

Dr. Daniel Treier, Proverbs for Christian Living -- Session 3, Proverbs 10-29, Capital Vices Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Treier, Proverbs for Christian Living – Session 3, Proverbs 10-29, Capital Vices, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture series by Dr. Daniel Treier examines Proverbs 10-29 through the lens of seven capital vices: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride. Treier uses the traditional Christian framework of virtues and vices to interpret the proverbs, arguing that these vices stem from disordered desires rooted in self-love rather than God-love. He explores the interconnectedness of these vices and how they manifest in individual and societal contexts. The lectures analyze specific proverbs illustrating each vice, connecting them to broader theological themes and emphasizing the importance of reordered desires and a fear of the Lord for true righteousness. Finally, the lecture highlights the importance of humility as the antidote to pride, the root of all the other vices.

2. 24 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Treier, Proverbs for Christian Living – Session 3, Proverbs 10-29, Capital Vices – 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).



**Treier_Prov_Session
03.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Treier, Proverbs for Christian Living – Session 3, Proverbs 10-29, Capital Vices

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided source, "Treier_Proverbs_EN_Session03_Pr10_29_Vices.pdf", which is a lecture by Dr. Daniel J. Treier on Proverbs 10-29, focusing on capital vices.

Briefing Document: Proverbs 10-29 and the Seven Capital Vices

Source: Excerpts from "Treier_Proverbs_EN_Session03_Pr10_29_Vices.pdf" by Dr. Daniel J. Treier and Ted Hildebrandt (2024)

Date: 2024

Purpose: To provide a summary of Dr. Treier's lecture on how the book of Proverbs, specifically chapters 10-29, addresses seven capital vices through the lens of Christian tradition.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Proverbs and the Larger Moral Framework:

- Proverbs presents moral wisdom in memorable, situation-specific statements, but these can seem sporadic and lack larger coherence.
- Christian tradition, particularly the framework of virtues and vices, provides a helpful structure for understanding and applying Proverbs' moral vision.
- The overarching theme is the fear of the Lord, which is linked to covenant faithfulness and communal flourishing within God's created world.
- "Their shared vision of what it means to fear the Lord by maintaining the bonds of covenant faithfulness and communal flourishing in the context of the created world."

1. Capital Vices as Root Dispositions:

- The lecture focuses on capital vices, which are described as "sinful dispositions from which other sins spring, like roots to flowers and trees."
- These vices are not just about actions but are about the heart, emphasizing the need for self-knowledge within a covenant relationship with God.
- "As such, capital vices deal with the heart too closely for anyone's comfort, not just behavioral outcomes."

- They offer a path to self-knowledge and ultimately, new life in Christ, rather than legalism or despair.
- While pagans may recognize problems linked to vices, the root cause is disordered desire, requiring desires to be healed by God's love to overcome the vices.
- "So, unless a person has their desires healed by the love of God, any attempts to conquer these vices will basically shift around deck chairs on the Titanic"

1. **The Seven Capital Vices (Ordered in Reverse of Dante's Inferno):**

- The lecture will cover seven capital vices: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride.
- Vainglory is included as part of pride, which is considered the root vice.
- The order is intentionally reverse of Dante's Inferno to reflect the increasing distance from true charity, beginning with lust (considered the easiest departure from charity).
- "Here, we're going to proceed in the reverse of Dante's order."
- These vices represent various aspects of self-love and world-love that contradict God-love and neighbor-love.
- "And these vices reflect various aspects of self-love and world-love that contradict God-love and neighbor-love, in which true wisdom is found and true righteousness is found."

1. **Lust:**

- Lust is not only about sex but the broader love of pleasure which can lead to poverty and scheming for evil.
- It stems from pride and a desire to engineer one's own happiness on one's own terms.
- "Lust, in other words, flowers from roots in pride."
- Victory over lust involves reordering the object, nature, and extent of desires to align with righteousness.
- A healthy marriage can be a part of the solution, but not a complete cure, as lust is a component of a larger issue.

- "Yet people should not be naive as many well-intended abstinence campaigns appear to be about marital sex solving the problem of lust."

1. **Gluttony:**

- Gluttony involves self-preoccupation with food, using it to satisfy the soul apart from God, described using the acronym FRESH (Fastidiously, Ravenously, Excessively, Sumptuously, Hastily).
- "Gluttony, in other words, embodies self-preoccupation regarding food, using it to satisfy the soul apart from God."
- It is not just about overeating but can also manifest as wrongful asceticism or an unhealthy focus on weight control.
- It is linked with other vices, such as sloth.
- True satisfaction is found in righteousness and wisdom, rather than through food and drink, highlighting the importance of moderation.
- "In other words, this intriguing parallelism here regarding the mouth locates full satisfaction in righteousness and wisdom as displayed, for instance, in timely speech, what comes out of our mouth rather than what goes in."

1. **Greed (Avarice):**

- Greed involves a love of money for its own sake, substituting money for truly valuable things like friendship and love.
- "But eventually, and ironically, this form of self-absorption, greed, substitutes money for what it buys."
- It's described as a spiritual "dropsy," where the more one tries to satisfy their thirst, the more their thirst is stimulated.
- "It is characterized by an insatiable thirst for water, even though the body is already filled with fluid."
- Virtue stands between extremes; liberality is the virtue opposed to greed, involving using money freely to meet the needs of others and oneself. Both stinginess and prodigality are failures in this regard.
- Greed can lead to betrayal and dehumanization, and is a symptom of pride.

- "Learning from that, that avarice moves us to betray one another's humanness. In so doing, we betray our own humanity as well."
- Proverbs teaches that wealth should be acquired justly and enjoyed with awareness of community needs.

1. **Sloth:**

- Sloth is not simply laziness but is a more complex issue involving a lack of caring (acedia) and sadness/sorrow (tristitia), ultimately resulting in despair about the possibility of salvation.
- "The sin of sloth has two components, acedia, which means a lack of caring, an aimless indifference to one's responsibilities to God and to man, that is closer to what we think of as laziness, but also tristitia, meaning sadness and sorrow."
- While laziness is a cause of poverty, Proverbs does not simplistically equate all poverty with laziness.
- Sloth is linked to disordered desires and a refusal to engage in godly discipline, including work.

1. **Wrath:**

- Wrath stems from a passion for justice but involves a disproportionate response, taking what should be God's prerogative into our own hands.
- "Wrath not only reflects intemperance, but it also stems from pride. It's the opposite, not only of charity, but of the fear of the Lord, because we're taking something that is God's prerogative in terms of justice into our own hands."
- While some argue for righteous anger, the emphasis in Proverbs is on controlling and cooling down anger and avoiding strife.
- Proverbs discusses violence stemming from wrath, the use of harsh words, instigators of strife and how to avoid conflict, including loving and covering offenses.
- It also warns against slander and the desire for retribution and highlights the connection between a quick temper and folly.
- "Fools show their anger at once, but the prudent ignore an insult, 12:16."

1. **Envy:**

- Envy is not just coveting but wishing ill for another, violating both love of God and love of neighbor.
- "Envy is wishing to have what someone else has and desiring that they not have it."
- Proverbs speaks of the causes of envy indirectly, focusing on its public manifestation, and warns against envying the wicked and rich.
- It is seen as a harmful vice, described as a "rot of the bones" and linked to jealousy.
- "And in 14:30, the life of the body is a healthy heart, but jealousy is a rot of the bones, as Tremper Longman translates it."

1. **Pride:**

- Pride is considered the root of all vices.
- Pride is about promoting the self in ways the self approves while vainglory is about seeking approval from others.
- "Pride deals with striving to promote the self in ways the self approves. Vainglory deals with striving to please others."
- Pride manifests as seeing oneself as the cause of achievements, boasting of qualities one lacks, and despising others.
- Biblical humility is not about self-denial, but about recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses in relation to God and others.
- God opposes the proud, and pride leads to dishonor and destruction, while humility leads to life, riches, and honor.
- "At the root of folly, we might say, is pride."
- Social status is a test of character, revealing whether a person fears God or is controlled by vainglory.

1. **Humility and the Fear of the Lord:**

- Humility is presented as the key to overcoming pride and other vices.
- The fear of the Lord is essential for developing true wisdom and for pursuing virtue.

- "In sum, as the opposite of pride, biblical humility fosters virtuous character through faith's fear of God leading to charity, the opposite of lust, and other capital vices."
- While prudence and virtues can be developed apart from faith, true moral progress requires humility and points toward spiritual needs.
- Ultimately, true holistic, integrated wisdom starts with the fear of the Lord.

Conclusion:

Dr. Treier's lecture provides a detailed exploration of Proverbs 10-29 using the framework of the seven capital vices. It emphasizes that these vices are not just about individual actions but stem from disordered desires and pride within the heart. The lecture advocates for a holistic approach to growth, recognizing the need for the love of God to heal and reorder our desires to true, integrated wisdom. The overarching message is that true wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, which leads to humility and charity.

This briefing document should provide a clear overview of Dr. Treier's main arguments and insights.

4. Study Guide: Treier, Proverbs for Christian Living – Session 3, Proverbs 10-29, Capital Vices

Proverbs: Capital Vices Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. According to the lecture, why are the "seven deadly sins" more accurately termed "capital vices"?
2. What is the primary vice from which the other capital vices are said to originate, according to the lecture?
3. How does the lecture define lust, and what does it say about its relationship to the body and to pride?
4. Explain the acronym FRESH in relation to gluttony, according to the lecture.
5. How does the lecture distinguish greed from other vices like lust and gluttony?
6. What is the lecture's perspective on the relationship between hard work and divine provision, and how does this relate to sloth?
7. According to the lecture, what is the root cause of wrath, and how should we respond when confronted with injustice?
8. How does envy differ from covetousness or jealousy, according to the lecture?
9. What is the difference between pride and vainglory, according to the lecture?
10. How does humility relate to individuality, freedom, and the fear of the Lord, as explained in the lecture?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The term "capital vices" is more accurate because they are the root dispositions from which specific sinful actions spring, not just individual acts; they are the underlying issues of the heart, like roots to a tree, and require a deeper response than simply addressing behaviors.
2. Pride is considered the cardinal root of the capital vices; it is the underlying disposition from which the other vices stem, a fundamental form of self-love that ultimately contradicts love for God and neighbor.

3. Lust, according to the lecture, is not just about sexual desire but is a broader disordered desire for pleasure, and it is rooted in pride, in that it attempts to engineer personal happiness and satisfaction apart from God, and it wrongly uses physical goods to try to meet spiritual needs.
4. The acronym FRESH is used to describe different aspects of gluttony: eating Fastidiously, Ravenously, Excessively, Sumptuously, and Hastily; this shows how gluttony embodies self-preoccupation regarding food as a means to satisfy the soul apart from God.
5. The lecture explains that greed initially relates money to pleasure as a means to obtain it; but unlike lust and gluttony, greed transforms money from a tool to an end in itself.
6. The lecture states that divine provision is often mediated through hard work, with laziness being a major factor in poverty, but it doesn't simplistically correlate poverty with laziness, as God's grace goes deeper than simply hard work.
7. Wrath stems from a passion for justice, often activated by a perceived injustice, but with a disproportionate response; while some anger is appropriate, it's crucial to discern when and how to express it, and we should look to God to be the true judge.
8. Envy is more than simply desiring what another has or feeling jealous; it includes the active desire that the other person not have the good that they possess, as it focuses on the neighbor as the object of attack, not merely an object of desire.
9. Pride is striving to promote the self in ways the self approves, whereas vainglory involves striving to please others and gain their praise; however, in contemporary culture, these often overlap, as people seek approval and affirmation from others to feel good about themselves.
10. Humility, according to the lecture, does not negate individuality or freedom but places the self in context through the fear of God; it is not groveling, but it is recognizing our dependence on God, our unique gifts, and our proper place in the community.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss how the seven capital vices, as presented in the lecture, demonstrate a fundamental misdirection of desire. Analyze how these vices, in their various forms, lead away from love of God and neighbor.
2. Explore how the wisdom literature of Proverbs addresses the root causes and manifestations of the seven capital vices. Include an analysis of specific proverbs and explain how the overall moral vision of Proverbs confronts these vices.
3. Compare and contrast the vices that, according to Dante, harm others through self-love, with the vices that involve a defective love for God, and the vices that involve an excessive love for material goods. How does this categorization assist in understanding the different dimensions of moral failure?
4. Analyze how the lecture's discussion of the vices integrates both individual and social dimensions. Consider how personal struggles with vices impact the community and how societal structures contribute to these struggles.
5. How does the lecture's treatment of pride as the root of the capital vices inform our understanding of true humility? Discuss how the pursuit of humility, as presented in the lecture, is essential for overcoming vice and living a virtuous life of love.

Glossary of Key Terms

Capital Vices: Deep-seated sinful dispositions from which other sins spring; also referred to in older Christian traditions as "deadly sins"; the underlying roots of sin.

Cardinal Virtues: Foundational virtues that are essential for human flourishing, such as justice, wisdom, courage, and temperance; the opposite of a vice.

Theological Virtues: Virtues that are gifts from God and related to our connection with Him, such as faith, hope, and charity.

Lust: Disordered desire for pleasure, not limited to sexual desire; a form of self-love seeking satisfaction apart from God.

Gluttony: Self-preoccupation regarding food; using food to satisfy the soul apart from God; a misuse of appetites and desires related to food and drink.

Greed (Avarice): A misshapen desire for money or material possessions, that becomes an end in itself; an insatiable thirst for possessions that becomes a form of spiritual disease.

Sloth: Lack of caring, an aimless indifference to responsibilities to God and others; also, a sadness and sorrow, eventually leading to despair regarding salvation.

Wrath: Disproportionate response to perceived injustice; stemming from a passion for justice, but characterized by a loss of temperance and control.

Envy: Wishing that another person does not have what they possess, more than simple covetousness or jealousy; the attack is on the neighbor, not the object itself.

Pride: An inflated sense of self, a desire for self-promotion, believing oneself to be the cause of achievements, and a denial of dependence on God.

Vainglory: Striving to please others and gain their praise; often overlaps with pride.

Humility: Recognizing our dependence on God, our unique strengths and weaknesses, and our proper place in community, without arrogance or self-deprecation; the opposite of pride.

Shalom: A comprehensive state of peace, wholeness, and well-being; a key concept in Proverbs regarding the moral and social dimensions of life.

5. FAQs on Treier, Proverbs for Christian Living – Session 3, Proverbs 10-29, Capital Vices, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Capital Vices in Proverbs

1. **What are the "capital vices" and why are they important in understanding Proverbs?**
2. The "capital vices," often referred to as the seven deadly sins in Christian tradition, are not merely isolated acts but rather the root dispositions of the heart from which other sins spring. Understanding them helps us see how the wisdom in Proverbs applies to the underlying issues of our hearts, not just our behaviors. They help us move past the situation-specific nature of individual proverbs to see their larger coherence. They address our tendencies to put self-love and world-love above our love for God and neighbor, which is a key theme in Proverbs. They serve as the opposite of the traditional virtues, highlighting what a life of wisdom actively avoids.
3. **Why is pride often considered the root of all other vices?**
4. Pride is considered the root because it is an inflated or distorted view of the self that leads to a rejection of God and others. From this self-centered position, other vices emerge as ways of satisfying the self apart from God and others, such as lust, gluttony, greed, wrath, envy, and sloth. Pride can be manifested in a desire to please self or others (vainglory), which both move us away from God. Ultimately it is through humility, the opposite of pride, that we find true wisdom.
5. **How does the book of Proverbs address the vice of lust, and is it solely about sexual desire?**
6. Proverbs addresses lust as a disordered desire for pleasure, not just in the sexual sense, but a broader self-seeking drive for physical gratification. It warns of the dangers of uncontrolled pleasure-seeking, connecting it to poverty and folly. The root of lust, according to the tradition, lies in pride, which is a self-centered way of living that seeks to engineer happiness on one's own terms. Proverbs also suggests that a healthy marriage is part of the remedy for disordered sexual desire, but that simply having marital sex does not address lust's root. The focus of overcoming lust is to reorder our desires so that we seek righteousness, love, and wisdom over self-interested gratification.

7. What does Proverbs teach about gluttony, and how does it go beyond just overeating?

Proverbs highlights gluttony as a form of self-preoccupation regarding food, using it to try and satisfy the soul apart from God. It's not just about overeating, but also includes errors like eating too fast, ravenously, excessively, sumptuously, or hastily (FRESH). Gluttony can also manifest as wrongful asceticism, or an obsession with weight control. Proverbs emphasizes that while God provides for our physical needs, our deepest satisfaction comes from righteousness and wisdom, not from overindulging our appetites. It connects overeating and overdrinking to poverty, laziness and shame.

1. **How does greed or avarice relate to the love of money, and what are its consequences according to Proverbs?**
2. Greed is the misshapen desire for money and possessions as ends in themselves. It moves beyond seeking money as an instrument for pleasure, to substituting money for things like friendship and love, even becoming a means of self-measurement. Proverbs views the pursuit of wealth as complex, involving God's blessing, human effort, and the potential for deceit. However, ill-gotten gain is unprofitable, and wealth can lead to arrogance and idolatry if not handled with wisdom and generosity. It is better to live with less and the fear of the Lord than great wealth and trouble. The love of money can lead us to betray our own humanity.
3. **In what ways does Proverbs discuss the vice of sloth, and is it simply about laziness?**

Sloth, in the tradition, is not just laziness. It is a lack of care, a refusal to engage in meaningful work and relationships, both with God and others. Proverbs notes that laziness leads to poverty and shame, and that the lazy can be proud and slow to realize it. The deeper issue with sloth is despair - a lack of hope in God's grace and power to transform us. It can often lead to vain pursuits and self-preoccupation rather than action grounded in love for God and neighbor. Sloth reflects a refusal to undergo the godly discipline, including work, that fosters wisdom.

1. **How does Proverbs understand wrath or anger, and what solutions does it offer for dealing with it?**
2. Proverbs recognizes that wrath stems from a passion for justice that has become disproportionate. While some anger might be appropriate, we must discern the "when and how" of anger, because it quickly places us among the foolish. It warns of the violence and strife that can result from uncontrolled anger and the dangers of slander and retribution. Instead of reacting with anger and vengeance, Proverbs encourages us to show love, offer soft answers, and be slow to anger, trusting that God will ultimately handle justice. This includes meeting the needs of our enemies, trusting that God will bring about the best outcomes.
3. **How does envy differ from jealousy, and how does it relate to pride, according to Proverbs?**
4. Envy differs from jealousy in that envy focuses not just on wanting what someone else has, but on wanting to take it away from them, or resenting their possession of it. Jealousy can have a positive element when we are rightly zealous for the love and fidelity of our partner, as opposed to the destructive envy that eats at us from the inside. Proverbs warns against envying the wicked and the rich because their ways of living lead to poverty, chaos, and ultimately have no future. Envy is connected to pride in that it is a distorted sense of the self that cannot be content with what it has, wanting not just to be like others, but to make them less so that we feel better. Ultimately pride is the distortion of self, that either inflates it or devalues it as a result of not trusting in God, that creates the conditions for envy.