

Studies in the Book of Proverbs by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

(#158) The Proverbs of Solomon 21:29- Choose One: A Statue's Face Or An Obedient Heart?

Since God Created humans, only God can provide specific understanding of human behavior. God gave Solomon Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**) to explain what and why behavior is as it is, and **Proverbs 10:1 - 24:34** are randomly written, as if they were Judgments Solomon made about individual cases brought to him for Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**), or simply God-given explanations about life. New Testament passages may help see the continuation of Wisdom offered through Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 21:29:

A wicked man hardens his face, but as for the upright, he establishes his way.

Jesus Christ "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (**Luke 9:51**) which indicated His purpose of heart was to complete the work of salvation by being crucified, buried, but resurrected the third day (**Luke 9:21-22**). To "harden" one's face, however, describes a person who is determined to sin. It was Pharaoh's decision, not God's appeal through Moses, that caused him to "harden his heart" (**Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 14:4**); the same for the Canaanites Joshua defeated (**Joshua 11:1-4, 15-20**); and for the Israelites in their 40-year Wilderness wandering (**Psalm 95:7-11**; an example for Christians NOT to follow, as stated in **Hebrews 3:7-19**).

Other proverbs state this clearly:

- Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity. (**Proverbs 28:14**)
- He who *is* often rebuked, *and* hardens *his* neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. (**Proverbs 29:1**)

Those who are "always reverent" will listen and obey God's Will written in the Scriptures, but those who refuse to be "often rebuked" will be more determined to keep sinning, therefore it could be said that God "has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens" (**Romans 9:18**). "The upright" will make every exposure to Scripture have its effect, as David said:

You are my portion, O LORD; I have said that I would keep Your words. I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; Be merciful to me according to Your word. I thought about my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies. I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments. (**Psalm 119:57-60**)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.



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Solomon later will emphasize this truth:

Words of the wise, spoken quietly, should be heard Rather than the shout of a ruler of fools. ([Ecclesiastes 9:17](#))

The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. ([Ecclesiastes 12:11](#))

In other words, Wisdom will be permanently attached to a wise person without having to be forced by “the shout of a ruler of fools,” but pushing one’s thoughts in the right direction, like “goads” (or prods). True “scholars” drive home their truths, not like false-scholarship today, always challenging truth with questions and doubt.

Flinty faces fail, truth-filled hearts set faces toward Heaven.

