



FIRST BAPTIST of Hayden

Proverbs
The Proverbs of Solomon
Chapters 9-21
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Introduction:

Standards help us to evaluate the quality of something. There are standards for the medical profession which are supposed to bring a measure of assurance that the person who is working on you, prescribing medicine to you, or trying to help you has some measure of competency in the field. The same is true of the legal profession. When you stand before a judge, whose responsibility it is to rightly adjudicate the law, you want to know that both the attorneys and the judge are competent to do what is required by the standards set forth.

Unfortunately, we find all too often that professional standards are set aside when the title is conferred or the degree is awarded, and the “professional” lacks integrity and is willing to do whatever is necessary to gain financially.



So, while standards are important, they can be ignored and set aside for the sake of personal gain.

In chapter 11:1-14, Solomon gives us three standards that we should consider. First, an altered standard; second, a divine standard; and finally, a human standard.

Message:

1. An Altered Standard:

Proverbs 11:1–3 (ESV): *1 A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight. 2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom. 3 The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.*

The idea of abomination is repulsive, disgusting, even twisted and corrupted. The Hebrew merchant would use stones of varying sizes to weigh out grain or a portion of meat. A corrupt merchant could use stones to fool the unsuspecting shopper into buying something that was not as full or as heavy as the shopper was expecting to purchase.

This was, in effect a form of deception. A willingness to trick someone into thinking something was more than it is, and it was in direct conflict with God’s law.

Deuteronomy 25:13–16 (ESV): *13 “You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, a large and a small. 14 You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, a large and a small.*

15 A full and fair weight you shall have, a full and fair measure you shall have, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. 16 For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to the Lord your God.

God wanted his people to be different, and the same applies to us today. If we must deceive to conduct business, God is not going to bless our work. He expects us to use just weights: a true measure of value and worth.

Pride tends to cause someone to believe they can alter a standard that has been set. They may feel as if the rule does not apply to them, or they believe they are beyond anyone else's standards. They are too good, or too big to fail, so they aren't bound by the same rules as everyone else.

As a people of God, we should strive to work according to the Lord's high standard of holiness – not as a means of believing ourselves to be better than someone else, but as a means of worship and honor to God.

Colossians 3:23–24 (ESV): *23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

God wants us to recognize that it is him we serve.

2. A Divine Standard:

Proverbs 11:4–8 (ESV): *4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. 5 The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight, but the wicked falls by his own wickedness. 6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the treacherous are taken captive by their lust. 7 When the wicked dies, his hope will perish, and the expectation of wealth perishes too. 8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, and the wicked walks into it instead.*

God is always watching, and God keeps a just scale – ready to determine the worth of a soul.

There is a day coming when we will face his judgment, his scales of justice, and nothing in that day will deliver us from his wrath except one thing: *Are we clothed in the righteousness of one more worthy and far superior?*

Isaiah saw this day coming – a day when there are those who ignore God’s standard of righteousness and who refuse to do as he commanded according to his word and will.

Isaiah 10:1–4 (ESV): *1 Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, 2 to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!*

3 What will you do on the day of punishment, in the ruin that will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your wealth? 4 Nothing remains but to crouch among the prisoners or fall among the slain. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.

If you live life for yourself, always ignoring the plight of the widow, the orphan, the downtrodden, the enslaved, then you will find on the day of judgment a less than merciful God.

Jesus spoke of this day, and he pointed out what makes the difference in the eyes of the judge.

Matthew 25:31–46 (ESV): 31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’

37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?'

45 Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

That's harsh, but our actions are a clear statement of what we believe. How we act toward the highest, the wealthiest, or the lowliest and most marginalized and the poorest among us speaks volumes of our faith in Christ.

James, the brother of the Lord said, James 2:18 (ESV):
18 *But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

Saying you have faith is never enough, we live out our faith in real time among real people – not to win God’s approval, but to show that we already have his approval. It is a natural result of the Spirit of Christ who lives in the believer.

The one who does not live this way demonstrates that his is a life of death. and his expectations, his hopes and aspirations for wealth, or influence dies with him. He will have no influence with the Judge of all the earth.

However, a man who is righteous, one who lives by faith, and is living by the divine standard finds that he has already escaped the coming calamity of sorrow.

3. A Human Standard:

Proverbs 11:9–14 (ESV): 9 *With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbor, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.* 10 *When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness.* 11 *By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown.* 12 *Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent.* 13 *Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.* 14 *Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.*

In verse 9, Solomon points to the hypocrite, the one who acts as if he is one way but is the opposite. Two Old Testament examples come to mind. Haman, who attempting to ingratiate himself with the king wound up hung on his own gallows. Likewise, Daniel's opponents who, trying to win favor with the king, found themselves being cast into the den of lions.

Both stories are about people who walked with integrity: Mordecai, and Daniel. Both men were godly, honest, righteous and without any hint of trying for personal gain by deception or crookedness. Yet, both faced very severe punishment, possibly even death. However, they were saved by the hand of God.

The human standard says to protect yourself, get as much for you and yours as possible, regardless if any it may hurt.

The human standard says don't rock the boat, stay quiet about the wrong, the lie, the unjust scale.

We live in a day when we see our politicians saying what they know and we know to be lies. Yet, they say it without shame or remorse because it protects their power, or money, or both.

We don't need to worry. We can pray for their souls, knowing that if they refuse to repent, there is a God who watches and who will judge according to his righteous standard – not our human standard.

Conclusion:

Solomon points to three standards, but only one honors God and brings true lasting reward for us. Reject God's standard, and we face the penalty of ignoring the Creator's desire.

7 When the wicked dies, his hope will perish, and the expectation of wealth perishes too.