



## INSTRUCTION AND REPROOF

10:8, 17; 12:1, 15; 13:1, 13, 18; 15:5, 10, 12, 31-32;  
28:9; 29:1

These **proverbs** draw a contrast between those who give heed to godly “*instruction*” and “*reproof*” and those who reject it. Godly “*instruction*” has reference to the orders, the commands, the directives, the bidding, and the requirements of God, as set forth in the Word of God. Godly “*reproof*” has reference to the rebukes, the reprimands, the admonishment, and correction that God gives through His Word!

The central point of these **proverbs** is the wisdom of obedience and the folly of disobedience. The giving heed to godly “*instruction*” and “*reproof*” is obedience and results in further obedience, while the rejection of godly “*instruction*” and “*reproof*” is disobedience and results in further disobedience. It is always wise to obey what God says, for there is a blessing in such, and it is always foolish to disobey what God says, for there is a curse in such [Deuteronomy 11:26-28]. It is always wise to obey what God says, for such is a solid foundation, and it is always foolish to disobey what God says, for such is an unstable foundation [Matthew 7:24-27]. One’s attitude toward the “*instruction*” and “*reproof*” of God will either be obedience or disobedience.

*“The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall”* [10:8].

The “*wise in heart*” are those who have a heart-seated wisdom, and such will “*receive*” the commandments of God. To “*receive*” is to hear, to accept, to respond to, and to welcome the commandments of God. The “*wise in heart*” have a gracious attitude toward the commandments of God, and are of a teachable spirit. The contrast is “*a prating fool* (one who talks long and idly) *shall fall*” This is the individual who refuses to be governed by God, that refuses to be taught and counseled, and such will tumble.

*“He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth”* [10:17].

Not only is the child of God to receive godly instruction, but to retain it, as indicated by the word “*keepeth*” The word “*keepeth*” conveys the idea of “*holding on to, and to keep possession of, not to part with*” Godly instruction sets “*the way of life*” before us, and the one who keeps such instruction will not fail in finding and enjoying that life. But the one who refuses and dismisses godly reproof, the one who turns a deaf ear to it shall fall into many errors, miscalculations and delusions. *Rehoboam* the son of *Solomon* is an example of the truth of the second part of this proverb [I Kings 12:1-14].

*“Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish”* [12:1].

Scriptural instruction is the course for acquiring scriptural knowledge, therefore, the one who loves such instruction loves the knowledge that it imparts. On the contrary is the one who

hates “*reproof*” such an individual is said to be “*brutish*” (animal-like, not rational). Even God’s people can fall into such a state [Psalm 73:22].

*“The way of the fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise”* [12:15].

The book of Proverbs has much to say about “*counsel*” and “*counsellors*” [11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 20:18; 24:6], but in the “*fool’s*” eyes, he needs no direction, or counsel, and is stubborn in his own way. He does not ask for advice, because he does not think he needs it. On the contrary is the “*wise*” individual who realizes their need for instruction and gladly receives it.

*“A wise son beareth his father’s instruction: but a scorner beareth not rebuke”* [13:1].

The one who is truly “*wise*” realizes that they do not know everything, and that they stand in need of godly counsel and instruction, and they desire such, because they have a “*fear of the Lord*” and therefore they will gladly listen to such. On the contrary is the scorner “*but a scorner*” (one who has a disdain and contempt for godly instruction) *beareth not rebuke*” They turn a deaf ear to it.

*“Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded”* [13:13].

This proverb draws a contrast between the one who “*despiseth the word*” and the one who “*feareth the commandment*” The one that “*despiseth*” (dislikes, looks down upon, and thinks lightly of) *the word shall be destroyed*” (wrecked). This is the one who casts the Word of God away [Psalm 50:17; Isaiah 5:24; Jeremiah 6:10], and is on a path that leads to destruction! In contrast, is the one who has a reverence (respect) for the commandments of God and is on a path that leads to God’s blessing.

*“Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured”* [13:18].

The one who is so proud that he refuses to be taught godly principles shall be brought low. But the one who “*regardeth reproof*” (considers it seriously, receives it, and is changed by it), such shall be honored or lifted up.

*“A fool despiseth his father’s instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent”* [15:5].

Here the contrast is between a “*fool*” (one who acts unwisely), and the “*prudent*” (one who shows care and thought, one who is sensible). The “*fool*” despises godly “*instruction*”, but the “*prudent*” receives “*reproof*”

*“Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die” [15:10].*

“Correction” has reference to reproof, warning, instruction, restraint, and chastisement. Such is “grievous (painful) unto him that forsaketh (abandons) the way” It is also “grievous” to the wise individual [Hebrews 12:11], but he knows his need of it, and bows his will to it. But the one who kicks against the “reproof” and “correction” of God, and refuses to submit to it, only increases his own pain.

*“A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise” [15:12].*

This is quite different from David’s spirit [Psalm 141:5]. The “scorner” considers the truth-telling friend as an enemy [Galatians 4:15-16]. The “scorner” has no desire to be in the path of obedience and so hates godly “instruction” and “reproof” that he absolutely will not seek the “instruction” and “reproof” of the wise, but will rather seek what he wants to hear, and what will suit his own ends.

*“The ear that beareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that beareth reproof getteth understanding” [15:31-32].*

It is the character of the “wise” that he is very willing to be reproved, and admonished, and therefore chooses to converse with those that, both by their words and example reveal what is amiss in him. On the contrary is the one who refuses instruction and admonishment, such an individual thinks lightly of his own soul and well-being!

*“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination” [28:9].*

The one who refuses to hear godly “instruction” and “reproof” not only is such an “abomination” to God, but “even his prayer (outward exercise of religion) shall be abomination”

*“He that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” [29:1].*

The one who “hardeneth his neck” has reference to the stiff-necked [Exodus 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deuteronomy 9:6, 13; 10:16; II Chronicles 30:8]. This one, who hardens himself over and over again, refusing godly “instruction” and “reproof” is in danger of being ruined, and that without remedy or healing, seeing that they have refused God’s remedy!

