



## Proverbs – Part #3

I mentioned last week that Proverbs 10-15 are dominated by “antithetical” lines, where the second line of the proverb gives the opposite and contrasting reality from the first line.

This week’s section, Proverbs 16:1-22:16, also contains two-line proverbs but concentrate mostly in synonymous or “complementary” type proverbs in which the second line echoes or adds to the first. For example, in Proverbs 19:17 the first line states, “He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He [the Lord] will pay back what he has given.” The second line is not antithetical (like most of the Proverbs from last week’s section) but complementary. Another difference between last week’s section of Proverbs and this week is the latter has a higher number of proverbs dealing with the king and the Lord.

Despite the different prosaic style between these two sections of Proverbs, both still share common themes in contrasting between the wise man and the wicked; the hard worker and laziness; poverty and wealth; pride and humility; family; controlling the tongue, and others.

It is interesting to note the book of James in the New Testament is akin to Proverbs in some ways and also provides practical advice, “people can tame all kinds of animals, bird, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue” (James 3:7-8). The key message here, in James and Proverbs, is that trying to tame the tongue is well worth the effort, even if we are only partly successful.

Proverbs teach us not to be boastful or proud. We learn here, as throughout the Bible, that God does not like prideful people, and we should strive to be humble and concerned about others.

This is part of wise living.