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Discipline and Correction

10: 17-21

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.



He who observes discipline is on the path to life. Learning from one's mistakes is a key to gaining **wisdom**. One must pay attention to **the discipline/correction** given by one's teachers in order to mature. This **proverb** contrasts those who do the right thing and learn from **their** mistakes with **those** who try to live oblivious to constructive criticism. **The path** image is used here for one's **life**, and those who willingly submit to **discipline**, either from an autoreactive figure in your **life** or from **the Lord**, enhance their lives. However, those **who ignore correction are making a mistake (10:17 Hebrew)**.

He who covers up hate has lips that lie, and anyone who slanders is a fool (10:18 CJB). Cola 1 (a single unit of poetry) implicitly criticizes anyone who hates another but pretends otherwise. Such people, by definition, are liars since they don't express their dislike for the other person. Cola 2, however, intensifies the offense since **slanderers** may continue to conceal **their hate** from the object of **their hate**, but **they** gossip about that person to others. **Proverbs** understands that it is important to be open and honest with one's **words**. If there is a legitimate

gripe about something, the **wise** person will rebuke the other, with the purpose of helping to restore the relationship. Here, however, there is no intention other than to hurt, belittle, or demean the other person. Through such actions, relationships are destroyed.

Sin is not stopped by many words, but the wise hold their tongues (10:19 NIV). Proverbs consistently teaches that fewer **words** are better than **many words**. **Those who control their tongue will have a long life; but those who speak rashly will come to ruin (13:3 Hebrew). Even fools seem wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem pretty intelligent (17:28 NLT). Words** are powerful and should be spoken **prudently (1:4a)**. The more one says, the more likely that your words can be taken out of context, or even worse, that you can say something stupid or unwittingly offensive to others. The time and the situation must be right for **the words** that we speak. In addition, **Proverbs** teaches that our **words** must follow some reflection about **their** impact on others. **The heart of the righteous thinks before speaking, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil words (15:28 NLT).**²²⁸

A wise person restrains **his tongue** because **he** knows speaking too much may cause **him** to fall into sin. In the TaNaKh it says: **I will watch what I do and not sin in what I say. I will hold my tongue when the ungodly are around me (Psalm 39:1 NLT)**. And in the B'rit Chadashah we learn that **when we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the captain wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider that a great forest can be set on fire by a small spark. The tongue is also like a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell (James 3:3-6 NIV)**.

The tongue of the righteous is as choice as silver, but the heart of the wicked is worth little (10:20 Hebrew). The idea seems to be that words reflect what is going on inside. **Solomon** uses the words **tongue** and **heart** as parallel terms because they are inseparably linked, **Yeshua** would later say: **The things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them (Matthew 15:18)**. **Righteous words**, however, are **as choice as silver** because it expresses **wisdom** and lead people toward **the path of life**.²²⁹

Again, the contrast is between **the wise/righteous**, whose behavior leads to **the path of life**, and **the foolish/wicked**, whose behavior leads to **the path of death** (**to see link click [Ci](#) - Life or Death**). And again, the contrast is drawn between contrasting two body parts, here **the lips** and **the heart**. **The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of heart (10:21 Hebrew)**. **The lips** stand for **the speech**, or **the words**, of **the righteous**. What **the righteous** say to others encourages, edifies, and builds them up. The verb **feed** (Hebrew: *raah*) is often translated *to shepherd* in other contexts. The picture of **the proverb** draws is of **the righteous person** guiding **his** listeners to refreshing pastures. **They** do this, not just for **themselves** or even for the other person, but for **many**. **The righteous**, therefore, help to build a godly **community**.²³⁰

As Derek Leman relates in his book *Proverbial Wisdom and Common Sense*, an anonymous writer gives us this thought: “We are all like those walking along **a path** backwards. No one can see the way until we have passed it, but those who are further on ahead can see the stones and ditches that we are coming to, and if we listen to their directions, we can avoid many hard falls and ugly slips.” Only **fools** think **they** know it all. **Wise** people think of knowledge and experience as a vast repository, from which every person has drawn at least a little, but from which no one has gleaned everything. The **wise** person realizes – the more he learns – that knowledge and experience are nearly infinite realms. Therefore, as the old saying goes, the more you learn, the more you realize there is to learn.

Solomon says: **He who observes discipline is on the path to life; but he who ignores correction is making a mistake (10:17)**. Times of **discipline** are times of learning opportunities. Parents who discipline their children hope that they will learn not to repeat the behavior that led to the punishment. **Foolish** children fail to learn and **the discipline** is often repeated. Adolescents begin following their wayward friends and often end up in trouble. Very few make it through adolescence without falling into some sort of dishonesty, immorality, or excessive thrill-seeking experience. **A wise** teenager learns from the first time he is **disciplined**. Adults are not immune to **discipline**. Authorities over us, at work, the government (see the commentary on **Romans De - Respecting Civil Authority**), or in the congregations of **God**, for example, may apply discipline in various ways. **The fool** responds to **discipline** by despising the one administering it. **The wise** person looks truthfully at himself, sees the root cause of the failure, and makes changes.

Those who ignore such correction are **making a mistake** (Hebrew *ta'ah*), which in some forms means *to wander aimlessly*. However, in this verse, *ta'ah* occurs in the

form that suggests active causation, meaning, *to lead astray or to cause confusion*. In other words, the one who ignores correction, according to **Solomon's** words, causes himself to be led astray. This is a willful error. The person who ignores correction is not passively making a mistake, but deliberately making a choice. The choice is between listening to what we know is right in the correction that we are receiving, or in maintaining our own pride and refusing to listen. Given the choice, fallen human nature usually goes with pride and self-will. **Stern discipline awaits anyone who leaves the path, Solomon says (15:10a)**. Having already led himself astray according to **10:17**, the unteachable person then leaves **the path of wisdom. Wisdom's path** is smooth and easy to travel. The ground of **folly** is rough and filled with pitfalls.

Neon signs will not accompany the rebuke that may make a huge difference in our lives. No booming voice from heaven is likely to call out, "Listen to this man, he is telling you the truth." We may survive dozens of corrections, not listening to any of them and yet avoiding the consequences. But we are playing Russian roulette. The unheeded rebuke that will do us in may come in a small voice. It may be a quiet suggestion that we pass over in ignorance, "I'm sure I'm right and he isn't." It may be from a person we are too proud to listen to, or from an enemy. But the **wise** person is open to learning from anyone, no matter who it is.

Solomon says: **whoever accepts correction will be honored (13:18)**. When those in authority over us see that we learn from our mistakes and from their correction, they will reward us with greater trust. Many employers would rather have someone who can learn and grow than someone who is an "expert." The "expert," if he is stagnant, will be left behind as situations and the rules of the game change. In the larger sense, those who habitually pay attention to discipline and correction are rewarded in all of life. Always learning from others and growing, and new doors open for them. This is **the path of wisdom**.²³¹ The bottom line is that since you are **a child of God**, you need to be ready and willing to listen to your heavenly **Father** and do your best to obey **Him** (see the commentary on **Hebrews Cz - God Disciplines His Children**).

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for Your steadfast love that cares so much for me. What comfort it is for me to keep my eyes on eternity and know that when **You discipline**, it is out of a heart to purify to protect me. **Wisdom** trusts **You** at all times, even in times of **discipline**. What a blessing it is to know that **You** can turn **discipline** into something that yields **peace** and **righteousness**. **Now all discipline seems painful at the moment - not joyful. But later it yields the***

peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Hebrews 12:11). Wisdom listens with a heart of love and respect for **You**, even when **disciplined**. **Wisdom** thinks what can I learn from this discipline? Abiding in **the vine** is the only way to produce **fruit**. **Abide in Me, and I will abide in you. The branch cannot itself produce fruit, unless it abides on the vine. Likewise, you cannot produce fruit unless you abide in Me (John 15:4).** When **disciplined** may I run back to **You** in love, with a humble heart, seeking forgiveness. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection.
Amen