

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Proverb Pairs -- Prov 26:4-5, 15:8-9, 10:16-17, 13:21-22, 15:1-2 etc Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Proverb Pairs – Prov 26:4-5, 15:8-9, 10:16-17, 13:21-22, 15:1-2 etc., Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt examines paired proverbs in Proverbs 10-29, arguing against the notion that their arrangement is random. He details five proverb pairs, illustrating various cohesive techniques used by the compilers, such as catchwords, syntactic structures (including chiasms and inclusios), and thematic links. Hildebrandt highlights the importance of considering both the authorial intent of individual proverbs and the editorial intent behind their pairings to achieve a deeper understanding of their meaning. He emphasizes that these pairings reveal the editor's thoughtful arrangement, creating nuanced interpretations beyond the individual proverb's meaning. The lecture also explores different translation choices and their impact on interpreting the proverbs.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Proverb Pairs – Prov 26:4-5, 15:8-9, 10:16-17, 13:21-22, 15:1-2 etc.– 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_P
airs.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Proverb Pairs – Prov 26:4-5, 15:8-9, 10:16-17, 13:21-22, 15:1-2 etc.

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided source, "Hildebrandt_EN_Proverb_Pairs_Session 02.pdf":

Briefing Document: Proverb Pairs in Proverbs 10-29

Source: Excerpts from "Hildebrandt_EN_Proverb_Pairs_Session 02.pdf," a lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt.

Overall Theme: This session focuses on the argument that the proverbs in Proverbs 10-29 are not randomly placed, but are often intentionally paired by collectors/editors to enhance their meaning and create a deeper understanding. This pairing impacts interpretation and provides a richer reading. Dr. Hildebrandt aims to demonstrate the editor's hand in shaping the book, emphasizing that context (specifically adjacent proverbs) is crucial for understanding a proverb's full meaning.

Key Concepts & Ideas:

1. Proverb Pairs:

- Dr. Hildebrandt argues that a significant portion of Proverbs 10-29 are presented in pairs. He found 62 examples of pairs, making up 124 verses (21%) of the total 568 verses in this section of Proverbs.
- These pairs are not accidental; they are intentional groupings by the collectors/editors to create a nuanced meaning and push "the wise to higher-order thinking and imagination."
- The pairing highlights that meaning isn't just at the level of the single saying, but also at the level of the collection/pairing. The author's intent and the collector's intent both matter.
- The context of a proverb isn't just its literal meaning but also the proverbs it's placed next to. "We've often said context determines meaning. What is the context for a proverbial saying? One proverb to another one."

1. Types of Proverb Pairings:

- **Basic Pairs:** Two proverbs directly linked together. (e.g., Prov. 26:4-5, Prov. 15:8-9)
- **Triads:** Three verses in a row are connected (e.g., Prov. 23:26-28, 24:10-12).

- **Detached Pairs:** Two verses connected, separated by a non-connecting proverb (e.g., Prov. 10:8 and 10, separated by verse 9). "The wise in heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin...Whoever walks with integrity walks securely...Whoever winks the eye causes trouble and a babbling fool comes to ruin."
- **Pairs Plus One:** A pair of proverbs plus one additional verse connected. (e.g., Prov. 15:1-2 plus 4). This can be a pair +1 detached or juxtaposed.
- **Proverbial Strings/Clusters:** Several proverbs in a row forming a related string (Knut Heim refers to these as "clusters").
- Knut Heim's works are cited: *Like Grapes of Gold and Set in Silver* and *The Poetic Imagination in Proverbs*.

1. Proverbs 26:4-5 as the Quintessential Pair:

- These verses are an intentional, concatenated pair: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself," and "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes."
- They are unique in the book of Proverbs and push the wise to consider both the obligation and threat of engaging with a fool. "Hoglund concludes that entering into dialogue with a fool is both an obligation and a threat to the wise."
- They exemplify the collectors' purpose and thinking, going beyond the original proverb's author. The collector is pairing these in a way that adds layers of meaning.

1. Detailed Analysis of Specific Pairs

- **Proverbs 15:8-9 (Syntactically Bonded Pair):** This pair uses verbless clauses in the first half of each verse, starting with "An abomination to the Lord."
- Verse 8 uses plural forms of "the wicked" and "the upright," while verse 9 uses singular forms ("the way of the wicked" and "the one pursuing righteousness.")
- Both verses end with pronominal references to Yahweh: "His delight" and "he loves"
- They are linked by multiple catchwords, "abomination to the Lord" and the presence of Yahweh.

- These verses are syntactically bonded through a chiasm structure (ABBA): A - "the sacrifice of the wicked ones"; B - "an abomination to the Lord" in the first verse, and the second verse has B - "an abomination to the Lord"; A- "the way of the wicked ones".
- Thematic cohesion: they both address what pleases the Lord and what displeases him, shifting from cultic acts to wisdom orientation. "The settings for the two verses are actually quite diverse."
- "Character over cultic acts." "Character elicits a response from God."
- Sacrifices are usually presented negatively in wisdom literature and there are no priests in the book of proverbs.
- **Proverbs 10:15-16 (Non-Catchword Pair):**
 - These verses are linked by their verbless clauses and their economic terms. "The wealth of the rich is his fortified city, the poverty is the ruin of the poor ones." "The wages of the righteous one is life, but the income of the wicked one is punishment."
 - All four lines of the two verses are verbless clauses.
 - Subjects of all four are a noun plus possessor. (Wealth of the rich, poverty of the poor)
 - The first verse focuses on economic status, the second on moral status. The positives (A parts) are economic, the negatives (B parts) are the results.
- **Proverbs 13:21-22 (Positionally-Bonded Pair):**
 - These verses are linked by the placement of words: "Disaster pursues sinners, but the righteous are rewarded with the good." "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous."
 - The first verse begins with "sinners" and ends with "good things," while the second begins with "a good person" and ends with "sinner." It's an inclusio, like an envelope.
 - The word "good" (tov) is used in both verses, but is translated differently based on context (prosperity in 21, character in 22).
 - They also have a chiasm structure (ABBA).

- Also, they employ OVS order (object, verb, subject). This pair is bound together positionally, where the words are placed in the sentence.
- **Proverbs 15:1-2** "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."
- "A wise tongue commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly."
- These verses have a very similar syntactic form. They both use Subject Verb Object, and all the verbs are Hiphil Imperfects.
- The Subject is a noun phrase with two words and the Object is always one noun.
- They are all about speech acts leading to emotional responses or character results.

1. Pairing Techniques Beyond the Analyzed Pairs:

- **Low-Frequency Catchwords:** These can really link two proverbs. (e.g., "wood" and "fire" in Prov. 26:20-21, found nowhere else in Proverbs.)
- **Multiple-Word Catchwords:** Phrases repeated in two proverbs (e.g., "the fear of the Lord" in Prov. 14:26-27). "The abomination of the Lord."
- **Multiple Catchwords:** Several catchwords in a row. (Wealth, wages, and income in 10:15-16, grace, kindness, and love in 14:20-21.)
- **Rhetorical Devices:** Using "al" (prohibition) followed by "ki" (explanation) (e.g., Prov. 24:1-2). "Do not do this...for..."
- **Better-Than Proverbs:** Placing two of these next to one another (e.g. Prov. 15:16-17)
- **Similes:** Beginning two verses with a similar introductory word (e.g., *kaph* in 10:25-26 which can be translated when or like.)
- **Syntactic Cohesion:** Using linking particles (e.g., "lest" in Prov. 24:17-18).
- **Pronominal Suffixes:** The second proverb refers to the first using a pronominal suffix.
- **Medial Vavs:** Using "and" in the middle of a line, which is very rare.

1. Implications for Interpretation (Hermeneutics):

- Recognizing proverb pairs enriches the reading of Proverbs, requiring more active reading.
- Understanding the relationship between paired proverbs helps to clarify the meaning of each.
- The editor's hand in placing proverbs side-by-side gives a deeper level of understanding.
- Context goes beyond the single sentence.

Dr. Hildebrandt's Argument Against the Random View

- Dr. Hildebrandt rejects the notion that the proverbs were collected randomly and haphazardly, like pulling fortune cookies.
- He argues that the editors were thoughtful and used sophisticated methods to group them. The pairs are not the product of chance, but show the hand of the collector.
- The existence of the pairs demonstrates that the editors are providing meaning at a "saying's level," putting proverbs together intentionally.

Conclusion:

Dr. Hildebrandt concludes that recognizing proverb pairs illuminates the editor's role in shaping the meaning of the book of Proverbs. By carefully pairing proverbs, the collectors and editors created a more complex and insightful body of wisdom literature, going beyond simple sentence-level interpretation. The context, particularly the other proverb it is paired with, must be taken into account. The interpretation of Proverbs is enhanced when we understand the intentional pairing and various techniques employed by the editors.

4. Study Guide: Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Proverb Pairs – Prov 26:4-5, 15:8-9, 10:16-17, 13:21-22, 15:1-2 etc.

Proverb Pairs Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Dr. Hildebrandt, what percentage of verses in Proverbs 10-29 are found in pairs?
2. What are the two books by Knut Heim that Dr. Hildebrandt references, and what is their focus?
3. What are "detached pairs" in the context of Proverbs?
4. In Proverbs 15:8-9, what is unique about the way the "way of the wicked" is presented compared to other instances in the Bible?
5. What is a "chiasm," and how does it apply to the structure of some proverb pairs?
6. How does Dr. Hildebrandt use the concept of "low-frequency words" to identify proverb pairs? Give an example.
7. What is a "better-than proverb" and where did Dr. Hildebrandt find two of these paired in his research?
8. What is meant by the term "inclusio" and what example did Dr. Hildebrandt use?
9. What is the significance of the phrase "fear of the Lord" in identifying proverb pairs?
10. Why is it important to consider both the author's intent and the collector's intent when studying proverbs?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Dr. Hildebrandt states that 21% of the verses in Proverbs 10-29 are found in pairs. This equates to 124 verses out of 568 being part of a proverb pair.
2. The two books by Knut Heim are *Like Grapes of Gold Set in Silver*, which focuses on clusters of proverbs, and *The Poetic Imagination in Proverbs*, which explores repeated elements in Proverbs.

3. "Detached pairs" are two verses that are connected thematically and structurally, but they are separated by a verse in the middle that does not fit the pattern.
4. In Proverbs 15:8-9, the "way of the wicked" is singular, unlike all other instances in the Bible where it appears as plural. This change highlights a structural shift in the pairing.
5. A "chiasm" is a structural pattern where elements are arranged in an ABBA pattern. In proverb pairs, this can be seen in the arrangement of concepts, words, or grammatical structures.
6. Low-frequency words are those that appear infrequently in the text. If two proverbs share a low-frequency word, it's unlikely to be coincidental and suggests a deliberate pairing. An example is the words "wood" and "fire" in Proverbs 26:20 and 21.
7. A "better-than proverb" is a type of saying that uses a comparison to highlight the value of one thing over another. Dr. Hildebrandt found two of these paired together in Proverbs 15:16 and 17.
8. The term "inclusio" refers to an envelope structure where a word or concept appears at the beginning and end of a section of text. Dr. Hildebrandt used the example of "sinners" and "sinner" in Proverbs 13:21 and 22 to illustrate the inclusio.
9. The phrase "fear of the Lord" is significant because it is a less frequent phrase and when two proverbs include this phrase they suggest an intentional pairing. The example of Proverbs 14:26 and 27 provides such an example.
10. It is important to consider both the author's and collector's intent because the original author's meaning is significant, but the collector's intent in pairing proverbs together is important as it adds additional meaning through the juxtaposition.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of pairing in the book of Proverbs, using specific examples from Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture, and explore how understanding these pairings can affect the interpretation of individual proverbs.
2. Discuss the different techniques used to create proverb pairs, according to Dr. Hildebrandt. Choose three techniques and explain their unique qualities using specific biblical examples.
3. Dr. Hildebrandt suggests that the collectors of Proverbs were sophisticated editors. Argue the plausibility of this statement in light of his research.
4. Compare and contrast the different approaches of Dr. Hildebrandt's explanation of pairing, focusing on the way structural techniques and thematic links are used.
5. Evaluate the role of context in interpreting proverbs, as discussed by Dr. Hildebrandt. How does understanding the context of a proverb within a pair alter its meaning compared to reading it in isolation?

Glossary of Key Terms

Catchword: A word or phrase that is repeated in two or more proverbs, suggesting a deliberate connection and linking the proverbs as a pair.

Chiasm: A literary device where ideas, words, or phrases are arranged in an ABBA pattern, creating a mirrored structure that emphasizes relationships between the different elements.

Collector's Intent: The purpose or intention behind the way the editor of the book of Proverbs organized and paired proverbs together, to create additional layers of meaning.

Detached Pair: Two verses that are thematically linked but separated by a verse that doesn't share those themes, creating a sense of interrupted pairing.

Hiphil Imperfect: A specific form of Hebrew verb that emphasizes a causative or intensive action, which is significant when found repeatedly in adjacent verses as a linking device.

Inclusio: A literary technique where a word, phrase, or theme appears at both the beginning and end of a section of text, creating an envelope structure that emphasizes the enclosed content.

Isomorphism: In the context of proverbs, it refers to a similarity in the syntactic form or structure, where the arrangement of words, verbs, and objects in two proverbs closely match.

Low-Frequency Words: Words that appear infrequently in the text of Proverbs; when shared by two proverbs, it suggests a deliberate and intentional pairing.

Paremiology: The study of proverbs, including their origins, forms, and usage, often in a cross-cultural context.

Proverb Pair: Two proverbs that are intentionally juxtaposed and connected by various means (e.g. catchwords, shared grammar, and shared themes) for the purpose of mutual interpretation and enrichment.

Syntactically Bonded Pair: Proverbs that are linked by a shared grammatical structure.

Triad: A set of three verses that are closely connected and thematically related, forming a larger unit of wisdom.

Verbless Clause: A clause that lacks an explicit verb in the Hebrew; the English translation often uses "is" to maintain grammatical structure.

Yahweh Saying: A saying that includes the name of God (Yahweh) within the proverb, which is an important feature when identifying proverb pairs.

5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, Proverbs, Proverb Pairs – Prov 26:4-5, 15:8-9, 10:16-17, 13:21-22, 15:1-2 etc., Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Okay, here's an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source, formatted using markdown:

FAQ on Proverb Pairs

- **Are the proverbs in Proverbs 10-29 randomly arranged, or is there a discernible order?**
- The proverbs in Proverbs 10-29 are *not* randomly arranged. Dr. Hildebrandt's research shows that many proverbs are intentionally paired, forming meaningful units. He has found that 21% of the verses in this section of Proverbs are part of a pair (124 verses out of 568). These pairs, triads and other groupings indicate a deliberate structuring of the book by its editors. This is a significant departure from a haphazard collection.
- **What does "context" mean when interpreting a proverb, especially in relation to other proverbs?**
- When interpreting proverbs, "context" refers not just to the immediate sentence or verse, but also to the proverbs surrounding it. The proverbs often connect with one another. Dr. Hildebrandt argues that understanding a proverb often requires considering the proverb that is paired with it, as the pair can nuance and deepen the meaning of each proverb, and together they can convey a more complex message than either alone.
- **How do proverb pairs affect the meaning of individual proverbs?**
- Proverb pairs influence the interpretation of each proverb by creating a dialogue or tension between them. The paired proverbs can be contrasting, complementary, or expanding upon each other, causing the reader to consider the complexity of the situation. The meaning of one proverb is not only impacted by the author's original intent, but also by the collector's intent when they put it next to another proverb. This juxtaposition of proverbs adds layers of understanding to the original saying.

- **What are some examples of ways that proverbs are paired together, as discussed in the text?**
- Proverbs can be paired together in various ways. Some are syntactically bonded, using similar grammatical structures, like verbless clauses. Others share catchwords or repeated phrases. Some are linked by low-frequency words only found in the pair. Some are paired using rhetorical devices (like a prohibition "do not..." followed by an explanation "because"). Some pairs employ the use of "better than" phrases back to back, or use similes next to each other. And some are positionally grouped with an inclusion pattern, where a similar word or concept begins and ends the two sayings. These techniques demonstrate a deliberate editorial hand at work.
- **What is a "chiasm," and how is it used in proverb pairs?**
- A chiasm is a literary structure where the elements of a text are arranged in a pattern that mirrors itself. It is structured in an "ABBA" pattern (or similar). In the case of proverb pairs, the first saying might start with element A and end with element B, and the second saying will begin with element B and end with element A. This chiastic structure is one way proverbs are intentionally connected. It draws attention to the relationships of ideas within the pair, and shows the hand of the collector/editor.
- **Why are Proverbs 26:4 and 5 considered a unique and important pair?**
- Proverbs 26:4 and 5 ("Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself" and "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes") are considered unique because they present a seemingly contradictory instruction, thus forcing the reader to engage in higher-order thinking. They are a unique pair in the proverbs canon, because no other verses are like this pairing. The tension between these two verses causes the reader to consider a multitude of angles when considering the correct way to interact with a fool. The pair creates a paradox that causes the reader to see a more nuanced view of a complex matter.

- **Besides pairs, what other groupings of proverbs are mentioned in the text?**
- Beyond pairs, the text mentions *triads*, where three verses are linked together, and *detached pairs*, where two verses are linked but separated by an intervening verse. There are also "pairs plus one," where a pair is followed by an additional proverb and *proverbial strings* or clusters, where multiple proverbs are grouped together based on a theme. These groupings suggest a varied editorial method of collection with these commonalities and patterns.
- **What is the significance of the editor's role in the arrangement of proverbs, and how does it impact our understanding?**
- The editor's role is crucial. By deliberately pairing or grouping proverbs, the editor adds a new layer of meaning that goes beyond the individual author's intent. It is essential to look at the collector's purpose when putting these words together. This allows for a more sophisticated interpretation of the proverbs. Understanding this editorial structure challenges the view that Proverbs 10-29 are a random collection of sayings and opens the door for a deeper exploration of the relationships between the sayings, which ultimately leads to a higher understanding of the book itself.