



THE LIVES OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED CONTRASTED

10:6, 9, 16, 27-30; 11:3, 5-8, 18-21, 31; 12:2-3, 7, 13-14,
26, 28; 13:6, 9, 14-15, 21-22, 25; 14:11, 14, 19, 32; 15:6,
8-9, 26, 29; 21:12, 15-16; 28:10, 18; 29:6

The subject of these **proverbs** is found throughout the Word of God. It is a subject that ought to cause people to contemplate their lives and their manner of living. In these **proverbs** the lives of the “*righteous*” (those who live virtuously, uprightly, decently, and lawfully) and the “*wicked*” (those who live sinfully, immorally, corruptly, and unlawfully) are put side by side and contrasted. These **proverbs** plainly teach that there are consequences to the way that one chooses to live their life. The teaching of these **proverbs** is stated in **Galatians 6:8**.

“Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked” [10:6].

“*Blessings*” has reference to both **temporal** [Deuteronomy 28:1-6; I Timothy 4:8], and **spiritual** blessings [Isaiah 32:17]. The reference to the covering of the mouth is an allusion to the ancient covering of the mouths and faces of condemned criminals. It speaks of the fact that God’s judgment will fall upon them.

“He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known” [10:9].

The one who walks “*uprightly*” has reference to the one who is **just** and **faithful** in his dealings with God and with men. The word “*surely*” means **securely** and **confidently**. It has reference to a **consistent** walk of faithfulness, and this individual can rest upon God’s favor and providence for his protection. But the one who walks perversely in crooked and sinful paths; that deals hypocritically and deceitfully with God or with men “*shall be known*” (publicly discovered, and exposed to shame and punishment).

“The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin” [10:16].

The “*labour* (industry and effort) *of the righteous*” is for God and His glory. He covets not to be rich or great, but simply to please God, and such leads to **abundant** living! With the “*wicked*” **self** is both the object and end, and the fruit of such a life is more sin [Galatians 6:7-8].

“The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inherit the earth” [10:27-30].

There are four contrasts between the “*righteous*” and the “*wicked*” in these verses. ❶ A contrast in their very **lives**. The lives of the “*righteous*” are characterized by the “*fear of the LORD*” (which is reverence for God, and includes godly principles). This “*fear of the LORD*”

results in fullness of life, and enjoyment of life. On the other hand, the life of the “wicked” is one of irreverence, which wears away the very spring of life [Ecclesiastes 5:10-12]. ❷ There is a contrast in their hope. “The hope of the righteous shall be gladness” (shall be realized). On the other side, “the expectation (hope) of the wicked shall perish” or end in disappointment [Job 8:13; 11:20; 27:8; Psalm 10:6; 49:6-14]. ❸ There is a contrast in their ways. “The way of the LORD (this has reference to the precepts of God) is strength (courage, confidence, and support) to the upright” On the other hand, “but destruction (ruin, devastation) shall be to the workers of iniquity” DESTRUCTION IS IN THEIR WAYS! ❹ There is a contrast in their stability. “The righteous shall never be removed” Those who live virtuously, decently, and lawfully are well established, but it is not so with the “wicked”

“The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them” [11:3].

The word “integrity” means “*adherence to a moral code*” Here it refers to “*a firm adherence to God’s precepts*” Such serves as a guide, an attendant, and a counselor in life. The word “perverseness” means “*that which is turned away from God’s code of righteousness, that which is improper and incorrect*” Such leads to destruction [Psalm 34:21; Proverbs 8:36; Isaiah 3:9; Hosea 13:9].

“The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of the unjust men perisheth. The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead” [11:5-8].

The “righteous” are described by the words “perfect” and “upright” The word “perfect” has reference to spiritual maturity. The word “upright” has reference to the one who is marked by strong moral principles. The blessing of such is guidance and deliverance. The unrighteous are described by the words “wicked” (that which is evil and vile) and “transgressors” (that which goes beyond, or passes over the laws of God). Such are on a road that will lead to destruction, to disappointment, and trouble.

“The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death. They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight. Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered” [11:18-21].

These verses speak of how that “wicked” men live their life to their own destruction, and how that the “righteous” live in such a way as to receive the blessings of God. These verses teach four things about the “wicked” ❶ THEY ARE DECEIVED-“The wicked worketh a deceitful work” ❷ THEY PURSUE THAT WHICH RESULTS IN DEATH-“so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death” He plans and acts against his own self-interest. ❸ THEY ARE AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD-“They that are of a froward heart (habitually

disposed to disobedience and opposition), *are abomination* (disgust) *to the LORD*” ④ THEY SHALL NOT ESCAPE PUNISHMENT-”*Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished*” Confederacies in sin shall be broken, and shall not avail to protect the sinner! Though there are many that concur by their practice or approval, yet this will not protect them from the justice of God! These verses also teach four things about the “*righteous*” ① THEY HAVE A SURE REWARD-”*to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward*” ② THEY HAVE ENJOYMENT OF LIFE-”*As righteousness tendeth to life*” ③ THEY ARE PLEASING TO THE LORD-”*but such as are upright in their way are his delight*” ④ THEY AND THEIR SEED HAVE DELIVERANCE-”*but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered*” The best way for any parent to do his children good, is to be godly.

“A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will be condemn. A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved” [12:2-3].

Goodness is “*the fruit of the Spirit*” [Galatians 5:22]. The “*good man*” therefore is a man filled with the Spirit. He reflects the goodness of God, and such an individual enjoys the favor of God. The contrast to the “*good man*” is “*a man of wicked devices*” This is the individual who follows wickedness as his course, he “*shall not be established by wickedness*” It may set him in high places, but they are slippery places [Psalm 73:18].

“The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand” [12:7].

This teaches that the triumphing of the “*wicked*” is short [Job 20:5]. On the other hand, the foundation of the “*righteous*” is a firm and enduring foundation.

“The wicked is snared by the transgressions of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble” [12:13].

The “*wicked*” entangles (ensnares) themselves in trouble by their own foolishness. And though trouble may come into the lives of the just, they are not entangled in such!

“The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor: but the way of the wicked seduceth him” [12:26].

The “*righteous*” (those who live virtuously, uprightly, decently, and lawfully) are more “*excellent*” in character by the grace of God, and more abundant in opportunity and privilege. On the other hand, “*the way of the wicked*” takes advantage of him, causing him to err and to wander to his own ruin.

“In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof is no death” [12:28].

“*Righteousness*” is conformity to God’s commandments, which are all holy, just, and good. “*Righteousness*” is here united with life and immortality. This “*righteousness*” is spoken of as a “*pathway*” and as such it leads from something to something, and is narrow. “*Righteousness*”

though it may expose one to some dangers and inconveniences in the world, yet it will lead to a life of happiness, whereas the way of wickedness leads to destruction.

“Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner” [13:6].

The one who is just and faithful in the way of “*righteousness*” is kept from sin, and therefore kept from the destruction that awaits wickedness.

“The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out” [13:9].

“*The light of the righteous*” and “*the lamp of the wicked*” has reference to joy and gladness. The joy and gladness of the “*righteous*” shall continue, but for the “*wicked*” it shall come to an end. Notice, that there is a difference in the degree of joy and gladness in the “*righteous*” and the “*wicked*” The one is “*light*” itself, while the other is a “*lamp*”

“The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard” [13:14-15].

Here, the “*wise*” and the “*transgressor*” are contrasted, implying that it is an act of foolishness to transgress the law of God. The “*wise*” are ruled by God’s law, and such serves as a “*fountain of life*” to them, a constant source of comfort and satisfaction. The law of God also serves as a preservative from the snares of sin and Satan. The “*wise*” have “*good understanding*” (discretion) of the ways of God, and find favor with God, “*but the way of transgressors is hard*” That is, “*the way of transgressors*” is strenuous, exhausting, difficult, demanding, and punishing!

“Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed. A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just” [13:21-22].

The destruction that awaits the “*wicked*” is unavoidable, it pursues them wherever they go. They may prosper for awhile, but their damnation is sure outside of *Christ* [Psalm 73:12-19]. The “*righteous*” individual will be recompensed, and leaves an inheritance for his children’s children, not necessarily a material inheritance. There is an inheritance that is far greater and more lasting than a material inheritance. Even the material blessings of the sinner is for the benefit of the righteous.

“The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want” [13:25].

God’s favor and blessing gives the “*righteous*” individual what he needs for his soul, but the “*wicked*” is never satisfied.

“The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish” [14:11].

Notice, it is “*the house of the wicked*” and “*the tabernacle of the upright*” A “*tabernacle*” compared to a “*house*” appears to be very weak, poor, and unstable. But the “*tabernacle*” shall stand, and the “*house*” shall fall, because the one is built upon a rock, the other upon sand [Matthew 7:24-27].

“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself” [14:14].

Here the contrast is between the “*backslider*” and the “*good man*” The “*backslider in heart*” is the one who departs from God, and from the way of His precepts. Such shall be filled with the fruit of their own ways and doings. In contrast, “*the good man*” (the one who cleaves to the Lord, and His ways with all his heart) shall receive great comfort and satisfaction in the ways of the Lord.

“The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death” [14:32].

Not only is there a great contrast between the lives of the “*wicked*” and the “*righteous*” but there is also a contrast in their deaths! The “*wicked*” are “*driven away*” in death, while the “*righteous*” live in “*hope*” (assurance) and die in “*hope*”

“In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues (income and profits) of the wicked is trouble” [15:6].

Even if the “*righteous*” do not possess material wealth, there is treasure (that which is valuable and precious) in their house. On the other hand, the “*wicked*” may possess great material wealth, but there is also “*trouble*” (problems, difficulties, worries, and concerns).

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness” [15:8-9].

In these verses the worship of the “*wicked*” and the “*upright*” is contrasted. The one is said to be an “*abomination*” (that which is loathsome and disgusting in God’s sight), while the other is said to be a “*delight*” (that which brings great pleasure). These verses also contrast the way of the “*wicked*” and the way of “*righteousness*” The one is said to be an “*abomination*” while the other is the object of God’s great love.

“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words” [15:26].

In this verse the “*wicked*” and the “*pure*” are contrasted. “*The thoughts of the wicked*” are made mention of and are said to be an “*abomination*” to God. These “*thoughts*” are known to God

[Psalm 94:11; Matthew 9:4]. The “*words of the pure*” are made mention of and are said to be “*pleasant*” (enjoyable and agreeable to God).

“The LORD is far from the wicked: but he beareth the prayer of the righteous” [15:29].

The words “*The LORD is far from the wicked*” does not have reference to His omnipresence, but to His favor and good will. In contrast “*he beareth the prayer of the righteous*” His favorable and gracious presence is with the “*righteous*” and He hears their prayer [Psalm 4:3; 34:17].

“The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness” [21:12].

The “*righteous*” individual will not envy the material blessings of the “*wicked*” but will contemplate and reflect upon the ruin and destruction of such [Psalm 37:38; 73:12-19].

“It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead” [21:15-16].

The “*just*” find great pleasure in doing that which is right, and those that make it their work to sin, will find **destruction** and **ruin!** The way of God is “*the way of understanding*” and he that wanders from such shall find himself in the congregation of the damned!

“Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession” [28:10].

THOSE WHO LEAD OTHERS ASTRAY ARE OF THE SAME IMAGE OF SATAN! *Christ* warned against such [Mark 13:22], and *Paul* also warned against the same [Acts 20:30]. In contrast to those who lead astray, the “*upright*” shall not only be preserved from the evil way, but they shall have “*good things*” (the graces and comforts of the Holy Spirit) *in possession*”

“Whoso walketh uprightly (honestly) shall be saved (delivered) but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once” [28:18].

The one who walks “*uprightly*” shall be saved from destruction. In contrast, the one who thinks to secure himself by fraudulent practices shall fall.

“In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice” [29:6].

“*Transgression*” not only ends in punishment, but also entraps [Job 18:8; Psalm 9:15; Proverbs 22:5; 26:27; Ecclesiastes 10:8; Isaiah 8:15]. In contrast the “*righteous doth sing and rejoice*” as a result of the peace they have within!