

### Wisdom in Correction

#### Proverbs 29:14-27

**Proverbs 29:14-27** - *“The king who judges the poor with truth, his throne will be established forever.*

*The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.*

*When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases, but the righteous will see their fall.*

*Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.*

*Where there is no revelation the people cast off restraint, but happy is he who keeps the law.*

*A servant will not be corrected by mere words, for though he understands, he will not respond.*

*Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

*He who pampers his servant from childhood will have him as a son in the end.*

*An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression.*

*A man’s pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.*

*Whoever is a partner with a thief hates his own life. He swears to tell the truth, but reveals nothing.*

*The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.*

*Many seek the ruler’s favor, but justice for man comes from the LORD.*

*An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, and he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.”*

#### Background Notes

For our background, let’s consider verse 21: *“He who pampers his servant from childhood will have him as a son in the end.”*

Is this proverb saying that it is wise to pamper a servant from childhood because he’ll be like a son, and care for you in your old age? Or is this proverb a warning to us that we shouldn’t pamper a servant from childhood because if we do, the child will grow up thinking that he’s a son? Thus he won’t do the work of a servant, and may even expect to receive part of the inheritance, thinking that he’s an heir.

Most Bible scholars go with the idea that it’s a warning. In fact, that’s the way the New International Version translates this verse: *“If man pampers his servant from youth, he will bring grief in the end.”*

If indeed Proverbs 29:21 is a warning, it has plenty of practical application for the employer/employee relationship today. You’ve heard the expression, “Familiarity breeds contempt.” If there’s too much casual friendliness, the lines between

employer and employee can become blurred, and a breakdown in the authority structure can occur. As a result, productivity and responsibility suffer.

## Doctrinal Point

### The proverbs are wise advice for everyday living.

**Verse 14:** *“The king who judges the poor with truth, his throne will be established forever.”* It’s generally true that the duration of a regime depends on its moral character. The Lord loves to establish rulers who treat the poor and helpless with justice. The Hebrew word that is translated “forever” here can also be translated “long lasting.” The rule of Christ as the Perfect King will literally last forever!

**Verse 15:** *“The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.”* What does this proverb say about modern child psychology and training? As we’ve mentioned before, the Bible is totally against child abuse, but it is not against the discipline and correction of children - even physical punishment, if needed.

**Verse 16:** *“When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases, but the righteous will see their fall.”* It stands to reason that if the population of the wicked increases, there will be more sin and crime in the land. The good news of this proverb is that when the Lord returns as Judge, justice and righteousness will prevail! Sometimes we see the fall of wicked regimes even in our lifetime, such as the fall of Hitler’s Reich or the fall of the Soviet Union. Remember how the children of Israel saw the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and how good King Hezekiah and the kingdom of Judah saw the overthrow of 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night? Other biblical examples could be given of God’s miraculous intervention to end the oppression of His people.

**Verse 17:** *“Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.”* I’m certainly old enough to have seen the truth of this proverb! Children who have been properly disciplined and corrected in their youth bring joy to their parents when they’re adults, and show far more care and concern when their parents are in their senior years.

**Verse 19:** *“A servant will not be corrected by mere words, for though he understands, he will not respond.”* This proverb has lots of applications. You can tell an employee or student what to do, and they may perfectly understand the job that has to be done, or the assignment that has to be finished - but if you don’t put “teeth” into your words, the work may be put off and the assignment may never get done. However, it carries enormous weight if you reduce an employee’s salary or give a failing grade to a student - and get dramatic results!

**Verse 20:** *“Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”* Don’t just blurt out your immediate feelings! Always think before you speak! Look at the last part of the proverb, *“There is more hope for a fool than for him.”* In the heat of the moment you could say something that’s rash and ill advised. And that could get you in big trouble – maybe a worse situation than just being foolish.

**Verse 22:** *“An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression.”* Do you have anyone like this in your family, or church, or business? If so, you know the truth of this proverb. Think of the multiplied sins that angry people generate, including criticism, and complaining, and cursing, and cruelty - and many more anger-related sins.

**Verse 23:** *“A man’s pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.”* This proverb is more than just a “general truth” because it is backed up in Scripture. Twice in the gospel of Luke the Lord said, *“Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted”* (Luke 14:11 & 18:14). And in James 4:10 we read, *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up.”* 1 Peter 5:6 says, *“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.”* Isn’t it ironic that the sure way down is to try promoting yourself to the heights of self-glory – but the way up is to keep a lowly and humble lifestyle!

**Verse 24:** *“Whoever is a partner with a thief hates his own life. He swears to tell the truth, but reveals nothing.”* If you become the accomplice of a thief, you’re your own worst enemy. You have put yourself in a no-win situation. If you lie in court, you commit the serious crime of perjury. If you tell the truth, you convict yourself as an accomplice - and you become the target of the thief’s revenge. (And by the way, under the law, you cannot plead the Fifth Amendment.)

**Verse 25:** *“The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.”* The more you trust the Lord, the more you’ll be safe and secure, and the more you will be free from everything associated with the fear of man. What are some of those fears?

- the fear of witnessing because of what others may think of you
- the fear of telling the truth because you may get hurt
- the fear of doing what’s right because of social pressure

The more you trust the Lord, the more you’ll be safe and secure and free from the fear of man. Hebrews 13:6 says, *“So we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do to me.”*

**Verse 26:** *“Many seek the ruler’s favor, but justice for man comes from the LORD.”* A lot of injustice can be done legally - by manipulating the law. A mercenary person can rob poor people legally, and a selfish person can legally take advantage of people in need. So don’t confuse what’s **legal** with what is **just**. The justice that is set forth in the Bible must always trump every legal system in this world.

**Verse 27:** *“An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, and he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.”* As you seek to draw closer to the Lord and walk an honest and upright path in life, two things will take place in your life:

- You will hate sin more, and you will not want to have close associations with anyone involved in sinful practices. We are to love the sinner but hate the sin.
- You will be hated and mocked and criticized by unrighteous people, because their unrighteous lifestyle is made obvious by your righteous lifestyle.

The Lord Jesus said, *“If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you”* (John 15:18). 1 John 3:13 tells us, *“Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.”*

The proverbs are wise advice for everyday living.

## Practical Application

### Follow the “pursuit of happiness”!

The Declaration of Independence says that every person has the “right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” How do we pursue happiness? The movie, *“The Pursuit of Happiness,”* was certainly based on moral values, but it fell short of the **true** pursuit of happiness.

Verse 18 gives us the key for the pursuit of happiness: *“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint, but happy is he who keeps the law.”* A good illustration of this proverb is the golden calf incident found in Exodus 32. Without the presence of Moses to lead them, and without the Law of God to guide them, the people became rebellious and *“cast off restraint.”* In seeking “happiness” without the one true God, their thoughts and activities were unrestrained and wicked.

But when you keep God’s law and obey the directives in His Word, your life will be pleasing to the Lord - and you will be happy! In fact, the only way to be **truly** happy is through obedience to God. Why? Because you’re functioning in the way that God created you to function, and the way He designed you to be happy.

So the only way to pursue and find true happiness is to bring joy to the Lord by making Him #1 in your life. That’s the only true way to follow the “pursuit of happiness”!