

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Proverb Pairs 1, Proverbs 26:4- 5

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This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt and his teaching on Proverbs pairs and the Proverbs 26, 4, and 5 contradiction. Session one, to answer or not to answer a fool, that is the question.

Welcome today to the presentation for Biblical e-learning on Proverbs pairs and the Proverbs 26 versus four and five quote contradiction, to answer or not to answer a fool. And so, we're going to be talking about proverb pairs today and going into quite a bit of detail here as we do this presentation on Proverbs. Get this thing going here.

The questions that we'll be addressing basically are Proverbs in chapters 10 to 29 just isolated units of Proverbs thrown together in a haphazard manner? Or is there some discernible and meaningful editorial ordering of the Proverbs in these sentence Proverbs as they're called in chapters 10 to 29? Is there ordering? And if there is ordering, how does that ordering function? In other words, what triggers it? How can we discover it and things? And what is the meaning behind it that the editors, why put such and such a proverb next to the other proverb? What are the hermeneutical benefits of observing this interproverbial contextual connection? In other words, the connections between the sentences. What is the interpretive or hermeneutical benefit of that? Are Proverbs just boring, banal platitudes reflecting a black-and-white retribution principle of act and consequence, which affirms the status quo or tradition? Contra, Job, and Ecclesiastes, which are much more sophisticated, quote wisdom literature, if you still use that term.

So, we'll be looking at, for example, in Proverbs chapter 12, you just read that Proverbs chapter 12:21 kind of shows this kind of cut-and-dry kind of thing. Proverbs chapter 12:21 says this, no harm overtakes the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble. So, you have kind of a character, the righteous and no harm overtakes the righteous.

So, you have righteous, and then you have a consequence. You have the wicked, but the wicked have their fill of trouble. And so, this is called the retribution principle.

And a lot of people view that as being a very banal and straightforward black-and-white world, reflecting a black-and-white world. Now we're going to be stressing the context then of these two proverbial sentences and putting them back-to-back and how they connect with one another. And if they do connect with one another, or whether it's just a haphazard mix.

But context is important. When you start to study the meaning of words, context determines meaning. And so, for example, let me just use an English example, the word trunk.

What does the word trunk mean? Well, context determines meaning. So, if I say trunk, what comes to your mind? Well, for many of us, a tree trunk comes to mind. But for others who are traveling now or trying to travel, it's luggage trunk that you travel with.

Some people are driving in their car and they have a car trunk. A car trunk is very different from a tree trunk. And so, you see that as soon as you put a word next to it, all of a sudden, the word trunk takes on different nuances, different meanings.

The body trunk. And then you have the elephant's trunk. Very different.

A rail line, they call those a trunk, a rail line trunk. And then even now in the digital world, we have a network trunk line, which is a big line, and it's called a trunk.

And so, therefore, what the meaning of trunk is, you say, it's trunk. It really depends on the context, and the words that go with it, whether it's a car trunk, a tree trunk, or a body trunk, or an elephant trunk, or whatever. Genres, literary genres, or types of literature also affect how you interpret things.

So, for example, let's just say you pick up a newspaper. Does anybody remember what that is? A newspaper? Anyways, they used to have these things called newspapers that people would pick up. And on the front page, you had certain types of photographs, and also certain types of stories made it to the front page.

And so, when you pick up a newspaper, you expect a certain type of story to be placed on the front page. On the other hand, as you get into the newspaper, you have an editorial page, an editorial page in which people are giving their opinions on everything. And so therefore, you know that this may not even be done by the newspaper themselves, but this may be an editorial coming in from outside that's just somebody bloviating about their opinion, good or bad.

You have a cartoon page. And so, when you pick up a cartoon page, you don't expect to get the same thing that you would get on a front page, a cartoon page. There are also classified ads.

You look in the back and you're trying to buy a new car; you're trying to buy something new for your house. And so, you look in the classified ads, or you're trying to hire somebody, you look in the classified ads at the back of the paper. Notice the front page is different from the back with the classified ads.

And then other things like obituaries. You look at obituaries, what are you expecting to get? Well, it's going to tell you who in the area has died and give some history and background of their life and what they did and possibly a picture of them. And so, obituaries are very different from a front page story, is different from an editorial, is different from cartoons, is different from classified ads.

And so, these all take, in a newspaper, would take a different place, a different role, a different ordering in that newspaper. Now, documentaries, for example, are very different than fictional stories. And so, if you're looking at a movie or something, my wife and I sit down to watch a movie, and it's fictional, we expect one type of thing.

When it's science fiction, for example, it's a little bit different than just a plain fictional story. And that's very different than when we watch a documentary. So, the type of literature that you're watching or listening to affects what you expect.

So, we'll be seeing what do we expect from a proverb? How does a proverb, the fact that it is a proverb, how does that affect its meaning and affect its truth, for example? The genre also applies to the Bible as well. So, we know for a historical narrative, you're going to hear stories about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and Esau, and Moses, and Aaron, and things like that, and Joshua, and various things, Samuel, and David, and the various kings, Hezekiah, and Jehoiakim, or whatever. And so, in the historical narratives, you're getting a historical, and it's telling you about individuals, where they lived, and what they did.

And so, you get plots, you get beginnings and ends of a story, and you get the middle or climax of a story, and the stories proceed, historical narrative kinds of things. That's different from a prophetic utterance, where a prophet comes in and says, basically, repent, you know, shuv, repent. And so therefore the prophetic narratives are different.

They say, thus sayeth the Lord, whereas the historical narratives will tell you that, you know, David did all these things that were really kind of nasty at times, and things you say, how did David really do that? And how do you understand it? Have to interpret historical narratives in a certain way. In the prophets, you've got a, thus saith the Lord, and then the man's, or woman speaks a prophecy from God. Okay.

And then you watch the people's response, the audience's response to the prophetic message. They usually beat them up, threw them in prison, or a septic tank, or something like that. And so, the prophets had a pretty rough time, but then you hear some of the stories of the prophets, these people of God who spoke the word of God to the community there.

Psalms are very different than both prophets and the historical narrative, even though you have psalmic elements in both those types of genre, but psalms and

parables, the kingdom of heaven is like, and you know, then you're going to get a story about, I don't know, of a sower who goes out to sow seed and some falls on the road and some falls in the rocks and some actually produces good stuff. And so parables, the kingdom of heaven is like, it's kind of like in English, we would say once upon a time, as I read a story to my granddaughters or grandson, and you'd say once upon a time, as soon as you say once upon a time, it triggers a type of expectation of what type of story you're getting. So, the kingdom of heaven is like parables. Apocalyptic literature, is like Revelation and Daniel, Ezekiel, those things.

And the prophet sees something and he sees something in the future and he sees something that's relevant for their time. And so, you expect certain types of things and kind of, even in modern terms, in terms of apocalypse now, and you expect some kind of end of the world type of thing and polarization of good and evil and these heavenly scenes and earthly consequences. In Psalms, you get laments, you get Psalms of praise, and you get Psalms of Ascent.

So even within the genre of Psalms, you have laments, praise, Psalms of Ascent, and various types of Psalms, imprecations, and other things like that. In Proverbs, you get Proverbs. Okay.

And so, we need to look at how do Proverbs function. Proverbs are pretty much an international phenomena. They occur in almost every, every language around the world.

And so, Proverb, how does a proverb function, within its culture and within its literary, from its literary genre? Form and meaning are connected. Form and meaning are connected. And so, the literary form is going to shape what types of things are communicated and how they're communicated.

Okay. So, we're just wanting to say that. Now, genre does matter.

Let's take, for example, historical. The word locusts. Okay.

So, you hear the word locusts in the Bible. If you're in the historical narrative and all of a sudden you've got locusts, it was a plague in Egypt. And so, God, what do you see? The locusts come in and swarm over the land of Egypt and eat up all the food.

What it shows is it reveals God's mighty hand as he takes his people out of slavery delivers them and leads them to the promised land. And so, the locusts then are an evidence or revelation of God in the historical books, particularly in the book of Exodus, the early chapters there. In the prophetic literature, you've got, say, take the book of Joel and he kind of specializes in locusts.

And so, you have different types of locusts coming as a plague on Israel. And now locusts are not a revelation of the deliverance of God, but rather locusts come as a judgment on the people of God and a kind of precursor of the Day of the Lord. So, locusts play a different, very different function in the prophetic book of Joel than they did in the book of Exodus.

Then you have, of course, the apocalyptic apocalypse in the book of Revelation. All of a sudden you have these pit locusts coming out, with the face of a man, a scorpion-like stinger on them, and things. Well, you expect that when I, when I say apocalyptic literature, it's talking about locusts, pit locusts are coming out of the pit, but you realize that that's, you know, it's not, this isn't like, you know, the locusts of Exodus or the locusts of the book of Joel.

These are apocalyptic end times kind of strange things in Revelation chapter nine. Wisdom actually has locusts too. And so, in the book of Ecclesiastes, you've got in terms of an old man in the book of Ecclesiastes and this old man going, walking along and he's got that old man walk.

Have you ever seen somebody that's let's say 78 years old, could be president of the United States? I mean, but the person is older and you watch how they walk and you say, wow, that guy's got an old man walk. Okay.

Struggling with that myself anyway, but there's a certain, and so he portrays this old man using in wisdom literature, this old man walking along kind of like a grasshopper and things. In the New Testament, it's interesting. It takes a locust, take another flip. All of a sudden you've got John the Baptist. And what does he do? He eats the locusts. Okay.

And so, you've got a different, all I'm saying is different ways this locust functions and in different types of literature. Okay. And we're going to be seeing things happening in the, in Proverbs and things like that.

Now, are the sentences in Proverbs 10 and following, are they thrown together haphazardly or are they connected? And therefore, we should try to discover the meaning of the relationship between the Proverbs as well as the Proverb itself. A great work was done by Gerald Wilson on the Psalms. What he went through the book of Psalms, because Psalms also had this similar type of thing where some people said, the Psalms are just thrown together.

They're not really connected that much. And therefore, and he went through and developed this methodology that showed, no, the Psalms are connected to one another and you need to read them in connection to one another. And so, for example, the editors, not only the authors who authored the Psalms, but you need to see what were the editors doing who edited the book of Psalms together.

Now, David or whoever may have been writing Psalms back in 1000 BC, but the book of Psalms also has stories and Psalms from the time of the Babylonian captivity, you know, by the waters of Babylon, we sat down and that was 586, 587, 600 BC rather than a thousand BC. So, the book of Psalms was compiled over at least 400 years, at least 400 years and probably more than that. And so, what, what we're saying is that the editor who put it together, they didn't write the Psalms necessarily, but they combined them in ways that gave new meaning because of the relationships and how they were editing them together.

So, we have the author's meaning, but we also have the editor's meaning and, and, and their influence in this as well. And so in the book of Psalms, for example, in Psalm 72.20, you have this statement, it's just kind of put in there, but it's the end of book two. There are five books in the Psalter.

And the second book ends with this statement in Psalm 72 verse 20, "this concludes the prayers of David, son of Jesse." "This concludes the prayers of David, the son of Jesse." Well, now do you realize that there are Davidic Psalms after Psalm 72?

So, what this is, is that we're finishing, you know, our book two, and therefore this is the end. This is how we ended. This concludes the prayers of David, the son of Jesse to this point.

And then others will be added later. In the Psalms, you also have a section of Psalms 42 to 83 that is known as the Elohist Psalter. The Elohist Psalter.

Elohim is the name translated in your Bible, God, G capital G O D. Okay. That's different than Yahweh, the name that's spelled Y H Y A H W E H Yahweh, which is usually translated Lord in all capitals, Lord, kind of a small type, but Lord, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. When you see those all capitalized, you know that the Lord there comes from Adonai, means Yahweh, that stands behind that. The name, most sacred and personal name of God, the covenantal name of God in the Old Testament.

Whereas Elohim, Bereshit Barah Elohim, in the beginning, God created Elohim. And so, what's very interesting is that you have a section in Psalms 53 to 8, I'm sorry, 42 to 83, which is known as the Elohist Psalter. In other words, the name Elohim comes up very strongly in chapters 42 to 83.

Whereas in the other chapters, the earlier books from 41 and previous, the name Yahweh is used all the time. Yahweh, Yahweh, Yahweh. And then you hit 42 to 83 and Elohim is used all the time.

And then after 83, 84, and following, it goes back to Yahweh. Now you say, well, can you prove that? And our point isn't to argue about Psalms at this point. We've got another lecture on that if you're interested in Biblicalearning.org that goes through this Elohist Psalter in detail, but it's interesting.

In chapter 14, which is in the Yahweh sections, it says this, the fool says in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt. Their deeds are vile. There is no one who does good. The Lord or Yahweh, Yahweh looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there's anyone who understands any who seek after God. Very interesting.

That's just Psalm 14. You go over to Psalm 53, and guess what? You have is a duplicate Psalm. And here's what Psalm 53 says.

Now Psalm 53 is in the Elohist Psalter. Psalm 14 was in the Psalter, part of the Psalter that uses Yahweh. Psalm 53, is the same Psalm.

The fool says in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt. Their ways are vile. There is no one who does good. Who looks down from heaven? The other one said the LORD looks down from heaven, but this one says God looks down from heaven. Elohim looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there's anyone who understands any who seek God.

So, we see here that here's a duplicate Psalm, Psalm 14, Psalm 53. In 14, it uses the Lord looking down from heaven. And in chapter 53, the word LORD [Yahweh], the rest of it's exactly the same.

The other one says God or Elohim looks down. So, there's been a shift in the name that's why they call it the Elohist Psalter. There are also Psalms of Asaph.

There's a section 73 to 83. The author, however, you look at that collector or whatever, from Asaph 73 to 83, you've got the Psalms of Korah, which is Psalms 42 to 49. You also have the Psalms of the Ascent.

And depending on how you take this word Ascent, whether it's going up to Jerusalem and these songs are sung on a pilgrimage like that. But it's Psalms 120 to 134 are called the Psalms of Ascent and the going up and things. So different Psalms in different sections.

And so, in Proverbs, you're also going to have in Proverbs 1 to 9, you've got instructions, which are kind of instructional discourses where the father is teaching his child or son, my son, hear my voice. And then he goes off on a story and tells them why you should listen. So, that's one to nine.

So those are long sections of instruction. Some of them, you know, 20, 30 verses.

You get into chapter eight on wisdom. There's a whole section on how God created and wisdom was right there kind of thing. And then chapter nine ends with Madam Wisdom and Madam Folly inviting the young man to embrace wisdom. So those are kind of more discourse or dialogue or instructions and they're connected to longer sections.

But when you hit chapter 10, all of a sudden sentence literature takes over in chapters 10 to 29, you have this strong sentence, once proverb after another proverb, and there kind of it goes. Let me just example in Proverbs chapter nine, let me just take this. Wisdom has built her house.

She has set up seven pillars. She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine. She has also set her table.

So you'll get this notion that wisdom, Madam Wisdom is preparing a meal for the young man and going to invite the young man in. This isn't just one sentence and the next sentence has nothing to do with the other. The pronouns carry this.

Wisdom has built her house. And then it says, she has prepared her meat tying into the previous verse. She has sent out her servants and she calls from the highest point in the city.

Let all who are simple come to my house. To those who have no sense, she says, come eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and you will live.

Walk in the way of insight. And so Madam Wisdom is inviting. And there's this whole story of her invitation.

This is not sentential literature. This is not a proverb per se and a short sentence. This is an instruction in chapters 1 to 9.

Now Proverbs 10, then all of a sudden in Proverbs 10, you get this really sharp break. And then all of a sudden, boom, after chapter 10, basically at 29, largely of the sentential-oriented Proverbs. So, for example, in chapter 10, one, starting that section, it says, a wise son brings joy to a father, a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

Notice the parallelism there. Not the time to talk about parallelism, but to understand Hebrew poetry, you've got to understand parallelism and how it works. Then the next verse, what does the next verse say? A wise son brings joy to a father, a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

Ill-gotten treasures are of no lasting value, but righteousness delivers from death. Now, wait a minute. What does verse one have to do with verse two? You say, whoa, it's kind of not connected there.

And what does verse three say? The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked. You say, whoa, those three proverbs are going three different directions. It's like a shotgun shooting out birdshot going all over the place.

And so, you say, hmm, that's interesting. It is very different in terms of this being sentential. It's ordered by sentences rather than these long connections.

And in Proverbs then too, we have this statement in Proverbs 25:1 that's fairly important, really important actually. And it tells us how the book of Proverbs was put together at one level. Proverbs 25:1 says this, these are more Proverbs of Solomon.

Proverbs chapter 10.1 starts out, "the Proverbs of Solomon," and then you get chapters 10 and following. There are big debates on all these things. But anyway, chapter 25 then was a different section.

Apparently chapters 10 to 24 or whatever was multiple sections put together there. But then in chapter 25, it says, these are more Proverbs of Solomon compiled by the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah. So Hezekiah apparently was involved and his people involved in editing chapters 25 to 29.

They put those things together and it tells us here. So, I want to suggest then that there's an importance to look at what the editors were doing, not just the meaning of the original author and who was the original author of a proverb. Anyways, who offered the Proverbs? Proverbs are very different than that.

You say, well, Solomon did that. Well, did Solomon get those from people? Did he collect them from the Queen of Sheba and other people who came to visit him and see his wisdom? And you know, some of the Proverbs seem to be, it's a whole other story from Proverbs 22 and following seem to be very parallel to the Proverbs of Amenemope from Egypt. So there seems to have been a big crossover between the internationalization of Proverbs.

So, Solomon was obviously a major collector. So, Proverbs 30 is the sayings of Agur. There's a guy named Agur, Proverbs 30.

Proverbs 31 says, these are the Proverbs that basically come from King Lemuel that his mother taught him. And so, you get now the mother teaching in Israel. And then in Proverbs 31, these aren't, Proverbs 31 are just not scattered together.

In Proverbs 31, you've got the VW. You've got the virtuous woman. In Proverbs chapter 31, the virtuous woman is an acrostic, which means it goes through the alphabet, there are 22 verses there that are connected. The first one starts with A, the second one with B, the second one with D, Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth. In other words, in Hebrew, they go right through the alphabet. And so, you have what's called an acrostic.

You get to see a similar thing in Psalm 119. If you've ever looked at Psalm 119, this massive Psalm, you get to see an acrostic where eight verses all begin with Aleph, eight verses begin with Beth, and it goes through the whole alphabet. And that's why the whole thing is so honking long.

It's like over 170, 72 verses because it's eight verses for each letter. And each Psalm verse begins with that new and next letter. So, you've got eight, eight, eight, eight, for each letter of the alphabet.

Well, the virtuous woman in Proverbs is an acrostic. So those 22 verses are definitely connected. So, whoever put that together is connecting those verses.

They're not just haphazard or scattered together. Okay. So connected discourse.

So, what will show the purpose of going over all this stuff is to show that the, that editors are going to build the proverbial collection together using pairs. So, I'm going to suggest that they could, that Proverbs often, not always, but often come together in pairs. And you need to look at those pairs because the editors were putting those together.

They wanted you to see the relationship of one verse to the next in pairs kind of thing. o, this gives us a new level of meaning. We look at the authorial intent.

And then when you look also at the editor's intent of scripture. So, there are several insights that hermeneutical or interpretive insights that can be gained by this concatenation, the putting of two Proverbs together. Now, Proverbs' formation is kind of interesting.

As I was reading from devotions and things, I happened to be reading in 1 Samuel. And it was interesting to me that Saul became king. Okay.

This is 1 Samuel 10 and Saul is, he's not made king yet. Israel's calling for a king. Samuel's all upset and says, man, the king's going to rip you off and things like that.

People, they say, we don't care. We want a king. So, then God says, okay, I'll give them Saul.

You know, he's a handsome, big, strong guy, taller than everybody else, and quite an impressive young man. And so, but Saul's out wandering around looking for his father's donkeys. And, and so what happens is then Saul's going to be made king.

Okay. The first king of Israel kind of thing, anointed by Samuel, the last of the judges. And so here you have in chapters 10 verses 10 through 13.

And what I'm looking at here is the connection between a proverb and a story, or I should say a story and a proverb. A lot of times a proverb is kind of like a compressed story. It's kind of like a kernel of popcorn that in other words, it's all come down.

You apply the appropriate hermeneutical heat and then boom, it pops up into a kernel of corn. It pops back up into a story. So, proverbs and stories are connected.

And here you see how a proverb was actually generated, how it actually comes into being. Now, in the book of Proverbs, you have hundreds of proverbs. You can't, you know, the book can't be long enough to have hundreds of stories.

It'd be too much. But a proverb is kind of a compressed story many times. And so here you actually see how a proverb came into existence.

As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart and all these signs were fulfilled that day. When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him and the spirit of God came powerfully upon him. And he joined in their prophesying.

When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, what is this that has happened to the son of Kish, Saul? Is Saul among the prophets? A man who lived there answered, who is their father? So, it became a saying, so it became a proverb, a saying, is Saul among the prophets? Do chickens have lips? Do bears sleep in the woods? Is Saul among the prophets? Whoa, that's weird. And so, it became a proverb. So, the story of the spirit of God coming on and Saul prophesying, it became a saying, and that saying then was repeated, not just for that particular historical situation, but was repeated over and over among the folk, among the people.

And it was repeated then and it was accepted by the people. Is Saul among the prophets? And so, you get this kind of thing. So, I want to talk next just a little briefly about the, I want to call this a non-definition definition of a proverb.

What is a proverb? How does it differ from other genres of literature? Or oral communication? How does a proverb, what is a proverb? There have been huge discourses on this. Probably, well, we'll talk about him, but one of the most famous

guys in the world on proverbs, he's largely been ignored by biblical studies people to our shame. Well, one is Archer Taylor.

He's one of the guys way back that got it started, but there's a guy named Wolfgang Meider from Vermont who studied international proverbs all over the world. This guy is the leading expert in the world. I believe he's, well, he is retired now.

He's, he's getting older now, but he has, he had collected proverbs and analyzed proverbs, has written numerous, numerous books, Wolfgang Meider on proverbs. And so, he, but he's not, now he's not connected with biblical proverbs. He's dealing with universal proverbs and things, international proverbs.

And so, the definition has been debated in this journal called Proverbium that he was highly engaged in for decades. This Proverbium journal discussed: what is a proverb? And there are all sorts of articles taken from structural points of view, sociological stances, and rhetorical points of view. And, and, and each comes up with, and basically one guy said, he said, it's not worth the effort.

We're trying to nail this thing down, but it's like trying to nail down jello, you know, you just can't get it nailed down. And so, I'm not ready to give up just because you can't technically do one definition that covers everything. I'm not ready to give up on the idea that proverbs are different and the proverbs are unique and proverbs are their own literary genre.

And so let me just give a kind of a short one. So, I call this my non-definition definition. Okay.

The proverb is usually a short, a short, salty, by that I mean significant, short, salty, significant, repeated, and accepted statement, often using metaphor, simile, hyperbole, generalization, generalization, and summation. So, a proverb is a short, salty, significant, repeated, and accepted statement. It's repeated among the folk.

It's accepted in a culture that when they hear it, well, that's a proverb, they accept it. And it's often used as a metaphor, simile, hyperbole, overstatement for emphasis, generalization, generalizing things, and summation, summarizing, like in the story of Saul, summarizing this story. So that's kind of the crude definition of proverbs that I'll be working with.

The caution, yes, proverbs are generalizations, but you can't universalize them. A proverb is not meant to be universalized. In other words, it's not, we always talk about propositional truth.

It's not a truth that fits in every circumstance, in every situation. Proverb is very much the complexity of life that calls for discernment, not simple guarantees where

you grab a proverb and, and, and sometimes it just doesn't apply. One aspect, it's one, proverb gives you one aspect of truth for a particular situation.

One aspect of truth. It's kind of like in the old days we did vectors. It's like a vector that goes a certain direction and it gives you in that direction, yes, it gives you the truth and stuff, but that vector is going this way.

It's not going this way. And so, you've got to be very careful. It's a vector.

It's not giving comprehensive universal truth. So therefore Proverbs 22:6, for example, train up a child in the way she'll go. When he's old, he'll not depart from it.

Okay. Train up a child in the way she'll go. Proverbs 22:6, when he's old, he'll not depart from it.

Is that always true? I know parents that have trained their children very well and the kids have gone to pot. I've also known some parents who bailed out on their kids, abused their kids and their kids turned out wonderfully. Okay.

So, you can't say to train up a child in the way she'll go when he's old and not depart from it is always right. By the way, this even works for God. If you look at Isaiah 1, God was the perfect father, right? In Isaiah 1, God himself laments.

He said, I raised him, now he's the perfect father, right? Our Father who art in heaven, the Father in heaven has raised his children in Israel. And he says, what have they done? They've rebelled against me. Train up a child in the way she'll go.

And when he's old, they'll not depart from it. What really? Well, Israel, did Israel rebel against God? Yes, they did. And so, God's lamenting the fact that he was a perfect father, but his children rebelled against him and went away from him.

So, Proverbs 22.6, basically what I'm trying to say is a proverb is not a promise. Let's just put that out on the table. Proverb is not a promise.

Okay. And so, proverb, you can't say, well, I've got this proverb, train up a child. Therefore, if I train up a child properly, he'll go in the way.

No, that's not always true. And actually your child may end up dying for some reason, when they're 18 years old, they never get to see the end of their life. Life is complex.

You can't take a complex situation and approximate it by a single vector or a single proverb. So, Proverbs are not absolute truths. Okay.

And even Meider in his book, *Twisted Wisdom*, acknowledges this as he studied Proverbs all over the world, that basically they're not absolute truths. Okay. So, you have to be really careful.

That's one of the things when you're interpreting Proverbs, a bad mistake. A proverb is not a promise. It's a particular, it does have a particular aspect of authority though.

And that's where you've got to come back the other way. Everybody thinks they're a genius today. They say, well, the authority of a proverb, a proverb is not a promise.

And they think, whoa, that no, you haven't, you've told us what a proverb is not. You've not told us what it is. Yes, it is not a promise.

I think you have to agree with that. But what is a proverb? What is the nature of the authority of a proverb? It does have authority. And when it's quoted in cultures all over the world, it has a certain authority to it.

And so you've got to come to grips with what is the nature of the authority of a proverb. It's different from a universal statement, a promise from God, or something like that. It's different than that. But what is the nature of its authority? And so you've got to explore that kind of thing.

If there is intentional interaction between Proverbs and pairs, then one should seek the meaning of the editors may have had in mind when they concatenated, when they juxtaposed when they put two proverbs adjacent to one another into a pair. And we're going to be looking at this pair today, Proverbs chapter 26 verses four and five. Intertextuality is an interesting new study that's been going on in biblical studies actually for quite a while now, but it's the relation of one text to another.

This is an important field of studies. And as we said in Psalms, they did it was a relationship between the Psalms. And now we can ask the same thing in the question of Proverbs.

What is the relationship between different Proverbs and things like that? Context of use. How is the proverb actually used? Often in African culture, still Proverbs are very much alive in the African culture. They use the proverb to win a legal case.

So, if you come down, you do all, you present all your evidence, you get your witnesses and stuff. But in the end, if you can come up with a proverb, you can really nail the case because the proverb is generally accepted by everybody. And so therefore they use it to win a case in an argument.

It's a way of encapsulating a story. And sometimes Proverbs are used for humor. Sometimes Proverbs are used for humor.

Let me just give you an example here. Proverbs chapter 23 verses 29 to 35. I'm sorry, chapter 23 verses 29 to 35.

Check this out. I want to say in Proverbs, that these are instructional things. And sometimes they're just plain funny and they're meant to be that.

And so, in chapter 23 verse 29 and following it says, who has woe, who has sorrow. You can see this is kind of like a riddle. Riddles are related to Proverbs.

Okay. And so, who has woe, who has sorrow? Who would you guess? Who has woe, who has sorrow, who has strife, who has complaints, who has needless bruising? Now this kind of gives it away. Who has bloodshot eyes? Okay.

Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup when it goes down smoothly. In the end, it bites like a snake, it poisons like a viper.

Your eyes will see strange sights. Your mind will imagine confusing things. You'll be like, remember we said Proverbs a lot of times, similes.

You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on the top of the rigging. You can see the boat bouncing back and forth. And this person's getting drunk.

They hit me, you will say, but I am not hurt. They beat me up, but I don't feel it. When will I wake up so I can find another drink? Kind of the, yeah, the problem with alcoholism and the addiction that comes with that.

So, okay. So sometimes probably are kind of humorous in that way. Proverbs are applied in different situations.

So, for example, we say a stitch in time saves nine. And so, if you're a NASCAR guy and your car's coming around and you may have trouble with something, a stitch in time saves nine. You get it fixed so that to make sure that it runs the race.

A stitch in time saves nine. Do it now so you don't have a bigger problem later on. Okay.

Stitch in time saves nine. That's very different than a student may use it in the context of doing homework. A stitch in time saves nine.

So, you do your homework daily, little stitches, stitch in time saves nine. Cause when you hit the exam, you better know your stuff. And if you've done your homework up to that point, then the exam becomes, just a reflection of what you already know.

And so, it's not a big deal. A stitch in time saves nine. However, you don't do your homework.

Then you get nine stitches to do all at once. It doesn't work too well. Although most of us are into cramming and know the problems with that type of approach.

So, what a poem means, and what a poem or proverb means is discovered on how a poem or how a proverb means. What a poem means is determined by how a poem means. So, the what and how are connected.

There's a literary aspect to it here that's really reflected and you've got to see how it comes to meaning and the form and meaning are connected in poetry. It's kind of like verbal and nonverbal communication. Um, actually much of communication now we've realized as nonverbal.

And so, I've been in meetings with people and somebody will be giving their opinion and you'll watch the person over to the side of them kind of rolling their eyes and then kind of like going like this or whatever. You can just see that the person by their nonverbal is rejecting the idea that this person is saying and the nonverbal speaks. Uh, and that's what I always tell my children.

You've got to hear not only what is said, but what is not said. And oftentimes what is not said is actually more important than what is actually said. And so, you got to watch the nonverbal in, in poetry.

It's very similar. You watch what it says, but how do you determine what it's saying, you've got to listen to how it's saying it. Poetry will have all sorts of, um, little features and wonderful things that make it, um, beautiful.

And you've got to pick up those things. If you're going to understand what the poet, what the proverbial wise person was, was meaning. Um, so we do not miss the author's poetic craft and intent.

We should also not miss the editor's craft and intent as he or she builds the book together and shapes the book out of the single Proverbs. A poet puts words together to make a poem. So, the editor takes proverbial sentences and builds those together into the meaning of the book.

So editorial meaning and authorial meaning, are very important. In the journey to discover meanings in Proverbs, we've got a historical setting that we need to take serious and seriously. And, um, so for example, Solomon, Hezekiah, Augur, Lemuel, the sayings of the wise.

So, we look at the historical kind of context in which these Proverbs and through which the Proverbs were collected and authored and things. There's literary expression. You've got aesthetics going on.

Sometimes, as we said in Proverbs 31, there's an acrostic where the virtuous woman, you've got 22 verses exactly. And each one begins with the next letter of the alphabet. It's an acrostic.

It's trying to say, I've gone A to Z. This is the climactic expression of this virtuous woman or quote, Madam Wisdom, as I would take it and things. Although there's a lot of disagreement on how you interpret Proverbs 31. Acrostic, a chiasmic structure where you've got, sometimes the poets will use A, B, C, and then a C, B, A type, what's called a chiasmic structure.

It's called a key because in key, key in Greek is like an X and so you'd have A, B, B, A. And so, if you connect the two B's, you connect the two A's, it makes like an X, it makes a key. So, they call it a chiasmic structure. Sometimes you've got what's called an inclusio.

An inclusio means the beginning and the end are connected. And so oftentimes in a story, and how many times does this happen? The story begins, you know, one way and it ends coming back around to the beginning. And those are called inclusio. They're called bookends. A story begins the way it ends. And sometimes you get that kind of structure as well, inclusios.

So, there are many of these kinds of structures. Sometimes you get a hinge or what they call a Janus. Okay. And a Janus was a thing with I think it was Latins, but when you had this two-headed coin where the one head goes this way and the other head goes this way. And so, you've got two heads facing like this. And a Janus means that basically it's a connecting verse where you come down a certain section and then you've got a connecting verse.

It refers back up to what came before it, but it also refers down to what comes after it. And that's called a Janus or a hinge, kind of like a hinge on a door connected to things. And so anyway, there are different things.

Phonology also, a lot of times you get a phonology on a monopia kind of things. And so, for example, I just, out of my head, there's this mikase sinasifte sheker. Mikase sinasifte.

You can hear this. Mikase sinasifte sheker. The verse is about the gossip. Even doing modern English. Mikase sinasifte sheker. It's about a gossip.

And so sometimes the phonology of how something sounds is playing off the sound of the gossip as well as the communication, by the way. And it really helps to know Hebrew then because you can pick up the sounding things that don't come over in translation. There's almost no way to translate that.

You get the rhetorical aspects that you've got to take in. What's the relationship of the speaker and the addressee and the audience, the speaker and the audience? What's the relationship between the speaker and the audience rhetorically? And poetics, parallelism, as we mentioned earlier, parallelism is absolutely critical. A wise son brings joy to a father, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

You can see that they're parallel. The father and mother are parallel. One brings joy, one brings grief.

A wise son brings joy, a foolish son brings grief. And so, you can see how those two lines are parallel. And so, there's a whole study in parallelism.

Actually, we should do a whole presentation just on the nature of parallelism in Hebrew poetry. It's wonderful. Sound and sense, as we said, combining terseness in proverbs, very terse.

And so those will be used as poetic features to capture the proverbial moment. Figurative language, metaphor, simile, metonymy, are really important things. These are figures of speech.

Hyperbole, and hyperboles are overstatements for emphasis. Parody, sometimes there is a parody. It's got a humorous side to it about the drunk, you know, he's going back and forth.

It's kind of a parody of that. Generalization also. These figures of speech, especially metaphor and metonymy, there's a new type of study called cognitive linguistics.

And there are huge studies being done now on metaphor and understanding metaphor and metonymy. And the relationship between a metaphonymy, which would be a combination of metaphor and metonymy put together. And what they're realizing in cognitive linguistics is that we think, we think, these are not just, I call them figures of speech, but I don't like that terminology anymore, figures of speech.

When you say that a metaphor or metonymy is a figure of speech, it's kind of like it's a frill thing that, you know, the poetic guy is getting artistic and person is getting artistic and things. No, that's not what, what, what the cognitive linguistics are saying. No, we think our brains are wired to think metaphorically.

That is this rain, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Okay. Though your sins be as scarlet, they'll be as white as snow.

And then, so there's a relationship between two different categories. Okay. Two different categories, sins, white, snow, and things.

So, metaphor and metonymy, actually how we think, and metonymy, another aspect of how our brains put together meaning, saying parts for whole, like a synecdoche is a type of metonymy, etc. We don't want to get into all that stuff and go on forever, but just, but just be aware that those things are happening. And the literary form, what is a proverb? Forms are used.

The proverbial sage uses forms. So, for example, in Proverbs 30, there are definite forms that the sage uses. And let's see.

Okay. I guess I'll just read it from the scripture here itself rather than the printed, but Proverbs 30, it's interesting that the, and you can pick it up. Here it is.

Proverbs chapter 30, the sayings of Augur. Now let's just see what types of things he uses. He uses what are called numerical proverbs, numerical proverbs, and just check this out.

Okay. Three things are never satisfied. Four that never say enough.

The grave, the barren womb, land, which is never satisfied with water and fire, which never says enough. Proverbs chapter 30, verse 18, another numerical proverb. See, this is a form that he's using.

There are three things that are too amazing for me. Four that I do not understand. Three and four, the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas.

Israelites were land lovers up in the mountains. The way of a ship on the high seas and the way of a man with a woman. I'm not going to comment on that, but you can see numerical proverbs.

Okay. Beautiful. And they had these certain structures that were used then in constructing proverbs, constricting proverbial literature.

Cultural settings, cultural settings would be like, and many have done massive studies on this. You have the royal court involved and you'll see many of the proverbs, Proverbs 16, for example, a ton of king proverbs. Okay.

And so, it had to do, the proverbs were often constructed and used in the court, the king's court. Other times you get proverbs that are very much folk oriented and they tell you about the common folk. A lot of times they're involved in pedagogical functions, teaching children and just teaching basic principles of morality or what other things that proverbs are doing.

There's also a judicial aspect of them too, where they argue for social justice types of things and judicial. Social factors, kings, kings, scribes, teachers, students. Those also help us to put this in a context.

King, scribes, teachers, students, family, father and mother and children. Really important. Education was done in the context of the family and these proverbs reflect that.

A wise son brings joy to a father, foolish son has a grief to his mother. Listen my son to your father's instruction, hear your mother's teaching. And so, the parents were very much involved in their education.

Sounds like something we should consider. Canonical function. How are proverbs used in narratives? And so, we have then, as Carol Fontaine did a beautiful book called the traditional sayings in the Old Testament, in which he traced proverbs, not in the book of proverbs, but outside in the historical narrative, these proverbs came up.

So, is Saul among the prophets? That was first Samuel 10. And so, you have these proverbs. Also another canonical function is Proverbs 26:4 and 5 that we're going to look at today.

"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him." And the next verse says, "answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." These two verses seem to contradict one another.

And so, proverbs, when it went to get in the Bible was called the antilegomena, that which is spoken against. There were five books in the Old Testament canon that were antilegomena in terms of when they went to put the Old Testament canon together, there were these books that had problems with them. And so, you had books like proverbs where there's this clash, answer not a fool according to his folly.

And then the next verse says, answer a fool according to his folly. It seems to contradict things. The book of Ezekiel, describes a temple as being like 1200 miles this way and 1200 miles that way, it's too big for what it is in Israel and stuff.

And so, Ezekiel would be one of those ones that was questioned also. There were five of these antilegomena books, but Proverbs was one of those antilegomena

books because of this, because of the verses we're going to look at today, chapters six and 25. Now I want to call these guys willy-nilly advocates.

There are certain people, and I'm going to read here from an article I wrote in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and just read some of the statements. Are the proverbs in chapters 10 to 29 thrown together haphazardly, or are they ordered? I'm trying to argue that they were ordered by an editor. And that gives us another level of meaning that we need to look at what the editor was doing, putting these back to back and things.

And so Oesterley writes this, but generally speaking, the proverbs are thrown together in a very haphazard fashion in this collection. I tend to disagree, but many still agree with that. R. Gordon explains proverbs are difficult to read because quote, there is little continuity or progression, end quote.

A to B to C to D plot, direction, beginning story, middle story, climax, end of story. It's not like that in proverbs. And so, he says, Whoa, there's a, even Gerhard von Raad expresses his annoyance at the quote, lack of order of the proverbs.

And so, McKane, who wrote a major commentary on it, sees these proverbs as atomistic. Bernard Lang makes this comment. The book of Proverbs is an almost random collection of brief didactic discourses, poems, learned and pious sayings.

J. C. Rylaarsdam says this, even when two or more successive proverbs deal more or less with the same subject, for example, in chapter 10 verses four and five, notice that's a pair, but he kind of, is he going to play that up or play it down? The connection seems to be incidental rather than organic. There is no logical continuity of thought. So that's what a lot of people are saying about proverbs, that these things are scattered and they're haphazard and they're willy nilly and, therefore atomistic, self-contained proverbs, disconnected, helter-skelter, disarranged, disordered.

What is a proverb pair? Now I'm going to give a definition of a proverb pair. Two proverbial sentences that are bonded together, whether by means of phonetics, semantics, catchwords, syntax, rhetorical device, situation, or theme into a higher, into a higher architectonic unit. There are two proverbs that are adjacent, that are concatenated, and they're put back to back.

Two proverbs that are together, that are bonded together by phonetics, semantics, catchwords, syntax, rhetorical devices, situation, or theme into a higher unit. So, there's a, there's some meaning to be had there on what, what was the, what was the intent of the editor by putting those two together? Now, each one means something by itself, and I don't want to downplay that at all. Each proverb by itself

has a significant meaning on its own, but when you put them back-to-back, they kind of dance together.

And dancing together is very different than a person doing the moves by themselves. Okay. And so that's what I'm trying to say.

Weeks to weeks discovered, quote, discovered such adjacent sayings in 1994. The problem was apparently ignored my article was written six years earlier than that, but it's six years late, but at least he got it, that there are proverb pairs. And literary, literary craftsmanship can be seen.

These are the proverbs of Solomon that were collected by Hezekiah's men, Proverbs chapter 25.1. These are the proverbs of Solomon that were collected. And then they're collected by these editors who then select certain proverbs and don't select other proverbs. First King, first Kings four and five tell us that Solomon wrote like 3000 proverbs.

We only have about 375. We get about one 10th or less of what Solomon actually put together from the 1 Kings 4 and 5 passages. So, they were edited later on by Hezekiah's men, which is a couple and of half centuries after the time of Solomon.

There are examples of longer units. As we said, Proverbs 31 across the book of the virtuous woman, the numerical saying, which are several problems in a row. Um, and that type of thing.

Now, how frequent are proverb pairs? How frequent are proverb pairs? Well, in Proverbs chapter 10 verses 10 to 29, I'm sorry, Proverbs chapter 10 to 29, there are about 595 verses. Okay. Proverbs 10 chapters 10 to 29, there are 595 verses.

I found in going through those 62 examples of pairing, 62 examples, which is 124 verses. So, you've got 595 verses, and 124 of those are paired up. That's 21%, 21% of the proverbs that are supposed to be helter-skelter scattered together, Proverbs chapter 10 sentences to 29.

But yet there's an example of 124 of those or 21% are found in pairs. For example, Proverbs chapter 15 verses 16 and 17, it says, are two Better Than Proverbs. Okay.

Are two Better Than Proverbs. And so, these are put back-to-back. And, let's see if I've got that.

Yeah, I've got that written here. It says "better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil." That's one proverb.

And then the next proverb right after it says, “better a small serving of vegetables with love than a fattened calf with hatred.” And so, these are put back-to-back these two. And yet, there's 21 of these Better Than Proverbs in the whole book of Proverbs.

There are 21 of these, what they call Better Than Proverbs, better this than that kind of thing, the structure. And so, there's 21 of those, but notice here out of the 21, two of them occur back-to-back. What is the possibility of that? What is the probability of that? If you have 21 and you've got 31 chapters and you've got 21 examples, you'd think they'd be scattered all over the place.

And sometimes they are, but in this case, you've got two put back-to-back, not only two in the same chapter but they're put back-to-back. And this shows that they're, they're being paired up. They're being paired up.

One proverb contextualizes another, for example, the wealth of the rich is their fortified city. This is Proverbs chapter 10:15 and 16. Proverbs 10:15 and 16 says “the wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor.”

If you've ever been poor, you know what the ruin of the poor means. So, this is not describing how it should be. It describes how it is in life.

So, then what happens is then this proverb is saying, you know, the rich is their fortified city and the poverty is the ruin of the poor. The next verse kind of qualifies it a little bit. “The wages of the righteous is life, but the earnings of the wicked is sin and death.”

And so, it's saying, if you've got your wealth, but you're wicked, you're, you got a big problem. And if you're poor and you're righteous, you get life and things. And so, the one verse kind of contextualizes and helps us with the meaning of the other.

Now there's a chiasmic structure here that's been noticed by a guy named Steinmann, who's written an excellent commentary on the book of Proverbs. It's also been noted by a guy named Ray Van Leuwen, who has written extensively on Proverbs chapters 25 to 27, but he's also written a whole commentary in the Interpreter's Bible on this. And they've noticed then this chiasmic structure.

Now remember we said chiasmic was that's the X Chi in Greek, A B B A. Now this is an extended one, but he takes verses Proverbs chapter 26 verses 1 to 12 as a chiasmic structure. And I want to read through chapter 26 verses 1 to 12 and show you that basically this whole 1 to 12 is what Toy, who's an older commentator who wrote on Proverbs, calls this the Book of Fools. So, in the book of Proverbs, you get all these sentence sayings in chapters 10 to 29, but in chapter 26 verses 1 to 12, these verses all seem to hang together around the topic of the fool.

So, Toy calls this chapter 26 verses 1 to 12, the Book of Fools. And I would probably call it the Scroll of fools. But anyway, he said the Book of Fools.

Let me just read this then Proverbs chapter 26 verses 1 and following. "Like snow in the summer or rain in the harvest, honor is not fitting for a fool." Now that's going to be a key phrase.

Honor is not fitting for a fool. Proverbs chapter 26 verses 1 to 12. The idea is what is fitting? What is fitting? And it says here, "like snow in summer or rain in harvest, honor is not fitting for a fool. Like a fluttering sparrow in a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest. A whip for a horse and a bridle for a donkey and a rod for the back of fools." There again, the fool comes to head.

"A whip for the horse and a bridle for the donkey and a rod for the back of fools." Then our verses, our two verses are going to be looking at Proverbs 26:4 and 5. "Do not answer a fool according to his folly or you yourself will be just like him." Verse 5, "answer a fool according to his folly or he'll be wise in his own eyes."

See the kind of conundrum or paradox, or some people call it contradiction. These two verses, we'll look at shortly.

"Sending a message by the hand of a fool is like cutting off one's feet or drinking poison." Don't send messages by a fool.

"Like useless legs of one who is lame is a proverb in the mouth of a fool." Proverbs are for wisdom, right? But can a fool cite Proverbs? Yeah.

And it's like useless legs of one who is lame is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

"Like tying a stone in a sling is giving honor to a fool. A fool should not have honor. Like a thorn bush in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool." When a fool quotes a proverb, it's like having a thorn stuck in your hand.

"Like an archer who wounds at random is one who hires a fool or any passerby. As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats its folly, their folly." And then the last verse, "do you see a person wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for them."

Read that last verse. "Do you see a person wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for them than a fool." What's worse than being a fool? Being wise in your own eyes. Pride and arrogance are worse than being a fool.

According to the last verse, summation of this, of this proverb section here. Now, A, honoring a fool is not fitting. B, inconsequential curse.

C, a double comparison, honor is not fitting for a fool. So you can see how it kind of goes in A, B, C, D, and then D, C, B, A. Back out. It's a chiasm.

And so, this is, by the way, I'll have this, I should, I'll cut these in. The PowerPoints are going to be available online. You can download the PowerPoint and actually probably should download the PowerPoint and you can follow along through this lengthy lecture on Proverbs 26:4-5.

But so, I've got the chiasm laid out there. Now what Steinman notices is there's a kind of a chiasm tucked in another chiasm. And this is what he calls E1, a fool's stupidity.

Chapter 26, verse 4. E2, the fool's stupidity is his wisdom. 26.5. F is the folly of using a fool for important business. Verse 6. G, a proverb in the mouth of fools.

26.7. H, the focus of the chiasm. H, honor is not fitting for a fool. And so that's the major message of this whole section. Honor is not fitting for a fool. So, what is fitting for a fool? It's asking, how do you deal with a fool? Okay. Honor is not fitting for a fool.

Chapter 26, verse 8. Notice that 26.1 basically said the same thing. Okay. A proverb in the mouth of fools.

26.9. G, and then coming back out F, the folly of using a fool for important business. 26.10 is F and then E1, a fool's stupidity, verse 11. And then a fool's wisdom.

Better to be a fool than to be wise in your own eyes. Chapter 26:12 ends like that. So Steinmann, I think points out these two embedded chiasms. That's a really interesting structure.

What I'm trying to say is that when the editors put this thing together, they throw this stuff together. It's very well, chapters 26 verses 1 to 12 is extremely well constructed and there is a higher meaning. And I think Van Leeuwen is correct.

And he's saying that it's basically telling us how we need to interpret proverbs. And so, this is the interpretation or the hermeneutic of wisdom, that everything's not cut and dry. Everything's not straightforward.

You see situations, they're complex and you need to interpret them very slightly. You got a fool who can quote a proverb. So, you've got, you know, you've got to do some thinking about this stuff.

And fool and worse, hermeneutics evaluating what is fitting. Honor given to a fool. That's repeated by the way, in verses one and verse eight, a rod for the back of fools.

Again, what is fitting for a fool? A rod for the back of fools. Answering a fool or not. There's a repetition, a major repetition.

"Answer not a fool according to his folly." The next verse, "answer a fool according to his folly." So, there's a high repetition in verses four and five that we're going to be looking at.

Sending a fool as an envoy. Again, is it what is fitting? Don't send a fool when you want an envoy or an ambassador.

Fool spouting a proverb in chapter 26:7, and 26:9 both have a fool spouting a proverb. Hiring workers. A drunk, don't do a drunk, and don't do a fool.

Hire, verse 10. And so basically, Van Leeuwen lays these out as things that are not appropriate for a fool. And he's just telling you how to deal with a fool there.

So, okay. Pairing variations. Now this can be fun.

Notice how I'm trying to maintain, and I tried to show you 21% of these in Proverbs 10 to 29 are these pairs. 21% of them are like that. There are like 60 some of them.

Okay. But there are also variations. There are triads.

Sometimes there are three proverbs in a row. We call those triads. Stuart Weeks in his book, *Early Israelite Wisdom* also notes these triads.

For example, chapter 23:26 to 28, and chapter 24:10 through 12, et cetera. Sometimes I discovered what are called split pairs. In other words, there's two verses that are kind of close to one another, but they're paired to one another.

And so, I call them split pairs. Okay. An example, Proverbs 10 verse 8 and verse 10. There's a verse that goes in between them, but those two, 8 and 10, go together. Same thing with chapter 16:32 and chapter 17:1. Those two go together, but there's a verse in between. Same thing with chapter 17:26 and chapter 18:5.

Now the pair plus one detached. Sometimes I found that there was a pair, but then there was a verse intervening, and then another one detached. So, this is kind of like a broken triad. You've got a pair that's tight.

There's a verse slotted in there and then there's another one that bonds back to the pair. So, it's like a triad or it's like a pair plus one. And you have that in 15:1 and 2 and then verse 4. You've got that in 15:8 and 9 and verse 11. And you've got that in chapter 20:16 and 17 and then verse 20. So, this is the idea of a pair plus one attached.

And then something that's really been controversial, and I just am so grateful for the fellow who is a wonderful brother. Knut Heim, one of the leading people in the study of Proverbs in the world, did a series for us in the book of Proverbs and it's up on YouTube. You can watch it. He's got a thing that he calls clusters. And so not only do you have pairs and triads, but then you have clusters of these proverbial things where they're linked together. I called them strings earlier, but he calls them clusters and I give way to him. He's obviously a major expert on this stuff.

He shows how chapter 11:9 to 12, for example, chapter 15:29 to 33, how these things are connected up in these clusters. And so, there's just not pairs, triads, pairs plus one, but there's also these strings or these clusters of proverbs that go together that the editors had placed together.

Now, I'm going to go through five examples of pairs, but we're only going to do one today because this one on 26:4 and 5 is a major one because of the conundrum or paradox or conflict or contradiction.

However, you want to determine the say it. And it's verses 4 and 5. Proverbs chapter 26:4 and 5 reads, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself." Next verse, "Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes."

Should you not answer a fool as the first verse says, or should you answer a fool as the next verse says? So, these are called contradictory proverbs. And what I want to do before we jump actually into the biblical text here is actually have some fun and just play around.

This phenomena of two proverbs kind of clashing with one another is found all over the world in all different periods. And so contradictory proverbs are well-known phenomena. Alster, who's dealing with two volumes, two beautiful volumes on Proverbs of ancient Sumer. Okay. We're talking Sumer, way back, thousands of years before Solomon. Okay. Thousand years before Solomon or many hundred years before Solomon, before Israel, the Sumer, history begins a Sumer kind of thing.

He notices he's put together this collection of Sumerian proverbs and he notices that some of them are conflicting, and contradictory. Part of the genre in almost all languages then uses this contrast. Mieder, the guy from Vermont who studies these things also calls them anti or twisted proverbs.

And what we'll do is we'll examine some twisted proverbs in English. We'll just have some fun with that. Okay.

I know this is long, but I wanted to do it in detail because I know if I don't do it in detail, who's going to do it. So anyway, English proverbs, and we'll just have some fun with his book. Mieder wrote a book called *Twisted Wisdom, Modern Anti-Proverbs* in 1999.

And we'll look at some of those anti-proverbs. You guys will know them. The Sumerian proverbs, we'll grab a couple from Alster and then we'll go over to Nigeria and there are Yoruba proverbs that come from Nigeria. And we'll look at some of the contrasts between those. And then also actually, even in Scripture, you get tensions between things that they kind of clash. You've got the sovereignty of God on one hand, and the free will of man on the other. How do those things fit together? Well, if you're reformed, they go one way. If you're more of an Arminian perspective, they go the other way. And you know, which one you're going to emphasize.

You're like me and you stand in the middle, get hit by both sides, faith and works. Is it by faith or by works and faith without works is dead, but yet faith, you know, works then is no good and stuff. And so, you get this, the Trinity, the whole notion of the Trinity is God, you know, is one.

Hear O Israel, Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one. And yet we've got father, son, and Holy Spirit. And so therefore three in one.

And how does the Trinity, you say, well, it's just a Trinity and dismiss it. No, no, man. Trinity is a mystery. It's incredible when you start thinking about it more deeply as the church fathers did. So, there are these kinds of clashing things. So, let's just play with English.

English paradoxical or contradictory proverbs. It's part of a genre and Mieder presents some of these. Now, let me just take one.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. In other words, I'm down at seminary, my wife's back at Buffalo State College and stuff, and absence makes the heart grow fonder.

And I desire to be with her. And so, as the absence then my desire and just longing for my wife to be, grew much stronger. So, absence makes the heart grow fonder.

We know what that's like. How about this one? Absence makes the heart grow fonder for someone else. Well, and you know what that's like.

Okay. So, a guy falls in love with this girl or whatever, and she's over here, he's over here. And then all of a sudden, he meets this other character, a woman here, and he falls in love with her now.

And now he's got a real problem. I think that happened actually in the series called Yellowstone. And he has a girlfriend.

I'm not putting an advertisement for that, but anyway. So, absence makes the heart go fonder for someone else. And you can see how the proverb is twisted there.

Absence makes, here's another one. And I've said this one myself. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. Absence makes the heart to wander. Whoa. A variational technique, substituting a rhyming word, fonder, wander, two totally different meanings built off the same proverb.

Here's another. Now this is a real anti-proverb. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" and "out of sight, out of mind," out of sight, out of mind.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, or is it out of sight, out of mind? Two totally clashing, contradictory proverbs. And so, we have fun with those in English and they're kind of fun to play with these things.

Here's one. This is an interesting one. X a day keeps the Y away. Now this is the way we all know. "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." That's the proverb. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Most of us have heard that when we were children. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Apples are good to eat. Apple a day keeps the doctor away. That's the proverb.

How about this one? Twisted proverb. "A crisis a day keeps impeachment away." Bill Clinton. "A crisis a day keeps the impeachment away." And that was used in political circles.

Here's another twist to it. "A laugh a day keeps the psychiatrist away." A laugh a day keeps the psychiatrist away. Good to be happy and laugh at times.

Here's another one. "An effort a day keeps failure away." An effort a day keeps the failure away. Put in effort, discipline. Discipline equals freedom. I think there's a guy named Jocko Willink said that. Discipline equals freedom. Effort a day keeps failure away.

Now here's one. Proverbs are meant, everybody gets into this thing where it's in the Bible. It's got to be truth and truth and all these heavy, big things. Sometimes proverbs are meant to have fun.

The guy is, you know, on a ship mast. He's going back and forth. Hit me, but I don't feel it (Prov 23:35). And it's a parody. And so, you got to kind of lighten up a little bit with these proverbs.

So, here's another one. "An onion a day keeps everybody away." An onion a day keeps everyone away. And you say, it's meant to put a smile on your face.

Okay. Here's another one. It's more religious. "A chapter of the Bible a day keeps Satan away." A chapter a day keeps Satan away. Some good advice there.

And then an apple a day keeps a doctor away. And so does not paying your bills. You don't pay your bills is a response. You don't see a doctor. Okay. Apples are so expensive these days. You may as well have a doctor. Better than an apple a day. Better than an apple a day.

Okay. And then here's this one about a chicken. It's a discussion between two chickens. So, the old hen says to the young hen, he says, the old hen says, let me give you a good piece of advice. Notice we're in a kind of an advice, old hen, young hen, old wisdom, young person learning. Okay. So, we're in that kind of context only they use chickens. Okay. Let me give you a piece of good advice. The young hen says, what is it? "The old hen says an egg a day keeps the axe away." An egg a day keeps the axe away. In other words, you better take care to do your eggs. Okay.

These are twisted Proverbs. Wolfgang Mieder, thanks to him gives us some proverbial fun.

I had fun with these with my daughter, actually. I think it took place actually in this very room. In our family, we've got a major conflict. I'm a major morning person. Like I get up usually five, five o'clock in the morning. To be honest, I'm retired now and I still get up at five in the morning, sometimes 5:30. Sometimes I sleep into 5:30 like I did this morning. But anyway, my wife is a major night person. So, she goes to bed between two and 4 AM in the morning.

Okay. So we kind of miss that way while our children then are all, actually they all take after her pretty much. Okay. So, night people kind of thing. And so, I was trying to tell my daughter she needs to get up early and I mean, the best part of my day is between like six in the morning and noon I get a whole day's work done just then.

So, I'm trying to encourage my daughter. She's going to college and trying to get her to really hit the ground running. So I tell her, "the early bird gets the worm." The early bird gets the worm. I really believe that. So, get up early, get your stuff going, and get on the road.

Okay. She is a really smart whip. My kids are all smarter than I am. But anyways, my daughter came back without blinking an eye. She says, "yeah, dad, the early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese." "The second mouse gets the cheese."

And so, we had a kind of a proverb war or duel and it was fun. It was playful banter between a father and his daughter. And anyway, look before you leap.

Here's another proverb. Look before you leap. So look before you leap.

And there needs to be a little hesitation here because you're going to leap and you're jumping off something. Look before you leap to what you're getting down into. Okay.

Used to jump off cliffs into water quarries and things like that. And you look to make sure there's enough water down there to catch you when you jump off an 80-foot cliff and things like that. Look before you leap.

But the other proverb says "he who hesitates is lost." You take too much time looking. You hesitate. It's lost. You've lost the opportunity. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

"If you don't succeed at first," "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again." The other proverb says "don't beat your head against the wall." You've got to know when to quit. Just, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again." The next proverb says, don't beat your head against the wall. Okay. Or "Don't beat a dead horse." Okay. You've got to know when to pull back.

I mean, when things are going wrong and things are going to go wrong, you got to say, I've got a problem here and you've got to reanalyze. And so, if you don't do that, you're just going to keep banging your head against the wall. And we've got many people today that just keep doing the same thing and making the same mistakes over and over.

Okay. If you never, "you're never too old to learn." "You're never too old to learn." I love this one. "You're never too old to learn." What's the other proverb? "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." "You're never too old to learn." Or is it "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." Do you give up on the old folks or do you, you know, give them a break?

"Many hands make light work." "Many hands make light work." I love that. "Many hands make light work." Well, what's the other proverb say? "Too many cooks in the kitchen spoil the broth." "Too many cooks in the kitchen spoil the broth." Whoops. Too many. So, you get it.

“Save for a rainy day.” “Save for a rainy day.” It's kind of a proverb. “Save up for a rainy day.” Another proverb coming the other way. “Tomorrow will take care of itself.” Almost sounds biblical. Matthew 6 was that? Anyway, “tomorrow will take care of itself.”

So now let's jump into Sumer. Here are some Sumerian proverbs.

“One cannot take anything out of the mouth of the poor.” Sumerian proverbs are about 1800, 1900 BC. That's like back in the time with Abraham. It's about a thousand years before David and Solomon. So, “one cannot take anything out of the mouth of the poor.” There is nothing in there. Okay.

Next proverb says, “so lowly is a poor man that what is taken from his mouth is thus restored.” And so it comes back the other way and says, well, wait a minute, you know, and I'm not sure I understand these two proverbs, but they're obviously contradictory things being said there.

Here's an Aruba proverb from Nigeria. Okay. And they use proverbs here to bolster their arguments in legal contexts and other things. It says “An empty barrel makes the loudest noise.” “An empty barrel makes the loudest noise.”

The one that has content does not make noise. In other words, if you fill a barrel up with sand and you wrap it, it doesn't make much noise at all. But you take the same barrel, you pour out all the sand and it's an empty barrel. You hit it, it goes gong and it makes a big sound. So, “An empty barrel makes the loudest noise.” “An empty barrel makes the loudest noise,” but one that has content doesn't.

So, what's it saying is you see what it's saying in terms of a person that a lot of times the people with the loudest mouth have nothing in their heads. But anyway, okay.

Sorry. The contrast to that is “if you do not praise yourself, nobody will praise you.” So, in other words, yeah, it's an empty thing, but if you don't praise yourself, nobody will.

And so those two proverbs kind of hit at each other in various ways. Here's another one on a warrior. “A warrior does not receive a wound on the back.” “A warrior does not receive a wound on the back.” A warrior is always out fighting. And so, he takes his wounds on his front.

The next proverb comes in, “To fight and run is the beauty of bravery.” “To fight and run is the beauty of bravery.” In other words, you've got to be smart enough to know you're losing the battle. Get out of there. Okay. And so, the other one says he doesn't take a wound in the back, but you've got to know when to bail out.

And so, these are two kinds of contrary proverbs. So, these are, there's a book that I've been using for some of this stuff by Peter Hatton. It's called *Contradiction in the Book of Proverbs: The Deep Waters of Counsel*, 2008. Very excellent, excellent book. These contradictions are not imperfections, but part of a subtle and profound didactic strategy to awaken critical faculties in the readers.

They're kind of like eddies. You know what an eddy is? The water comes down, but then the waters come down, but then there's an eddy that kind of circles back around like that. So actually, even though the water's going this way in the eddy, the water goes up against it and things.

So which way is the water flowing? The water's flowing this way, but the eddy takes it back the other way. And so, what Hatton is pointing out here is that critical faculties, take account of the major flow of the water. Yes, but they also see the eddies that ripple up back the other way.

Hatton writes this, "We shall discover that proverbs achieve its goal of awakening its readers to wisdom by introducing contradictions into the flow of its sayings. This defamiliarizes not only just the sayings concerned but also the context and other sayings around them. The reader audience is goaded into paying renewed attention to a form of wisdom whose familiarity might lead to it being dismissed."

In other words, in these proverbs, a stitch in time saves time. You don't even think about it anymore. But what happens is when they get these clashes, then all of a sudden you start thinking about the nuances.

What is the real meaning of this? It's a pondering hermeneutic. When you clash the two like this, it creates a pondering hermeneutic or a pondering interpretation that you go back to evaluating what is fitting in our Proverbs chapter 26. Timing is important.

People, the character of the people is important. The situation, sociological and rhetorical, are all important and have to be taken into account. So internal contrary items in a single proverb.

So here Hatton is pointing out some conflicts within a certain proverb, within a proverb itself. Proverbs 13:24 says this, "he who withholds his rod," "he who withholds his rod hates his son." And you say, wait a minute, wait a minute, a father who withholds a rod, okay, we don't do the rod thing anymore.

Okay. I wonder whether we should, but anyway, "he who withholds his rod hates his son, whoever loves him, disciplines him early." So, it's kind of the reverse.

You know, the guy that supposedly seems to be merciful actually hates his son. And the one who loves him is careful to discipline his son. Now this is contrary to a lot of parenting I see going on today where the parent does not discipline the child and says, Hey, I want to be the fun person and doesn't do any discipline.

And well, this says the one who withholds the rod actually hates his child, but the one who disciplines the child early, that's the one who really loves him. And so this is a really important proverb, that kind of goes the other way. Here's another one.

Chapter 27.6, Proverbs 27:6, "Trustworthy are a lover's blows." So, in other words, a lover's blows are trustworthy, "but dangerous, the caresses of one who hates." In other words, you've got a person who hates a person, they use caresses and all sorts of getting close, touchy, feely kind of things. That's not, I'd be careful. "Trustworthy are the lover's blows." In other words, if you've got a friend who tells you the way it is, he has enough guts. And I think a lot of people need these kinds of people. A person who is able to kind of like, and it's one of the things I really respect about my wife is she'll tell me when I, mess up, she'll tell me. Now, of course, she's always wrong, but she'll tell me when I'm doing something goofy or something that's wrong, or incorrect. And then I've got to weigh that and I got to correct often because she's usually right.

Okay. Don't tell her that. But anyway, so you've got to, the one trustworthy is a lover's blows. And the dangerous are the caresses of one who hates.

Here's another one, Proverbs 31:4-7. Lemuel's mother is talking to him. Lemuel's the king and his mother is talking to him and he basically says, okay, I'll just paraphrase it. She says, when you're the king, don't get drunk because if you're the king and you get drunk, you can do major damage because you can destroy justice in your drunken stupor.

You can destroy justice and you're the king. Don't get drunk. Maintain your justice and things like that.

However, she then comes back the other way and she says, but wine and strong drink are for the poor and those who are needy and those who have a really rough time in life. And she says those are the people that should be drinking. Okay. As an escape. And so just a really interesting thing there in terms of Proverbs.

Proverbs 25: 15 with patience, a ruler is persuaded. A soft tongue can break a bone. Okay. Do you see the clash there? "A soft tongue can break a bone."

In other words, a person is gentle when he speaks to the king, can actually persuade the king. And we've kind of lost the art of persuasion today. We'd rather just, you

know, stereotype people and put them in this box or this box and they're all wrong. And these guys are all right.

I'm with this group. These guys are our enemies. He said, no, a soft, a soft tongue can break a bone. And so, this is a beautiful proverb. But again, you see the clash, the soft tongue breaking a hard bone.

And that you can ask it as a riddle. What is soft yet breaks a bone? So, you can take the proverb and turn it into a riddle.

What is soft that breaks a bone? The tongue. So that kind of thing is available as well. Ahikar wrote in the 400s BC in the Assyrian court of Sinai, basically in other proverbs and wisdom.

“By controlling temper, one galls a commander, a soft tongue breaks a bone.” So here we have, in another culture, in an Assyrian culture, not Israel, Israel's got it in Proverbs 25:15, a soft tongue can break a bone. Here you are in the 400s.

And Ahikar has basically “a soft tongue can break a bone,” which is interesting. Proverbs are international. Proverbs were international.

Proverbs of Solomon, where he was wiser than the men of Egypt. Apparently, they knew the people of Egypt were wise. And so, they, they compare, there's a comparison contrast between, in between cultures and the nature of their Proverbs.

Now the nature of repetition in Proverbs. There's a wonderful book out by a guy named Daniel Snell. This book by Daniel Snell is called Twice-Told Proverbs and the Composition of the Book of Proverbs.

Wonderful book, brilliant guy, discovered this stuff way back and really had some things to say in terms of these twice-told Proverbs or the use of repetition. Now what's interesting is there are three repetitions in our Proverbs chapter 26, 1 to 12, there are three repetitions. And so, in chapter 26:1, you've got this, “like snow in summer and rain during the harvest, so honor does not befit a fool.”

Then jump down to verse eight. In verse eight, it says, like tying a stone in a slingshot. So is giving honor to a fool. So is giving honor to a fool. Those two phrases are repeated in chapter 26:1 and 26:8.

Here's another one. “Legs dangle from a cripple and a proverb from the mouth of fools. That's 26:7, 26:9, notice they're separated by one verse in the middle. “A thorn goes up into the hand of a drunkard and a proverb in the mouth of fools,” “a proverb in the mouth of fools.” Again, a repetition, 26: 7, 26:9, there is this repetition.

And then of course our verse, “Answer not a fool according to his folly.” The next verse, “Answer a fool according to his folly.” Again, repetition, repetition in 26:4 and 5. So, those are three repetitions interesting, all packed in.

So, repetition becomes an important feature and usually, it's repetition with little twists. And so, you've got to be careful to pay attention to those little trips. Now let's talk about cohesion.

How is Proverbs 26:4 related to verse 5? The first verse says, do not answer a fool according to his folly. What does verse six say? Answer a fool according to his folly. So, it's almost exact repetition, except for the word “not,” “not answer a fool according to his folly,” “Answer a fool according to his folly.”

The next verse says, “lest you be like him yourself.” In other words, what are the consequences of not answering a fool? Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. That's the consequence.

Verse five says, lest he be wise in his own eyes. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes. So, you can see the repetition here of the answer, do not answer, answer, fool, fool, according to his folly, according to his folly, lest, and then the consequence, and then lest he be wise in his own eyes, consequence and stuff.

So, you've got an act, answer or not answer, and consequence. And the consequence in the first one is for you, lest you be like him yourself. And the consequence in the second one is like that he would be wise in his own eyes.

And so, there's basically an imperative. An imperative is a command kind of thing. Answer or do not answer, plus an object, the fool, and then the manner, “according to his folly.”

And the negative then comes after that, the imperfect, with the consequence, “lest you be like him” or “lest he be wise in his own eyes.” Waltke also picks up some assonance here, that there's a sound thing going on with this verse as well, in these verses. And so, that's a beautiful, just kind of a poetic thing that's going on there that makes this really beautiful.

Now the fool, it's interesting that the fool, you say, well, out of Proverbs talks all about the fools. And so, putting two fool verses next to each other, that isn't a pair. That's just random. It just randomly happened. Yeah. Fool, this kasil-type fool, there are several different types of fools.

Dr. Wilson, Marv Wilson in his book, *Our Father Abraham*, outlines the different three or four types of fools. Here's the word *kasil*, which is the real fool strongly. And there's 48 times it's used in Proverbs.

Proverbs is 31 chapters, 49 times. So that's what about two fools per chapter kind of thing. Some have more than that.

But notice in Proverbs chapter 26 out of the 49 times, 11 times it has the word *kasil* in our verses, 11 times, which is 22% of the word *kasil* occurs in Proverbs chapter 26 verses 1 to 12. In other words, this chapter is the fool chapter kind of thing. If you want to learn about fools, Proverbs 26 is where to go.

According to *keiulto*, according to *keiulto* only occurs two times in the whole book of Proverbs. So, you say, well, it just, according to *keiulto*, that could be anywhere in Proverbs. No, now, according to *keiulto* only occurs two times in the book of Proverbs and that's in chapter 26 verse 4, and chapter 26 verse 5. You can't tell me that that's just luck that they got put back-to-back.

No, no. According to *keiulto*, only two times in the whole book, and they're put back-to-back like that. So, these things are being drawn together.

Answer, the word answer, *anah*, is a low-frequency word. It's only used eight times in the book of Proverbs. So, eight times in 31 chapters and notice chapters 26:4 and 5, those two verses, *anah* to answer a fool or not answer a fool are put back-to-back.

That word "answer" is only used eight times and two of those eight times are used in our two verses put back-to-back. The notion of "lest" or *pen* is used 17 times and often it's in the initial line and 10 times in the second line. But notice then our two, we're down to what's less than 17 times and seven of those are in the initial line.

So, they aren't the same, but there are 10 that are similar. So, 10 times *pen* [lest] is used, but notice it's used in our, out of the whole 10 times. So, it's used once every three chapters like this, once every three chapters, and yet ours is back-to-back, proverb to proverb in the second line, both of them lest he be like him or lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Now I want to separate, you say, okay, you've got Proverbs verses four and five. What I'm trying to show is the literary cohesion that those things go together. Obviously, they go together.

I've kind of, you know, beat a dead horse, so to speak. I mean, I've overdone it, but to answer not a fool according to his folly, answer a fool according to his folly. Obviously, those verses go together and I just proved that there's this major literary cohesion between those two verses.

But now it's four and five, is that separated from verse three? In other words, is it a pair or is it a triad? Is this other verse we can't know? Okay. It's interesting. Verse three, 26:3 says, "a whip for a horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools."

Now that's very different than answering or not answering a fool. They're both about fools, but the whole section is about fools. Verse 12, 1 to 12 are about fools, but it's very different.

"A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey." Notice the kind of comparison, the metaphor, and a rod for the back of fools. And so, it's saying, you know, whip, horse, bridle, this is for this, this is for this, and this is for this.

And that's a very different structure. While "fools" does link them all together, the topic is disciplining a fool and 26.3 is disciplining a fool, not answering or reasoning with a fool as it is in chapters 26.4 and 5. So notice also that in Proverbs 20, 26.3, the verse preceding our verses that it's, and the rod for the backs of fools, plural, it's pluralized in chapter 26.3 in ours, do not answer a fool, singular. And so, there's a distinction there, but one's talking about fools, plural.

Our two verses are both singular and things. One is highly metaphorical, whip for the horse, bridle for the donkey. And so, you get that kind of things going.

So, notice also that 26.3 is a tricolon, a whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools. That's three lines, three poetic lines. The lines in poetry are really important.

Okay. I don't want to get off on that, but sometimes when you look at poetry, even when you see it in English, how do you tell poetry in the Old Testament? Because it's built line by line. Whereas when you get into a historical narrative, the margins go down, and you get whole paragraphs. The historical narratives are paragraph, paragraph, paragraph. In poetry, it's a line, it's a line, it's a line. And so, the margins are zigzaggy lines in poetry all the time. In English, it's how it comes over.

So, all I'm trying to say is that there's a tricolon, three lines. And in our Proverbs answer, according to our list to be wise in his own eyes. There are two lines in both of those. And there's a tricolon, three lines there in 26:3.

Now, so verses four and five, 26:4 and 5 do not go with verse 3. There's a separation. They're very different verses saying different things.

Now, what about the verse that follows 4 and 5 is followed by 6. Verse 6 goes like this, "like cutting off one's feet or drinking violence is sending a message by the hand

of fools.” Notice that this is a simile, “like cutting off one's feet or drinking violence is sending a message by the hand of a fool.” It's using a simile. Well, there's no simile, in “answer fool according to his folly lest he be wise.” There's no simile or things like that there. So, it's quite different. And by the way, 6 does connect more down with 7 and 8 than it does back up. Okay.

Here's a warning against using a fool to accomplish a task, not trying to reason with them. So, verse six says that you shouldn't use a fool to accomplish a task that could not go and get done. Okay.

But trying to correct him by reasoning is more four and five and answering a fool or not answering a fool. So, the fool in 26:6 is positioned last, not in the first colon contrary to “Answer not a fool according to his folly” and “answer a fool.” Those are both in the first line, not in the second line. And in this one here in 26.6, the next verse, the fool comes in the second line, not the first. So just those differences I think are important.

So basically chapter 26:1-12 verse 2 is the only exception, addresses the fool. And so, this is 26:4 and 5 then is definitely a unit that stands out by itself, not with verse six and following and not with verse three preceding it. It's a pair.

In other words, it's a pair, it's uniquely bonded together and is a pair. Now what's the significance of putting of these two together and strongly linking Proverbs back-to-back. Sometimes it may be worth it to risk, personal risk, to stop a fool from moving downward, being wise in his own eyes.

What's worse than being a fool? Worse than being a fool is being wise in your own eyes. Arrogance, pride, from which there's no escape.

There is escape redemptively and I understand that, but it's worse than being a fool, being wise in your own eyes. And if you can stop the fool from descending into being wise in his own eyes, then it may be worth taking on some personal risk, but you have to, you know, watch out for that because you can be damaged. Higher-order reasoning is achieved by the apparent contradiction between the two Proverbs.

When and why should a person answer a fool? When and why? You've got one proverb saying don't answer a fool. The other one says answer a fool. When and why should that happen? And again, we said that this conflict then caused the book of Proverbs to be questioned, whether it should even be in the canon.

Now what's interesting to me, and this may be a side point, I'm sorry it's so small and stuff, but let me do this quickly. The Greek version, the Septuagint or Septuagint, was done about 250 BC to 100 BC. Basically, the Jews started speaking Greek and Alexander took over in 333 BC.

Alexander the Great or grape comes through, turns everything Greek, Hellenistic, and things like that. So, the Jews start speaking Greek. And so, the New Testament is going to be written in Greek, not Hebrew, largely because of what Alexander did, et cetera, et cetera.

Okay. And they, the Jews didn't have a, they had a Bible in Hebrew and Aramaic, but they didn't have one in Greek. So, what happened is some Alexandrian Jews got together and said, Hey, we need to translate our Hebrew Old Testament Masoretic text.

Okay. There are all sorts of conflicts, but it was our Hebrew text into the Septuagint text, into the Greek. So, we translated the Hebrew, we translated it into Greek and they called it the Septuagint then.

The Septuagint was the Bible of basically in Jesus' time and Paul and things like that. And things of the Greek Bible and stuff like that. So what happened when the scribes in Alexandria, translated the book of Proverbs, what you begin to see happening is that whenever they came into these Proverbs that conflicted, they kind of softened the blow in their translation.

So, these guys, about 250 BC to 100 BC, they're translating the Bible from Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek. And when they do that, they soften the contradictions. You can just see Aristotle, classical Greek contradictions, and the Bible's crazy, stuff like that.

So, they softened them into Greek. So different attitudes. And what I want to do is just take some on bribes and just show you in the Septuagint and how they softened up the bribes and this thing.

So, Proverbs 17:23 says this, the wicked accept a bribe in secret to pervert the ways of justice. Bribes are no good. Judges should not accept bribes.

I still remember when I taught in prison for about 10 years in Michigan City prison up in Indiana, in the maximum-security prison there. And one day I said to the guys who were in the prison, that's a maximum security. So many of those guys are there for their life.

And I said, O, well, it's nice in America that our judges don't accept bribes. And the guys in the class literally laughed at me. They said, Elder Brandt, you got no clue.

And these guys were more experienced in the world. And I think they were right in a lot of ways. But anyway, bribes are no good.

Justice and bribes are supposed to be separated. If you go back into Deuteronomy, it says explicitly this one thing that judges are not supposed to do is bribe. So, the wicked accept a bribe in secret to pervert the ways of justice.

Proverbs 21.14 in the Hebrew text says a gift in secret averts anger and a concealed bribe, strong wrath. In other words, if you want to avoid anger and strong, somebody getting really mad at you, a gift, or a bribe can kind of smooth that over. But then you've got this problem with what do you do with bribes? So, what happens is in the Greek Septuagint, it goes a secret gift, meaning generosity.

So rather than using this term to say bribe, it's used to say gift in terms of generosity. A secret generosity turns away anger and he who forbears giving raises strong wrath. The whole point of this, is that I don't want to go through all of this.

I think it's going to be too long. We've already gone too long. When they came to this thing are bribes good or bad? Well, in some contexts they pervert justice and that's evil.

But then other passages say that a bribe or a gift actually can smooth things out. It's appropriate to kind of grease the palm. You got to get into the site at Jericho and the guy sees all your cameras and he won't let you in there really doing that.

So, your friend pops him 10 bucks and all of a sudden, you're in the site and things like that. Well, that worked pretty well. Didn't pervert justice.

Well, I don't know what it did, but anyway, we got in there largely because we greased the guy's palm. So, you have to know what the deal is. And so, the Septuagint, it's interesting, the Septuagint realized these conflicts in terms of bribes and they soften the blow and things.

We're going to see they did the same thing with Proverbs chapter 26:4 and 5. Hatton concludes after examining the divergences between the Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint, "My contention that the Greek version of Proverbs is sensitive to the contradictory nature of the Hebrew text and repeatedly translates it in a way that smooths out the contradictions could be a valuable hermeneutical device in identifying similar complexities in other scriptures. In other words, when they did it, they saw these conflicts, and they smoothed it out by attending to complex dialogues in the book, refusing to jump to premature conclusions, reading sensitively, and holding contradictions together."

And so, what Hatton is saying is, don't try to smooth them out. Don't try to harmonize. By forcing them, smoothing them out, and harmonizing, you're missing the point of interpreting each one to their own and letting them feel the tension that you need to really understand the nuances of what's going on. Holding

contradictions together, rather than seeking to harmonize them away, the reader can become one of those who is able to react wisely, responsibly in a complex world. Well said.

Now here's some solutions. There's a guy named Van Herden who wrote an article on the strategies applied by interpreters of the paradox in Proverbs 26:4r and 5. And I got ahold of this and he uses some of these proverbial people, people not, this is outside the Bible.

They study Proverbs, international Proverbs. Meider was one, Norris is another. And he says, there are basically three ways when you've got Proverbs that contradict each other.

Look before you leap, he who hesitates is lost. Absence makes the heart go fonder or out of sight, out of mind. These Proverbs clash with one another, he says how people solve that is they use number one: separate frames of reference.

They separate frames of reference, different situations. So, you say, well, wait, one is for one situation, the other is for another situation. And then you describe which situation works for which proverb. So separating frames of reference.

Averaging: Sometimes these clashes called for kind of an averaging of the two, an averaging of the two Proverbs. So, for example, she's awake and she isn't. She's awake and she isn't. It's like a contradiction. She's awake and she isn't.

So, what you do is you average the two together to make it what's happening is she's awake, but she isn't. In other words, she's just getting up. And so, she's in the process of waking, she's in between.

And so, you take two Proverbs that contradict each other and you kind of go for that middle in the middle kind of thing. And you say they're both, they both combined together like she's just waking up. Okay.

The averaging of opposites, the averaging of opposites and making them come together.

Another way to solve this problem. So, one way is separating frames of reference or situations. One is averaging two together and kind of combining them that way.

Modifying: The other one is modifying one term. So, you take the term and you redefine it. So, for example, "a friend to everyone is a friend to no one." "A friend to everyone is a friend to no one." And what does that mean? A friend, friend is being used in two different ways.

And so, what happens is while it looks like a contradiction, it's not really. A friend to everyone is a friend to no one. Friend is being used in a different way there. In the first term, a friend to everyone is kind of like a superficial friend. He goes and knows how to schmooze, schmooze, and go around.

He's everybody's friend and things like that. But there's very different. Friend is being for a kind of a best friend forever kind of thing where the person is really close. You're really close friends. And a friend who has friends with everybody. A friend to everyone is a friend to no one. It was not close. It's not close -- a real friend.

So, you have there a friend being used in two different ways. And so, modifying how the terms are used and things. And then the last one he points out is this vicious cycle.

A vicious cycle. You get a conflict between two proverbs and it creates a vicious cycle. So, for example, "nothing is certain, but uncertainty." "Nothing is certain, but uncertainty." And so, you see it almost contradicts itself. "Nothing is certain, but uncertainty."

And what this does is it creates a vicious cycle. What do you, you know, what, nothing is certain, but uncertainty, but then uncertainty is certain. So therefore, and it creates this kind of cycle, you know, can God make a rock too big that he can't pick it up? You know, if a tree falls in the woods, nobody hears it.

Does it make a sound? Okay. Those kinds of things that create this vicious cycle kind of thing. And what he says is that that's used for an emphatic function.

Okay. Nothing is certain, but uncertainty is a way of, because of the clash, putting an emphasis and emphasizing something, a vicious cycle. So those are four ways.

And now let's take, for example, these six years of references, and I want to use next a book by Michael Fox, who's probably written one of the best commentaries on proverbs ever written, two volumes Michael Fox. Excellent. University of Wisconsin.

He is an excellent, excellent scholar. He went back and said, here's how the rabbis used to solve this problem. They say, answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes. They say, don't answer back in matters of Torah, but only in matters of ordinary affairs. So, that's how they take it, two separate situations.

They say, if it's about Torah, don't argue about Torah like that. But if it's about ordinary affairs, then you can argue like that.

That's from some of the rabbis. And now another way that they've taken it, Sadia, is don't answer back in mundane affairs, but only in religious matters. So, this guy takes it and flips it. He says, don't answer in mundane affairs, but only in religious affairs. The Shabbat 30, section B said, answer a fool in Torah, but in mundane answer, don't answer. This guy says, answer in mundane things, but in religious things, then answer. Don't answer in mundane things. So, he reverses the order there.

And you say, aye, aye, aye, oy vey. Don't answer when the audience knows both you and the fool. This comes from the Midrash and Proverbs. Don't answer when the audience knows both you and the fool. Answer when neither of you is known. Okay. So, in other words, you don't avoid damage because they don't know you.

And so, then you can answer and stuff, the Midrash, Proverbs there. Don't answer if by answering you were put on the same plane as a fool. Answer back when the fool is claiming the same status as a wise man.

Fox says all these suggestions of trying to separate the different spheres with Torah and mundane, mundane, and Torah. He said that they're all arbitrary and they're not derived from the text. They're all arbitrary and not derived from the text.

And I think he's probably onto something there. Separating spheres of reference. Let me read Seidel who's another of these paremiologists who study Proverbs and there's a whole discipline in the paremiology kind of study.

He contends that Proverb meaning depends on the social context of the Proverb use. Proverb use. Factors determining the relationship between the Proverb and the user and the addressee plus one's understanding of the temporal situation, the relation between the parts of the Proverb plus one's understanding of the social situation, the relationship between the parts of the social situation of the Proverb plus an assessment of the analogy between the Proverb situation and the social situation, not to mention the rhetorical strategy applied by the user.

Fox then looks at Proverbs 26:5, 4 and 5 saying 26:5 is the last word. So, Fox privileges, it says, do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes. Fox says the last word is given in verse five. So, therefore, he privileges verse five. He says, yeah, verse four, yes, but verse five is the privileged one, is the majority advice. And the verse preceding is the minority.

Interestingly, Van Leeuwen reverses that and says, verse four is the majority. Do not answer according to his folly. That's the majority one. That's what you should do most of the time. But if in some rare cases, you see him getting wise in his own eyes, then do the minority report.

So, Fox and Van Leeuwen take a different one. Fox emphasizes the fifth verse and Van Leeuwen the fourth verse and privileges those. Waltke rejects the privileging approach saying both are always true.

To be sure, there is a time to be silent and a time to speak. Ecclesiastes 4 and 5, excuse me. But one must always, not only in certain situations, answer a fool to destabilize him, but always, not sometimes, without becoming like him.

So Waltke tries to have both of them and affirm the truth of both of them and put the saying, there's a time to answer a fool and time not to, and make some good sense there.

It does not seem like verse four, the focus is on, the way I would look at it according to the pronouns. And I'm going back to the grammar. The first one says, do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him. So, the first one seems to be focusing on the damage that it does to you. So, I want to say damaging yourself, if that's the concern in the situation, and you see that you're going to be damaged, then you need to take that into account.

The second verse says "answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." So, the second one is directed more at the fool. And if you're more concerned about the fool, he's becoming wise in his own eyes, then you need to put him in his place. You need to answer him. Okay. So, one is if you're looking at damage done to you, then don't answer. If in the answer you see that you're trying to help him, then answer the fool according to his folly. And that's based off the "you" and the "he" and the pronouns in the second line there. I kind of like that myself.

That's the way I would go. Now this Menzi, well, rules, but if a fool continues to pester you in verse five, then response is necessary. So, he says, yeah, don't answer a fool according to his folly. But if he pesters you and pesters you and pesters you, then answer him, and lest he be wise in his own eyes. Now, another way is taking the averaging of opposites. So, the first one says basically there are certain times in certain situations when you answer full, there are certain times in which you don't answer full, certain situations you don't answer full.

I agree with that. And it depends where your focus is and whether it's toward him or toward yourself and the image. But this, this, so that's separating two situations, averaging opposites.

Now Van Heuren takes why Brian McCain as holding each Proverbs encompasses only partial truth. So, answer a fool according to his folly. Do not answer.

Each is partial and must be taken together to get the fuller picture. So, you need both Proverbs to fill out the whole picture. And so, this is kind of like averaging the both together and having your cake and eating too.

Sounds like a proverb to me, having your cake and eating too, of putting them both together and that together they present the fuller picture. And there's an element of truth to that, to complete picture and stuff. Now, word modification is an interesting one too.

And the Septuagint is very interesting. It translate this like, "and you will be like him yourself." Answer fool, do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him. And then the other one, "lest he be wise in his own eyes." There's a difference between this k, which is the Hebrew word for la. It's used both times. It's translated "like" or "as," but in Greek, when they bring it over, one time it's translated prose, which is to and "kata" is like "according to." So, it's according to his folly the first one is, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly." And the second verse then is "answer a fool as his folly deserves." And so, the Septuagint then by using prose and kata, these prepositions, do not answer a fool according to his folly, prose. But the next verse says answer a fool, kata, "as his folly deserves."

And so, they basically smooth it out between whether he deserves to be answered or not. And the Septuagint, the NASB Bible, by the way, translates the first verse "according to his folly." And the second verse translates it "as his folly deserves." So, the NASB then picks up that distinction, even though the word in Hebrew is ke, ke in both situations and translates it two different ways. The same word is translated in two different ways. Bullman takes the word ana, answer, and translates it two different ways.

Anah can also be translated to humble or rebuke. So, the first verse would then read, do not answer a fool according to his folly. The second verse would be translated as, rebuke a fool lest he become wise in his own eyes.

So, the word anah, answer then is translated answer in the first one, don't answer him, but rebuke him in the second line. And the word anah is translated differently than in those two different situations. I'm not sure I like either of these.

And by the way, Today's English version says, if you answer a silly question, and the second one is give a silly answer to a silly question. And so, they tried to, even Today's English version tries to change the meanings of the words, which are the same words. So, I like Mieder and the Paremiologists' approach that such proverb dueling is part of the genre.

There were these clashing proverbs, it's just part of the proverbs that occur. And we saw in Sumerian, in Yoruba, in Nigeria, in English, all over the place. And so therefore genre is found almost universally in proverbial collections and citations.

It sparks higher-order thinking. When you get the clash, then you've got to say, how do these proverbs fit together? It creates higher-order thinking, interpretive insights, and proverbial playfulness. And I'm sorry, we always take the Bible so sterilely and so seriously, that you don't realize that sometimes the proverbs are just having fun and playfulness, imagination, and reflection.

And those types of things with imagination, and reflection, are important in proverbs in general. Proverbs relation to the truth. It's not propositional truth.

Proverbs do not present universal propositional truth. They're basically making small statements about specific situations and stuff and can be applied in multiple situations and not these universal truths and stuff. Now, the clash, the clash of two proverbs gives way to insight.

What is your purpose in dealing with this fool's question? What is your purpose? There is a time to answer and a time not to answer. Depends on the situation. It's not a universal or absolute truth.

Proverbs is not a promise, but what is a proverb and what is his authority? What is its authority? It's not a universal authority. It's in a particular situation that the authority comes to bear. The pronoun you, you'll become like him or he will be wise in his own eyes seems to trigger the first one is concerned about damage to yourself.

And the second one damaged to him or the fool. Wisdom discernment is the hermeneutic. And basically, in chapter 26, verses 1 to 12, it's asking: what is fitting for a fool? What is fitting for a fool? And there's not a symbol formula.

There's not a logarithm that you can just plug this into. Life is complex and a sole proverb, the sole proverb only gives you one aspect. Yeah.

Even the, even the fool is quoting proverbs. Okay. So, you can't say that these things are always a fool can quote a proverb and do some really dumb things with the proverb.

So, you've got to be careful even when he's quoting something that's a proverb. And so, the pair shows the complexity, and the clashing of the pair shows the complexity of life. And you've got to work with that.

Why this pair? Imagination, pedagogical, hermeneutical, and interpretive that you've got to interpret these proverbs. Insightful to gain insight. Playful.

There may be some clash in the pro, the sage who is saying these proverbs has got a smile on his face because he realizes he's given you two proverbs that clash against each other and he smiles and looks at you. What are you going to do with that? You know, you're the student. What are you going to do with that? Do you go on one side and not the other? Do you try to put them both together? How do you solve the conundrum? And the sage looks and just smiles because he's going to see the student wrestling, wrestling with it.

Knowing when, how, and what is fitting to address a fool. The importance of pairs and providing a proverbial dialogic setting by the editor. The editor is setting it up so that the sage and the student are, there's a dialogue going on.

Now the sum is greater than the individual parts. All I'm trying to say is these two proverbs are put together and the sum of them is greater than the individual parts. Each proverb has its own wisdom.

Yes. But when seen together, the wisdom demands higher-order thinking about situations, and life's complexity is called upon by the student. Purposeful juxtaposing by the editors is not random.

This is not random that these two proverbs were put together. These are a pair put together to be a pair, to be interpreted as a pair and stuff. They're not, they are individual proverbs.

You can take them individually, but putting them together as a pair, forms a new level of meaning. Okay. A new level of meaning, the, um, editor, editorial level of meaning of the canonical biblical text.

Methodologically, when reading proverbs, look at the one before and look at the one after. Whenever you read a sentence proverb, look at the one before and the one after to see if there are any connections there that are going to modify how you interpret the proverb you're working with. So, pairs, triads, strings, or clusters, you need to look for pairs, single proverbs, yes, but pairs, the other pairs, triads, strings, clusters, those types of things.

And look at repetitional variations, um, intertextually and things. Van Lewins, to bring this kind of to a close, Van Lewins summarizes wonderfully, quote, wisdom does not always mean doing the same thing, even superficially, in superficially similar circumstances. Yet the juxtaposition of these admonitions drives one to reflect on the limits of human wisdom, the limits of human wisdom.

For the no clue is given to help the reader identify which fool should be ignored and which spoken to. Of two viable courses of action, we do not always know which one

is fitting. What's the purpose of chapter 26, one to 12? What is fitting for a fool? How do you deal with it? Then Hoagland concludes, to enter into dialogue with the fool is both an obligation, lest he be wise in his own eyes, and a threat to the wise.

It's an obligation, lest he be wise in his own eyes and a threat, lest you be like him yourself, to the wise. So, this dialogue with the fool has ramifications. You've got to look at it carefully.

Thus Proverbs 26, verses four and five, for a proverb pair intentionally concatenated, put together to push the wise toward higher order thinking, and imagination, using the proverbial pair with its repetition and with a certain amount of playfulness and parody to accomplish the editor's purpose of thinking more deeply about what is fitting in dealing with a fool. Thank you so much. I realize this has been long, but hopefully, it's been wonderful as you see these proverbs clash and you see the biblical editor kind of pushing people to think more deeply about what is the response to someone who's a fool and when is the time to answer, when is the time not to and how to gain insight.

I just want to run through some resources and we'll conclude with this. Anybody who studies Proverbs, let me just give you, there are three major commentaries on Proverbs that are wonderful. One's Bruce Waltke's two volumes, by Erdman's (NICOT), beautiful set, wonderful Proverbs teaching, Bruce Waltke, incredible.

Michael Fox is also one of the leading proverbial biblical proverbial scholars in the world and he's got two volumes in the Anchor Bible Series. So those two, Waltke and Fox, Michael Fox, Bruce Waltke, are amazing. Bruce Waltke, by the way, did a series on Psalms.

If you're interested Biblicalelearning.org, has a series of 28 lectures on the book of Psalms by Waltke. By the way, he's an expert in Hebrew poetry, a Harvard PhD. So anyway, Michael Fox and Bruce Waltke, are the two seminal, incredible works on that. Steinman also has a wonderful commentary on it also.

I think I've got it here. Actually, let me just see. Actually, here's Waltke's, here's a picture of Waltke's book, and then Fox's book as well. These are two volumes. I just got the one volume. Steinman's book on Proverbs is also an excellent work.

And then I, for less, I forget one that I kind of grew up with and things is Derek Kidner's book on Proverbs, real small book put out by InterVarsity Press, but just a wonderful little treatment of Proverbs and things. So those, Hatton's Contradiction to the Book of Proverbs has been very helpful. Mieder's book, Wolfgang Mieder, anybody who studies Proverbs, I wish the biblical people could plug more strongly into the Proverbium movement and the paremiologists who are studying Proverbs internationally.

He's got a book called *The Wisdom of Many, Essays on the Proverb*. It is well worth reading. He has another book called *Twisted Wisdom, Modern Anti-Proverbs*, and this is where he gets 300 Proverbs and shows how they clash with each other and how they are twisted in various ways. It's wonderful.

Knuth Heim also has an article on Proverbs chapter 26, verses 1 to 12, a crash course on the hermeneutics of Proverbs. Knuth Heim also is a wonderful guy. He did a series actually in this, if you look just above me in Biblicalelearning.org, he's got a book *Poetic Imagination in Proverbs, Variation, Repetitions, and the Nature of Poetry*. It is a wonderful book. He does a wonderful series of lectures and it's really great.

Van Herden has an article that he did in 2008, "Strategies Applied by Interpreters of the Paradox in Proverbs 26, 4, and 5" in the *Journal of Semitics*, volume 17.2 in 2008. And then Hoagland also, this book here is a little bit older now. It's called *Learning from the Sages, Selected Studies in the Book of Proverbs* by a good man named Roy Zuck. Roy Zuck was at Dallas Seminary. Wonderful book. He culls major articles up to the time this book was written and major articles on wisdom, Proverbs in particular here. And Roy Zuck's book on that is a very good, good collection and things like that.

Well, thank you so much. And I hope you can think more deeply today about to answer a fool according to his folly.

"Do not answer a fool according to his folly lest you be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." May we not be wise in our own eyes, but with humility and the fear of God pursue wisdom.

And so that's our first pair. Now in our next lecture, we're going to go over four other pairs and I'll try to show you how those pairs are connected. It's much more sophisticated linguistically and otherwise, but we'll go over the four other pairs and that will complete these two, actually two lectures or a pair of lectures on the proverbial pair.

This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt and his teaching on Proverbs pairs and the Proverbs 26, 4, and 5 contradiction. Session one, to answer or not to answer a fool, that is the question. Session one, to answer or not to answer a fool. That is the question.