</sup> that mocks at a father and despises obeying<sup>14</sup> a mother – the ravens of the valley will peck it out and the young vultures will eat it.<sup>15</sup>

**30:18** There are three things that are too wonderful for me,<sup>16</sup> four that I do not understand:

**30:19** the way<sup>17</sup> of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock,

“wealth,” but here it has the nuance of “sufficiency” (cf. TEV, CEV, NLT “satisfied”) or “enough” (BDB 223 s.v.).

**10 tn** The term שְׁאוֹל (*she'ol*, “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.”

**11 tn** Heb “the closing of the womb,” a situation especially troubling for one who is consumed with a desire for children (e.g., Gen 16:2; 30:1).

**12 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.

**13 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).

**14 tn** The Hebrew word לִיָּבֶתָה (*liqabat*, “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” (לִיָּבֶתָה, *li'zibqat*) of the mother (*Proverbs* [ICC], 530). The LXX with γῆρας (*gēras*, “old age”) suggests that a root *lhq* had something to do with “white hair.” D. W. Thomas suggests a corruption from *lhyqt* to *lyqht*; it would have read, “The eye that mocks a father and despises an aged mother” (“A Note on לִיָּבֶתָה in Proverbs 30:17,” *JTS* 42 [1941]: 154-55); this is followed by NAB “or scorn an aged mother.”

**15 sn** The sternest punishment is for the evil eye. The punishment is talionic – eye for eye. The reference to “the valley” may indicate a place where people are not given decent burials and the birds of prey pick the corpses clean. It is an image the prophets use in judgment passages.

**16 tn** The form נִפְלְאוֹ (*nifl'au*) is the Niphal perfect from פָּלָא (*pala*); the verb means “to be wonderful; to be extraordinary; to be surpassing”; cf. NIV “too amazing.” The things mentioned are things that the sage finds incomprehensible (e.g., Gen 18:14; Judg 13:18; Ps 139:6; and Isa 9:6[5]). The sage can only admire these wonders – he is at a loss to explain them.

**17 sn** It is difficult to know for certain what these four things had in common for the sage. They are all linked by the word “way” (meaning “a course of action”) and by 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 majestic form and then gone; (2) they all have a mysterious means of propulsion or motivation; (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 concerns human relationships and is slightly different than the first three.

the way of a ship in the sea,  
and the way of a man with a woman.<sup>1</sup>  
**30:20** This is the way<sup>2</sup> of an adulterous<sup>3</sup>  
woman:  
she eats and wipes her mouth<sup>4</sup>  
and says, “I have not done wrong.”<sup>5</sup>

**30:21** Under three things the earth trem-  
bles,<sup>6</sup>  
and under four things it cannot bear up:  
**30:22** under a servant<sup>7</sup> who becomes  
king,  
under a fool who is stuffed with food,<sup>8</sup>  
**30:23** under an unloved<sup>9</sup> woman who is  
married,

**1 tn** This last item in the series is the most difficult to understand. The MT reads וַיִּבְרַח בְּעַלְמָהּ (v<sup>e</sup>derekh gever b<sup>e</sup>almah, “and 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 בְּ (bet) 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 new, elevated status of the individuals was not accompanied by a change in nature. For example, it was not completely unknown in the ancient world for a servant to become king, and in the process begin to behave like a king.

**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 the attitude of a servant and be useless as a leader.

**8 tn Heb** “filled with food” (so ASV); NASB “satisfied with food”; NAB, NRSV “glutted with food”; CEV “who eats too much”; NLT “who prospers.”

**9 sn** The expression *stuffed with food* probably represents prosperity in general. So the line portrays someone who suddenly comes into wealth, but continues to be boorish and irreligious.

**9 tn** The Hebrew term means “hated,” from שָׂנְאָה (*sane’*), a feminine passive participle. The text does not say why she is hated; some have speculated that she might be odious (cf. KJV, ASV, NAB) or unattractive, but perhaps she is married to someone incapable of showing love (e.g., Gen 29:31, 33; Deut 21:15; Isa 60:5). Perhaps the strange situation of Jacob was in the mind of the sage, for Leah was described as “hated” (Gen 29:31).

and under a female servant who disposes<sup>10</sup> her mistress.

**30:24** There are four things on earth that are small,<sup>11</sup>  
but they are exceedingly wise;<sup>12</sup>

**30:25** ants are creatures with little strength,  
but they prepare<sup>13</sup> their food in the summer;

**30:26** rock badgers<sup>14</sup> are creatures with little power,  
but they make their homes in the crags;

**30:27** locusts have no king,  
but they all go forward by ranks;<sup>15</sup>

**30:28** a lizard<sup>16</sup> you can catch with the hand,  
but it gets into the palaces of the king.<sup>17</sup>

**30:29** There are three things that are magnificent<sup>18</sup> in their step,

**10 tn** The verb יָרַשׁ (*yarash*) means either (1) “to possess; to inherit” or (2) “to dispossess.” Often the process of possessing meant the dispossessing of those already there (e.g., Hagar and Sarah in Gen 16:5; 21:10); another example is the Israelites’ wars against the Canaanites.

**11 tn Heb** “Four are the small things of the earth.” TEV has “four animals,” though in the list of four that follows, two are insects and one is a reptile.

**12 tn** The construction uses the Pual participle with the plural adjective as an intensive; these four creatures are the very embodiment of wisdom (BDB 314 s.v. הִבְיָנוּ Pu).

**13 sn** The wisdom of the ants is found in their diligent preparation (כּוּן, *kun*) of food supplies in the summer for times in the winter when food is scarce. See S. P. Toperoff, “The Ant in the Bible and Midrash,” *Dor le Dor* 13 (1985): 179-83. According to this, being prepared ahead of time is a mark of true wisdom.

**14 tn** Or “hyraxes.” This is the Syrian Hyrax, also known as the rock badger. KJV, ASV has “conies” (alternately spelled “coney” by NIV), a term usually associated with the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) but which can also refer to the pika or the hyrax. Scholars today generally agree that the Hebrew term used here refers to a type of hyrax, a small ungulate mammal of the family *Procavidae* native to Africa and the Middle East which has a thick body, short legs and ears and 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.

**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.

**15 sn** 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.

**16 tn** 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.”

**sn** 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.

**17 tn** Although the Hebrew noun translated “king” is singular here, it is traditionally translated as plural: “kings’ palaces” (so KJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV).

**18 tn** The form מְיֹשֵׁבִי (*metibe*) is the Hiphil participle, plural construct. It has the idea of “doing good [in] their step.” They move about well, i.e., magnificently. The genitive would be a genitive of specification.



four things that move about magnificently:<sup>1</sup>

**30:30** a lion, mightiest<sup>2</sup> of the beasts, who does not retreat from anything;

**30:31** a strutting rooster,<sup>3</sup> a male goat, and a king with his army around him.<sup>4</sup>

**30:32** If you have done foolishly by exalting yourself<sup>5</sup>

or if you have planned evil, put<sup>6</sup> your hand over your mouth!

**30:33** For as the churning<sup>7</sup> of milk produces butter

and as punching the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger<sup>8</sup> produces strife.<sup>9</sup>

**1 tn** The construction uses the Hiphil participle again (as in the previous line) followed by the infinitive construct of הלך (*halakh*). This forms a verbal hendiadys, the infinitive becoming the main verb and the participle before it the adverb.

**2 tn** Heb “mighty among the beasts,” but referring to a superlative degree (“mightiest”).

**3 tn** The Hebrew term זָרִיר (*zarzir*) means “girt”; it occurs only here with “loins” in the Bible: “that which is girt in the loins” (BDB 267 s.v.). Some have interpreted this to be the “greyhound” because it is narrow in the flanks (J. H. Greenstone, *Proverbs*, 327); so KJV, ASV. Others have suggested the warhorse, zebra, raven, or starling. Tg. Prov 30:31 has it as the large fighting cock that struts around among the hens. There is no clear referent that is convincing, although most modern English versions use “strutting rooster” or something similar (cf. CEV “proud roosters”).

**4 tc** This last line has inspired many suggestions. The MT has “with his army around him” (אַלְקִים עִיּוֹ, *alqum immo*); so NIV. This has been emended to read “against whom there is no rising up” (so KJV, ASV) or “standing over his people.” The LXX has “a king haranguing his people.” Tg. Prov 30:31 has, “a king who stands up before his people and addresses them.” Some have attempted to identify this with Alcimus, the high priest who aspired to kingship (1 Macc 7:5-22), but such a suggestion is quite remote. Another interpretation sees the word for “God” in the line: “a king with whom God is.” Furthermore, C. H. Toy thinks the text is corrupt and must have at one time referred to some majestic animal (*Proverbs* [ICC], 537). While all these suggestions are fascinating, they have not improved or corrected the Hebrew text. At least one can say the focus is on the stately appearance of the king at some auspicious moment. The word occurs only here, but if it is interpreted with its Arabic cognate in mind, then it refers to a band of soldiers (BDB 39 s.v. אֲלִקִּים).

**5 tn** The construction has the ב (*bet*) preposition with the Hitpael infinitive construct, forming a temporal clause. This clause explains the way in which the person has acted foolishly.

**6 tn** Heb “hand to mouth.” This expression means “put your hand to your mouth” (e.g., Job 40:4, 5); cf. NIV “clap your hand over.”

**7 tn** This line provides the explanation for the instruction to keep silent in the previous verse. It uses two images to make the point, and in so doing repeats two words throughout. The first is the word מִיץ (*mits*), which is translated (in sequence) “churning,” “punching,” and “stirring up.” The form is a noun, and BDB 568 s.v. suggests translating it as “squeezing” in all three places, even in the last where it describes the pressure or the insistence on strife. This noun occurs only here. The second repeated word, the verb יָצַר (*yotsir*), also occurs three times; it is the Hiphil imperfect, meaning “produces” (i.e., causes to go out).

**8 sn** There is a subtle wordplay here with the word for anger: It is related to the word for nose in the preceding colon.

**9 sn** The analogy indicates that continuously pressing certain things will yield results, some good, some bad. So pressing anger produces strife. The proverb advises people to strive for peace and harmony through humility and righteousness.

*The Words of Lemuel*

**31:1** The words of King Lemuel,<sup>10</sup> an oracle<sup>11</sup> that his mother taught him:

**31:2** O<sup>12</sup> my son, O son of my womb, O son<sup>13</sup> of my vows,

**31:3** Do not give your strength<sup>14</sup> to women, nor your ways<sup>15</sup> to that which ruins<sup>16</sup> kings.

**31:4** It is not for kings,<sup>17</sup> O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine,<sup>18</sup> or for rulers to crave strong drink,<sup>19</sup>

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 מָה (*mah*), normally the interrogative “what?” (so KJV, ASV, NAB, NASB) is best interpreted here as an exclamation. Tg. Prov 31:2 has “Woel!”

**13 tn** In all three occurrences in this verse the word “son” has the Aramaic spelling, בַּר (*bar*), rather than the Hebrew בֶּן (*ben*). The repetition of the word “son” shows the seriousness of the warning; and 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 powers 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 לְמַחֵת (*lamkhot*, “to wipe out; to blot out; to destroy”). The construction is somewhat strange, and so some interpreters suggest changing it to מְחַתֵּת (*mokhot*, “destroyers of kings”); cf. BDB 562 s.v. מָחָה Qal.3. Commentators note that the form is close to an Aramaic word that means “concubine,” 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 יָיָ (*ev*), a *Kethib*/Qere reading. The *Kethib* is יָיָ (*o*) but the Qere is יָיָ (*ey*). Some follow the Qere and take the word as a shortened form of יָיָה, “where?” This would mean the ruler would be always asking for drink (cf. ASV). Others reconstruct יָיָה (*avveh*, “to desire; to crave”). In either case, the verse would be saying that a king is not to be want-

31:5 lest they drink and forget what is decreed,  
and remove<sup>1</sup> from all the poor<sup>2</sup> their legal rights.<sup>3</sup>

31:6 Give strong drink to the one who is perishing,<sup>4</sup>  
and wine to those who are bitterly distressed;<sup>5</sup>

31:7 let them<sup>6</sup> drink and forget<sup>7</sup> their poverty,  
and remember their misery no more.

31:8 Open your mouth<sup>8</sup> on behalf of those unable to speak,<sup>9</sup>

for the legal rights of all the dying.<sup>10</sup>

31:9 Open your mouth, judge in righteousness,<sup>11</sup>

and plead the cause<sup>12</sup> of the poor and needy.

*The Wife of Noble Character*<sup>13</sup>

31:10 Who can find<sup>14</sup> a wife<sup>15</sup> of noble character?<sup>16</sup>

**12 sn** Previously the noun *דִּין* (*din*, "judgment") was used, signifying the legal rights or the pleas of the people. Now the imperative *דִּן* 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).

**13 sn** 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 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. Dont-Sommer*, 287-95). In general, it appears that the "woman" of Proverbs 31 is a symbol 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 deity 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 (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," *CBQ* 44 [1982]: 202-11). Second, the passage is similar to hymns, but this one extols wisdom. A comparison with Psalm 111 will illustrate the similarities. Third, the passage has similarities with heroic literature. The vocabulary and the expressions often sound more like an ode to a champion than to a 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 only 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.

**14 sn** The poem begins with a rhetorical question (a figure of speech known as erotesis). 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.

**15 tn** The first word in the Hebrew text (*אִשָּׁה*, 'eshet) begins with *א* (*alef*), the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

**16 tn** *Heb* "a woman of valor." This is the same expression used to describe Ruth (e.g., Ruth 3:11). The term *חַיִּיל* (*khayil*) here means "moral worth" (BDB 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

ing/seeking alcohol.

**1n** Here "strong drink" probably refers to barley beer (cf. NIV, NCV "beer").

**1 tn** The verb means "change," perhaps expressed in reversing decisions or removing rights.

**2 tn** *Heb* "all the children of poverty." This expression refers to the poor by nature. Cf. KJV, NASB, NRSV "the afflicted"; NIV "oppressed."

**3 sn** The word is *דִּין* (*din*, "judgment"; so KJV). In this passage it refers to the cause or the plea for justice, i.e., the "legal rights."

**4 sn** Wine and beer should be given to those distressed and dying in order to ease their suffering and help them forget.

**5 tn** *Heb* "to the bitter of soul." The phrase *לִבִּירֵי בִּישׁ* (*l'bamare nafesh*) has been translated "of heavy hearts" (KJV); "in anguish" (NIV); "in misery" (TEV); "in bitter distress" (NRSV); "sorely depressed" (NAB); "in deep depression" (NLT); "have lost all hope" (CEV). The word "bitter" (*בִּירֵי*, *mar*) describes the physical and mental/spiritual suffering as a result of affliction, grief, or suffering – these people are in emotional pain. So the idea of "bitterly distressed" works as well as any other translation.

**6 tn** The subjects and suffixes are singular (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). Most other English versions render this as plural for stylistic reasons, in light of the preceding context.

**7 tn** The king was not to "drink and forget"; the suffering are to "drink and forget."

**8 sn** The instruction to "open your mouth" is a metonymy of cause; it means "speak up for" (so NIV, TEV, NLT) or in this context "serve as an advocate in judgment" (cf. CEV "you must defend").

**9 sn** The instruction compares people who cannot defend themselves in court with those who are physically unable to speak (this is a figure of speech known as hypocatastasis, an implied comparison). The former can physically speak, but because they are the poor, the uneducated, the oppressed, they are unable to conduct a legal defense. They may as well be speechless.

**10 tn** Or "of all the defenseless." The noun *חַלְוֹף* (*khalof*) means "passing away; vanishing" (properly an infinitive); in this construction "the sons of the passing away" means people who by nature are transitory, people who are dying – mortals. But in this context it would indicate people who are "defenseless" as opposed to those who are healthy and powerful.

**11 tn** The noun *צַדִּיק* (*tsedeq*) serves here as an adverbial accusative of manner. The decisions reached (*שֹׁפֵט*, *sh'fat*) in this advocacy must conform to the standard of the law. So it is a little stronger than "judging fairly" (cf. NIV, NCV), although it will be fair if it is done righteously for all.

For her value<sup>1</sup> is far more than rubies.

**31:11** The heart of her husband has confidence<sup>2</sup> in her, and he has no lack of gain.<sup>3</sup>

**31:12** She brings him<sup>4</sup> good and not evil<sup>5</sup> all the days of her life.

**31:13** She obtains<sup>6</sup> wool and flax, and she is pleased to work with her hands.<sup>7</sup>

**31:14** She is like<sup>8</sup> the merchant ships;<sup>9</sup> she brings her food from afar.

**31:15** She also gets up<sup>10</sup> while it is still night, and provides food<sup>11</sup> for her household

and a portion<sup>12</sup> to her female servants.

**31:16** She considers<sup>13</sup> a field and buys it; from her own income<sup>14</sup> she plants a vineyard.

**31:17** She begins<sup>15</sup> her work vigorously, and she strengthens<sup>16</sup> her arms.

**31:18** She knows<sup>17</sup> that her merchandise is good, and her lamp<sup>18</sup> does not go out in the night.

**31:19** Her hands<sup>19</sup> take hold<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> **sn** This line expresses that her value (*Heb* “her price”), like wisdom, is worth more than rubies (e.g., 3:15; 8:11).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The first word of the second line begins with ב (*bet*), the second letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The verb בָּטַח (*batakh*) 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.”

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The Hebrew word used here for “gain” (שָׂלַח, *shalal*) is unusual; it means “plunder; spoil” of war primarily (e.g., Isa 8:1-4 and the name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz). The point is that the gain will be as rich and bountiful as the spoils of war. The wife’s capabilities in business and domestic matters guarantee a rich profit and inspire the confidence of her husband.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The first word of the third line begins with ג (*gimel*), the third letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>5</sup> **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.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The first word of the fourth line begins with ד (*dalet*), the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The verb דָּרַשׁ (*darash*) means “to seek; to inquire; to investigate.” The idea is that she looks for the wool and flax to do her work, but the whole verse assumes she has obtained it. This verb also occurs in the hymn of Ps 111, which says in v. 2 that “the works of the Lord are searched.” One word used in another passage is not that significant, but the cumulative effect of words and ideas suggest that the composition of this poem is influenced by hymnology.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and she works in the pleasure of her hands.” The noun כְּשֵׂהֶפֶט (*kheshefets*) means “delight; pleasure.” BDB suggests it means here “that in which one takes pleasure,” i.e., a business, and translates the line “in the business of her hands” (BDB 343 s.v. 4). But that translation reduces the emphasis on pleasure and could have easily been expressed in other ways. Here it is part of the construct relationship. The “hands” are the metonymy of cause, representing all her skills and activities in making things. It is also a genitive of specification, making “pleasure” the modifier of “her hands/her working.” She does her work with pleasure. *Tg. Prov* 31:13 has, “she works with her hands in accordance with her pleasure.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The first word of the fifth line begins with ה (*he*), the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The point of the simile is that she goes wherever she needs to go, near and far, to gather in all the food for the needs and the likes of the family. The line captures the vision and the industry of this woman.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The first word of the sixth line begins with ו (*vav*), the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>11</sup> **sn** The word for “food” is תֵּרֵף (*teref*, “prey”; KJV “meat”), another word that does not normally fit the domestic scene. This word also is used in a similar way in Ps 111:5, which says the Lord gives food. Here it is the noble woman who gives food to her family and servants.

<sup>12</sup> **sn** The word חֶקֶף (*khaqf*) 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 (*Tg. 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.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The first word of the seventh line begins with ז (*zayin*), the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

**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.

<sup>14</sup> **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.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The first word of the eighth line begins with ח (*khet*), the eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

**tn** *Heb* “she girds her loins with strength.” The idea is that of gathering up the long robes with a sash or belt so that they do not get in the way of the work. The point of the figure is readiness for work. But to say she girds herself with “strength” means that she begins vigorously. “Strength” here would be a comparison with the sash.

<sup>16</sup> **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.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The first word of the ninth line begins with ט (*tet*), the ninth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

**sn** This is the word for “taste.” It means her opinion or perception, what she has learned by experience and therefore seems right.

<sup>18</sup> **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.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The first word of the tenth line begins with י (*yod*) the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

**sn** The words for “hands” are often paired in poetry; the first (יָד, *yad*) means the hand and the forearm and usually indicates strength, and the second (כַּף, *kaf*) means the palm of the hand and usually indicates the more intricate activity.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The verb שָׁלַח (*shilakh*), 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<sup>1</sup> her hand<sup>2</sup> to the poor, and reaches out her hand to the needy.

**31:21** She is not<sup>3</sup> afraid of the snow<sup>4</sup> for her household, for all of her household are clothed with scarlet.<sup>5</sup>

**31:22** She makes for herself coverlets;<sup>6</sup> her clothing is fine linen and purple.<sup>7</sup>

**31:23** Her husband is well-known<sup>8</sup> in the city gate<sup>9</sup>

when he sits with the elders<sup>10</sup> of the land.

**31:24** She makes linen garments<sup>11</sup> and sells them,

and supplies the merchants<sup>12</sup> with sashes.

**31:25** She is clothed<sup>13</sup> with strength<sup>14</sup> and honor,<sup>15</sup>

and she can laugh<sup>16</sup> at the time<sup>17</sup> to come.

**31:26** She opens her mouth<sup>18</sup> with wisdom,

and loving instruction<sup>19</sup> is on her tongue.

**31:27** She watches over<sup>20</sup> the ways of her household,

and does not eat the bread of idleness.<sup>21</sup>

**31:28** Her children rise up<sup>22</sup> and call her blessed,

her husband<sup>23</sup> also praises her:

**31:29** “Many<sup>24</sup> daughters<sup>25</sup> have done valiantly,<sup>26</sup>

but you surpass them all!”

<sup>1</sup> **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.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The first word of the eleventh line begins with כ (kaf), the eleventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The first word of the twelfth line begins with ל (lamed), the twelfth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>4</sup> **sn** “Snow” is a metonymy of adjunct; it refers to the cold weather when snow comes. The verse is saying that this time is not a concern for the wise woman because the family is well prepared.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** For the MT’s “scarlet” the LXX and the Latin have “two” or “double” – the difference being essentially the vocalization of a plural as opposed to a dual. The word is taken in the versions with the word that follows (“covers”) to mean “double garments.” The question to be asked is whether scarlet would keep one warm in winter or double garments. The latter is the easier reading and therefore suspect.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The first word of the thirteenth line begins with מ (mem), the thirteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The word rendered “coverlets” appears in 7:16, where it has the idea of “covered.” K&D 17:335 suggests “pillows” or “mattresses” here. The Greek version has “lined overcoats” or “garments,” but brings over the last word of the previous verse to form this line and parallel the second half, which has clothing in view.

<sup>7</sup> **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 dyed with purple 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 charitable, but he is not.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The first word of the fourteenth line begins with נ (nun), the fourteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The form is the Niphal participle of יָדָע (yada’); it means that her husband is “known.” The point is that he is a prominent person, respected in the community.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “gate”; the term “city” has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

**sn** The “gate” was the area inside the entrance to the city, usually made with rooms at each side of the main street where there would be seats for the elders. This was the place of assembly for the elders who had judicial responsibilities.

<sup>10</sup> **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.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The first word of the fifteenth line begins with ס (samek), the fifteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

**sn** The poet did not think it strange or unworthy for a woman of this stature to be a businesswoman engaged in an honest trade. In fact, weaving of fine linens was a common trade for women in the ancient world.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “to the Canaanites.” These are the Phoenician traders that survived the wars and continued to do business down to the exile.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** The idea of clothing and being clothed is a favorite figure in Hebrew. It makes a comparison between wearing clothes and having strength and honor. Just as clothes immediately indicate something of the nature and circumstances of the person, so do these virtues.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The first word of the sixteenth line begins with ע (ayin), the sixteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** This word appears in Ps 111:3 which says that the LORD’s work is honorable, and here the woman is clothed with strength and honor.

<sup>16</sup> **sn** Here “laugh” is either a metonymy of adjunct or effect. The point is that she is confident for the future because of all her industry and planning.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “day.” This word is a metonymy of subject meaning any events that take place on the day or in the time to come.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The first word of the seventeenth line begins with פ (pe), the seventeenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

**sn** The words “mouth” (“opens her mouth”) and “tongue” (“on her tongue”) here are also metonymies of cause, referring to her speaking.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The Hebrew phrase תּוֹרַת־חֶסֶד (torat-khesed) 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.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The first word of the eighteenth line begins with צ (tsade), the eighteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>21</sup> **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.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The first word of the nineteenth line begins with פ (qof), the nineteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

**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.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** 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.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** The first word of the twentieth line begins with ר (resh), the twentieth letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** Or “women” (NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>26</sup> **tn** The word is the same as in v. 10, “noble, valiant.”

31:30 Charm is deceitful<sup>1</sup> and beauty is fleeting,<sup>2</sup>  
but a woman who fears the LORD<sup>3</sup> will be praised.

31:31 Give<sup>4</sup> her credit for what she has accomplished,<sup>5</sup>  
and let her works praise her<sup>6</sup> in the city gates.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The first word of the twenty-first line begins with ש (shin), the twenty-first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The graphic distinction between ש (shin) and ש (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.

<sup>2</sup> **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.

<sup>3</sup> **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.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The first word of the twenty-second line begins with ת (tav), the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>5</sup> **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).

<sup>6</sup> **sn** Psalm 111 began with the imperative הַלְלוּ יְהוָה (*hal'lu yah*, “praise the LORD”), and this poem ends with the jussive וְיְהַלְלוּהָ (*vihal'luha*, “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.

<sup>7</sup> **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 [אִשָּׁת חַיִּיל]” (*eshet khayil*)” (Ruth 3:11).