**Proverbs 15:26-29**

**The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.**

**He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.**

**The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.**

**The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.**

So far in this chapter, we’ve seen some great advice from Proverbs about living in a godly society and a peaceful, happy household. These verses give us some additional insight into these ideas. The wicked, the “greedy” bring trouble to their own homes, their societies, even their nations, as we have seen before in Proverbs. Even their thoughts are “an abomination to the Lord!” Everything about wickedness brings grief. But the righteous, the “pure,” the people who are following God, bring much better things to their families, societies, and nations. And the effects of righteousness are at least as profound and all-encompassing as the effects of wickedness. It can be hard for us to remember that at times. It often seems like wickedness is stronger and more pervasive than righteousness in our world, but that isn’t actually true. God hears the prayers of the righteous. His real, personal presence is with His people. That’s more powerful and more profound than any perceived power of wickedness. As mighty as the powers of selfishness and greed are in this world, they are easily defeated by things that seem gentle and powerless—love, kindness, humility, holiness. Admittedly, that doesn’t make a righteous life easy! The “mouth of the wicked,” after all, “poureth out evil things,” while the righteous must make a greater effort. The righteous “studieth to answer” properly. But if, with God’s all-powerful help, we can defeat the wickedness within our own hearts, the rest of the powers of wickedness in this world can have no authority over us. It turns out that the small, gentle things are much stronger than all the grandiose powers of wickedness.

[](http://www.helcom.fi/PublishingImages/action-areas/fisheries/fish-communities/marine-species/Baltic_herring.jpg)**Baltic Herring**

One of the most abundant fish species in the world, Baltic herring are cold-water fish that grow up to about 18 inches in length. Herring congregate in groups that consist of thousands or even millions of individuals. These schools help protect them from their predators, like seals, whales, and larger fish. Herring have excellent hearing, and a school can react very quickly to evade predators. Herring have a special swim bladder, which they also use as protection. They can control the amount of air in their swim bladder. When they sense a predator, they can squeeze their swim bladder to release a small bubble of air and make a “chirp” or “tick” noise. The noise alerts all the other herring to the problem. With an entire school of herring releasing these bubbles, they can create a screen from predators, allowing the herring to escape. This defense mechanism is called “Fast Repetitive Tick,” or “FRT.” This herring defense mechanism, in fact, almost reignited the Cold War. Schools of herring make this noise when startled by what they perceive to be predators in the water. It turns out that they also make it when startled by Soviet submarines. The Swedish Royal Navy, listening for Soviet submarines, associated the sounds of startled herring with this threat. They called it the “typical sound,” and thought it was the sound of Soviet subs sneaking into their waters. Scientists were not permitted to hear the typical sound, because it was classified. But even after peace agreements were signed and the Cold War was supposed to be over, the Swedish Navy continued to hear these sounds and assumed they represented covert Soviet subs. Political tensions increased, and indignant letters were sent. In 1996, scientists were finally permitted to hear the typical sound. Which, of course, was nothing but herring startled by their natural predators. These military types nearly brought some real trouble to their own house! That’s the trouble when people pour out negativity rather than studying to discover the truth. Entire nations can be terribly threatened by...bubbles. If harmless herring could (nearly) bring about world war, we have to reevaluate the authority and power of small, gentle things! Righteousness and prayer are more powerful than we usually think. Fortunately, God has given us clear guidance. With His help, we can limit negativity and embrace the power of righteousness.

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Weird Wonders of the World

Season 1

Episode 2

Start: 8:47 (41:31 from End)

End: 15:26 (34:52 from End)