

DISCIPLINE → DISCIPLESHIP → DISCIPLES**Proverbs 10-13 (Selected)**

Intro: The title of this series I've been in for the past two months is PREACHABLE PROVERBS and there is a reason for that since much of Proverbs is not as preachable other portions of scripture. My sermons to this point have been from extended passages or a grouping of scriptures that can be made into a sermon with just a few verses. The Oxford Dictionary defines a proverb as "a short pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice." And that is what most of the book of Proverbs is, wise sayings that can be said in one or two lines, like my scripture that I am using today. You'll notice that my text is chapters 10 through 13 but you can be relieved to know that I'm not preaching through four chapters. Instead I am taking a verse here and a verse there from the snippets of wisdom that constitute those chapters as I delve into the idea of discipline, discipleship, and disciples. There are a number of verses here that I have chosen. One from chapter 10, two from chapter 11 one from chapter 12 and four from chapter 13. As you might expect, they follow a similar theme. The wisdom of discipline and having discipline in one's life and being a disciple by submitting to the discipleship of those wise people in our lives, and how we become disciples by observing this is what my talk consists of today.

First,

Choices have profound results

- Listen, *The proverbs of Solomon.*
A wise son makes a glad father,
but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother. Proverbs 10:1 (ESV)
- The first line is clear. A wise son brings joy to his parents. They marvel at his sensible life and they gain great satisfaction from seeing how he has incorporated their teaching into his life.
- The Hebrew word from which the word "foolish" is derived in the second half of the verse is very telling. In fact many translations simply render it as "stupid". Now, we teach our little ones to not use that word because it is so denigrating. But the writer of Proverbs doesn't mince words since the meaning of the word is actually deeper and stronger than being merely "stupid". Because it means one who is insensible to moral truth and acts without regard to it. This foolish child is a wild child and deaf to wisdom and only driven by his own desires. He lacks discipline.
- A wise choice is to make a glad father, a foolish choice brings heartache.
- The next one is a national admonition and helps us to be good citizens while we walk this earth . . .

Many counselors is good

- Listen, *Where there is no guidance, a people falls,*
but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. Proverbs 11:14 (ESV)
- This is good wisdom for life but it seems this proverb is designed for the people of God as they live out their earthly citizenship. This saying about the need for wise guidance in government and the need for taking extensive advice would have been especially relevant soon after Solomon's death as his kingdom was torn from top to bottom. As a matter of fact, in 1 Kings 12 and also in 1 Chronicles 10, Solomon's son, Rehoboam, completely disregarded the advice of wise counselors and listened instead to hot headed young Turks who gave him destructive advice that tore Israel and Judah apart.
- This is true for anyone, but we need to make sure we pray regularly for our government officials to seek wisdom from a variety of sources. We have seen our country ripped open because our leaders refuse to make wise decisions and seek counsel. It is the truth, where there is no guidance a people fall. If we all seek our own way, we cannot succeed as a people.
- But there is hope . . .

If you diligently seek good, you will find it

- *Whoever diligently seeks good seeks favor,*
but evil comes to him who searches for it. Proverbs 11:27 (ESV)
- A disciple seeks good. The opposite is true. If you look for evil you will find it. One commentator and several translators rendered it this way, "*Those who seek good will find God's favor; those who look for trouble will find more of it than they bargained for.*"

- Let me point something out here. How about we treat others with the wisdom of this proverb. How about we look for the good in others. Or at least try to catch them doing something right. Too often we look at the negative in others and if we look, we WILL find it. Disciples build one another up. Diligently seek good and don't go looking for bad.
- Which means we need to take a look at ourselves with a careful eye and . . .

Seek knowledge

- *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.* Proverbs 12:1 (ESV)
- It comes down to this – disciples are lifelong learners. The wise person is very intent on self-criticism. This doesn't mean beating oneself up – instead, he knows what he is capable of and is careful to take the wise path. One commentator points out that “*This person has is an intimate awareness of the ways of life ordained by God—must show a desire for correction and criticism if his assertion is to be taken seriously. One's love of knowledge is no greater than one's love of correction.*”
- The opposite is true. The word stupid comes up again here, only this time it says that the one who does not like reproof is no better than a dumb animal.
- The truth is . . .

A wise person listens

- *A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.* Proverbs 13:1 (ESV)
- We've been given two ears and only one mouth. We need to listen. The scoffer puts his fingers in his ears and says “Wahh, Wahh, Wahh!”
- Which takes us right into the next one . . .

The instruction of the wise is refreshing and revitalizing

- *The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.* Proverbs 13:14 (ESV)
- Attach yourself to a wise teacher. Ask questions. Be refreshed by new knowledge. Its life giving.
- But notice the opposite is true. Listen, *Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.* Proverbs 13:18 (ESV) If you ignore wisdom you will pay and pay dearly. Listen to wise counsel and be prepared to take critique. Even if it's coming from a critical spirit you can learn from it. The one who builds on constructive criticism will grow, the one who ignores guidance will end up in the poorhouse.
- Finally . . .

Discipline comes from love

- This is passage that has been much maligned and abused. Listen, *Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.* Proverbs 13:24 (ESV).
- Either it is under applied or it is over applied. People don't like the idea of a rod and the picture of abusive corporal punishment so they don't discipline at all. The opposite is true when a parent sees what they interpret as a biblical greenlight to beat their child.
- Here's the truth: discipline is teaching that is derived from love. A loving parent will not ignore their misbehaving child or beat them mercilessly. Love is the key. And diligence is the key as well. A loving parent will design a discipline that will teach their child the way. Each child is different because discipline is not a one-size-fits-all matter. The key is love.

Conclusion: This sermon has been much like the Book of Proverbs, here and there and everywhere, but the point is clear, as we practice discipline in our own life and in the life of the ones we love we are practicing discipline with the end result that we build disciples. That is what we all are DISCIPLES. Amen.