



LESSON 6: "The Transgressor" Date: _____

KEY VERSE: Proverbs 11:3 – "The integrity of the upright shall guide them; but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them."

INTRODUCTION

As with many of the "real characters" in the book of Proverbs, the "transgressor" is a difficult character to describe. The dictionary says a "transgression" is the "exceeding of the limits, or the breaking of a rule." While this is true, the Hebrew idea of a "transgression" is much more colorful. There are four different Hebrew words that are translated "transgressor" or "transgression" in the book of Proverbs. Let's consider the pictures behind the words:

- **To transgress is to act deceitfully or to be a hypocrite (Prov. 11:3)** — The Hebrew word, *baw-gad*, means to act in a deceitful manner or to deal faithlessly. It describes an unfaithful man who does not honor an agreement. This word is used in Proverbs 2:22; 11:3, 6; 13:2, 15; 21:18; 22:12; 23:28. God specifically uses this word to condemn Israel for unfaithfulness to God (I Sam. 14:33), those who are unfaithful to their brothers (Mal. 2:10), and those who are unfaithful to their marital vow. A transgressor is a deceiving, unfaithful, disloyal hypocrite, and Proverbs warns that, "The integrity of the upright shall guide them; but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them" (Prov. 11:3).
- **To break a law by cover-up (Prov. 16:10)** — Prov. 16:10 says, "A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment." This verse contains the Hebrew word, *maw-al*, and has the idea of covering up something deceitfully in order to break a law. Such a person is a "transgressor." *Maw-al* is only used in Proverbs 16:10, but in Joshua 7:1 and 22:20 the same word is used describe Achan's sin of covering up what he stole.

- **To pass over or to ignore (Prov. 26:10)** — Proverbs 26:10 says, "The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors." The word used here is *aw-bar'*. It carries with it the idea of movement. Literally, Proverbs 26:10 is saying, "God rewards those who pass unrighteously by a matter." Sins of commission are sins of involvement. Sins of omission are sins of non-involvement but sins nevertheless. To see someone in need and to "pass by" is to commit a sin of omission. God sees such sins and according to Proverbs 26:10, He will "reward them."
- **To rebel (Prov. 12:13)** — Proverb 12:13 says, "The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips; but the just shall come out of trouble." This verse contains the Hebrew word, *peh'-shah*, which means to rebel. This word is found frequently in Proverbs (Prov. 12:13; 17:9, 19; 19:11; 28:2, 21, 24; 29:6, 16, 22).

As one puts together the Hebrew pictures behind our English word, "transgressor," it becomes clear that a transgressor is an unfaithful, disloyal hypocrite who covers-up wrongdoing, fails to do right when he has a chance and willfully, impudently rebels against what is right." This is not a pleasant picture. Nevertheless, it is the picture that God paints in the book of Proverbs of the one He calls, "The Transgressor."

Theme: Wise believers will avoid being the transgressor.

We are going to take the time to become more specifically acquainted with this character as he appears in the book of Proverbs. We will begin by considering...

THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE TRANSGRESSOR

All of us are prone to temptation (I Cor. 10:13). There are specific temptations that pull at the heart of the transgressor. Let's note them in order to be warned:

1. He loves a fight (Prov. 17:19; 29:22).

Proverbs 17:19 says, "He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction." To "exalt his gate" means to lift up the walls of one's domain so that they appear impregnable in order to hurl insults at others round

about. Proverbs 17:9 is picturing the “trash-talking” bully who uses his position of power to intimidate, offend, and insult. One only need watch a professional athlete be interviewed in order to understand the picture being painted in Proverbs 17:19.

Proverbs 29:22 says, “An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.” What’s on the inside will soon impact relationships on the outside. Transgressors stir the pot. The furious nature of their temperament will not back away from a battle.

The Lord wants His followers to exhibit “peace.” Our Savior promised blessings for the peacemakers (Mt 5:9). In a pugilistic world filled with domestic abuse, increasing violence and tension, believers must be reminded that, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:22-24). While transgressors welcome a fight, believers want the Spirit’s fruit.

2. *He shows partiality (Prov. 28:21).*

Proverbs 28:21, “To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress.” Watch out for those who show partiality. According to Proverbs 28:21, the person who shows partiality will quickly yield to other temptations to sin. Those that show partiality have no real respect for others. Therefore, they will transgress even for a reward as seemingly inconsequential as “a piece of bread.”

3. *He is led by peer pressure (Prov. 29:16).*

Proverbs 29:16 warns, “When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall.” Peer pressure is real and we do not “grow out of it” after we exit our teen years. As wicked people multiply, wicked actions and transgression will multiply as well. Those who would please the Lord must be careful with whom they associate (I Cor. 15:33; II Cor. 6:17). Sadly, some believe that fraternization with evil will not bring corruption. This is not the truth. Evil is toxic and will always spread.

4. *He is greedy (Prov. 28:24).*

Proverbs 28:24 tells us, “Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.” Transgressors are willing to craftily and impudently legitimize their wickedness. Having committed the unconscionable act of robbing from his parents, the transgressor has no problem defending his wickedness. Watch out, such greedy ones dwell with those who destroy. Like the companion of thieves who believes himself to be surrounded by faithful friends, he soon finds out that such friends will ultimately bring destruction.

5. *He is a companion of harlots (Prov. 23:27-28).*

Proverbs 23:27-28 informs us that, “A whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.” Who would company with the wicked woman? Proverbs says that the transgressor will.

While it would appear that temptations make a man a transgressor, Proverbs says that it is because a man is a transgressor that temptations appeal to him. The character of the transgressor causes him to be vulnerable to fighting, partiality, peer pressure, greed, and consorting with harlots. Just as a man lies because he is a liar, a transgressor transgresses because that is who he is.

Transition: Now that we have seen the particular temptations of the transgressor, let’s look at the difficulties brought on by his transgression.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE TRANSGRESSOR

Transgressors break contracts, relationships, rules, and orders. Transgressors may choose their actions but they cannot choose their consequences. Child psychologists tell us that children are happy when they are playing on a playground surrounded with fences. Take away the fences and insecurities increase. Sadly, transgressors do not learn this truth when they are little and playing on the playground. Instead, they trip over the truth that difficulties will come to those who break covenants, ignore laws, and rebel against what is right.

1. *Transgressors will be found out (Prov. 11:6).*

Proverbs 11:6 warns, “The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.” God has repeatedly warned that there is a “payday someday.”¹ Proverbs 11:6 speaks especially about the hypocritical transgressor (*Baw-gad*), who believes that his inner motives will never be revealed. God’s Word promises that the web of deceit that the transgressor spins will eventually capture them (Nu. 32:23).

2. *Transgressors will be victims of violence (Prov. 13:2).*

Proverbs 13:2 –“A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.” Examine the statistics. Violent criminals become the victims of violent crime. Those who find it appealing to rob their neighbors are soon surrounded by neighbors who love to rob—especially when their behavior places them in the prison.

3. *Transgressors encounter many difficulties (Prov. 13:15).*

Proverbs 13:15 – “Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.” It is much easier to tell the truth than to tell a lie. It is much easier to make an honest living than to make a living on the wrong side of the law. While crime may seem to pay, it is important to note that the reward of the criminal is short lived. Many difficulties are on the road of the transgressor. Some will be incarcerated. Some will contract diseases which quickly make life miserable and death all but desirable. Living without a reputation, having trampled on character, the way of the transgressor is hard!

4. *Transgressors are caught in their words (Prov. 12:13).*

Proverbs 12:13 informs us, “The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble.” The word translated “transgression” in Proverbs 12:13, is the word that carries the idea of rebellion - *Peh'-shah*. American culture rewards rebellion. Rock-music has been called the

music of “rebellion.” Americans love to boast and sing, “I did it my way!” God says, the rebellious transgressor’s words will ensnare them.

5. *Transgressors are weak leaders (Prov. 28:2).*

Proverbs 28:2 says, “For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.” Leadership without character will always lead to the loss of loyalty and an increasingly partisan spirit. We live in a time when “Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse” (II Tim. 3:13). It should not surprise the student of Scripture to find that the tenures of leaders to be short, the temperament of leaders to be questionable and the accomplishment of “leaders” to be negligible.

6. *Transgressors oppose God (Prov. 22:12).*

Proverbs 22:12, “The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.”

Transition: Having seen the unique temptations and difficulties of the Transgressor, let’s focus on what Proverbs has to say about his future.

THE FUTURE OF THE TRANSGRESSOR

As one may imagine, the future of the transgressor is not bright. God has a way of leveling the playing field. Note the predications that Proverbs makes in regard to the future of the transgressor:

1. *He will be rooted out of the earth (Prov. 2:22).*

Remember, the word used to describe the transgressor in Prov. 2:22 is the word which carries the picture of “hypocrisy.”

2. *He will be destroyed (Prov. 11:3).*

Once again God addresses the hypocritical transgressor and warns him of his destruction.

¹ sbc.net/aboutus/sbvoices/rgleepayday

3. He will face God (Prov. 26:10).

Here God addresses the one who has “moved the boundaries” and been guilty of sins of omission. Like the Priest and the Levite who offered no help to the injured Samaritan (Luke 10:30-32), there are those who simply don’t “want to get involved.” Such a statement has no understanding of the love of God which caused Jesus to leave the splendors of heaven for the horrors of earth.

4. He will fall, as the upright stand (Prov. 21:18).

Prov. 21:18 – “The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.” God balances out the unaligned accounts. The one feeling comfortable is now feeling afflicted and the one who once felt afflicted is feeling comfortable.

Transition: There’s one final matter for us to consider as we consider the transgressor and it’s the most important matter. Let’s ask...

HOW NOT TO TRANSGRESS

The Transgressor is a large character in the book of Proverbs and an equally large character in history as well as in current culture. Proverbs tells us that this is a character to be avoided. Let’s learn how:

1. Don’t be a gossip (Prov. 17:9).

Proverbs 17:9 says, “He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.” There are times that we must confront issues (Gal. 6:1) and “Speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). At other times, discretion teaches us that we are to turn away from exposing transgression. Obviously, when a penitent comes seeking forgiveness, it is not the time to announce the sin in which they were once involved (Eph. 5:12). Family members ought to learn to speak to family members within the confines of their family relationships rather than to broadcast the wrong-doing far and wide. Those who would avoid transgression learn to “cover” certain sins.

2. Get away from temptation (Prov. 19:11).

Proverbs 19:11 says, “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.”

3. Be ever aware of coming judgment (Prov. 16:10).

Prov. 16:10 says, “A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.”

CONCLUSION

The character of the Transgressor is large in Proverbs and sadly, it is large in the earth. God’s children ought to be ever so careful to live far apart from transgression.