

Proverbs 25-01-15b

Let's pick up our study now in Proverbs chapter 15, right at the end of the chapter and into the first verse of chapter 16. And in my humble studied opinion, really it would have been helpful if they had waited to start chapter 16 until verse two to avoid trimming off the last verse in this chiastic structure. But we're looking at this third most inner bracket that surrounds the jewel in the center.

And that is verse 30 and verse 32. We've seen verse 30, from the light of the eyes, the heart rejoices. And good tidings anoint the body.

Comes through the eyes and the heart rejoices. The good tidings that we hear, this is by extension. If you're getting tidings, you typically hear those.

And the result is a physical response of happiness. But beyond that, when you think about the illustration or the metaphorical value of the heart and the body, this good news energizes us. It motivates us.

It encourages us to reflect the righteousness that we have cultivated in our hearts. We prepare our hearts to be righteous. We attune our hearts to God's word and God's will.

And then when we see the goodness of God made manifest, it energizes us. It rejoices our heart and it emboldens us and it gives us physical energy to accomplish the things that God puts in our path. And all of this is spiritually connected.

It's not any old good news. It's not any old light. This is a heart that rejoices because it is the heart of verse 28.

And this heart is going to be seen again in verse 32, which we're about to look at. But when you see the light of the eyes and the tidings that rejoice the heart and anoint the body, what is the corresponding verse? It is verse 32. What if you don't look for the light? What if you don't respond and rejoice in the good tidings where God is at work to will and to do for his good purpose? What if that's not your concentration and not your focus? You have verse 32.

He who disdains instruction despises his own soul. But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding. You may remember something that I said in the first session that every other verse in this seven verse set explicitly references the heart.

So verse 28, the heart of the righteous. Verse 30, from the light of the eyes, the heart rejoices. So where is the heart in verse 32? He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, but he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.

Cross out the word understanding. It is not in the Bible. That word is lev, L-E-V, lev, heart.

You get the heart. It has nothing to do with understanding. He who disdains instruction

despises his own soul.

You're doing harm to yourself, ignoring instruction because instruction is for our benefit and God's glory. If you despise that instruction, you're not interested. You're not looking for the light that rejoices the heart.

You're not looking for those good tidings that anoint the body because it informs us, it instructs us, it leads us in the way of wisdom. And to be too much in this world, measuring by immediate circumstantial outcomes, what do people think is good? What seems to stimulate? What seems to create interest and a stir and a topic of conversation? And if we use human standards of good, we are not listening to God's instruction. God's instruction says, there is a divine standard of what is good.

There is a divine definition of good news and of light. And it often is invisible or opaque to those who aren't interested in God's wisdom, aren't interested in being instructed in the way of wisdom. Remember the first nine chapters of this book were all an appeal to a young person at the beginning of adult life to heed instruction, to value wisdom, to listen to lady wisdom and not be seduced by the crafty harlot.

Chapters of exhortation and appeal. But if after all of that, if you've arrived here at this point, if you've arrived in life and you still don't value instruction, if you disdain it, it's not important, doesn't rise in the level of priorities. Yeah, I heard it.

And I'm sure that's what the Bible says, but I'm looking into the perfect law of liberty like a mirror, but I straightway forget what I saw. Remember that in James? How can you look in the mirror and then forget what it revealed? If you had spinach in your teeth, wouldn't you wanna fix it? If you had a giant lipstick smear going up your cheek, wouldn't you wanna kinda clean that up? If you had boogers in your eyes, wouldn't you wanna clean those out before you went out in public? If the law of liberty reveals discrepancies or flaws or things that need to be fixed, why would you walk away and forget about it? That's disdainning instruction, God's instruction. He who disdains instruction despises his own soul.

You're not going to thwart the plan of God. That thing is gonna move forward. The Lord Jesus Christ is gonna be the Lord of glory.

He's gonna have a thousand year kingdom. Kingdom of the Father is going to follow that. There's going to be a new Jerusalem.

There's gonna be a tree of life on each side of the river of life. There's gonna be healing leaves going out to the nations. Do you wanna be on the outside or the inside? Do you want to be dwelling inside the walls and the gates of that city? It has walls and it has gates, why? If everybody will be happy over there, what do you need walls and gates for? Because there are people who will be excluded and prevented from access to the new Jerusalem.

They are in the darkness, which is outside. They're described twice in Revelation chapter 20 and

21 and 22. There are two different descriptions of those who are outside and why they are outside.

They despise instruction. There are manifold adjectives that describe them and their inheritance is roasting in the lake of fire. Their opportunities, their potential gets cast into the lake of fire.

So he who disdains instruction despises his own soul. We only hurt ourselves when we don't pay attention and endeavor to implement what we learned from God's word. It ought to make a difference.

Why be a Christian? Why read the Bible, study the Bible, learn the Bible if we are not educated by it, if we are not changed by it. If we're not changed, the implication is we don't think we need to change. I'm good as I am.

I've come to a happy place. I've come to a medium and I'm satisfied. We all need change.

This is why half of what the word of God does is negative. The word of God is profitable for what? Doctrine is the first one and instruction and righteousness is the last one. What's in the middle of that four line description of the word of God? It is profitable for reproof and correction.

We right away obviate and neutralize half of what the word of God is supposed to do if we are not corrected and rebuked by it. If we're listening to the presentation of the word of God and we do not occasionally feel our toes get stepped on, if we're not smacked on the knuckles in some way, if not smacked in the head, which just happens to me relatively often, if we are not rebuked and corrected, we are not getting the word of God because that's what it does. And that's what we need.

We have not achieved perfection. We haven't even achieved very much by way of maturity in most cases. We need correction.

We need rebuke. We need instruction in righteousness so that we can have the righteous heart that can study on a problem and will know how to answer. God will give us the words.

God will give us the response and he will be glorified. We will be blessed. If we're not interested in that, we're not heeding instruction and we're detrimental to our own soul.

We despise our own soul. Look at the second line of verse 32. But he who heeds rebuke, does that sound familiar at all? He who heeds rebuke.

Look at verse 31. The ear that hears the rebukes of life, we're going to get there. But that here is heed.

This is the exact same combination of words in verse 31 and verse 32. We're going to get to the heart in verse 31 momentarily. But heeds rebuke is the very same thing that's in 31.

He who heeds rebuke gets a heart. Gets the heart. It's lev.

There's no word for understanding. There's no word for thinking. There's no word for meditation or any of the other operations of the mind that result in understanding.

It isn't wisdom. It's not instruction. It isn't any of those words.

It is lev. You get the heart. Gets the heart.

What heart? What heart has been emphasized throughout this chiasm? The heart of the righteous. It is the heart that prays to the Lord. It is the heart that rejoices when the light shines through the eyes.

And it is the heart that is prepared in chapter 16, verse 1. The word lev, the word heart occurs in verse 28, verse 30, verse 32, and in 16.1. That's why this is the heart chiasm. So what kind of heart do you get when you heed rebuke? It is the heart that is described in all seven of these verses. So that is the outer shell.

What is at the heart of the heart chiasm? It is verse 31. And that is, in your English here, it says, the ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise. We've seen the light that comes in the eyes.

We've seen the good tidings that come from the ears. We've seen the heart. We've seen the mouth of the wicked, the tongue that gives an answer based on what the Lord provides.

In chapter 16, verse 1, this heart chiasm is characterized by references to the physical body in a metaphorical sense. So we've seen the mouth, the tongue, the ears, the eyes, the bones, the body. Here in verse 31, the ear, and this is singular because this is a metaphor.

It isn't the ears that hear. He that hath ears, let him hear. This is the ear that hears.

And this word for hear is one that means, and you can't translate it with a single English word. This word needs two English words to get its meaning across. And I have it written in my Bible.

The ear that understands and hearkens. The ear that understands, you can hear and not understand what was said. If you ever walked into a room and you get the last half of a sentence, or you can hear talking, but you can't make out the words.

Initially, you think it's a foreign language, and then you realize it's just someone with an accent speaking English. You hear it, but you don't understand it. This verb in Hebrew means to hear and to heed, to hearken, to respond to what is heard.

It isn't just acknowledging reception. In ham radio and other places, in military radio talk, you can say, Roger. Somebody says, the commander says, you need to pick up stakes and move to such and such a grid coordinate.

Roger, what does that mean? It's, Roger is the old mnemonic or the old memory aid for the letter R. Now we use Romeo, or I don't know what they use now, but when I was a Marine, we used Romeo. But in World War II in Korea, they used Roger, the British used Roger. And it just means received, it's R. I received your transmission.

If you've ever heard in old movies, they say, Roger Wilco. That's what this word means. I have received, I have heard, and Wilco means I will comply.

Roger will comply. Received, we'll follow the order. We'll do it.

Roger Wilco, that's what this verb means. So the ear that hears and complies, understands and hearkens. Then it says, we'll abide among the wise.

This is technically correct, but it isn't what it means. Because when it says abide among, the word among here is in the midst of, with the idea that it's, this is what is in the midst of your heart. It's what is inside.

And the ear that understands and hearkens to the rebukes, this is the corrective wisdom, the wisdom that says you need to change your path. You need to change your way. You need to reorder your priorities.

You need to establish a different goal. You need to adopt better values that are in line with God's word and God's will. You need to change.

A rebuke isn't helpful encouragement like, well, that's almost right. That's pretty close. Rebuke is you're doing it wrong.

Stop doing it wrong. Start doing it right. Rebuke calls out error and invites corrective action.

What happened when Jesus stood up in the boat during the storm on the Sea of Galilee and rebuked the wind and the waves? Remember that? He stood up and he rebuked them. And that's what the Greek word means. He rebuked it.

What did the wind and the waves do when Jesus rebuked them? They didn't hang their head and kick their toe in the dirt. What did they do? They stopped doing what they were doing and the sea became calm and the wind abated. When Jesus rebuked demons that were inhabiting human beings that he encountered, what did they do? Jesus said, be quiet and come out of him.

Remember the demon because they are demons. The demon caused him to cry with a loud voice. Jesus said, be quiet and come out of him.

And so he yells with a loud voice, but then he shuts up and he comes out. It's his last act of defiance before he departs. Causes a demon-possessed man to scream, then he leaves.

But Jesus rebuked the demon and it left. No longer inhabits, no longer possesses, no longer controls the actions of the man. Final act of defiance and departs.

So, the ear that heeds the rebukes, Chaim. If you've ever heard Hebrew people toast, I've mentioned this many times. They say L'Chaim and that's to life.

La is to, Chaim is life. It's a dual. It's the im, the dual of greatness.

It's like Mayim, the waters that are great, or Shemayim, the heavens that are great. Elohim, the God who is great. And Chaim is life in its fullness, life in its essence, in its importance.

And these are the rebukes of life. It doesn't mean life is rebuking me. I went along and I'm graduating from the School of Hard Knocks.

This is life-giving rebukes. These are rebukes for life. Rebukes that grant life.

If you hearken to them, if you understand them and heed them, if you respond to the rebuke with a change, this is a rebuke that leads to life, that imparts life, that enters you into life, God's life, a life of meaning and purpose and definition. So, it's difficult because you've just got the two words. You've got the rebuke and you've got life, Chaim.

But you have to add English to get the sense of it. These are rebukes for the purpose of life, rebuke that enhances life, leads to life, makes life worthwhile. Your life is going to be wasted.

Your life is going to be dissipated if you do not heed these rebukes. They are rebukes for a good life, for a divinely approved life. It's just, this is poetry.

It's concise, it's condensed, but that's what it means. It's not, well, I was going along and life just rebuked me. It's not a rebuke from life.

It is a rebuke for life. Meaningful life, purposeful life, eternal life. This is at the center.

This is the heart of the heart chiasm. This is how you implement the heart of the righteous. This is the point of prayer.

This is the good news and the light that comes through the eyes and the good tidings that anoint the body. This is the instruction that we do not disdain, but that we heed. And that's why in verse 32, you have that rebuke that leads to life in verse 31.

And when you go back to 32, it's closely linked. If you disdain that instruction, you're just despising your own soul. You're going to reduce and diminish, flatten and neutralize your own life.

These are rebukes that enhance, make life worthwhile. But if you disdain instruction, you despise your soul. But if you heed the rebuke, very same phrase, understand and hearken, Roger Wilco, you will get a heart.

You will have the heart that God approves. But our verse, verse 31, the ear that understands and hearkens to the rebukes for life, the rebukes of God that lead to life will continue. Abide

sounds like, well, you're going to be in the neighborhood of wise people.

You go next door and knock on the door and there's Einstein or somebody smart. Abide among, that isn't really what it means. You continue among the wise because you're already with the wise.

You are one of the wise people. You have the wisdom to know how important the heart is, how important it is to understand and respond to rebuke. And if you continue among the wise, that means you are heeding rebuke.

If you're not corrected, you will soon no longer be wise or have access to the wise. And many times wisdom is shared in our fellowship. It's a part of our community.

So the ear that understands and hearkens to rebukes that lead to life, you'll continue among the wise. That's where life is, meaningful life, eternal life, life that reflects the glory of God. And you'll stay there.

You won't be asked to leave. You won't walk out the door under your own power. You will remain or continue among the wise, those who possess wisdom.

And this will be your fellowship. You will be attracted to fellow believers who also value God's wisdom, who also respond to God's instruction. And this inevitably means that some relationships will fade and diminish and go to a greater distance, to an outside shell of love.

And other relationships with believers will grow. And those believers who understand the word of God, who value it, who are on the narrow road that goes through the straight gate that leads to life, you will continue with them. Your bonds of fellowship will grow and solidify.

And in our age, these are our brothers. And in our age, they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. More so, you remember the famous incident where they came to Jesus and said, your mother and brothers are outside.

And he said, these that are here listening to my words, they are my mother and brothers and sisters. This is the relationship because they value the wisdom of God. They value the word of God and the truth of God.

And they are more closely related to the Lord Jesus than his own family. Well, this is our heart chiasm. It's a seven verse structure.

Hopefully you can see now, if you've used your number two pencil and marked it a little bit, you've got your A next to verse 28, your B next to verse 29, your C next to verse 30, D or the very center is verse 31. It is all about understanding and responding to the rebukes that God gives us because he wants us to have a fullness of life, eternal life in the present that builds into the eternal future. But it's a choice.

If we disdain instruction, the next verse, we're just shooting ourselves in the foot. We want to

continue among the wise. We want to cultivate fellowship and relationship with those who share an enthusiasm for God, a love for God and appreciation.

Even when he is rebuking and correcting and instructing us in righteousness, that's what we want. Why would you not? What is possibly better than being in the very center of God's will? So that is our heart chiasm. Now the next section is going to begin in chapter 16, verse two.

We'll introduce it here quickly in the time we have left. We will finish our study of it next time. But once again, we are going to have a seven verse chiasm.

And the first one was the heart chiasm. This is the Lord chiasm. Every verse in this seven line structure references the Lord.

You know this when you look at your New King James text and you see the word Lord is in small caps. You remember this. This is the signal.

There is the word Lord that's in normal type. And there's the word that's in small caps. Small caps means you have the tetragrammaton behind it.

Y-H-W-H, yi-ye or ya-we. And this is the word we saw that means to be. It's the word for being.

I am that I am. And you will notice one other feature. This chiasm links to the previous one in that chapter 16, verse one is the last verse in the heart chiasm.

And it is also the first verse of the Lord chiasm. And this permanently links them together. You can't, in Hebrew, you can't really look at one without looking at the other because they share a verse.

Look at how this works. Start at 16, one. The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.

Lord in small caps. Verse two, all the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes. We know this.

There is a way that seems right to a man. All the ways of man are pure in his own eyes. This is how we know that our right meter is broken.

It always tells us our ways are right and it's the other guy that's wrong. You just misunderstood me. I was right, you were wrong.

All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes. Notice again, we've got the eyes going back to our previous chiasm. The eyes that rejoice when they see the light, the light of the Lord.

All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirits. Man can judge himself to be right, but God will put us in the balance. Mene, mene, teko ufarsin.

Remember that? Handwriting on the wall. You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Our fervent prayer is we do not hear anything similar at the judgment seat of Christ.

Fill in your name here. I've weighed your spirit in the balance you lack. You didn't seek understanding.

You didn't have a heart that rejoiced at the light. You disdained rebuke. You ignored instruction.

You didn't understand and heed. You thought you had a better way. You were content with your own judgment of what is right and what is wrong.

The Lord weighs the spirits. Verse three. Notice now the word Lord is gonna be in all seven of these verses, beginning at verse one.

Verse three, commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established. Notice how closely this chiasm links to the previous one. That's why it shares a verse.

Remember the heart and the thoughts of the heart, the meditations and reflections of the heart that should precede any response or answer that we give. God will determine what comes out of our mouths. God will establish those thoughts in our heart that reflect his wisdom and his instruction.

The thoughts of our heart will be established. Commit your works. Verse four.

The Lord has made everything for himself, even the wicked for the day of doom. We have difficulty understanding why God would create the wicked knowing they are going to be wicked. If God knows ahead of time, the end from the beginning, why would he create wicked people, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction? Paul addresses this, as you well know, in Romans chapter nine.

What if God, willing to display features of his character, endures with great patience, the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction? This is the Old Testament testimony to that same idea. The Lord has made everything for himself to accomplish his purpose, and he works all things together for good to those who love him and recognize the calling, even the wickedness that is in the world. God will use it for his own glory.

As just a quick illustration of this, think about the conquest of Canaan with Joshua. If, as historians like to claim, Israel had simply gradually migrated into the land of Canaan and sort of slowly outnumbered the Canaanites, out-reproduced them, edged them out, where is the glory attached to the name that God gives himself over and over again in the Old Testament? I am the Lord who brought you forth from the land of Egypt. I am the God who brought you into the land of Canaan.

I am the God of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom I promised the land and descendants and ultimately a king. The conquest of Canaan is part of God's identity to Israel, giving them that victory. But in order for there to be a victory, there have to be Canaanites to overcome.

And God endures the iniquity of the Amorites. And he says, you can't go in yet. The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

But in the fullness of time, God sends Israel into the land of Canaan. In the fullness of time, God sends his son, the Lord Jesus, into human history. But there is a time and God will endure the wicked.

He creates them. And that's what it says here. The Lord has made all for himself.

Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom. It is necessary for there to be a day of doom and for there to be those who are condemned in the day of doom as an illustration of what happens when you voluntarily of your own accord, exercising your free will, choose against God. Verse five, everyone proud in heart.

Every one of these verses has at least one word that goes back to the preceding chiasm. Do you see it here? Everyone proud in heart. This is not humility in the heart.

This isn't the fear of the Lord in the heart. Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Then it says, though they join forces.

I think if you have a New King James, you should have a text note there that says hand to hand. And the translators believe this is a metaphor that they're joining hands, that this is a handshake or they're joining in opposition. We'll see this when we do this verse by verse.

But hand to hand, none will go unpunished. Verse six, in mercy and truth, grace and truth, atonement is provided for iniquity. This goes back to the righteous heart, the heart of the righteous.

The righteous avail themselves of the atonement that is provided in mercy and truth. And by the fear of the Lord, one departs from evil. Remember the fear of the Lord up in verse 33, the fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom.

Here in verse six, by the fear of the Lord, one departs from evil. Evil and the fear of the Lord are up in the previous chiasm. Verse seven, the last one in this set, when a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

When a man's ways please the Lord. All seven verses, 16, one through seven, talk about the Lord's role. So we start in the heart chiasm with our preparation, with what we seek, with what rejoices our heart, with whether we have prepared and put righteousness into our hearts, whether we have the fear of the Lord, whether we heed, hear and understand and respond and comply with rebuke, that prepares us.

Here, we are going to have the Lord's actions with regard to the righteous and the wicked. The Lord is present in the preceding chiasm, but the focus is on our heart. Here, the righteous and the wicked are present in the chiasm, but the focus and the emphasis is on the Lord.

So they are complimentary and they share 16, one as a hinge, as an unbreakable bond for these two seven verse units, because it is so important to understand our responsibility to prepare our hearts, to seek the Lord, to cultivate a righteous heart, which requires responding to rebuke and cultivating wisdom. Here is what the Lord will do for those who respond to that call and those who don't. What the Lord evaluates, how he evaluates and what he's looking for, such an important section.

What do you think now about the confetti view of Proverbs? Are these just random aphorisms that have been strung haphazardly? Such a beautiful, focused, intentional structure designed to teach us truths for life, rebukes of life that prepare us for service and function now and in the ages to come. We will continue our study in Proverbs at chapter 16 next time, we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, what a wonderful treasure, what a beautiful construction your word is, how grateful we are to be given the gift of the Holy Spirit and the opportunity to possess our own copy, to reflect and meditate and think on it to our heart's content.

We pray that as we look at this portion of your word and review it in our hearts, that your Holy Spirit will bless it to our understanding, help us to see its pertinence and application in our individual circumstances, as we weigh our opportunities, our options, our challenges, our tests, our conversations, our actions, every area of our lives. May we find in this passage the necessary rebuke and correction that we need, the opportunity to forge ahead, be drawn closer to you and to each other by these wonderful truths that prepare us for life now and in the kingdoms to come. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.