

Proverbs 15:1 ¶ A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

A soft, tender-hearted answer calms things, but lies and hurtful words promote anger. I think everyone recognizes this truth. It takes great discipline in the heat of a verbal attack to control one's tongue and answer softly. The Hebrew actually references being tender-hearted in one's response, showing sensitivity and kindness. That is even harder. However, the indwelling Holy Spirit can and will strengthen us to do that very thing if we will but yield to Him.

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Guzik quoting Garrett: "Many conflicts arise not because the issues separating the parties are so great but because of the temperaments people bring to a confrontation."

Proverbs 15:2 ¶ The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

Simply put—The wise person speaks wisely, and the foolish person speaks foolishly. Wisdom is predicated on fear and reverence of God; foolishness is a result of showing no reverence for God or His word. I'm reminded of the old saying, "What goes in, must come out." A person who takes in the word of God with a desire to be obedient to God's will is more likely to respond accordingly. A person who only takes in the "so called" wisdom of this world is bound to respond with no respect for God and His word. This truth is on very public display on all media platforms in our world today.

Clarke on "useth knowledge aright": "This is very difficult to know: - when to speak, and when to be silent; what to speak, and what to leave unspoken; the manner that is best and most suitable to the occasion, the subject, the circumstances, and the persons. All these are difficulties, often even to the wisest men. Even wise counsel may be foolishly given."

Proverbs 15:3 ¶ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

If people, including Christians, really believed the truth declared in this verse, I believe the world would be a much better place. The Hebrew for "beholding" indicates more than just seeing; it indicates that the LORD is leaning forward to observe and watch.

This truth has become a great comfort to me in my later years. In spite of the many ways I have let my LORD down, I know that he is fully aware of each one and loves me

unconditionally. As I have grown older, I am much more constantly aware of that truth; and it has a direct effect on the choices I make as to how to spend my time each day, the demeanor I project to others, my reactions when driving, etc. I am alone much of the time, and this is the prime truth that motivates me as I approach each new day. If only I had really embraced this truth at a much younger age! It's an important truth to teach our children and grandchildren. There are other verses in scripture that affirm this truth.

2 Chronicles 16:9 "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

Hebrews 4:13 "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Chuck Smith: "You say, 'Oh, I thought that God was too holy as to behold evil. Or to look upon evil.' God cannot look upon sin. That word look upon is an implication. To look upon it with favor or condoning it, He cannot do that. But He surely sees it. He's not blind."

Proverbs 15:4 ¶ A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

One with a wholesome tongue speaks in a way that promotes healing and promotes what is good. In that regard, it promotes a healthy life. One with a perverse tongue speaks with distortion or deceit and promotes what is evil; it leads to the destruction of life. A wholesome tongue promotes peace; a perverse tongue promotes discord.

Proverbs 15:5 ¶ A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

Once again, we remind ourselves that Solomon is writing from the perspective of a man that honors the LORD. Such a father will counsel his son with wisdom, and a wise son will heed such reproof and correction. Only a foolish son will scorn or show contempt for such counsel.

William McDonald: "We have met this fool before. He considers his father out-dated, his ideas old-fashioned and his instruction worthless."

Guzik quoting Garrett: "One's attitude toward parental teaching will determine one's lifelong attitude toward authority and instruction."

Ironsides: "It is foolish not to learn from one who has walked the path before you."

Proverbs 15:6 ¶ In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

The home of a righteous man is one that stores up treasure and strength (from Hebrew). The home of a wicked man is one that stores up trouble. I think the more striking contrast is viewed in light of spiritual wealth and strength vs. worldly treasure.

I liked Henry's comments: "God *blesses the habitation of the just*, and that blessing makes rich without trouble. Or, if there be not much of this world's goods, yet where there is grace there is true treasure; and those who have but little, if they have a heart to be therewith content, and to enjoy the comfort of that little, it is enough; it is all riches. The righteous perhaps are not themselves enriched, but there is treasure in their house, a blessing in store, which their children after them may reap the benefit of....Where wickedness is, though there may be riches, yet there is vexation of spirit with them."

Proverbs 15:7 ¶ The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so.

I think the NLT states it well: "*Only the wise can give good advice; fools cannot do so.*" Short and to the point and repeated so many times already in this book of proverbs.

Ironsides: "In place of idle jokes and unkind speeches, the words of the wise bring profit and blessing—the true knowledge that edifies the hearer."

Proverbs 15:8 ¶ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

Proverbs 15:9 ¶ The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

Verse 8 addresses the sacrifices or prayers of a person while verse 9 addresses one's way of life. I believe Solomon had learned the connection between sacrifice and prayer from his father.

Psalm 141:2 "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

The prophet Isaiah, many years later, affirmed this connection.

Isaiah 56:7 "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."

The LORD delights in the prayers of His people; He loves those that follow Him in faith and obedience. The LORD is disgusted by the prayers or sacrifices of those that are just going through the motions with no true respect for Him; He despises their way of life. I think it is important to note that the LORD focuses His disgust to their way of life. He loves the person and desires that they turn to Him in faith and obedience.

Proverbs 15:10 ¶ Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.

"The way" in context is in reference to the right way, the way of faith and obedience to the LORD. To "forsake" the right way is to choose to leave it entirely, to abandon it (per Webster). A person that makes that choice hates to be corrected and is on the path to destruction and death.

Proverbs 15:11 ¶ Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

This is an odd comparison to me. Solomon is basically saying that the LORD knows all about hell and destruction. If He is aware of that, how much more is He observant and aware of the hearts, the thoughts and motives, of men and women.

Trapp: "We, silly fishes, see one another jerked out of the pond of life by the hand of death; but we see not the frying pan and the fire that they are cast into, that "die in their sins," and refuse to be reformed. Cast they are into utter darkness."

Proverbs 15:12 ¶ A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.

One who is scornful and mocking toward others does not like those that would dare reprove him; he would never choose to seek advice from a wise man. This sounds like a person with a hardened heart. To scorn and mock those that choose to follow God in faith and obedience is to scorn and mock God. Jesus made that clear to Saul on the road to Damascus.

Acts 26:14–15 “...Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”

Saul was persecuting Christians, and Jesus declared that in doing so he was persecuting Him.

Ironsides: “It will be solemn indeed when the wicked must account for opportunities refused, instruction neglected, and grace despised.”

Proverbs 15:13 ¶ A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

This verse is basically saying that you can tell whether a heart is merry or sorrowful just by looking at a person’s face. One whose heart is merry will generally have a smile or sparkle about their look. One who is broken-hearted or sorrowful will usually project a downcast or burdened demeanor. I can usually even make that discernment by talking to someone on the phone; you can hear it in their voice.

Ironsides: “The portion of the one who tries to carry his own sorrows and daily cares is a burdened heart. He fails to turn all over to Him who so delights to bear our cares for us. Nothing breaks the spirit like hidden grief; but this need not be the condition of the saint who will allow the Lord Jesus to be not only his sin-bearer, but his burden-bearer too.”

Proverbs 15:14 ¶ The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

A person with understanding is one that is discerning and wise; such a person always seeks to broaden his knowledge base. A foolish person is only interested in knowing what will contribute to his foolishness, his desires to feed his flesh in pride and selfishness without regard to God or His word.

Ironsides: “Our food has much to do with making us what we are. The same is true of us morally. We become like that on which we feed; and we feed on what our hearts crave.”

Proverbs 15:15 ¶ All the days of the afflicted *are* evil: but he that is of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast.

This verse addresses the contrast between the lives of the person who is needy and afflicted and the person that is well favored with a pleasant life. The afflicted person's life is filled with trouble; the person with a merry heart enjoys the bounty of life every day.

I think the contrast is focused on the attitude of the heart. In that regard, the application is to spiritual poverty vs. spiritual blessing. I believe that no one can truly have a merry heart that does not honor and respect the LORD and His word. They may fool themselves into thinking differently, but they will one day have to face their maker and will sadly realize too late how deluded they were. There are those that live in humble circumstances and/or suffer much due to effects of sin on this world but who have joyful hearts because of their confident expectation of an eternal future in the presence of the LORD. It was this confidence that kept Job going.

Job 19:25–27 “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”

Proverbs 15:16 ¶ Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.

Proverbs 15:17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

These verses go hand-in-hand. Simply put, it is better to be poor man that fears the LORD than to be a rich man without such fear. It is better to have only simple food to eat and be loved than it is to have steak to eat and no love in your life. The main connection is love, and love is of God. God is love, and without Him in your life you cannot experience true love.

*1 John 4:7 “Beloved, let us love one another: for **love is of God**; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”*

*1 John 4:16 “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love**; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”*

Proverbs 15:18 ¶ A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

Another obvious truth, a man with a hot temper stirs up trouble, but a person who is more self-controlled and slow to anger promotes peace.

Proverbs 15:19 ¶ The way of the slothful *man* is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

In this verse the righteous man is in contrast to the slothful or lazy man. One who is lazy ends up having a hard time navigating through life as a consequence of not applying himself to the work necessary to provide for himself. The righteous man is aware of the need to work and applies himself so as to provide for himself.

Spurgeon: “Unthinking persons suppose that the sluggard lives a happy life and travels an easy road. It is not so. Many believe in “the sweet doing of nothing,” but it is a sheer fiction. Surface appearances are not the truth: though it may seem that idleness is rest, it is not so....Labour of a holy sort has ten thousand times more joy in it than purposeless leisure.”

Proverbs 15:20 ¶ A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

I believe you could switch the words father and mother and not change the meaning of this proverb. Solomon is referencing the parental unit. A wise son gives pleasure to his parents. A foolish son dishonors his parents. Again, the perspective is one of parents that follow God in faith and obedience and have taught their children accordingly.

Proverbs 15:21 ¶ Folly is joy to *him* that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

Sadly, those that lack wisdom, that do not reverence the LORD, take pleasure in sinful things. Those that are wise, however, realize that such pleasure is temporary and carries a far greater consequence than it is worth.

Scripture doesn't deny that sin gives one pleasure—but only for a season. The time of coming judgment is sure.

Hebrews 11:24–25 “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season....”

Revelation 20:12 "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

William McDonald: "A pig enjoys wallowing in the mire, whereas a sheep wants the clean pasture."

Proverbs 15:22 ¶ Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

Solomon is basically saying that when making plans, it is good to get the advice of wise counsellors before moving forward. Wise counsel can help you avoid problems you might not have foreseen without such counsel. You can benefit from the shared knowledge and experiences of others.

Proverbs 15:23 ¶ A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word *spoken* in due season, how good *is it!*

I liked the NLT: "*Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time!*" This reminds me of another proverb I memorized as a young person.

Proverbs 25:11 "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Proverbs 15:24 ¶ The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

The way of life of a wise person that honors the LORD in faith and obedience leads to eternal life in heaven and rescues him from hell. As one lives life, he/she is sowing the seeds that will determine his eternal destiny.

Galatians 6:7-8 "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Proverbs 15:25 ¶ The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.

There are so many verses in scripture that declare how the LORD hates pride and how He cares for widows and orphans, the needy and dependent. In this verse, the proud person is contrasted with the widow. He thinks he has everything he needs; she,

however, knows she is needy. He has no reverence for the LORD; his god is himself. Contrast implies that she honors God and looks to Him in faith for her provision—and He will not fail her.

Proverbs 15:26 ¶ The thoughts of the wicked *are* an abomination to the LORD: but *the words of the pure are* pleasant words.

I am reminded that the words in italics were added by the translators to facilitate understanding. In this verse, Solomon is contesting the thoughts of the wicked with the thoughts of those who are pure and moral. The truth is applicable whether you say thoughts or words I believe. The LORD detests the thoughts/ words of the wicked, but the thoughts/ words of one who is morally pure please Him. Wicked thoughts lead to wicked actions; pure thoughts lead to moral actions.

Proverbs 15:27 ¶ He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

This verse draws a contrast between a greedy man and a man that refuses to take bribes. Implied, the greedy man was quite willing to be bribed in his greed for more. The greedy person is setting himself and those of his household up for trouble. The person that refuses to be bribed promotes a life of peace.

Proverbs 15:28 ¶ The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

The guiding truth in this proverb is “Think before you speak.” One who is righteous (godly) will think before speaking. The language of one who is wicked (ungodly) flows with wickedness.

Proverbs 15:29 ¶ The LORD *is* far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

The significant truth in this proverb is that the LORD hears the prayer of those that reverence Him and seek to obey Him. This truth is echoed many times throughout scripture. John and Peter actually mirror this truth in their writings.

John 9:31 “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.”

1 Peter 3:12 "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

It should be noted, however, that the LORD is ever willing to hear the prayer of one who is turning to Him in faith and repentance.

Proverbs 15:30 ¶ The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: *and* a good report maketh the bones fat.

Simply put, "A cheerful look promotes joy, and good news promotes health." I try to keep that in mind when out and about doing errands. I always try to call cashiers and other workers by name and bring a smile to their face with a kind remark.

Proverbs 15:31 ¶ The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.

This is yet another statement of the truth that one who is willing to receive reproof and correction is wise.

Henry: "Those that learn well, and obey well, are likely in time to teach well and rule well."

Proverbs 15:32 ¶ He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

The person that refuses to accept instruction (rebuke, correction) hurts himself most of all. The one that is willing to to accept instruction will grow in wisdom.

Proverbs 15:33 ¶ The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom; and before honour *is* humility.

Again, we get the foundational truth for all Solomon's proverbs. The fear/reverence of the LORD is the basis for receiving instruction and wisdom. This requires one to humble himself before the LORD and his parents, the primary instructors that God has placed over him. One who so humbles himself will gain honor.