

MOTIVATION AND ANTITHETIC PARALLELISM IN PROVERBS 10-15

TED HILDEBRANDT*

Motivation is a critical issue for employers, administrators, teachers and parents. It is also a key topic in the book of Proverbs. This paper will attempt to make contributions to proverbial motivation studies in several areas. A methodology will be developed for digging out the deep semantic motivational structures buried in the sentence literature (Proverbs 10-15). By applying this method of analysis to the sentence literature, a rich diversity of motivational forces will be exposed even though there is a dearth of explicit motive clauses. Eight deep-structure categories will provide an initial framework for categorizing and understanding the underlying thought structure of the proverbial sentences. It will be suggested that "approach/avoidance" motivation theory may provide a psycholinguistic reason for the sages' frequent selection of antithetic parallelism as a medium to express their instruction. A dialogue will be initiated between proverbial motivation study and the vast literature on the psychology of motivation that lies untapped by Biblical scholars. Such an integration may yield fresh insights into a Biblical theory of motivation that may be of use to educators, employers and parents. Hopefully such a theory will allow us to expose the motivating forces that should and do drive us as we pursue God and others (Prov 16:2).

I. BACKGROUND: OT MOTIVE CLAUSE STUDY

Gemser in 1953 first isolated the motive clause as a grammatically subordinate clause usually introduced by a particle (*kî*; *lê-* plus infinitive; *lêma^can*; *pen-*) that provides motivation for a command (Law: Exod 20:7; Deut 22:19; Prophets: Amos 5:4-5; Isa 34:5-8; Jer 4:6-8; Writings: Pss 2:11; 3:7; 95:3-7; Prov 3:1-2). After surveying the ancient Near Eastern law codes, Gemser concludes that motive clauses were unique to Israel.¹ While the absoluteness of his original conclusion has been tempered by the dissertations of Sonsino and Utti, they confirm a wide frequency gap between the motives of Biblical law (30% are motivated; 375 of 1,238 commands) and the ancient law codes (only 5%-6% are motivated).²

* Ted Hildebrandt is professor of Biblical studies and philosophy at Grace College, Winona Lake, IN 46590.

¹ B. Gemser, "The Importance of the Motive Clause in Old Testament Law" (VTSup 1; Leiden: Brill, 1953) 52, 62.

² R. Sonsino, *Motive Clauses in Hebrew Law: Biblical Forms and Near Eastern Parallels* (Chico: Scholars, 1980) 153, 172-173, 221; R. Utti, *The Motive Clause in Old Testament Law* (dissertation; Chicago: Lutheran School of Theology, 1973).

The motive clause is usually viewed as a later addition to the admonition (cf. Prov 22:28; 23:10–11).³ Sonsino, following Kitchen's advice, rejects the idea of unilinear evolution from smaller, literary units to those larger and more complex.⁴ He does affirm, however, that motive clauses are used more frequently in the later Biblical law codes than in earlier codes (Book of the Covenant = 17%; Deuteronomy = 50%; Holiness Code = 51%).⁵ Postel harnesses this developmental pattern in Proverbs and concludes that the substantially higher percentage of motive clauses in Proverbs 1–9 dates the collection later than Proverbs 10–22.⁶ But Sonsino wisely notes that content may also have a marked effect on the frequency of motivation (78% of the law is cultic [27% motivated]; 12% treats civil matters [29% motivated]; 8% is ethical/humanitarian [53% motivated]).⁷ Since wisdom is largely of an ethical/humanitarian nature the frequent use of motive clauses is not surprising, especially given wisdom's didactic *Sitz im Leben*. The differences in form and content between the instructions (Proverbs 1–9) and brief, pungent sentences (Proverbs 10–22) may better account for the difference in the frequency of motive clauses than the date.

Contrary to the absence of motive clauses in ancient Near Eastern legal materials, the use of motivational support is characteristic of the wisdom literature throughout the ancient Near East (Sumerian [*Instruction of Šuruppak*], Akkadian [*Counsels of Wisdom*], Ugaritic [*Instructions of Šube-Awilum*], Egyptian [*Ptahhotep, Ani, etc.*]).⁸ Gemser suggests that there is an intrinsic connection between the law and wisdom based on motive clauses (Exod 23:7 [cf. Prov 17:15]; Lev 19:35 [cf. Prov 11:1]). The legal/wisdom nexus is also found in the Bantu tribes of Africa that utilize proverbial wisdom to clinch arguments in legal courtroom settings.⁹ Sonsino highlights several distinctions in the form of legal, as opposed to wisdom, motive clauses (wisdom uses ²*al* + second person, legal uses *lō*²; wisdom uses nonrepetitive format [contrast Lev 19:20]; wisdom uses particles to connect motives).¹⁰

II. MOTIVE CLASSIFICATION

Gemser classifies the motive clauses into four categories: (1) explanatory character (Deut 20:5–8; 22:24, 26; Prov 19:25, 27; 22:6), (2) ethical

³ W. Zimmerli, "Concerning the Structure of Old Testament Wisdom," *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom* (ed. J. Crenshaw; New York: Ktav, 1976) 182–183; H. J. Postel, *The Form and Function of the Motive Clause in Proverbs 10–29* (dissertation; University of Iowa, 1976) 107, 140, 142.

⁴ Sonsino, *Motive* 98–99, 193; P. Nel, "Authority in the Wisdom Admonitions," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 419.

⁵ Sonsino, *Motive* 98–99.

⁶ Postel, *Form* 138; contra C. Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1–9* (WMANT 22; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1966) 135.

⁷ Sonsino, *Motive* 99, 222–223.

⁸ *Ibid.* 153, 168–170.

⁹ Gemser, "Importance" 64–65; cf. Sonsino, *Motive* 28–29, 36; T. Hildebrandt, *Proverbial Poetry: Its Settings and Syntax* (dissertation; Grace Theological Seminary, 1985) 89–91; cf. appropriate cautions by J. Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon 'Historical' Literature," *Studies* (ed. Crenshaw) 481–494.

¹⁰ Sonsino, *Motive* 28, 171.

content (Deut 5:14-15; 19:21), (3) cultic/theological (Deut 17:1; 22:5; Prov 20:22; 22:24-25), and (4) historical (Lev 19:33-34; Deut 5:15).¹¹ It is interesting that neither the ancient Near Eastern legal codes nor Biblical wisdom employs motives using historical events.¹²

Sonsino isolates numerous motivational forces: (1) human dignity (Deut 25:3), (2) compassion (Exod 22:26), (3) imitating God (20:11), (4) social value (Lev 21:9), (5) special status of actor (21:7), (6) short value judgment (20:17), and (7) characterization of prohibition (11:41, "it is loathsome"). These draw from four orientations: (1) God's authority (Lev 19:3, 30), (2) allusions to historical experiences (Exod 22:20; Deut 23:8), (3) fear of punishment (Exod 30:20-21), and (4) promise of well-being (20:12; Deut 5:16).¹³

Postel sets up a typology of motive content more fitting for wisdom (T = Theological; E = Explanatory; C = Consequential) with motive valences (P = Promissory; D = Dissuasive).¹⁴ The presence of promissory motives in Proverbs warns that the often-cited statement "a proverb is not a promise" is rather simplistic and an inadequate explanation of the consequentially directed proverbial statements (Prov 3:1-2, 5-6, 9-10; cf. Deut 8:1). Postel connects his "consequential" category with von Rad's "act-consequence" (order) relationship, supporting it as the center of wisdom literature.¹⁵

In Proverbs the distribution of motive clauses is concentrated largely in the instructions (Proverbs 1-9; 22:17-24:22; 31:1-9) as opposed to the sentences (10:1-22:16; chaps. 25-29). Admonitions are much more frequent in the instructions (Proverbs 1-9 = 39) than in the sayings (Proverbs 10-22 = 13 [e.g. 14:7; 16:3; 19:18; 20:18-19; 22:6]).¹⁶ Postel notes that 13 of the 17 motive clauses in Proverbs 10-22 are in admonitions and only 4 are in nonadmonitional sentences (13:14; 14:27; 15:24; 16:12).¹⁷ He further differentiates between the instructions and proverbial sentences by noting differences in the content of the motive clauses. A clear contrast emerges in the frequency of motive clauses in the instructions (77.5% in 22:17-24:22) as opposed to the sentences (5.3% in Proverbs 10-22; 12% in Proverbs 25-29). Postel observes that the motive clauses in the instructions (22:17-24:22) are heavily theological and those in Proverbs 25-29 are heavily consequential while those in Proverbs 10-22 are evenly distributed.¹⁸

III. NEED FOR DEEP-STRUCTURE MOTIVE ANALYSIS

Several lines of evidence caution against concluding that because the sentences contain few motive clauses they are merely empirical observations

¹¹ Gemser, "Importance" 55-56; Postel, *Form* 144, 151-157.

¹² Sonsino, *Motive* 172; Postel, *Form* 146.

¹³ Sonsino, *Motive* 105-108; cf. Utti, *Motive* 92.

¹⁴ Postel, *Form* 58; P. Nel, *The Structure and Ethos of the Wisdom Admonitions in Proverbs* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982) 28, 46-48.

¹⁵ Cf. the *ma'at* concept; Postel, *Form* 72-73; G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972) 196; cf. F. Wicker, F. Lambert, F. Richardson and J. Kahler, "Categorical Goal Hierarchies and Classification of Human Motives," *Journal of Personality* 52/3 (1984) 285-305.

¹⁶ Nel, *Structure* 65-66, has a handy listing of all admonitions in Proverbs.

¹⁷ Postel, *Form* 58, 90-93.

¹⁸ Ibid. 137, 170.

with little attempt to motivate (energize and direct choices). (1) There seems to be a clear relationship between admonitions and sentences in some of the "duplicate" proverbs in which the same content is formatted as an admonition (22:22–23; 27:11 with explicit motive clause) and as a sentence (14:31; 10:1 without explicit motive clause but clearly motivational in intent).¹⁹ Zimmerli recognizes the sentential deep-structure motivation when he writes concerning the admonition/saying connection that the admonition makes "explicit the implication, already lying hidden within the saying."²⁰ (2) A naive reading of the sentences in Proverbs 10–15 (e.g. 10:1, 4, 5) reveals that many of the sentences go beyond mere empirical observation to being motivationally directive. Thus one must be careful to dissociate the broad deep-structure category of motivation from Gemser's grammatical motive clause. This distinction is critical. When looking at motivation in the sentences it is imperative to penetrate below the surface motive clauses in order to isolate how the sages actually motivated. A deep-structure analysis may provide a link between the sentence (*Aussage*) and admonition (*Mahnwort*) genres. (3) Postel notes that "the *tô'ebâ* [abomination] clause, so frequent in Old Testament legislation, does not occur in the motive clauses of Proverbs."²¹ Yet such "abomination sayings" are found in the sentences but not in explicit motive clauses (11:1, 20; 12:22; 15:8, 9; 17:15; 20:10).²² A deep-structure analysis would uncover the motivational intent of these abomination sayings, while Postel's surface motive clause analysis has missed the connection. (4) After a deep-structure analysis was performed on the sentences, many of the same motivational themes arose that occurred in the explicit motive clauses of Proverbs 1–9. This provides some verification for the proposed methodology.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Raymond Van Leeuwen has insightfully harnessed the deep-structure binary analysis of Dundes by breaking the proverbial sentence into a topic and comment (e.g. topic: "A wise son"; comment: "brings his father joy" [Prov 10:1a]).²³ The semantic relationship between the topic and comment is specified below. A couple of examples will illustrate the method. First, the line is broken up into topic/comment and then the semantic deep-structure relationship and valences (+/–) between the topic and comment are identified:

¹⁹ Ibid. 28; Nel, *Structure* 29.

²⁰ Zimmerli, "Structure" 183. Nel also mentions the need for a meaning-based analysis of the motive clauses rather than merely a grammatical approach.

²¹ Postel, *Form* 146.

²² von Rad, *Wisdom* 115; R. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981) 69.

²³ R. Van Leeuwen, *Context and Meaning in Proverbs 25–27* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 48–52; C. Fontaine, *Traditional Sayings in the Old Testament: A Contextual Study* (Sheffield: Almond, 1982) 34–38; A. Dundes, "On the Structure of the Proverb," *Analytic Essays in Folklore* (ed. Dundes; The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1975) 103–118.

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Prov 10:1</i>
A wise son (+ character)	brings joy to his father (+ consequence);	
a foolish son (- character)	is a grief to his mother (- consequence).	
+ Character → + ConSequence (10:1a)	(CS) ++	
- Character → - ConSequence (10:1b)	(CS) --	

It should be clear from Postel's categories listed above that the consequence, while not in a Gemserian motive clause, acts as a motivation drawing the son to be wise and driving him from becoming foolish. Its motivational force is unleashed by exposing the son to the emotive consequences, whether joy or sorrow, that his character will have on his parents (expectational aspect of motivation).

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Prov 11:15</i>	<i>Comment</i>
He who puts up security for another (- act)	will surely suffer (- consequence);	
whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge (+ act)	is safe (+ consequence).	
- Act →	- ConSequence (11:15a)	(AS)--
+ Act →	+ ConSequence (11:15b)	(AS)++

In Prov 11:15 there is no motive clause, and yet its clear motivational intent is to avoid suffering harm (11:15a) and to maintain one's safety (11:15b). In the Appendix there is a semantic classification of the types of deep-structure motives used in the sentence literature. Many of the motives used in the explicit motive clauses of Proverbs 1-9 are reiterated, confirming our hypothesis that the sentences are motivational in character even though an explicit motive clause has not been employed.

V. DEEP-STRUCTURE CLASSIFICATION RESULTS

In specifying the relationship between the topic and comment, most of the sentences fit into one of the following eight categories:²⁴

				<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Character →	→	ConSequence	(CS)	(152)	10:2b, 3a, 6a
	→	Act	(CA)	(70)	10:12a, 14a
	→	Evaluation	(CE)	(16)	10:20a; 11:1a
Character →	→	ConSequence	(CS)	(152)	<i>supra</i>
Act →	→		(AS)	(62)	10:17a, 19a
Item →	→		(IS)	(12)	13:2a, 8a

²⁴ R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965) 5-7; J. Berezov, *Single-Line Proverbs: A Study of the Sayings Collected in Proverbs 10-22:16 and 25-29* (dissertation; Hebrew Union College, 1987) 4-6 (see 53-55 for categories on basis of topic and syntax); Fontaine, *Traditional* 66-68.

Item —————→	→ Evaluation	(IE)	(7)	10:15a; 13:19a
Act —————→		(AE)	(13)	11:30b; 12:1a
Character —————→		(CE)	(16)	<i>supra</i>
Appearance —————→	Reality	(PR)	(4)	13:7; 14:13

While von Rad and others have emphasized the Act → Consequence connection (62 found in Proverbs 10–15) as wisdom's core, the statistics reveal that other frameworks may be more central (e.g. Character → Consequence [152] or Character → Act [70]). Thus the first major hypothesis of this paper is that Character → Consequence is closer than Act → Consequence to the central core of the proverbial sentences.²⁵

VI. THE MOTIVATION FOR ANTITHETIC PARALLELISM

Looking at the list of motives, we may suggest another hypothesis. The binary valencing of the motivational items that Postel has labeled "promissory" and "dissuasive" might better be coordinated with modern motivation literature (promissory → approach motivation; dissuasive → avoidance motivation).²⁶ This binary valencing, as Van Leeuwen and pareimologists Dundes and Milner have noted, is descriptive of proverbial literature cross-culturally.²⁷ Many of the proverbial sentences are beautifully balanced with an approach motivation drawing ("brings joy to a father," 10:1a) and an avoidance motivation driving away ("is a grief to his mother," 10:1b).

It is interesting that Kersovec's monograph on antithesis failed to treat antithesis in the proverbial sentences. Although he acknowledges that Proverbs contains "the greatest number of antithetic parallelisms," he demurs that they are "neither stimulating nor rewarding."²⁸ Why should the sages in producing wisdom literature show such a preference for antithetic structures (90% of Proverbs 10–15; cf. also Psalms 1, 73)?²⁹ Several hypotheses may be suggested. Atkinson and the massive literature on the psychology of motivation conclude that there is an additive relationship between approach and avoidance motivation.³⁰ This paper contends that antithesis provides a perfect psycholinguistic structure for doubling the motivational potency of the sentences by combining in an additive sense

²⁵ Cf. Berezov, *Single-Line* 84; J. Gladson, *Retributive Paradoxes in Proverbs 10–29* (dissertation; Vanderbilt University, 1978).

²⁶ J. Atkinson and D. Birch, *An Introduction to Motivation* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1978) 239, 288–289.

²⁷ Van Leeuwen, *Context* 48; Fontaine, *Traditional* 34–36; G. Milner, "Quadripartite Structures," *Proverbium* 14 (1969) 379–383.

²⁸ J. Kersovec, *Antithetic Structure in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 1984) 17.

²⁹ U. Skladny, *Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1962) 68; Berezov, *Single-Line* 84.

³⁰ Atkinson and Birch, *Introduction* 50–52.

approach and avoidance motivations (10:1, 3, 5; $142/184 = 77\%$ of Proverbs 10-15 are approach/avoidance type). Rather than being nonmotivationally oriented because the sentences lack surface motive clauses, the deep-structure analysis suggests that the sage's use of antithetic structure is extremely potent motivationally.

VII. PROVERBS AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MOTIVATION

The final area of discussion involves the nature of motivation in Proverbs in light of the vast literature on the psychology of motivation.³¹ A brief browsing of the Appendix reveals the wide range of ways in which the sage/father motivates his student/son. It is interesting, for example, how well Bandura's social learning theory of modeling fits the sage's approach: attention processes ("Listen, my son") → retention processes ("do not forget") → motor reproduction processes (Proverbs 5 and 7 walk the son through the situation with the admonition "do this") and motivational processes (abundance of motive clauses in Proverbs 1-9).³²

VIII. APPROACHES TO MOTIVATION

Motivational studies treat the initiation, intensity, direction and persistence of behavior.³³ Motivational theory has gone far beyond naive hedonism (pleasure/pain as motivators) through Hullian drive reduction theory (drive × habit) to the more cognitive value × expectancy (incentive) theories, including achievement, attribution, and intrinsic motivational theories.³⁴ Proverbs does not ignore the basic motivational drives (hunger, 10:3b; 13:25; 15:15b, 17a; harm, 10:7b, 15b, 16b, 29b, 31b; death, 10:21b, 27b; 11:3b, 19b; 13:9b). Indeed Maslow's hierarchy of needs and motivation in Proverbs intersects at many points.³⁵ Heider noted that man has two basic needs: to understand his world, and to control it.³⁶ Both of these are employed motivationally in Proverbs.

Proverbs, however, goes beyond drives to tap the student's cognitive evaluations. Proverbs affirms man's ability to choose and unleashes a

³¹ D. McClelland, *Human Motivation* (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1985); B. Weiner, *Human Motivation* (New York: Holt, 1980); J. Houston, *Motivation* (New York: Macmillan, 1985); Atkinson and Birch, *Introduction*.

³² Cf. Houston, *Motivation* 334; A. Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977) 23.

³³ Houston, *Motivation* 6-7; Atkinson and Birch, *Introduction*.

³⁴ For Hullian theory cf. Atkinson and Birch, *Introduction* 47, 15-16; Houston, *Motivation* 192-209; for value expectancy theory cf. Houston, *Motivation* 238; Atkinson and Birch, *Introduction* 75; for achievement motivation cf. McClelland, *Human*; for attribution theory cf. Weiner, *Human*; for intrinsic motivation cf. E. Deci and R. Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior* (New York: Plenum, 1985); M. Lepper and D. Greene, *The Hidden Costs of Reward: New Perspectives on the Psychology of Human Motivation* (Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1978).

³⁵ Houston, *Motivation* 215-216.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 255.

whole cluster of motivational incentives—not only rousing personal drives but also social concerns (friendships, 14:20; honor/disgrace, 12:8; 14:18; 15:33; status, 12:24; blessing/curse, 11:26; 14:17b, 21b, 22b), altruistic concern for others (10:21a; 12:18; 15:4) and theological motivations (14:2; 14:31; cf. Appendix).³⁷ Gordon is correct that the ultimate motive is life (8:32–36).³⁸ Self-preservation, the desire for well-being and the avoidance of harm underlie much proverbial motivation. Rather than demeaning such motivational forces by labeling them as adolescent or crassly egocentric, such “worldly” motivations need to be embraced as having been utilized in Proverbs, the law (Deuteronomy 28; Leviticus 26), and even the NT (cf. Austgen’s demonstration of such “worldly” motivation in the Pauline epistles: 1 Tim 5:23; Titus 2:5; cf. Matt 6:33; Acts 16:3).³⁹

IX. COGNITIVE MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

Atkinson’s value \times expectancy theory may be summarized by the formula $M_s \times P_s \times I_n$ ([individual’s motive for success = M_s] \times [probability of success (task difficulty) = P_s] \times [incentive = I_n]).⁴⁰ When the $M_f > M_s$ (motive to avoid failure > motive to achieve success) a person will attempt to avoid failure. On the other hand when the $M_s > M_f$ a person will strive for success. Motivational theorists have discovered an inverted U-shaped curve relating optimal arousal level, task difficulty, and risk levels.⁴¹ If tasks are too easy (P_s high) or impossible (P_s too low) motivation will be minimal, but if the task is mid-range the motivational challenge will be maximized. Wisdom is both challenging and costly (Prov 4:7–8). She is not, however, unattainable but graciously offers herself to those who will pursue her (1:20–33; 9:1–5). In order to shape character, wisdom digitizes reality into discreet, well-defined choices. This helps the son to recognize more easily characterological patterns of behavior, making choices more accessible although by no means easily attained.

The proverbial sentences use approach/approach incentives (better-than proverbs: Prov 22:1, 4), avoidance/approach (most antithetic sentences: 10:1, 3, 5), and avoidance/avoidance (22:16; 21:27; cf. Atkinson’s concept of “negaction” or inhibitory motivation).⁴² Through the use of antithetic parallelism the sages maximize the motivational forces by presenting the negative and positive consequences of both wisdom and folly. Thus the approach motivation draws the son to the desired wise choice (10:1a), while the avoidance motivation in the next line drives the son away from the corresponding foolish choice (10:1b).

³⁷ R. N. Gordon, “Motivation in Proverbs,” *Biblical Theology* 25 (1975) 55–56.

³⁸ Ibid. 54.

³⁹ R. Austgen, *Natural Motivation in the Pauline Epistles* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame, 1966).

⁴⁰ Atkinson and Birch, *Introduction* 94–96; Houston, *Motivation* 242.

⁴¹ Atkinson and Birch, *Introduction* 65, 106; Houston, *Motivation* 83.

⁴² Atkinson and Birch, *Introduction* 50–53.

X. ATTRIBUTION THEORY MOTIVATION

Weiner and others have stressed the importance of attribution theory in motivational studies.⁴³ The basic premise of the theory is that man is motivated to seek causes.⁴⁴ This aspect of motivational theory is sensitive to the personal attributions made after a task success or failure (why I succeeded/failed = ability, effort, luck, task difficulty).⁴⁵ It is noted that success for males leads to effort attributions while they favor ability praise as informational. Females, on the other hand, make ability attributions more naturally but they prefer effort praise, perceiving ability praise as controlling.⁴⁶ Thus, some tasks are ego-involving (resulting in attributions about ability, feeling controlled and high personal risk), while others are merely task-involving (attributions made about task difficulty, more informational, less risky).⁴⁷

Though Proverbs relates many tasks to character (10:3, 5) and hence is ego-involving, one must clearly note that the sentences' third-person style is more informationally directive, leaving the choice to the son. These choices result in character attributions and consequences (10:5, 18, 23, 32; 11:12-13; cf. Appendix, evaluations section). By teaching these proverbial sentences the sage builds an attributional set into his student. When the student engages in a particular behavior, having internalized the evaluative wisdom grid, he will be able to reward himself by evaluating his choices as wise or foolish.⁴⁸

Proverbs also builds the son's internal locus of control.⁴⁹ He must choose. The outside forces do not determine his character. Thus the father avoids a learned helplessness response where the son gives up because the situation has a locus of control beyond his ability.⁵⁰ This internal control builds the son's self-esteem, which is critical to all forms of motivation as the son realizes he must take charge of his world through making responsible

⁴³ Weiner, *Human* 275-277.

⁴⁴ Houston, *Motivation* 254-255.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 256.

⁴⁶ R. Koestner, M. Zuckerman and J. Koestner, "Attributional Focus of Praise and Children's Intrinsic Motivation: The Moderating Role of Gender," *Personality and Social Bulletin* 15/1 (1989) 61-72; C. Dweck, "Motivational Processes Affecting Learning," *American Psychologist* 41/10 (1986) 10-43; C. Sansone, "A Question of Competence: The Effects of Competence and Task Feedback on Intrinsic Interest," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51/5 (1986) 918-931.

⁴⁷ S. Harter, "A Model of Mastery Motivation in Children: Individual Differences and Developmental Change," *Aspects of the Development of Competence: The Minnesota Symposia on Child Psychology* 14 (ed. W. A. Collins; Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1981) 252; Koestner, "Attributional" 384.

⁴⁸ Sansone, "Question" 918.

⁴⁹ Atkinson and Birch, *Introduction* 140; B. Earn, "Intrinsic Motivation as a Function of Extrinsic Financial Rewards and Subjects' Locus of Control," *Journal of Personality* 50/3 (1982) 360-363; D. Tzuriel and H. C. Haywood, "Locus of Control and Child Rearing Practices in Intrinsically Motivated and Extrinsically Motivated Children," *Psychological Reports* 57 (1985) 888; J. Condry, "Enemies of Exploration: Self-Initiated Versus Other-Initiated Learning," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 35/7 (1977) 459-477.

⁵⁰ Houston, *Motivation* 276.

choices. The ultimate results/consequences, however, must be released in the fear of the Lord, whose ways are beyond calculation (1:7; 21:31; 20:24).

XI. EXTRINSIC/INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Deci has championed the notion of the possible undermining effects of extrinsic motivation.⁵¹ It has been found that if a child is paid money (extrinsic reward) to engage in a particular behavior (puzzles) he will make the mental attribution that he is doing the puzzles not because they are enjoyable but because he is being paid (overjustification).⁵² Once the payments stop, the behavior will be quickly extinguished. But if the child does a puzzle without pay, he will tell himself that the reason he is doing it is because it is interesting. This intrinsic motivation leads to greater creativity and persistence.⁵³ At the core of intrinsic motivation is a feeling of self-determination and autonomy. Some of this seems to be developmental since young children are more intrinsically motivated than adolescents.⁵⁴

Superficially, Proverbs appears to be extrinsic in its motivational orientation (10:3). The notions of self-determination are highlighted, however, as each sentence presents the student with a choice whereby he is able to determine his own character and consequences. While Proverbs utilizes the potency of extrinsic rewards (e.g. wealth/poverty), it highlights such intrinsic benefits of character development as that its own reward is more valuable than rubies (4:7; 31:10; cf. evaluation section in the Appendix). Indeed, wisdom itself is used as a motivating goal (11:2b; 13:20a; 14:6–7, 18, 23; 15:33). Again the point is to build informational Gestalts for making self-attributions rather than to control, which will result in resentment and lack of internalization.⁵⁵

Some have empirically established that the impact of others-oriented motivation leads to more empathic and altruistic behavior.⁵⁶ Proverbs clearly employs this type of motivational strategy (10:21; 12:18; 13:22; 14:25; 15:4; cf. Appendix).

XII. MOTIVATION AND EMOTION

Lastly, the bond between emotions and motivation links the affective domain with values motivation at the levels of the individual (10:28a; 12:20b; 15:23a), others (10:1; 11:10; 15:30a) and even for Yahweh (11:1, 20; 12:2, 22;

⁵¹ Deci and Ryan, *Intrinsic*; Lepper and Greene, *Hidden*; Condry, "Enemies."

⁵² M. Lepper, D. Greene and R. Nisbett, "Undermining Children's Intrinsic Interest with Extrinsic Reward," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 28/1 (1973) 129–130.

⁵³ T. Amabile, "Motivation and Creativity: Effects of Motivational Orientation on Creative Writers," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 48/2 (1985) 393–399.

⁵⁴ Harter, "Model" 237.

⁵⁵ M. L. Hoffman, "Parent Discipline and the Child's Moral Development," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 5 (1967) 45–57.

⁵⁶ L. Kuczynski, "Reasoning, Prohibitions, and Motivations for Compliance," *Developmental Psychology* 19/1 (1983) 126–128.

15:8-9, 26) Emotional anticipation is a key factor in the motivation of behavior. The connection of values motivation and affective responses warns against a cognitive belittling of the emotions. Wisdom also includes such responses as desirable and functional in motivational contexts.⁵⁷

XIII. CONCLUDING SUMMARY

This paper has proposed a methodology for exposing the motivational forces hidden in the sentence literature deep structures that often lack explicit Gemserian motive clauses. It has been suggested that rather than seeing act → consequence as the core of the proverbial sentences, character → consequence may be closer to its center.

A motivationally based explanation was given for the sages' frequent use of antithetic parallelisms. This poetic structure often unleashes a powerful motivation combination: approach (10:1a) + avoidance (10:1b).

While the discussion of the psychology of motivation and proverbial motivation has merely been introduced, it is hoped that it will be found to be a fertile frontier for further exploration. Drive reduction, cognitive expectancies, characterological attributions, and intrinsic/extrinsic motivational strategies, as well as the nexus between emotion and motivation, provide rich areas for further study.

Much of the motivation literature reveals the need for a value-based motivational theory that can promote moral/faith development.⁵⁸ Proverbs presents a value-based motivation that includes a rich variety of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations including personal this-worldly, altruistic/sociological and theological motives. Indeed, both God and the teachers/sages of Israel were concerned about what motivates the heart (Heb 4:12; Prov 16:2).

⁵⁷ Houston, *Motivation* 272-273; H. A. Simon, "Motivational and Emotional Controls of Cognition," *Psychological Review* 74 (1967) 29-39; I. J. Roseman, "Cognitive Determinants of Emotion: A Structural Theory," *Review of Personality and Social Psychology* 5 (1984); N. L. Stein and L. J. Levine, "Making Sense Out of Emotion: the Representation and Use of Goal-Structured Knowledge," *Psychological and Biological Approaches to Emotion* (ed. Stein, B. Leventhal and T. Trabasso; Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1990) 45-73.

⁵⁸ L. Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development: The Philosophy of Moral Development* (New York: Harper, 1981, 1984); B. Clouse, *Moral Development: Perspective in Psychology and Christian Belief* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985); J. Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper, 1981); C. Dystra and S. Parks, *Faith Development and Fowler* (Birmingham: Religious Education, 1986).

APPENDIX

Structure of Proverbial Motivation (Proverbs 10–15)