

1. Health of Piety (1-12)

a. Internalize Precepts (1-4)

- i. “My son” difference between the presumed father and heavenly Father are insignificant.
- ii. “Heart.” Whereas chs. 1-2 addressed outward threats to piety (godliness); e.g. conspirators, thieves, false teachers, and the seductress; ch. 3 discusses the inward threats which lie w/in the heart (1, 3, 5)! Sin is not something outward but that which comes from within. Therefore, we must fill our hearts with God’s Law.
- iii. Doing so preserves us and affords opportunity for longevity; for the evil are but a vapor but the righteous will go on forever (compare v. 2 with 12:7).
- iv. “Mercy and truth” or “goodness and truth” are expressions of the Law and must be demonstrated not unlike an adorning necklace (3). The Law is a transcript of God’s heart and we see this same descriptive term in Exod. 34:6 of God. And so reap the benefits of such character (4 cf. Lu. 2:52).

b. Trust Providence (5-8)

- i. 2 Cor. 4:18 echoes this principle. The precepts (Law/Commands) of God work because reality is based on His character. His Law is true North. See vv. 19-20.
- ii. When the object functions as designed there is success – in this case godliness is achieved.
- iii. The world holds up the seemingly logical paths with the promise of satisfaction and meaning but we must cling to the Word we hide in our hearts.
- iv. Trusting God provides nourishment as physical sustenance to the flesh and bones (8). The actual terms (as most Bibles note) are “naval” rather than “flesh,” and “drink” rather than “strength.” In his more technical commentary, Bruce Waltke explains: “*To your navel* (elsewhere only in Ezek. 16:4; Song 7:3) is a synecdoche, *pars pro toto*, for the whole body. Ibn Ezra,⁴⁰ followed by Delitzsch⁴¹ and Meinhold,⁴² sees an allusion to the embryo finding life apportioned at this central part of the body. By observing the commands of 3:7, as by *drinking* a divine elixir, one will experience a mysterious quickening and nourishing of the inner and firmest part of the body, *to your bones* [emphasis mine]”¹ See my footnote below for further consideration.²

c. Honor Provision (9-10)

- i. A principle not a precept. Giving God monetary homage is more about trusting Him. He already owns everything. It’s about the heart.
- ii. We don’t give to God to get blessings. We honor, trust, and obey Him because we have been blessed and love Him.

d. Receive Punishment (11-12)

Though we may need to take our negative disciplining, we must also be aware that God has other plans for our infirmities and trials (which are not chastening per se). See footnote 2 below.

2. Wealth of Sagacity se-gas-city (13-26)

a. Splendor of Wisdom (13-18)

⁴⁰ Cited by Greenstone, *Proverbs*, p. 27.

⁴¹ Delitzsch, *Proverbs*, p. 63.

⁴² Meinhold, *Sprüche*, p. 76.

¹ Waltke, B. K. (2004). *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15* (p. 246). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

² This health is like that we recently considered in 1 Tim. 6:3-10. Also, re: v. 7’s “straight” paths indicate the avoidable trouble wisdom avoids. Nevertheless, consider Job and Jn. 9:3.

- i. Wisdom and understanding make one happy because they are more precious than silver, gold (14) and rubies (15).
 - ii. Not only does “she” provide life, security, and peace (17-18); “her” application radiates to God and man (4).
 - iii. If you treasure wisdom, she’ll be a treasure of splendor displayed in your life.
 - iv. Again we see in v. 16 that she provides opportunity for longevity and honor – treasure which cannot be stolen or corroded.
 - b. Source of Wisdom (19-20)
 - i. The LORD Creator is her source as she is innate to His essence.
 - ii. She is the source of creation as she was necessary to its design and purpose.
 - iii. She is the source of the benefits listed throughout Proverbs and is indeed the one to be sought at all costs.
 - c. Security of Wisdom (21-26)
 - i. Clinging to “them” or “her/she” (understanding and knowledge) provides a *practical* security, a grounded or sure-footed (23) stability like a goat on a mountain path.
 - ii. Applying the wisdom of God allows us to have restful peace (24) as it is well with our souls.
 - iii. Applied knowledge (wisdom) provides a practical protection and foundation but it also assures us of a *providential* protection (25-26). In other words, God honors (16) those who honor Him and providentially (if not miraculously) provides protection for His own. If you guard wisdom, wisdom will guard you.
- 3. Stealth of Charity (27-35)
 - a. Charity’s Debt (27-28)
 - i. Greatest Commandment Mk. 12:28-31 is foreshadowed her in Pr. 3.
 - ii. Ro. 13:8-10 echoes the precept.
 - iii. Affirming the two tables of the Decalogue (as Jesus did in Mk. 12), vv.1-26 discuss trusting, abiding, honoring the LORD ultimately and vv. 27-31 address loving our neighbors.
 - iv. Jesus taught that our charitable works are to be somewhat stealth – at least not seek applause (Mat. 6:3-5; 5:42).
 - b. Charity’s Disdain (29-31)
 - i. 1 Cor. 13:6.
 - ii. Love is stealthy in that it does not call attention to itself (1 Cor. 13:4).
 - iii. Love hates hesitation (28), harm (29), harassment (30), haughtiness (1 Cor. 13:4) and hatred (31).
 - c. Charity’s Declaration (32-35)
 - i. Like the previous teachings, this one ends with an antithetical summary (four part).
 - ii. V. 32 contrasts the perverse who are an abomination with the upright who are privy to His secret counsel. It is not so much stealth here as what one commentator called the “Open Secret” of the Cosmos. We know He created the universe with His knowledge and understanding (19-20) and such is open for all to observe, not unlike lady wisdom who calls out in the open square. V. 33 contrasts the curse on the wicked with the blessing of the just.
 - iii. V. 34 contrasts the scorn of God on the scornful with His grace to the humble. What is another stealthy truth is that the first will be last and the last will be first.
 - iv. V. 35 contrasts the glory of the wise with the shame of the fools.

PC

This wisdom speech is truly wise as it is framed like The Decalogue (10 Commandments). It affirms the wisdom of the Creator and wisdom of abiding in His Law. It affirms the benefits of prosperity, peace, and security for those who love God and their neighbors. It commands that we trust God when our own eyes see a seemingly prudent path. It assures us God's discipline is loving and that the upright, the just, the humble, and the wise will find treasure and display it with humility and honor for the LORD. The world promises happiness, security, peace, prosperity, and glory but cannot deliver. The paths which seem to provide such are followed by those whose hearts are full of pride, selfishness, and anxiety. The paths of righteousness, joy, and security are tread by those whose hearts abide in His commands and trust Him, not leaning on their own understanding.