

PROVERBS 23:10-35

¹⁰ Do not move an ancient landmark or enter the fields of the fatherless, ¹¹ for their Redeemer is strong; he will plead their cause against you.

We were introduced to the concept of property and landmarks back in **Chapter 22:28**, which is actually a reiteration of **Deuteronomy 19:14**, which says *Do not move the ancient landmark that your fathers have set*. The *landmark* was a stone or pile of stones marking property lines. At the core of that command and proverb are matters of discontentment, covetousness and theft!

Solomon has to repeat what he said in Chapter 22:28 because it needs repeating — apart from grace and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the heart of man wants — and wants — and wants — and wants. The heart of the believer is not exempt from those desires. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write

***Colossians 3:5-7** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, **and covetousness, which is idolatry.** ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you must put them all away*

Yes — By His death on the cross Jesus has delivered us from the wrath of God that is going to come on account of those things. But as we live between the already and the not yet we are going to face those same impulses that once drove our lives. The Holy Spirit **informs** us about them — time and again. He **defines us** as those redeemed from the penalty **and** the power of those things — and He **directs us** to yield ourselves to His transforming power to put them to death — put them all away.

Do not..... enter the fields of the fatherless, ¹¹ for their Redeemer is strong; he will plead their cause against you.

DON'T MISS THIS — The heart of fallen man is so driven by discontentment and covetousness and idolatry that that he is willing to steal from the fatherless, rob the defenseless. If enough is never enough,

then find the easiest way to have more. Who is least capable of preventing you from taking what you want? In the day of Solomon the widow and the orphan were the epitome of defenseless and powerless.

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit Solomon says, “*Don’t do that because they have a **strong redeemer!** Redeemer* is the Hebrew word *gō’ēl*. In the Old Testament (especially in the Book of Ruth) we learn about “the kinsman redeemer”. The title given to him was *gō’ēl*. He was *responsible for meeting the needs of a troubled or defenseless close relative*.¹ This man not only redeemed — purchased family property that had been forfeited because of debt and returned it to the widow and/or orphan, he defended them.

The *gō’ēl*, in particular a man in the book of Ruth named Boaz, is a picture of Jesus, points to Jesus. In a few weeks we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus is God who came in human flesh so He could be united with us in our humanity and thus become our “kinsman redeemer.” As our Redeemer Jesus has taken it upon Himself Jesus to *meet the needs of His troubled or defenseless close relatives* — you and me! It’s an awesome subject to study. We had an amazing time studying the short book of Ruth (5 studies I believe). I would encourage you to get the resources from metrocalvary.org or the metro church app. They will enrich your worship of Jesus this Christmas.

On the human level, Solomon readers got the picture: *WARNING: If you mess with the field of a widow or an orphan you are messing with their gō’ēl. He’s strong, and he’s going to defend his defenseless relatives!*

DON’T MISS THIS — The translators saw fit to capitalize the word **Redeemer**. They did so on great grounds.

Deuteronomy 10:18 *He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow,*

¹ Buzzell, S. S. (1985). Proverbs. (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Eds.) *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

God is radically compassionate towards the widow and orphan. God is radically committed to take up their case. The fatherless are under divine protection.

Once again the Holy Spirit gives direction to those who look to Jesus and trust in Jesus to be their strong redeemer. Social justice is never a replacement for the Gospel. But we must never ignore the fact that God is deeply vested in the cause of the widow and the orphan.

QUOTE: Mark Driscoll — *Being in covenant with God means we have blessings from him and burdens with him.*

If you're glad that Jesus is always pleading your cause, you should be glad to participate with Jesus in pleading the cause of the widow and orphan. (Foster and adoption, girls on the streets without parents who are being used and abused, widows and orphans in need)

¹² Apply your heart to instruction and your ear to words of knowledge.

It's just not enough to apply your intellect to instruction. It literally reads "bring your heart".² You and I need to bring our hearts because the "heart" is the seat of affection, the causal core of behavior, the center commitment.

If you and I come Monday after Monday bringing only our mind, we leave unchanged. Listen — if I only bring my mind to the process of study, I'm never going to be changed. I need my heart to be instructed and transformed!

HERE'S THE POINT — We come on Monday knowing that we are going to spend time studying the Scriptures. We come to be ***instructed*** by God. That means that we have to do more than just show up. We need to be present in our hearts. If we are to bring our hearts we should spend time preparing our hearts to receive and respond. Ask the Lord to prepare our hearts, make our hearts good soil. The time given to worship in song is an activity of the heart. It isn't an optional time or a 30 minute buffer in your

² Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. (2000). *A handbook on Proverbs* (p. 493). New York: United Bible Societies.

schedule. When we bring our hearts into the time of worship we not only pour out adoration, we receive instruction, the Lord reveals things to us about His heart and our heart. It also provides a time in which the Holy Spirit prepares our hearts for instruction — inspires us to bring our hearts for instruction.

Apply.... your ear to words of knowledge

Get within earshot of God’s Word. More than that — “pay attention and listen.” Each of the letters of Jesus to the seven churches in Asia close with these words of Jesus — *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

Contextually, there is specific instruction that demands the heart and ears of the reader.

¹³ Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. ¹⁴ If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol.

Do not withhold discipline

QUOTE: Bible Knowledge Commentary — *mûsâr*, “moral correction,” both verbal and physical;³

QUOTE: H.A. Ironside — *Discipline, administered seasonably (not in harshness, or undue severity), is for the profit of the child. In this way, by means of present suffering, he will be preserved from the ruin and wretchedness which are bound to follow a life of self-seeking and unsubdued, perverse will.* ⁴

Discipline is for the child’s profit. Parents withhold discipline for their own benefit — to the detriment of their children.

³ Buzzell, S. S. (1985). Proverbs. (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Eds.) *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴ Ironside, H. A. (1908). *Notes on the Book of Proverbs* (pp. 321–322). Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Bros.

HERE'S THE PROBLEM — Parents withhold discipline for their own sake. As a result the child continues in the behavior until the parent gets angry and deals with the behavior out of anger instead of love. You want to be, you need to be, as cool and collected and loving in the act of discipline as possible — because in the act of discipline you are supposed to represent the Father-heart of God.

¹⁵ My son, if your heart is wise, my heart too will be glad.

FIRST — The implication is that a wise heart makes for a glad heart.

SECOND — There is a clear parental value system here: Seeing their child with a wise heart makes them glad.

THIRD — What makes a heart wise?

Jeremiah 9:23-24 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.

BOTTOM LINE — The glad heart is the heart that knows God!

DON'T MISS THIS — ***“your heart ... my heart.”*** The parent's heart is totally wrapped up in their kid's heart. The gladness of the parent is wrapped up in seeing their children know God!

Verse 16 follows from this.

¹⁶ My inmost being will exult when your lips speak what is right.

The parent is rejoicing because he knows his child is speaking right things from a right heart ([Proverbs 4:23](#); [Matthew 12:34](#)). This is not a matter of mere words. Parents and children alike can say the right thing but have wrong lives. It's called being a hypocrite. The Handbook on Proverbs is really helpful here.

***What is right**, as in **8:6** (from my lips will come what is right), is the translation of a plural noun meaning “uprightness” (derived from the verb “to **be** right” or “to **be** straight”).⁵*

Right words coming from a heart and life that is in a right relationship with God.

Too many times parents are living under the impression that all is well with their children. This is especially true in their children’s teenage years. One woman told me, “*My daughter is not following the Lord because He didn’t let her be a cheerleader. She doesn’t talk about the things of the Lord and doesn’t want to be in fellowship. But she’s really a good kid.*”

PARENTS: Our heart should rejoice when our children speak right things from a right heart that is in a right relationship with God. They’re do not stop being our kids when they stop being right with God. I hope you all understand that. There are kids who decide in their teenage years that they want to find their own way, and they wander from the Lord. It’s going to break your heart and fill you with concern. It’s going to keep you on your knees. But if they really belong to God, God is going to deal with them because they ultimately belong to God, and whom the Lord loves He disciplines. It won’t be pleasant for them, but in the end the Lord’s discipline will bear the fruit of holiness. Maybe some are with us tonight that have taken that path and the Lord’s been dealing with you. He loves you! Return to the Lord! Right now!

***Joel 2:13 NLT** Don’t tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.*

So if your kids are saying and doing things from a life that is not right with God, you still love them. But your heart will rejoice when they speak a right thing because you know that’s a reflection of their heart. And that’s why this parent is so glad.

⁵ Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. (2000). *A handbook on Proverbs* (p. 496). New York: United Bible Societies.

Don't confuse success with wisdom. You can be proud of your kids when they achieve and have success in school or work or career. But success on those terms doesn't mean they are wise.

Whatever you do, don't look at your kids and think that all's well with them unless you can hear in their words, see in the things that occupy their minds, see in the way they use their time, talents and treasures that they have a right relationship with God.

What do you do if you're seeing and hearing things that come from a wrong heart?

REMEMBER: *Your heart — My heart!* You need to sit down with them. You need to talk to them. You need to ask them what's going on? Ask them if they notice that there's been a break down between the word of God and their life. It's an amazing thing to see when a child's heart returns to the Word of God and to the God of the Word; when they are once again informed, defined and directed by God. You begin to hear good and see good things from a good heart.

17 Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day. 18 Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

Write *Psalm 73* in the margin of your Bible next to v.17-18

In **v.1-12** the psalmist says that he sees ungodly people prospering. In **v. 13** he asks a question that a lot of godly men and women have asked when they see the same thing all around them — *“Have I cleansed my heart in vain? Have I lived a pure life for nothing?”* In **v.16** everything comes into focus.

Psalm 73:16-25; 28 NLT *So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is! 17 Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked. 18 Truly, you put them on a slippery path and send them sliding over the cliff to destruction. 19 In an instant they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors. 20 When you arise, O Lord, you will laugh at their silly ideas as*

a person laughs at dreams in the morning. ²¹ Then I realized that my heart was bitter, and I was all torn up inside. ²² I was so foolish and ignorant— I must have seemed like a senseless animal to you. ²³ Yet I still belong to you; you hold my right hand. ²⁴ You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny. ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth..... ²⁸ But as for me, how good it is to be near God! I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter, and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do.

When he came in the presence of God he had a change of perspective. His perspective changed from the temporal to the eternal. We can only understand the temporal in light of the eternal! We have to have an eternal perspective when we are looking at fallen world around us, how it works and who gets ahead in it. **This present world is not our future.**

DON'T MISS THIS — The psalmist got this renewed eternal perspective when he went into the house of the Lord — went where the people of God worshipped God. That is one of the huge reasons we gather for corporate worship.

QUOTE: Paul Tripp — *Corporate worship is designed to transport your personal celebration from things temporary to things eternal.*

When you find yourself messed up by the temporal, messed up by seeing the ungodly prosper — corporate worship is HUGE! I NEED to be here because I get messed up by the “here and now”.

Do any of your friends profess faith in Jesus but seem to be obsessed with the here and now — profess faith in heaven but they live like **this** is all there really is? Do any of your friends profess faith in Jesus but they’re messed up by the seeming injustices of the here and now — are just giving in to the course of this world and it's value system? (By the way, that is a big segment of professing Christians) GET THEM HERE! Pray! Invite! Bring!

¹⁹ Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. ²⁰ Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, ²¹ for the

drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.

QUOTE: *A handbook on Proverbs* — “Don’t be one of the people who”.... “Do not join those who”⁶

REMEMBER — The Bible is the best commentary on the Bible. When we look at the life of Jesus we certainly can’t understand this to mean “don’t be near.” Jesus was with them — but He never became one of them — He never “joined” His heart to their idols.

²⁰ Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, ²¹ for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.

Idols bankrupt your Life!

²² Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

First — Let’s deal with the concept of age. In fallen culture youth tends to despise age! Listen to me all of you young people. There is a very real way in which OLD is a relative thing. When you’re 12 — 20 is OLD! When you’re 18 — 40 is ancient. In terms of sheer longevity, today 65 is the new 50!

Fallen culture diminishes the value of age. The elderly are seen as burdens not blessings. They are seen as liabilities not assets. Look at the way health insurance limits certain life saving or quality of life procedures. God’s wisdom says that we shouldn’t despise those who are old.

Then let’s deal with wisdom. A lot of us grow up thinking our parents are clueless. We thinking that they don’t know anything about anything. We wonder how our parents manage to survive being so stupid.

⁶ Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. (2000). *A handbook on Proverbs* (p. 499). New York: United Bible Societies.

Sin has made a mess of things, but dads should have things worth saying to their kids.

²³ Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.

Buy has the more general meaning of “get” or “acquire”. The verb **sell** has a figurative meaning because TRUTH itself is not something that can be bought or sold.

HERE’S THE POINT — Truth is worth getting at the cost of time, effort and resources. Jesus is the embodiment of truth — *I am the truth!*

“Get truth, and do not part with it.” Here’s the problem. Fallen culture hears with its eyes and thinks with its feelings. It has no heart for anything longer than a 2-3 minute YouTube video or an Instagram post. Surely, as ministers of the Gospel we need to understand that and seek the Lord for ways to build bridges to their hearts and minds. But here’s the deal — Jesus gave to the church pastor-teachers. Authentic 1st century Christians were devoted to hearing the Word. But for most Christians today the thought that truth and instruction will cost them 45-60 minutes is sticker-shock. They don’t want truth at that price. The same is true for reading. Then there’s the reality of processing life through the grid of feelings. But when you have no truth to process pain or joy, hardship or happiness, you are only left with feelings.

QUOTE: C.S. Lewis; “A Grief Observed” — *“Feelings, feelings, and feelings. Let me try thinking instead.”*

²⁴ The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him. ²⁵ Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice. ²⁶ My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.

This convicts me just in reading it. How many of us men would say with complete confidence to our children give me your heart and look at the way I live. Watch me and see how I live. Man that’s a sobering thought.

In verses 17- 35 there specific things about that this son has observed in his dad's life.

Sexual purity — marital fidelity — moderation and self-control.

DAD'S — What do our kids see in our lives? If we don't look like this we need to repent for the sake of our kids and the glory of God.

CHILDREN — If you parents have failed in these things, pray for them to know Jesus and be transformed by His love and grace. Read the Scriptures to the kind of person God wants you to be. Find godly examples in the church and emulate them.