

## **A Commentary on the Book of Proverbs**

### **Chapter 15:1-33: Heart's Humility and Harmonious Speech**

**Verses 1-12: Words that heal:** In Proverbs, multiple sayings discuss human speech [words] and wisdom. A wise person's speech is gentle and it quenches anger; it has healing effect. Anger dealt with anger is a recipe for disaster! Words of the wise display knowledge; mouth of the folly spreads stupidity. Anger of the wealthy and ruling class can destroy the life and rights of the poor and disadvantaged of society. The wise know that God sees the human heart and they discern their thoughts before actions and conform their deeds to divine justice. Thoughtful, right words are powerful; they can enrich lives, generate positive change, heal hurts and reconcile what is estranged. Twisted words are fodder for trouble; negative speech breaks the human spirit. The wise one is self-critical, knows one's own errors and ready to accept wise counsel to repair wrongs. The wicked are self-absorbed; they speak nonsense, provoke anger, hostility and retribution. Prayer, worship requires humility/integrity of heart; prayers from a haughty heart displeases God [Example: parable of the pharisee and tax-collector praying in the temple-Luke 18:9-14]. The wise hold everyone in fairness of heart. Store-up treasures of wisdom for wellbeing!

**Verses 13-33: A joyful heart lights up the face:** One's attitudes and behavior depend on varied emotions of the heart. The heart that seeks knowledge, understanding is capable of positive emotions. A crushed spirit is constantly buffeted by negativity, weakened to appreciate the good and what is uplifting! The afflicted heart is healed when turns to wisdom. The wise practice self-control, patience and their words and actions ease conflicts and bring harmony. In Proverbs, true happiness doesn't depend on the amount of wealth one has. Fear of the Lord, following wisdom's counsel brings joy to life. The spirit with which one eats a meal [gratitude, appreciation of gifts] is more important than the number of dishes one may have! The life of the lazy is twisted [thorn-hedge] and invites affliction and the road ahead for the righteous is uncomplicated. Therefore, the children who grow-up loving wisdom and discipline is the joy of parents.

The unwise consider their folly satisfying; they don't know they are flirting with ruin! Listening to good counsel is listening to God. In conversations, one must consider the context and time to say things or share thoughts [gossip can damage friendships]. The prudent one walks the way of life without serious regrets! Humility of the heart is wisdom's characteristic; such a heart cares for the vulnerable in society [widows, orphans]. Care for the poor is life-saving act. Greed, bribery, the Lord hates. A mind lost in riches is reason for bribery. Greedy judges and witnesses corrupt the justice system and favors the rich and powerful. Evil plans of the human heart are opposed to God who is all good. Proverbs observe that the eye can display the emotions of the heart; goodness of the heart fills the eye with joy! Commandments of the Lord are the light of the eye. Heart and organs of senses are vehicles through which one gains wisdom and understanding. Proverbs find it a mystery that some delight in wrong doings! The wise person refrains from self-defeating attitudes and what violates other's dignity.

Father Jose