

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Motivation and Antithetical Parallelism in Proverbs 10-15 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Motivation and Antithetical Parallelism in Proverbs 10-15, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt examines motivation in Proverbs 10-15, focusing on the use of antithetical parallelism to reinforce didactic points. Hildebrandt explores various motivational theories from psychology, comparing them to the motivational structures in Proverbs. He analyzes the text's grammatical structures, particularly "motive clauses," to reveal underlying motivations. Further, he proposes a deep-structure methodology for interpreting Proverbs' motivational strategies, arguing that character-consequence relationships are central, rather than act-consequence. Finally, he discusses how understanding these motivations can inform effective teaching and parenting.

2. 31 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Motivation and Antithetical Parallelism in Proverbs 10-15 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Psalms & Wisdom → Proverbs).



**Hildebrandt_Prov_
Motivation.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Motivation and Antithetical Parallelism in Proverbs 10-15

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Hildebrandt_EN_Motivation_EN_InProv_10_15.pdf":

Briefing Document: Motivation in Proverbs 10-15

Overview: This document presents Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture on the topic of motivation, specifically as it relates to the book of Proverbs, chapters 10-15. He focuses on how these proverbs motivate individuals towards wisdom and righteous behavior, exploring both the grammatical structure of "motive clauses" and the deeper underlying motivational structures present in these texts. He argues that while explicit motive clauses (using words like "for" or "because") are less frequent in these chapters than in the instructional sections of Proverbs (chapters 1-9), motivation is still powerfully present through the use of antithetical parallelism and deep-structure analysis.

Key Concepts and Themes:

1. Motive Clauses:

- A "motive clause" provides the reason or rationale for an admonition (command or prohibition). The Hebrew word "ki" often introduces these clauses, translating to "for" or "because".
- Example: "It is an abomination for kings to do evil, *for* the throne is established by righteousness." (Prov. 16:12, emphasis added)
- While more common in legal and instructional texts, motive clauses are less explicit in the sentence sayings of Proverbs 10-15.
- Hildebrandt references work by Gemser, Socino, and Utti regarding the prevalence of motive clauses in biblical law versus other Ancient Near Eastern codes. The Tanakh has a much higher percentage of motivated laws (30% compared to 5-6% in other codes).

1. Admonition and Motivation:

- Admonitions are either prohibitions ("do not do this") or mandates ("do this").
- These admonitions are often reinforced with a motive clause, explaining *why* one should adhere to the command.

- Examples:
- Prohibition: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, *for* the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain." (Ex. 20:7)
- Mandate: "My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, *for* length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you." (Prov. 3:1)
- Both: "Kiss the son, lest he be angry and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled." (Psalm 2:12)

1. Types of Motives (Gemser's Categories):

- **Explanatory:** The motive clause explains the reason for the admonition. Example: "Strike a scoffer, *and* the simple will learn prudence." (Prov. 19:25)
- **Character-Consequence:** Example: "Train up a child in the way he should go, *because* when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6). This is a very common motif within Proverbs.
- Other Motives: Theological (abomination to the Lord, delight of God), and Consequential (what happens if you do something)

1. Deep Structure Analysis:

- Since explicit motive clauses are less common in Proverbs 10-15, Hildebrandt advocates for a "deep structure" analysis to uncover the underlying motivational mechanisms.
- This involves breaking down proverbs into **topic** and **comment**, and then assigning them positive or negative valences based on their character and consequences.
- Example: Proverbs 10:1:
- Topic A: "A wise son" (+character)
- Comment A: "brings joy to a father" (+consequence)
- Topic B: "a foolish son" (-character)
- Comment B: "is a grief to his mother" (-consequence)

- Hildebrandt identifies eight categories of deep structure found in Proverbs 10-15: character-consequence, character-act, character-evaluation, act-consequence, item-consequence, item-evaluation, act-evaluation, and appearance-reality.

1. **Antithetical Parallelism:**

- Most proverbs in chapters 10-15 use antithetical parallelism, where the second line contrasts with the first, creating a "good/bad" dynamic.
- Example: "A wise son brings joy to a father, *but* a foolish son is a grief to his mother." (Prov. 10:1)
- This structure reinforces the motivation, combining attraction (positive outcome) with avoidance (negative outcome).
- This structure may be specific to the poetic form of the book of Proverbs.
- Hildebrandt suggests a psycholinguistic effect of the antithetical structure doubles motivational potency.

1. **Motivational Theory:**

- Motivational theory involves more than just pleasure/pain; it involves drives, habits, values, experience, incentives and expectations.
- The lecture connects these approaches with the motivational categories of approach and avoidance.
- This creates a binary system of promissory (positive) and dissuasive (negative).
- "Promissory" expectations are things you want to have happen.
- "Dissuasive" expectations are things you want to avoid.
- The use of antithetical parallelism doubles the motivational potency.
- Motivational factors: Hunger, harm, death, honor, shame, social status, blessings, curses, concern for others, theological motivations, life and death.

1. **Cognitive Motivational Factors:**

- Hildebrandt introduces a formula: **MS x TD x INS**, which stands for *motivation for success x task difficulty x incentive*.
- This illustrates the factors people consider when engaging in a task.

- If motivation for failure is higher than motivation for success, the behavior is unlikely to happen.
- A task is less engaging if it is too easy, and a task is unlikely to be undertaken if the task difficulty is too high.

1. **Attribution Theory:**

- Attribution theory of motivation explores why we succeed or fail. Is it ability, effort, or something else?
- Proverbs relates tasks to character, making them "ego-involving," thus influencing a person's self-identity.
- The sages through these proverbs, are creating within the student an internal locus of control. It is the student's choices that matter.

1. **Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic Motivation:**

- Extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards (e.g., money for reading), while intrinsic motivation comes from within (e.g., love of learning).
- The importance of a teacher/parent explaining "why" behind the activity in order to promote intrinsic motivation is highlighted.

1. **Structure of Motivation in Proverbs:**

- Hildebrandt organizes the motives in Proverbs into three main categories:
- **Personal Concern:** Self-interest, life and death, security, hunger, character, achievement, wealth, poverty, success, failure
- **Concern for Others:** Reputation, joy, sorrow
- **Concern for God:** What God delights in, what God detests, benefactor and punisher
- The ultimate motivation in Proverbs is life and death.

Quotes:

- "It is an abomination for kings to do evil. For the throne is established by righteousness."
- "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain for or because the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."

- "My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart. Why? For or because length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you."
- "A wise son brings joy to a father, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother."
- "The way of the Lord is a stronghold to the blameless, but destruction to evildoers."
- "Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. For whoever finds me, Madam Wisdom, finds life and obtains favor from the Lord. But whoever fails to find me, injures himself. All who hate me love death."

Implications:

- Proverbs 10-15 motivates through implicit means using poetic structures and underlying connections between character, actions, and consequences.
- The lecture provides tools for understanding the complex methods of motivation in wisdom literature.
- This lecture can be useful to those teaching/parenting. It shows that one must not just tell children what to do, but also explain why.
- The study of motivation in Proverbs helps understand the connection between choices, character, and consequences.

This briefing document should provide you with a solid understanding of the main points from Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture.

4. Study Guide: Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Motivation and Antithetical Parallelism in Proverbs 10-15

Motivation in Proverbs 10-15: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is a motive clause, and how is it typically identified in the Hebrew Bible?
2. According to Hildebrandt, how does the use of motive clauses in Israelite law codes differ from those in other ancient Near Eastern legal texts?
3. What are the two types of admonitions, and how are they typically reinforced?
4. What are the four categories of motives identified by Gemser and how do they function?
5. What is the significance of the Hebrew word "ki" in relation to motive clauses?
6. How does Hildebrandt explain the presence of motivation in Proverbs when explicit motive clauses are missing?
7. What does Hildebrandt mean by "deep structure" when examining motivation in Proverbs 10-15?
8. How does Hildebrandt describe the structure of antithetical parallelism and its motivational function?
9. What are the three main categories of motivation according to Hildebrandt, and how are they expressed in Proverbs?
10. What is the formula Hildebrandt uses for calculating motivational potential and how can it be applied to the situations in Proverbs?

Answer Key

1. A motive clause is a phrase or sentence that explains the reason or motivation behind a command or statement. In the Hebrew Bible, it is often triggered by words like "ki" (for, because) or "pen" (lest), indicating the reason behind an admonition.
2. Hildebrandt notes that in Israelite law codes, approximately 30% of laws are motivated with a reason, while in ancient Near Eastern legal texts, only 5-6% of

laws include motive clauses. This suggests a unique focus on motivating laws in Israel.

3. The two types of admonitions are prohibitions (don't do this) and mandates (do this), both are often reinforced by a motive clause that provides a reason or consequence for the action, typically using "for" or "because" after the admonition.
4. Gemser identified four categories of motives: explanatory, which explains why something should be done; character, which focuses on the type of person the action suggests; consequence, highlighting the results of actions; and theological, referring to God's will.
5. The Hebrew word "ki" is significant because it is often used to explicitly introduce a motive clause, signaling that the following words provide the reason, cause or explanation for the preceding command or statement.
6. Hildebrandt explains that in many proverbs, the motive is not explicitly stated with a "ki" clause, but is embedded in the proverb's structure and requires a "deep structure" analysis to identify the underlying motivational intent of the saying.
7. Deep structure refers to an analysis that goes beyond the surface grammar of the proverbs to identify the underlying motivational framework. It breaks down proverbs into topics and comments, identifying the character, actions, and consequences involved, revealing the hidden motivations.
8. Antithetical parallelism is a poetic structure in which two lines present contrasting ideas. According to Hildebrandt, this structure is perfect for motivation, doubling potency by combining attraction to good with avoidance of bad.
9. The three main categories of motivation, according to Hildebrandt, are personal concern (life, death, security, harm), concern for others (reputation, joy, sorrow, consequences of action on others), and concern for God (delights/detests, benefactor/punisher).
10. The formula is $MS \times TD \times INS$ (Motivation for Success multiplied by Task Difficulty multiplied by Incentive). It proposes that motivation is the result of assessing one's drive for success, the perceived difficulty of the task, and the reward involved. It can apply to proverbs by demonstrating the level of investment expected based on the potential outcome.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of explicit and implicit motivation in the book of Proverbs, comparing the use of motive clauses in Proverbs 1-9 with their relative absence in Proverbs 10-15.
2. Analyze Hildebrandt's methodology for identifying deep structure motives in Proverbs 10-15, and explain how his analysis demonstrates that motivation is still present even without explicit motive clauses.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of antithetical parallelism as a motivational tool in Proverbs, according to Hildebrandt. Consider other potential purposes that may inform the use of this structure in the book.
4. Explore the various categories of motivation as presented by Hildebrandt (personal concern, concern for others, concern for God), and provide examples of each from Proverbs 10-15.
5. How does Hildebrandt's application of attribution theory relate to his understanding of how the book of Proverbs attempts to form a wise character?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Admonition:** A piece of advice or warning, often including a command or prohibition. Can be positive or negative in structure.
- **Antithetical Parallelism:** A poetic structure where two lines are related by contrasting ideas or concepts.
- **Attribution Theory:** A theory of motivation that explores how people attribute success or failure to different causes (e.g., ability, effort, luck).
- **Deep Structure:** Underlying layers of meaning and motivation that exist below the surface level of grammar in a text, which requires deeper analysis to uncover.
- **Dissuasive:** Having the effect of deterring someone from a course of action.
- **Expectational:** Relating to an expectation of some potential outcome.
- **Explicit Motive Clause:** A motive clause clearly marked by connecting words such as "ki" or "pen" that indicates the reason for a specific action or statement.
- **Implicit Motive Clause:** A motive clause that is not grammatically marked but can be inferred from the context or structure of a statement.
- **Internal Locus of Control:** The belief that one's actions and choices have a direct impact on the consequences that follow, a key concept developed by Hildebrandt.
- **Mandate:** A type of admonition that includes a positive command to do something.
- **Motive Clause:** A phrase or sentence that provides the reason or motivation behind a command or statement, often triggered by the words "for," or "because," or "lest."
- **Prohibition:** A type of admonition that includes a negative command not to do something.
- **Promissory:** Having the nature of a promise, often related to a positive expectation.
- **Surface Grammar:** The literal, explicit grammatical construction of a text, as opposed to the deeper, underlying structure.
- **Topic and Comment:** A method of analyzing statements by separating the subject of the sentence (the topic) from what is being said about it (the comment).

5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Motivation and Antithetical Parallelism in Proverbs 10-15, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Motivation in Proverbs 10-15

1. **What is a "motive clause" in the context of Proverbs, and how does it function?**

A motive clause provides the *reason* or *purpose* behind an admonition (command or prohibition). It typically answers the question "Why?" regarding a certain behavior or action. These clauses often start with the Hebrew word "ki," which translates to "for" or "because," or "pen" which translates to "lest". For example, "Do not take the name of the Lord in vain, *for* the Lord will not hold him guiltless" (Exodus 20:7) uses a motive clause. The motive clause can be explanatory (explaining the benefits of the action) or consequential (highlighting the results of the action).

2. **How do the motive clauses in Proverbs differ from those found in ancient Near Eastern law codes?**

Ancient Near Eastern law codes, like those from Mesopotamia and Egypt, feature relatively few motive clauses (around 5-6%). In contrast, about 30% of biblical laws are motivated. While the quantity of motive clauses in legal material differs, the wisdom literature of the Ancient Near East exhibits more motivation (as would be expected) than their legal counterparts. Notably, Proverbs uses motive clauses more frequently than other Old Testament legal texts. In Proverbs 1-9, there are 39 instances of admonitions that use a motive clause but only 13 instances in Proverbs 10-22. The lower frequency of explicit motive clauses in the "sentence sayings" of Proverbs 10-15 leads to the need to explore deeper motivational structures.

3. **What are the different categories of motives found in Proverbs, according to the source?** The source identifies several categories:

- **Explanatory:** The motive explains *why* something should be done (e.g., "Strike a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence").
- **Theological:** Motives that relate actions to God's character, desires, or requirements (e.g., "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord").
- **Consequential:** The motive highlights the *results* of an action, often employing both positive (promissory or expectational) or negative (dissuasive or avoidance) motivation.

- **Promissory:** Suggests that good results will follow a desired action
 - **Dissuasive:** Suggests that poor results will follow an undesired action In Proverbs, the *consequential* motivation is very significant. These can be summarized as motivation via concern for oneself, others, and for God.
1. **What are 'admonitions' in Proverbs, and how are they connected to motivation?** Admonitions in Proverbs are commands or prohibitions—they tell the listener what they should or shouldn't do. Admonitions can be either *prohibitory* (saying "do not") or a *mandate* (saying "do this"). Motivation is added to an admonition through a motive clause to strengthen it, giving the listener a *reason* to follow the command or prohibition. Admonitions plus a motive clause are common in Proverbs 1-9 but less so in Proverbs 10-22, with the majority found in the instructional sections of the book.
 2. **How is motivation expressed in the sentence sayings of Proverbs 10-15, given the relative lack of explicit motive clauses?** The source argues that while explicit motive clauses (using "ki" or "pen") are less frequent in Proverbs 10-15, motivation is still present. In order to uncover the motives in this section, a "deep structure" analysis is necessary. The sentence sayings are broken down into:
 - **Topic:** The subject of the proverb.
 - **Comment:** What is stated about the topic.
 - **Character:** The attribute or quality of the topic.
 - **Consequence:** The result of the topic. Each can be given a positive or negative value to indicate the motivating principle. Additionally, the study of *act* and *evaluation* further illuminates the deep structure. For example, "A wise son brings joy to his father, a foolish son is a grief to his mother," uses both character and consequence and the antithetical parallelism to highlight both the reward of wisdom (positive consequence) and the cost of foolishness (negative consequence).
 1. **What are some of the ways that a "deep structure" analysis reveals the motivation in Proverbs 10-15?** The deep structure analysis reveals eight basic categories by looking at the relationship between the topic, comment, character, consequence, actions and evaluation:
 - **Character-Consequence:** The character is connected to the outcome (e.g., "righteousness delivers from death").

- **Character-Act:** The character does this type of action (e.g. "the wise lay up knowledge")
 - **Character-Evaluation:** The character is evaluated in some manner (e.g., "the tongue of the righteous is choice silver").
 - **Act-Consequence:** A certain act leads to a particular outcome (e.g., "whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life").
 - **Item-Consequence:** An item is linked to a consequence (e.g., "from the fruit of the mouth, a man eats what is good").
 - **Item-Evaluation:** An item is given a value (e.g., "a rich man's wealth is a strong city").
 - **Act-Evaluation:** An act is evaluated (e.g., "whoever loves discipline loves knowledge").
 - **Appearance-Reality:** Highlights the difference between what seems to be true and what is actually true (e.g., "One pretends to be rich, yet he is nothing").
1. **What is antithetical parallelism, and how does it enhance the motivational power of Proverbs?** Antithetical parallelism is a poetic structure where two lines of a proverb are placed in contrast to one another, creating a sense of opposition. It often sets a positive observation next to a negative one. The first line (A) sets up an idea, and the second line (B) expresses the opposite. This structure enhances motivation because it combines *attraction* (the positive) and *avoidance* (the negative), doubling the motivational effect. For instance, "A wise son brings joy to his father" is paired with "a foolish son is a grief to his mother." This antithesis makes both the desirability of wisdom and the undesirable nature of foolishness more powerful. Antithetical parallelism is a frequent feature of Proverbs, distinguishing it from other wisdom literature that often appears in the form of one-line proverbs.

2. **According to the source, what are some specific motivations identified in Proverbs, and how do they relate to the deep structure analysis?** Motivations in Proverbs revolve around personal concerns, social evaluations, and theological considerations. These broad categories include things like:
 - **Personal concerns:** Life and death, harm and benefit, security versus insecurity, hunger, wrath and happiness, character achievement, wealth and poverty, and success and failure.
 - **Social evaluation:** Blessing and curses, social status and social concerns, reputation, and joy and sorrow of others.
 - **Theological concerns:** What God delights in and what he detests, and God as benefactor and punisher.
1. These can also be understood through the concepts of internal locus of control (choices impact results), the interplay between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (external reward vs. internal satisfaction), the importance of challenge (task difficulty), and the need for self-evaluation based on character. Proverbs seeks to create an internal locus of control in the listener or student, encouraging them to take ownership of their choices and understand the consequences, avoiding the trap of learned helplessness.