

“Righteousness is True Security” (Prov. 11)

- v. 1. Dishonest transactions fail to trust God and instead seek to cheat others to selfishly gain. The weighted scales are an abomination. We are not to employ deceptive prejudiced double standards in order to gain wealth, prominence, position, etc. The application of this verse is not merely monetarily. E.g. it is unjust and using weighted scales to punish those who say a double mastectomy is child abuse by firing them because they are intolerant while not tolerating their religious and scientific stances. Christians do not sacrifice justice for the sake of tolerance, they are not one in the same and Proverbs affirms such. Fair dealings please God as He is just and such demonstrates our trust in Him.
- v. 2. “Pride” = insolent (zadon) connoting a stubborn unwillingness to learn or mature. The wise are humble and thus teachable and obedient becoming wiser still.
- v. 3. The upright walk in the light of integrity and are thus clearly guided, yet the perverse walk in darkness covering “perverting” their destructive agendas which ultimately serve as self-destruction. Vv. 1-3 summary: the wicked use false appearances to deceive and gain; while the wise trust God, walk in the light, and are thus secure in Him. Dishonesty is not transparent and pride is not honest, thus there is no integrity to them thus they end in destruction.
- v. 4. \$ is not bad but it cannot save from the wrath of an offended victim or God! The fool trusts in wealth so he does anything to gain it but it cannot save him from justice. Conversely, the righteous need not look over their shoulders, as they do not cheat others invoking God’s wrath. *Clarifying definition of “righteousness”: The OT and NT affirm there is none righteous save God. But then uses the term regarding people like Abraham and generally speaking in e.g. Proverbs. The ones called “righteous” in the OT or NT are those who trust in God. They are not self-righteous but are accounted as righteous (Ro. 4:3) because they do not trust in their ‘righteousness’ but God’s righteousness and provision.
- vv. 5-6. Success and security are found in righteousness. The “upright” can afford transparency while the “fallen” are entrapped by their own sin.
- vv. 7-8. Death is the great disillusionment for the wicked. The righteous will be delivered from trouble yet it will find the wicked.
- v. 9. Dishonest speech destroys others; but the discerning wise will not be enticed by such and thus not be ensnared by the deceit. There is little (and sometimes no) difference between a liar, thief, and murderer. Wisdom “knowledge” can give discernment to avoid victimhood from the hypocrite’s mouth which will falsely accuse and mislead to not only their own destruction but those who fall for such.
- vv. 10-11. When wisdom is rightly positioned, its fruit multiplies to many. Here in vv. 10-11 we see how when the wise are in positions of authority, such benefits the city or even nation. Hence when the wicked (who cause trouble) perish, the thievery ends and people rejoice. Those wicked – with their wicked deceptions – overthrow the blessings of righteous rule (11). Now is a time when Christians are being duped by political and social ideologies and practices. To help us clarify what we should approve and disapprove is found in this chapter and in these verses viz. does the policy and practice promote righteousness or unrighteousness? We must ask ourselves this and test such in light of Scripture. For those Christians vying for religious equality (including secularism), how do they reconcile such with clear violations such as LGBTQIAplus agendas, abortion, evolution, etc.? A wiser stance is religious tolerance (not equality), as all legislation is moral in nature and many morals are perverted when the unrighteous rule and thus penalize those with biblical morals while promoting immorality which rejects God, governs with prejudice towards evil, and causes corruption and utter decay. Does this sound a bit too religious or radical? Read Isa. 1:4-7. Can we trust our secularized institutions?
- vv. 12-13. The “heartless” who despise others (inferring wicked intent toward them) vs the peaceful neighbor who employs discretion / restraint –holding his peace and knowing vengeance is the LORD’s. And whereas the gossip causes division, the faithful use discretion.

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- v. 14. Wise counsel is needed not platitudes! The wise know that they don't know it all and thus seek multiple perspectives from other humble souls.
- v. 15. It is foolhardy to give your pledge to a stranger.
- v. 16. The gracious give and receive honor while the ruthless take (exploit) riches which can neither bring honor nor security – which are respectively both greater and more secure than riches.
- v. 17. “Merciful” = loyal (hesed). Helping others he aids himself yet cruelty is self-inflicting.
- v. 18. The wicked deceive in order to gain unrighteous wages while the righteous earn their wages (albeit they understand and rely on grace). Today's vernacular e.g. “An honest day's work for an honest day's wage.”
- v. 19. Both temporal and eternal recompense is likely in view.
- v. 20. Conveys crooked roundabout avoidance of truth and goodness vs straight forward integrity – dark perversion vs transparent integrity. Beware of those who contradict themselves and are unclear where they stand on a matter. The trustworthy “blameless” need not hide nor deceive.
- v. 21. “Join forces” = lit. “hand to hand” (yad). Though in numbers they conspire, they will fail and be punished cf. Ps. 2. The righteous and their seed will be delivered from evil and their own sins.
- v. 22. What good is a beautiful ring in the nose of an unclean pig which rolls in the mud and snorts when it eats? Not very attractive. “Beauty is skin deep.” Happy is the man who may not have a “trophy wife” but a loyal, upright, gracious one.
- v. 23. The righteous are such because they desire God and truth thus they'll be satisfied (Mat. 5:6). The wicked desire selfish pleasures with no thought of God, neighbor, truth, or righteousness. Therefore their end is wrath.
- vv. 24-25. This overtly requires faith. Paradox of generosity relies on God, trusting in His providential care not promised abundance. See 2 Cor. 9:6; 8:9. Conversely, hoarding riches leads to poverty. One can gain the world but cannot exchange such for his soul. →
- v. 26. This seems to say that such selfish practice need not only be dealt with by God, but will naturally be avoided by sensible people while blessing comes on those who do not hoard.
- v. 27. See Mat. 6:33; 7:7-11.
- v. 28. As in the beginning of this chapter, wealth can be good (e.g. 3:9-10) but trusting in it is foolish (Jer. 9:23-24). I like to boast of the goodness, graciousness, and holiness of God. Though we save, invest, give, etc., we do not trust in money, markets, nor men. Righteousness is of more value than money and can offer the only security for eternity. Invest where thieves, moths, nor rust can devour.
- v. 29. Harm the household and inherit nothing. Idiocy (being ignorant or malevolent) destroys and leaves nothing – save judgment (23b). And the fool will inherit slavery.
- v. 30. Interesting word play: Righteousness produces fruit which “takes” – not “wins” souls. From what does the righteous take those? What is the opposite of life? This thought is actually clearly displayed in 13:14 and soberly expressed in 2 Tim. 2:26 & Jude v. 23. Because we are born in our sinful nature, we must be rescued, “taken,” from the clutches of evil and sin...
- v. 31. Emphatic conclusion: “how much more...?” 1 Pet. 4:18 conveys this sobering thought. We know (and those in the OT knew) that no one is righteous (Ps. 130:1-4). The key to the comparison is “on the earth.” The righteous who are saved by grace through faith will indeed receive discipline here and now but not in the hereafter. However, the evil who may avoid full justice temporally, will actually get their full recompense – whereas those clothed in the only perfect righteousness have their sins paid in full at the Cross!

Regarding the motif of “security,” Ps. 91 must be interpreted in light of Mat. 10 esp. v. 28.

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We all desire (and need) security. But from what do we need to be secure? And to what or whom ought we to be secured? The wicked seek security by ill-gotten gain, exploitation, and other means of selfish practices. Even the upstanding citizens seek security by trusting in money, insurance, health food, exercise, and other mental, physical, and spiritual practices. However, the healthiest of folk can be disabled or die in an auto accident in moments. The wise can also meet an ominous trauma. And the spiritualists may refuse to see that Jesus alone can atone for their transgressions. Therefore the only sure security is God. And those who have found Him know that walking in His security has great advantages such as peace, transparency, humility, and even learning to walk righteously as we attempt to do His will on earth as it is in heaven. What a privilege, what a blessing, what a security to be in Christ!