

Proverbs 24-12-18b

We're ready to pick up our study in Proverbs chapter 15. We left off at the end of verse 28 where the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil and It's important to remember what God's definition of wicked is the Bible is replete with descriptions and definitions talking about the causes and conditions and Successions and relations and all of the other Aspects of wickedness and those who embrace it and are therefore wicked you think well Is this the the most heinous criminals of the world the most obviously? non good and unrighteous Wicked is not having the righteousness of God It is a binary situation you either have the righteousness of God or By definition you are wicked the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest Whose waters cast up mire and dirt there is no peace saith my God for the wicked The wickedness doesn't have to be overt Mind numbingly criminal behavior it is The Condition and the effect of those who are not actively laying hold of the righteousness of God by faith This is why believers can be wicked It isn't are you saved it is are you righteous and? And in my early years studying under a pastor who had a lot to say about The righteousness that comes from God in my notes I had an abbreviation for righteousness, and it was a plus sign and then a capital R and If you lack the righteousness of God if you're not operating in faith, then it's a minus R Minus R isn't just the lack of righteousness It's wickedness What does this mean in terms of this verse The mouth of the wicked pours forth evil What this means is if we are not actively harboring the righteousness of God in our soul Our speech is going to be harmful It is going to be a fountain of evil our Conversation will inevitably trend in bad directions. It will lead to gossip and maligning and judging and backbiting Vindictiveness Implacability some of you recognize that list from that same pastor these are mental attitude sins that become sins of the tongue and We are very capable of sin simply when we lack the righteousness of God That is the condition it's like the presence or absence of water When there's water it's wet when there's not water it's dry Dry is wickedness water and wetness is righteousness and When there's no righteousness It's dry.

It's wicked. We like to say well wickedness. That's other people.

That's the really bad Those are the nefarious cult people and the alternate religions and those who are out to do harm no, you and I can be wicked if we lose sight of the exhortation and the command to pursue God's righteousness and lay hold of it by faith and our conversation Will end up having evil results It doesn't promote the glory of God. It doesn't further the plan and purpose of God It becomes evil in and of itself this ought to scare us We don't want to be sitting here wagging our finger off in some vague direction saying well those wicked You know their mouths just pour forth evil I saw that on the news Somebody that hates my candidate was talking and their mouth was just pouring forth evil. They're wicked That does nobody any good The Word of God isn't for that guy.

The Word of God is for me. It's for us So when this says the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil this ought to scare me I want to be sure I am as far away from wicked as I can get. I don't want

my mouth to pour forth evil and Notice that that even if my heart is in the right place, and I meant well I had good intentions my mouth is going to pour the evil out because Whatever goodness is in my heart can't get to my mouth and can't get to my eyes and can't get to my ears When I am being faithless when I am not walking in wisdom when I'm not availing myself of God's grace and God's power I'm dysfunctional My speech ought to be with coming from an overflowing heart that is full of gratitude to God and love for others but if it's just shooting from the mouth, it's going to flood evil and This is a word for me.

And this is a word for you. Don't worry about the other people How wicked are they how much evil is coming out their mouth? Doesn't matter. You can't do anything about that.

I Have to worry about what's coming out of my mouth This is why the constant prayer let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart Be acceptable in thy sight. Oh Lord my strength and my Redeemer That's from the Psalms Let the words of my mouth the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight Notice the connection even in that scripture of the words and the heart So You see the flow here That was Psalm 19 14 by the way that I just quoted but you notice that as a result of these kinds of choices and these Priorities that we set for ourselves and how much it concerns us whether we are a blessing or a curse to those around us whether we are a pleasure or an abomination in God's sight does it matter enough for me to pay attention to what I'm doing and avail myself of God's grace and God's power to change Well, I know that I need the Lord to make that kind of change So in verse 29, the Lord is far from the wicked That's why their mouth pours forth evil. The Lord's far away.

The fountain of living water is far away They can't help but be dry Rocks can't generate water on their own only God can make water pour forth from the rock If God is far from the wicked they have no choice Every word they speak is going to be an aspect of wickedness even when they're being kind even when they think they are being helpful or comforting or Saying I love you if a Godless heart says I love you. Watch out because you're relying on the strength of an attitude that isn't shored up with divine power and It's fickle it's fleeting it's here today and gone tomorrow. It's impulsive.

It's reckless. It is indiscriminate. It is undiscerning Human love is the reason we've got the high divorce rate that we have even among believers The heart of the righteous studies how to answer the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil Why the Lord is far from the wicked? But he hears the prayers of the righteous He hears the prayers The heart of the righteous studies how to answer and you can see the connection here.

This is Chiastic and its structure you have the righteous at the beginning of verse 28 and you have the righteous at the end of verse 29 and In the middle of that outer layer Where the righteous has a heart that spends time figuring out the best way to answer it is Praying to God for wisdom and strength and guidance and discernment and discretion and wisdom But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil the Lord is far from the wicked these two verses go together they're they're a pair and you can see the symmetry and you can see how they Inform

and define and illuminate each other So we're now we are looking at our effect on each other and the Opinion that God has the evaluation that God makes of us in those Situations so in verse 30 the light of the eyes Rejoices the heart and a good report makes the bones fat They were trying to be tactful here, and they said healthy in Hebrew. It's fat The light of the eyes rejoices the heart Remember when Jesus was talking about? your eyes and Light that is from within Lights up the entire body and you are transparent what is in your heart comes through your aspect your demeanor your countenance your eyes and When your eyes are light your whole body is full of light Jesus said Where does the light come from who is the author and originator of light the very first thing we ever hear God? Say is what? Let there be light This is the essence God is light and in him is no darkness at all God is light he spoke light into existence at the dawn of creation and When our eyes are focused on the light of God When the light of God comes through our eyes and illuminates our hearts and souls There is joy The fruit of the Spirit is love God is love the spirit fruit of the Spirit is joy this light rejoices our heart and We have seen references to joy earlier in the chapter remember verse 20 a wise son brings joy to his father makes his father glad Folly is joy if you Don't have discernment if you don't understand what's good and bad if you call evil good and you call good evil Which is happening today Can you believe the? growing support for this cold blooded shoot a guy in the back murderer that is Trending on social media and girls are are Impressed because he's got Stomach muscles and thick eyebrows. I don't know what it's Insanity to me, but people are calling evil good And you have others who are doing good and endeavoring to do good and trying to bring good into bad Situations and they are being called evil and hounded and persecuted as evil Victims of lawfare and so forth People misusing and abusing the the legal system to attack people who are trying to do good You want to wonder of whether or not we're in the last days there's no more Cogent clue than that, but the light of the eyes Rejoices the heart light is of God God is clothed in light God dwells in unapproachable light God is the life and the light of men remember in John 1 The Lord Jesus is the light and the life of men So are we looking at life from divine viewpoint from God's perspective with God's plans and purposes and promises and his will Uppermost in our thoughts or are we greedy for gain? Are we looking for material security? Are we endeavoring to get ahead using the tools and the ways of the world? It's a pretty clear choice.

The light of the eyes rejoices the heart and a good report makes the bones fat Strengthens the bones. This is it's not actual fat in your bones It means your bones become strong and sturdy gives you structure gives you strength gives you stability Gives you immovability This all hinges on what is a good report? You have to know the difference between good and evil and sadly because our Ancient ancestors ate of the true tree of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil Now we know what evil is everything is not good you dwell in a perfect garden planted by God following the directions given by God you yourself are clothed in light and Have a companion and are moving about the garden doing the tending that God Enjoyed Adam to do and it's wonderful anything you see anything you put your hand to is going to be good It is perfect environment Until the day that the knowledge That there is more than just good. There is also evil the knowledge of good Contra evil good and evil So what is a good report if you have

the light of God in your eyes so that you can discern? Again Hebrews you get to chapter 5 in chapter 6 those who are mature and have their senses Dis Exercised to discern good and evil To know what is genuine good it might not be good by the world standard it might not be spoken of as good it might Be decried and denounced and attacked and defamed by people who have a conscience seared with a hot iron But you know what is good? What is good? Oh, man? Do justice love mercy walk humbly you're not the proud You're not the boaster.

You're not the attacker. You're not the self-interested He has shown you. Oh, man.

What is good and What does the Lord require of you those things are good so a good report is going to reflect those things Justice mercy and humility Intrinsic to that which is good All Things work together for good To those who love God to those who live in the light of their calling according to his purpose and not not their own Light of the eyes rejoices the heart This is seeing the world in the context of God's plan of purpose verse 31 the ear now we've moved from the eyes to We've moved from the walk we move from the heart and we move from the mouth in the earlier verses now We're looking at the ears the ear that hears the rebukes of life Think about that before we even go any further The ear that hears the rebukes. Do you think this is just I noticed the sound? This is here in the sense of heed understand take to heart and endeavor to implement correction because of right This isn't just I heard a noise I Hear what you're saying? I don't agree with it. I don't understand it.

I don't intend to do anything with it That's that's not that kind of hearing the ear that hears the rebukes What is a rebuke I? Am pointing out an error on your part it is an omission or it is a commission of that which is Erroneous you made a mistake You did something wrong You did something that is not Tove. It is not good. It doesn't reflect God's glory It doesn't reflect humility and character.

It doesn't reflect personal commitment to righteousness You This this isn't Good advice. This isn't healthy guidance. It's rebuke rebuke is correction of a wrong And we are in big trouble if we cannot acknowledge that we are wrong All of us are wrong from time to time and it is good practice to go before the Lord and review our wrongs confess our sins and We will have the humility to also confess our faults to one another.

I'm sorry. I spoke in haste I Was wrong to do so what I said isn't right isn't fair was sinful and I Apologize that was me. I was wrong and if we don't find ourselves fairly regularly Confessing a wrong at a minimum to God and often to each other Confessing your faults one to another isn't a bad idea People have said oh, you don't stand up in church and tell everybody that you know what you did wrong.

No, you don't the offended party Should hear from us when we when when David says against thee and the only have I sinned That's the offense toward God but David also Was at pains to make restitution and there is restitution built into the law of Moses and if we Wrong our brother. We should go to him. The Lord Jesus said if your brother has ought against you go to him and make it right Don't bring your sacrifice put your sacrifice down and go be reconciled

your brother then come and approach God This is a double recognition.

I screwed up I made this problem and it requires humility and it is a it is a good exercise of humility to review our behavior and When we see a fault don't excuse it. Don't shove it away. Don't find somebody to blame Well, you know extenuating and mitigating circumstance.

I couldn't help it You know, look at what this happened Look what this person said or what this person did Doesn't matter what anybody else said or did if I am at fault. I need to acknowledge my fault Take it to any wounded party involved preferably sooner rather than later and Acknowledge it to God Confess your faults to one another is a biblical command Doesn't mean assemble a group and tell them that you've had bad thoughts. It means get with the wounded party and confess and This is in the sphere of the one another's.

Hopefully you are Spending your time with people who are similarly humble and similarly able to acknowledge they're wrong and When people together say, you know, it took two to tango there. I appreciate that you're Willing to to Own up to your part in this let me own up to my part in it and there is reconciliation. There is restoration There is healing and health and unity in such a case and people don't harbor a grudge and go for miles and miles With a rock in their shoe every step every time does it well, you know I can't believe you'd said or did or didn't say or didn't do or whatever Confess your faults one to another So that the ear that hears the rebukes of life the rebukes of life that I used to listen to a different pastor and All of us that speak and get recorded are Paranoid at least I am about developing a tick or a bad habit Saying a lot is is One of mine that I'm unsuccessfully trying to purge but this individual tape after tape lesson after lesson would be talking about a thing and Always tacked on the word in life When you have problems in life you're looking for solutions in life and and when you're You know And you realize it's kind of an unneeded accessory when you have problems.

You're looking for solutions. Of course, it's in life It's not in death or in limbo or you know in she old or in glory The end and it but it becomes sort of a gap filler And there are others you can think of Here the phrase in life means something look at it The ear that hears the rebukes of life What is that? There's a rebuke at Scripture corrects rebukes and instructs right the Word of God profitable But this says that that there's a rebuke of life What is what's the difference in in an ordinary rebuke and a rebuke of life, what do you think? This is like a mini pop quiz here, how could you figure out what in life means? What's our go-to strategy for understanding Scripture? Also known as the three rules of interpretation Okay context. So what is the context? Do you see life in the context? Like maybe the preceding verse What did the preceding verse say The light of the eyes rejoices the heart.

What do we know about the light? God is light. The Lord Jesus is the light of the world and that life that light is the life of men from John So the rebukes of life This isn't just The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or cause and effect in the material world. This is life for a believer This is a believer who is endeavoring to walk in the light as he is in the light We have the advantage in looking at this verse of New Testament truth They could have figured it out in the

Old Testament It's a little bit more straightforward for us.

But the ear that hears the rebukes of life. This is God's activity in our life This is God's light shining into our life and giving us understanding of the real issues being able to discern the difference between a symptom and a root cause and These rebukes are from God whom the Lord loves he chastens He scourges every son whom he receives his word corrects rebukes and instructs us Via doctrine, right So the ear that hears the rebukes of life, this isn't well, I know not to stub my toe on that Threshold again. I know not to bump my head on that doorframe again I know not to life has taught me, you know that the school of hard knocks That's not it.

This is the life of a believer. This is God's life this is the neshama in the spiritual sense that God breathes into us as his children and His Nurturing of us is Life and God will work rebukes into our life And if we hear them if we respond if we are looking for correction Lord I'm praying about this situation It appears that this is the direction to go if I have misunderstood this Please rebuke and correct me. I am listening for your rebuke You didn't stop and think you didn't consider your answer before you launched it out of your mouth you got Distracted by the material aspect of this option and you missed it these truths.

We've just reviewed we look for these in our life and get rebuked when we see ourselves falling for these deceptions in these distractions and these deflections from the right path and looking at our life in the light of God's Word in the Power of God's Spirit we see where we need correction and we correct ourselves We let God's power and God's grace correct us. This takes effort. It's not automatic You can't lay back on your floating Pool cushion and wait to be transformed this requires active participation on our part Our ear has to pay attention here and heed the rebukes that are built into life Don't you see that you missed an opportunity? Don't you see that you fell short because you didn't stop and consider you weren't prayerful.

You didn't acknowledge your own Part in a bad thing. You haven't confessed. You haven't been made pure.

God can't fully bless you and In some cases, he's starting to tear down your house Because you're acting in a self-interested and materialistic way. You're putting your faith and your confidence in the wrong things Listen to the rebukes heed the rebukes Turn ye at my reproof. God says why will you die? Oh house of Israel? I'm sending you rebukes if you turn you don't have to go into captivity You don't have to be driven out of the promised land That was granted to you for the sake of the forefathers Turn at my reproof Rebuke correction instruction in righteousness pay attention listen When these things are communicated I got through 85 to 90 percent of my academic career Not because I was a great guy for studying and You know Cramming material into my head from the book.

I listened in class you could pick up cues if you listened closely to to a good professor and Paid attention to the assignments that were given you could discern what was going to be on the test You could kind of figure out what they were going to ask You know, they've mentioned this like two or three times and by listening in class Many times I survived tests that I didn't even

have time to study for because I was disorganized and late on some other assignment But I listened in class Most of you that have been in school know this if you pay attention in class you get enough material to pass without studying the book In almost all cases in a well-constructed class that is the case and there's no better constructed class than God's Word for his people if we listen We will live the ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide Among the wise what do you know about the abode of the wise? Where are the wise? Going to abide Think about the future There were wise and foolish virgins Some of them ended up in the presence of the king and celebration and the marriage and the bride Others were outside because they were unwise they were foolish if you want a permanent address in the New Jerusalem You want to abide among the wise because that's where the wise are going to abide Figure it out listen in class the time is now here in heed I Am going to make some changes in the way I talk and the way I think and the way I act in the light of the truth I have seen on this page of the book of Proverbs. I am going to improve I am going to change by God's grace humbly prayerfully asking God to Expose for me the faults that I don't want to acknowledge that I Just would really prefer to not think about or hear about I need to know that I've got to fix it if you ignore Bumps and grinds and weird noises under the hood of your car Ignoring them doesn't make them go away very soon you will be at the side of the road with steam emerging from under the hood and waiting endless hours for a tow truck Those things mean something pay attention to the warnings pay attention to the rebuke The ear that hears rebuke of life will abide among the wise You will find that there are wise people in your periphery that there are people who love God and have the wisdom and the truth of God circulating in their hearts and souls it will come up in conversation They will bless you and you will bless them and your spiritual abode even now Will you will be most at home and most relaxed and most joyful and peaceful? around fellow believers who love God and love his word love his truth love his son the Lord Jesus and Love the wisdom that is in the Word of God Never get tired of talking about it never get tired of thinking about it. You will abide you will remain with and Be at close quarters and intimate terms with the wise and that translates into the eternal future as well He who disdains instruction you're shooting yourself in the foot you hate your own soul Why would you not listen to God's reproof? He's the creator.

He wrote the owner's manual Why would you not pay attention when he says you need to change this this needs to be different you need to correct this Heed my rebuke and live dwell among the wise if you disdain that instruction You must really hate yourself because you are leading yourself down 40 miles of bad road thousand yards of ground glass He who heeds rebuke gets understanding notice how verse 31 and 32 go together The year that hears rebukes at the beginning of 31 Hating or rebuke at the end of verse 32 you get understanding that qualifies you to abide with the wise what a blessing What a joy what an opportunity and It's a win-win. God is pleased. We are blessed The Lord Jesus is glorified fellow believers are encouraged and lifted up and edified we together are greater than the sum of the parts because the Spirit is there the Lord Jesus is is Pleased as he walks among the lampstands.

Here's a group that is glowing with the fire of God Who doesn't want that it's crazy to not want

that but you look around There's a lot of craziness in the world and when we look at ourselves sometimes we see that we've been infected with some of that crazy, and we're not we don't stop and Reflect we do not study out the right answer as in verse 28 so Summarize here in verse 33 the fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom it begins with respecting our Father in heaven Being grateful for our salvation and the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus on our behalf we weren't redeemed with the common things of the world gold and silver and such but with the precious blood of Christ and And Unimaginable price was paid to redeem us Do we not care enough to dedicate ourselves hour by hour day by day? To becoming wise and being worthy of the attention of God in heaven who will not hate us But will love us Hate in the sense of pay no attention. Let us go our own way The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom and before honor is Humility all of this hinges on being humble enough to admit our faults Shouldn't be too hard to acknowledge. We are all as an unclean thing all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags We fade like leaves our iniquities like the wind carry us away Submit yourself under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time At the right time when we are ready when that exaltation won't Cause us to have pride in our heart the way Satan was exalted and lifted up and ended up Falling a greater distance than he was ever lifted before honor is Humility you don't need honor for material goods.

You don't need honor by pride trying to impress trying to Rise above the crowd Humility must precede honor because with humility honor will not destroy us honor will not distract us or Mess us up you give somebody too much money They'll destroy themselves with it you get too much of almost anything and we destroy ourselves with it Before honor is humility. What do you have that you did not receive? Do we need the grace of God do we need the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, of course we do We haven't arrived. We're not perfect.

We're not ineffably and inapproachably wise in ourselves humility The more we humble ourselves the more God can honor us and honor himself in and through us What a privilege what an opportunity that brings us to chapter 16 That's what we'll pick up next time after Christmas. We'll close here in a word of prayer Father thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the powerful Means by which we can be lifted up from the miry clay we can be transferred out of the kingdom of darkness Into the kingdom of light the kingdom of the love of your son the Lord Jesus We pray that as we reflect on these the Holy Spirit will give us insight into our own Situation our own shortcomings our own opportunities to avail ourselves of your grace to be strengthened with might in the inner man to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus and to be thoroughly equipped for every good work as we are constantly aware of our responsibility to Think and act in a way that is pleasing in your sight.

We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen