

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Proverbs: Topical Applications of Proverbs
III. The Proverbs Themselves, Proverbs 10:1-31:31
N. God's Directives On Relating To Him

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In today's world, we need to be sure we know how to relate to God in a way that pleases Him:

(1) Some people think that God approves if a troubled woman kills her children: Consider the case of "Lindsay Clancy" who "is accused of strangling her three children to death in 2023. . . (H)er then-husband, Patrick Clancy . . . returned . . . home to find her lying on the ground outside after attempting to take her own life. The children were unresponsive in the basement. At one point" in Lindsay's trial the "Assistant District Attorney . . . began to question" Patrick Clancy's mother "about her Catholic faith. 'So you're aware that murder is considered a mortal sin?' the prosecutor asked. The line of questioning was quickly shut down by an objection from Reddington," Lindsay's attorney "and Judge William Sullivan . . ." (Peter Yankowski and Austin Mirmina, "Hundreds show support for Clancy outside court, hospital," Republican-American, August 21, 2026, p. A4) In addition, "a crowd of more than 200 supporters of Clancy gathered outside the courthouse . . . Renee Kimball . . . led them in . . . the Lord's Prayer," after which "women hugged, embraced and shook hands, some visibly upset." (Ibid.)

In reaction to this story, the Republican American editorial, "Lindsay Clancy's indefensible defenders" (op. cit., p. A6) pronounced, "(A) civilization that produces pro-child-killer activism among otherwise normal people – is one that is experiencing . . . spiritual rot . . . Clancy's defenders are indefensible."

(2) Some leaders in the Roman Catholic view some cases of clergy sexual abuse as tolerable: "The Vatican . . . confirmed that a church trial against a famous ex-Jesuit priest accused of . . . sexual abuse of women is ongoing and defended the secrecy of the proceedings . . . (Ex-priest) Rev. Marko Ivan Rupnik" was "excommunicated briefly in 2020 for . . . using the confessional to absolve a woman with whom he had engaged in sexual activity. But the Vatican later refused to prosecute claims of other women" as "the allegations were too old and involved adult women, not minors . . ." (Nicole Winfield, "Vatican defends secrecy in sensitive abuse case," op. cit., July 24, 2026, p. B8)

(3) Some Evangelicals oppose the idea that the Bible's statements on divine election and predestination truth are logically understood: Dr. John C. Whitcomb, co-author of the landmark creationist book, The Genesis Flood, once took notes in a class taught by evangelical seminary professor Cornelious Van Til, and Whitcomb cited Van Til as saying, "You cannot overthrow either election or free will because you cannot understand it. You cannot surrender to rationalism." (David C. Whitcomb, A Good And Faithful Servant, 2022, p. 452) Dr. Van Til thus taught we must be content to remain in a state of irrationality on the doctrine of election and predestination! However, all human beings identify truth only if it is rationally knowable (Clark H. Pinnock, A Defense Of Biblical Infallibility, 1967, p. 16-17), so Dr. Van Til inadvertently countered the idea that God has revealed to us His truth on election and predestination!

Need: *So we ask, "With today's disputed ideas on morality and truth, how can we know how to relate to God?"*

- I. God's "wisdom," His *hokmah*, or fixed eternal moral order for success and blessing, applies to many issues of human concern, including the issue of knowing how to relate to God well.**
- II. We thus view proverbs as translated from the Hebrew Biblical text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica) in the Book of Proverbs that provide God's directives on relating to Him well (as follows):**
 - A. God strictly adheres to His perfect standard of righteousness, so we must align with it or be detestable to Him:
 1. "Yahweh abhors men of perverse heart but He delights in those whose ways are blameless," Prov. 11:20.
 2. "Yahweh detests lying lips, but His acceptance is for men who are truthful," Proverbs 12:22.
 3. "Yahweh detests the thoughts of the wicked, but the pure (have) pleasant words (in His view)," Pr. 15:26.
 4. "Yahweh detests all who are proud in heart; be sure of this, they will not be freed from punishment," 16:5.
 5. "If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable," Proverbs 28:9.
 6. "Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent – Yahweh detests them both," Proverbs 17:15.
 7. "The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable – how much more when brought with evil intent," Prov. 21:27.
 8. "Yahweh detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright is His pleasure. Yahweh detests the way of the wicked, but He loves those who pursue righteousness," Proverbs 15:8-9.
 - B. Adhering to God's perfect standard of righteousness is essential for His blessing in life:
 1. "A good man obtains acceptance from Yahweh, but He condemns (even) a nobleman who is guilty of sin and who is a man of crafty devices," Proverbs 12:2.

2. "Yahweh is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous," Proverbs 15:29.
3. "By loyal love and faithfulness is iniquity atoned, but by the fear of Yahweh one departs from evil," 16:6.
4. "When the ways of a man please Yahweh, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him," Pr. 16:7.
5. "Do not say, 'I will pay you back for this wrong!' Wait for Yahweh, and He will deliver you," Pr. 20:22.
6. "To practice what is righteous and just is more acceptable to Yahweh than sacrifice," Proverbs 21:3.
7. "Rescue those being led away to death . . . (I)f you say, 'But we knew nothing about this,' does not He Who weighs the heart perceive it? . . . Will He not repay each one . . . ?" (Proverbs 24:11-12)
8. "Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, lest Yahweh sees and disapproves and turns away His wrath from him," Proverbs 24:17-18.
9. "The Righteous One (God) takes note of the house of the wicked and brings the wicked to ruin," Pr. 21:12.

III. However, we human beings are in an utterly defenseless position before God when left to ourselves:

- A. Our evaluation of our own morals is distorted by our sinfulness, so we are vulnerable to God's evaluation:
 1. "All the ways of a nobleman are innocent in his own eyes, but Yahweh weighs the spirits (motives)," 16:2.
 2. "All the ways of a nobleman are right in his own eyes, but Yahweh weighs the hearts (inner man)," 21:2.
- B. Furthermore, we human beings cannot escape God's omniscient evaluation of us all:
 1. "Sheol (death) and Abaddon (hell) are open to Yahweh; how much more the hearts of men," Prov. 15:11.
 2. "The lamp of Yahweh searches the spirit of a man; it searches out all his innermost being," Prov. 20:27.
- C. Besides, God is completely sovereign over all mankind:
 1. "To man (belong) the arrangements of the heart, but from Yahweh is the answer of the tongue," Pr. 16:1.
 2. "Commit unto Yahweh whatever you do, and your plans will be firmly established," Proverbs 16:3.
 3. "Yahweh works out everything for His end results, even the wicked for the day of disaster," Prov. 16:4.
 4. "In his heart a man plans his course, but Yahweh determines his steps," Proverbs 16:9.
 5. "There is no wisdom, no insight and no plan that can succeed against Yahweh!" (Proverbs 21:30)
 6. "The rich and the poor meet together (have this in common): Yahweh is Maker of them all," Prov. 22:2.
 7. "The poor and the oppressive nobleman have this in common: Yahweh gives them both eyesight," 29:13.
- D. No man is perfectly righteous, so everyone must rely on God for any hope of deliverance from his sin:
 1. "Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?'" (Proverbs 20:9)
 2. Consequently, Proverbs 22:17-19 instructs, "Pay attention and hearken to the words of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach, for it is delightful when you keep them in your inner soul that they may be ready on your lips. So that your confidence might be in Yahweh, I make known to you today, even you."

IV. Thus, we must rely on God's provision of righteousness for salvation and blessing:

- A. God's righteousness for us is available to all men worldwide regardless of their sin, Romans 3:21-23.
- B. This righteousness is God's gift that is given to those who believe in Christ for salvation, Romans 3:24.
- C. This provision is based on the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of the whole world when He absorbed the wrath of God against man's sins in His death for sin, Romans 3:25-27.
- D. Thus, anyone who believes in Christ is pronounced righteous by God apart from human merit, Romans 3:28.

Lesson: *To relate well to God, our sin must be handled through the cross of Christ. This occurs when we trust in Christ for salvation from sin so that God pronounces us righteous as a gift, making us objects of His compassion.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we then live righteous lives by the power of the Holy Spirit for God's blessing, Galatians 5:16, 22-23.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

The issues of concern mentioned in our sermon introduction can be addressed by Scripture (as follows):

(1) As for a mother's killing her children, it violates God's righteous standard of Exodus 20:13 that charges, "Thou shalt not kill (murder in the context)." (2) As for clerical sexual abuse, all such abuse violates God's righteous standard of Exodus 20:14 that charges, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (3) As for Dr. Van Til's assertion that we must not surrender to rationalism so as to understand divine election and predestination, Jesus in Luke 14:28-29 taught one is responsible to count the cost of building a tower before trying to build it, what requires logical thinking. God thus expects us to use logic to understand His Word's revelation on divine election and predestination!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we then live righteous lives by the power of the Holy Spirit for God's blessing.