

# The Book of Proverbs

## Introduction:

The very first word found in Proverbs is the Hebrew word *masal*. The Hebrew word *masal* is translated “*proverbs*” in the 1901 ASV and is defined as “byword, saying, maxim... a saying, usually brief, stating observations from experience so arrestingly that it gains popularity. The purpose is to warn against dangerous conduct, while encouraging behavior that promotes personal and social well-being” (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia vol. 3 page 1012). The very purpose of this book is given in the first six verses of chapter one. Attaining wisdom and understanding through the process of instruction and prudence ought to be man's primary objective.

The proverbs of this book belonged to Solomon (Proverbs 1:1). Solomon was known for his wisdom (1 Kings 4:29). The Bible tells us that Solomon had composed 3000 proverbs (1 Kings 4:32). Other authors were Agur (Proverbs 30:1) and Lemuel's mother (Proverbs 31:1).

## Date

The date of compilation of Proverbs into book form can be no earlier than the reign of Hezekiah (715 – 690 BC). Proverbs 25:1 states, “*These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.*”

## Content of Proverbs

The theme of Proverbs is found at chapter 1:7 and 4:7. Solomon writes, “*The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction*” (Proverbs 1:7). Again, he writes, “*Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom; yea, with all thy getting get understanding*” (Proverbs 4:7). That which is to be first, highest, and foremost in a person's life is obtaining wisdom. Solomon depicts wisdom as the greatest treasure a man may own (see Proverbs 8:18-19; 16:16; 20:15). When one comes to view wisdom with such precedence in life they will do all they can do to obtain it as though it were a precious treasure. Solomon wrote, “*Buy the truth and sell it not; yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding*” (Proverbs 23:23). Parents often contemplate how they may instill faith, conviction, and the pursuit of wisdom within their children. Solomon tells us that the way to instill these eternal characteristics within man is to help them understand the great value of wisdom. Jesus said, “*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goes and sells all that he hath, and buys that field*” (Matthew 13:44-45).

Solomon spends a considerable amount of time defining wisdom in the book. Solomon writes, “*I wisdom have made prudence my dwelling, and find out knowledge and discretion*” (Proverbs 8:12). Wisdom is identified as prudence, knowledge, and discretion. The word *prudence* “expresses caution and wisdom in the conduct of affairs... implies not only caution but the capacity for judging in advance the probable results of one's actions” (American Heritage Dictionary {hereafter AHD} 998). “*Discretion*” is “to be discreet... having or showing a judicious reserve in one's speech or behavior; prudent... lacking ostentation or pretension; modest” (AHD 403). “*Knowledge*” is “familiarity, awareness, or understanding gained through experience or study... the sum or range of what has been perceived, discovered, or learned” (AHD 705). Wisdom is the ability to gain understanding of life issues and to exercise reserve due to a perception of probable outcomes. Knowledge, prudence, and discretion will keep man out of much trouble in life and bring a great deal of happiness now and forevermore.

The book of Proverbs paints pictures of various topics that wisdom affects. The book focuses heavily upon the consequences of man's choices in this life. Proverbs reveals the grave consequences for rejecting wisdom in life. Solomon writes, “*Good understanding giveth favor; But the way of the transgressor is hard*” (Proverbs 13:15). The life of the fool is likened unto making your way through a “*hedge of thorns*” (Proverbs 15:19). When a person rejects wisdom for foolishness they bring trouble (Proverbs 15:6; 21:23), destruction (Proverbs 13:13), mischief (Proverbs 28:14), and calamity (Proverbs 22:) to their lives and the lives of those they touch. The foolish experience

trouble, destruction, mischief, and calamity in life because of the poor decisions they make. The fool will have evil companions (Proverbs 1:10-14; 4:14-19; 13:20; 20:19; 24:1-2; 28:9), participate in sexual immorality (Proverbs 5:7-9; 9:14-15; etc.), be too lazy to work (Proverbs 6:6-11; etc.), use filthy language (Proverbs 4:24-27; 8:7-9), hunger and thirst for riches (Proverbs 11:4-6, 27-28; 13:7-8, 11; 18:11, 23; 23:4-5; etc.), angry (Proverbs 19:19; 29:11), bear false witness (Proverbs 19:5, 28; 25:18), seek revenge (Proverbs 20:22), scoff at others (Proverbs 21:24; 22:10; 24:9; 29:8), and harden their hearts against God's laws (Proverbs 29:1). All such foolishness brings regret, troubles, and sorrows now and forevermore.

Proverbs paints a picture of the great contrast between the life of the wicked and the wise. While the wicked wallow in poverty and trouble the wise enjoy life now and forevermore. The choice of pursuing wisdom in life results in preserving the soul (Proverbs 16:17), longevity of life (Proverbs 9:11), happiness (Proverbs 17:22; 28:14; 29:18), satisfaction (Proverbs 19:23), riches, honor, and life (Proverbs 22:4, 29), and such a one is less likely to experience troubles (Proverbs 19:23; 21:23). The wise will avoid worldliness at all cost. Solomon writes, "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life*" (Proverbs 4:23 see also 25:26). The wise man also maintains a proper attitude toward sin. Solomon writes, "*The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil: Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth, do I hate*" (Proverbs 8:13 see also 8:7-9; 13:5; 14:9). The wise have a high estimation of their soul. "*He that gets wisdom loves his own soul: He that keeps understanding shall find good*" (Proverbs 19:8 etc.). The wise are humble (Proverbs 20:9; 22:4; 29:23; 28:13), interested in spiritual matters (Proverbs 23:12, 26), seek out the things that delight God (Proverbs 11:1, 20; 12:2-3 etc.), and have a never quit attitude. Solomon writes, "*If thou faint in the day of adversity, Thy strength is small*" (Proverbs 24:10).

The overall message of Proverbs is that when one chooses the way of wisdom they chose a good life. Truly it is a wonderful life being a Christian. Such a life is enjoyable now and will be forevermore!

## Chapter One

### I. The purpose of the proverbs (1:1-6):

- A. "*The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel*" (1:1).
  1. As stated in the introduction, a proverb is a maxim (truisms), comparison, noting likenesses in things unlike.
  2. The book begins by identifying its author; i.e., Solomon the son of king David.
- B. "*To know wisdom and instruction; to discern the words of understanding*" (1:2).
  1. By the examination of comparisons or parallels through instruction one gains understanding and wisdom.
  2. The one who engages in the pursuit of wisdom through proverbs sharpens his understanding in matters of riddles, enigmas, and dark sayings (cf. Prov. 1:6). The sharpening of one's understanding is "discernment" (i.e., the ability to differentiate or distinguish between things). The wise will differentiate between right and wrong.
- C. "*To receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness and justice and equity*" (1:3).
  1. The proverbs of Solomon deal in wisdom, instruction, and discernment. The wise will "*receive*" and the foolish shall reject "*instruction*."
  2. The instruction is in "*righteousness*" and therefore forms the thinking in a right direction. The instruction is in "*justice*" and therefore helps us form just judgments upon not only ourselves but our fellow man. The instruction is in "*equity*" and therefore teaches the wise to be fair and impartial in judgments. Let all look to the facts alongside the word of God for proper judgments and not allow emotionalism to cloud one's judgment (see study # 1; Bible Authority).
- D. "*To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion*:" (1:4).
  1. The word "*simple*" is defined as "the foolish, silly, one who allows him self to be easily persuaded or led astray."<sup>1</sup> The word "*simple*" is found 18 times in Proverbs and six other times in the entire Bible.

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<sup>1</sup> Keil and Delitzsch pg. 40

2. "*Prudence*" (*phronesis*) = "a minding to do so and so, purpose, intention... thoughtfulness, prudence" (LS 872). The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word as, "careful management... the capacity for judging in advance the probable results of one's actions" (AHD 998). The prudent is cautious and careful in all his dealings. The simple are easily carried away with every wind of doctrine (Cf. Rom. 16:18-19). The proverbs are therefore designed to sharpen the mind of the simple through knowledge and discretion. The young man who gains wisdom will be careful and cautious when any teaching is brought his way. He will be cautious and careful when making a decision to do this or that.
- E. The word "*that*" always indicates purpose. Solomon records that the purpose of a proverb is that "*the wise man may hear, and increase in learning; and that the man of understanding may attain unto sound counsels*" (1:5).
1. Godliness is an education process (Cf. Isa. 54:13; Jn. 6:44; Eph. 4:20-22).
  2. Understanding through education leads one to "*attain unto sound counsels.*" "To explain, to make to understand: one who is caused to understand or who lets himself be informed, and thus an intelligent person – that is one who may gain by means of these proverbs."<sup>2</sup> "Literally, the power to 'steer' his course rightly on the dangerous seas of life."<sup>3</sup>
- F. "*To understand a proverb, and a figure, the words of the wise, and their dark sayings*" (1:6).
1. Herein we see another purpose of studying the proverbs. One gains a habit of thinking on a higher plain. The mind is thus bent to seek out understanding.
  2. That which one seeks to understand is the words of the wise, figures, enigmas or dark sayings that have spiritual meanings.
- G. "*The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction*" (1:7).
1. Fear = "feminine of 3373; fear (also used as infinitive); morally, reverence:--X dreadful, X exceedingly, fear (-fulness)" (Strong's). Those who fear God are those who reverentially fear Him because He is the Potentate King of kings (see I Tim. 6:15). Fear is evidenced in man through obedience to God's commands (see Deut. 5:29; 6:1-3; Titus 3:8; I Pet. 1:17). To fear is to be aware of the fierce anger and wrath of God against law breakers (Deut. 19:19-21; I Tim. 5:20; Rev. 14). Moses (see Deut. 9:19), David (II Sam. 6:9), early Christians (Acts 9:31), and Paul (II Cor. 5:11) had this fear. The Bible paints an obvious picture of the error of not possessing such fear (see Numb. 12:1, 7-8; II Sam. 1:14; Jer. 5:22-24). Fear carries with it the idea of reverential submission to those in positions that deem honor (see Rom. 13:7).
  2. To "*despise*" is "a primitive root; **to disrespect**:--contemn, despise, X utterly" (Strong's). The Greek equivalent is *kataphroneo* which is defined as "to think in disparagement of; to contemn, scorn, despise, to slight... **disregard**" (Moulton 222). This is the disposition of the false teacher (see II Pet. 2:10) and obviously the founding principle for all who have trouble submitting to God's laws or the laws of man.
  3. Solomon defines the "*foolish*" one in Ecclesiastes as one who is so far removed from reverential and fearful respect of God's laws that he doesn't even know that he is in sin (Eccl. 5:1).
  4. The sinful disregard the things of God and thereby are opposed to knowledge and wisdom. "*Wisdom*" (Greek / *sophia*) = "knowledge of, acquaintance with a thing... sound judgment, intelligence, practical wisdom, such as was attributed to the Seven Wise men" (LS 737). Moulton defines the word as, "Practical wisdom, prudence, superior knowledge and enlightenment (see Col. 2:23)... Christian enlightenment (see 1 Corinthians 12:8 etc.)" (Moulton 371).
- H. "*My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck*" (1:8-9).
1. Children are to learn very early in life what respect, honor, and fear is all about. Young people are to be taught, by their father and mother, to honor and fear those to whom honor and fear is due. Children who will not honor their father and their mother will certainly dishonor the name of Jehovah God and all others who are due honor (Eph. 6:1-2) (see study # 47).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pg. 40

<sup>3</sup> Barnes 15

2. Such early principles of respect, reverence, and honor to those in authority will serve as "*a chaplet of grace unto thy head and chains about thy neck.*" The young man or woman who listens, learns, and makes reverence respect and honor to those in authority a part of their moral character will be likened unto one with a crown and jewels about the neck (the moral character is examined here - see I Tim. 2:9-10; I Pet. 3:4-5).

## II. **Have no fellowship with those who despise Authority, wisdom, and Instruction (1:10-19):**

- A. "*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, come with us, let us lay wait for blood; let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause; let us swallow them up alive as Sheol, and whole, as those that go down into the pit; we shall find all precious substance; we shall fill our houses with spoil; Thou shalt cast thy lot among us; we will all have one purse:*" (1:10-14).
  1. The scriptures warn of making friends with or sharing in the sins of the wicked who despise the authorized word of Jehovah God (see 1 Corinthians 15:33) (see study # 2; Evil Companions Corrupt good Morals).
  2. To the mind of the wise (those instructed in the ways of righteousness and who have not despised the wise instruction of their father and mother) such words are foolishness and there is to be no desire for such conduct or company.
- B. "*My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood. for in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird: and these lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives. So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; it takes away the life of the owners thereof*" (1:15-19).
  1. Notice that Solomon speaks to his listeners as though he were our father giving instructions to us as sons. Any father in his right mind would warn his children not to follow the paths of the evil (Eph. 5:11; I Tim. 5:22; Rev. 18:4).
  2. Wicked men have a hardened desire for money and such will do ungodly things to obtain it (see I Tim. 6:9-10).

## III. **Wisdom calls unto the Simple yet she is Rejected (1:20-33):**

- A. "*Wisdom cries aloud in the street. She utters her voice in the broad places; she cries in the chief place of concourse; at the entrance of the gates, in the city, she utters her words:*" (1:20-21).
  1. Wisdom (sound judgment, forethought, insight, enlightenment) is personified as one who cries out to people in the street, broad places, places of business, and all over the city.
  2. Wisdom is at men's grasp yet so many refuse to use her. She cries to be used and made a part of man's life yet many reject her.
- B. "*How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And scoffers delight them in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge? turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you; I will make known my words unto you*" (1:22-23).
  1. Again, the "*simple ones*" are those who are foolish, silly, one who easily allows himself to be led astray by the wicked (see Proverbs 1:4).
  2. Notice that such men "**love** simplicity, **delight** in scoffing, and **hate** knowledge." Jeremiah said, "*The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?*" (Jeremiah 5:31).
  3. Wisdom begs and pleads with men to consider her instruction so that she may be a part of their character and help them.
- C. "*Because I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man hath regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:*" (1:24-25).
  1. No man or woman may exclaim, "But wisdom did not knock at my door... invite me to her council, or desired to be a part of my life."
  2. Wisdom, through Jehovah's precepts, has always been a part of man's make up and a part of God's divine revelation. People reject it because it is not what they want in this life.
  3. The prophet Isaiah records, "*I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, that walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts;*" (Isa. 65:2).
- D. "*I also will laugh in the day of your calamity; I will mock when your fear comes; when your fears comes as a storm, and your calamity comes on as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then will they call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they shall not find*"

*me. For that they hated knowledge, and **did not choose the fear of Jehovah**. They would none of my counsel, they **despised all my reproof**" (1:24-30).*

1. Those who harden their hearts against Jehovah God in that they despise dominion, knowledge, and instruction will not find Jehovah when they need Him most.
  2. Those who live opposed to Jehovah's laws are depicted as hating knowledge, lacking in fear toward Jehovah, those who reject the Lord's counsel, and despise all correction. Herein is a rebellious selfish person who does not understand the big picture of life. He sees only what is in front of his eyes for the immediate gratification of the flesh.
- E. *"Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the backsliding of the simple shall slay them, and the careless ease of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkens unto me shall dwell securely, and shall be quiet without fear of evil" (1:31-33).*
1. The hardhearted shall go to their grave with their own devices and own ways of doing things. Said men reject the authorized instructions and guidance of the Holy Spirit for their own ways and devices.
  2. Later Solomon writes, "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; But he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel*" (Prov. 12:15).

## Concluding Thoughts

Solomon begins by identifying both the wise and foolish. Wisdom is identified as being sound in judgment, having insight and understanding. The wise are prudent (cautious and careful), discerning (differentiate between things like good and evil), receive instructions from divine revelation, father, and mother, and fear the Lord (Prov. 1:4-9). The fool, on the other hand, despises wisdom (Prov. 1:7, 30). The fool is irritated at instruction because his love is directed toward simplicity. The fool scoffs at and hates knowledge (Prov. 1:22). Both the wise and the foolish shall "eat the fruit of their ways."

## Chapter 2

### I. How to Obtain Fear and Knowledge of God (2:1-11):

- A. *"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and lay up my commandments with thee; So as to incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; Yea, if thou cry after discernment, and lift up thy voice for understanding; If thou seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures: Then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah, and find the knowledge of God" (2:1-5).*
1. Solomon continues to speak to his readers as though they were his own children. A classic "*if then*" statement is found within these first five verses. **If** a son will do seven things **then** he will "*understand the fear of Jehovah, and find the knowledge of God.*" Recall that Solomon had said that "*The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge*" (Prov. 1:7). Here is the formula for gaining a fear of Jehovah.
  2. Solomon lists **seven things** for man to do to gain and understanding of fear and knowledge of God (see study # 10):
    - a. **First**, one must be **willing** to "*receive my words*" (i.e., words of instruction and wisdom - the source of which is divine revelation, father, and mother [see Prov. 1:3, 8]).
    - b. **Secondly**, one must not only receive instruction but "*lay up my commandments*" within the heart. One who only has knowledge yet refuse to apply the knowledge in life lacks wisdom. We must not only know but lay them to our heart; i.e., **value** the instructions and make them a part of our very being.
    - c. **Thirdly**, one must "*incline thine ear unto wisdom.*" The one who will fear and know God is the one who's **purpose** it is to obtain wisdom.
    - d. **Fourthly**, one must "apply thy heart to understanding." When we "apply" our hearts to something we are **concerned** about it. If we are concerned about understanding we will obtain it because it is something that we value in this life.

- e. **Fifthly**, the one who is to fear and know God must "*cry after discernment* (to differentiate between things - like right and wrong)." When one "cries" after something it is of utmost importance in our lives. We will give great **diligence** to obtain it.
  - f. **Sixthly**, to obtain fear and knowledge of God one must "lift up the voice for understanding" (i.e., be **inquisitive and curious** about it; i.e., be **interested in**).
  - g. **Seventhly**, to obtain fear and knowledge of God one must **seek and search** after her as though it were hidden treasure. Fear and knowledge of God is identified as treasure throughout the scriptures (see Matt. 13:44; Col. 2:3; II Cor. 4:7).
3. The quest for understanding the fear of Jehovah and gaining knowledge begins with man's willingness to value truth greater than anything this world has to offer. Such an approach to truth will see a man concerned, diligent, curious, and searching after truth. If wisdom and an understanding of the fear of God was something easily found on the surface then everyone would have it and it would not be something of value. Likewise if gold nuggets were laying all over the surface of our yards they would not be valuable. The fear of God is of great value and must be sought after diligently if one expects to find it.
- B. "*For Jehovah gives wisdom; out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding: He lays up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to them that walk in integrity; that he may guard the paths of justice, and preserve the way of his saints*" (2:6-8).
- 1. Again, wisdom is defined as sound judgment, insight, and understanding in relationship to the things of God and eternity. God **gives** wisdom to those who do the seven things listed above. When Jesus was asked why he spoke in parables he answered, "*Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given...*" (Matt. 13:10-11). Those that are given wisdom and knowledge are those who are willing, value, purpose to obtain, concerned about, are diligent to know, interested, and spend their time seeking and searching after it. God gives wisdom, knowledge and fear to such.
  - 2. Those who could care less about truth, wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of Jehovah will do none of these things and thereby shall receive nothing. These are the "*simple*" (remember Prov. 1:22). **The simple love things that are easy. The simple don't want to work for anything... they expect all things to be given to them in life. They are lazy and worthless. The simple will gamble away a paycheck in hopes of receiving a pot of gold for no work performed. The simple are unwilling to work hard to obtain things in this life and they hate those who do work hard. The simple will cheat on an exam because they don't want to study. These are people who are opposed to hard labor. They want material blessings for no labor. God has no respect for such people and neither do the people of God** (see study # 5; The Simple).
  - 3. Jehovah had predetermined before the foundation of the world that there would be men and women on both sides of wisdom, knowledge, and fear (see Eph. 1:3-7; Rom. 8:29-30) (see study # 3; Predestination). Jehovah will act as a shield and He will guard and preserve the saints (i.e., those who receive instruction, wisdom, knowledge, and fear God). The mathematics of the thought is simple. Those who are interested in God and thereby seek out wisdom in life shall obtain it and that wisdom shall shield and guard them against false teachers and worldliness. The saints will be those who exercise "*sound judgment!*"
- C. "*Then shalt thou understand righteousness and justice, and equity, yea, every good path. For wisdom shall enter into thy heart, and knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall watch over thee; understanding shall keep thee*" (2:9-11).
- 1. So many foolish men and women in the body of Christ today exclaim, "We cannot know all truth... we cannot all agree on all parts of the scriptures... unity in faith can only be obtained by tolerating the diversity of man's faith and understanding..."
  - 2. Notice that Solomon states that when a man or woman has the disposition to obtain knowledge, wisdom, and fear then "*thou shalt understand...*" (see study # 6; Can we know Truth?). When we value and diligently search after wisdom, knowledge, and discretion then these things shall "*enter into thy heart, watch, and keep thee.*" Though men act as though wisdom and understanding of divine things are an impossible swim across an ocean or flight into the heavens the Lord tells us

that those who truly desire will have it because they gave diligence to obtain it (Deut. 30:11-12; Rom. 10:5ff; II Tim. 2:15).

3. Don't you want to know "*every good path*" to take in this life? Don't you want to be able to give an answer to every man concerning the faith within you (I Pet. 3:15)? Don't you want to be able to give a thus saith Jehovah for every question that comes up within the church today? God will direct us in paths of righteousness if only we will seek them out. I can know the answer to every spiritual question as I search it out in the authorized word of God (see study # 1).

## II. The Value of Wisdom, Understanding, and Fear (2:12-19):

A. "*To deliver thee from the way of evil, from the men that speak perverse things; who forsake the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the perverseness of evil; who are crooked in their ways, and wayward in their paths:*" (2:12-15).

1. Solomon mentions two things that those who obtain wisdom and the fear of God will be **delivered** from.
2. First, the wise and fearful of God, will be delivered from "*the way of evil.*"
  - a. The "*way of evil*" is depicted in "*men that speak perverse things.*" The wise are neither interested or entertained by the perverse tongue of those of the world. The wise cringe and are offended at filthy jokes, the hearing of cursing, and the perverted dealings of man.
  - b. The "*way of evil*" is depicted in those "*who forsake the paths of uprightness and walk in the ways of darkness.*" The wise "*walk worthily of the calling wherewith they were called*" (Eph. 4:1ff). The wise and fearful of God do not speak to others as though they were better. The wise do not make sinful plans. The wise are careful to follow God's will.
  - c. The "*way of evil*" is depicted as "*rejoicing and delighting in perverted ways.*" The wicked are seen today laughing and happy when they are drunk, sexually immoral, and speaking perverse things to one another. Their triumphs in life are experienced when they perform their acts of foolishness. They think it is funny and they believe these acts to be a measure of true success and happiness.
  - d. The "*way of evil*" is "*crooked and wayward.*" Cheating and thievery is a way of life for these people. They will cheat on tests and cheat people out of money through deception and lies because they want something for no work.

B. "*To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the foreigner that flatters with her words; that forsake the friend of her youth, and forgets the covenant of her God: for her house inclines unto death, and her paths unto the dead; none that go unto her return again, neither do they attain unto the paths of life:*" (2:16-19).

1. The second thing that Solomon tells us that wisdom and the fear of Jehovah will deliver us from is the "*strange woman.*" Interestingly, the same word; i.e., "*strange*" is used to describe the fire that Nadab and Abihu had unlawfully placed upon the altar and were thereby killed (see Lev. 10:1-3). Their fire was "*strange*" because it was something that God "*had not commanded.*" The woman under consideration is "*strange and foreign*" to a man because she is unlawful to have. Those who go into her do so at the expense of their soul. Remember that Jesus said, "*What will a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (Matt. 16:26)
2. The power of man's lusts and the strange woman's flattering words will be averted by the wise because they are men of understanding and have obtained fear of Jehovah. The wise have no desire to place themselves in such situations because of their love and understanding of truth. There are grave consequences to adultery and fornication (see study # 4; Sexual Immorality).

## III. The Path of Righteousness and Perfection is the Best Way (2:20-22):

A. "*That thou mayest walk in the ways of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it*" (2:20-21).

1. Solomon identifies the "*good, righteous, upright, and perfect*" among men. These people are those who have obtained wisdom and fear of God through the reception and interest in instruction. God's will for man is perfection (Matt. 5:48) and holiness (I Pet. 1:15-16).
2. Those who obtain wisdom and fear of God will "*remain in it*" because they have insight and understanding of the big picture of man's existence.

B. "*But the wicked shall be cut off from the land, and the treacherous shall be rooted out of it*" (2:22).

1. Solomon contrast the blessings of the wise with the punishment of the wicked who despise instruction. While the good, righteous, upright, and perfect man will dwell in the land (or earth) the wicked and treacherous shall be cut off and rooted out of the land.
2. The picture is one of utter extermination of the wicked. Their end punishment will be so complete that they will no longer exists among the upright. Visions of the eternal banishment to hell with its fire and misery are no doubt under consideration (see Rev. 20:10ff).

### Concluding Thoughts:

Let us all remember that wisdom (the fear of God) is crying aloud for mankind to hear and receive her (Prov. 1:20-21). She is available to all who would diligently seek her with great interest as though she were the greatest treasure to obtain in this life. Those who view wisdom as a great treasure above all that this earth has to offer they will naturally spend all their time and energy obtaining her. When one finds wisdom and the fear of God they will be delivered from wickedness and the sexually immoral woman. God will certainly reward the man or woman who finds and holds to wisdom. The simple; however, will be eternally condemned. The simple are those who want something for nothing. The simple will cheat on tests, gamble their paychecks away, lie to gain favor, and are altogether opposed to labor of any sort.

## Chapter 3

Solomon builds upon the subject the Law of Wisdom and the consequences of following it.

### I. Admonition to trust in the Law of God (3:1-10):

- A. *"My son, forget not my law; But let thy heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and years of life, And peace, will they add to thee"* (3:1-2).
  1. Solomon (as a voice of wisdom and knowledge) continues to speak tenderly to his audience as a father to a son. The wise king pleads with his listeners to never "*forget*" my law and always "*keep my commandments*."
  2. The greatest troubles that God's people throughout history experienced were due to their forgetting God's laws and consequential disobedience (see Jer. 5:22-24; 18:15).
  3. Those who love and treasure wisdom and the fear of God will always keep her near and thereby gain length of days, years, and peace to life. When one is doing what they are suppose to do they stay out of trouble and are at peace.
  4. A universal law of our existence is that there are consequences to all our actions (whether good or bad).
- B. *"Let not kindness and truth forsake thee: Bind them about thy neck; Write them upon the tablet of thy heart: So shalt thou find favor and good understanding In the sight of God and man"* (3:3-4).
  1. The Law of wisdom of verse 1 is now equated to kindness and truth.
  2. The wise and fearful of God will not permit kindness and truth to be left in the lurch of their lives. Solomon advises that the wise make them such a part of their lives that they are figuratively bound to their necks and written in the tables of stone within the heart.
  3. When my disposition towards others is kind and truthful rather than abrasive, ugly, and lying I will certainly find favor in the sight of God and other men. I will be trustworthy to all.
- C. *"Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, And lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths"* (3:5-6).
  1. The Law of Wisdom is trusting in Jehovah (i.e., in His promises). The man of God who obtains wisdom and the fear of God will trust that God's ways will be helpful now and for ever more. With a heart filled with faith man is to "*trust in Jehovah with all thy heart*." God will not misguide you in life or eternity.
  2. When the temptation to do things by "*thine own understanding*" comes the wise will trust in the ways of the Lord. The Law of Wisdom does not equate to "*thine own understanding*." Though some things may not seem good to you they are nonetheless divinely instructed. Sometimes people



in the church don't believe in withdrawing from a fellow Christian because they formulate things according to their "*own understanding*." Those who will not follow all God's instructions show a lack of trust in God. The Lord will direct our paths to eternal glory if we will let him.

**D. "*Be not wise in thine own eyes; Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil: It will be health to thy navel, And marrow to thy bones*" (3:7-8).**

1. Notice the line of thought. Solomon instructs man to make wisdom and the fear of God an integral part of one's life (verse 1-4). The wise are to put their trust in God's laws (verse 5). The wise are not to "*lean upon thine own understanding*" (verse 5).
2. The wise are now encouraged to "*not be wise in thine own eyes*" (see also Isa. 5:21). We ought to never let our personal assessment of what is wise or not determine our level of wisdom but rather our quiet and lawful actions.
3. Solomon advises against looking inward to self for direction and instructs the man of God to rather look to Jehovah (see study # 7; Direction in Life). When one does this through a great interest in truth they will fear Jehovah. Solomon thereby instructs all to "*fear Jehovah and depart from evil.*" Such will be the case because the man of God will have no interest in wicked practices. The Law of Wisdom is to fear God and depart from evil!

**E. "*Honor Jehovah with thy substance, And with the first-fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, And thy vats shall overflow with new wine*" (3:9-10).**

1. To honor another is to give reverence, respect, and obedience to. The Law of Wisdom is to honor Jehovah with thy substance. The man of God is to honor Jehovah not only with an insatiable appetite for His truths but also "*with thy substance.*" The Mosaic Law commanded the people of God to tithe (Deut. 14:22ff) and to give of the first fruits of their harvest (see Exod. 22:29; 23:19 etc.). Televangelist love this verse because in it they find supposed authority for requesting their listeners to send money to them. The plea is that people would send their money and God will in turn bless them bountifully with plenty. The Lord does; however, promise plenty blessings for one who so honors Him. Those who do not merely give lip service to the Lord but actually open their wallet shall be blessed in that their actions of giving have made manifest their true faith. God's blessings of redemption, which is compared to an overflowing wine vat, shall be richly supplied to such a one (see study # 8; Giving of our Means).
2. The New Testament speaks of one giving as they have prospered to the Lord as well (see I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6ff). The same principle holds true here. Those who give liberally "*shall reap bountifully*" (the thought is spiritual - see II Cor. 6:8).

**II. The Value of Wisdom (3:11-35):**

**A. "*My son, despise not the chastening of Jehovah; Neither be weary of his reproof: For whom Jehovah loveth he reproveth; Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth*" (3:11-12).**

1. The author of Hebrews quotes from this passage at Hebrews 12:3-11 when he said, "*For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin: and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons, My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when thou art reproveth of him; For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness."*
2. Here is the big picture regarding the Hebrews. Apparently many had apostized from the faith that they once held. They were not studying the scriptures. They were being persecuted and some were on the verge of giving up their faith. The picture is one of spiritual weakness brought on by a lack of knowledge. How would the Lord bring the Hebrews back to their senses? The Lord would do

so by "*chastening*." To "*chasten*" (*paideia*) = "the rearing of a child... training and teaching, education... its result, culture, learning, accomplishments" (LS 584). Chastening is therefore not punishment for sinful deeds but rather an education process whereby the recipient will do some learning.

- a. It seems clear here that the afflictions the Hebrews were undergoing at the hands of ungodly men are directly associated with the chastening of the Lord. Throughout history God has used various wicked men and nations to chasten His children. The Assyrian nation, (though wicked), were used as God's "*rod*" to correct His people (Isa. 10:9-10). Again, God used Babylon to chasten His people to shame that they may repent of their sinful works (cf. Jer. 31:17-20). The people of Judah had the same problem as the Hebrew Christians; i.e., they lacked knowledge (cf. Jer. 8:7). When heavily reproved by the Babylonians many of the survivors were moved to shame and repented (cf. Lam. 1:20). God was correcting them in measure (cf. Jer. 30:11; 46:28).
  - b. Let all today understand that because we suffer we are loved of God. He deals with us as a loving father would his own children. We are educated when treated shamefully by the world and evil brethren. Let us gain wisdom and understanding from each case of ill treatment knowing that we have a glorious home in heaven after a while (see appendix # 55).
  - c. Said chastening at the hands of evil men (yet through the purpose of God) is never pleasant; however, let us see the consequences and thereby endure them with joy (cf. James 1:2-4). This is God's world and this is how He operates. He allows sinful men to persecute us and those who truly love Him will endure gaining wisdom along the way. So the old adage, 'no pain, no gain.'
  - d. How am I educated when treated shamefully? Such an incident will force me to make a decision in life. I will ask myself, 'is what I believe worth this ill treatment?' Again, I will find myself defending truth against ungodly men and growing stronger and stronger. I am educated therefore, by ill treatment of the ungodly because I am forced to make decisions that will strengthen my faith and knowledge of God's word. The Psalmist said, "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes*" (Ps. 119:67).
3. If we will simply understand the Lord's chastening we will not despise nor grow weary of it. We will understand that our holiness and righteousness is being molded.
- B. "*Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, And the man that getteth understanding. For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver, And the profit thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: And happy is every one that retaineth her*" (3:13-18).
1. Solomon had said at chapter two that wisdom and the fear of God will only be found by great effort on the part of man. Now, Solomon tells us that in this quest for wisdom the interested will be chastened by God and thereby obtain wisdom. While man has his part in the quest for wisdom and fear God has his part as well. Jehovah providentially permits man to suffer various ill events that they may obtain wisdom. Those who view trials and tribulations from this perspective will indeed be "*happy*" (see also James 1:2).
  2. Wisdom and the fear of God is well worth the hard search and trials of ill treatment. Wisdom and fear is thereby viewed as a greater treasure than that of silver, gold, and rubies (riches and honor) (see study # 9; The Search for Wisdom).
- C. "*Jehovah by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths were broken up, And the skies drop down the dew*" (3:19-20).
1. Here we find an association between Jehovah and wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. The wisdom of God speaks. Luke records, "*Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send unto them prophets and apostles; and some of them they shall kill and persecute...*" (Lk. 11:49). Jehovah used wisdom to "*found the earth*" (i.e., create all that is). John writes of the "*word*" (i.e., Jesus) saying, "*All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made*" (Jn. 1:3). Such a statement identifies the authoritative position of Jehovah in

- relation to wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. Wisdom is not the Holy Spirit, as some may conclude, but rather an identifying attribute of Jehovah. Jehovah's actions and thoughts define what wisdom, understanding, and knowledge is.
2. The apostle Paul spoke of the "*potentate*" position of Jehovah at I Tim. 6:15 illustrating His grand authority over mankind. This authority, through wisdom, created the earth. This authority, through understanding, established the heavens. This authority, by knowledge, broke up the depths (i.e., divided the waters into rivers, lakes, and various streams to sustain His creation). This authority, through knowledge, causes the skies to drop down rain and dew. God simply spoke and the universe was framed (see Ps. 33:6ff). Jesus simply spoke and he exercised authority over the Devil (Matt. 4:10), sickness, diseases, demons, epileptic, and palsied (Matt. 4:24; 8:5ff), Peter's mother-in-law's fever (Matt. 8:14-15), demons (Matt. 8:16-17, 30-32), the wind and sea (physical elements) (Matt. 8:23-27), sin (Matt. 9:2-8), life and death (Matt. 9:23-25), eyesight (Matt. 9:27-29), gravity and water (physical elements) (Matt. 14:24-25), fish of the sea (Matt. 17:27), and a fig tree (plant kingdom) (Matt. 21:20).
- D. "*My son, let them not depart from thine eyes; **Keep sound wisdom and discretion: So shall they be life unto thy soul, And grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way securely, And thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet***" (3:21-24).
1. Wisdom, discretion (prudence, forethought, judgment, carefulness), and understanding are "*not to depart from thine eyes.*" God's potentate sovereign position is defined by these traits. The New Testament Christian is commanded to attain unto the perfection (Matt. 5:48), holiness (I Pet. 1:16) and divine nature of Jehovah (II Pet. 1:4).
  2. Those who keep wisdom and discretion shall have life, walk in God's ways securely, shall not stumble, nor be afraid of the wicked. After Peter spoke of attaining unto a divine nature at II Peter 1 he writes, "*Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble:*" (II Pet. 1:10). Remember, such an endeavor in life will guard one from ungodliness because we will not be interested in filth but all our interest will be in truth, justice and equity.
  3. Those who live with wisdom, discretion, and understanding avoid the ills of society that come to the wicked and they are able to sleep at night knowing that their actions and words carry no punishment.
- E. "*Be not afraid of sudden fear, Neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh: For **Jehovah will be thy confidence, And will keep thy foot from being taken***" (3:25-26).
1. There is nothing for the righteous to fear (see II Tim. 1:7). There will be no pity nor fear for the wicked when their desolation comes.
  2. The faithful lives by holiness and righteousness and display the confidence in Jehovah's promises. There is no reason for them to fear even if they lose their lives (Matt. 10:28).
- F. "*Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, When it is in the power of thy hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, And to-morrow I will give; When thou hast it by thee. Devise not evil against thy neighbor, Seeing he dwelleth securely by thee*" (3:27-29).
1. Wisdom, discretion, and understanding are not just words but they are ways. The wise will seek out the knowledge of God and perform acts of kindness. Furthermore, the wise will not withhold things from the needy. If I have the ability ("when it is in my power to do") I should never withhold help to those who need it. Recall that John said, "*Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need, and shuts up his compassion from him, how doth the love of god abide in him?*" (I Jn. 3:17). Again, James writes, "*If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?*" (James 2:15). Wisdom is defined by actual actions (as we noted earlier in the giving honor to God through our contributions - see Prov. 3:9) (see study # 10; Helping those in Need).
  2. Again, wisdom would never be seen devising a plan of wickedness against the people who live or work next to you. Wisdom will always seek out the betterment of all men.

- G. *"Strive not with a man without cause, If he have done thee no harm. Envy thou not the man of violence, And choose none of his ways. For the perverse is an abomination to Jehovah; But his friendship is with the upright"* (3:30-32).
1. More of wisdom is defined in the peaceable nature of such a man. The man of wisdom and discretion does not envy the "*man of violence*." Said men often prosper through wicked vices yet the wise cannot be jealous of him. His kid never sits the bench, he is promoted at work, and he attains all that he has through behind the scenes wickedness.
  2. Remember, the world knows their own and they also know those who are not like them (see Jn. 15:19). Let not the wise be bothered by this. Jehovah is true friends with the upright (see James 2:23).
- H. *"The curse of Jehovah is in the house of the wicked; But he blesseth the habitation of the righteous. Surely he scoffeth at the scoffers; But he giveth grace unto the lowly. The wise shall inherit glory; But shame shall be the promotion of fools"* (3:33-35)
1. Chapter three ends as chapter two did. The consequences of wicked living is their extermination or banishment from among the righteous (see Proverbs 2:22). Furthermore, Solomon states that they have Jehovah's curse and live in shame.
  2. The wise will attain the grace of God and "*inherit glory*" (i.e., dwell in the land - Proverbs 2:21). The New Testament speaks of the saints obtaining or inheriting glory (see Philippians 3:20; 2 Timimothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13; 5:4, 10; 1 John 3:2 etc.).

## Chapter 4

- I. **The young are encouraged to gladly receive instructions and obtain Wisdom (4:1-13):**
- A. *"Hear, my sons, the instruction of a father, And attend to know understanding: For I give you good doctrine; Forsake ye not my law"* (4:1-2).
1. Once again, Solomon advises his readers to "*Hear the instruction of a father*" (see Proverbs 1:8). The foolish and unloving could care less about the instruction of a father. Fathers have lived long and gained experience. A son would do well to listen to his father's instructions. The foolish mock and ignore their parents instructions.
  2. The mark of the wise is that they are willing to "*hear*" their fathers and "*attend to know understanding*." Those who are wise are interested in doing what is right and being respectful to those who are due honor. Such people will "attend" to gaining wisdom and understanding because they view these spiritual matters as great treasure to be gained (see Prov. 2:3-5; 3:13-15).
- B. *"For I was a son unto my father, Tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. And he taught me, and said unto me: Let thy heart retain my words; Keep my commandments, and live; Get wisdom, get understanding; Forget not, neither decline from the words of my mouth; Forsake her not, and she will preserve thee; Love her, and she will keep thee"* (4:3-6).
1. Solomon fondly remembers his childhood of sitting at his own father's feet and gaining understanding. How many times have you young people heard your dad say, "When I was your age..."? Though you may role your eyes as though dad has no clue remember he has lived at least twice as long as you and has gained a degree of wisdom and understanding. You owe them, by divine decree, your attention and honor.
  2. The father of wisdom is Jehovah God (see Proverbs 8:22ff). Solomon's father (king David) taught him to "*retain*" the words he was taught. Young people should not listen to their fathers to amuse them but listen with an ear to learn and then "*retain*" those words for future use. Such retention will be an investment in wisdom and understanding.
- C. *"Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom; Yea, with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote thee; She will bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her. She will give to thy head a chaplet of grace; A crown of beauty will she deliver to thee"* (4:7-9).
1. What is the "*principle thing*" in your life (i.e., what is most important to you)? Sometimes people live and talk as though entertainment were the principle thing in life to obtain. Others seem to

believe that financial security is the principle thing to strive after. There are many things of this world that people strive after as though they could not live without; however, Solomon tells us that "*Wisdom is the principle or most important thing.*" To this point of our study this may be the principle statement. Man may fail to have many friend, fame, or riches yet if he fails in attaining wisdom he has failed at obtaining the principle thing in this life (see study # 11; The Importance of Wisdom).

2. Seeing that wisdom is the most important thing for you to possess you ought to search after her with all diligence (see Prov. 2:1-5; 3:13-18) (see study # 9).
  3. Those who treat wisdom as the principle thing in life will bring honor, grace, and a crown of beauty to their lives.
- D. "*Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; And the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in paths of uprightness. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; And if thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble*" (4:10-12).
1. Solomon, as a father to a son, pleads that his readers would receive the wise sayings of a dad (don't be so quick to ignore your father's instruction).
  2. A father should be able to say to his son, "*I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in paths of uprightness*" (see Eph. 6:1ff). When a father has done his job of teaching a child in the ways of wisdom the child will be kept from the ways of the wicked (see study # 12; Father's Responsibility to Teach their Children).
  3. Solomon is not teaching once saved always saved but rather saying that those who continue in wisdom and paths of righteousness "*shall not stumble.*" The key to not stumbling is remaining faithful to divine revelation (see II Pet. 1:10).
- E. "*Take fast hold of instruction; Let her not go: Keep her; For she is thy life*" (4:13).
1. Solomon had just said that "*wisdom is the principle (most important) thing.*" The wise man now states that wisdom "*is thy life.*" Wisdom, the precious treasures of knowledge, are to be equated to oxygen in level of importance in our lives. Wisdom should be viewed as something that not only sustains our lives but something that we simply cannot do without for a moment (see study # 11).
  2. When wisdom is viewed as this important and this precious then the young will "*take fast hold of instruction.*" Rather than scoffing at your dad's instructions you will be ready, willing, and anxious to hear more and more of your father's teaching.

## II. The Direction of the Wise (4:14-27):

- A. "*Enter not into the path of the wicked, And walk not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it; Turn from it, and pass on. For they sleep not, except they do evil; And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, And drink the wine of violence. But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light, That shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: They know not at what they stumble*" (4:14-19).
1. The wise who listen to their father and gain understanding will have the ability to differentiate between the ways of the wicked and the ways of the wise. The wise will identify the directions of the wicked and will thereby in no way "*walk*" in their ways. So opposed to the ways of the wicked are we to be that we altogether "*avoid*" their hangouts. Those who do not go to the places where the wicked are will not be tempted to be involved in the ways of the wicked. The instructions are simple: Don't go where they go (see I Cor. 15:33) (see study # 2).
  2. Why do the wise not want to go where the wicked go? Solomon says its because their every waking hour is spent "*doing evil*" and trying to get one who is good to "*fall*" into their lifestyle of wickedness. The more that do what they are doing the more they will feel comfortable. Don't be taken by the wicked!
  3. The great contrast of light and darkness is used to differentiate between the wise and the wicked.
- B. "*My son, attend to my words; Incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; Keep them in the midst of thy heart. For they are life unto those that find them, And health to all their flesh*" (4:20-22).
1. The wise king pleads with his audience to "*attend, incline thine ear to know, never let instruction depart thine eyes, and keep divine instructions within thy heart.*" The devil and wicked men are at

work constantly. They will bring you down if you do not continuously contemplate the ways of wisdom and understanding.

2. Life and spiritual health belong to those whose quest it is in life to find wisdom and understanding.
- C. *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life"* (4:23).
1. With the heart we think (Prov. 23:7), reason (Mk. 2:8), understand things (Matt. 13:15), plan or intend things (Heb. 4:12), purpose to do things (II Cor. 9:7), desire (Rom. 10:1), love (Matt. 22:37), and trust (Prov. 3:5). The wise should keep or possess their heart rather than permitting the wicked and the ways of the world to possess the heart. When we keep or possess things we hold on *"with all diligence."* Our purpose should always be spiritual (see Col. 3:1ff). We live in a world where sin and the availability to sin is all around us. To walk in the paths of the wicked is to relinquish our hearts to folly. We cannot afford to slip (see study # 13; Avoiding Worldliness).
  2. All issues of life are summed up in man's ability to reason, understand, purpose to do things, plan to do things, and desires. All of the wise man's interest and abilities ought to be kept within the bounds of wisdom. All issues of life will have wisdom applied to them and thereby the one who so lives will be blessed eternally.
- D. *"Put away from thee a wayward mouth, And perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, And let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Make level the path of thy feet, And let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: Remove thy foot from evil"* (4:24-27).
1. The wise will *"put away"* things like a filthy mouth (see Eph. 4:29) (see study # 14; Filthy Language).
  2. The wise will keep their eyes looking straight ahead rather than being distracted by lust and wicked ways.
  3. The wise will *"make level the path of thy feet"* in relation to directions in life to go. While the wicked are quick to turn after evil deeds the wise do not permit themselves to be in such situations.

## Chapter 5

### I. Solomon Warns against embracing a Strange Woman (5:1-14):

- A. *"My son, attend unto my wisdom; Incline thine ear to my understanding: That thou mayest preserve discretion, And that thy lips may keep knowledge"* (5:1-2).
1. Solomon is on a quest to have man attend to the business of obtaining wisdom and understanding. If we as fathers had one thing to do over with our children as they grew up what would it be? It seems that most ought to say that I would spend more time encouraging my son or daughter to gain wisdom and understanding.
  2. The consequences of such work is *"discretion"* i.e., "to be discreet... having or showing a judicious reserve in one's speech or behavior; prudent... lacking ostentation or pretension; modest" (AHD 403). We defined discretion at Proverbs 3:21 as *prudence, forethought, judgment, and carefulness*. One with discretion will have lips that keep knowledge. The wise man is what he is and does not try to appear to be something else (see study # 39).
- B. *"For the lips of a strange woman drop honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil: But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; Her steps take hold on Sheol; So that she findeth not the level path of life: Her ways are unstable, and she knoweth it not"* (5:3-6).
1. Solomon had instructed his readers to obtain wisdom at chapter 2 so that they would be delivered *"from the strange woman, even from the foreigner that flatters with her words; that forsake the friend of her youth, and forgets the covenant of her God: for her house inclines unto death, and her paths unto the dead; none that go unto her return again, neither do they attain unto the paths of life:"* (2:16-19).
  2. Her mouth is once again considered. Solomon warned of her words of flattery at chapter 2. He now warns against her smooth words that drop as honey. Her work of seduction may appear desirable at the first; however, when one takes hold of her she becomes bitter as wormwood and

sharp as a two-edged sword in that she pierces one through with many bitter sorrows of life. To a married man she is strange because she does not belong to you and neither is she available to you. Those who imbibe of her will be brought to death.

3. Solomon says that such a woman who is willing to take a married man in adultery or unmarried man in fornication has not found the level path of life. She is unstable in the realm of faith and so foolish she doesn't even know it. Women who seek after sexual companions are a cancer to society.

C. *"Now therefore, my sons, hearken unto me, And depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, And come not nigh the door of her house; Lest thou give thine honor unto others, And thy years unto the cruel; Lest strangers be filled with thy strength, And thy labors be in the house of an alien" (5:7-9).*

1. Solomon pleads again with the reader regarding attaining, holding, and giving heed to wisdom and instruction. Don't let a strange woman ruin your existence. Solomon admonishes man to *"remove thy way far from her... come not nigh the door of her house..."* Those who flirt with disaster will taste disaster in their lives. The wise should run *"far from her"* (see I Cor. 6:13-20) (see study # 4).
2. To go to the door of a strange woman is to:
  - a. *"Give thine honor unto others."* The meaning may be one's reputation is ruined...
  - b. Give *"thy years unto the cruel"* may be an allusion to the wrath that the adulterated woman's husband would exercise on the young man that went her way.
  - c. *"Lest strangers be filled with thy strength."* The 1901 ASV has a footnote that reads "wealth" rather than "strength." All that a man works for may be taken by this strange woman. One's hard earned money from labor will be spent on one that is strange and unlawful.

D. *"And thou mourn at thy latter end, When thy flesh and thy body are consumed, And say, How have I hated instruction, And my heart despised reproof; Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was well-nigh in all evil In the midst of the assembly and congregation" (5:10-14).*

1. One can scarcely imagine the sorrow and tears that are the byproduct of fornication and adultery. When the strange woman succeeds in bringing one to spiritual death there will be great mourning in the latter end. The mental anguish of knowing that you have violated God's laws, turned your head to your parents instructions, caused great sorrow within the home, and lost your hard earned money to a harlot is a sorrow that will burn within one's being.
2. When it is too late, when your family is torn, when your children are ashamed of you, when your wife's heart is broken you will say, "why didn't I listen and apply wisdom to my life." The moment of pleasure will not be worth the agony your carelessness caused.

## II. A Call to Faithfulness (5:15-23):

A. *"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, And running waters out of thine own well. Should thy springs be dispersed abroad, And streams of water in the streets? Let them be for thyself alone, And not for strangers with thee" (5:15-17).*

1. Wives are sometimes referred to as a cistern (Isa. 51:2) or vessels with which one would drink (see I Thess. 4:4; I Pet. 3:7).
2. The sexual act is completely lawful within the confines of marriage (see Heb. 13:4) and is actually encouraged by the Holy Spirit (see I Cor. 7:1ff). The faithful child of God is to be faithful to their mate and never seeking intercourse outside of marriage.

B. *"Let thy fountain be blessed; And rejoice in the wife of thy youth. As a loving hind and a pleasant doe, Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; And be thou ravished always with her love" (5:18-19).*

1. Marriage is generally for the young. Solomon commands that man always *"rejoice in the wife of thy youth."* Our wives ought to continue to please and make us happy even in our older ages.
2. Man is commanded to be satisfied with the breast of his own wife. One should never even look lustfully at the breast of another woman (see Matt. 5:27-28).
3. Man is also instructed to *"always be ravished with her love."* The word "ravished" means to be overwhelmed with emotion. A man's wife should cause him to be overwhelmed with emotion when thinking of her, being with her, and making a home with her. She is everything to him in this life and he would not give her up for anything (like a strange woman).

4. People today seem to get bored with the wife of their youth. When children come along they feel the reality of age setting in and decide to go back out into the world. What a sickening sight it is for a man in his forties to be chasing women and attending events that single people would be doing. Some refuse to accept their age. Some refuse to accept maturity. Some are bent on destroying homes for selfish pleasure (see study # 36 and # 55).
- C. *"For **why** shouldst thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, And embrace the bosom of a foreigner? For the ways of man are before the eyes of Jehovah; And he maketh level all his paths. His own iniquities shall take the wicked, And he shall be holden with the cords of his sin. He shall die for lack of instruction; And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray"* (5:20-23).
1. The Holy Spirit enjoins the emotion of being ravished with love only by one's wife (or husband) "**why**" would someone want to be ravished by a "*strange woman*" or "*embrace the bosom of a foreigner?*" If it is God's laws not to do so yet you do this you exercise a spirit of selfishness and dishonor the name of Jehovah God.
  2. Always remember, "*the ways of man are before the eyes of Jehovah*" (see Jer. 23:23) (see study # ; The Omniscience of God). Nathan had made a similar comment to David when he tried to secretly conceal his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah her husband (see 2 Sam. 12:12).
  3. Then end of an adulterous relationship is to live in sin (i.e., *holden with the cords of sin*). Due to the adulterer's folly he shall die for lack of instruction.

## Chapter 6

- I. **Let neighbors take care of their own issues, consider the ant, the man with a filthy Mouth, and Seven things that God Hates (6:1-19):**
- A. *"My son, if thou art become surety for thy neighbor, If thou hast stricken thy hands for a stranger; Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, Thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, Seeing thou art come into the hand of thy neighbor: Go, humble thyself, and importune thy neighbor; Give not sleep to thine eyes, Nor slumber to thine eyelids; Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, And as a bird from the hand of the fowler"* (6:1-5).
1. Solomon gives bits of wise instruction to his readers. It is not wise to guarantee anything for your neighbor or a stranger. It may very well be that the neighbor or stranger will not do as he should. Let each man speak for himself and take care of his own business.
  2. If you have given a guarantee for a neighbor or stranger do all within your power to get out of such a situation. You cannot be responsible for other people's actions... you can only be responsible for your actions.
- B. *"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; Consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no chief, Overseer, or ruler, Provideth her bread in the summer, And gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as a robber, And thy want as an armed man"* (6:6-11).
1. Solomon speaks very low of the simple man who wants something for nothing. The one who would cheat on a test to pass a class, the one who would gamble away any money he has in hopes of hitting it big, the man who is unwilling to work for anything in life, and opposed to hard labor. God has no respect for such people and neither do the people of God.
  2. Solomon's advise for the sluggard is to go to the ant. Watch the hard working ant who has no lack because she works hard. The sluggard; however, likes to sleep and thereby they experience poverty in life (see study # 5 and # 15; Work Ethic).
- C. *"A worthless person, a man of iniquity, Is he that walketh with a perverse mouth; That winketh with his eyes, that speaketh with his feet, That maketh signs with his fingers; In whose heart is perverseness, Who deviseth evil continually, Who soweth discord. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; On a sudden shall he be broken, and that without remedy"* (6:12-15).



1. There are many "*worthless persons*" in the world who curse with their mouths, wink with their eyes, and make motions with their fingers (see Eph. 4:29) (see study # 16; The Use of Bad Language).
  2. Such a person is not subject to the laws of God (Rom. 8:7).
- D. "*There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood; A heart that deviseth wicked purposes, Feet that are swift in running to mischief, A false witness that uttereth lies, And he that soweth discord among brethren*" (6:16-19).
1. The word "*abomination*" (hatred - something disgraceful) is found throughout the word of God in relation to the Lord's attitude toward sinful things. Moses said that idolatry (Deut. 7:24-26; 12:28-32; 17:2-5; 27:15), false prophets (Deut. 13:12-13), blemished sacrifices (Deut. 17:1), Wizards, sorcerers, and magicians (Deut. 18:9-12), women who wear men's clothing (Deut. 22:5), prostitution (Deut. 23:17-18), cheating people out of money with false balances (Deut. 25:13-16), and sexual immorality such as adultery, fornication, and bestiality (Deut. 27:15ff) are acts that are repulsive to God.
  2. Solomon lists seven more things that Jehovah views as an "*abomination*:"
    - a. **Haughty eyes:** Those filled with pride are headed toward eternal destruction. Solomon wrote, "*Pride goeth before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall*" (Prov. 16:18).
    - b. A **Lying tongue:** Those who do not tell truth... those who speak lies to make themselves appear better than what they are... those who get themselves in trouble and then lie to get out... these actions are an abomination unto Jehovah.
    - c. **Murderers:** The act of taking another person's life is an abomination to Jehovah.
    - d. A **wicked heart:** People who make wicked plans within their hearts to do some evil deed.
    - e. Those feet that are quick to involve themselves in **wicked and mischievous activities**.
    - f. A **false witness:** one who tells a lie about another person.
    - g. Lastly, he that sows **discord among brethren:** The man or woman who would, by means of a factious movement, sow seeds of discord among brethren (causing people to argue).

**II. Respect and honor for parents and word of God will keep one from Sexual Immorality (6:20-35) (see study # 4):**

- A. "*My son, keep the commandment of thy father, And forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thy heart; Tie them about thy neck. When thou walkest, it shall lead thee; When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee; And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; And the law is light; And reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, From the flattery of the foreigner's tongue*" (6:20-24).
1. Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding will keep a man from the strange woman.
  2. The man or woman who binds the word of God to their heart and around their neck will be fully equipped to escape the seductive words and looks of an immoral woman (or man).
- B. "*Lust not after her beauty in thy heart; Neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a piece of bread; And the adulteress hunteth for the precious life*" (6:25-26).
1. To deny that there are other beautiful women in the world aside from your wife is to be naive. Those who lustfully contemplate the beauty of a woman within the heart fail to live holy in God's sight. Solomon advises to not let the lust of a beautiful woman have a beginning in the heart (see study # 4).
  2. Neither is a man to allow a beautiful flirtatious woman seduce with her eyes. A married man has no business "making eyes" or receiving sensual eyes.
  3. Those who lust and make flirtatious eye contact with a woman outside your marriage are brought as low as a piece of bread (they are ruined).
  4. Jesus had said, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul" (Matt. 16:26). Will the godly give up their fellowship with the Lord and family for a moment of pleasure? Know this that the "*adulteress hunts for the precious life*" of one who is unsuspecting.
- C. "*Can a man take fire in his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk upon hot coals, And his feet not be scorched? So he that goeth in to his neighbor's wife; Whosoever toucheth her shall not be unpunished*" (6:27-29).

1. Solomon calls upon his readers to reason with him. One can in no way take fire into his bosom and not expect to get burned. Again, a man cannot walk upon hot coals and somehow think that it is not going to affect him.
  2. You will be burned. Likewise, the man that "*goes into his neighbor's wife*" will suffer the awful consequences of such an unlawful and abominable act. He will receive immediate and everlasting punishment!
- D. "*Men do not despise a thief, if he steal To satisfy himself when he is hungry: But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; He shall give all the substance of his house. He that committeth adultery with a woman is void of understanding: He doeth it who would destroy his own soul*" (6:30-32).
1. Solomon continues to reason with his reader who may contemplate an adulterous affair. Solomon compares the abominable sin of adultery with a sin that is on the lowest end of the "sin spectrum." A man who steals food to satisfy his starvation will nonetheless pay a penalty for his error (see study # 17; Situation Ethics). If Adultery is on the other end of the "sin spectrum" will it not be even more punishable.
  2. The point is that no one will escape the punishment that is due the adulterer. When a man or woman commits adultery against their spouse they demonstrate a spirit that lacks understanding regarding the consequences of said action. They are numb to the fact that they are destroying their own soul for all eternity.
- E. "*Wounds and dishonor shall he get; And his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man; And he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts*" (6:33-35).
1. Two immediate consequences to an adulterous affair are personal chastisement and loss of reputation. The adulterer's "reproach shall not be wiped away" (i.e., every time someone mentions the adulterers name they will think not about his good deeds but about his adultery).
  2. The adulterer is also subject to the "*jealousy and rage*" of the man that the woman you committed adultery with is married to. Does the adulterer actually think that the man whose wife you cheated with will say, "Hey, no problem... I understand you made a mistake..." NO! That man will be filled with rage and will be tempted to take your head off. You have violated that man's wife. You have thrown the trust that your wife had in you to the wind. You have acted corruptly and shall now reap what you have sown. Adultery is a grave error!
  3. One may recall Nathaniel Hawthorne's book, "The Scarlet Letter." The book told of a woman who had traveled to America in the 1700's to establish herself and family. Her husband was to join her after a short stay in Europe. While she waited on her husband to come she found herself in an adulterous affair. The result was a baby daughter. When the towns people heard of her adultery they made her wear a scarlet red letter "A" upon her clothing and walk about the city streets in shame. When her husband finally came to America he found what she did and would not reveal himself to her. He was so angry that he spent years formulating a plan of revenge. There is nothing good that comes of adultery!

## Chapter 7

### I. How to Avoid Adultery (7 all):

- A. "*My son, keep my words, And lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments and live; And my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers; Write them upon the tablet of thy heart. Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; And call understanding thy kinswoman: That they may keep thee from the strange woman, From the foreigner that flattereth with her words*" (7:1-5).
1. To this point of our study we may believe the proverbs to be a dissertation over the error of adultery and sexual immorality. Let us consider what we have seen regarding the "*strange*" or adulterous woman (see study # 4):
    - a. She willfully forgets the laws of God (Prov. 2:17).
    - b. She flatters with her words (Prov. 2:16; 5:3-5; 6:24; 7:5).
    - c. You know where she is (Prov. 5:8)

- d. She seduces with her eyes (Prov. 6:25).
  - e. Let us not forget that she is beautiful to look upon (Prov. 6:25).
2. Those who have "wisdom and instruction" as the "*apple of thine eye*" (something precious) (i.e., those who seek and obtain wisdom and understanding like as though it were gold treasures (see Prov. 2:4-6) - remember: "*Wisdom is the principal thing*" [Prov. 4:7]) will (see study # 9):
- a. Understand righteousness and discretion (Prov. 1:4; 2:9-11; 3:21).
  - b. Will be delivered from evil men and the strange woman of adultery (Prov. 2:12-16).
  - c. Preserve discretion (judgment and tact) (Prov. 5:2)
  - d. Be satisfied with the "*wife of thy youth*" (Prov. 5:18).
  - e. Wisdom will guide one in paths of righteousness (Prov. 6:22).
3. Once again Solomon advises one to bind the laws of Jehovah upon their heart and neck so that they will not be tempted to lust and commit adultery with another woman.
- B. "*For at the window of my house I looked forth through my lattice; And I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, A young man void of understanding, Passing through the street near her corner; And he went the way to her house*" (7:6-8).
1. Solomon depicts a day in his life as he gazes out of a window through a lattice (trellis) and sees "*among the simple ones... a young man void of understanding.*"
    - a. Recall that the man "*void of understanding*" is the one who "*commits adultery with a woman*" (see Prov. 6:32). Those void of understanding have not diligently searched for wisdom as though it were great treasures of gold, silver, and precious stones (see Prov. 2:4-6). They treasure the things of worldliness rather than the things of God.
    - b. The young man that Solomon saw was also identified as "*simple.*" The simple are slothful and unwilling to work for their money (see Prov. 6:6ff). Here we find the simple being identified as "*void of understanding*" to the point that he would not only ponder adultery but commit adultery (see study # 5).
  2. What did Solomon see this slothful young man that was void of understanding do? The young man went to the house of the harlot. Solomon knew of her location and so did the young man. Rather than avoiding her the young man goes to her.
- C. "*In the twilight, in the evening of the day, In the middle of the night and in the darkness. And, behold, there met him a woman With the attire of a harlot, and wily of heart. She is clamorous and willful; Her feet abide not in her house: Now she is in the streets, now in the broad places, And lieth in wait at every corner*" (7:9-12).
1. A progression of time is given; i.e., from twilight, to evening, to the middle of the night. Solomon observed the young man going to the corner of the street where he knew the harlot lived. He paced back and forth obviously hoping to see her. His heart was filled with lust and he sought to fulfill all his fantasies. Finally, at midnight, she appears to him as a lion on the hunt for prey.
  2. Solomon gives a description of the harlot (see study # 18; The Identity of the Harlot):
    - a. The object of the young man's lust wears "*the attire of a harlot.*" Everything about this woman is sensual and worldly. Let us recall that she is indeed beautiful to look upon (see Prov. 6:25). Said attire is likely tight clothing, excessive jewelry, and makeup. She is a living standing contradiction of Paul's instruction to the woman at 1 Timothy 2:9-10 (see study # 29; Modesty in Dress).
    - b. With no shame before her face she exercises a "*wily heart*" (i.e., crafty in that she likely feigns love to her husband yet lust after the flesh of other men).
    - c. Thirdly, this harlot is "*clamorous*" or boisterous (unruly in her dealings with others).
    - d. Fourthly, the harlot is "*willful*" (i.e., she does what she desires... she is only interested in selfish objectives). Her mind is sensual and devilish and she will fulfill her innermost desires even if it destroys another.
    - e. Note also that the harlot is a married woman (see Prov. 7:19-20).
    - f. Lastly, the harlot is not content to stay within her own home with her own husband. She is out and about seeking whom she may devour through lust. You see her in McDonald's, Sam's, Walmart, the mall, and at the work place. She is beautiful, she flirts with her eyes, she will strike up a conversation with you, she will tell you things that make you feel desired, and in the

end she ruins your life. She is the harlot! May the Lord help all of our young ladies seek out a life of wisdom and understanding rather than lust and worldliness. Be conscientious of the clothing that you wear. Again, may all of our young men gain wisdom and understanding that will help them identify the harlot and altogether avoid her.

D. *"So she caught him, and kissed him, And with an impudent face she said unto him: Sacrifices of peace-offerings are with me; This day have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, Diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have spread my couch with carpets of tapestry, With striped cloths of the yarn of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning; Let us solace ourselves with loves. For the man is not at home; He is gone a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him; He will come home at the full moon" (7:13-20).*

1. The harlot's lust has found a home with the simple young man. She catches him and kisses him. She then, with an "*impudent face*" (i.e., since of shamelessness or hard heartedness - hardened in the since that God's laws forbid adulterous relationships yet adultery is what this willful woman wants) said, to paraphrase, "*I have performed my duties at the altar and now am ready for a joyous meal.*" Please note the forwardness of this woman (see study # 18). One makes a grave mistake to think that it is only men who are so forward in their sensual flirtations. Many women make the most sensual men look like school boys when it comes to language, dress, and flirting.
2. Her joy; however, is not expressed in thanksgiving to Jehovah but rather in the fulfilling of a lustful feeling toward a young man that did not belong to her. She explains to the young man that she has prepared her bedroom for this moment with him (she had premeditated the event). No doubt the young man and this woman had previous encounters. Maybe it was not an encounter of sexual intercourse yet she had showed her unlawful interest in him through her speech and making eyes at the young man. She may have flaunted her immodesty before him to catch his eye in the first place. The wise will run the simple will lust.
3. She is now ready to fulfill her lust as is the young man. An opportune time has arisen. The woman's husband is away on a business trip. Her husband has taken a money bag with him and will not be home for quite some time. It is safe for the young man to come into the house and fulfill both of their longing lustful desire. Now we see another part of the equation of the harlot. She presents herself in opportune times (see study # 18). When the husband or wife is not around!

E. *"With her much fair speech she causeth him to yield; With the flattering of her lips she forceth him along. He goeth after her straightway, As an ox goeth to the slaughter, Or as one in fetters to the correction of the fool; Till an arrow strike through his liver; As a bird hasteth to the snare, And knoweth not that it is for his life" (7:21-23).*

1. The adulterous harlot, "*With her much fair speech causes him to yield.*" The young man lusted after the married woman in his heart. He has lusted hard after her immodest beauty. He has been seduced by her flirtatious eyes and words. He wanders about near her home with a heart filled with desire for this strange woman. She comes out to meet him. The young man, like a time bomb, can contain himself no longer and he yields. Once the yielding takes place there is no going back to erase what you have done. With her flattering speech he runs head first like an **ox to the slaughter** to have sexual intercourse with the harlot. His senses have been dulled by her to the point that he is likened unto a cow standing in line to receive a death blow to the head so that it can be chopped up and served as steak on someone's table.
2. Once the deed is done he is likened unto one who has his liver shot through with an arrow or a bird that has been captured in a net and knows that its life is over. Its then too late to turn back. What is done is done.

F. *"Now therefore, my sons, hearken unto me, And attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thy heart decline to her ways; Go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: Yea, all her slain are a mighty host. Her house is the way to Sheol, Going down to the chambers of death" (7:24-27).*

1. Solomon speaks to the man who has not gone to the adulterous harlot. Give heed NOW... hearken unto me NOW... Attend to the words of my mouth NOW... Solomon pleads with his readers to see the dangers NOW before its everlasting too late.

2. **Avoid the adulterous harlot all together.** That married man or woman at work that flirts with the eyes and says smooth and lustful things into your ear... get away NOW!
3. Those who toy with the flirtatious lusts of others will be taken down in wounds and spiritual death. The harlot slays a mighty host (not just one woman but all women of her lustful ways).
4. Let wisdom be the apple of thine eye young man... let wisdom be the principle thing in your life... wisdom will keep you from great trouble if only we all would heed to its calling.

## Chapter 8

### I. Wisdom and Understanding Cries out to be heard and Embraced (8:1-9):

- A. *"Doth not wisdom cry, And understanding put forth her voice? On the top of high places by the way, where the paths meet, she stands; beside the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors, she cries aloud:"* (8:1-3).
  1. Note the equivalence that exist between wisdom and understanding. Wisdom cries out to the simple who are *"void of understanding"* (see Prov. 1:22; 7:7). Solomon has previously revealed this fact at Proverbs 1:20ff. If wisdom is truly the *"principle thing"* (Prov. 4:7) and *"thy life"* (Prov. 4:13) then all should give diligence to obtain her.
  2. Note again that in every place and every situation there is wisdom and understanding that must be exercised by man. She is always available yet the simple reject her for selfish and foolish reasons.
- B. *"Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand prudence; and, ye fools, be of an understanding heart"* (8:4-5).
  1. Just as wisdom and understanding are equivalent even so the simple and foolish are one and the same. Wisdom and understanding cries out to the simple fool that he may avoid great trouble in life. She is available to all if only man would seek her.
  2. To wisdom and understanding is added *"prudence."* We examined this word at Proverbs 1:4 as it related to discretion. Prudence is "a minding to do so and so, purpose, intention... thoughtfulness, prudence" (LS 872). The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word as, "careful management... caution... forethought" (AHD 998). Wisdom is crying to be heard among the simple that they would use forethought and caution when making a decision.
- C. *"Hear, for I will speak excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things"* (8:6).
  1. Wisdom is identified as both *"excellent and right things."*
  2. Those with wisdom will:
    - a. Understand righteousness and discretion (Prov. 2:9-11).
    - b. Will be delivered from evil men and the strange woman of adultery (Prov. 2:12-16).
    - c. Preserve discretion (judgment and tact) (Prov. 5:2)
    - d. Be satisfied with the *"wife of thy youth"* (Prov. 5:18).
    - e. Wisdom will guide one in paths of righteousness (Prov. 6:22).
- D. *"For my mouth shall utter truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing crooked or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understands, and right to them that find knowledge"* (8:7-9)
  1. The language of wisdom is truth and all things that are wicked are an *"abomination"* to her. Those who have wisdom as the apple of their eye and the principle thing in life are those who have a passionate hatred for *"wickedness"* (see study # 19; My Attitude Toward Sin).
  2. Wisdom's words are defined not only as truth but righteousness. Crooked and perverse words are absent from wisdom. The wise will not let crooked or perverse words fall from their lips (see study # 14).
  3. Those perceptive and receptive to truth find wisdom to be right. Wisdom and understanding fit the very nature that God created in us all (see Rom. 2:14ff) (see study # 20; The Nature of Man).

### II. The Value of Wisdom (8:10-11):

- A. *"Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold"* (8:10).
  1. Man has a choice in this life as to what he chooses to value. Some value recognition and other value money. Some place great value on family and other value their collections.

2. Value comes in many varieties but that which will profit above even gold and silver is wisdom, instruction, and knowledge. Wisdom has value that will never fade. The greatest investment that man can make is to gain wisdom.
- B. *"For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared unto it"* (8:11).
1. Solomon now associates wisdom, instruction, and knowledge together so that they are one and the same. Wisdom is *"better than rubies."* Solomon then goes a step further and says that wisdom is even better than *"all the things that may be desired."* Fame, fortune, and beauty have nothing on wisdom. Those who have all the wealth and fame in this world actually have nothing when compared to the man or woman with wisdom. The most poverty stricken individual who has obtained this precious wisdom is actually in better shape than the man who has fame and fortune but little wisdom.
  2. Seeing the great value of wisdom shouldn't we all be diligently seeking after it? (see Prov. 2:4-5). When one finds wisdom, a value that far exceeds silver and gold, you *"understand the fear of Jehovah"* (Prov. 2:5). Jesus said, *"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field"* (Matt. 13:44). Wisdom is of the greatest value among things of this world.

### III. Wisdom is Identified (8:12-21):

- A. *"I wisdom have made prudence my dwelling, and find out knowledge and discretion"* (8:12)
1. We shall now see why it is that wisdom is greater in value than choice gold, silver, rubies, and all things viewed as precious and costly in this world.
  2. Again, wisdom is personified. She has *"made prudence her dwelling place."* The word *"prudence"* has been defined at Proverbs 1:4 and 8:5 as "expresses caution and wisdom in the conduct of affairs... implies not only caution but the capacity for judging in advance the probable results of one's actions" (AHD 998).
  3. Wisdom is also personified in *"discretion."* To have discretion is to exercise prudence (careful forethought) with self-restraint and sound judgment. The man of discretion will measure his words carefully with self-restraint (i.e., he may upon first impulse give a knee jerk reaction to a conversation yet restrains such comments knowing that his words may cause a disturbance or have an adverse affect).
  4. When a man exercises prudence and discretion he keeps himself out of trouble and so here is one reason wisdom is greater in value than the treasures of this earth (see study # 21; The Great Value of Wisdom and # 39).
- B. *"The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil: Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth, do I hate"* (8:13).
1. Now wisdom adds *"the fear of Jehovah"* to her identity. Said fear is the first step to obtaining the precious and valuable wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 9:10). When one searches for wisdom as great treasures they will gain an understanding of what it means to *"fear Jehovah"* (Prov. 2:5). To *"fear Jehovah"* is to depart from evil (Prov. 3:7). Wisdom *"instructs"* man to *"fear Jehovah"* (see Prov. 15:33) (see study # 22; The Fear of God).
  2. When one fears Jehovah they *"hate:"* (see study # 19)
    - a. The character trait of *"pride"* and *"arrogance"* (self importance / egotistic / superiority complex).
    - b. *"evil and the evil way"* = all that the Lord condemns through His laws.
    - c. The practice of a *"perverse mouth"* - filthy communication out of one's mouth (see study # 14). We seem to run across this idea quite often in Proverbs (see Prov. 4:24; 8:7-8 and here at 8:13).
- C. *"Counsel is mine, and sound knowledge: I am understanding; I have might"* (8:14)
1. Wisdom is a counselor (one who gives sound guidance and direction to others).
  2. Wisdom is identified as understanding (many times over we have seen this in this study).
  3. Thirdly, wisdom occupies great *"might"* or power. There is great power in giving sound guidance and direction to people. Might changes the direction or course of men's life and that is a power of itself.

- D. *"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. I love them that love me; and those that seek me diligently shall find me"* (8:15-17).
1. Wisdom is the very tool that prudent and discrete men of high positions use to govern and judge matters within the earth (see study # 40).
  2. Once again we find that those who will see wisdom as the "*principle thing*" in life (Prov. 4:7), those who view wisdom as "*thy life*" (Prov. 4:13), and those who have wisdom as the "*apple of their eye*" (Prov. 7:2) will be those who "*seek me diligently.*" Those who view wisdom as an item of great importance will find her (see also Prov. 2:5). Those who say that we cannot know truth have give themselves over to the way of the simple.
- E. *"Riches and honor are with me; Yea, durable wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver"* (8:18-19).
1. The riches and honor that come with wisdom is not the riches of this world but riches in eternal blessings of glory and honor.
  2. Again, wisdom reveals its value. The return for one's investment in wisdom is "*better than gold and choice silver.*" Prudence, discretion, understanding, and the fear of Jehovah is far more valuable to a person's eternal being than any worldly treasure (see study # 21).
- F. *"I walk in the way of righteousness. In the paths of justice; that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and that I may fill their treasuries"* (8:20-21).
1. Wisdom is identified as walking in righteousness and justice (lawfully and fair with all by God's divine standards).
  2. Wisdom is the cause of men's treasuries being full (i.e., the substance or hope of man's faith is a heavenly home... this endeavor is to be like treasure being stored up while in the here and now - see Matt. 19:21).

#### IV. **God's Relationship to Wisdom (8:22-31):**

- A. *"Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the beginning of the dust of the world"* (8:22-26).
1. Wisdom has ever been (everlasting). Jehovah possessed wisdom before the world was even created. Before there was fountains of water, mountains, hills, the earth and its fields wisdom was. Before any part of the dust of the world was made wisdom existed.
  2. Wisdom is identified as being "*everlasting*" as is the Lord Jesus Christ (see Jn. 1:1ff). The identity of wisdom is prudence, discretion, righteousness, justice, and the fear of Jehovah. These **principles** were established with the Lord before the creation. Thereby the apostle Paul could refer to these **eternal principles** as a standard that must be met for one to be considered saved from the eternal wrath of God (see Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3ff) (see study # 3).
- B. *"When he established the heavens, I was there: when he set a circle upon the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when the fountains of the deep became strong, when he gave to the sea its bound, that the waters should not transgress his commandment, when he marked out the foundations of the earth; then I was by him, as a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in his habitable earth; and my delight was with the sons of men"* (8:27-31).
1. Wisdom stood beside Jehovah as He established the heavens and set a "*circle upon the face of the deep.*" Isaiah 40:22 speaks of Jehovah sitting above the "*circle of the earth*" which indicates an early divine understanding of the shape of the earth. Here; the "*circle*" is not the earth as a whole but the confining of the waters upon the earth as is commented on at Job 26:10.
  2. Wisdom was by Jehovah as a "*master workman*" (i.e., she was involved in the creative process). Wisdom was Jehovah's daily delight and wisdom's delight was Jehovah. Man too delighted in wisdom.

#### V. **Blessedness of the Wise Man (8:32-36):**

- A. *"Now therefore, my sons, hearken unto me; for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not"* (8:32-33).

1. Again, wisdom calls upon mankind to seek after her. As the gospel calls upon men to obey and enjoy the rich blessings of salvation even so wisdom calls (see II Thess. 2:13-14).
  2. Those who seek, hear, and give heed to instruction will obtain wisdom. Never refuse it!
- B.** *"Blessed is the man that hears me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. for whoso finds me finds life, and shall obtain favor of Jehovah. But he that sins against me wrongs his own soul: all they that hate me love death"* (8:34-36).
1. The blessed man is he who diligently seeks wisdom, finds her, and makes her his life. Such a man *"finds life and obtains the favor of Jehovah."* Jehovah favors and delights in the person who watches, waits, and looks for wisdom.
  2. Those who sin against wisdom; i.e., reject or refuse her knowledge and instructions in righteousness and justice:
    - a. *"Wrongs his own soul"* in that the soul is eternal and such a one self condemns his soul with eternal torment by sinful behavior (see also Proverbs 15:32; 16:17) (see study # 51; Attitude toward my own Soul) (see also study # 47).
    - b. Actually *"hates"* Jehovah and *"loves death."* One must appreciate the forward way in which the word of God speaks to man. It may be that those who do not choose a life of wisdom would never ever say, *"I hate God... I love death,"* yet this is exactly what they are doing when they choose the ways of the world over divine wisdom.

## Chapter 9

### I. Wisdom's Invitation to All (9:1-6):

- A.** *"Wisdom hath builded her house; She hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; She hath mingled her wine; She hath also furnished her table: She hath sent forth her maidens; She crieth upon the highest places of the city:* (9:1-3).
1. Wisdom has been identified by seven consistent articles. The seven are truth, instruction, knowledge, understanding, prudence, discretion, , and the fear of the Lord.
  2. Wisdom, once again, is personified as having a house founded upon seven pillars (she is perfect in every way).
  3. A similar story is told in the parable of the marriage feast at Matthew 22:1ff. The kingdom of God (here wisdom) has prepared a great feast for those of the world to come partake. Diligent preparation is made and the invitations sent out (*"she cries upon the highest places of the city"*) (see study # 23; Wisdom's Invitation - see also Proverbs 1:20-21; 8:1-5).
- B.** *"Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: As for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat ye of my bread, And drink of the wine which I have mingled. Leave off, ye simple ones, and live; And walk in the way of understanding"* (9:4-6).
1. Who are the *"simple?"* Solomon has precisely identified the *"simple"* man or woman as (see study # 5):
    - a. Scoffers who lack prudence and love simplicity (Proverbs 1:4, 22).
    - b. They are sluggards [i.e., lazy people who want everything for nothing... opposed to labor and believe that everyone owes them something] (Proverbs 6:6-11).
    - c. Worthless (Proverbs 6:12)
    - d. Void of understanding (Proverbs 7:6-8; 9:4-6)
    - e. Fool (Proverbs 8:5)
  2. Wisdom calls upon the simple to turn into her house (like also the harlot calls upon the simple to enter her prepared house for a ruinous death - see Proverbs 7:16ff). The call is likened unto the admonition of Proverbs 1:22 where the simple are called to leave the life of simplicity and gain life and understanding.

### II. The Mind of the Wise and Foolish (9:7-12):

- A.** *"He that correcteth a scoffer getteth to himself reviling; And he that reproveth a wicked man getteth himself a blot"* (9:7).
1. The *"scoffer"* (one who ridicules and has disdain for the wise) is identified as a *"simple"* man or woman (again, see Proverbs 1:22). The wise man who tries to correct the simple will be met with



insult, abuse, and scorn. The simple do not want to hear instruction or be told that they are wrong about a matter. The simple are so filled with pride and arrogance that their judgment is clouded with the affairs of this world.

2. Note that the wise man who attempts to correct the scoffer, wicked man, or simple will "*get himself a blot*." The effects of wisdom being pored upon the simple are often a shame unto the instructor of righteousness. Jesus said, "*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you*" (Matthew 7:6). The apostle Paul warns Timothy the evangelist to "*refuse*" those who wrangle over words in somewhat of a sick manner because they make it manifest that they truly have no desire for real saving truth (1 Timothy 4:7; 6:3ff). Though this be the case Paul also encourages Timothy to preach and rebuke these people until it comes to the point that such men may harm you due to their reprobate ways. Many come to be so irritated at the exposing nature of truth that they lash out at the teacher (see 2 Timothy 2:3; 4:1-3).
- B.** "*Reprove not a scoffer, lest he hate thee: Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: Teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning*" (9:8-9).
1. To "*reprove*" another is to shame, reprimand or scold one for their fault. Those of the world only have hatred for the spiritually minded who reprove their error (see John 15:17ff).
  2. The wise are not without fault. Though prudence, discretion, understanding, and knowledge are a way of life they still falter from time to time. When the wise man is shamed or scolded for his transgression he is grateful to the one who corrected him. He is not made angry at the scolding because he has not let arrogance and pride be a way of life. He is humble and knows the value of correction and wisdom. Such a man has been on a quest in this life to obtain wisdom and so he sees such reprimanding as a furtherance of his knowledge and understanding (see Proverbs 4:7, 13; 8:18-19) (see study # 11 and # 21).
- C.** "*The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding*" (9:10).
1. The "*fear of Jehovah*" has been identified as a part of wisdom at Proverbs 8:13. This fear of God has been identically identified as "*the beginning of wisdom*" at Proverbs 1:7. To this point of our study we have identified the "*fear of Jehovah*" as (see study # 22 and # 39):
    - a. Not being wise in thine own eyes (Proverbs 3:7).
    - b. Departing from evil (Proverbs 3:7).
    - c. Hating evil, pride, arrogance, the perverse mouth, and the evil way (Proverbs 8:13).
  2. When one gains knowledge of the Holy One then one obtains understanding.
- D.** "*For by me thy days shall be multiplied, And the years of thy life shall be increased. If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself; And if thou scoffest, thou alone shalt bear it*" (9:11-12).
1. The man or woman of wisdom (i.e., prudence, discretion, knowledge, and understanding) will live longer than the simple because they stay out of trouble. The man of the world is more likely to get himself involved in smoking, doing drugs, hanging around corrupt men, and doing corrupt things (all of which have the power of shortening one's life... the Billy Joel song, "Only the good die young" had it all wrong!).
  2. Elephaz said, "*Can a man be profitable unto God? Surely he that is wise is profitable unto himself*" (Job 22:2). When a man chooses a life of wisdom (i.e., prudence, understanding, knowledge, and the fear of God) then he profits himself through experiencing a long life, gaining material security through a diligent work ethic, and most importantly he gains an eternal heavenly home. Life is good to the wise in many ways (see study # 24; The Benefits of Gaining Wisdom).
  3. The "*scoffer*" (the simple sluggard) shall bear the shame that he brings to his life. He will live a life of poverty, always dependant upon others for his means and shelter, and in the end will suffer an eternal existence of torment (see study # 25; The Consequences of a Foolish Life).

### **III. The Harlot once again Identified (9:13-18):**

- A.** "*The foolish woman is clamorous; She is simple, and knoweth nothing*" (9:13).
1. Wisdom is put in juxtaposition to the simple as she is personified as a "*foolish woman*" of adultery.
  2. The "*foolish woman*" is identified as:

- a. "*Clamorous*" i.e., noisy, rowdy, boisterous, and riotous (opposite of the calm and quite disposition of the wise)... Solomon identified her as a harlot at Proverbs 7:10-11.
  - b. She is "*simple*" (identified previously as lazy, arrogant, void of understanding...)
  - c. She "*knows nothing*" that she ought to know that would bring her life. While wisdom is knowledge and understanding this foolish woman represents ignorance and lacking understanding.
- B. "*And she sitteth at the door of her house, On a seat in the high places of the city, To call to them that pass by, Who go right on their ways:*" (9:14-15).
- 1. The lazy sloth of ignorance and riotous living sits at her house immodestly dressed calling to the passer by people with no shame for her wickedness (see study # 4).
  - 2. Notice that Wisdom was in all places pleading to be heard while the foolish woman sits at her house and calls to those who pass by.
- C. "*Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; And as for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; That her guests are in the depths of Sheol*" (9:16-18).
- 1. The simple will find entertainment and pleasure with her and so he "*turns in*" or gives heed to her call of filth. Solomon, through this chapter, is illustrating the fact that man is given a choice as to what call they obey (see Proverbs 9:4) (see study # 26; The Call of Filthiness).
  - 2. The words of the adulterous are, "*Stolen waters are sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.*" Recall that a woman is referred to as a man's well or cistern (container) at Proverbs 5:15. Those who drink out of their own well are faithful to their mate. Those who drink "*stolen waters*" have gone into the "*strange woman.*" This woman's water is stolen by the simple in that he commits adultery with the woman whom he is not married to. Her water and bread of adultery are "*pleasant*" to the wicked.
  - 3. The simple rush into the pleasures of sin not pausing to recognize the death trap he enters (see Proverbs 7:22, 27). Those mighty men who have fallen by her seductive and immodest ways are in the "*depths of Sheol*" (i.e., the place where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched - see Mark 9:44-48).

## Chapter 10

### I. A Comparison of the Righteous and Wicked (10:1-10):

- A. "*The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father; But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother*" (10:1).
- 1. Seems odd that our children can dictate the emotional responses of gladness and heaviness of heart. Parents are affected by the choices their children make. Solomon had earlier said, "*My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother*" (Proverbs 1:8; 6:20). When a child forsakes the instruction and teachings of their father and mother it is a heaviness to their being. When children show signs of coming into wisdom there are glad hearts in the home (see study # 27; The Home).
  - 2. Parents have such a deep love for their children. They want the best for them in the area of spirituality. When a son or daughter rejects the teachings of their parents it is a source of great heart ache. If only the child knew how deep the pain they cause their parents for their folly. If only the child would consider the eternal state of their souls.
- B. "*Treasures of wickedness profit nothing; But righteousness delivereth from death. Jehovah will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish; But he thrusteth away the desire of the wicked*" (10:2-3).
- 1. Two possibilities here regarding the gains of the wicked. First, these treasures may be gained by wicked means (a false balance or thievery). Secondly, these treasures may be gained honestly; however, they do not profit the man because he is wicked. His life will end and his treasures will do nothing for him.
  - 2. The righteous man; however, will be delivered from the death of the wicked (i.e., eternal torment). The Lord will see to it that the righteous suffer not for their good and right deeds. The Psalmist

said, "*I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken. Nor his seed begging bread*" (Psalms 37:25).

- C. "*He becometh poor that worketh with a slack hand; But the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son; But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame*" (10:4-5).
1. Solomon, by divine inspiration, gives God's view of the man or woman who works hard as opposed to the sloth (see Proverbs 6:6-11). The scriptures portray the faithful servant of God as "*rich*" and the sinful sloth as "*poor*." The faithful are not minded to be rich (i.e., make it their objective) (see 1 Timothy 6:9) yet it occurs in their life because of their godly work ethic. The wise will be rich according to the world's standards because of their intense work ethic. Such is approved of God.
  2. The sloth will not only be poor but "*by slothfulness the roof sinks in; and through idleness of the hands the house leaks*" (Ecclesiastes 10:18). The apostle Paul wrote, "*If any will not work, neither let him eat*" (2 Thessalonians 3:10) (see study # 15).
- D. "*Blessings are upon the head of the righteous; But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. The memory of the righteous is blessed; But the name of the wicked shall rot. The wise in heart will receive commandments; But a prating fool shall fall. He that walketh uprightly walketh surely; But he that perverteth his ways shall be known. He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow; But a prating fool shall fall*" (10:6-10).
1. Solomon continues to draw contrasting points of view between the righteous and wicked. The righteous man is blessed (with material gain from his labors and eternally by doing God's will). The fool has nothing but trouble in this life and the life to come (he brings trouble to himself). Some say, "Trouble just seems to follow that young man..." It is obvious that the young man under consideration lives in violence and folly.
  2. When people think back upon the lives of the righteous they do so fondly but the wicked man's name is rotten. What fond thoughts are there of the man who is a pedophile, murderer, sexually immoral, foul mouthed, etc? Each man will be known and remembered for how they lived their lives.
  3. We examined the "*worthless person*" at Proverbs 6:12-14 who winks with his eyes as if to give signals to others regarding his wicked intentions.

## II. A Man's Mouth Identifies Him as being a Fool or Wise (10:11-21):

- A. "*The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life; But violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. Hatred stirreth up strifes; But love covereth all transgressions. In the lips of him that hath discernment wisdom is found; But a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding*" (10:11-13).
1. The use of Man's mouth is a major theme in the book of Proverbs (see study # 28; Proper and Improper Uses of the Tongue). The wise and righteous man of God will speak words of edification whereas the wicked man's words are those of violence and harm (see Ephesians 4:29 and Colossians 4:6).
  2. The words of the wise man are those of "*discernment*" (i.e., perspicacity or insightfulness of judgment). The man of wicked lips should only expect the rod of correction to be placed upon his ignorant and foolish back (see study # 16). Consider these uses of the tongue:
    - a. The wise man puts the mouth of perversion far from himself (Proverbs 4:24). The wise literally hates the perverse mouth (Proverbs 8:13). The wise use their mouths for godly purposes (see Proverbs 8:7-9).
    - b. The worthless man, on the other hand, speaks words of perversion (Proverbs 6:12)
- B. "*Wise men lay up knowledge; But the mouth of the foolish is a present destruction*" (10:14).
1. The man of wisdom "*lays up knowledge*" as though it were treasures that are to be used on a rainy day (i.e., when he needs wisdom it shall be there for him because he has laid it up through study and meditation of God's word).
  2. The mouth of the fool receives not wisdom but rejoices in folly. All his words and advice are thereby "*destructive*" to those who give heed to his words.
- C. "*The rich man's wealth is his strong city: The destruction of the poor is their poverty. The labor of the righteous tendeth to life; The increase of the wicked, to sin*" (10:15-16).
1. How is wealth the rich man's strong city (see also Proverbs 18:11)? Wealth gained by honest labor can make one secure in many ways. Food, shelter, clothing, and environment are a few of those

things. The rich have all the necessities of life and they are not forced into desperate situations where they may do foolish or unlawful things to get by. They also are not going to live in slums where great poverty and all the wickedness that comes with that life are present.

2. Solomon writes, "*A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes glad the life; and money answers all things*" (Eccl. 10:19). Again, he writes, "*Wisdom is as good as an inheritance; yea, more excellent is it for them that see the sun. For wisdom is a defense, even as money is a defense; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom preserves the life of him that hath it*" (Eccl. 7:11-12).
- D. "*He is in the way of life that heedeth correction; But he that forsaketh reproof erreth*" (10:17).
  1. The "*way of life*" is obviously an allusion to a life of wisdom, hope, and happiness (see Proverbs 9:8-9). Such a humble approach to life that is willing to learn leads to a more abundant life.
  2. The foolish, arrogant, prideful, and simple cannot stand to be told they are wrong and they do not like to listen to boring lectures of substance that expose their ignorance and lack of interest in spiritual matters.
- E. "*He that hideth hatred is of lying lips; And he that uttereth a slander is a fool. In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression; But he that refraineth his lips doeth wisely*" (10:18-19).
  1. Here is a man who stores up hatred and bitterness within his heart yet speaks words of love (he is not revealing his true inner being).
  2. Furthermore, those who speak insulting words of disparagement (slander) about others are foolish (see study # 28; Gossip).
  3. The foolish are known by the multitude of words but the wise refrains his lips from flapping away. Many people believe that you should listen to all their stories. They will burn your time with their volumes of information about their selves yet if you try to get one word in about your activities they make it obvious that they could care less. The wise will not be so bent on telling others everything about themselves because they realize that what really matters is the things of God rather than my accomplishments.
- F. "*The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver: The heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many; But the foolish die for lack of understanding*" (10:20-21).
  1. Solomon continues to contrast the words and speech of the wise and wicked. The wise man's words are compared with "*choice silver*" for value. Not even rubies nor the riches of this world can compare to the value of the words of the wise (see Proverbs 8:10-11) (see study # 21).
  2. Contrary to the valuable words of the wise is the worthless words of the wicked. The words of the wicked will not profit others except by perverse and crooked means.

### III. More contrast between the Wise and Wicked (10:22-32):

- A. "*The blessing of Jehovah, it maketh rich; And he addeth no sorrow therewith. It is as sport to a fool to do wickedness; And so is wisdom to a man of understanding*" (10:22-23).
  1. Solomon seems to comment upon this verse in the book of Ecclesiastes by saying, "*Behold, that which I have seen to be good and to be comely is for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy good in all his labor, wherein he labor under the sun, all the days of his life which God hath given him: for this is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor – this is the gift of God*" (Ecclesiastes 5:18-19). The blessed man has riches and with riches comes no sorrow.
  2. While the wicked make sport (or is amused and entertained) by his wicked actions the wise man is made content and satisfied with gaining wisdom and understanding.
- B. "*The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him; And the desire of the righteous shall be granted. When the whirlwind passeth, the wicked is no more; But the righteous is an everlasting foundation*" (10:24-25).
  1. This verse is connected to the preceding thoughts regarding the wicked making sport of their ill advised ways. Though they enjoy the passing pleasures of sin there is that deep feeling of fear because they know that there will be consequences to their actions. The wicked thereby live in fear of the retribution of their error (see Proverbs 1:26). When the time of reckoning comes the wicked passes into the realm of trouble and consequential rewards. The wicked may run but they cannot hide from the all seeing eyes of Jehovah.

2. The righteous; on the other hand, have their immediate and everlasting desires met as they seek out a life of submissive obedience and wisdom in spiritual matters.
- C. *"As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, So is the sluggard to them that send him"* (10:26).
1. Ezekiel said, *"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?"* in relation to children not being guilty of their parents sins (see Ezek. 18:2). To have your "teeth set on edge" or to have "vinegar to the teeth" is to experience a bitter and unbearable taste or feeling to the teeth and mouth. Likewise, to have smoke in the eyes is to be annoyingly unbearable.
  2. The man that employs a sloth who will not accomplish his instructed task is likened to experiencing vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes. The sluggard's ways are annoying and unbearable. These people are seeking to do the least bit of work they can (see study # 15).
- D. *"The fear of Jehovah prolongeth days; But the years of the wicked shall be shortened. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness; But the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The way of Jehovah is a stronghold to the upright; But it is a destruction to the workers of iniquity. The righteous shall never be removed; But the wicked shall not dwell in the land"* (10:27-30).
1. Over and over Solomon points up the fact that the righteous will benefit from wisdom and good choices by longevity of life where as the wicked have nothing but shortness of life to experience (see Proverbs 9:11-12) (see study # 21).
  2. The righteous shall have their desire and expectation (hope) met (i.e., they shall receive a heavenly home through the blood of Jesus Christ). The wicked man's hope as it is set upon this world, will only perish with the things of this world (see 1 John 2:16-17).
- E. *"The mouth of the righteous bringeth forth wisdom; But the perverse tongue shall be cut off. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable; But the mouth of the wicked speaketh perverseness"* (10:31-32).
1. The mouth is viewed as a fruit tree that produces fruits. The *"mouth of the righteous"* produces much beneficial fruits. The mouth of the wise shall edify its hearers and cause one to know right from wrong and salvation from condemnation.
  2. The *"perverse tongue"* is also viewed as a fruit tree. This tree; however, produces poisonous and harmful fruit and is thereby good for nothing but to be cut down. While the fruit of this tree may be beneficial to animals (like deer berry) it is not fit for human consumption (see 2 Peter 2:12; Jude 10) (see study # 16).

## Chapter 11

### I. Contrasting the Wise and Wicked (11 all):

- A. *"A false balance is an abomination to Jehovah; But a just weight is his delight"* (11:1).
1. Jehovah delivered an authorized command regarding balances being just and correct rather than deceitfully faulty (see Leviticus 19:36; Deut. 25:13-16). Jehovah is a just God and so demands that His people be the same (see Jeremiah 9:23-24). If one were to measure out or weigh precious metals, grain, or any other commodity the merchant was to be trustworthy. Some may have fixed their scales to rob those who sold yet such an act was abhorrent to the Lord (see Hos. 12:7-8).
  2. The word *"abomination"* was examined at Proverbs 6:16 and defined as something hated or disgraceful. The use of a false balance is disgraceful in the eyes of God but those who would use just weights (accurate) are the Lord's *"delight"* (see study # 30; Things that Delight God).
- B. *"When pride cometh, then cometh shame; But with the lowly is wisdom. The integrity of the upright shall guide them; But the perverseness of the treacherous shall destroy them"* (11:2-3).
1. Pride was identified at Proverbs 8:13 as being equated to evil. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil which includes the quality of pride (arrogance and self-importance). Those who are arrogant and whose conversation depicts one who believes that their lives are so very important are acting shamefully (see study # 31; Pride). The lowly wise man; however, does not feel the need to tell everyone how important he is.
  2. The wise man's integrity guides him in the paths of righteousness because he has heard and received truth. The word *"integrity"* is defined as, "Rigid adherence to a code or standard of values; probity (honesty)" (AHD 667). While the man of integrity rigidly follows the standard of

God's word the perverse and treacherous have no such guidance. These men are guided by whatever feels good to them and so in the end they are destroyed.

- C. *"Riches profit not in the day of wrath; But righteousness delivereth from death. The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way; But the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them; But the treacherous shall be taken in their own iniquity"* (11:4-6).
1. The "*day of wrath*" is an allusion to the day that the Lord will judge mankind (see Isaiah 13:7; Romans 2:5; Revelation 6:17). There will be no amount of money that one has stored up over his lifetime that will save him from his wicked deeds (see Ezekiel 7:19 and Zephaniah 1:18) (see study # 32; The Dangers of Riches).
  2. The Lord will come quickly at an unannounced time and those found in sin will perish eternally for their treacherous behavior (see Revelation 3:3). The righteous; however, shall be found perfect and thereby saved.
- D. *"When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish; And the hope of iniquity perisheth. The righteous is delivered out of trouble, And the wicked cometh in his stead. With his mouth the godless man destroyeth his neighbor; But through knowledge shall the righteous be delivered"* (11:7-9).
1. There is nothing that man can do to change the course of nature. We are born into this world, live a certain amount of time, and then we die. The "*expectation*" of the wicked man is that his gold and silver (the things he treasured up on this earth) will be his comfort; however, when the time of death comes there is no amount of money that can change the course. All that the wicked put their trust and hope in cannot save him from the day of death and the day of great wrath. Those who put their hope in sinful things shall surely perish along with all who took the wicked man's advice.
  2. The righteous set their hope on eternal things and shall thereby be delivered from the grave of eternal torment.
- E. *"When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth; And when the wicked perish, there is shouting. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted; But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked"* (11:10-11).
1. A city rejoices over the good lives of the righteous because everyone benefits from a just person that makes positive contributions to society.
  2. The same city shouts with joy over the perishing of the wicked. Such shouting is not due to their being happy he is dead but they shout for joy because they are not ill affected by his slothfulness and unjust way of dealing with people.
- F. *"He that despiseth his neighbor is void of wisdom; But a man of understanding holdeth his peace. He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter"* (11:12-13).
1. To despise one's neighbor is to hate and look down upon as though you were better. Such an outward display of conduct is to be "*void of wisdom.*" The wise man may be very annoyed with a neighbor; however, he does not openly despise the man simply because they do something different. The wise will "*hold his peace*" in matters that really do not affect one's soul.
  2. Again, the foolish man will go about gossiping about others as a "*talebearer.*" The wise man; however, will not be so quick to tell matters about others to people (see study # 28).
- G. *"Where no wise guidance is, the people falleth; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; But he that hateth suretyship is secure"* (11:14-15).
1. A city that has no wise men in it will eventually wither away. A church that has no wise men in it will eventually wither away. When there are many wise counselors the city and church will thrive. We are at times puzzled when we hear of a church closing its doors after 75 or 100 years in existence at some locality of many people. Why did the church close its doors? Why is there nothing but elderly shut ins left? Why did the church die out? The answer is obvious.
  2. The subject of surety was discussed at Proverbs 6:1-5. A surety is a guarantee or collateral put down for another's sake. The wise thing to do is stay out of other people's business as we discussed at Proverbs 6:1-5. To involve yourself in a stranger's monetary affairs is not wise because the stranger may skip town and leave you with the bill. This was happening quite a bit in Houston after hurricane Ike hit in the year 2008. Contractors were taking advantage of the elderly.

- H. *"A gracious woman obtaineth honor; And violent men obtain riches. The merciful man doeth good to his own soul; But he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh. The wicked earneth deceitful wages; But he that soweth righteousness hath a sure reward. He that is stedfast in righteousness shall attain unto life; And he that pursueth evil doeth it to his own death"* (11:16-19).
1. The **contrast between the wise and wicked continue**. The wise woman, through a gracious disposition, obtains honor. Here is a woman whose mannerism is that of being courteous, polite, and considerate of others (see study # 33; Godly Women). The other side is the violent man who obtain riches by means of false balances and other perverted means. The woman gains honor from her fellow neighbors whereas the violent rich man is seen as hard and one to be avoided.
  2. Again, a merciful man does good to his own soul because he is conducting himself as God (God is merciful - Psalms 116:5). The man who is cruel; however, brings trouble to his life. When people are treated unkind and with a mean disposition they certainly will not want anything to do with such an ugly person. This is why the wicked go with each other in unity as do the righteous (see John 15:19). Joel said, *"rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, and repenteth him of the evil"* (Joel 2:13). Two traits of God that ought to belong to man are graciousness and mercy. Those who have such characteristics bring joy and hope not only to their own lives but to the lives of others.
- I. *"They that are perverse in heart are an **abomination** to Jehovah; But such as are perfect in their way are his delight"* (11:20).
1. This verses is worded similar to 11:1. Perversity comes in various forms. There is a perverted mouth, heart (mind), hands and feet (i.e., one's deeds), and a lack of one's deeds (slothfulness). The man of perverse lips or actions is an "**abomination**" to the Lord (see above at Proverbs 11:1) (see study # 34; Things that are an Abomination to God).
  2. When one is "**perfect in their way**" they are striving to live a life without sin (see Phil. 3:13-15). The Lord commands that man be perfect (without sin) (see Gen. 17:1; Deut. 18:13; Psalms 119:1; Matthew 5:48 etc.) (see study # 35; God Demands Perfection). Those who strive for perfection of life through the law of Jesus Christ will be a **delight** to the Lord for evermore (see Jeremiah 9:23-24) (see study # 30).
- J. *"Though hand join in hand, the evil man shall not be unpunished; But the seed of the righteous shall be delivered"* (11:21).
1. Let the wicked ban together as a mighty army of like minded filthiness yet will they make no progress against the Lord of all.
  2. Though the wicked may be comforted in their numbers they nonetheless shall not go unpunished.
- K. *"As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, So is a fair woman that is without discretion"* (11:22).
1. Recall that discretion is a characteristic of wisdom (see Proverbs 1:4; 3:21; 8:12). The discrete woman will be prudent (cautious), exercise forethought, sound judgment, and carefulness. The author obviously equates the "**fair woman**" to the character trait of discretion. The words "fair woman" are only found four times in the Old Testament. The three other times reveal the word to mean physical beauty. Sometimes beauty; however, is only skin deep.
  2. A contrast is drawn between a fair woman of discretion and a swine (i.e., an animal that is considered unclean and shameless (wallowing in the mud). Solomon's point is that it is un-natural for a beautiful woman to lack discretion as it is to have a swine with a ring in its nose.
  3. When Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac the man found Rebekah and put a ring on her nose and bracelets upon her hands (Genesis 24:47). Apparently part of a woman's ornaments, even back to the days of the Patriarchs, included rings in the nose. The point is that it is unnatural for a fair woman adorned with an nose ring to act as a swine (shamelessly and unclean) rather than exercising discretion (see study # 20 and # 33).
- L. *"The **desire** of the righteous is only good; But the expectation of the wicked is wrath. There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; And there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want. The liberal soul shall be made fat; And he that watereth shall be watered also himself. He that withholdeth grain, the people shall curse him; But blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it"* (11:23-26).

1. This passage is similar to 11:7. The righteous desire good things and so they receive good. The wicked; however, desire and expect things out of deceitful and wicked practices and thereby all that is due them is wrath from not only their fellow man but of God.
  2. The proverbial statement those who give receive is identified as truth. To withhold things from others only brings other's curses.
- M. *"He that diligently seeketh good seeketh favor; But he that searcheth after evil, it shall come unto him. He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; But the righteous shall flourish as the green leaf"* (11:27-28).
1. The proverbs have taught us that good things come to those who work hard and seek after wisdom in this life. Good things such as longevity of life and riches. Though one does not live godly for the purpose of long life and neither does he work that he may obtain riches these things nonetheless come to the wise (reminds us of Solomon's request for wisdom rather than riches and long life yet those things were granted to him by God - see 1 Kings 3:5ff) (see Proverbs 3:1-2; 9:11-12) (see study # 21 and # 32).
  2. The wicked man may *"search after evil and trust in riches"* yet the very things he places his hope and interest in cannot save him. While the wise are in a win win situation the wicked follow a life destined for eternal failure.
  3. As one has aptly said, "be careful what you wish for... you might just get it." So the wicked who search after wickedness find it and all that comes with that style of life (see study # 25).
- N. *"He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind; And the foolish shall be servant to the wise of heart"* (11:29).
1. The wicked are a trouble not only to their own flesh (see Proverbs 11:17) but also to others around him (Proverbs 10:6-10; 11:7-9).
  2. Now we find that his troubles reach even to his own house (i.e., through violence, cheating, poverty, adultery, and wrath of others) (see study # 25).
- O. *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; And he that is wise winneth souls. Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: How much more the wicked and the sinner!"* (11:30-31).
1. Again, the Proverbs have taught us that there are results such as long life and riches that come to the wise (i.e., happiness, good marriages, comfortable living due to a solid work ethic, good health and longevity of life). We also find that the lives of wise people affects the lives of others. The fruit of the wise is likened unto a tree that gives life to those it touches.
  2. The wise wins souls by their godly conduct and disposition whereas the wicked only bring failure and doom to people's lives (see study # 21 and # 25).

## Chapter 12

### I. Solomon continues to Contrast the Wise and Wicked (12 all):

- A. *"Whoso loveth correction loveth knowledge; **But** he that hateth reproof is brutish"* (12:1).
1. Chapter 12 delivers 24 *"but"* contrast between the wise and foolish.
  2. Solomon had earlier written, *"Reprove not a scoffer, lest he hate thee: Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee"* (Proverbs 9:8). No scolding is very pleasant to take yet the wise know the value of such words from a loving brother (see Hebrews 12:11).
  3. The sloth, arrogant, and foolish cannot stand to be told that they are wrong or that something needs to be changed in their life. The foolish thereby react to scolding or exposing their error by violence, anger, and hate.
  4. The character of humility and a love of truth is to be instilled within the hearts of the young. The next chapter focuses on the training of a child and the consequence of a parent's negligence (see study # 12; Train up a Child).
- B. *"A good man shall obtain favor of Jehovah; **But** a man of wicked devices will he condemn. A man shall not be established by wickedness; **But** the root of the righteous shall not be moved"* (12:2-3).
1. We have seen who it is that God delights or favors in this study. The Lord delights in wisdom (Proverbs 8:30), the just man who deals fairly with others (Proverbs 11:1), the perfect (Proverbs



- 11:20), and latter in this chapter we will see that God delights in those who speak words of truth (Proverbs 12:22) (see study # 30).
2. Those who do things that cause the Lord grief or anger will be eternally condemned and never established in the earth.
- C. *"A worthy woman is the crown of her husband; **But** she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones"* (12:4).
1. We shall build the case of the "*worthy woman*" from this study. As we compile acceptable and unacceptable behavior in an approved woman of God we shall be better equipped to study Proverbs 31:10ff.
    - a. Solomon has previously said, "*A gracious woman obtains honor...*" (Proverbs 11:16). God's approved woman is kind and courteous to all.
    - b. The worthy woman will not be **wily of heart nor clamorous with her mouth** so that she would bring shame to herself and her husband (Proverbs 7:9-12).
    - c. The worthy woman will be one of **discretion** rather than acting shameful (see Proverbs 11:22). We have seen that discretion belongs to the wise and the wise are not slothful (Proverbs 6:6-11) and neither would she be heard speaking words of gossip or perversion (Proverbs 6:12).
    - d. This woman will be greatly concerned about the spiritual welfare of her children (Proverbs 10:1).
  2. The worthy woman is now likened unto a "*crown of her husband*." The husband may confidently be identified as this woman's husband because his heart totally trust her. She does not do things that would bring the both of them shame such as flirt and commit adultery with other men (see Proverbs 7:17-20). The woman who lacks discretion, lacks kindness, and is flirtatious is an embarrassment and rottenness in the bones of her husband (see study # 36; God's Model Woman).
- D. *"The thoughts of the righteous are just; **But** the counsels of the wicked are deceit. The words of the wicked are of lying in wait for blood; **But** the mouth of the upright shall deliver them. The wicked are overthrown, and are not; **But** the house of the righteous shall stand"* (12:5-7).
1. More contrast between the righteous and wicked are given. The righteous are just (i.e., concerned about doing things lawfully, right, and fair) where as the wicked give not a second thought to unlawfulness, wronging others, and being unfair (see Ezekiel 18:5-9) (see study # 37; Identity of the Just). **Consider the great contrast between the just and wicked.** The just do not even think wickedness whereas the wicked not only think evil but give foolish and sinful council to others.
  2. Not only are the thoughts of the wise just but also their words. The foolish wicked man is known for his lies and perversion. No one can trust the fool.
  3. Man commends the wise for their work and accomplishments but the perverted are despised by even the general public.
- E. *"A man shall be commended according to his wisdom; **But** he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised. Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant, Than he that honoreth himself, and lacketh bread"* (12:8-9).
1. The idea of being "*lightly esteemed*" is that of people's view toward you being unimportant or without much value. The wise will have no trouble with those of the world viewing him as unimportant or without much value. The wise man knows that his hard work and just ways will bring fruit in this life and the life to come. While the wicked may not think much of the wise the just man will make manifest his value by the servants he has. Another benefit of righteous living is "*servants*" (an obvious sign that the wise man is doing well financially) (see study # 24).
  2. Solomon had earlier wrote, "*The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil: Pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth, do I hate*" (Proverbs 8:13). Again, he writes, "*When pride comes then comes shame but with the lowly is wisdom*" (Proverbs 11:2). Those filled with pride and arrogance love to talk about themselves and bring glory and honor to themselves with their swelling braggadocios words. Such are identified with the simple and shall one day lack bread due to busying themselves with everything but the necessities of life (see study # 31). The point being that if good and uplifting things are to be said about you let others say it. It is nauseating to hear one tell how great he is.

- F. *"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast; **But** the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel"* (12:10).
1. Another distinguishing factor that separates the wise from the wicked is how they treat animals. There is obviously something not right in the mind of one who would kick a friendly dog that comes up to lick the hand.
  2. I can remember, growing up, kids beating on animals as though it were funny. Their cruelty certainly pains the hearts of the upright.
- G. *"He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread; **But** he that followeth after vain persons is void of understanding. The wicked desireth the net of evil men; **But** the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit. In the transgression of the lips is a snare to the evil man; **But** the righteous shall come out of trouble. A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth; And the doings of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him"* (12:11-14).
1. Once again the diligent worker is contrasted with the lazy sloth. Those who work shall have plenty but those who are lazy shall be in want of bread. Those "*void of understanding*" follow after worthless people (i.e., people who are sinful and speak with perverted lips / Proverbs 6:12), commit adultery (Proverbs 6:32), they are simple (Proverbs 7:7; 9:4-6), despise their neighbors (Proverbs 11:12-13), and to them belong the rod upon the back (Proverbs 10:13).
  2. Wicked sinful men desire the lifestyles of evil men with lips filled with sinful things to say (they gravitate to each other). Not so with the just and righteous.
  3. The righteous stay out of trouble with their mouths but the wicked bring trouble to themselves. Whatever a man sows this will he also reap.
- H. *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; **But** he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel. A fool's vexation is presently known; **But** a prudent man concealeth shame. He that uttereth truth showeth forth righteousness; **But** a false witness, deceit. There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a sword; **But** the tongue of the wise is health. The lip of truth shall be established for ever; **But** a lying tongue is but for a moment"* (12:15-19).
1. The wise and fool are know by what governs them in life. The wise man gives heed to wise council yet the fool does whatever he deems to be right for his own self (that which governs him is his own will rather than the will of God) (see study # 1).
  2. When the fool does shameful things he lets everyone know. Not so with the wise. A wise man who does a shameful thing would rather conceal it than announce it to the world as though it were some funny thing. The wise is ashamed of himself and quietly takes care of his sins with the Lord.
  3. The identity of the righteous is that they speak words of truth as opposed to the wicked who bear false testimony about another (see study # 38; The Identity of the Righteous).
  4. The man who throws caution to the wind and speaks rashly (recklessly or impetuously) with his mouth cut deep within the feelings of others (i.e., you may notice something embarrassing about someone and you just blurt it out). Such a man pierces or wounds others as though his mouth were a sword. The wise man; however, does nothing but encourage and cause others to be spiritually healthy.
- I. *"Deceit is in the heart of them that devise evil; **But** to the counsellors of peace is joy. There shall no mischief happen to the righteous; **But** the wicked shall be filled with evil"* (12:20-21).
1. Dishonesty and a cheating spirit governs the heart of the wicked. You cannot trust such a one as far as you could throw them. The upright shall experience peace and joy.
  2. The consequences of wise verses foolish choices is once again addressed. No mischief (trouble) comes to the lives of the wise; however, the wicked bring great trouble and evil to their lives and the lives of those connected to them (see study # 24 and # 25).
- J. *"Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah; **But** they that deal truly are his delight"* (12:22).
1. We have seen many things that are an abomination (things that God hates). Solomon reveals that a perverse heart (Proverbs 3:30-31; 11:20), wickedness (Proverbs 8:7), a false balance (Proverbs 11:1), and the seven things of Proverbs 6:16-19). To this list we now add "*lying lips*" (Proverbs 12:22) (see study # 34).
  2. We have also seen many things that are God's delight (see notes above at Proverbs 12:2-3).
- K. *"A prudent man concealeth knowledge; **But** the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness"* (12:23).

1. The knowledge under consideration is likely the knowledge of private affairs of other people. The "*prudent*" (i.e., wise man of discretion and foreknowledge) doesn't go telling everything he knows about a person.
  2. The fool has no problem proclaiming all that he knows whether it be truth or lies (see study # 28).
- L. "*The hand of the diligent shall bear rule; But the slothful shall be put under taskwork*" (12:24).
1. Those with a diligent work ethic will be the bosses, superintendents, supervisors, company presidents, vice presidents etc. (see study # 5).
  2. Many of the slothful will be the servants who work under the diligent workers of prudence and discretion.
- M. "*Heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop; But a good word maketh it glad. The righteous is a guide to his neighbor; But the way of the wicked causeth them to err*" (12:25-26).
1. There are times when we all get down about things. Our hearts stoop within us because of some bad news or bad events. The best medicine for someone whose heart is heavy is to say something good to them that will make them glad to be alive and happy for the blessings we have.
  2. The righteous speak words of truth and wise guidance to his neighbor; however, the wicked say things that make them go in the paths of error.
- N. "*The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting; But the precious substance of men is to the diligent*" (12:27).
1. There is nothing to roast because he brings nothing back from a hunting trip. He rolls on his bed like a door upon its hinges. This man will not get up and get busy (see study # 5).
  2. The wise and diligent man does do the necessary things to put food on the table and so his substance is precious.
- O. "*In the way of righteousness is life; And in the pathway thereof there is no death*" (12:28).
1. Those who are righteous, diligent in work, prudent, and exercise discretion in this life actually find true living. True living is not laziness and sinful living. The righteous, just, and wise will have more in this life than the sloth. They will enjoy life more because of their Godly approach. The wise man's marriage will be happier because he trusts his wife in all areas of life. The wise man's heart will not be made heavy by foolish and sinful children (see study # 24).
  2. True living is being happy, having a great marriage, having food on the table because of diligence, living righteously, just, and fair. This pathway never brings one to death.

## Chapter 13

### I. Sundry Proverbs Contrasting the Upright and the Wicked (13 all):

- A. "*A wise son hears his father's instruction; **But** a scoffer hears not rebuke*" (13:1).
1. Another sub-theme of the book of Proverbs is the **father's responsibility to train a child in the ways of righteousness and being just**. This chapter builds upon the subject of a father's responsibility to train up a child in the way he should go. To succeed at said parenting obligation is to get one's self a wise son that will not bring sorrow and regret (see Proverbs 1:8; 4:13; 6:20; 10:1, 8, 17; 12:15 and latter in this chapter at 13:24).
  2. The man who succeeds at teaching his child wisdom, righteousness, and justice will help the young man or woman to give heed to instruction and rebuke rather than being irritated at it like the scoffer (see Proverbs 9:8; 12:1) (see study # 12). All young people are to give a careful and attentive ear to their parents.
- B. "*A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth; **But** the soul of the treacherous shall eat violence. He that guards his mouth keeps his life; **But** he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction*" (13:2-3).
1. Those who use their mouths to bring glory to God and kindness to their neighbors will experience the good fruit of his doings. He shall "*keep his life*" in that he stays out of trouble by guarding what his tongue says.
  2. The wicked man of perverse and treacherous lips will only experience the violence that comes with gossiping about others. This man blurts out those things he has no facts to back up and has no

- problem adding to a story to make it even more interesting. Such a one will be subject to the violent response of those he damages with his tongue (see study # 28).
- C. *"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; **But** the soul of the diligent shall be made fat"* (13:4).
1. The sluggard is greedy of gain and covetous yet he is unwilling to put the time and effort needed to achieve his goals and thereby he "*hath nothing*" (see Proverbs 1:19; 6:6-11; 10:4-5, 26; 11:18; 12:11, 24, 27) (see study # 5 and # 25).
  2. Note that as the sluggard has nothing in life "*the diligent shall be made fat*" with sustenance. That which brings the "*fatness*" is the diligent work ethic (see study # 24).
- D. *"A righteous man hates lying; **But** a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame"* (13:5).
1. God hates lying and so the just do as well (see Proverbs 12:22). A sign of righteous indignation against all things that God considers an abomination is a part of the just man's makeup. This is why the just feels shame when he does the very things that he hates (see Romans 7:16ff.) (see study # 19).
  2. The wicked man seems to enjoy telling lies and so he is loathed and viewed by others as a shameful person that no one can trust (see Proverbs 12:20).
- E. *"Righteousness guards him that is upright in the way; **But** wickedness overthrows the sinner"* (13:6).
1. Those who view wisdom and righteousness as the apple of their eye (see Proverbs 7:2) and the very principle thing of life (Proverbs 4:7) shall be guarded from the adulterous woman, a perverse and lying mouth, and great trouble in this life (see study # 24).
  2. If righteousness guards the wise then the wicked fool has no guardian. Such a one is overthrown by great trouble and want in this life and the life to come (see study # 25).
- F. *"There is that makes himself rich, yet hath nothing: There is that makes himself poor, yet hath great wealth. The ransom of a man's life is his riches; **But** the poor hears no threatening"* (13:7-8).
1. Let us recall that Solomon has aptly taught us that wisdom is of greater value than anything that this world views as precious and costly (see Proverbs 2:4; 8:10-11) (see study # 21). It may be that one of this world is depicted as poverty stricken yet such a one who has wisdom is truly rich toward God (see Proverbs 11:4) (see study # 32). Again, it may be that the wicked man whose objective it is to get rich and obtains it by cruel and unjust means truly "*hath nothing*" in relationship to true value. All the money in the world that this wicked man may obtain shall not save him from one sin.
  2. We may say that a man is defined by what he considers riches in this life. Those who desire the riches of this world are identified as foolish and worldly whereas the man or woman who prizes the riches of wisdom is identified as just and righteous. One has temporary value the other eternal value (see study # 32).
- G. *"The light of the righteous rejoices; **But** the lamp of the wicked shall be put out"* (13:9).
1. Light illuminates and makes all things clear to the eye. The gospel message is identified as a light that shines brightly (John 5:35; 2 Corinthians 4:4). Those who live by the standards of truth and justice rejoice in this light and are referred to as "*sons of light*" (1 Thessalonians 5:5) and "*children of light*" (Ephesians 5:8). God's people of light shall be saved from eternal damnation and so they live in happiness and rejoice always (see Philippians 4:4).
  2. The lamp of the wicked shines only the dark rays of error, folly, wickedness, lies, adultery, and perversion. This way of life will be eliminated by the Lord of Host and is filled with trouble in the here and now.
- H. *"By pride cometh only contention; **But** with the well-advised is wisdom"* (13:10).
1. Solomon has identified pride as "evil" (Proverbs 8:13), shameful (Proverbs 11:2), and of a perverse heart (Proverbs 12:8-9). When one is evil, shameful, and perverse in heart there will be contention (conflicts) in his life. The root of pride is selfish arrogance. This disposition cares nothing about others. The less you care about others the less people will care about you.
  2. Again, those who exercise wisdom experience no self imposed trouble except that which comes to them by the wicked due to their hatred (Proverbs 5:10-13) and jealousy (Proverbs 13:4).
- I. *"Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished; **But** he that gathers by labor shall have increase"* (13:11).

1. The wealth of this world is the objective of the fool (Proverbs 10:2). How do some gain "*wealth by vanity*" (or worthless means)? Solomon reveals that the wicked get gains through "*crooked ways*" (Proverbs 2:15), faulty balances (Proverbs 11:1), and by means of violence (Proverbs 11:16). Such wealth will always be "*diminished*" because the foolish are never satisfied. They will continue to cheat people by means of violence and crooked dealings. Those who are cheated will come back for revenge. While the poor get poorer the rich get richer in many cases (see study # 32).
  2. Note, once again, that there are great benefits to living godly in wisdom. The wise shall exercise a diligent work ethic and thereby gain the increase of this life (see study # 24, # 25, and # 5).
- J. "*Hope deferred makes the heart sick; **But** when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life*" (13:12).
1. The wicked who put their hope in the riches of this world are more often than not disappointed because they do not obtain the very thing they hope for in this life. Their hearts are thereby made sick because that which they long for is not obtained.
  2. Those, on the other hand, who desire wisdom will experience true life and living (i.e., happiness, contentment, joy, great marriages, avoidance of trouble, little worries, plenty to eat, etc.).
- K. "*Whoso despises the word brings destruction on himself; **But** he that fears the commandment shall be rewarded*" (13:13).
1. Those who "*despise*" (hate or look down upon as worthless) the word of God bring nothing but destruction to their lives (trouble with man, trouble with their children, trouble with their spouse, troubles at work, trouble in all areas of life, and trouble with God). Solomon identifies the despisers as foolish (Proverbs 1:7) and void of wisdom (Proverbs 11:12) (see study # 25).
  2. The rewards of those who "*fear the commandment*" will be seen not only in this life but the life to come. When one fears God they are identified as wise and the wise are diligent in all areas of life viewing wisdom as the greatest treasure.
- L. "*The law of the wise is a fountain of life, That one may depart from the snares of death. Good understanding giveth favor; **But the way of the transgressor is hard***" (13:14-15).
1. If only the foolish and wicked would hear the words of the wise they would escape the great snares of trouble and death.
  2. Unfortunately, foolish and wicked men have nothing but trouble and hardships in this life because they will not listen to instruction. There are many who seem to feel at home with trouble and grief in life. If you like hardship, trouble, and grief then the life of sin and wickedness is for you. Herein is another major sub-theme of Proverbs... "*The way of the transgressor is hard*" (see study # 25). Here is one who is identified as a professional student of the university of hard knocks. This man or woman never learns life lessons and thereby continues to suffer hardship.
- M. "*Every prudent man worketh with knowledge; **But** a fool flaunts his folly*" (13:16).
1. The "*prudent*" [i.e., a careful man who uses good judgment and foresight - see Proverbs 12:16] is known by his judgment and knowledge of things.
  2. The fool is known by his many words (Proverbs 10:19). The fool shamelessly blabs all that is in his ignorance and perverse heart (see study # 28).
- N. "*A wicked messenger falls into evil; **But** a faithful ambassador is health*" (13:17).
1. The wicked messenger does not tell all the truth of a matter and thereby subjects himself to great trouble.
  2. The words of the faithful messenger are truth and thereby healthy to its audience.
- O. "*Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuses correction; **But** he that regards reproof shall be honored*" (13:18).
1. Once again we find the admonition to be receptive to constructive criticism, correction, and instruction. The man or woman who is of this disposition will be honored among men.
  2. The lazy sloth who is angered by instruction shall find nothing but poverty and shame (poverty because he will not work and shame because he conducts himself in such ways to bring great trouble into his life) (see Proverbs 13:1) (see study # 12).
- P. "*The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul; **But** it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil*" (13:19).

1. The wise set goals to attain and when they work diligently and complete the project it is indeed "*sweet to the soul*." A great sense of satisfaction and accomplishment accompanies a completed project that was hard work (swing set for kids / garage floor / college education etc.).
  2. The wicked also have objectives and things they consider an abomination (i.e., things they hate). They hate to depart from evil because such living has come to be a part of their lives. They love the drama and troubles such a life brings and do not even wish to depart from such ways.
- Q. "*Walk with wise men, and thou shalt be wise; **But** the companion of fools shall smart for it*" (13:20).
1. Solomon had previously gave similar warnings at Proverbs 1:10-14 (see study # 2). The apostle Paul also warned of the company of the wicked as well (see 1 Corinthians 15:33). Herein is wise council. Remember the wicked have a perverse mouth, love trouble, gossip about others, are lazy, and love the life of wickedness.
  2. If you hang around these people it is likely that you will become like them and experience all the troubles that they bring upon themselves. If you company with the wise (i.e., those who are prudent and use discretion) you will be wise.
- R. "*Evil pursues sinners; **But** the righteous shall be recompensed with good*" (13:21).
1. Solomon had earlier said, "*the way of the transgressor is hard*" (Proverbs 13:15b). The wicked and sinful have evil in life pursuing them. Trouble and evil are the fruits of life filled with wickedness.
  2. The righteous shall be rewarded with good (i.e., good marriages, jobs, happiness, and contentment). Again, this is a major sub-theme in Proverbs. The life of the just, righteous, and wise is the best and happiest life (see study # 24 and # 25).
- S. "*A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children; And the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the righteous*" (13:22).
1. The "*good man*" is the wise, just, and righteous man who exercises due diligence when it comes to a solid work ethic. He earns enough money to pay his own bills and has enough to provide an inheritance to not only his immediate children but to his grandchildren. Such an inheritance, if you have experienced this, is the product of someone's diligence.
  2. The heaped up treasures of the wicked; however, will find themselves in the hands of other men (the righteous).
- T. "*Much food is in the tillage of the poor; **But** there is that is destroyed by reason of injustice*" (13:23).
1. Within the fields of the poor is the potential for a great harvest; however, he is too slothful to till the ground and plant a crop.
  2. That which could have been through diligence is wasted or destroyed by reason of their unjust lazy ways.
- U. "*He that spares his rod hates his son; **But** he that loves him chastens him betimes*" (13:24).
1. What does God want to see out of a parental relationship with their children? Proverbs teaches us that mothers and fathers want to see their children attain wisdom (see Proverbs 10:1). This chapters seems to have a thrust of beginning instruction with children early on so that they do not become fools of wicked and evil lives, companying with the wicked, and living lives of trouble.
  2. Wisdom pleads with a young man or woman to hear instruction (Proverbs 1:8; 10:8), keep the commandments and laws of parents (Proverbs 6:20), and to receive correction with a spirit of understanding (Proverbs 10:17) before its too late (see Proverbs 4:13).
  3. The "*rod*" is obviously a tool of correction and instruction. The man who will not use this tool against his children **hates** them because they will not learn to receive instruction and follow authorized direction and law without it. Such a child will run with the wicked and experience great trouble hear and forever more.
  4. One way a parent shows great love toward their children is to punish them with the rod of correction "*betimes*" or "*promptly*" as the NKJV Bible says (see Proverbs 22:6, 15).
- V. "*The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul; **But** the belly of the wicked shall want*" (13:25).
1. Due to the diligent work ethic of the righteous he shall not go hungry.
  2. The sloth, on the other hand, shall be hungry and no man ought to feed such (see 2 Thessalonians 3:10).

## Chapter 14

### I. Sundry Proverbs Contrasting the Upright and the Wicked (14 all):

- A. *"Every wise woman builds her house; **But** the foolish plucks it down with her own hands"* (14:1).
1. We shall build the case of the *"worthy woman"* from this study. As we compile acceptable and unacceptable behavior in an approved woman of God we shall be better equipped to study Proverbs 31:10ff (see study # 33).
    - a. Solomon has previously said, *"A gracious woman obtains honor..."* (Proverbs 11:16). God's approved woman is kind and courteous to all.
    - b. The worthy woman will not be **wily of heart nor clamorous with her mouth** so that she would bring shame to herself and her husband (Proverbs 7:9-12).
    - c. The worthy woman will be one of **discretion** rather than acting shameful (see Proverbs 11:22). We have seen that discretion belongs to the wise and the wise are not slothful (Proverbs 6:6-11) and neither would she be heard speaking words of gossip or perversion (Proverbs 6:12).
    - d. This woman will be greatly concerned about the spiritual welfare of her children (Proverbs 10:1).
    - e. The worthy woman is a *"crown of her husband"* in that he trust her and is not ashamed of her ways (Proverbs 12:4 / 7:17-20).
    - f. The godly woman is now depicted as one who *"builds her house"* as opposed to the foolish woman who *"plucks it down with her own hands"* (Proverbs 14:1). Solomon had wrote at Proverbs 9:1 that wisdom builds her house upon seven pillars. The seven "pillars" of wisdom may be identified as truth, instruction, knowledge, understanding, prudence / discretion, a diligent work ethic, and the fear of the Lord. The wise woman will apply these principles to her approach of her house. Again, Solomon later writes, *"Through wisdom is a house builded; and by understanding it is established"* (24:3). Those who so live will live a life of great reward now and forever (Proverbs 12:28).
  2. The foolish woman; however, destroys her house by ignoring the principles of wisdom and bringing great trouble to her home (see Proverbs 11:29; 12:7; 15:27).
- B. *"He that walks in his uprightness fears Jehovah; **But** he that is perverse in his ways despises him"* (14:2).
1. Solomon has precisely identified what it means to *"fear Jehovah:"*
    - a. Fearing God means to be wise (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10).
    - b. It means to depart from all forms of evil (Proverbs 3:7).
    - c. When one fears the Lord they hate pride, arrogance, evil, the evil way, and a perverse mouth (Proverbs 8:13).
  2. Now, Solomon adds that the man who *"fears Jehovah"* is the man who *"walks in his uprightness"* (see study # 22). Here is a man that not only claims to know, believe, and love God but he is obedient in all ways to the Lord (see study # 22).
  3. The perverted do not fear God but rather *"despise him."* The Apostle Peter stated that it is the false teachers who *"despise dominion* (i.e., authority)" (2 Peter 2:10). The point is that those who claim to love God yet despise His divine authorized ways are plainly identified as *"perverse in his ways."* It is obvious that man's intentions are not measured by God but rather his actual doings (see study # 1).
- C. *"In the mouth of the foolish is a rod for his pride; **But** the lips of the wise shall preserve them"* (14:3).
1. The fool's tongue is likened unto a rod that that strikes its audience with words of arrogance and pride. With such language comes trouble to this person's life (see Proverbs 13:2-3).
  2. The wise man preserves peace in his life due to a proper use of the tongue (see study # 28).
- D. *"Where no oxen are, the crib is clean; **But** much increase is by the strength of the ox"* (14:4).
1. The New International Readers Version Bible translates the verse, *"Where there are no oxen, the feed box is empty. But a strong ox brings in a great harvest."*
  2. The thought seems to be that those who work hard as a strong ox will have food in the feed box. Again, the idea is that of diligence verses sloth.
- E. *"A faithful witness will not lie; **But** a false witness uttereth lies"* (14:5).

1. The "*false witness*" is identified as a liar (Proverbs 12:17; 14:25) and is one of the seven character traits viewed as an abomination to God (see Proverbs 6:19).
  2. The "*faithful witness*" gives the facts as they are. He does not spruce up a story to make himself look good. Here is one who simply tells the truth and can be trusted.
- F. "*A scoffer seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not; **But** knowledge is easy unto him that hath understanding*" (14:6)
1. The "*scoffer*" (one who speaks words of disdain about others) cannot stand to be told he is wrong (Proverbs 9:7-8; 13:1) and he is "*simple*" (Proverbs 1:4, 22). The scoffer cannot find wisdom because his perception, approach, and attitude toward true wisdom is faulty. **Those who want something for nothing generally find nothing.**
  2. The man of understanding has no problem finding wisdom because he gives diligence, receives instruction, and has an humble approach to life.
- G. "*Go into the presence of a foolish man, And thou shalt not perceive in him the lips of knowledge*" (14:7).
1. What should one expect when they are in the presence of foolish men? Should we expect a mouth of truth or perversion and lies? Should we expect prudence and discretion or do we expect to see one who is careless with his deeds and mouth? Should we expect this person to have knowledge and understanding or ignorance and carelessness?
  2. Solomon tells us what to expect. You should expect to hear and see one whose lips manifest ignorance and foolishness.
- H. "*The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way; **But** the folly of fools is deceit*" (14:8).
1. The prudent man is cautious, careful, and exercises forethought. Here is a man who has great vision of the way he is to take in this life. He understand the ways of Jehovah God.
  2. The foolish; however, carelessly stumbles through life deceiving any he may with his lies to get by to the next day.
- I. "*A trespass-offering mocks fools; **But** among the upright there is good will*" (14:9).
1. The reading of other versions may help us understand this verse better. The Bible in Basic English states, "*In the tents of those hating authority there is error, but in the house of the upright man there is grace.*" The New Century Version states, "*Fools don't care if they sin, but honest people work at being right.*" Again, the New Living Translation states, "*Fools make fun of guilt, but the godly acknowledge it and seek reconciliation.*"
  2. The fool just really doesn't care if what he is doing is sinful. He feels no guilt for the sin he participates in. The upright; however, care about God's authorized word and it bothers them when they sin. They are going to do everything within their power to walk according to God's will and when they sin they will fervently pray to the Lord and make their sacrifices of sin offerings (see study # 19).
- J. "*The heart knoweth its own bitterness; And a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy. The house of the wicked shall be overthrown; **But** the tent of the upright shall flourish*" (14:10-11).
1. Each person privately knows the heartaches of their lives and they also know the great joy. Words cannot express such emotions to other people. These experiences thereby belong to you alone.
  2. The house of the wicked man is overthrown with the heartaches and troubles that come with a sinful life yet the home of the righteous will experience peace, joy, and love.
- K. "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; **But** the end thereof are the ways of death*" (14:12).
1. Jeremiah said that it is not within a man to direct his own paths (Jeremiah 10:23). Man; however, attempts to do the very thing that God said he was not designed to do.
  2. When man tries to direct his steps in righteousness with his own ideas and opinions it ends in spiritual death.
- L. "*Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; And the end of mirth is heaviness. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; And a good man shall be satisfied from himself*" (14:13-14).
1. The wicked man may laugh at his sinful ways yet when the moment of joy wears off the backslider is heavy in heart due to the trouble he brings upon himself.
  2. The upright man; however, shall laugh and be filled with joy over the right things and therein is no end sadness of trouble.



- M. *"The simple believeth every word; **But** the prudent man looketh well to his going"* (14:15).
1. The simple is the fool who lacks prudence, discretion, knowledge, understanding, diligence, and instruction. Such a fool believes every word someone tells him. He will be deceived by men who are likened unto him in folly.
  2. The prudent man will examine all angles of a matter before making his decision.
- N. *"A wise man fears, and departs from evil; **But** the fool bears himself insolently, and is confident"* (14:16).
1. The identity of the wise man is that his attitude toward sin is hatred and when he practices the very things he hates he *"fears God and departs from evil"* (see also Proverbs 3:7). The consequence of sin is the wrath of God and the prudent man foresees such events and thereby reacts quickly to correct the circumstance (see study # 39; Identity of the Wise).
  2. The foolish man; however, has no respect for the authorized word of God and thereby feels no shame or guilt for his wickedness. He is confident to a fault. No matter how confident he may be in his sin; however, truth remains truth and all will be judged thereby (see 2 Timothy 2:9, 13, 19).
- O. *"He that is soon angry will deal foolishly; And a man of wicked devices is hated"* (14:17).
1. Solomon wrote *"Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger rests in the bosom of fools"* (Ecclesiastes 7:9). Those who are quick to blow their top end up saying and doing things that they latter regret.
  2. When a man reacts in anger and uses wicked devices he is generally hated by the subjects of his anger and lies.
- P. *"The simple inherit folly; **But** the prudent are crowned with knowledge. The evil bow down before the good; And the wicked, at the gates of the righteous "* (14:18-19).
1. The identity of the simple is that which he is adorned with (or inherits). The simple are clothed with folly (reckless stupidity) (see study # 5).
  2. The attire of the prudent is a crown of knowledge. The wicked will thereby bow down before the wise in that they will be over them in prudence and discretion.
- Q. *"The poor is hated even of his own neighbor; **But** the rich hath many friends. He that despises his neighbor sins; But he that hath pity on the poor, happy is he"* (14:20-21).
1. Here is one of those factual matters of life. People who are poor, no matter how they obtained that status, are not as well loved as those who have riches of this world. The tendency of people is to hate the needy poor neighbor because of his continual needs. Friends are friends not out of a continual helping of each other but out of common interest. Its difficult to be friends with one who is always in need. He brings nothing to the friendship except his need for your help.
  2. We must be careful to draw the proper conclusion from this verse. Solomon has painted an ugly picture of the sloth who will not work for his food. The apostle Paul said that those who are such are not to eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10). The poor that receive the neighbor's pity and benevolence are obviously those who through no real fault of their own have nothing. Those who help the true needy shall find self happiness. It always makes one feel good to do things for others.
- R. *"Do they not err that devise evil? **But** mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good"* (14:22).
1. Those that err by devising evil receive only trouble and condemnation.
  2. Those who devise good things receive mercy and truth.
- S. *"In all labor there is profit; **But** the talk of the lips tends only to penury. The crown of the wise is their riches; But the folly of fools is only folly"* (14:23-24).
1. If a man or woman works hard there is profit; however for the man who only sits around talking rather than working there is only *"penury"* (indigence and poverty).
  2. Those who work hard throughout their lives will have riches but those who exercise folly will have nothing but need.
- T. *"A true witness delivers souls; **But** he that utters lies causes deceit"* (14:25).
1. Once again the false witness (liar) is set in contrast to the man who speaks truth.
  2. The man who speaks truth and reveals only the facts will give honest help to men whereas the liar does nothing but bring trouble to men's lives.
- U. *"In the fear of Jehovah is strong confidence; And his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, That one may depart from the snares of death"* (14:26-27).

1. The "*fear of Jehovah*" has been clearly identified in this study:
  - a. Fearing God means to be wise (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10).
  - b. It means to depart from all forms of evil (Proverbs 3:7).
  - c. When one fear the Lord they hate pride, arrogance, evil, the evil way, and a perverse mouth (Proverbs 8:13).
  - d. He who fears God, "*walks in his uprightness*" (14:2).
  - e. Now he adds "*strong confidence*" to the identity of fearing God. This confidence is different than the fool who may have confidence to a fault. This confidence is based in the authorized word of God alone.
  - f. Lastly, the fear of Jehovah is "*a fountain of life.*" When one is wise, departs from evil, hates sin, and walks in the paths of righteousness with **strong confidence** there is a "*fountain of life.*" Great things happen not only in this life but in the life to come. It is truly comforting to know that your actions are right as defined by God's divine standards. This confidence will see one through to the end of life.
2. The "*snares of death*" shall not touch the man who fears Jehovah.
- V. "*In the multitude of people is the king's glory; **But** in the want of people is the destruction of the prince*" (14:28).
  1. The king who fears God will have a multitude of people to govern due to his prudence and discretion.
  2. Where there is few to govern there is a heart of folly behind the scenes.
- W. "*He that is slow to anger is of great understanding; **But** he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh; **But** envy is the rottenness of the bones*" (14:29-30).
  1. The man who does not get upset and angry quickly is one of "*great understanding*" (see Proverbs 14:7). The Lord is also slow to anger (see Joel 2:13). Rather than getting angry at a situation let us examine all facts of the matter and exercise patience and mercy with all.
  2. Those who are slow to anger have greater peace in life. Those quick to be angry and are jealous of others have nothing but rottenness of bones.
- X. "*He that oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker; **But** he that hath mercy on the needy honors him*" (14:31).
  1. Not all the needy and poor are wicked men and women. Sometimes poverty and need comes upon one not of their own workings. A widow may have lost her husband and she has work that only strong young men can accomplish for her. Others may have come into extreme bad health and cannot work. There may be young children who have lost their parents and they have great needs. There are those who have honest needs.
  2. The person who would "*reproach*" (criticize) these needy poor people may as well be criticizing God. Let the wise man exercise mercy on the needy.
- Y. "*The wicked is thrust down in his evil-doing; **But** the righteous hath a refuge in his death*" (14:32).
  1. No one cares much for the wicked man and he is thrust down due to his deceptive and cheating ways.
  2. The righteous man has a refuge even in death because he treated people kindly and with fairness.
- Z. "*Wisdom rests in the heart of him that hath understanding; **But** that which is in the inward part of fools is made known*" (14:33).
  1. The inward parts of the wise man's heart is understanding (he uses discretion and prudence).
  2. That which defines the fool is folly and he generally lets everyone know.
- AA. "*Righteousness exalts a nation; **But** sin is a reproach to any people*" (14:34).
  1. When a nation does what is right and is governed by those who do right there is praise and applause (not only so with individuals but with a nation of people).
  2. When a nation conducts itself sinfully that nation bring reproach (disapproval and criticism) by other peoples and lands (see study # 40; Government).
- BB. "*The king's favor is toward a servant that deals wisely; **But** his wrath will be against him that causes shame*" (14:35).
  1. Those in positions of authority will always be favorable to the law abiding citizen that does right.

2. That man or woman who conducts themselves shamefully bring upon themselves the wrath of that government (See Romans 13:1ff) (see study # 40).

## Chapter 15

### I. Sundry Proverbs Contrasting the Upright and the Wicked (15 all):

- A. *"A soft answer turns away wrath; But a grievous word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise utters knowledge aright; But the mouth of fools pours out folly"* (15:1-2).
  1. The tongue must be used wisely. The foolish are quick to blow their top in anger against others (see Proverbs 14:17, 29-30) (see study # 45; Anger). Those who are wise will have the power of calming a man of wrath by giving a *"soft answer."* This type of answer will not fuel the flame of the fools anger but rather sooth it. Those who return anger for anger only stir up more anger.
  2. The tongue of the wise will deliver knowledge to others but the tongue of the fool *"pours out folly"* (i.e., stupidity and ignorance) (see study # 28).
- B. *"The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, Keeping watch upon the evil and the good"* (15:3).
  1. There is nothing that escapes the all seeing eyes of Jehovah God (see Jeremiah 23:23-24).
  2. The omniscient Lord knows not only the thoughts but the intents of man's heart (Hebrews 4:12) (see study # 41; The Omniscient God).
- C. *"A gentle tongue is a tree of life; But perverseness therein is a breaking of the spirit"* (15:4).
  1. The use of one's tongue is very important in the identity of an individual. God's people are to exercise a spirit of wisdom (prudence and discretion) when using their tongues. The soft tongue turns away an angry man's wrath (see Proverbs 15:1-2 above).
  2. Now Solomon adds that a gently tongue is a tree of life in that it edifies its hearers rather than a perverse tongue that breaks the spirit of others. The apostle Paul wrote, *"Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear"* (Ephesians 4:29) (see study # 28).
- D. *"A fool despises his father's correction; But he that regards reproof gets prudence"* (15:5).
  1. The fool's identity has been clearly depicted in the pages of Proverbs (see study # 42):
    - a. Due corporal punishment because of his folly (Proverbs 7:22).
    - b. Will not receive commandments or instruction (Proverbs 10:8) and is thereby brutish (Proverbs 12:1).
    - c. Speaks words of slander about others (Proverbs 10:18).
    - d. He is entertained by participating in acts of wickedness (Proverbs 10:23).
    - e. Reasons that his decisions in life are right rather than measuring himself by God's standard (Proverbs 12:15).
    - f. Has no shame while blurting out his stupidity and ignorance (Proverbs 13:6).
    - g. Acts disrespectfully toward God's laws and his fellow man (Proverbs 14:16).
    - h. A foolish woman tears down her own house with acts of folly (Proverbs 14:1).
    - i. Now we find that the fool, *"despises his father's correction."* This person hates to be corrected even by his own father. He is bent on doing what he wants to do and refuses to change his behavior because he believes that he is ok. His conscience is based upon his own reason rather than the word of God and thereby the sting of guilt is taken away.
  2. The **prudent** man (man with foresight); however, gives an interested ear to correction so that he may better himself (see study # 39).
- E. *"In the house of the righteous is much treasure; But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble"* (15:6).
  1. The *"righteous"* are those who give regard to God's divine standard. They are not slothful in this life and thereby work hard and obtain treasures.
  2. The wicked, on the other hand, receive treasures by cheating and stealing and thereby receive nothing but trouble in life (see study # 25).
- F. *"The lips of the wise disperse knowledge; But the heart of the foolish doeth not so"* (15:7).
  1. This verse is so similar to Proverbs 15:2 that the reader should look to those comments.

- G. *"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah; But the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah; But he loveth him that followeth after righteousness"* (15:8-9).
1. There is nothing about the wicked man's life that the Lord loves, respects, or cherishes. The wicked doesn't do much of anything that is right as defined by the standard of truth. Nothing is different when it comes to his worship. The wicked man will often continue his worship to Jehovah God believing all things are well; however, the Lord hates even the prayers of such a man (see Isaiah 1:11ff; Amos 5:21-23 etc.) (see study # 34).
  2. God's love, grace, and mercy belongs to the man who seeks out righteousness in this life (see study # 43; Conditional Salvation).
- H. *"There is grievous correction for him that forsakes the way; And he that hates reproof shall die. Sheol and Abaddon are before Jehovah: How much more then the hearts of the children of men! A scoffer loveth not to be reproved; He will not go unto the wise"* (15:10-12).
1. It is the fool that hates correction (Proverbs 15:5) and so he is brutish (Proverbs 12:1). Such a one may have had truth at one time but now he has *"forsaken the way."* When one forsakes *"the way"* he abandons or deserts God's standards (see Jeremiah 10:23). Maybe he forsook the way because he thought he had a better way (Proverbs 12:15) or maybe he grew weary of the established way. Whatever the reason for one to forsake the way of righteousness those who do so have nothing but *"grievous correction"* to look forward to.
  2. Those who continue to forsake the way of righteousness shall eventually die in their sins. God knows all such events in man's life and thereby has the power to cast men into *"Sheol or Abaddon"* (see study # 41). The word *"Abaddon"* is found only two other times in the entire Bible (i.e., Revelation 9:11 and Job 28:22). The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia states of the Hebrew word *"Abaddon"* that is "A name found only in Revelation 9:11, as a translation of the Hebrew name 'Abaddon,' designating an angel or prince of the lower world. In the OT Abaddon and the accompanying terms Death and Sheol are personified (as in Job 28:22) and represented as living beings who speak and act (cf. Rev. 6:8)" (ISBE v. 1, pp. 189). The Hebrew and Greek names mean "destruction" and "destroyer." Two descriptive words of Satan and his work (see John 8:44). The obvious meaning is thereby the eternal unseen abode of the wicked. This unseen world is before the eyes of Jehovah and He has control over who is cast there and who is not. It is none other than hell where the worm dies not, where the unquenchable fire of anguish burns, and all wicked souls shall spend their eternity (Mark 9:44-48) (see study # 44; Hell; or study # 85 Sheol and Abaddon).
- I. *"A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance; But by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken"* (15:13).
1. What makes a man's heart glad and experiencing the consequential *"cheerful countenance?"*
    - a. A wise son makes the heart glad (see Proverbs 10:1; 15:20).
    - b. Money (Proverbs 10:15 compared to Ecclesiastes 10:19).
    - c. Hope (Proverbs 10:28).
    - d. A timely word spoken by a caring friend (Proverbs 12:25).
    - e. Good news can also cheer us (see Proverbs 15:30).
  2. There are things that man cannot control that brings sorrow to life. There are also things that man can control that when practiced bring trouble, sorrow, and a broken spirit.
  3. The thought seems to be that there is enough sorrows in life as it is without me making foolish decisions that would bring more upon me in life.
- J. *"The heart of him that hath understanding seeks knowledge; But the mouth of fools feeds on folly"* (15:14).
1. The understanding man is the wise man (see Proverbs 1:2). Here is a man who seeks after wisdom as though it were the greatest treasures the earth knows (Proverbs 2:1-5; 8:11). Knowledge, understanding, and wisdom is the principle thing in this man's life (Proverbs 4:7) and the *"apple of thine eye"* (Proverbs 7:2). This person is not satisfied with tidbits of information but searches daily for the knowledge of Jehovah God.
  2. The fool; however, has no such quest in life. He feeds on stupidity and foolishness. He scoffs at wisdom and makes fun of the sanctified life (see study # 42).

- K. *"All the days of the afflicted are evil; But he that is of a cheerful heart hath a continual feast. Better is little, with the fear of Jehovah, Than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs, where love is, Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith"* (15:15-17).
1. Being wise and exercising a diligent work ethic is not a guarantee of wealth. There are other factors to consider. It may be that one works extremely hard to care for a very large family or an ailing parent. The wise will find joy and cheer in whatever state they find themselves in because they have faith and hope of an eternal life with God. The apostle Paul wrote, *"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content"* (Philippians 4:11).
  2. Solomon observes that it is truly better to have hardly anything of this life but to be happy than it is to be miserable with much. We would much rather experience love than hatred and little rather than much with trouble.
- L. *"A wrathful man stirs up contention; But he that is slow to anger appeases strife"* (15:18).
1. Anger and man's wrath does nothing but stir up contention (disagreements and conflicts) with others (Proverbs 15:1, 4) (see study # 45).
  2. Again, the man or woman who is *"slow to anger"* will speak words that sooth the hot wrath of others (see Proverbs 14:29; 15:1). The obvious issue is that it is more acceptable to God that one not argue or fuel the fire of anger over issues and events that have nothing to do with our salvation. People get angry in traffic, angry in grocery lines, angry over sporting events, and angry because someone doesn't share their opinions.
- M. *"The way of the sluggard is as a hedge of thorns; But the path of the upright is made a highway"* (15:19).
1. A major theme in the book of Proverbs is the fact that when men make foolish decisions they generally bring trouble to themselves and their families. Recall that Solomon said, *"Good understanding gives favor; but the way of the transgressor is hard"* (Proverbs 13:15) (see study # 25).
  2. Why would the way of the *"sluggard"* be as a *"hedge of thorns?"* Making your way through thorns is no fun at all. I experienced this first hand while working on a study of how fusiform rust affects southern pines. To get to our research plots around east Texas we often had to wade through thick black berry patches (*rubus*). It was a hard rout that left us bloody from the thorns. Here again is the idea of the sluggard. The sluggard will not listen to instruction, will not work hard to pay his bills and provide food for his family and the work he does often is laced with cheating. Such a life is that of trouble and ignorance. Here is the man or woman who refuses to graduate from the university of hard knocks. They are life long students (see study # 5).
- N. *"A wise son maketh a glad father; But a foolish man despises his mother"* (15:20).
1. This exact statement was made at Proverbs 10:1.
  2. The commandment of God is that children would hear and obey their parents (see Proverbs 1:8-9; 6:20-21).
  3. While the parents have the responsibility of instructing their children the children have the responsibility of giving heed to the instruction. The families welfare, health, and spiritual joy is dependant upon the child's reception of instruction. A rebellious child makes a home miserable.
- O. *"Folly is joy to him that is void of wisdom; But a man of understanding makes straight his going"* (15:21).
1. The wise man finds joy in producing a wise son, receiving wages for his hard labor, and in their hope of eternal life with the Lord (see notes at Proverbs 15:13).
  2. The fool is *"void of wisdom"* and thereby actually finds *"joy"* in stupid and ignorant things (it is a sport to him - Proverbs 10:23). The fool does not want to be instructed in the right and wise ways. He enjoys the path of unrighteousness (see study # 42).
- P. *"Where there is no counsel, purposes are disappointed; But in the multitude of counselors they are established"* (15:22).
1. To give *"counsel"* is to give instruction, guidance, and direction to others. If there is no guidance or direction given then one's objectives are not met and when objectives or goals are not met there is nothing but disappointment.

2. Where there are many counselors much instruction, guidance, and direction is received. The wise will receive said instructions and thereby achieve their goals.
  3. Consider the joy that is taken by parents who have a wise son (Proverbs 15:20). The son listens to instruction and gains wisdom because he was "*counseled*" to do so. If a child seeks after the things of this world and foolishness then it stands to reason that he lacked counsel as a child. Does that make the young man, who is a fool due to a lack of parental counsel, any less subject to God's divine judgment? No (see study # 47; Parental Responsibility).
- Q. "*A man hath joy in the answer of his mouth; And a word in due season, how good is it!*" (15:23).
1. Recall that we had noted that:
    - a. The words of the wise are likened unto a fountain of life (Proverbs 10:11 ).
    - b. The words of the wise cause its hearers to be spiritually healthy (Proverbs 12:18).
    - c. Such wise words delivers man from wickedness by instructing others to steer clear of ungodliness (Proverbs 12:6).
    - d. Wise and timely words will cheer up the discouraged (Proverbs 12:25).
  2. Once again, we see that a wise mouth that considers others may speak timely words (in due season) and bring joy to others people's lives (see study # 28).
- R. "*To the wise the way of life goes upward, That he may depart from Sheol beneath*" (15:24).
1. The "*way of life*" is the way of God's divine standard (Jeremiah 10:23).
  2. The way of righteousness and justice leads one away from the tormenting place of Sheol.
- S. "*Jehovah will root up the house of the proud; But he will establish the border of the widow*" (15:25).
1. Those whose hearts are filled with pride have actually set themselves against Jehovah (see Proverbs 6:16-17). Pride is equated to evil at Proverbs 8:13 and shame at Proverbs 11:2.
  2. Those who conduct themselves in pride (arrogance) will not go unpunished. The Lord will root up their houses yet he will establish the house of the lowly widow (see study # 31).
- T. "*Evil devices are an abomination to Jehovah; But pleasant words are pure*" (15:26).
1. Evil devices (plans or strategies) come in the form of faulty balances and lying words. Those who practice such things are an "*abomination to Jehovah*" (see study # 34).
  2. The plans or strategies of the upright do not scheme to rob or cheat people but rather they are pure and desire the betterment of their fellow man.
- U. "*He that is greedy of gain troubles his own house; But he that hates bribes shall live*" (15:27).
1. Such a one troubles his own house because he is willing to do what ever it takes to obtain riches. He will rob, cheat, swindle, and gamble. Such events potentially brings the wrath of the cheated upon himself and his family (see Proverbs 1:19; 13:4). Such a man can be bribed to do unlawful things that have the potential to bring trouble to his home. Furthermore, such a greedy man may take his earned money and rather than paying bills and buying food for his family he gambles it away in hopes of hitting it big (see study # 46; Gambling).
  2. The wise; however, will work hard for his money and do the things that God commands and thereby stay out of trouble with the wicked.
- V. "*The heart of the righteous studies to answer; But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things*" (15:28).
1. The righteous will think out their words to other rather that rashly blurting out un-thoughtful words. The righteous seeks to better and edify his audience. The apostle Peter said, "*Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear:*" (1 Peter 3:15). Consider the right uses of the mouth from Proverbs 15 (see study # 28):
    - a. A soft (15:1) and gentle (15:4) word appeases the wrath of the foolish (15:18).
    - b. Words of encouragement help rather than discourage (15:23).
    - c. The righteous use pure words (15:26).
  2. The wicked do not concern themselves with such thoughts. That which pours out of the mouth of the wicked are "*evil things*." The fool will thoughtlessly blurt out his folly.
- W. "*Jehovah is far from the wicked; But he hears the prayer of the righteous*" (15:29).
1. One solid fact that the scriptures bear out is that sin separates man from God (see Isaiah 59:1-2) (see study # 48).

2. God will not so much as give ear to the prayers of the wicked (see Proverbs 1:28).
- X. *"The light of the eyes rejoices the heart; And good tidings make the bones fat"* (15:30).
1. When one's eyes are lit up with joy there is a happiness due to some good news or confidence in one's walk in life (see comments at Proverbs 15:13, 20). Such day's in one's life *"makes the bones fat"* (i.e., blessed and happy).
  2. This is a complete contrast to the sorrow and trouble that the wicked face in life. Truly it is a good life being a Christians (see study # 24).
- Y. *"The ear that hearkens to the reproof of life Shall abide among the wise. He that refuses correction despises his own soul; But he that hearkens to reproof gets understanding"* (15:31-32).
1. Jonah made a statement from the belly of the great fish that seems to be a commentary on this verse. The prophet of God said, *"They that regard lying vanities forsake their own mercy"* (Jonah 2:8). Here, Solomon states that it is he who rejects correction in life that *"despises his own soul."* The soul of man shall live for ever and ever. Man is given one short life to life. To take this short life and cast away instruction and correction that will see man to everlasting peace and joy as opposed to everlasting anguish in flaming fire is indeed a despising of the soul and a forsaking one's own mercy that could be obtained.
  2. There are those in this world who will listen to instruction and correction and those who will not. Those who are interested and those who are not. Those who see instruction as the principle thing and apple of their eye and those who do not. Esau was one who rejected spirituality for the things of this life. Why do some children, young people, and adults reject instruction and others receive? (see study # 47)
- Z. *"The fear of Jehovah is the instruction of wisdom; And before honor goes humility"* (15:34).
1. Chapter 15 closes with another identifying factor of *"the fear of Jehovah."* Wisdom instructs man to fear Jehovah. Fearing Jehovah has clearly been identified, summarily, as obedience.
  2. When one obeys the will of another there is humility. Where there is subjection and humility then comes honor. Honor and glory cannot be obtained until one first learn humility, instruction, and obedience (see study # 22).

## Chapter 16

### I. Sundry Observations concerning Life and Conduct (16 all):

- A. *"The plans of the heart belong to man; But the answer of the tongue is from Jehovah"* (16:1).
1. Young's Literal Translation reads, *"Of man are arrangements of the heart, And from Jehovah an answer of the tongue."* Man has been given the ability to *"plan"* (i.e., think, reason, choose, set objectives, have opinions, and a conscience). When man speaks his words reveal that which is dear to his heart. If wisdom is the *"principle thing"* in his life (Proverbs 4:7) and the *"apple of his eye"* (Proverbs 7:2) then divinely authorized words will flow out. Jesus said, *"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks... good men speak good things and evil men speak evil things"* (Matthew 12:34-35). Jesus tells us that what comes out of a mouth identifies the man's heart as either good or evil (see Matt. 15:17-20).
  2. God governs the tongue by His divine standard. Those who love him and instruction will have their words trained by a heart of wisdom (see study # ).
- B. *"All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; But Jehovah weighs the spirits"* (16:2).
1. Solomon had wrote, *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that is wise hearkens unto counsel"* (Proverbs 12:15). Again, he writes, *"There is a way which seems right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Proverbs 14:12).
  2. The fool, unfortunately, measures his self by his own standards. The true measure of right and wrong belongs to the scales of Jehovah's standard (see study # 49; The Standard of Truth and study # 52; Delusional Faith).
- C. *"Commit thy works unto Jehovah, And thy purposes shall be established"* (16:3).
1. God's divine standard determines right from wrong. Those whose *"works"* (i.e., their plans, conscience, and purposes) are trained by God's standard will have a right view of good and evil.

- God's word can keep one from a deluded state of mind (i.e., viewing things as clean when they really are not) (see study # 49 and # 52).
2. The plea is to commit all that one does to Jehovah and His standard so that what you plan will be pre-established as right.
- D. "*Jehovah hath made everything for its own end; Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*" (16:4).
1. One may conclude from this verse that God creates some evil and some good (theory of Calvinism). If we follow the context; however, we see that one is evil and suffers because he **chooses** not to give heed to God's divine standard. What makes the individual choose the world over God? It seems that their interest is in the things of this life rather than the things of God (see Proverbs 15:21).
  2. Solomon is telling us that God has prepared a place for the wicked and righteous to dwell for all eternity. When all is said and done man will reap the rewards for the choices he makes in life. This is the world we live in. A world of consequences that follow our actions (see Proverbs 13:15; 15:19) (see study # 25).
- E. "*Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to Jehovah: Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished*" (16:5).
1. Chapter 16 flows with continuity. Solomon now identifies the "*proud*" as one whose plans do not include Jehovah and His divine standard. Here are the people who do things because they feel or think it is the right thing to do (see first three verses). What arrogance and what a daring spirit. When one ignores divine instructions for their own ways they seek to usurp the authority that belongs to Jehovah God alone. It's no wonder that pride is an abomination to God (Proverbs 6:17; 15:25) (see study # 31).
  2. Solomon tells us that it matters not that wicked and prideful men join hand in hand to do wickedness it remains wicked and will not go unpunished. Sometimes people think that just because many people are participating in something it must be ok to do. Not so, God's divine standard determines right from wrong rather than a majority rules concept (see study # 49).
- F. "*By mercy and truth iniquity is atoned for; And by the fear of Jehovah men depart from evil*" (16:6).
1. While sin separates one from Jehovah His truth and mercy "*atone*" or reconcile (see Proverbs 15:29). Truth explains what one must do to experience atonement and when one receives such instructions God's mercy is there. The study of Proverbs has revealed that only the man or woman with an understanding, prudent, or wise heart will receive instruction. Said ones are obviously the only ones to receive God's mercy and atonement because they are the only ones who will humbly receive His instructions (see study # 43).
  2. When one receives instruction they obtain a healthy "*fear of Jehovah*." This fear of Jehovah will cause a man to "*depart from evil*" due to its consequences (see Proverbs 3:7). When one's "works" or "plans" include God they will not only fearfully submit to His divine will but they will also humbly seek His divine mercy when they falter. Not so with the proud.
- G. "*When a man's ways please Jehovah, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him*" (16:7).
1. A man pleases Jehovah as he walks by His divine standard rather than doing those things which are an abomination to the Lord (see 16:5 above). His attitude is "not my will by thy will be done."
  2. God's ways are ways that keep man from trouble in this life. The righteous have no trouble with the man of greed, cheaters, adulterers, and so forth because they do not make friends with such people (out of sight out of mind) (see Proverbs 1:10-15; 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33) (see study # 2). Secondly, peace is experienced because none of the godly man's works can be condemned. The apostle Paul wrote, "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:23). No law (or person) can condemn a man who walks justly and righteously.
- H. "*Better is a little, with righteousness, Than great revenues with injustice*" (16:8).
1. At Proverbs 15:16 Solomon wrote, "*Better is little, with the fear of Jehovah, than great treasure and trouble therewith*."
  2. Not only is it better to have little without trouble but it is also better to have little by obtaining what you have justly than having much due to you unjust acts. Greater satisfaction comes with making gains honestly rather than with dishonesty.



- I. *"A man's heart devises his way; But Jehovah directs his steps"* (16:9).
1. God gave man the power to make "*plans*" and "*work*" (Proverbs 16:1-3). It is the proud fool that seeks to direct his own path in this life rather than looking to God's standard (see study # 52). One that would say, "It seems to me that the church ought to do this and that work... or its my opinion that the church should be doing this or than... or I am of the position that says this or that..." God's people are to say, "Thus saith Jehovah" rather than "I think, its my opinon, I'm of the position... etc." Jeremiah said that it is not within a man to direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23) (see study # 49).
  2. While some men may conjure up their own ways in this life it is Jehovah alone that divinely directs man to the path of righteousness (see Proverbs 16:2 above).
- J. *"A divine sentence is in the lips of the king; His mouth shall not transgress in judgment. A just balance and scales are Jehovah's; All the weights of the bag are his work. It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness; For the throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of kings; And they love him that speaketh right. The wrath of a king is as messengers of death; But a wise man will pacify it. In the light of the king's countenance is life; And his favor is as a cloud of the latter rain"* (16:10-15).
1. The natural course for kings (magistrates in civil control) is justice and equity (this is his divinely appointed position) (see Proverbs 8:15).
  2. The king has at his disposal "*a just balance and scale*" (i.e., God's divine will to guide him in all his decision making processes) (see study # 49).
  3. Seeing that God ordains the positions of civil authority (see also Romans 13:1ff) it is thereby an abomination for that which should represent justice to perform abominable works (pride, faulty scales, extorting people with high taxes, passing laws that affront the will of God, ext.).
  4. The king that rules rightly will love the lips of those who tell the truth and there will be nothing for such truth tellers to fear. The unjust lawbreakers will experience the king's great wrath yet the truth speakers who seek out righteousness will see no such wrath (see Proverbs 14:35).
  5. When man does what is civilly correct they will benefit from the government (see study # 40).
- K. *"How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! Yea, to get understanding is rather to be chosen than silver"* (16:16).
1. This verse sums up all said to this point of the chapter. A study of Proverbs reveals the value of wisdom (prudence, discretion, understanding). Wisdom is better than gold and silver because such will lead one to God's mercy through giving heed to instruction. Worldly treasures have only the amount of life that its owners have.
  2. Wisdom will keep one out of trouble with the wicked. Wisdom will keep one from the strange woman of adultery. Wisdom will keep one out of trouble with the civil authorities. Wisdom will keep one with food on the table and clothing to wear because of a diligent work ethic. Wisdom will cause one to be happy and also make others happy. Wisdom will keep others from falling into the pit falls of sin. Wisdom is truly the better way of life. This is why it is to be the principle thing (Proverbs 4:7) and the apple of thine eye (Proverbs 7:2) (see study # 19, # 21 and # 39).
- L. *"The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: He that keeps his way preserves his soul"* (16:17).
1. We have seen in this study that it is those who "**fear Jehovah**" that depart from evil (see Proverbs 3:7; 16:6) because they hate evil (Proverbs 8:13). We have also seen that it is the **wise** who will "depart from evil" (see Proverbs 14:16). The fool will not depart from evil because this is where he gets his joy in life (see Proverbs 13:19; 15:21) (see study # 19 and # 56).
  2. The wise man who hates evil and departs from it will seek to preserve his own soul by such decisions rather than destroy it (see Proverbs 15:32) (see study # 39). The highway to heaven is the way of wisdom.
- M. *"Pride goeth before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of a lowly spirit with the poor, Than to divide the spoil with the proud"* (16:18-19).
1. The highway of life that is directed by self rather than divine wisdom leads one to destruction. One might refer to it as the "highway to hell." Recall that Solomon revealed that God would root up all the proud of heart (see Proverbs 15:25). Pride is equated to evil (Proverbs 8:13) and shame (Proverbs 11:2). The proud heart is one that is a source of contention among men (Proverbs 13:10).

- God hates or abhors the proud and haughty spirit (see Proverbs 6:17). Those who love folly, destruction, and falling from God's favor will continue in their spirit of pride and arrogance. It is the proud man who chooses his own way in life rather than take the way of God. It is the proud that elevate themselves above God's laws so that they sit in the seat of God's divine and authoritative position (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4) (see study # 31).
2. There is nothing good to look forward to by being proud. Solomon thereby tells us that it is better to be of a "*lowly spirit with the poor.*" It is the humble of heart that will seek out understanding (see Proverbs 9:8-9; 10:17; 16:6).
- N. "*He that giveth heed unto the word shall find good; And whoso trusteth in Jehovah, happy is he*" (16:20).
1. The book of Proverbs, like other books in the Bible, builds upon topics to the point of the student gaining a thorough understanding of the subject under consideration. When one looks upon the entirety of God's word on any given subject there is even greater understanding (good introduction statement). It is the wise (prudent, discretion, man of understanding heart) that receive instruction and put it into application in their lives (see Proverbs 1:2-3, 7 etc.).
  2. The further we delve into Proverbs the greater our understanding of the value of wisdom, the fear of God, and giving heed to all that God intends for us to obey. Such an approach to life will bring happiness because we are content in this life to know that the Lord's mercy belongs to us (see study # 50; My Individual Responsibility)
- O. "*The wise in heart shall be called prudent; And the sweetness of the lips increases learning*" (16:21).
1. The wise hate evil, love instruction, love their own souls, and are "*called prudent*" (i.e., using discretion and foreknowledge). The wise base their plans and work in divine revelation and thereby use foresight when making decisions. The wise will asks themselves questions such as, "Am I doing this deed because God authorizes it or because I feel, think, am of the opinion or position to do it?" (see study # 39)
  2. Knowledge and understanding are sweet to this man and so he increases learning (learns more and more as time goes on).
- P. "*Understanding is a well-spring of life unto him that hath it; But the correction of fools is their folly*" (16:22).
1. Understanding belongs to those who love instruction, see wisdom as the principle thing in this life, and has it as the apple of their eye. Such a one has life rather than the death of Sheol and Abbaddon.
  2. Young's Literal Translation states, "*The instruction of fools is folly.*" Remember, it is the fool who cannot stand to be told he is wrong. He wants no part of instruction. He is the man or woman who does things based upon what they feel right for themselves. This is the man of pride. Self is God rather than Jehovah God. To instruct those who have proven themselves to be such is indeed folly. Jesus said, "*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you*" (Matthew 7:6).
- Q. "*The heart of the wise instructs his mouth, And adds learning to his lips. Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, Sweet to the soul, and health to the bones*" (16:23-24).
1. The way of the wise is instruction and adding learning to one's heart. This man will gain understanding which will be sweet to his soul.
  2. What makes one this way? Is it not because they have been shown the destruction of the soul that belongs to those who reject instruction and obedience (see 13:13; 15:11-12)? The foolish who give no heed to instruction are what they are because they love self more than God. Both their prideful will and personal desires are elevated above the will of God (see study # 47 and # 53; Why Do People Sin?).
- R. "*There is a way which seems right unto a man, But the end thereof are the ways of death*" (16:25).
1. This exact statement is made at Proverbs 14:12 and complementary statements made at Proverbs 12:15; 16:2). Here is the man who forsakes all mercy toward his soul. Here is the man who seeks out his way in life by his own prescribed ways rather than God's revealed pattern. Here is one who bases the eternal abode of his soul on his opinions. This man is full of pride and arrogance (see study # 31 and # 52).

2. Why is this man not interested in divinely revealed instruction? He is not interested because he believes he can find his way in this life on his own. This is the spirit of pride and rebellion. What brings about pride and rebellion in a child? Is it a lack of instruction by a father? Is it a lack of a solid upbringing? Is he a rebellious son due to the environment of his youth? Do we not all choose the directions we take in life (see Proverbs 1:28-30; 3:31; 8:10; 16:4). Once we choose one certain direction can we not change that path? The wise will always depart from evil and the moment they do not choose righteousness over evil is the point in which they become fools (see Proverbs 3:7; 14:16; 16:6, 17). The fool does his folly because this is his joy in life (Proverbs 13:19; 15:21). He believes this way to be the right way for him (see this verse). But can the fool change? If not why the book of Proverbs (see Proverbs 1:20ff)? (see study # 47)
- S. "*The appetite of the laboring man labors for him; For his mouth urges him thereto*" (16:26).
1. A man who labors for food is not a sloth.
  2. This man's motivation is not only to stay out of trouble by an honest day of work but to bring food to his hungry mouth. If he chooses not to labor he chooses not to eat.
- T. "*A worthless man devises mischief; And in his lips there is as a scorching fire. A perverse man scatters abroad strife; And a whisperer separates chief friends. A man of violence entices his neighbor, And leads him in a way that is not good. He that shuts his eyes, it is to devise perverse things: He that compresses his lips brings evil to pass*" (16:27-30).
1. The man of pride who seeks to direct his own paths in life is now identified as "*worthless, perverse, and a man of violence.*"
  2. This arrogant man literally scorches the faith of others with his tongue. His reckless use of the tongue endears him to gossip and a separating of best friends. He cares not because the only thing that matters in life is me.
  3. Those who engage in gossip have the power to separate even the best of friends (see study # 28).
- U. "*The hoary head is a crown of glory; It shall be found in the way of righteousness*" (16:31).
1. The natural state of mind of the man who has reached an age of gray hair is the way of righteousness or wisdom (see study # 20). Unfortunately many do not follow the natural course of action as God intends.
  2. Leviticus 19:32 commands that honor be given to such a man who has obtained the identity of "*old man*" (see 2 Chronicles 36:17; Proverbs 20:29).
- V. "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; And he that rules his spirit, than he that takes a city*" (16:32).
1. Solomon has said that anger belongs to fools (see Ecclesiastes 7:9; Proverbs 14:7). Those who are slow to anger have been identified as have great understanding (Proverbs 14:29) and able to appease strife (Proverbs 15:18).
  2. While the mighty may appear to be those who are loud and angry the true mighty are those who are able to exercise self control over anger (see study # 45).
- W. "*The lot is cast into the lap; But the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah*" (16:33).
1. The meaning of this verse is similar to Proverbs 16:1, 3. Man often makes plans and purposes to do things yet it is God whose will determines the eternal state of the soul (see study # 49).
  2. Though God created man with the ability to plan and purpose man must conform his will to the will of God (see study # 1).

## Chapter 17

### I. Sundry Observations concerning Life and Conduct (17 all):

- A. "*Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, Than a house full of feasting with strife*" (17:1).
1. Consider the "*better*" statements of Proverbs (see study # 60; Better statements of Proverbs):
    - a. Gaining wisdom is "*better*" than spending one's life gaining silver, gold, and rubies (Proverbs 3:13-14; 8:11, 18-19; 16:16).
    - b. "*Better*" to be lowly and humble than popular and proud with nothing to eat (Proverbs 12:8-9; 16:19).

- c. "*Better*" to have wisdom with poverty than to have riches with trouble (Proverbs 15:16; 16:8).
2. Proverbs 17:1 is very similar to Proverbs 15:17 which states, "*Better is a dinner of herbs, where love is, Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.*" Experiencing "**love and peace**" with little is better than experiencing "**hatred and strife**" with great feasting. A troubled home is not worth all the money in the world!
- B. "*A servant that deals wisely shall have rule over a son that causes shame, And shall have part in the inheritance among the brethren*" (17:2).
1. How does a son "*cause shame*?"
    - a. A son causes shame through their "*foolishness*" (Proverbs 10:1). The fool is identified as brutish (Proverbs 12:1), a gossip (Proverbs 10:18), one who enjoys doing bad things (Proverbs 10:23; 15:14), one who seeks to direct his own steps rather than listening to the instruction of his parents (Proverbs 12:15; 15:5), he has no shame about himself (Proverbs 13:6), and acts disrespectfully toward God's laws (Proverbs 14:16) (see study # 42).
    - b. A son causes shame when they do not give heed to their parents instructions (Proverbs 13:1 - identified as a "*scoffer*" = simple and sluggard {Proverbs 1:4, 22; 9:12}). Apparently there can be a situation where the father is instructing the son yet the son will not give heed. The parent is doing what he or she is suppose to do yet the rebellious child wants to do things their own way (see study # 12 and # 47).
  2. With correction and counsel (Proverbs 13:24; 15:22) such a son may become wise (Proverbs 10:17). Without correction and counsel the son is a foolish scoffer.
  3. The son who has received correction and counsel yet chooses to enjoy wickedness over righteousness is one that brings shame. Even a man's wise servant will be over such a son when it comes to the "*inheritance among the brethren*" (their eternal reward and inheritance from God).
- C. "*The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; But Jehovah trieth the hearts*" (17:3).
1. A study of the book of Job will reveal a man who had committed no sin yet he was suffering at a level that could hardly be endured. Though his friends accused him of sin he knew that he had not done any sin worthy of suffering. Job concludes, "*But he knoweth the way that I take; When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold*" (Job 23:10). The more man suffers in this life the greater an understanding of their need for Jehovah God.
  2. The intense trials of life will cause man to fall away from God or get closer. God tries the hearts of men to see who will endure to the end (Revelation 2:10) and secondly to refine such a man as pure gold (see James 1:2-4; I Pet. 1:6ff) (see study # 57; God puts man to the Test).
- D. "*An evil-doer giveth heed to wicked lips; And a liar giveth ear to a mischievous tongue*" (17:4).
1. The "*evil-doer*" is one who loves and enjoys the life of the wicked (drunkenness, party life, gambling, fornication, adultery, slanderers, etc. - Romans 1:28-32).
  2. Interestingly such a person gives heed to the lips of the wicked and mischievous but they will not give heed to their parents instructions.
  3. How would you like to go down in the history of all eternity as an "*evil-doer*?"
- E. "*Whoso mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; And he that is glad at calamity shall not be unpunished*" (17:5).
1. The poor under consideration cannot possibly be the man or woman who refuses to work and thereby has nothing because such a life is condemned by God as slothful and a sluggard.
  2. The poor under consideration must thereby be those who have experienced unfortunate events in life that brings them to this point. A man who was brought up in a family with illness who had to forsake his own education to take care of family members is such a one. A person who is incapable of work due to some infirmity or "*calamity*." A person who works hard yet just simply does not make enough to feed his children.
  3. To ridicule such people who are trying their hardest in this life to make it and please God "*reproaches his Maker*" (i.e., may as well be mocking or making fun of God). Those who laugh at a family who experiences a "*calamity*" that brings poverty to their lives "*shall not be unpunished*" (see study # 58; God's Concern for the Poor).
- F. "*Children's children are the crown of old men; And the glory of children are their fathers*" (17:6).

1. This verse illustrates the natural course for any family. A family is comprised of a husband and wife. They two have children. When their children have children of their own the parents become grandparents. This is the "*crown of old men*" (i.e., something considered blessed and gratefully displayed as a crown upon one's head as a worthy woman is such a crown to a husband - see Proverbs 12:4).
  2. The "*glory*" under consideration is the glory or fame and credit that one receives in this earth. Children will be known by their fathers. A wise and successful father brings glory to his children (see study # 47).
- G. "*Excellent speech becomes not a fool; Much less do lying lips a prince*" (17:7).
1. We had previously asked the question, "What should we expect from the fool?" (see notes at Proverbs 14:7 where Solomon wrote, "*Go into the presence of a foolish man, And thou shalt not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.*")
  2. We should no more expect to hear words of excellent speech from the fool than we would expect a prince among the people to lie to us. Though our expectations are high from government we are often disappointed. Those who speak lies can certainly not be trusted (see study # 40).
- H. "*A bribe is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; Whithersoever it turns, it prospers*" (17:8).
1. Today's New International Bible translates the verse, "*A bribe is seen as a charm by those who give it; they think success will come at every turn.*" Recall that it is the greedy man who seeks out bribes (see Proverbs 15:27).
  2. Here is a man who gets what he wants out of life by bribery. His "carrots" are appealing only to those who share his wicked vises.
- I. "*He that covers a transgression seeks love; But he that harps on a matter separates chief friends*" (17:9).
1. Solomon had said at Proverbs 10:11-13 that love covers transgressions in relationship to the tongue that would seek out revenge out of hatred. Here is the man who will not let a matter drop. One may sin against me and I am simply not going to forgive such a one even if they ask my forgiveness. This person will continue to "*harp*" on a matter until they separate themselves from a chief friend. Friendship and God's commands are set aside for selfishness.
  2. The man who will "*cover the transgression*" (i.e., forgive one of the matter) is seeking to restore a friendship and maintain good standing with the Lord (see Matthew 18:15) (see study # 59; Friendship).
- J. "*A rebuke enters deeper into one that hath understanding Than a hundred stripes into a fool*" (17:10).
1. It is the fool who wants nothing to do with the scolding of a parent or wise man (see Proverbs 15:5). The wise man is advised not to scold the scoffer lest he be hated (see Proverbs 9:7).
  2. Adding to the thoughts of Proverbs 9:7 is the idea that the thick headed man will not receive correction even if he is stroked 100 times on the back (see Matthew 13:14-15) (see study # 12 and # 47).
- K. "*An evil man seeks only rebellion; Therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him*" (17:11).
1. Remember, the evil man seeks only "*rebellion*" because this is the lifestyle he loves (see Proverbs 10:23; 15:14).
  2. The wicked will not have to wait long for the troubling messenger to come. Remember, with wicked choices come great troubles to life (see Proverbs 13:15, 21; 15:19) (see study # 25).
- L. "*Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, Rather than a fool in his folly*" (17:12).
1. Recall that it is useless to try to correct the fool (see Proverbs 15:5; 17:10). Again, the wise man is advised to steer clear of the fool lest he be hated. The thought, once again, seems to be the idea of "out of sight out of mind." Solomon says that it would be better for the wise man to meet an angry female bear that has been robbed of her whelps or cubs than to be subject to the fools hatred.
  2. God's ways are ways that keep man from trouble in this life. The righteous have no trouble with the man of greed, cheaters, adulterers, and so forth because they do not make friends with such people (out of sight out of mind) (see Proverbs 1:10-15; 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33) (see study # 2).
- M. "*Whoso rewards evil for good, Evil shall not depart from his house*" (17:13).
1. Here is another one of those absolute statements (see also Proverbs 16:31).

2. As long as one continues to reward evil for good that same evil will not depart from his home. He, in other words, will continue to bring trouble to himself and his family as long as he deals unjustly with people (see study # 54; Absolute Statements in Proverbs).
- N. *"The beginning of strife is as when one lets out water: Therefore leave off contention, before there is quarrelling"* (17:14).
1. Think of a dam that holds back water. The moment a breach is made in that dam water begins to flow out and there is trouble.
  2. Arguments are like that dam holding back water. People know what buttons to push to stir up strife. Why would you want to do such things? If you know that there are certain areas that will get your wife worked up then why push the button to let the water out of the dam and bring great contention to your life and marriage (or friendships with others) (see study # 55; A Healthy Marriage).
- O. *"He that justifies the wicked, and he that condemns the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah"* (17:15).
1. Once again it is the wicked who love wickedness and those who practice such things (see Proverbs 10:23; 15:14; 17:11).
  2. Such a man will naturally try to defend and give excuses for the wicked person's behavior and blame the righteous man for other things. One who lives this style of life is an *"abomination to Jehovah"* (see study # 34).
- P. *"Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to buy wisdom, Seeing he hath no understanding?"* (17:16)
1. Solomon poses a rhetorical question that he has already given the answer to. Why would there be money in the hands of a foolish person so that he may buy wisdom when he has absolutely no desire for it." The idea, once again, is don't bother to buy this man wisdom seeing that he has no desire to obtain it. You would waste your money on such a one. This is the man that you could stroke a 100 times on his back to correct him and he still will not receive correction (see Proverbs 17:10-12).
  2. Don't waste your time, money, or friendship on such a one. They will eventually turn you away from God before you will turn them to righteousness (see study # 2 and # 42).
- Q. *"A friend loveth at all times; And a brother is born for adversity"* (17:17).
1. One begins to see a progression of thoughts from chapter 17. Chapter 16 had a thread of continuity being that of God's standard alone will direct the wise. Chapter 17's thread seems to be a warning to the wise not to overextend themselves with the wicked. The wicked will be no friend at all.
  2. A true friend will love you even when you wrong them because they are willing to receive your plea of forgiveness (Proverbs 17:9). A true friend will love you even when you have experienced a great calamity in your life (Proverbs 17:5). Such reminds us of marriage vows; i.e., for richer or poorer in sickness or health for better or worse... (see study # 59).
- R. *"A man void of understanding strikes hands, And becomes surety in the presence of his neighbor"* (17:18).
1. The idea of *"surety"* has been discussed at Proverbs 6:1-5 and 11:15. The point is that it would not be wise to guarantee something on behalf of another. Each man should guarantee his own work. This would be the idea behind one "co-signing" for another for an automobile or home loan. They are guaranteeing that the loan will be paid back and if it is not they will assume responsibility. This is not wise to do. One could find themselves in great financial trouble doing this for others.
  2. The best policy is to let people stand on their own two feet. If they cannot get a loan then maybe they need to wait and work a little harder until their credit supports such an effort. A true friend would not expect me to do such a thing for him.
- S. *"He loves transgression that loves strife: He that raises high his gate seeks destruction"* (17:19).
1. To be fond of trouble and conflicts with others is one who loves sin. Recall that we had learned that there are some who seem to never graduate from the university of hard knocks. They love the life of trouble and so they live (see Proverbs 13:15; 15:19).

2. Here are people who figuratively open their home to the wicked. They had given an open invitation for trouble to enter their homes as one who leaves a gate open for all thieves and murderers to enter.
- T. *"He that hath a wayward heart finds no good; And he that hath a perverse tongue falls into mischief"* (17:20).
1. Nothing but trouble awaits the wayward man of folly.
  2. Those with perverse tongues also bring trouble to their lives (Proverbs 13:15; 15:19).
- U. *"He that begets a fool doeth it to his sorrow; And the father of a fool hath no joy"* (17:21).
1. Happiness and gladness belong to the heart of a man who has raised a wise man (Proverbs 10:1; 15:20). Consequentially, sorrow and sadness belong to the man whose son is a fool.
  2. The word "*beget*" (Hebrew *yalad* [to bring forth... to be born]) here and at Proverbs 23:24 indicates the presentation to the public of one's finished product at any given point. The young man raised by his mother and father is depicted as either a fool or wise in the public's eye. If what is presented is a fool then the father and mother bear the shame and have no joy. The verse indicates that the father has a great deal to do with what the son is perceived as by the public's eye. The longer this son is permitted to be foolish the harder it will be to bring him to wisdom. Though the child was stroked 100 times he would continue to reject correction (see Proverbs 17:10) (see study # 12 and # 47).
- V. *"A cheerful heart is a good medicine; But a broken spirit dries up the bones"* (17:22).
1. Contextually we see what it is that brings the "*broken spirit*" of sorrow. Those who have a foolish son (Proverbs 17:21), those who have friends that will not forgive them but rather harp on matters (see Proverbs 17:9), and those who have spouses or friends that love to argue (Proverbs 17:14). Solomon has also told us that good news, doing what is right, and trusting in Jehovah brings happiness (see Proverbs 15:30; 16:20).
  2. The point is obvious. Its better to be happy and cheerful in this life and that only comes when one is doing right (those who do wrong only bring trouble to their lives) (see study # 25 and # 56).
- W. *"A wicked man receives a bribe out of the bosom, To pervert the ways of justice"* (17:23).
1. Recall that it is the greedy man who offers the bribe for personal profit (see Proverbs 15:27; 17:8).
  2. Now we see that those who are bribed by the greedy are themselves perverted. The wicked will do anything immoral for a buck.
- X. *"Wisdom is before the face of him that hath understanding; But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth"* (17:24).
1. The wise man gains understanding because he is diligently seeking it out in life (see Proverbs 3:13-18). Solomon had earlier said, *"A scoffer seeks wisdom, and finds it not; But knowledge is easy unto him that hath understanding"* (14:6).
  2. The point is that while the wise easily find wisdom the fool never does because he looks for it in all the wrong places. His idea of wisdom is gaining entertainment from evil deeds.
- Y. *"A foolish son is a grief to his father, And bitterness to her that bare him"* (17:25).
1. This verse is very similar to Proverbs 17:2 and 17:21.
  2. The same foolish attributes of a son that brings his parents and family shame bring grief to the home.
  3. If grief and bitterness belong to the parents of a fool it follows that the two are spiritually minded yet failed to get their son to listen to their instruction. Why did they fail? Was it a lack of teaching on their part or a disinterested attitude on the son's side (see study # 12 and # 47).
- Z. *"Also to punish the righteous is not good, Nor to smite the noble for their uprightness"* (17:26).
1. The punishing rod is for the wrong doer (see Proverbs 13:24; 22:6, 15).
  2. To apply the punishing rod to the good person is "*not good*" (i.e., it is unnatural and not right).
- AA. *"He that spareth his words hath knowledge; And he that is of a cool spirit is a man of understanding"* (17:27).
1. The foolish are just the opposite.
  2. The fool is known for his multitude of words (see Proverbs 10:18-19) and angry disposition (Proverbs 14:17) (see study # 42).

- BB.** *"Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; When he shutteth his lips, he is esteemed as prudent"* (17:28).
1. The distinguishing characteristics of the wise is their quiet disposition (they are not going to be the first to pipe up and reveal what is on their mind). The fool; on the other hand, will speak volumes of words regarding his personal thoughts and thereby reveal his ignorance. When the fool keeps his mouth shut, though he be a fool, at least he will not be thought of as a fool.
  2. As the old saying goes, "Better to keep one's mouth shut and appear foolish than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

## Chapter 18

### I. Sundry Observations concerning Life and Conduct (18 all):

- A.** *"He that separates himself seeks his own desire, And rages against all sound wisdom"* (18:1).
1. Various versions use the word "loner" or one who "isolates" himself from others.
  2. Why would one want to isolate himself? Solomon writes that it is for selfish desires. I don't want to marry because then I would have to share all my goods with another. I don't want any friends because having friends means I would have to give of myself to someone. All of life is about me and so I want to live alone...
  3. Such reasoning *"rages against all sound wisdom."* Friendship and companionship are sources of true happiness (chapter 17 all). To miss out on friendship is to miss out on happiness on this earth (see study # 59).
- B.** *"A fool hath no delight in understanding, But only that his heart may reveal itself"* (18:2).
1. The English Standard Version translates the verse, *"A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion."*
  2. Recall that the fool is known for directing his own paths rather than conforming his life to God's will (Proverbs 12:15). Seeing that there is no delight in understanding he naturally will be more than willing to express his own personal opinions. This man has placed his opinions on par with God's standard of truth. The root of his problem is pride (see study # 42).
- C.** *"When the wicked cometh, there cometh also contempt, And with ignominy cometh reproach"* (18:3).
1. The wicked are foolish and love arguments and anger (Proverbs 14:17).
  2. The bitterness of hatred and anger brings nothing but shame and reproach to all involved with this foolish one.
- D.** *"The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters; The wellspring of wisdom is as a flowing brook"* (18:4).
1. Words spoken from the mouth of the fool only cause contention, shame and hurt in people's lives.
  2. The words of a wise man; however, are likened unto deep waters or a flowing brook that refreshes and brings life to his subjects.
- E.** *"To respect the person of the wicked is not good, Nor to turn aside the righteous in judgment"* (18:5).
1. When one *"respects the person"* of someone they show favoritism or preferential treatment.
  2. The standard of truth tells us that when we show favoritism and preferential treatment to the wicked while treating the righteous unfairly *"is not good."* Such actions go against God's divine order of things (see study # 20).
- F.** *"A fool's lips enter into contention, And his mouth calls for stripes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts"* (18:6-8).
1. A man is identified as wise or foolish by the manner in which he uses his mouth. The fool loves to argue and bring punishment of stripes upon him due to his shameless conduct (see study # 42).
  2. Here is one who loves gossip (see Proverbs 10:18). Stories about other people are like *"dainty morsels"* swallowed and thoroughly enjoyed (see study # 28).
  3. Note that contention, shame, reproachful language, and gossip all lead to *"destruction"* (see Matthew 7:13-14) (see study # 25).
- G.** *"He also that is slack in his work Is brother to him that is a destroyer"* (18:9).



1. The sluggard is under consideration here (see study # 5). Here is one who through laziness brings poverty and want to his life (Proverbs 6:6-11), has nothing to eat (Proverbs 12:29), no property or substance of this earth (Proverbs 13:4), and regularly invites trouble to his life (Proverbs 15:19).
  2. The slack worker is a brother to a destroyer in that he brings trouble to all whose lives he touches (see study # 25).
- H. *"The name of Jehovah is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it, and is safe"* (18:10).
1. The *"name of Jehovah"* is the seal of authority regarding the direction man takes in life through His divine standard (see Deuteronomy 28:58-59; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 4:7-10, 12) (see study # 1).
  2. Those who abide in the authoritative words of God (i.e., the righteous) shall be safe from the destruction caused by the foolish and wicked because they will not participate in it (see study # 2).
- I. *"The rich man's wealth is his strong city, And as a high wall in his own imagination"* (18:11).
1. The man who puts his trust in his riches rather than God's divine revelation has deluded himself through his own imagination. He thinks that his money will comfort and save him from all trouble of life. Money is this man's strong tower of defense rather than God.
  2. The truth of the matter is; however, riches will save nothing when God's judgment day comes (Proverbs 11:4). Those who spend their lives in a quest to obtain riches will have nothing of true and lasting substance in the end (Proverbs 13:7) (see study # 32).
- J. *"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty; And before honor goes humility"* (18:12).
1. The same verse was stated at Proverbs 16:18. The highway of life that is directed by self rather than divine wisdom leads one to destruction. One might refer to it as the "highway to hell." Recall that Solomon revealed that God would root up all the proud of heart (see Proverbs 15:25). Pride is equated to evil (Proverbs 8:13) and shame (Proverbs 11:2). The proud heart is one that is a source of contention among men (Proverbs 13:10). God hates or abhors the proud and haughty spirit (see Proverbs 6:17). Those who love folly, destruction, and shameful language will continue in their spirit of pride and arrogance (Proverbs 18:3). It is the proud that favor the wicked over the just (Proverbs 18:5). It is the proud that trust in wealth rather than making God their high tower (Proverbs 18:11). It is the proud man who chooses his own way in life rather than take the way of God (Proverbs 18:2). It is the proud that elevate themselves above God's laws so that they sit in the seat of God's divine and authoritative position (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4) (see study # 31).
  2. While the proud heart is looking for honor from others he finds it not because he lacks humility. He tries to take the easy way out of life. He wants the glory of men without doing the necessary things to obtain it (i.e., humility). The humble will receive honor because they are living as God would have them.
- K. *"He that giveth answer before he hears, It is folly and shame unto him"* (18:13).
1. Those who do shameful things are fools.
  2. The fool will thereby be known when he opens his mouth to comment on a matter before the whole issue is brought forth. Again, let us be quiet and listen to all that is said before we blurt out our ideas.
- L. *"The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; But a broken spirit who can bear"* (18:14).
1. The broken hearted person loses the will to live and so he is unable to bear his infirmity (ill-health condition).
  2. The person whose spirit is full of joy will be able to sustain the infirmity because he has a will to live and loves life.
- M. *"The heart of the prudent gets knowledge; And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge"* (18:15).
1. The *"prudent"* man is the sensible and far-sighted person.
  2. Such a person will have it in his heart to *"get and seek knowledge"* because it is not only the principle thing in his life but the apple of his eye (see Proverbs 4:7; 7:2).
- N. *"A man's gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men"* (18:16).
1. It is wise to bring a gift if one expects to be in the presence of great men.
  2. Without the gift man appears disrespectful.
- O. *"He that pleads his cause first seems just; But his neighbor cometh and searches him out"* (18:17).
1. One's words may appear to justify him yet he may be guilty of a wrong.

2. Before one gives trust and identifies one as a man of integrity there ought to be a thorough searching out of the person.
- P. *"The lot causes contentions to cease, And parts between the mighty. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; And such contentions are like the bars of a castle"* (18:18-19).
1. The NKJV Bible reads, "Casting lots causes contentions to cease, And keeps the mighty apart." Sometimes there are disputes that are difficult to settle. Lots would be cast to settle such issues. Whoever the lot fell to may be considered providentially innocent or due some reward. The two that were in contention could not argue with the lot because it was done fairly. It may be that such disputes are settled today by the flipping of a coin.
  2. When one is offended; however, the contention is more complex to solve than with a mere flipping of a coin. Careful not to offend others with your opinions or liberties.
- Q. *"A man's belly shall be filled with the fruit of his mouth; With the increase of his lips shall he be satisfied"* (18:20).
1. This is a fascinating analogy of the use of one's tongue. Solomon depicts the tongue as that which sustains the belly by words (i.e., the man's words fill the belly and keep him satisfied).
  2. When the mouth speaks words of wisdom coming from a heart trained by diligent searching for knowledge and wisdom then such words of the wise will satisfy the soul within.
  3. Those who search for wisdom and knowledge and have God as their high tower of defense are satisfied.
- R. *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue; And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof"* (18:21).
1. The tongue has the power to bring both life and death. Those who love death will speak words that bring death to themselves. Those who love life will speak words that bring life.
  2. The words we take into our ears define who we are. You have heard it said, "You are what you eat..." Those who have a regular diet of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ will be satisfied forever (see John 6:51).
- S. *"Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor of Jehovah"* (18:22).
1. This verse is another absolute statement found in Proverbs (see study # 54). One who finds a wife is one who has searched for a woman to marry, finds her, and marries her so that she becomes his wife. Solomon states that such a man has obtained "*favor of Jehovah*." Consider the other means by which a man gains the favor of Jehovah and note that these cannot be separated from the favor mentioned above:
    - a. The man who is kind and holds to truth has gained favor with God (Proverbs 3:3-4).
    - b. The man who seeks and finds wisdom has gained favor with God (Proverbs 8:34-36).
    - c. The man that is "*good*" finds favor with God (Proverbs 12:2).
  2. What kind of wife would be considered "*a good thing*" and consequentially revealed to be a favor of Jehovah?" Would any kind of wife meet this standard? Would the adulterous wife of Proverbs 7:15-20 meet this "favor of Jehovah?" Would the wife that is a rottenness to the bones of a man meet this favor?
  3. Solomon is not talking about just any old girl here. He is talking about finding a wife that would be considered a "*worthy woman*." This woman will be a "*crown to her husband*" (Proverbs 12:4). She will be gracious (Proverbs 11:16) and use discretion (Proverbs 11:22). Not everyone finds such a woman but when you do consider it "*obtaining the favor of Jehovah*" (see Proverbs 31:10) (see study # 36).
  4. The verse thereby means that those who find a worthy woman have obtained favor of Jehovah. Proverbs builds a case for the worthy woman and other topics such as the sluggard, fool, and the wise.
- T. *"The poor uses entreaties; But the rich answers roughly"* (18:23).
1. The poor man will entreat (beseech or plead) with one.
  2. The rich make rough demands rather than pleading his case because he doesn't fear losing out on anything. He has all that he needs and needs nothing from others. Herein is a danger of being rich. Such a one feels he can afford to treat people however he pleases because he doesn't need anyone's help (see study # 32).

- U. *"He that makes many friends does it to his own destruction; But there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother"* (18:24).
1. Chapter 18 began with a verse condemning the loner life of having no friends (see Proverbs 18:1). Now Solomon condemns the life of *"many friends."* How many friends should we have?
  2. The ESV reads, *"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."* Why would many friends be one's own demise? The word *"friend"* in the first clause means companions and the word *"friend"* in the second clause is the Hebrew word *qas* which is equivalent to our English word love.
  3. The meaning is that many friends will not all share an equal love for you because their allegiance is split with others. There is; however, one friend that loves you and sticks close to you. Generally that one friend that sticks closer to you than a brother is your very best friend (likely a spouse) (see study # 55 and # 59).

## Chapter 19

### I. Sundry Observations concerning Life and Conduct (19 all):

- A. *"Better is the poor that walks in his integrity Than he that is perverse in his lips and is a fool"* (19:1).
1. Solomon has given many **"Better"** statements (see study # 60).
    - a. Better to find wisdom than silver or gold (Proverbs 3:13-14; 8:18-19; 10:20; 16:8, 16, 19) (see study # 21).
    - b. Wisdom is better than rubies or any other treasure the world may offer (Proverbs 8:11).
    - c. *"Better is little, with the fear of Jehovah, than great treasure and trouble therewith"* (Proverbs 15:16).
    - d. Better to eat a dinner of herbs where love and peace is than to eat the steaks of an ox where hatred and strife exists in the home (Proverbs 15:17; 17:1).
  2. We now add to the above list 19:1. It would be better to be poor yet maintain your integrity with your fellow man than to be one whose words cannot be trusted and identified as a fool.
- B. *"Also, that the soul be without knowledge is not good; And he that hastens with his feet sins"* (19:2).
1. Those without knowledge or interest in gaining understanding have been identified as foolish (see Proverbs 10:8; 15:14, 21; 18:2).
  2. When one seeks to pave his own way through life rather than seeking God's ways his feet hastens to sin. He is seeking a shortcut in this life (see Proverbs 18:12). This is the simple man who wants everything for nothing (see study # 5). He wants to take the easiest way of life yet his desire is that which the hard working man of wisdom has (Proverbs 14:6).
- C. *"The foolishness of man subverts his way; And his heart frets against Jehovah"* (19:3).
1. The ESV reads, *"When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the LORD."*
  2. Solomon has revealed that it is foolish folly to attempt to direct your own spiritual steps in this life (see Proverbs 14:12, 16:2, 25 and also Jeremiah 10:23) (see study # 49).
  3. Recall that the decisions of the foolish bring great trouble to this person's life (see Proverbs 13:15). When this man experiences heartaches, poverty, and loss of friends he grows angry with God. It becomes God's fault even though the man did not seek to live as God commands.
- D. *"Wealth adds many friends; But the poor is separated from his friend"* (19:4).
1. Proverbs 14:20 records the same thought.
  2. Here is one of those factual matters of life. People who are poor, no matter how they obtained that status, are not as well loved as those who have riches of this world. The tendency of people is to hate the needy poor neighbor because of his continual needs. Friends are friends not out of a continual helping of each other but out of common interest. Its difficult to be friends with one who is always in need. He brings nothing to the friendship except his need for your help (see study # 54).
- E. *"A false witness shall not be unpunished; And he that utters lies shall not escape"* (19:5).
1. God's view of *"false witnesses"* is not veiled or confusing. God *"hates"* the false witness (Proverbs 6:16-19). He is identified as a deceitful (Proverbs 12:17) liar (Proverbs 14:5; 19:5).

2. Though the false witness may believe he or she has pulled the wool over someone's eyes the truth of the matter is they will not escape the punishing wrath of the all seeing and knowing Jehovah God (see study # 61; False Witnesses).
  3. Proverbs 19 brings out an interesting fact. The natural course for the wrong doer is punishment. If that natural course is not followed then God's purpose becomes frustrated at the hands of tolerant man (see study # 63; Punishment; A Natural Course that Must be Followed).
- F. *"Many will entreat the favor of the liberal man; And every man is a friend to him that gives gifts. All the brethren of the poor do hate him: How much more do his friends go far from him! He pursues them with words, but they are gone"* (19:6-7).
1. Solomon had previously wrote, *"The poor is hated even of his own neighbor; But the rich hath many friends. He that despises his neighbor sins; But he that hath pity on the poor, happy is he"* (14:20-21). Here at chapter 19 we have a similar verse. Money can certainly buy friends; however, what type of friend is it that is there only because of what he can get from you?
  2. Those who are poor have little friends and those they do have try to avoid them lest they be asked to help in some way.
- G. *"He that gets wisdom loves his own soul: He that keeps understanding shall find good"* (19:8).
1. The soul of man has been considered throughout the book of Proverbs (see study # 51). Solomon effectively paints a picture within our minds of the soul, its value, and our responsibility to take care of it:
    - a. Wisdom and knowledge are pleasant to the soul (Proverbs 2:9-11).
    - b. Those who are wise and use discretion bring life unto their souls (Proverbs 3:21-22).
    - c. The man void of understanding commits adultery and destroys his own soul (Proverbs 6:30-32).
    - d. Those who are merciful do good to their soul (Proverbs 11:16-17).
    - e. Those who speak truth do good to their soul (Proverbs 14:25).
    - f. Those that depart from evil preserve their soul (Proverbs 16:17).
    - g. Those who obtain wisdom bring sweetness and health to their soul (Proverbs 16:23-24).
    - h. Those who sin against God's standards wrong their soul (Proverbs 8:35-36).
    - i. Those who refuse correction despise their own soul (Proverbs 15:31-32).
    - j. Foolish words spoken will destroy the soul (Proverbs 18:6-8).
    - k. Having no knowledge of God's standards is not good for the soul (Proverbs 19:2).
    - l. Now, we find that getting wisdom is a sign that one *"loves his own soul"* (Proverbs 19:8).
    - m. At Proverbs 19:16 Solomon tells us that he who keeps God's commands keeps his own soul.
    - n. Later we read that the man who partners up with a thief hates his own soul (Proverbs 29:24).
  2. The soul of man will go on for all eternity. Those who do evil bring God's condemning judgment upon themselves and thereby wrong their souls. Those; however, who get wisdom truly love their souls and shall find good. The soul can be compared to the human body. Some are very hard on their bodies. Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco are certainly detrimental to the physical body. Likewise, man can be hard on his soul by choosing a life of sin (see study # 64; What's Wrong with Smoking, Drinking, and Drugs?). Sin, is like a cancerous disease to the soul that will eventually kill it if one does not change their ways.
- H. *"A false witness shall not be unpunished; And he that utters lies shall perish"* (19:9).
1. See comments at Proverbs 19:5 (same verse).
  2. A false witness certainly despises his soul too.
- I. *"Delicate living is not seemly for a fool; Much less for a servant to have rule over princes"* (19:10).
1. The ESV reads, *"It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, much less for a slave to rule over princes."*
  2. We have seen similar statements throughout this study. Solomon's point is that it goes against the natural course of life for a fool to live in luxury and a servant to rule princes. Fools will not work to receive luxurious things and the servant has no place ruling princes.
  3. Consider these natural things from Proverbs (see study # 20):
    - a. It is the natural order of things that man gain understanding and knowledge (Proverbs 8:9).
    - b. It is the natural order of things that a beautiful woman have discretion (Proverbs 11:22).

- c. It is natural for kings to rule with justice and equity (Proverbs 8:15; 16:10).
  - d. It is the natural course of life that a gray headed man be righteous (Proverbs 16:31).
  - e. It is the natural course of life for a man to have children and those children have their own children (Proverbs 17:6).
  - f. It goes against nature for the wicked to be justified and the righteous condemned (Proverbs 17:15) and punished for their good deeds (Proverbs 17:26).
  - g. It would go against the natural order for man to take a wife that was not good and thereby miss out on the favor of Jehovah (Proverbs 18:22) (look at closer)
  - h. It goes against the natural order of things for those who are due punishment to be spared the chastening rod (see Proverbs 19:5)
  - i. Now Solomon writes that it goes against nature for the fool to have luxury and the servant to rule princes (Proverbs 19:10).
- J.** *"The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger; And it is his glory to pass over a transgression"* (19:11).
- 1. The Lord has created man with a temper. Those who do not control their temper are identified as the wicked (Proverbs 18:3). Controlling one's temper and using it correctly is the key to defending one's self from the vices of Satan (see Proverbs 16:32).
  - 2. Solomon has instructed us on the value of controlling one's anger (see study # 45):
    - a. A soft answer will soothe anger in others (Proverbs 15:1-2).
    - b. The wise will seek to appease other men's anger rather than fan the flame (Proverbs 15:18).
    - c. Now we find that the key to controlling anger is "*discretion*" (good judgment, diplomacy, maturity, and caution).
- K.** *"The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; But his favor is as dew upon the grass"* (19:12).
- 1. Proverbs reveals the king's reign to naturally be that of wisdom and righteousness (Proverbs 8:15; 16:10-11). The proper conclusion is that the "*king's wrath*" under consideration is his anger directed at those who cause shame (Proverbs 14:35).
  - 2. A king's favor will thereby naturally fall upon those who deal wisely (Proverbs 14:35) and righteously (Proverbs 16:10-15). As the dew refreshes the grass even so the wise and righteous are refreshed by the king (see study # 40).
- L.** *"A foolish son is the calamity of his father; And the contention of a wife are a continual dropping"* (19:13).
- 1. Consider the word "*calamity*" (disaster, tragedy, catastrophic) in relation to the father and son. The son of "*calamity*" is a fool who brings disastrous tragedy to his parents life. He brings sorrow (Proverbs 1:8; 4:13; 6:20; 10:1, 8, 17; 12:15; 13:24; 17:1) and shame (Proverbs 17:2). The wise son; however, brings great joy to a man's life (Proverbs 10:1; 15:20) (see study # 27).
  - 2. We had earlier found that a good wife is a blessing or favor of Jehovah (see Proverbs 18:22). She is defined as "good" because she is a "*crown to her husband*" (Proverbs 12:4), gracious (Proverbs 11:16) and uses discretion (Proverbs 11:22). Such a woman will not be found arguing, debating, and disagreeing continually with her husband. The wife who would be argumentative is indeed "*a continual dropping*." Like a leaky faucet that drips and drives a man mad so is the wife who cannot let issues die or is willing to forgive and forget or is just plain argumentative. She is a continual "*rottenness to his bones*" (Proverbs 12:4). Such verses place responsibility upon the Godly woman. Those who would want to be depicted as a Godly woman will not harass her husband with continued disagreements, arguments, and debating with her husband. Such attitude will do nothing but tear down the home (Proverbs 14:1) (see study # 36).
  - 3. This verse depicts a home where no peace is. The man's son has brought shame to his home by his unlawful attitude and deeds and his wife continuously argues with him. Such an environment is not healthy (see study # 27 # 55).
- M.** *"House and riches are an inheritance from fathers; But a prudent wife is from Jehovah"* (19:14).
- 1. There are things a son or daughter can expect to receive from their fathers when they pass from this earth. The inheritance of houses and riches are given by the father to his children. Earlier, Solomon wrote, "*A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children...*" through his diligent work ethic (Proverbs 13:22).

2. Note that the riches of this world; however, do not compare to the reception of a "*prudent wife from Jehovah.*" The "*prudent*" are the wise. Solomon wrote, "*The wise in heart shall be called prudent*" (Proverbs 16:21). The godly woman of discretion and prudence is a crown to the man (she brings no shame to him through arguing with him in conflicts) (see study # 36). The "*favor of Jehovah*" (Proverbs 18:22) is the **prudent and discrete wife** (Proverbs 19:14).
- N. "*Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep; And the idle soul shall suffer hunger*" (19:15).
1. The sluggard who will not work but rather rolls on his bed like a door on its hinges will pass the time of day in deep sleep (see Proverbs 6:6-11).
  2. Such a waist of one's time and life brings nothing but hunger. Solomon earlier wrote, "*The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat*" (13:4) (see study # 5).
- O. "*He that keeps the commandment keeps his soul; But he that is careless of his ways shall die*" (19:16).
1. Adding to the list we made above regarding one's attitude toward his own soul we find "*keeping the commandments*" is to "*keep the soul*" (see comments at Proverbs 19:8)
  2. Those who carelessly direct their own paths in life through pride can expect nothing but spiritual and eternal death (see study # 49 and # 62; No excuses at the day of Judgment).
- P. "*He that hath pity upon the poor lends unto Jehovah, And his good deed will he pay him again*" (19:17).
1. Interestingly Jesus said that the just and righteous will inherit the kingdom of God partly because they were mindful of the needs of the poor and were thereby mindful of Jesus' laws (see Matthew 25:31-40).
  2. We have already seen God's special love and concern for the poor in this study. Those who treat the poor with oppression or mockery actually reproach God (see Proverbs 14:31; 17:5). Those who have pity for the poor will be happy (Proverbs 14:20-21).
  3. Solomon now tells us that those who help with the needs of the poor will be repaid with a reward (see Matthew 25:44) (see study # 58).
- Q. "*Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; And set not thy heart on his destruction*" (19:18).
1. The foolish son who brings catastrophic anguish and sorrow to the home is not to be given up on (see Proverbs 19:13). A father who refuses to chasten a foolish and shameful child gives up all hope on restoring that child and brings about his destruction (see study # 63).
  2. If the father chastens through rod and instruction his child yet the child is determined to be wicked then the father cannot possibly answer for that child in the end of times. Ezekiel wrote, "*The soul that sins it shall die*" (Ezekiel 18:4 see Ezekiel 3:18-19 with Ezekiel chapter 18 all) (see study # 47).
- R. "*A man of great wrath shall bear the penalty; For if thou deliver him, thou must do it yet again*" (19:19).
1. The wicked are men of anger and wrath (Proverbs 18:3). Such conduct is due a "*penalty.*"
  2. As it would not be wise to co-sign for another's loan it would equally be unwise to "*deliver*" the angry man from his penalty (see Proverbs 17:18). To do so would not be really helping him because he will find himself right back where he started; i.e., letting his anger get the better of himself (see study # 45 and # 63).
- S. "*Hear counsel, and receive instruction, That thou may be wise in thy latter end*" (19:20).
1. The wise, throughout the study of Proverbs, are depicted as having a willing spirit to "*receive instruction*" rather than rejecting it.
  2. Those who give heed to this advise will be wise in "*thy latter end.*" There is no better time than the here and now to "*receive instruction.*"
- T. "*There are many devices in a man's heart; But the counsel of Jehovah, that shall stand*" (19:21).
1. The "*devices*" in a man's heart are the various direction his opinions and self drawn conclusions can bring him.
  2. Though a man reason a matter to be right when it is truly wrong God's standard shall "*stand*" immovable (see 2 Timothy 2:19) (see study # 49).
- U. "*That which makes a man to be desired is his kindness; And a poor man is better than a liar*" (19:22).
1. Those who are kind shall be desired over those who are callous and mean spirited.
  2. Even the poor ought to be desired over the unkind liar.

- V. *"The fear of Jehovah tends to life; And he that hath it shall abide satisfied; He shall not be visited with evil"* (19:23).
1. The fear of Jehovah has been precisely identified in Proverbs (see study # 22):
    - a. Fearing God means to hate evil (Proverbs 8:13).
    - b. Fearing God means departing from evil (Proverbs 3:7).
    - c. Fearing God is what wisdom instructs one to do (Proverbs 15:33).
  2. To hate evil and depart from it, as wisdom teaches, bring life and satisfaction. Those who do so will keep themselves from evil or hard times (see study # 56).
- W. *"The sluggard buries his hand in the dish, And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again"* (19:24).
1. Again, the sluggard's lazy disposition is examined.
  2. Here is one so lazy that he will not even bring a fork of food to his mouth (see study # 5).
- X. *"Smite a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence; And reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge"* (19:25).
1. The simple, as you recall, is the person who wants everything for nothing. He wants shortcuts through life that he may have with little effort (see Proverbs 1:22).
  2. It is apparent that the simple and foolish can change their ways. Solomon wrote, *"O ye simple, understand prudence; And, ye fools, be of an understanding heart"* (Proverbs 8:5 see also 1:4; 9:6; **21:11**).
  3. The positive side of punishment is that the simple scoffer *"will learn prudence"* and the wise will grow wiser (such is the natural course of smiting and reproofing one) (see study # 20 and # 47 and # 63).
- Y. *"He that doeth violence to his father, and chases away his mother, Is a son that causes shame and brings reproach. Cease, my son, to hear instruction only to err from the words of knowledge"* (19:26-27).
1. This verse helps us understand that the father and mother who seek to instruct their son or chasten their son may face his wrath (violence or chasing them away / "I don't want to hear it...").
  2. Such behavior is to bring shame and reproach to one's life (see study # 20 and # 47).
- Z. *"A worthless witness mocks at justice; And the mouth of the wicked swallows iniquity"* (19:28).
1. The false witness who lies has no respect for the justice system (see study # 61).
  2. Such a fool is swallowed up in iniquity.
- AA. *"Judgments are prepared for scoffers, And stripes for the back of fools"* (19:29).
1. The correction measures in place for the scoffers and fools is *"judgments and stripes for the back."*
  2. To do nothing for such individuals is to lose hope and set their souls on destruction. To do nothing is to lose all hope of their learning from their mistakes (see study # 63).

## Chapter 20

### I. Sundry Observations concerning Life and Conduct (20 all):

- A. *"Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; And whosoever errs thereby is not wise"* (20:1).
1. Two Hebrew words are used here for an intoxicating drink. First, *"wine"* or Hebrew *yayin* which can be either the freshly squeezed juice of the grape or fermented intoxicating wine (context determines juice or intoxicant). Secondly the word *"strong drink"* or Hebrew *shekar* is a term used for the intoxicating drink formed of other fruits (pomegranates, dates, etc.). The context of this verse illustrates an intoxicant (alcohol) is under consideration.
  2. Solomon tells us that two things occur when one drinks an intoxicant.
    - a. First, the intoxicant *"is a mocker."* When one mocks at another they are ridiculing or making fun of another. There are two previous verses that use the same Hebrew word for *"mocker"* as used here. First, at Proverbs 14:9 we find the mocker who ridicules the Lord's commanded sacrifices (he does not see the seriousness of the occasion). Such a man is termed a *"fool."* Secondly, at Proverbs 19:28 we find the one who mocks or ridicules the characteristic of justice. Such a one is termed a *"worthless witness"* and is associated with the *"wicked."* The

- issue under consideration is seriousness of mind. Wine makes man silly and unresponsive to serious discussion.
- b. Secondly, the intoxicant is a "*brawler*" (causes one to be in a rage or stirred up). Interestingly, at Proverbs 16:32 Solomon writes, "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; And he that rules his spirit, than he that takes a city.*" Once again, it is the fool who loses control of himself (see Ecclesiastes 7:9; Proverbs 14:7).
3. The Bible in Basic English (BBE) reads, "*Wine makes men foolish, and strong drink makes men come to blows; and whoever comes into error through these is not wise.*" When one drinks an intoxicant they are moved to foolish acts that subject themselves to ridicule and they lose control of themselves to anger. Men may act foolish and grow angry to the point of losing control of themselves without an intoxicant. Solomon; however, is telling us that the intoxicant will accentuate such behavior in that it will cause men to do things that they would not otherwise do in a sober state. If one, thereby, drinks an intoxicant they are dropping their guard and are identified as "*coming to error and not being wise*" (see study # 65; Drinking Intoxicants - Wine).
- B. "*The terror of a king is as the roaring of a lion: He that provokes him to anger sins against his own life*" (20:2).
1. A similar verse is found at Proverbs 19:12, "*The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favor is as dew upon the grass.*"
  2. The king's natural rule is that of justice (see Proverbs 8:15; 16:10-11). He naturally favors those who follow civil law and condemns the wicked (Proverbs 14:35; 19:12). To err against the king's laws is to "*sin against one's own life.*" Punishment is due the transgressor and thereby those who are lawbreakers do not consider the value of their lives. To spend time in jail for wrong doing or to be put to death for a crime is an indicator that the criminal had no respect for his own life much less the life of others he affects through his lawless acts (see study # 40).
- C. "*It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife; But every fool will be quarrelling*" (20:3).
1. We have noticed in the book of Proverbs that it is the fool who seems to live for trouble (see Proverbs 13:19). When a cause for quarrelling arises the fool is the first to join in.
  2. The wise man of honor and integrity keeps himself aloof (distant and detached) from strife.
- D. "*The sluggard will not plow by reason of the winter; Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing*" (20:4).
1. What is wrong with this man; i.e., the "*sluggard?*" The book of Proverbs has painted a clear picture of this man with no energy, drive, or concerns (see study # 5):
    - a. He is lazy (Proverbs 19:24).
    - b. He lives in poverty due to his laziness (Proverbs 6:6-11).
    - c. He is so lazy he will not even bring his fork to his mouth to eat (Proverbs 19:24).
    - d. He desires the things that the working man has yet is unwilling to work for it (Proverbs 13:4; 14:6).
    - e. He wants everyone to give him his sustenance (wants things for no work) (Proverbs 18:12).
    - f. He is hungry because he has no money to buy food (Proverbs 12:29; 19:15).
    - g. He has no money because he will not work (Proverbs 18:9).
    - h. The sluggard thereby chooses a life of trouble (Proverbs 15:19).
  2. At a time when all right thinking men are working and planning for a future harvest the sluggard is found sleeping rather than plowing. When the harvest time comes he has nothing and thereby begs for food.
- E. "*Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; But a man of understanding will draw it out*" (20:5).
1. Solomon had earlier written, "*The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters; The wellspring of wisdom is as a flowing brook*" (Proverbs 18:4).
  2. Deep and refreshing waters benefit the man of an understanding heart because he is willing to draw from these deep wells. Here is one who recognizes the value of wisdom.
- F. "*Most men will proclaim every one his own kindness; But a faithful man who can find?*" (20:6).
1. The "God's Word Translation" reads, "*Many people declare themselves loyal, but who can find someone who is really trustworthy?*" Solomon's point is that a good man is hard to find. He had written in Ecclesiastes 7:27-28, "*Behold, this have I found, saith the Preacher, laying one thing to*



- another, to find out the account; which my soul still seeks, but I have not found: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.*" A wise, godly, trustworthy man is hard to find. While we speak of the rarity of the "worthy woman" do we not also see that a worthy man of integrity is equally rare? (see study # 66)
2. Many men proclaim their love and faith but rare is it to find a man of true love and faith.
- G. *"A righteous man that walks in his integrity, Blessed are his children after him"* (20:7).
1. The man of integrity is the man who exercises "Rigid adherence to a code or standard of values; probity (honesty)" (AHD 667). Solomon identifies him as "*righteous*" (Proverbs 20:7) and "*wise*" (Proverbs 2:6-8) (see study # 66).
  2. How would the children of a man of integrity be "*blessed*?" They are blessed with food to eat because the wise man works hard. They will be blessed with property and inheritance because the wise man works hard. They will most importantly be blessed with an eternal life because the wise man instructs his children. They too shall live the wonderful life.
- H. *"A king that sits on the throne of judgment Scatters away all evil with his eyes"* (20:8).
1. While some men use their eyes to wink at others in some scheme or have eyes of perversion it is not so with the king.
  2. The piercing eyes of justice looks upon all men without fear or favor. Justice is his objective and all who do otherwise are to fear (see study # 40).
- I. *"Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"* (20:9).
1. Again, the thought is parallel to that of Proverbs 20:6 (i.e., there are few men who live right, justly, and with their integrity) (see study # 66 and # 67; Humility).
  2. Jesus said, *"Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leads unto life, and few are they that find it"* (Matthew 7:13-14).
- J. *"Diverse weights, and diverse measures, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah"* (20:10).
1. **The theme of Proverbs 20 appears to be man's integrity.** Many are swayed to do acts of unrighteousness but few hold to justice, truth, and godliness.
  2. Solomon has exposed the many to be drunkards, civil law breaker, brawler, sluggard, and now cheater of men through "*diverse weights*" (false balance). Such wicked men live contradictory lives to the honor, integrity, wisdom, and humble man who clears himself of all sin. The wicked are an abomination to God; however, the wise are beloved and blessed.
- K. *"Even a child makes himself known by his doings, Whether his work be pure, and whether it be right"* (20:11).
1. Children can show signs of honor, integrity, wisdom, and humility at an early age.
  2. The child that presents himself in integrity or wickedness will be made manifest to all who watch him or her.
  3. Far too often parents are more ready to defend their child's bad behavior rather than helping them see that his or her actions and words are making manifest a good or wicked heart early on (see study # 47).
- L. *"The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, Jehovah hath made even both of them. Love not sleep, let thou come to poverty; Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread"* (20:12-13).
1. Though not many men walk in the integrity of God's ways all are nonetheless without excuse (Proverbs 20:6-7). God has created man with ears to hear and eyes to see (i.e., to hear and see their divine duty). The nature of man and God's creation thereby leaves all without excuse before Jehovah (see Romans 1:20) (see study # 20).
  2. The sluggard is thereby admonished to get out of his bed, open his eyes to responsibility to work, and the consequences would be that he is satisfied with bread. The sluggard who continues to sleep closes his eyes to his responsibility and thereby comes to poverty (see study # 5).
- M. *"It is bad, it is bad, saith the buyer; But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth"* (20:14).
1. Here is one shopping and he calls attention to the merchant regarding the low value of that which is being sold. The objective of this cheapskate is to purchase the commodity for less than the asking price. The buyer desires the merchandise; however, he does not want to pay the asking price. Such a one will find some defect or perceived problem with the item so that he can get the price down.

- Once he has successfully negotiated the price down he purchases the item and then boast to his friends about the smaller price he paid.
2. That which moves one to do such a thing is greed. Nothing is wrong with the merchandise he just wants it at a lesser price. Why not pay the asking price knowing that the merchant is also trying to make a living?
- N. *"There is gold, and abundance of rubies; But the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel"* (20:15).
1. A reoccurring theme of Proverbs is the value of wisdom (see Proverbs 3:13-14; 8:18-19; 10:20; 16:8, 16, 19) (see study # 21).
  2. The superiority of gaining wisdom over earthly treasures is that one day you will die and carry no treasures from this earth with you. Wisdom; however, will benefit one on into eternity. If only mankind would see this great truth. We have the greatest treasure in God's word at our disposal (see 2 Corinthians 4:7).
- O. *"Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; And hold him in pledge that is surety for foreigners"* (20:16).
1. Solomon has explained that it is not wise to offer surety (or co-sign on a loan) for a stranger lest he neglect his duties and you are stuck with the bill (see Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15). The man or woman who would offer surety to his neighbor or stranger is *"void of understanding"* (Proverbs 17:18).
  2. It may be that the wise find themselves in a position to receive a surety on behalf of a neighbor or stranger from one *"void of understanding."* Solomon's advise is that if one is foolish enough to do this accept it yet not without immediate collateral (i.e., the man's garment). Obviously in this day and time one's garments were worth much to the individual. These people did not have the wardrobes that most of us have today.
- P. *"Bread of falsehood is sweet to a man; But afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel"* (20:17).
1. The *"bread of falsehood"* is the bread obtained without honest labor. Here is the simple man who desires everything for nothing and actually succeeds in getting it by means of deceit or false dealings (i.e., the faulty scale, gambling, or cheating someone out of their property). While his immediate success may seem sweet his end *"shall be a mouth filled with gravel"* (see study # 5 and # 46).
  2. The old saying, "You can fool some of the people some of the time but not all the people all the time" finally catches up to you. People eventually will catch on to one's deceptive ways and then the sweet bread is cut off. There is nothing left to such a man but "gravel in the mouth." Such a one's integrity is ruined and no one will trust him.
- Q. *"Every purpose is established by counsel; And by wise guidance make thou war"* (20:18).
1. Every serious event in life takes careful planning and forethought.
  2. Going to war is indeed a disastrous event; however, if it must occur every purpose must be carefully thought out. Wise counsel and guidance should be used when going to war. Every angle of danger must be consider to prevent the possibility of defeat.
- R. *"He that goes about as a tale-bearer reveals secrets; Therefore company not with him that opens wide his lips"* (20:19).
1. A tale-bearer is one who gossips about others. One who enjoys telling others about people's private life matters (may be true or false). The point being he gives information to others about others that should not be told.
  2. Solomon's advise equal's God's will. Do not company with such people (see study # 2, # 28; and # 59). Those who befriend gossips will not only have their own personal lives exposed but they are in danger of becoming that which is a loathed characteristic among men.
- S. *"Whoso curses his father or his mother, His lamp shall be put out in blackness of darkness"* (20:20).
1. The Mosaic Law condemns such a one to death (see Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9).
  2. Solomon had earlier said, *"He that doeth violence to his father, and chases away his mother, Is a son that causes shame and brings reproach. Cease, my son, to hear instruction only to err from the words of knowledge"* (19:26-27). The child that would curse his father or mother does damages to his eternal soul.
- T. *"An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; But the end thereof shall not be blessed"* (20:21).

1. It may be that the "*violence*" a son or daughter does to their parents is to asks for their inheritance before it is their time to receive it (i.e., the parents are still alive).
  2. What violence is this? It may be that the parents give their child his inheritance early and the parents go on to live much longer. While they live they have no money to live on because they gave it to their child. Now the parent finds themselves having to get help from others (reverse mortgages etc.).
- U. "*Say not thou, I will recompense evil: Wait for Jehovah, and he will save thee*" (20:22).
1. Man's immediate response to being wronged is to lash out in revenge. Solomon, by divine inspiration, instructs the wise to wait and let the Lord recompense one's evil acts.
  2. The NT reveals vengeance to belong to Jehovah (Romans 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 10:30). The wicked will not escape (see study # 68; Revenge).
- V. "*Diverse weights are an abomination to Jehovah; And a false balance is not good*" (20:23).
1. Solomon has said the exact phrase at Proverbs 20:10.
  2. Again, man's integrity is under consideration.
- W. "*A man's goings are of Jehovah; How then can man understand his way?*" (20:24).
1. Jeremiah had said, "*it is not in a man to direct his own steps*" (10:23). The wise man will be directed by the ways of Jehovah (see Proverbs 2:6-11).
  2. The fool; however, works hard at directing his own way through life (see Proverbs 3:5-6; 12:15; 14:12; 16:2, 9, 25; 19:21) (see study # 49 and # 52).
- X. "*It is a snare to a man rashly to say, It is holy, And after vows to make inquiry*" (2:25).
1. There are matters that take careful thought and consideration before participating in. Often times man is governed by his own desires rather than God's divine guidance.
  2. To rashly say that an event is "holy" i.e., permissible, participate in it, and then inquire as to whether or not the event was truly holy is "*a snare to a man.*" The time to figure out whether something is ok to participate in it is before the event takes place.
- Y. "*A wise king winnows the wicked, And brings the threshing -wheel over them*" (20:26).
1. The wise king is one who rules with justice and equity (see Proverbs 8:15; 14:34-35; 16:10; 17:7; and 19:12).
  2. The wise king holds the power of punishment over the lawless or wicked (see study # 40).
- Z. "*The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, Searching all his innermost parts*" (20:27).
1. This is somewhat of a fascinating verse that takes into consideration man's inner conscience as it has been directionally trained by divine revelation.
  2. The verse states a fact. That fact being that man's inner spirit (i.e., that which guides him through this life) is the "*lamp of Jehovah.*" The "*lamp of Jehovah*" is obviously divine revelation that guides man through life (see 2 Chronicles 21:7). The "*lamp of Jehovah*" and man's "*spirit*" are so interconnected that they are viewed as equal. Solomon writes, "*The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah.*" Such is as God would have it. Man's spirit is one with God and thereby it searches the innermost parts of his own mind to correct and perfect all areas of life (see study # 35). Peter refers to this as attaining unto the "*divine nature*" (see 2 Peter 1:4).
- AA. "*Kindness and truth preserve the king; And his throne is uphold by kindness*" (20:28).
1. The king that rules with justice and equity shall be preserved. Note that kindness is another responsibility of the king (see study # 40).
  2. Every politician and government leader ought to be required to read and study Proverbs before taking an office. God has ordained civil authority and He has expectations of that ordained office.
- BB. "*The glory of young men is their strength; And the beauty of old men is the hoary head*" (20:29).
1. A young man's virtue is physical strength.
  2. Older men lack the physical strength of the young yet make up for it in wisdom (i.e., the hoary head) (see Proverbs 16:31). Again, here is an absolute statement. The beauty of an old man ought to be (i.e., his natural state of being) the hoary head of wisdom yet not all men take that rout in life. There are some very foolish older men in this world (see study # 54).
- CC. "*Stripes that wound cleanse away evil; And strokes reach the innermost parts*" (20:30).

1. Punishment has its designed work of improving one's character and actions (see Proverbs 19:18, 25). To take away said punishment due to tolerance is to take away the guilty person's opportunity to improve himself (see Proverbs 19:29) (see study # 63).
2. When church discipline is not administered the wicked go on in their sin. When the criminal is not punished he goes on with his unjust ways. Those who do not feel the sting of guilt and shame will continue in their guilt and shame.

## Chapter 21

### I. Sundry Observations concerning Life and Conduct (21 all):

- A. "*The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the watercourses: He turns it whithersoever he will*" (21:1).
  1. Though it may have appeared that Pharaoh of Egypt was in control of the world God showed His own great power through this despotic ruler. The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart against His commandments and thereby turned it as he turns rivers and streams. God is in control.
  2. God providentially acts throughout the lives of kings to accomplish his will. God turned the heart of Tiglath Pileser of Assyria and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and again, illustrated His great control over kings and nations (see study # 40).
- B. "*Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; But Jehovah weighs the hearts*" (21:2).
  1. The "way" a man takes appears to be a thematic part of chapter 21.
  2. This exact admonition is given at Proverbs 16:2. Solomon has also wrote, "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that is wise hearkens unto counsel*" (Proverbs 12:15). Again, he writes, "*There is a way which seems right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Proverbs 14:12).
  3. The fool, unfortunately, measures his self by his own standards (i.e., his opinions, personal conscience, and convictions) (see also Proverbs 3:7-8). The true measure of right and wrong belongs to the scales of Jehovah's standard (see study # 49 and # 52).
- C. "*To do righteousness and justice Is more acceptable to Jehovah than sacrifice*" (21:3).
  1. Samuel had once asked Saul, "*Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah?*" Saul was commanded to kill all Amalekite men, women, and animals due to their sin against Israel when they came up out of Egypt. Saul disobeyed God by saving the Amalakite animals under the guise of using them for future sacrifices. Samuel exposed the king's error. This same question or thought is portrayed in many other context within the word of God (see Hos. 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Matt. 9:12-13).
  2. The Lord has always desired obedience over ritualistic sacrifices (cf. Joel 2:12-13; Matt. 22:37-40; 23:23-24). When one is not doing spiritual service out of fear, reverence, and respect for the laws of God then it is rejected of the Lord. Such service looks more to please self than God (cf. Amos 4:4-5).
  3. Christians today are to be doers of the word of God rather than hearers and talkers (see James 2:18ff).
- D. "*A high look, and a proud heart, Even the lamp of the wicked, is sin*" (21:4).
  1. Young's Literal Translation reads, "*Loftiness of eyes, and breadth of heart, Tillage of the wicked [is] sin.*" The work or tillage of the proud and arrogant is sinful when measured or weighted against the standard of truth (see study # 31).
  2. The spirit of pride is denounced as an abominable character trait (see Proverbs 15:25; 16:5, 18).
- E. "*The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; But every one that is hasty hastens only to want. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue Is a vapor driven to and fro by them that seek death*" (21:5-6).
  1. The English Standard Version reads, "*The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.*" Those who have well thought out plans and then work hard to achieve their business goals will find profit and plenty. Those who jump hastily into something thinking they are going to get great gain without researching out their decisions come to

- poverty. Again, it is the sluggard who wants something for nothing. Here is one of their characteristics (see study # 5).
2. Again, it is the sluggard who will lie, cheat, and steal to get the maximum amount of profit yet such efforts will end in death (see also Proverbs 20:17).
  3. A radio host was asked the question, "Why is it that only those who are lower class in wage earnings suffering most from the current housing crunch." The host answered, "Its because those who make more money are more educated and more likely to research out big purchases before they go throwing their money into things that possibly wont work."
- F. *"The violence of the wicked shall sweep them away, Because they refuse to do justice"* (21:7).
1. Recall that it is within the King's ordained power to administer punishment to those who lack justice in their lives (Proverbs 20:26). Solomon wrote, *"The terror of a king is as the roaring of a lion: He that provoks him to anger sins against his own life"* (Proverbs 20:2).
  2. To do works against justice is to sin against your own life because the punishing rod belongs to the king and he is against the wicked. The punishment of the wicked is always of their own unjust doing.
- G. *"The way of him that is laden with guilt is exceeding crooked; But as for the pure, his work is right"* (21:8).
1. *"The way"* of man is a favorite topic of Solomon's in this book. We noted at Proverbs 21:2 above that it is Jehovah who weighs the hearts and ways of man and determines whether or not it is right or wrong. The standard of truth is that which a man's ways are measured against.
  2. Naturally, the man *"laden with guilt"* is crooked because his *"way"* is not the way of Jehovah's standard. The pure, on the other hand, are identified as such because their work is *"right"* in relation to the standard of truth. The pure do not share the guilt of wrong doing.
- H. *"It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, Than with a contentious woman in a wide house"* (21:9).
1. Other Bible translations use the words, "quarrelsome, brawling, bitter, and nagging" to depict the woman under consideration. Let us recall that Solomon is painting pictures in our mind in various circles of life. Marriage is a great blessing from God and the man who finds a good wife has been blessed (see Proverbs 18:22). The good wife is defined as "good" because she is a *"crown to her husband"* (Proverbs 12:4), gracious (Proverbs 11:16) and uses discretion (Proverbs 11:22).
  2. The good and worthy woman will not be found arguing, debating, and disagreeing continually with her husband. Such a woman is indeed *"a continual dropping"* as Solomon writes at Proverbs 19:13. Like a leaky faucet that drips and drives a man mad so is the wife who cannot let issues die or is willing to forgive and forget or is just plain argumentative. She is a continual *"rottenness to his bones"* (Proverbs 12:4). Such *"rottenness"* drives a man to corners of the house where peace and quiet may be obtained. Such verses place responsibility upon the Godly woman. Those who would want to be depicted as a Godly woman will not harass her husband with continued disagreements, arguments, and debating with her husband. Such attitude will do nothing but tear down the home (Proverbs 14:1) (see study # 36).
- I. *"The soul of the wicked desires evil: His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes"* (21:10).
1. The wicked man's desires are the ways of unrighteousness and he companies with such wicked men (see Proverbs 12:11-12).
  2. All those who are in the path of this wicked man will have no mercy shown. Not only then should we consider our own way but we should be on the lookout for those who do not walk the way of Jehovah.
- J. *"When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise; And when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge"* (21:11).
1. We have noted that when punishment is withheld from the lawless, wicked, or unruly child its natural God ordained purpose of correction is ruined (see study # 63).
  2. Solomon had earlier said, *"Smite a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence; And reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge"* (Proverbs 19:25 see also 1:4). The scoffer and simple are one and the same as the wicked. The simple, as you recall, is the person who wants everything for nothing. He wants shortcuts through life that he may have with little

- effort (see Proverbs 1:22). It is apparent that the simple, wicked, and foolish can change their ways. Solomon wrote, "*O ye simple, understand prudence; And, ye fools, be of an understanding heart*" (Proverbs 1:4; 8:5 see also 9:6) (see study # 69; No Sin too hard for God to Forgive).
- K.** "*The righteous man considers the house of the wicked, How the wicked are overthrown to their ruin*" (21:12).
1. The wise and righteous man of God takes note of all the heartache and trouble that the wicked man brings to his home due to his lawless ways.
  2. A motivation for living lawfully in this life is found in the home of the wicked (see Proverbs 13:15 and 15:19).
- L.** "*Whoso stops his ears at the cry of the poor, He also shall cry, but shall not be heard*" (21:13).
1. The book of proverbs depicts poverty coming to those who are either too lazy to work (10:4-5; 13:23) or due to some calamity in life (17:5).
  2. Those who show no pity on the poor who have had terrible calamity in their lives are worthy of God's wrath to come (see Proverbs 14:31; 19:17). Those who show no mercy shall receive no mercy (see study # 58).
- M.** "*A gift in secret pacifies anger; And a present in the bosom, strong wrath*" (21:14).
1. Solomon said at Proverbs 19:11 that it is discretion that appeases anger. Here is an example of such a discretionary act to appease or pacify someone's anger.
  2. Sometimes it is good to give a gift to one who has been angry with you. Gifts have a way of bringing peace to a relationship. Another discretionary act to thwart anger is to deliver a "*soft answer*" (Proverbs 15:1).
- N.** "*It is joy to the righteous to do justice; But it is a destruction to the workers of iniquity*" (21:15).
1. The wicked enjoy doing unlawful and wicked things and this is why they find each other (See Proverbs 21:10 above).
  2. Here is a "Gut check." One's dad may tell his young sons to wake up and go mow the grass at the church building or at a shut in's house. While the young men may grumble about the work they go and do it and latter feel glad that they did so. Some; however, grumble before and after and thereby show a heart that is not pure.
- O.** "*The man that wanders out of the way of understanding Shall rest in the assembly of the dead*" (21:16).
1. Once again man's "way" is considered. Some, unfortunately, wander out of the way of understanding or wisdom or righteousness.
  2. Such a person trespasses in an area that God had not ordained. The consequences for such actions is spiritual death.
- P.** "*He that loves pleasure shall be a poor man: He that loves wine and oil shall not be rich*" (21:17).
1. To love pleasure, wine, and oil is to love the party life of want and waist. Here is one who spends his money on that which is not wise.
  2. As long as such a one has such an insatiable appetite to be entertained by pleasure and the costly products of oil and wine they will not gain wealth in this life.
- Q.** "*The wicked is a ransom for the righteous; And the treacherous comes in the stead of the upright*" (21:18).
1. The thought is paralleled at Proverbs 11:8.
  2. Sometimes the wicked suffer due to their guilt and the righteous experience no punishment because of their innocence. Such is as it should be.
- R.** "*It is better to dwell in a desert land, Than with a contentious and fretful woman*" (21:19).
1. Solomon had previously said that it would be better to dwell in the corner of a house than in a room with a contentious woman (see Proverbs 21:9). Two chapters back he said that such a woman is a "*continuous drip*" (Proverbs 19:3).
  2. He goes a step further here saying that it would be better to dwell in the desert than with not just a contentious (argumentative) wife but with a "*fretful*" woman. The word fretful is the idea of being fussy or agitated. Its no fun and there is no peace in the house of a fretful woman (see study # 36). You lady readers ought to catch yourself, when being fussy are agitated, and stop it lest your husband grow weary with you and you drive him into the desert for peace.

3. The book of Proverbs is not unlike other books in the Bible that paint the perfect picture of a man, woman, church, etc. We are all left with the responsibility to try to meet that standard set by God.
- S. *"There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise; But a foolish man swallows it up"* (21:20).
1. The Good News Translation reads, *"Wise people live in wealth and luxury, but stupid people spend their money as fast as they get it."* While I certainly would not recommend the Good News Translation Bible this translation is accurately stated.
  2. As one said, "The wise spares and the fool squanders."
- T. *"He that follows after righteousness and kindness finds life, righteousness, and honor"* (21:21).
1. The idea of *"following after"* is the idea of pursuing. The man or woman who pursues righteousness and kindness finds three things; i.e., life, righteousness, and honor.
  2. Here the righteous, in contrast with the wicked who pursues folly, gets his due reward.
- U. *"A wise man scales the city of the mighty, And brings down the strength of the confidence thereof"* (21:22)
1. The New American Standard Version reads, *"A wise man scales the city of the mighty And brings down the stronghold in which they trust."* The wise man recognizes the weakness of a mighty walled city and is able to bring that which many trusted in down to the ground.
  2. The point seems to be that the wise put their trust and confidence in Jehovah who has no weakness whereas others put their faith in walls and strength.
- V. *"Whoso keeps his mouth and his tongue Keeps his soul from troubles"* (21:23).
1. This verse is very similar to Proverbs 13:3. Once again we note the fact that there are always consequences to our every action (see Proverbs 13:15; 15:19; 16:4; 17:11, 19, 20; 20:4; 21:12) (see study # 25 and # 56).
  2. Those who do not control their tongues and permit gossip, anger, or lies to come out will reap the troubles associated with such actions.
- W. *"The proud and haughty man, scoffer is his name; He works in the arrogance of pride"* (21:24).
1. Solomon now identifies the *"scoffer"* as a man of *"arrogance and pride."* The scoffer is a simple foolish man (see Proverbs 1:22-23). He hates to be corrected (see Proverbs 9:7-8; 13:1, 12) (see study # 70; The Scoffer).
  2. He is often associated with pride because he cannot admit that he needs instruction and due to the error of his ways.
- X. *"The desire of the sluggard kills him; For his hands refuse to labor"* (21:25).
1. The lazy sluggard has many desires (food, drink, luxury, etc.) yet he will not work for anything.
  2. The lack of any work ethic eventually catches up to him and kills him because he spent his time in want rather than in labor to receive (see study # 5).
- Y. *"There is that covets greedily all the day long; But the righteous gives and withholds not"* (21:26).
1. The wicked man thinks only of his own self and reaches after personal desires *"all day long."*
  2. The righteous man; however, works hard and freely gives to those who have worse needs than his own.
- Z. *"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: How much more, when he brings it with a wicked mind!"* (21:27).
1. Proverbs 21:3 is very similar to this verse.
  2. Solomon further explains why righteousness and obedience are characteristics that Jehovah desires more than sacrifices. The wicked bring their weak and sickly animals as a sacrifice. The wicked cares not for the things of Jehovah but rather for the things of this world. How can this man or woman bring such sacrifices to God and expect the potentate creator to be pleased?
- AA. *"A false witness shall perish; But the man that hear shall speak so as to endure"* (21:28).
1. The false witness is one who gives faulty or a lying testimony of others. Such a one is an abomination to Jehovah God (see Proverbs 6). Here is one who is a liar (Proverbs 14:5) and will not go unpunished (Proverbs 19:5).
  2. While the false witness perishes in his lies the righteous will speak words of truth and so he endures.
- BB. *"A wicked man hardens his face; But as for the upright, he establishes his ways"* (21:29).

1. The wicked man hardens his face in that he is defiant and will not listen to any admonition.
  2. The righteous are willing to hear instruction and thereby they are established in their ways.
- CC. *"There is no wisdom nor understanding Nor counsel against Jehovah"* (21:30).
1. Solomon had said at Proverbs 11:21 that no amount of valiant men joined hand in hand could overpower Jehovah or His divine purpose (see study # 71; The Omnipotent God).
  2. Now we see that not only is there no physical power that supersedes Jehovah's but also there is no human wisdom, understanding, or counsel that can be effectively used against Him.
- DD. *"The horse is prepared against the day of battle; But victory is of Jehovah"* (21:31).
1. Recall that David made a similar statement to Goliath (1 Samuel 17:47).
  2. Though nations may have wise men, giants, great weapons, and masses of prepared armies the battle will always belong to Jehovah because He is in control of all things. Let us never fear so long as we are in fellowship with Jehovah (see study # 71).

## Chapter 22

### I. Sundry Precepts and Warnings (22 all):

- A. *"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, And loving favor rather than silver and gold"* (22:1).
1. The theme of chapter 20 was man's integrity and the blessings that come with it. Solomon wrote, *"A righteous man that walks in his integrity, Blessed are his children after him."* The man of integrity is trustworthy, keeps himself from trouble with others, and is honorable. Such qualities in life are to be more desired than great riches. The favor of men that is due to your solid character of faith is of greater value than silver and gold.
  2. The "*name*" Solomon speaks of here is not one's name given at birth but rather one's integrity. When your name comes up in conversation what do people say or think? Solomon had earlier wrote, *"Better is the poor that walks in his integrity Than he that is perverse in his lips and is a fool"* (Proverbs 19:1) (see study # 72; Personal Integrity).
- B. *"The rich and the poor meet together: Jehovah is the maker of them all"* (22:2).
1. While there are things that separate man there are also things that puts us all on a plane of equality (see study # 73; The Equality of All Men).
  2. Some are distinguished from each other because of race, economic standing, and job positions. The great equalizer; however, is that God has created all (whether black or white, rich or poor, supervisor or laborer). Another great equalizer is sin and righteousness (book of Philemon).
- C. *"A prudent man sees the evil, and hides himself; But the simple pass on, and suffer for it"* (22:3).
1. While there are things that put all man on an equal plane before God there are also those things about a man that distinguishes him from others (see study # 74; The Distinct Differences Among Men). The "*prudent man*" and the "*simple*" are now further defined and distinguished from each other (see study # 5 and # 39).
  2. The prudent man is the man who is able to look down the road of an event and make current decisions based upon what he perceives the outcome to be. The simple rush into trouble without thinking of the consequences (see Proverbs 20:25 and 21:5-6).
- D. *"The reward of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches, and honor, and life"* (22:4).
1. Solomon wrote, *"Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"* (Proverbs 20:9). There are not many men and women who are humble enough to admit their errors and cleanse their way from the sin they have committed. Those who do show humility will be blessed with riches, honor, and life. The message of Proverbs has been that good things come to those who do good (see study # 67 and # 56).
  2. The same good blessings come to those who "*fear Jehovah.*" Fearing God has been identified as (see study # 22):
    - a. Beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10).
    - b. Departing from evil (Proverbs 3:7).
    - c. Hating evil and pride (Proverbs 8:13).



- d. He who fears God walks uprightly (Proverbs 14:2).
- E. *"Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse: He that keeps his soul shall be far from them"* (22:5).
  - 1. While the Godly man enjoys life the perverse brings nothing but trouble to his life and home (see Proverbs 11:29-31; 13:13-15; 15:19; 21:23).
  - 2. To *"keep your soul"* indicates a purpose of doing what is right in the sight of God (i.e., fearing Jehovah). Those who do so will keep themselves far from the thorns and snares of the wicked (see study # 59).
- F. *"Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it"* (22:6).
  - 1. Some have referred to such a verse as a "general truth." I would personally call it an "absolute statement." Absolute statements are those verses that lay down a law of God as it relates to His divine will and consequentially an expectation of man's natural way. What we find is that the absolute statements do not always meet their desired end. Solomon depicts Jehovah's perfect and divine will for man; however, it is man himself that fails to meet God's standard.
  - 2. Consider some other absolute statements in Proverbs:
    - a. Solomon speaks of the man with a hoary head representing the upright, honorable, and glorious characteristics of life (see Proverbs 16:31; 20:29). While it would be the right and natural course of men who have lived to an age to be gray headed to be wise this is not always the case. We find older gray headed men doing many foolish things all the time (for other absolute statements see Proverbs 17:13; 18:22; 19:4).
    - b. Another issue of nature is punishment. Solomon wrote, *"Smite a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence; And reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge"* (Proverbs 19:25). The book of Proverbs has illustrated the value of punishment; however, just because one is punished does not mean that they will now be immune from committing the same or similar errors in the future (see Proverbs 19:5, 18, 19). Interestingly, the objective of the book of Proverbs is to teach the simple wisdom; however, such an endeavor is not always successful (see Proverbs 1:4).
  - 3. Consider these natural things from Proverbs (see study # 20):
    - a. It is the natural order of things that man gain understanding and knowledge (Proverbs 8:9).
    - b. It is the natural order of things that a beautiful woman have discretion (Proverbs 11:22).
    - c. It is natural for kings to rule with justice and equity (Proverbs 8:15; 16:10).
    - d. It is the natural course of life that a gray headed man be righteous (Proverbs 16:31).
    - e. It is the natural course of life for a man to have children and those children have their own children (Proverbs 17:6).
    - f. It goes against nature for the wicked to be justified and the righteous condemned (Proverbs 17:15) and punished for their good deeds (Proverbs 17:26).
    - g. It goes against the natural order of things for those who are due punishment to be spared the chastening rod (see Proverbs 19:5).
    - h. It goes against nature for the fool to have luxury and the servant to rule princes (Proverbs 19:10).
    - i. It is the natural course for a son who has erred to be stroked with a rod to drive it far from him (Proverbs 22:15).
    - j. Now, we find that it would go against God's natural order of expectation for a man or woman raised in a God fearing home to turn away from that spiritual teaching (see Proverbs 22:6).
  - 4. It is Jehovah's divine intention and consequentially the natural course of events for the young man or woman that was raised in a Godly home with Godly expectations to hold on to those divine principles all their lives. Unfortunately some choose not to follow divine council even though they were raised properly. Such a one goes against Jehovah's standard and the natural course of this life (see study # 54 and # 20).
  - 5. Consider the fact that if a parent is reproofing a child he or she inferentially has brought them up in the way they should go (see Proverbs 15:5, 31-32). Consider also the fact that if a son is bringing *"shame"* (Proverbs 17:2; 19:26-27), *"sorrow"* (Proverbs 17:21), *"grief"* and *"bitterness"* to his or her parents that this inferentially states that they are raising the child in the way in which he or she

- should go. The parent's hope is that by taking the rod to the child he or she will be changed for the better (Proverbs 19:18). Ultimately, it will be the child's own "*doings*" that determine whether or not they will stand just or unjust before Jehovah (Proverbs 20:11 see also Proverbs 13:1). Unfortunately, many are not men or women of Biblical integrity even though they were taught to be so.
6. There are, as we have seen in this study, few who follow through with their spiritual integrity. Jehovah's divine expectation for all man is to be saved from their sins yet many will reject Him (2 Peter 3:9). Just because it is Jehovah's expectation of man to do right does not mean that all men will be saved. Let us not be simple users of God's word but rather engineers and mathematicians who know the proof of our faith (see Acts 9:22) (see study # 47). The Lord does not hold the parents responsible for the sins of their children and neither does the Lord hold the children responsible for the sins of their parents (see Ezekiel 18:4, 20).
- G. "*The rich rule over the poor; And the borrower is servant to the lender*" (22:7).
1. How is it that the rich rule over the poor? Is it because they are wealthy and demand slaves? No, Solomon is speaking of the condition that people find themselves in due to the decisions they make.
  2. Recall that chapter 21:20 records, "*Wise people live in wealth and luxury, but stupid people spend their money as fast as they get it.*" The natural order of things is that the diligent will gain in this life and the slothful will borrow and serve (see study # 54).
- H. "*He that sows iniquity shall reap calamity; And the rod of his wrath shall fail*" (22:8).
1. Over and over the wise king Solomon pleads with his readers to take note of the natural order of things. Those who practice sin will be rewarded with calamity (i.e., catastrophic misfortune and disaster in their lives) (see passages such as Proverbs 13:15) (see study # 25).
  2. The punishing rod used by the sinful man against those subject to his wrath will end due to his personal calamity.
- I. "*He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; For he gives of his bread to the poor*" (22:9).
1. Let us recall that men find themselves in poverty for one of two reasons. First, one is poor because he is too slothful to work. Secondly, we find those who are poor due to a series of unfortunate events in their lives. Solomon cannot be speaking about the poor who are as they are due to slothfulness (see 2 Thessalonians 3:10 - "*We commanded you, if any will not work, neither let him eat*"). Solomon has said that the sloth will die in his poverty because he is too lazy to work for food (see Proverbs 21:25) (see study # 58).
  2. While we will not give to the poverty stricken sloth we are commanded to care for the poor who have experienced unfortunate events (see Proverbs 19:17; 21:13). Many a sloth know this principle and thereby make up elaborate stories (all have the same ring to them... "I'm trying to get to such and such city and I have run out of gas... I just got a job but I haven't been paid yet... and so on). The Christian is to be wise to the ways of the sluggard!
- J. "*Cast out the scoffer, and contention will go out; Yea, strife and ignominy will cease*" (22:10).
1. Who is the scoffer? Solomon has identified the scoffer as foolish (Proverbs 1:22-23), arrogant (Proverbs 21:24), and one who hates to be corrected (see Proverbs 9:7-8; 13:1, 12) (see study # 70; The Scoffer).
  2. To company with a scoffer is to experience contention. He, through pride and arrogance, will never admit that he has made a mistake or has erred. Cast such a one away from you and strife and shameful conduct will leave with him (see study # 59).
- K. "*He that loved pureness of heart, For the grace of his lips the king will be his friend*" (22:11).
1. Again, such is only true if the king is as he should be (i.e., just, fair, and honorable).
  2. When the king is as he should be in his rule he will greatly appreciate and befriend the pure of heart (see 1 Timothy 1:5).
- L. "*The eyes of Jehovah preserve him that hath knowledge; But he overthrows the words of the treacherous man*" (22:12).
1. Young's Literal Translation reads (also NKJB), "*The eyes of Jehovah have kept knowledge, And He overthrows the words of the treacherous.*"

2. The idea is the same that we have seen at Proverbs 11:21 and 21:30. Neither man's physical strength or human wisdom has the power to altar, change, or affect the consequences of divine revelation (see also Psalms 111:9; Zechariah 1:5-6; Malachi 3:6) (see study # 71).
- M. *"The sluggard saith, There is a lion without: I shall be slain in the streets"* (22:13).
1. Again the lazy sluggard comes under view (see study # 5).
  2. Here is one so lazy he will look to any excuse not to work. He exclaims that he cannot go out of his house to work because there might be a lion in the street to devour him.
- N. *"The mouth of a strange women is a deep pit: He that is abhorred of Jehovah shall fall therein"* (22:14).
1. Remember that which makes a woman "*strange*" is the fact that she does not lawfully belong to you (i.e., you have no right to have sexual relations with her) (Proverbs 2:16-19).
  2. This strange woman's words are as a deep pit of death because she speaks words that entice and excite the lust of other men (see Proverbs 5:3-6; 6:24; 7:5) (see study # 4).
- O. *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him"* (22:15).
1. The natural results of corporal punishment is correction of the erring way (see chapter 19 all).
  2. The fool's identity has been clearly depicted in the pages of Proverbs (see study # 42):
    - a. Due corporal punishment because of his folly (Proverbs 7:22).
    - b. Will not receive commandments or instruction (Proverbs 10:8) and is thereby brutish (Proverbs 12:1).
    - c. Speaks words of slander about others (Proverbs 10:18).
    - d. He is entertained by participating in acts of wickedness (Proverbs 10:23).
    - e. Reasons that his decisions in life are right rather than measuring himself by God's standard (Proverbs 12:15).
    - f. Has no shame while blurting out his stupidity and ignorance (Proverbs 13:6).
    - g. Acts disrespectfully toward God's laws and his fellow man (Proverbs 14:16).
    - h. A foolish woman tears down her own house with acts of folly (Proverbs 14:1).
    - i. The fool, "*despises his father's correction*" (Proverbs 15:5). This person hates to be corrected even by his own father. He is bent on doing what he wants to do and refuses to change his behavior because he believes that he is ok. His conscience is based upon his own reason rather than the word of God and thereby the sting of guilt is taken away.
    - j. The fool has no delight in understanding of spiritual things (Proverbs 18:2).
    - k. The fool loves to argue (Proverbs 18:6).
  3. We have also noted that there are consequences to living the life of a fool (Proverbs 18:6-8) (see study # 25).
  4. A wise and loving parent will certainly not want to see their child face the destructive consequences of a foolish life. Solomon advises, by divine revelation, drive the foolishness out of the child with a rod before its everlasting too late (see also Proverbs 13:24) (see study # 47).
- P. *"He that oppresses the poor to increase his gain, And he that gives to the rich, shall come only to want"* (22:16).
1. Solomon had earlier said, "*Whoso mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; And he that is glad at calamity shall not be unpunished*" (Proverbs 17:5). And again he said, "*Whoso stops his ears at the cry of the poor, He also shall cry, but shall not be heard*" (21:13).
  2. Over and over we find God's tender concern for those who have had unfortunate events that brought poverty upon them in life. Those who have plenty and spare nothing for the poor and even take from the poor while they experience calamity shall eventually come to want themselves (God will see to it) (see study # 58).
- Q. *"Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, And apply thy heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee, If they be established together upon thy lips. That thy trust may be in Jehovah, I have made them known to thee this day, even to thee. Have not I written unto thee excellent things Of counsels and knowledge, To make thee know the certainty of the words of truth, That thou may carry back words of truth to them that send thee?"* (22:17-21).

1. This is the most verses (sentences) that we have grouped together under one point of an outline up to this point of our study. It seems that Solomon is pausing to contemplate and summarize all that he has said by way of beseeching his readers to apply these wise principles to one's life.
  2. Those who would read, understand, and apply the principles of wisdom to their lives shall trust in Jehovah and know the certainty of the words of truth.
  3. With such wisdom we shall be able to return to those who send us (i.e., those who have questions of life and godliness).
- R. *"Rob not the poor, because he is poor; Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: For Jehovah will plead their cause, And despoil of life those that despoil them"* (22:22-23).
1. It is somewhat fascinating that the summation words of the wise king Solomon would begin with "robbing the poor." Throughout history man has been known to take advantage of those who are less fortunate. The poor are depicted as an easy target. The aging man or woman who has little left to live on is taken advantage of. The man who loses his home to a hurricane is further robbed by a lying contractor that flees the town with his money.
  2. Over and over Solomon warns that Jehovah will not deal lightly with those who take advantage, rob, or deal harshly with the poor (see Proverbs 17:5) (see study # 58).
- S. *"Make no friendship with a man that is given to anger; And with a wrathful man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, And get a snare to thy soul"* (22:24-25).
1. The choice of friends is another issue of great importance as is illustrated in these summation statements (see study # 59).
  2. The admonition is to not make friends with angry people *"lest thou learn his ways."* The reason you do not want to make friends with the angry man is that there is a danger of becoming like him.
- T. *"Be thou not one of them that strike hands, Or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast not wherewith to pay, Why should he take away thy bed from under thee?"* (22:26-27).
1. We have studied the concept of *"surety"* many times over in this study (i.e., the idea of cosigning for another on a loan). Solomon has advised the wise not to cosign on a loan for another (i.e., sign an agreement to pay a debt for another if he does not pay) (see Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16) (see study # 75; Surety; i.e., Cosigning for a Loan).
  2. What if the one you cosign for breaks his promise to pay for the loan? You will be left with the bill to pay. When the collector comes he shall take your bed (obviously one's clothes and bed were valued possessions). Again and again the admonition is to not involve yourself in a cosigning event.
- U. *"Remove not the ancient landmark, Which thy fathers have set"* (22:28).
1. Israel was commanded to never move their neighbor's landmark that outlined the boundaries of their property (Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17).
  2. The prophet Hosea would later use the *"landmark"* as an illustration of God's divine revelation that was not designed to be moved by man (see Hosea 5:10). The princes of Judah had trespassed against God's laws as one would move a landmark to take that which does not belong to him.
  3. Solomon reiterates the Deuteronomy law signifying to do such things would be void of understanding in relationship to Jehovah's will. Those who willfully do such things have erred greatly. Such is the characteristic of those who take liberties with the word of God (see study # 49).
- V. *"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; He shall not stand before mean men"* (22:29).
1. The NKJVB reads, *"Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men."*
  2. The message of Proverbs has been that those who work hard and gain a skill will not live in want of anything. Here is one who will stand before the highest of people rather than the obscure unknown men.
  3. The admonition is to be diligent in your work and your training of a skill rather than slothful sleeping the days of your life away. Your workload may seem difficult now but consider the end results. Let the young man and woman learn the lesson now. Work, study, and train hard now and you will soon see the fruit of your labors (see study # 15; # 56; # 66).

## Chapter 23

### I. Sundry Precepts and Warnings (23 all):

- A. *"When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, Consider diligently him that is before thee; And put a knife to thy throat, If thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties; Seeing they are deceitful food"* (23:1-3).
1. The book of Proverbs has identified God's expectation of rulers and kings. God expects these men to rule with the character of justice and fairness (Proverbs 8:15; 14:35; 17:7; 20:8, 26, 28). If ever a man may have expectations of others being fair and just it would be with governing rulers. Unfortunately, man does not always meet God's expectations (see study # 40).
  2. The ruler under consideration here is obviously unjust. To sit and eat with people illustrates a form of friendship, agreement, and peace between two. Never should a man of God compromise his faith to appease even a ruler of the land. If a man is doing wrong he is wrong. No position in government or secular industry should change my stand.
- B. *"Weary not thyself to be rich; Cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings, Like an eagle that flieth toward heaven"* (23:4-5).
1. We have noted in this study that the riches of this world have no value when measured up to wisdom which has eternal value (Proverbs 13:8). We have also noted that the riches of this world have absolutely no power to save one from the wrath of God (Proverbs 11:4). We have noted that riches are nothing for one to put their trust in (Proverbs 18:11). Seeing these facts we ought not to *"weary ourselves to be rich."*
  2. Those who *"set their eyes"* upon the riches of this life will miss out on the true treasures of wisdom and an eternal reward in heaven (see also 1 Timothy 6:9). Riches may bring enjoyment for now yet their duration is limited to earthly things and time tables. Eventually, riches will no longer be (see study # 32).
- C. *"Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, Neither desire thou his dainties: For as he thinks within himself, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; But his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, And lose thy sweet words"* (23:6-8).
1. Those with an *"evil eye"* have set their heart on things opposed to Jehovah God's ways (see Proverbs above and also 6:16ff). This man is what he is. You have noticed his wicked acts. You have experienced his character. Why sit with this man and eat?
  2. The wicked are drawn to each other in schemes and practices. They enjoy each other's company. The righteous have no part with them. If the righteous were to sit with the wicked at his table and be served food let him know that the ungodly do not care for your welfare. Though he may say that he cares for you his perverted actions make manifest otherwise. You do not belong at this table and if you eat his dainties you will live to regret it. The wicked will treat you as though you owed them something or some favor. Do not enter the lives of the wicked and you will be spared the vomiting (see study # 2 and # 59).
- D. *"Speak not in the hearing of a fool; For he will despise the wisdom of thy words"* (23:9).
1. To apply this Proverb one must make a judgment as to who the fool is. The study of Proverbs has identified the fool as:
    - a. One due corporal punishment because of his folly (Proverbs 7:22).
    - b. Will not receive commandments or instruction (Proverbs 10:8) and is thereby brutish (Proverbs 12:1).
    - c. Speaks words of slander about others (Proverbs 10:18).
    - d. He is entertained by participating in acts of wickedness (Proverbs 10:23).
    - e. Reasons that his decisions in life are right rather than measuring himself by God's standard (Proverbs 12:15).
    - f. Has no shame while blurting out his stupidity and ignorance (Proverbs 13:6).
    - g. Acts disrespectfully toward God's laws and his fellow man (Proverbs 14:16).
    - h. A foolish woman tears down her own house with acts of folly (Proverbs 14:1).

- i. The fool, "*despises his father's correction*" (Proverbs 15:5). This person hates to be corrected even by his own father. He is bent on doing what he wants to do and refuses to change his behavior because he stubbornly believes that he is ok. His conscience is based upon his own reason rather than the word of God and thereby the sting of guilt is taken away.
  - j. The fool has no delight in understanding of spiritual things (Proverbs 18:2).
  - k. The fool loves to argue (Proverbs 18:6).
- 2. Solomon's advise is to not even try to speak words of wisdom to one who has proved himself to be a fool. The words of wisdom are only annoying to such a one.
- E. "*Remove not the ancient landmark; And enter not into the fields of the fatherless: For their Redeemer is strong; He will plead their cause against thee*" (23:10-11).
  - 1. Solomon had previously warned of this crime against the Mosaic Law at Proverbs 22:28.
  - 2. To remove a landmark was an act of thievery and trespassing. Those who would do so, especially to the fatherless, will be greatly punished by Jehovah. Here were people who had suffered the unfortunate loss of their father. Those who prey upon the hurting shall themselves be preyed upon by Jehovah.
- F. "*Apply thy heart unto instruction, And thine ears to the words of knowledge*" (23:12).
  - 1. Rather than setting one's heart upon the riches of this world Solomon advises that man "*apply thy heart to instruction.*" Why? What will instruction and knowledge do that riches and the pleasures of this world cannot do?
  - 2. We have seen that all that comes with riches and earthly pleasure do not last. When we are dead we will not take one dollar of pleasure with us. Instruction and knowledge; however, are characteristics that will see us into eternity. My interest in this life, therefore, ought to be in instruction, wisdom, and knowledge. These qualities are greater than the greatest of earthly treasures. Man's heart must be turned from this world to the things of eternal value.
  - 3. One may ask, "How can I obtain greater interest in the word of God?" Another may ask, "How can I help my children obtain a greater interest in spiritual things?" The answer is given. Solomon advises all mankind to "*Apply thy heart to instruction and knowledge.*" My children will gain a greater conviction of the things of God if I teach them the distinction between the value of temporary things and eternal things (see study # 24; # 47; # 76).
- G. "*Withhold not correction from the child; For if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, And shalt deliver his soul from Sheol*" (23:13-14).
  - 1. When a child is corrected from an error he or she shall gain prudence (Proverbs 19:25) and understanding (Proverbs 17:10). Not all children respond favorably to "*correction*" by "*beating with the rod.*" Solomon writes, "*The ear that hearkens to the reproof of life Shall abide among the wise. He that refuses correction despises his own soul; But he that hearkens to reproof gets understanding*" (Proverbs 15:31-32). That does not mean that parents are to do an experiment with their child and if they do not respond to said beating then you try the "time-out" method or other means of correction. Divine revelation calls for beating with the rod to bring the child to his proper senses. Those who give up on beating the child give up on all hope of the child gaining wisdom, prudence, and understanding (see Proverbs 19:18) (see study # 47; # 63).
  - 2. Solomon thereby advises the parents to not give up on correction. Keep punishing a wayward son so that you may "*deliver his soul from Sheol*" (i.e., the place where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched - see Mark 9:44-48 / the eternal abode of the wicked - see Proverbs 15:11-12).
- H. "*My son, if thy heart be wise, My heart will be glad, even mine: Yea, my heart will rejoice, When thy lips speak right things. Let not thy heart envy sinners; But be thou in the fear of Jehovah all the day long: For surely there is a reward; And thy hope shall not be cut off*" (23:15-18).
  - 1. Proverbs 23:15 begins somewhat of an elliptical discussion that examines seven objectives of a child who would be identified as having a "*wise heart.*" The greatest desire of a father and mother is that their children would have a wise heart. The son or daughter that is foolish only brings sorrow, grief, and bitterness to the godly parent who seeks to train up their child in the way they should go (see Proverbs 17:21, 25) (see study # 47).

2. **The instructions vital to a child's eternal soul are seven fold:** **First**, a young man or woman is not to "envy sinners." To be jealous or envious of the perceived fun of the life of a sinner is to have one's mind drift from a spiritual direction to a carnal or fleshly direction.
  3. **Secondly**, Solomon advises that the son be in "*the fear of Jehovah all the day long*." Note that this should be done "*all the day long*" (i.e., all the days of thy life). Those who fear Jehovah will be eternally rewarded. Solomon said, "*The reward of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches, and honor, and life*" (Proverbs 22:4). The book of Proverbs has precisely identified what it means to "*fear Jehovah*:" (see study # 22):
    - a. To fear God is to be wise (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:34).
    - b. Fearing God will define wisdom rather than one being wise in thine own eyes (Proverbs 3:7).
    - d. To fear God means to depart from evil (Proverbs 3:7).
    - e. Fearing God means to hate evil, pride, arrogance, a perverse mouth, and evil ways (Proverbs 8:13).
    - f. To fear God means to walk upright (Proverbs 14:2).
  4. The second vital instruction to a child's eternal welfare is that they "*envy not sinners*." The greatest trouble young people get themselves into is found when they begin to look at the lives of sinners and desire their perceived fun lives.
- I. "*Hear thou, my son, and be wise, And guide thy heart in the way. Be not among winebibbers, Among gluttonous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags*" (23:19-21).
1. A **third** instruction that the young must learn to secure a wise heart is that they "*guide thy heart in the way*." Rather than permitting opinions and personal convictions be one's guide the wise will permit truth to guide their steps in this life. While a father and mother may do all within their power to instill interest, knowledge, understanding, conviction, and obedience in their children it is ultimately up to the child to "*guide THY heart in the way*." The way of the simple, sloth, and foolish often lures a young person into its perilous way.
  2. A **fourth instruction** that a young person must learn is that they are not to befriend winebibbers and gluttonous eaters of flesh. Here is an example of the great importance of understanding the context in which a verse is used. At Matthew 11:19 Jesus exposes the Jews faulty expectation of who the Messiah was to be when they said, "*The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!*" The Jews knew Jesus drank wine; however, the wine Jesus drank was not of the intoxicating variety. Here, the winebibber is the one who drinks alcohol and is drunk.
  3. Solomon's advise to the young are to stay away from those who are given over to these practices because they bring about laziness and poverty.
- J. "*Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, And despise not thy mother when she is old*" (23:22).
1. Recall that at Proverbs 17:21 Solomon wrote, "*He that begets a fool doeth it to his sorrow; And the father of a fool hath no joy*" (17:21). We ask, "Why is there no joy to such a father?" True joy from a father and mother, in relationship to their children, is found when the young people struggle their way to wisdom, understanding, and a convicted spirit in the things of God.
  2. A **fifth** admonition to the young man or woman in relationship to their attaining a wise heart is given. Give a respectful ear to your parents now before the days of foolishness and folly overtake you. Such an event would be catastrophic to a loving parent.
- K. "*Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding*" (23:23).
1. The **sixth** admonition to the young that they may obtain a wise heart is now given. Buy truth and never let it go from thee. The "*truth*" is equated to "*wisdom, instruction, and understanding*" (see study # 39; # 77).
  2. Young people are to be taught the value of "*truth*" (see Proverbs 23:12 above). Solomon has painted a picture of the great value of wisdom as it exceeds the value of all treasures of this earth (see Proverbs 8:18-19; 16:16; 20:15) (see study # 21; # 76). When one sees with clear vision the eternal value of wisdom as opposed to the limited time value of earthly treasures they will do all within their power to buy up all wisdom and never sell it (consider the parable of the kingdom of God being of greater value than earthly treasures at Matthew 13:44-45).

- L. *"The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; And he that begets a wise child will have joy of him. Let thy father and thy mother be glad, And let her that bare thee rejoice"* (23:24-25).
1. When the child of a Godly father and mother gives heed to his parents instruction and obtains wisdom (truth) the end benefit is not only for their own self but the parents as well. Parents hearts are made heavy with sorrow, grief, and bitterness when their child chooses the friends and ways of this world (see once again Proverbs 17:21, 25).
  2. The **seventh** admonition for the young to give heed that they may obtain a wise heart is given. Solomon's words to the young are, *"Let thy father and mother be glad and rejoice."* It is within the power of the young to bring happiness to their parents life by their good and wise choices.
- M. *"My son, give me thy heart; And let thine eyes delight in my ways. For a harlot is a deep ditch; And a foreign woman is a narrow pit. Yea, she lies in wait as a robber, And increases the treacherous among men"* (23:26-28).
1. Wisdom is once again personified as one who is calling and begging the young and simple to grasp hold of her and *"delight in my ways"* (i.e., have interest in me... see the true value I represent... and never let me go) (see Proverbs 1:20ff). The parent with a wise son and daughter will be those who have successfully taught their children the value of wisdom and truth as opposed to the things of this world (see study # 47; # 76).
  2. One example of this is the harlot. While the flesh of a young man may count the ways of a harlot as pleasing wisdom teaches otherwise. Recall that at Proverbs 5:10 that those who go into the harlot will end up lamenting over their erroneous decision as they suffer the consequences. Young men and women are to choose not only their friends carefully but also their life long mate.
- N. *"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; They that go to seek out mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly: At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange things, And thy heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lies down in the midst of the sea, Or as he that lies upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not hurt; They have beaten me, and I felt it not: When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again"* (23:29-35).
1. Recall that Solomon had earlier written, *"Wine makes men foolish, and strong drink makes men come to blows; and whoever comes into error through these is not wise"* (Proverbs 20:1). A few verses earlier in chapter 23 he has said that wine will bring one to poverty due to its intoxicating affects (makes one drowsy and unwilling to work). To this point of our study we find **three reasons not to drink alcohol** (i.e., Wine makes one foolish, a brawler, and poverty stricken). Indeed these three reasons are a *"woe, sorrow, and cause contentions* in one's life." Such a one will only *complain* due to the consequences of foolishness. People often complain about the hardships they bring upon their own selves.
  2. Solomon commands that people not even look at wine much less drink it. Such an approach to alcohol will cause one to avoid the hardships that come with foolish decisions that are actuated by alcohol (see study # 65). This entire study has focused on the horrible consequences of sinful decisions and the pleasant consequences of right and wise decisions. To make proper and wise decisions takes a sober mind that is aware of the awful lures of pleasures that the world dangles before us. To drink alcohol takes that sense of awareness away from man.
  3. The apostle Paul preached on the sin of even partaking of one drink of alcohol for reasons other than medicines. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7, *"So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night"* (5:6-7).
    - a. Paul contrast *"sleep"* and being *"drunk"* with *"watching"* and being *"sober."* To sleep and be drunk is to be oblivious to one's surroundings.
    - b. To be on watch is the complete opposite of sleeping. To be *"sober"* (*nepho*) = "to drink no wine... to be sober, dispassionate" (LS 532). The illustration of the effects of alcohol on an individual is most effective in this context. Alcohol, even when drunk in moderation, causes one's judgment to be effected (Proverbs 31:5; Isaiah 28:7-8), takes away one's understanding



(Hosea 4:11), makes one sick (Hosea 7:5), and causes a loss of mastery over self (Proverbs 20:1). Such a state of mind is dull, uninterested, tolerant, lethargic, apathetic, and generally of little care. The Hebrew Christians were guilty of this and thereby were in jeopardy of losing their souls (cf. Hebrews 5:22; 6:12). A parallel to this passage is found at I Peter 4:3; 5:8.

## Chapter 24

### I. Sundry Precepts and Warnings (24 all):

- A. *"Be not thou envious against evil men; Neither desire to be with them: For their heart studieth oppression, And their lips talk of mischief"* (24:1-2).
1. Proverbs is the book of wisdom. To be wise one must heed its instructions. Solomon has spent a considerable amount of space speaking of the dangers of evil companions. The message is uniform throughout this study. Evil companions will bring trouble to your life (Proverbs 1:10-14; 4:14-15; 13:20; 20:19). This being the case why would the wise be envious of them or desire to be with them? Nothing but oppression and mischief is found with them.
  2. The only reason one would want to be with such people is because you have lost sight of spiritual matters and eternity. Take note that the wicked are not traveling in the same spiritual direction you are and stay clear of them (see study # 2).
- B. *"Through wisdom is a house built; And by understanding it is established; And by knowledge are the chambers filled With all precious and pleasant riches"* (24:3-4).
1. Consider Proverbs 9:1, *"Wisdom hath built her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars:"* Wisdom has been identified by seven consistent articles in the book of Proverbs. The seven are truth, instruction, knowledge, understanding, prudence, discretion, , and the fear of the Lord. The home built upon these pillars will be perfect in every way.
  2. Solomon wrote, *"Every wise woman builds her house; but the foolish plucks it down with her own hands"* (Proverbs 14:1). While the wise woman uses wisdom to build her house with spirituality at the top of all her children's life the foolish woman destroys her house by ignoring the principles of wisdom and bringing great trouble to her home (see Proverbs 11:29; 12:7; 15:27).
  3. It seems that the *"house"* under consideration is the housing of one's mind (see 2 John 9-11).
- C. *"A wise man is strong; Yea, a man of knowledge increases might. For by wise guidance thou shalt make thy war; And in the multitude of counselors there is safety"* (24:5-6).
1. The strength of the wise man is not in his physical stature but by his spiritual approach to life (see Proverbs 21:22).
  2. A similar thought is portrayed at Proverbs 20:18. The point is that every serious event in life takes careful planning and forethought. Going to war is indeed a disastrous event; however, if it must occur every purpose must be carefully thought out. Wise counsel and guidance should be used when going to war. Every angle of danger must be consider to prevent the possibility of defeat.
- D. *"Wisdom is too high for a fool: He opens not his mouth in the gate"* (24:7).
1. The wise are instructed to not envy or desire to be with the wicked (Proverbs 24:1). The wise will establish the house of their mind with understanding and knowledge (Proverbs 24:3). Now we find that such thoughts are just too high for the fool. The fool has been thoroughly identified (consider these attributes of the foolish that apply here):
    - a. He is entertained by participating in acts of wickedness (Proverbs 10:23).
    - b. Reasons that his decisions in life are right rather than measuring himself by God's standard (Proverbs 12:15).
    - c. The fool has no delight in understanding of spiritual things (Proverbs 18:2).
  2. How then is wisdom too high for a fool? Wisdom is too high to attain by the fool in that he views it as something that will take too much work and time to obtain. He does not see the value of wisdom so that he would desire to spend his time and energy obtaining it. Seeing he does not possess wisdom he keeps his mouth shut at the gate of the city where wise counsel occurs (see study # 42).
- E. *"He that devises to do evil, Men shall call him a mischief-maker"* (24:8).
1. God abhors the mischief-maker (Proverbs 6:16-19) because he is worthless (Proverbs 16:27-30).

2. The evil man plans and schemes to do wicked things. Again, why would the wise want anything to do with such a person (see study # 2).
- F. *"The thought of foolishness is sin; And the scoffer is an abomination to men"* (24:9).
1. The fool has been identified as one who measures his self by his own standards rather than God's. This man has no desire to spend time and energy gaining wisdom. He would rather spend his time participating in acts of wickedness than being wise. While he devises wickedness in his heart the word of God reveals God's mind toward him. God abhors such a one. Even the **thought** of the foolish is sinful (see Acts 8:20-22) (see study # 78; Identity of Sin).
  2. The fool is now connected to the *"scoffer"*. The scoffer hates to be corrected (Proverbs 9:7-8). This man is proud and arrogant (Proverbs 21:24), loves contention (Proverbs 22:10), and is equated to the simple (Proverbs 19:25; 21:11) (see study # 70). Such a man is an abomination to men because of his ungodly outlook on life. This man wants things for nothing. He is too proud to admit he is wrong. He loves to argue and makes other men's life miserable.
- G. *"If thou faint in the day of adversity, Thy strength is small"* (24:10).
1. One of the golden characteristics of the Christian is that they are people who never throw in the towel when the going gets tuff (see Proverbs 24:16) (see study # 79; The Never Quit Attitude of the Christian). Those who give in to the ways of the world when things go wrong rather than staying the course of righteousness have proved themselves to be weak. The day of adversity comes to all men's lives. How you handle the hard times defines what you are.
  2. The man or woman of God must be so thoroughly convicted in the things of God that there is no amount of worldly adversity or pleasures that could pull me away from my objective of heaven. If I get treated bad when trying to convert a sinner shall I quit trying to help others?
- H. *"Deliver them that are carried away unto death, And those that are ready to be slain see that thou hold back. If thou say, Behold, we knew not this; Doth not he that weighs the hearts consider it? And he that keeps thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his work?"* (24:11-12).
1. The scary part about being a child of God is that not only are we responsible for our own souls but the souls of others too. The New King James Version reads, *"Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter."* The idea is that the wise are to do all within their power to save those bent on their own destruction through acts of folly. We can only go so far with such attempts. At some points it comes obvious that we are casting our pearls before swine and giving that which is holy to the dogs.
  2. To turn a blind eye to your fellow man's spiritual needs; however, is to put one's own self at risk of being judged by Jehovah. The Lord *"weighs the hearts"* of men. He knows our weaknesses and our strengths. He knows when we should have done something to keep another out of harms way yet we did nothing. The Lord will "render to every man according to his work." God will render to the man that is carried away to death and He will also render to that man who sits by idly letting a soul be lost (see Ezekiel 3:16ff) (see study # 80; Individual Responsibility to Watch for the Souls of Others).
- I. *"My son, eat thou honey, for it is good; And the droppings of the honeycomb, which are sweet to thy taste: So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul; If thou hast found it, then shall there be a reward, And thy hope shall not be cut off"* (24:13-14).
1. Obtaining wisdom is likened to eating sweet honey. To find a honeycomb and partake of its sweet honey is pleasant to the body.
  2. Likewise, the pursuit and obtaining of wisdom will have its sweet rewards in the area of hope.
- J. *"Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the habitation of the righteous; Destroy not his resting-place: For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises up again; But the wicked are overthrown by calamity"* (24:15-16).
1. Solomon advises the wicked man who devises mischief against the righteous to never start that which he is unable to succeed at. Though you destroy the righteous man's resting place seven times he will continue to rise and push forward. Come what may in this life the righteous are those who pick themselves up off the canvas to get ready for the next round. A peculiar trait of the righteous is their unwillingness to give up due to some calamity or adversity in life (see Proverbs 24:10).

2. The wicked; however, are not so. The wicked give up at the first sign of hardships. They give up because they want everything to be easy. They want their living to be easy and they want their knowledge to come to them easy (see study # 74).
- K. *"Rejoice not when thine enemy falls, And let not thy heart be glad when he is overthrown; Lest Jehovah see it, and it displease him, And he turn away his wrath from him"* (24:17-18).
1. The ability to pick one's self up when a calamity has struck is not an easy task. Though I am able to endure all things for the sake of eternity I must understand that not all men are where I am.
  2. It is my wisdom that drives me to push forward in this life when adversity strikes. Not all men have this wisdom and drive. To be glad when the foolish man who has been an enemy falls is to fail to understand the Lord's desire for ALL men. The Lord is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9).
- L. *"Fret not thyself because of evil-doers; Neither be thou envious at the wicked: For there shall be no reward to the evil man; The lamp of the wicked shall be put out"* (24:19-20).
1. Don't let yourself get all whacked out about how the wicked are doing this that and the other. Many today spend their day talking about how wicked the world is while their own lives are passing them by. Yes, there are evil people in the world. Yes, many of these evil people are living it up. What good does it do to sit around talking about what they are doing?
  2. It seems sometimes that what is really happening is that the godly people are so fascinated with the lives of the wicked that they are actually envying them.
- M. *"My son, fear thou Jehovah and the king; And company not with them that are given to change: For their calamity shall rise suddenly; And the destruction from them both, who knows it?"* (24:21-22).
1. Consider what it means to "*fear thou Jehovah*":
    - a. To fear God means to depart from evil (Proverbs 3:7).
    - b. To fear God is to hate evil, pride, arrogance, the perverse mouth, and the evil way (Proverbs 8:13).
    - c. To fear God means to walk upright (Proverbs 14:2).
  2. To "*fear the king*" would thereby have to do with giving honor and respect to the king's government. The apostle Peter wrote that Christians were to "*fear God and honor the king*" (1 Peter 2:17) (see study # 40).
  3. The word of God is clear on the matter of giving honor where honor is due (Romans 13:7). Those unwilling to submit themselves to God or the government are recognized as "*them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement, and despise dominion. Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities:*" (2 Peter 2:10 see also those who "*set at nought dominion and rail at dignities*" Jude 1:8).
  4. Consider the Good News Translation: "*Have reverence for the Lord, my child, and honor the king. Have nothing to do with people who rebel against them;*" Why have nothing to do with those who do not honor God and those who do not honor the king? Because these people have little respect for authority. If you company with those who have no honor for God their evil influence will wear on you. If you company with those who do not honor the king their bitterness will wear off on you.
  5. Don't fret over the wicked because they are always going to be around.
- N. *"These also are sayings of the wise. To have respect of persons in judgment is not good. He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; Peoples shall curse him, nations shall abhor him: But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, And a good blessing shall come upon them "* (24:23-25).
1. Why is it that some exercise the spirit of "respect of persons?" Some exercise favor over others due to family relationships, skin color, friendships, past associations, and geographic familiarity. With God truth is truth and justice is justice (see Proverbs 18:5).
  2. There is not one set of standards for one group and another for someone else. Whether my mother, best friend, wife, or respected coworker violates the law or it be someone I hardly know my judgment does not change. If my mom is wrong she is just as wrong as the person I don't even know who violates a law (see study # 49).
- O. *"He kisses the lips Who gives a right answer"* (24:26).
1. The idea seems to be that when one receives wise council it is like receiving a kiss from the one giving advise.

2. The answer is pleasant and helpful.
- P. *"Prepare thy work without, And make it ready for thee in the field; And afterwards build thy house"* (24:27).
1. Let a man take care of work in its proper order. Let a man first prepare his fields and plant before he goes building a house on a lot.
  2. Likewise, let us make sure that we have worked on obtaining wisdom before we go trying to set in order various things.
- Q. *"Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause; And deceive not with thy lips. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work"* (24:28-29).
1. Never give testimony against a neighbor simply out of a dislike of the person. To give deceptive or false testimony about another is to work against the just nature of God and government.
  2. Let all be governed rather by truth and let all receive judgments *"according to their works."*
- R. *"I went by the field of the sluggard, And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, The face thereof was covered with nettles, And the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I beheld, and considered well; I saw, and received instruction: Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep; So shall thy poverty come as a robber, And thy want as an armed man"* (24:30-34).
1. Proverbs has painted the picture of the sluggard. A summation statement may be found at Proverbs 21:25. Solomon said, *"The desire of the sluggard kills him; For his hands refuse to labor."* Consider these characteristics of the sluggard (see study # 5):
    - a. One who experiences poverty due to an unwillingness to work (Proverbs 6:6-11).
    - b. One who has nothing to eat because he will not work for food (Proverbs 12:27-29; 19:15).
    - c. One who can only desire the things that the diligent man has through hard labor (Proverbs 13:4).
    - d. One who experiences all the hardships that come with poverty (i.e., hunger, inadequate shelter, and a lack of friends) (Proverbs 15:19).
    - e. One who brings trouble to the lives of those he touches (Proverbs 18:9).
    - f. One who is lazy (Proverbs 19:24; 20:12-13; 21:25; 22:13).
    - g. One who begs for food rather than going to work (Proverbs 20:4).
    - h. One who is *"void of understanding"* (Proverbs 24:30).
  2. Why was the sluggard's vineyard overgrown with thorns and the wall broken down? Consider the attributes of this man reviewed above. This man's vineyard and walls were in a state of disrepair because he is too lazy to get out there and work.
  3. Note, that when the wise man under consideration went to the sluggard's field and saw this sight he was *"instructed."* The instruction was that if I lay around expecting someone else to do work for me its not going to get done. If my work is not done I will have nothing to eat. The lesson is to get out there and work.

## Chapter 25

### I. Sundry Similitudes and Moral Lessons (25 all):

- A. *"These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out"* (25:1).
1. The book of Proverbs begins by saying, "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel..." (Proverbs 1:1). At Proverbs 24:23-24 it is as though the book diverts from Solomon's personal proverbs to another wise man's words. Now, we pick up once again with Solomon's proverbial sayings.
  2. Hezekiah and the men of Judah took it upon themselves to copy out these proverbs and preserve them for future generations.
- B. *"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. As the heavens for height, and the earth for depth, So the heart of kings is unsearchable"* (25:2-3).
1. The glory of God rest within the fact that man cannot know those things that God does not care for them to know (see Deuteronomy 29:29). What did Jesus write in the dirt at John 8:6? What did the seven thunders utter that John was commanded not to write at Revelation 10:4? Isaiah wrote, *"For*

- as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts*" (55:9). It is a glorious matter that man has things concealed from him by God. Such illustrates the high position of God in the cosmos as creator as opposed to the created ones (see study # 81; The Sovereignty of God).
2. The king's glory is not in the fact that he has the ability to conceal things from man's eyes but rather he exposes men's dark deeds. The mind of the king is justice and kindness yet other than these things no man can know his thought.
  3. There appears to be a progression of hierarchy delivered in these first seven verses. Jehovah is at the highest. The king is below God in wisdom and knowledge. The common people are under the king.
- C. *"Take away the dross from the silver, And there cometh forth a vessel for the refiner: Take away the wicked from before the king, And his throne shall be established in righteousness"* (25:4-5).
1. We have noted in this study some facts about God's expectations of the king (see study # 40):
    - a. He is to reign in wisdom with justice (Proverbs 8:15-17).
    - b. The king's judgments are made with wisdom (Proverbs 16:10).
    - c. His rule is with kindness and truth (Proverbs 20:28).
    - d. The king's favor is with the wise (Proverbs 14:35).
    - e. His nation is exalted when the citizens act wisely (Proverbs 14:34).
    - f. The nation that acts in folly and wickedness will experience the king's wrath (Proverbs 19:12; 20:2, 26).
    - g. Wicked men fear to stand before a just king (Proverbs 20:8).
    - h. God's will is that man honor the king (Proverbs 24:21).
    - i. No matter the course the king takes God's providence will be exercised over the mighty kings of the earth (Proverbs 21:1).
    - j. Here, we find that the expectation of a king's rule and kingdom is that of righteousness.
  2. Once again we find that a just king who rules in kindness and truth will rule a nation viewed as righteous when all the *"dross is taken from the silver."* Dross is the worthless waist that is burned out of metals in the purification process. Get rid of the worthless citizens and things will go well (see the worthless sinful at Proverbs 6:12; 16:27; 19:28).
- D. *"Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king, And stand not in the place of great men: For better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, Than that thou should be put lower in the presence of the prince, Whom thine eyes have seen"* (25:6-7).
1. The idea is that man not think too highly of himself. Sometimes we get to thinking that we are important and worthy of things that only the great have.
  2. The message of the proverb is that we would have a humble disposition and let others elevate us if it be their desires. Never; however, be guilty of elevating one's own self.
- E. *"Go not forth hastily to strive, Lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, When thy neighbor hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbor, And disclose not the secret of another; Lest he that hear it revile thee, And thine infamy turn not away"* (25:8-10).
1. Here is another example of prudence (the ability to see the end of a matter before it begins) (see Proverbs 20:25).
  2. The point here is that we ought to not be so quick to want to charge another with wrong based upon surface evidence. We ought to look into the matter more carefully so that latter down the road the neighbor brings additional evidence to the table that proves innocence. Meanwhile, we would look disgraced in the eyes of others due to our jumping to conclusions before all the facts had been known.
- F. *"A word fitly spoken Is like apples of gold in network of silver"* (25:11).
1. The next four proverbs deal with our language as it benefits others. A word delivered by the mouth at the precise time of need to sooth the circumstance or condition of hurt is identified as *"apples of gold in a network of silver."* The picture of apples in a network of silver is compared with words fitly spoken (timely and in accordance with the circumstance or condition). A young man works extremely hard and graduates from college. His parents buy him a car. The young man begins to cry and his dad says, "you have worked hard son and you deserve this vehicle." The son can only

- then hug his dad and say thank you. Another sees the financial and educational hardships of a college student and wisely says, "I have no doubt whatsoever that you will graduate." Such words encourage, please, and satisfy the hearer.
2. Such an event is likened unto "*apples of gold in a network of silver*." The idea is that golden apples are often depicted as inviting and pleasing when sitting in a network or basket. We see many artist trying to capture this inviting, pleasing, and satisfying quality in paintings. To accomplish this with words is to succeed in encouraging another (see study # 28).
- G. "*As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, So is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear*" (25:12).
1. Once again a comparison or similitude is made to illustrate the beauty of words fitly spoken. Here there are two similitudes. First we have a gold ear-ring and a gold ornament and secondly we have one who reproves and the obedient ear.
  2. As the gold ear-ring and gold ornament look lovely upon a woman even so it is lovely when the erring give heed to the reproving of the wise.
- H. "*As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, So is a faithful messenger to them that send him; For he refreshes the soul of his masters*" (25:13).
1. Harvest time is hot and cool refreshments always restore one's energy.
  2. Such is the similitude of encouraging words from a messenger. Such words of good news refresh those who hear.
- I. "*As clouds and wind without rain, So is he that boasts himself of his gifts falsely*" (25:14).
1. Words that only elevate self to the point of it being a lie do nothing for those who hear.
  2. Braggadocios ways of a man are likened unto worthless clouds that give no rain when its needed.
- J. "*By long forbearing is a ruler persuaded, And a soft tongue breaks the bone*" (25:15).
1. Recall that Solomon had said, "*A soft answer turns away wrath; but a grievous word stirs up anger*" (Proverbs 15:1). Patience and a soft answer will "*break the bone*."
  2. Patience is said to "break iron" and it is "stronger than a diamond." Those things which seem hardened and difficult to break are softened by patience and a soft tongue (see study # ).
- K. "*Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, Lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it*" (25:16).
1. Honey is very tasty, pleasant, and satisfying. Eat too much of it; however, and you will become sick.
  2. Likewise, there are many things in this life that are very pleasant, tasty, and satisfying. Partake of only the pleasant and satisfying things too much and one will not be healthy. Man is designed to have a well rounded life. Not all things done will be filled with pleasure, enjoyment, and satisfying. Sometimes we must do the necessary things of life that are not so fun. Vacations are fun; however, there comes a time for it to end and the family to get back to work.
- L. "*Let thy foot be seldom in thy neighbor's house, Lest he be weary of thee, and hate thee*" (25:17).
1. Again, too much of one thing is not good. Sometimes people seem clueless about such principles. Example, the man who desires to be rich, hits it big in the lottery, and then doesn't know what to do with himself. Likewise, you may really like a neighbor and in your pursuit to have fun and enjoy the company of this person you wear them out with your continual presence. Sometimes people need to know when enough is enough.
  2. The clueless will push themselves on others to the point of becoming a nuisance. As the clueless days and months role on such a one causes others to hate you. The solution is to get a clue. Everyone needs their own private time and space. Leave people to their own and spend more time with your own home.
- M. "*A man that bears false witness against his neighbor Is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow*" (25:18).
1. God's view of a "*false witnesses*" is not veiled or confusing. God "*hates*" the false witness (Proverbs 6:16-19). He is identified as a deceitful (Proverbs 12:17) liar (Proverbs 14:5; 19:5).
  2. Additionally, the false witness is identified as a "maul, sword, and sharp arrow." Such tools are found as murder weapons throughout the Word of God. The false witness kills the one he bears

false witness against in that he ruins reputations and permits the righteous to suffer without cause (see study # 61).

- N. "*Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble Is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint*" (25:19).
1. The Hebrew word for "unfaithful" is *bagad*. This word is found nine times in the book of Proverbs (all eight other uses are found before this last use). The Hebrew word *bagad* is uniformly translated "*transgressor*" in all eight other places in the 1901 American Standard Bible.
  2. Proverbs 13:15 states that the "way of the transgressor is hard." A uniform message of Proverbs has been that hardships await the one who makes foolish decisions in life. If I place my confidence in one whose life is governed by ungodly ways his trouble will only add to my trouble. It would be like trying to eat with a broken tooth or walk with my foot out of joint (they are useless).
- O. "*As one that takes off a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon soda, So is he that sings songs to a heavy heart*" (25:20).
1. The man who would take off his garment in cold weather is a fool. Likewise to rub salt into a wound (many believe the idea behind, "*vinegar upon soda*") would be a terrible thing to do.
  2. The "heavy heart" is one who is down and depressed due to some calamity. To go to this person and joyfully sing a song to this person would be un-natural and foolish. We ought to rather mourn with them who mourn.
- P. "*If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head, And Jehovah will reward thee*" (25:21-22).
1. The apostle Paul wrote, "*But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head*" (Romans 12:20). The idea is that we take care of enemies rather than seeking vengeance. It may be by your good conduct toward him or her, you may cause them to repent and come back to the Lord.
  2. "*For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head*" (Romans 12:20b). To heap coals of fire upon ones head would be physically painful for the recipient. The phrase is used metaphorically to produce shame in the one whom has wronged you by your good conduct toward them. If one does not experience shame for their evil works, they never will repent (see 2 Thessalonians 3:14).
- Q. "*The north wind brings forth rain: So doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance*" (25:23).
1. A backbiting tongue is one that speaks words of disrepute about you behind your back. Here is one who is trying to ruin your good reputation among others for reasons unknown. Sometimes people are jealous and other times people are hateful. Whatever the reason the act is sinful (see study # 28). The angry countenance is the external look of anger upon one's face.
  2. Neither one of these are very pleasant. Neither is a cold north wind that brings rain... kind of miserable.
- R. "*It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, Than with a contentious woman in a wide house*" (25:24).
1. There are three previous proverbs that serve as a commentary on this proverbs. First, Proverbs 19:13 states, "*the contentions of a wife are a continuous dropping.*" Secondly, Proverbs 21:9 states, "*It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, Than with a contentious woman in a wide house.*" Thirdly, Proverbs 21:19 states, "*It is better to dwell in a desert land, than with a contentious and fretful woman.*" The word "contention" is identified as a "quarrelsome, brawling, bitter, and nagging" spirit.
  2. Let us recall that Solomon is painting pictures in our mind in various circles of life. Marriage is a great blessing from God and the man who finds a good wife has been blessed (see Proverbs 18:22). The good wife is defined as "*good*" because she is a "*crown to her husband*" (Proverbs 12:4), gracious (Proverbs 11:16) and uses discretion (Proverbs 11:22). The good and worthy woman will not be found arguing, debating, and disagreeing continually with her husband. Such a woman is indeed "*a continual dropping*" as Solomon writes at Proverbs 19:13. Like a leaky faucet that drips and drives a man mad so is the wife who cannot let issues die or is unwilling to forgive and forget or is just plain argumentative. She is a continual "*rottenness to his bones*" (Proverbs 12:4). Such "*rottenness*" drives a man to corners of the house where peace and quiet may be obtained. Such

verses place responsibility upon the Godly woman. Those who would want to be depicted as a Godly woman will not harass her husband with continued disagreements, arguments, and debating with her husband. Such attitude will do nothing but tear down the home (Proverbs 14:1) (see study # 36).

- S. "*As cold waters to a thirsty soul, So is good news from a far country*" (25:25).
  - 1. Refreshing news is always good to the soul (see Proverbs 18:4; 19:12; 20:15; 25:13).
  - 2. As cold water refreshes the body even so good news refreshes man's spirit.
- T. "*As a troubled fountain, and a corrupted spring, So is a righteous man that gives way before the wicked*" (25:26).
  - 1. Solomon compares a righteous man who lets his guard down and gives in to the ways of the wicked as a fountain that has had its waters agitated and thereby muddy or a spring that gives out polluted water.
  - 2. Many a good and godly men have left off righteousness for the pleasures of this world. To do so is to muddy and pollute the clear waters of righteousness (see study # 13).
- U. "*It is not good to eat much honey: So for men to search out their own glory is grievous*" (25:27).
  - 1. Again, too much of anything pleasant, enjoyable, and satisfying is not good. Likewise it is not good for anyone to search out their own glory.
  - 2. Many want to be viewed by others as great so they pursue this endeavor. The righteous do what is right in work and worship and they naturally receive glory and honor now and forever more.
- V. "*He whose spirit is without restraint Is like a city that is broken down and without walls*" (25:28).
  - 1. Those who are lured by the honey of this world give suit to the life of pleasures, personal satisfaction, fun, and even sensual passions.
  - 2. Here are men whose "*spirit is without restraint.*" They partake of the honey to the point of vomiting. They are likened unto a city whose walls are broken down. No defense of a city means easy prey for the enemy. A Christian who lets down his guard of self control will permit the devil to have his way with you (see 2 Peter 1:5ff).

## Chapter 26

### I. Sundry Similitudes regarding the Fool (26:1-12):

- A. "*As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, So honor is not seemly for a fool*" (26:1).
  - 1. The book of Proverbs has identified things that are just not natural in this world we live in (see study # 20):
    - a. It is the natural order of things that man gain understanding and knowledge (Proverbs 8:9).
    - b. It is the natural order of things that a beautiful woman have discretion (Proverbs 11:22).
    - c. It is natural for kings to rule with justice and equity (Proverbs 8:15; 16:10).
    - d. It is the natural course of life that a gray headed man be righteous (Proverbs 16:31).
    - e. It is the natural course of life for a man to have children and those children have their own children (Proverbs 17:6).
    - f. It goes against nature for the wicked to be justified and the righteous condemned (Proverbs 17:15) and punished for their good deeds (Proverbs 17:26).
    - g. It goes against the natural order of things for those who are due punishment to be spared the chastening rod (see Proverbs 19:5).
    - h. It goes against nature for the fool to have luxury and the servant to rule princes (Proverbs 19:10).
    - k. It is the natural course for a son who has erred to be stroked with a rod to drive it far from him (Proverbs 22:15).
    - l. It would go against God's natural order for a man or woman raised in a God fearing home to turn away from that spiritual teaching (see Proverbs 22:6).
  - 2. Now we find that it goes against the natural order of our world for a fool to receive honor or act honorably (just as snow in summer and rain at the time of harvest). Consider the fool:
    - a. Due corporal punishment because of his folly (Proverbs 7:22).



- b. Will not receive commandments or instruction (Proverbs 10:8) and is thereby brutish (Proverbs 12:1).
  - c. Speaks words of slander about others (Proverbs 10:18).
  - d. He is entertained by participating in acts of wickedness (Proverbs 10:23).
  - e. Reasons that his decisions in life are right rather than measuring himself by God's standard (Proverbs 12:15).
  - f. Has no shame while blurting out his stupidity and ignorance (Proverbs 13:6).
  - g. Acts disrespectfully toward God's laws and his fellow man (Proverbs 14:16).
  - h. A foolish woman tears down her own house with acts of folly (Proverbs 14:1).
  - i. The fool, "*despises his father's correction*" (Proverbs 15:5). This person hates to be corrected even by his own father. He is bent on doing what he wants to do and refuses to change his behavior because he believes that he is ok. His conscience is based upon his own reason rather than the word of God and thereby the sting of guilt is taken away.
  - j. The fool has no delight in understanding of spiritual things (Proverbs 18:2).
  - k. The fool loves to argue (Proverbs 18:6).
  - l. Wisdom is too high for the fool to obtain due to the above mentioned traits that governs this person (see Proverbs 24:7).
- B. "*As the sparrow in her wandering, as the swallow in her flying, So the curse that is causeless alights not*" (26:2).
- 1. A curse is apparently a accusation of wrong doing. This could include gossip and backbiting against another due to jealousy or hatred.
  - 2. Justice always prevails in the end and such false accusations will never come to rest.
- C. "*A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, And a rod for the back of fools*" (26:3).
- 1. The natural place for the rod of correction is upon the back of fools. To withhold the correcting rod is to give up on all hope for such a one (see Proverbs 19:19, 29; 20:30).
  - 2. The natural course of punishing the foolish is his correction. Solomon had previously said, "*Smite a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence; and reprove one that hath understanding and he will understand knowledge*" (Proverbs 19:25 see also 21:11).
- D. "*Answer not a fool according to his folly, Lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own conceit*" (26:4-5).
- 1. When the fool asks questions or tries to engage one in conversation regarding his folly the wise are admonished to not give such a one the time of day. To engage the fool in conversation of ignorance is to "*be like unto him.*" If a fool were to come to you at work, knowing you are a married man, and begin talking about how sexy a woman is on some TV show it would be folly for the married man to participate in such conversation. The fool makes observations about wicked practices that are entertaining to him while the wise will not participate in such talk.
  - 2. The wise are to rather put the fool in his place of ignorance and wickedness by a sharp reply of disapproval lest he be left thinking that his observations are condoned in your eyes (see study # 82; How to answer the Foolish).
- E. "*He that sends a message by the hand of a fool cuts off his own feet, and drinks in damage*" (26:6).
- 1. Messages of the wise are intended to encourage and refresh the recipients (see Proverbs 25:13).
  - 2. If the wise use a fool to deliver his message he "cuts off his own feet and drinks damage" in that the fool is likely to take forever to get the message to those who need it or not even deliver it at all. The fool is not to be trusted and neither his he to be considered for anything that takes responsibility (see study # 42).
- F. "*The legs of the lame hang loose: So is a parable in the mouth of fools*" (26:7).
- 1. To this point one may begin to say, "This language is harsh and judgmental..." I noticed this past week that Juan Williams was fired by NPR for his remarks on "the O'Reily Factor" regarding his fear of being on an airplane with a Muslim due to the events of 9-11... The liberal mindset is that of extreme tolerance of bad behavior. The word of God; however, teaches intolerance of bad behavior. Those recognized as fools are due punishment for their acts of folly and we are not to give them the time of day in relationship to their folly. They are not trustworthy and now we see their ignorance.

2. The fool can make as much use of a wise proverb as a lame man his bad legs. Why? As we noted above, he is just not interested in wisdom. The fool is rather interested in folly.
- G. "*As one that binds a stone in a sling, So is he that gives honor to a fool*" (26:8).
1. To give honor (respect, admiration, give credit to) is to put a fool in the place where he does not belong in the eyes of God. What action would the fool do to be recognized with respect, admiration, or to be due credit from anyone? To do so would be to agree with the wicked choices of the fool.
  2. Solomon compares such actions as binding a "*stone in a sling*." The stone is set within the sling in its proper place to do its designed work (to act as a missile of defense or for hunting). Giving honor to a fool is not what this person's proper place or design is.
- H. "*As a thorn that goes up into the hand of a drunkard, So is a parable in the mouth of fools*" (26:9).
1. The drunkard does not feel pain due to his brain being numbed by alcohol (see Proverbs 23:35).
  2. A parable of wisdom designed to bring prudence to its readers is also of no affect in the mouth of a fool. The fool does not even feel the sting of rebuke or the blessedness of the instruction.
- I. "*As an archer that wounds all, So is he that hires a fool and he that hires them that pass by*" (26:10).
1. Verse ten is one of the most obscure verses in the book of Proverbs in relationship to the original language. The 1901 ASV footnote reads, "Or, A master worker forms all things; but he that hires the fool is as one that hires them that pass by... The Hebrew text is obscure."
  2. The idea may be that if you decided to hire a fool wounds all other workers in that they will have to pick up his slack or ignorance???
- J. "*As a dog that returns to his vomit, So is a fool that repeats his folly*" (26:11).
1. Most all of us have seen such disgusting behavior on the part of animals. The apostle Peter compared a false teacher to such a disgusting act at 2 Peter 2:22. The false teacher is identified as one who once had truth yet now has returned to his old sinful ways.
  2. Recall that the fool may be corrected and reformed (see Proverbs 19:19, 29). The fool who turns around and goes right back to his folly is compared to the dog returning to its vomit.
- K. "*Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him*" (26:12).
1. Here is an arrogant individual who is blind to his own error. While he considers himself wise he is in all actuality acting foolish. It is as one said, "An award was given to the most humble man yet when the man came to accept the award they had to take it right back." Solomon has repeatedly stated, "*There is a way which seems right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Proverbs 14:12).
  2. There is more hope for a fool because his actions are acknowledged as wrong before all (the issue of right or wrong is established). If the fool will respond favorably to the rod upon his back he may learn prudence (see Proverbs 19:25).

## II. The Sluggard (26:13-16):

- A. "*The sluggard saith, There is a lion in the way; A lion is in the streets*" (26:13).
1. The sluggard is under consideration for the next four verses. We have identified the sluggard as (see study # 5):
    - a. He is lazy (Proverbs 19:24; 20:12-13; 21:25; 22:13).
    - b. He lives in poverty due to his laziness (Proverbs 6:6-11).
    - c. He is so lazy he will not even bring his fork to his mouth to eat (Proverbs 19:24).
    - d. He desires the things that the working man has yet is unwilling to work for it (Proverbs 13:4; 14:6).
    - e. He wants everyone to give him his sustenance (wants things for no work) (Proverbs 18:12).
    - f. He is hungry because he has no money to buy food (Proverbs 12:29; 19:15).
    - g. He has no money because he will not work (Proverbs 18:9).
    - h. He begs for food rather than working for it (Proverbs 20:4).
    - i. He is void of understanding. At a time when all right thinking men are working and planning for a future harvest the sluggard is found sleeping rather than plowing. When the harvest time comes he has nothing and thereby begs for food (Proverbs 24:30).
    - j. The sluggard thereby chooses a life of trouble; i.e., hunger, inadequate shelter, property and a lack of friends (Proverbs 15:19).

- k. The sluggard brings trouble to the lives of those he touches (Proverbs 18:9).
- 2. The reason the sluggard says, "There is a lion in the way" is because he is looking for any excuse not to go out and work. He likes to hold up in the house and lounge around the bed.
- B. "*As the door turns upon its hinges, So doth the sluggard upon his bed*" (26:14).
  - 1. If the subject were not so serious we may think this proverb funny. No humor here. The sluggard is depicted as being so lazy that his limited movements are those upon his bed as he rolls back and forth across his bed refusing to get up and get to work.
  - 2. Slothfulness, laziness, and sleeping are all connected to each other through these proverbs (see Proverbs 19:13; 20:12-13).
- C. "*The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; It wearies him to bring it again to his mouth*" (26:15).
  - 1. We had earlier examined this passage at Proverbs 19:24.
  - 2. One can scarcely imagine being so lazy yet such a disposition exist. Here is one so sleepy, lethargic, and apathetic to life in general that he can scarcely lift his hand to his mouth to eat.
- D. "*The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit Than seven men that can render a reason*" (26:16).
  - 1. Young's Literal Translation reads, "Wiser is the slothful in his own eyes, Than seven men returning a reason."
  - 2. Isn't this the way it usually is. The foolish, simple, slothful, and simple think and so they act. Such a one is unable to identify wrong or foolishness in his own life. Such a one points the finger at everyone else. Such a one blames everyone for their misery. Such a one identifies everyone else as the weak. Such a one thinks he or she is the true intellectual. Such a one can only complain about all those who are supervisors, executives, and business owners. This sluggard will not venture out to get training or attempt to start a business. He just wants to sit back and see other's failures and talk about how ignorant they all are. All the while he has nothing.

### III. Minding One's Own Business and Gossip (26:17-28):

- A. "*He that passes by, and vexes himself with strife belonging not to him, Is like one that takes a dog by the ears*" (26:17).
  - 1. The similitude of verse 17 is meddling in a contention between two others that has nothing to do with you and taking a dog by the ears.
  - 2. Have you ever taken a dog by the ears? The dog will yelp and squeal with pain. Those ears are sensitive. The point being is that you are likely to exasperate the situation by getting involve in it. Stay out of other people's quarrels.
- B. "*As a madman who casts firebrands, Arrows, and death, So is the man that deceives his neighbor, And saith, Am not I in sport?*" (26:18-19).
  - 1. Only a madman would throw out firebrands, arrows, and death at someone just for sport. The comparison is made between such a madman and one who would lie to a neighbor and then say, "Hey, I was only joking."
  - 2. The issue under consideration is obviously serious. This is not someone calling and saying, "Hey, is your refrigerator running... yes, ... well you better go catch it." This is more like someone calling you at work and saying, "Hey, your house is on fire." Latter the fool says, "I was just joking." Some things are not funny. Those with no wisdom will engage in inappropriate pranks and lies in the name of fun.
- C. "*For lack of wood the fire goes out; And where there is no whisperer, contention ceases. As coals are to hot embers, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to inflame strife. The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts*" (26:20-22).
  - 1. James said, "*So the tongue also is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire!*" (James 3:5). Take away the fuel (wood) and the fire will naturally go out. It is the "*contentious man*" who inflames (adds fuel to the fire) with his words of strife.
  - 2. Some may call this person "Maytag" because he likes to agitate the situation. Note that if this man and his disposition of contention is taken from the argument then the whispering and contentions among men will cease (see study # 28).
- D. "*Fervent lips and a wicked heart Are like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross*" (26:23).

1. The New Century Version reads, "*Kind words from a wicked mind are like a shiny coating on a clay pot.*"
  2. Generally the wicked will only tell others things they want to hear so that they can get gain from you somehow.
- E. "*He that hates dissembles with his lips; But he lays up deceit within him: When he speaks fair, believe him not; For there are seven abominations in his heart: Though his hatred cover itself with guile, His wickedness shall be openly showed before the assembly*" (26:24-26).
1. The person whose heart is filled with hatred disguises or conceals his disposition with his lips. He may say kind things to someone when there is actually bitter hatred within his heart. Here is a professional at concealing his true motives, nature, or feelings (AHD 408). The wise are admonished not to be taken by his fair and smooth speech.
  2. The reason: "*For there are seven abominations in his heart.*" These seven abominations may have Proverbs 6:16-19 under consideration. The point is obvious. This person does not have your best interest at heart and his true colors will be made known "*before the assembly.*" Eventually his hatred will come to be disclosed rather than concealed.
- F. "*Whoso digs a pit shall fall therein; And he that rolls a stone, it shall return upon him*" (26:27).
1. What pit is it that a man may dig for himself to fall into? What stone is it that a man may roll up hill only to have it come back upon him? The answer is the obvious trouble that one brings upon himself through foolish acts.
  2. This verse seems to summarize all that has been said in relation to the consequences of foolish decisions in life. The foolish and wicked of this world bring destruction, hardships, and calamity to their lives and the lives of others (see Proverbs 13:13-15, 21; 15:6, 19; 22:8) (see study # 25).
- G. "*A lying tongue hates those whom it hath wounded; And a flattering mouth works ruin*" (26:28).
1. First, note that a lying tongue wounds people. A liar will give information to people that is not true. This information may be in the form of a doctrine that is suppose to save people or words that hurt people and are not true. The false teacher and false witness are nothing more than people with hateful hearts (see study # 83).
  2. Another way to ruin or wound people is to flatter them with words of greatness so that their head swells and they begin to think to highly of themselves.
  3. God's people ought to be saying things to people that will help and edify them rather than destroying them (see study # 28).

## Chapter 27

### I. Sundry Antithetic Proverbs (27 all):

- A. "*Boast not thyself of tomorrow; For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*" (27:1).
1. The boasting under consideration is equated to James' instruction at James 4:13-17. Could you imagine a man singing his own praises because of a decision he made today regarding an event that will take place tomorrow? He may make an educated guess at how tomorrow's events are going to turn out; however, in reality he does not know exactly what the outcome of the next day's events are. The wise thing to do is to permit the future days events to unfold without all the bragging of what you think is going to happen.
  2. I recently bragged about Renya's soccer abilities to her grandmother, aunt, and friend and when the game came she fell flat on her face. It is not wise to do such things.
- B. "*Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; A stranger, and not thine own lips*" (27:2).
1. Wisdom is not defined by self promotion. If I have to tell everyone how great I am or how great my children are it is obviously not something that people have observed in me or my children.
  2. The book of Proverbs has helped us identify our responsibilities to be hard workers and let others praise us if they so desire (see Proverbs 12:9; 25:6-7, 14).
- C. "*A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; But a fool's vexation is heavier than they both*" (27:3).
1. Young's Literal Translation reads, "*A stone is heavy, and the sand is heavy, And the anger of a fool is heavier than they both.*" The point being that carrying a heavy stone or sand is very burdensome; however, the burden of a fool's anger is greater than the heavy rock and sand put together.

2. Why is the fool angry? The fool is angered due to one trying to correct him (Proverbs 10:8). This man loves to argue (Proverbs 18:6). The burden of his anger is the fact that you are not going to be able to reason with this man especially in his fit of rage.
- D. *"Wrath is cruel, and anger is overwhelming; But who is able to stand before jealousy?"* (27:4).
1. Anger and wrath are emotions that occur when one loses self control (Proverbs 16:32). Those who lose control of their emotions are identified as wicked (Proverbs 18:3). The angry and wicked are difficult to "stand before" i.e., withstand its effects. Anger can certainly destroy a man or cause him to do things that he later regrets.
  2. Solomon appears to be placing jealousy at a higher level of danger for the human soul than anger. Jealousy is a *"rotteness to the bones"* because it zaps every ounce of goodness from one's character (see Proverbs 14:30). Jealousy consumes one's mind, time, and energies. Jealousy brings about self destruction due to one being so fixed on others that they neglect to notice their own personal shortcomings. While all else see the jealous man's folly he continues in them to the point of losing all friends and respect of others.
- E. *"Better is open rebuke than love that is hidden. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; But the kisses of an enemy are profuse"* (27:5-6).
1. A true friend will tell you what you need to hear rather than what you want to hear. Sometimes people think they are doing a friend good by not saying anything about their friend's fault. To openly rebuke another is likely to embarrass and hurt the feelings of that person. Solomon says; however, *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend."* Though I may have had my feelings hurt or was embarrassed when someone rebuked me openly it nonetheless is what I need.
  2. If nothing is said I may continue on my wayward path. Those who are my enemies will tell me all is well rather than point up my shortcomings of sin or error in judgment.
- F. *"The full soul loathes a honeycomb; But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet"* (27:7).
1. Solomon has advised man to be careful with how much honey he takes in (i.e., too much pleasure and fun is not good ~ we ought to have a balanced life) (see Proverbs 25:16, 27).
  2. Those who have no idea when to stop with the fun and pleasantries of life fill themselves to the point of loathing a honeycomb. Here is the danger of doing nothing but fun and pleasurable things. You eventually hate these things and so there is no area of entertainment that satisfies you. To the man who rations his pleasurable activities he continues to enjoy them for years to come.
  3. The same principle applies to gluttony. We may really like a certain food; however, if we cannot pull ourselves away from the table we may come to be overweight and loath the very thing that we enjoyed.
- G. *"As a bird that wanders from her nest, So is a man that wanders from his place"* (27:8).
1. The proper place for a man is his own nest or home.
  2. To wander away from home subjects one to dangers. The danger of adultery, discontentment, and putting away responsibilities.
- H. *"Oil and perfume rejoice the heart; So doth the sweetness of a man's friend that come of hearty counsel. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; And go not to thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: Better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off"* (27:9-10).
1. Good news always rejoices the heart as though one were given oil and perfume (see Proverbs 15:30; 25:13, 25).
  2. Friends can be very helpful during days of *"calamity"* (see Proverbs 17:17; 18:24) It is good to maintain friendships so that there is always someone to rely on during difficult days of life. There is no need to travel far away to find your physical brother to help you when a closer and more immediate help is found in friends (see study # 59).
- I. *"My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, That I may answer him that reproaches me"* (27:11).
1. The son who makes a father's heart glad is the son who is wise in life (see Proverbs 10:1; 15:20; 19:13). The father is happy because his son is no sloth, fool that brings trouble, or simple that seeks others to do things for him.
  2. Those who would reproach a father over a son may not do so due to some act of wisdom on the part of the child.

3. We often hear a young person come before the congregation and say, "I have brought reproach upon my family and this local church." They ask for forgiveness and all rejoice at the repentance. To open up your family or the church of the Lord to the world's criticism is not good in the eyes of God (see study # 12 and # 47).
- J.** *"A prudent man sees the evil, and hides himself; But the simple pass on, and suffer for it" (27:12).*
1. Let us recall that the identity of the "*prudent*" is the one who "has the capacity for judging in advance the probable results of one's actions" (AHD 998). The very objective of the book of Proverbs is to give prudence to the simple (Proverbs 1:4). The "*simple*" are obviously people who have little ability to think about consequences before they act. Here is someone who simply reacts to what they believe is best for them rather than what God's instructions say. The "*simple*" has been identified in this study as:
    - a. Scoffers who lack prudence and love simplicity (Proverbs 1:4, 22).
    - b. Void of understanding (Proverbs 7:6-8; 9:4-6)
    - c. Equated to the Fool (Proverbs 8:5).
    - d. Now, we see that the simple are those who walk straight into a ditch without trying to avoid the trouble. They just simply do not consider the outcome of events before they rush into them.
  2. This exact proverb is found at chapter 22:3. There are things that put all man on an equal plane before God and there are also those things about a man that distinguishes him from others (see study # 74; The Distinct Differences Among Men). The "*prudent man*" and the "*simple*" are now further defined and distinguished from each other (see study # 5a and # 39). The prudent man is the man who is able to look down the road of an event and make current decisions based upon what he perceives the outcome to be. The simple rush into trouble without thinking of the consequences (see Proverbs 20:25 and 21:5-6).
- K.** *"Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; And hold him in pledge that is surety for a foreign woman" (27:13).*
1. This exact proverb is found at chapter 20:16. Solomon has explained that it is not wise to offer surety (or co-sign on a loan) for a stranger lest he neglect his duties and you are stuck with the bill (see Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15). The man or woman who would offer surety to his neighbor or stranger is "*void of understanding*" (Proverbs 17:18).
  2. It may be that the wise find themselves in a position to receive a surety on behalf of a neighbor or stranger from one "*void of understanding*." Solomon's advise is that if one is foolish enough to do this accept it yet not without immediate collateral (i.e., the man's garment). Obviously in this day and time one's garments were worth much to the individual. These people did not have the wardrobes that most of us have today (see study # 75).
- L.** *"He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, It shall be counted a curse to him" (27:14).*
1. People often heap praises upon others just to get some sort of gain or favor. The wise, and even the not so wise, can certainly see through such actions.
  2. Not only the one who receives the compliments but others who hear the words think, "that man is only trying to get something from the one he is complimenting."
- M.** *"A continual dropping in a very rainy day And a contentious woman are alike: He that would restrain her restrains the wind; And his right hand encounters oil" (27:15-16).*
1. There are four previous proverbs that serve as a commentary on this proverbs. First, Proverbs 19:13 states, "*the contentions of a wife are a continuous dropping.*" Secondly, Proverbs 21:9 states, "*It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, Than with a contentious woman in a wide house.*" Thirdly, Proverbs 21:19 states, "*It is better to dwell in a desert land, than with a contentious and fretful woman.*" Fourthly, Proverbs 25:24 makes the same statement as Proverbs 21:9. The words "*contention*" and "*fretful*" are identified as "quarrelsome, brawling, bitter, and nagging" spirit. Those who try to restrain such a woman performs an exercise in futility (like trying to restrain the wind or holding oil in the hand). If it is useless to restrain such a woman something has to be done to stop the activity of bitter nagging before it starts.
  2. Let us recall that Solomon is painting pictures in our mind in various circles of life. Marriage is a great blessing from God and the man who finds a good wife has been blessed (see Proverbs 18:22).

The good wife is defined as "*good*" because she is a "*crown to her husband*" (Proverbs 12:4), gracious (Proverbs 11:16) and uses discretion (Proverbs 11:22). The good and worthy woman will not be found arguing, debating, and disagreeing continually with her husband. Such a woman is indeed "*a continual dropping*" as Solomon writes at Proverbs 19:13. Like a leaky faucet that drips and drives a man mad so is the wife who cannot let issues die or is unwilling to forgive and forget or is just plain argumentative. She is a continual "*rotteness to his bones*" (Proverbs 12:4). Such "*rotteness*" drives a man to corners of the house where peace and quiet may be obtained. Such verses place responsibility upon the Godly woman. Those who would want to be depicted as a Godly woman will not harass her husband with continued disagreements, arguments, and debating with her husband. Such attitude will do nothing but tear down the home (Proverbs 14:1) (see study # 36).

- N. "*Iron sharpens iron; So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend*" (27:17).
1. As iron sharpens another piece of iron for proper use so a friend may sharpen another.
  2. Those sharpened by a friend have received words that better the individual. It may be that a friend will tell you to tuck in your shirt, stop moping around, and deliver words that will be just the right encouragement to cause your countenance to be sharpened at just the right time (see study # 59 and notes above at 27:9).
- O. "*Whoso keeps the fig-tree shall eat the fruit thereof; And he that regards his master shall be honored*" (27:18).
1. Solomon had earlier written, "*A man's belly shall be filled with the fruit of his mouth; With the increase of his lips shall he be satisfied. Death and life are in the power of the tongue; And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof*" (18:20-21). This is a fascinating analogy of the use of one's tongue. Solomon depicts the tongue as that which sustains the belly by words (i.e., the man's words fill the belly and keep him satisfied). When the mouth speaks words of wisdom coming from a heart trained by diligent searching for knowledge and wisdom then such words of the wise will satisfy the soul within. The tongue has the power to bring both life and death. Those who love death will speak words that bring death to themselves. Those who love life will speak words that bring life. The words we take into our ears and release from our mouths define who we are. You have heard it said, "You are what you eat..." Those who have a regular diet of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ will be satisfied forever (see John 6:51).
  2. One example of a wise use of the mouth is to give regard or honor to a master. Those who are in positions of authority are due man's honor and those who do so eat the fruit of the fig-tree.
- P. "*As in water face answer to face, So the heart of man to man*" (27:19).
1. The English Standard Version Bible reads, "*As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.*" We see our reflection in the water as though we were looking into a mirror. When I see my face it is my face and no other. Likewise, when one looks to the heart of a man they see the man for what his character truly is.
  2. Jesus said that the words that come from my heart through my lips define my true character (see Matthew 12:34-35; 15:17-19) (see study # 84; Defining One's True Character).
- Q. "*Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied; And the eyes of man are never satisfied*" (27:20).
1. The terms Sheol and Abaddon are mentioned together at Proverbs 15:11 and there defined as "destruction" and "destroyer." These are terms obviously connected with the unseen world of the wicked who have died in their sins as indicated by the use of the word "*Sheol*" at Proverbs 15:24 and 23:13-14. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines the word as, "A Hebrew proper noun without clear etymology and with a relatively wide range of meanings (mainly 'death,' 'the grave,' 'hell,' 'the next world,' 'the nether world'), making it difficult to determine which of its meanings is in view in any given OT passage" (v. 4, pp. 472) (see study # 85).
  2. How is it that the unseen world of the wicked is "*never satisfied*?" Sheol and Abaddon, in the context of Proverbs, is the unseen world that holds the dead who lived in sin while among the living. It is never satisfied in that it continuously receives men and women who could not control their lust and quest for sinful satisfaction while among the living (see Proverbs 1:10ff; 5:3-6; 7:24-27; 9:16-18) (see study # 26). Man's "*eyes are never satisfied*" because he cannot seem to get enough of sin and its pleasures. Like a drug addict that cannot stop abusing their bodies with

chemicals even so is the man who lives in sin and just cannot get enough (gamblers, pornography addicts, covetousness, money lovers etc. see 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

- R. *"The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; And a man is tried by his praise"* (27:21).
1. At the beginning of this chapter we noted that Solomon writes, *"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; A stranger, and not thine own lips"* (27:2). The book of Proverbs has helped us identify our responsibilities to be hard workers. If others desire to give us praise for our work let them; however, to praise one's self is to err (see Proverbs 12:9; 25:6-7, 14).
  2. As the Christian conducts himself with discretion and works hard in this life he will naturally receive the praise, glory, and honor of men. Said words of praise is actually a test that when passed will refine us as fire refines silver and gold. How we react to such praises determines our character. Will I allow my head to get oversized? Will I take the praise to heart and start to think too highly of myself? Will I humbly receive the praise and continue as I always have? (see study # 86; The Glory of Men).
- S. *"Though thou should bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with bruised grain, Yet will not his foolishness depart from him"* (27:22).
1. The Bible in Basic English reads, *"Even if a foolish man is crushed with a hammer in a vessel among crushed grain, still his foolish ways will not go from him."* Recall that it is the fool who will not receive correction (Proverbs 10:8) not even from his father (Proverbs 15:5).
  2. What makes a man or woman a fool? The fool is defined as the one who does not respond to correction no matter how hard he is punished. There is hope for all who are foolish; however, it is evident that fools will always exist. They will always be identified as those who will not change their sinful ways that bring so much hurt to their lives and the lives they touch (see study # 42).
- T. *"Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, And look well to thy herds: For riches are not for ever: And doth the crown endure unto all generations? The hay is carried, and the tender grass show itself, And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in. The lambs are for thy clothing, And the goats are the price of the field; And there will be goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, And maintenance for thy maidens"* (27:23-27).
1. The idea seems to be that man's diligence is to be placed in working that which brings him his daily sustenance and lively hood rather than searching out fame and fortune. There is much security and peace of mind when one simply works in a reliable field and is content when the wages.
  2. At times we may think our jobs are boring and we would that there were other more glorious and high paying wage jobs elsewhere yet the man who gives thanks, works hard, and is able to pay his bills should not cast off such a reliable work.

## Chapter 28

### I. Sundry Antithetic Proverbs (28 all):

- A. *"The wicked flee when no man pursues; But the righteous are bold as a lion"* (28:1).
1. The wicked are involved in sinful activities that bring about punishment. They run, after throwing a rock through a window, even when no one is chasing because they know that their deed is wrong.
  2. The righteous stand boldly as a lion. There is nothing for them to run from. There is no evil work that they have participated in that would cause them to flee. They stand bold and innocent.
- B. *"For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof; But by men of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged"* (28:2).
1. With transgressions come trouble and sorrows. When a country has many sorrows and troubles it will go through many princes or rulers.
  2. When the ruler is wise; however, he demands righteousness and the consequential results is less sorrow and troubles. Such a one will rule a long time.
  3. The same is true of the world of sports. The winning coach experiences little trouble from the alumni; however, when a coach looses he has trouble. The loosing coach is usually fired and another brought in. The Dallas Cowboys have had many coaches over the past 15 years. Tom Landry was coach a long time because he was a winner.



- C. *"A needy man that oppresses the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaves no food"* (28:3).
1. This verse is somewhat obscure but seems to be in keeping with the context of the previous two verses regarding a wise or foolish ruler. Young's Literal Translation reads, *"A man -- poor and oppressing the weak, [Is] a sweeping rain, and there is no bread."*
  2. The point may be that a wicked ruler who oppresses poor citizens through heavy taxes or demands leaves no food for anyone.
- D. *"They that forsake the law praise the wicked; But such as keep the law contend with them"* (28:4).
1. Like attracts like. The wicked love their own and praise each other for their unlawful practices in society (see Proverbs 10:23).
  2. Law abiding citizens; however, will contend with the wicked due to a sense of great conviction to do what is right.
- E. *"Evil men understand not justice; But they that seek Jehovah understand all things"* (28:5).
1. How can evil men understand that which they could care less about (Proverbs 2:12-15)?
  2. Fairness and righteousness (justice) is understood by those who "seek Jehovah." Those who have interest in doing good rather than evil understand all things. Those who have a pure heart of innocence will know justice.
- F. *"Better is the poor that walks in his integrity, Than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich"* (28:6).
1. A very similar proverb was discussed at Proverbs 19:1. Here; however, the substitute is being *"perverse"* and *"rich"* as opposed to being foolish.
  2. Solomon says its better to be trustworthy and poor because such a one can be depended on and entrusted with greater things. Through time this poor man of integrity will have enough to feed, cloth, and shelter his home and family.
- G. *"Whoso keeps the law is a wise son; But he that is a companion of gluttons shames his father"* (28:7).
1. The glutton is one who indulges himself in areas that are unlawful to participate in. Here is one who lacks reverence and respect for authority. Here is one who is living a life of riot and revelry. Those who make friends with this crowd do nothing but bring shame and reproach to their father (see Proverbs 27:11). Why is it that the son who will not keep the law and befriends gluttons considered a shame to his father? This son is a shame to the father because the father's responsibility is to see to it that his son is wise. The father has either failed to fulfill his duty and it is thereby a shame to him or the son has failed to receive his father's instruction (see study # 2 and # 47).
  2. If a young person would simply listen to the instruction of their fathers and give heed to the laws then they will have a productive life.
- H. *"He that augments his substance by interest and increase, gathers it for him that hath pity on the poor"* (28:8).
1. There are those whose sole objective is to get rich even at the expense of those who have very little. Sometimes these people charge ridiculous interest rates on loans that sucks the life out of those who have little.
  2. Eventually their cruel treatment of the poor will come back to them and their money will be returned to the poor by one who is just.
- I. *"He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination"* (28:9).
1. Solomon had earlier said, *"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah; But the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to Jehovah; But he loveth him that followeth after righteousness"* (15:8-9). There is nothing about the wicked man's life that the Lord loves, respects, or cherishes. The wicked doesn't do much of anything that is right as defined by the standard of truth. Nothing is different when it comes to his worship. The wicked man will often continue his worship to Jehovah God believing all things are well; however, the Lord hates even the prayers of such a man (see Isaiah 1:11ff; Amos 5:21-23 etc.) (see study # 34).
  2. God will not even hear the prayer of the wicked because they have no intention of living lawfully (see Psalms 66:18; 109:7; Isaiah 1:11-15; Matthew 6:5-8; 7:7-11; John 9:31).
- J. *"Whoso causes the upright to go astray in an evil way, He shall fall himself into his own pit; But the perfect shall inherit good"* (28:10).

1. Recall that Solomon had written, "*Whoso digs a pit shall fall therein; And he that rolls a stone, it shall return upon him*" (26:27). The pit that the wicked dig and fall into is the trouble that comes with their foolish and wicked actions (i.e., jail, calamity, hardships, sexual diseases, lack of food, etc). The inheritance of the wicked man who brings the upright into his own pit of troubles will be more troubles of his own making.
  2. Recall that Jesus said that it would be better if one were to have a millstone hung around their neck and thrown into the ocean than to have enticed the innocent to do evil (see Matthew 18:6) (see study # 26).
- K. "*The rich man is wise in his own conceit; But the poor that hath understanding searches him out*" (28:11).
1. Just because one has wealth does not mean that this man is wise.
  2. Sometimes people come to be conceited in their possessions and make out as though they are wise; however, a poor man with understanding will put such a one to the test.
- L. "*When the righteous triumph, there is great glory; But when the wicked rise, men hide themselves*" (28:12).
1. Solomon has earlier said, "*When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth; And when the wicked perish, there is shouting. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted; But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked*" (Proverbs 11:10-11). A city rejoices over the good lives of the righteous because everyone benefits from a just person that makes positive contributions to society.
  2. The same city shouts with joy over the perishing of the wicked. Such shouting is not due to their being happy he is dead but they shout for joy because they are not ill affected by his slothfulness and unjust way of dealing with people.
  3. I heard a horrible statement one day about a man in the church. One said that things will not change in this church until brother so and so is dead. What if people said that about me?
- M. "*He that covers his transgressions shall not prosper: But whoso confesses and forsakes them shall obtain mercy*" (28:13).
1. It is the humble heart that is willing to confess and forsake transgression in his life (Isaiah 57:15; 66:1-2). The lowly man of sorrow is such because he is fearful and ashamed of his actions. He is moved to confess his faults to the Lord and purposes to forsake them (see Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; 1 John 1:9). The proud heart of arrogance will not so much as admit wrong much less humble himself to God in repentance.
  2. Consider Solomon on Humility throughout this study (see study # 67):
    - a. "*The fear of Jehovah is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor goes humility*" (Proverbs 15:33).
    - b. "*By mercy and truth iniquity is atoned for; and by the fear of Jehovah men depart from evil*" (Proverbs 16:6).
    - c. "*Before destruction the heart of man is haughty; and before honor goes humility*" (Proverbs 18:12).
    - d. "*Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*" (Proverbs 20:9).
    - e. "*The reward of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches, and honor, and life*" (Proverbs 22:4).
- N. "*Happy is the man that fears always; But he that hardens his heart shall fall into mischief*" (28:14).
1. Note that "*fear*" is put in contrast with a "*hardened heart.*" The above verses have indicated a connection between the fear of Jehovah and humility as opposed to reckless hardening of the heart against the will of God.
  2. Consider the "*fear of God*" in Proverbs (see study # 22):
    - a. To fear God is to be wise (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:34).
    - b. Fearing God will define wisdom rather than one being wise in thine own eyes (Proverbs 3:7).
    - c. To fear God means to depart from evil (Proverbs 3:7).
    - d. To fear God is to hate evil, pride, arrogance, the perverse mouth, and the evil way (Proverbs 8:13).
    - e. To fear God means to walk upright (Proverbs 14:2).
    - f. There is great confidence in the one who fears Jehovah (Proverbs 14:26).

3. Note that those who do not fear God are those who “*despise and hate*” wisdom, knowledge, and reproof (Proverbs 1:7 and 1:29-30). Why do men despise and hate wisdom, knowledge, and discernment? Why do men hate reproof? Why do men sin (see study # 53)? Such occurs when one's prideful will and personal desires are elevated above the will of God (i.e., they are hardened in sin). They do what they want to do rather than what God wants them to do. They shall not escape though they may feel that they are currently safe and secure. Their style of life leads to awful and troublesome consequences now and forevermore (see study # 25).
- O. *"Happy is the man that fears always; But he that hardens his heart shall fall into mischief"* (28:14).
1. This **may be the thematic verse of the book of Proverbs**. Proverbs has proved that good things come to those who live right. The man that fears God is always *happy* because (see study # 24 and # 56):
    - a. The fear of God tends to life and satisfaction (Proverbs 12:28; 13:4; 19:23).
    - b. Joy and happiness (Proverbs 12:20; 28:14).
    - c. Keeps one out of trouble (Proverbs 12:21; 13:21; 21:23).
    - d. Such a one will work hard in this life and stand before kings (Proverbs 22:29).
    - e. Riches, honor, and life will belong to the man who fears God and keeps His commandments (Proverbs 13:11; 22:4).
    - f. A long life (Proverbs 9:11).
    - g. Integrity among peers (i.e., such a one is trustworthy and people know it) (Proverbs 12:8-9).
  2. The man who hardens his heart in sin shall always experience troubles in life (see study # 25):
    - a. Solomon earlier said, *"He that sows iniquity shall reap calamity; And the rod of his wrath shall fail"* (Proverbs 22:8).
    - b. Those who look for trouble in this life find it quickly (see Proverbs 11:27-28; 12:21; 13:6, 21; 15:6).
    - c. The **way of the transgressor is hard** because he brings trouble to his life with his hard hearted ways (Proverbs 13:15).
    - d. This man's way is like trudging through a hedge of thorns (he takes the most difficult way) (Proverbs 15:19).
    - e. This man inherits the wind (Proverbs 11:29) and has little sustenance to satisfy his hunger (Proverbs 13:4).
    - f. Eternal destruction belongs to this man (Proverbs 16:4).
- P. *"As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear, So is a wicked ruler over a poor people. The prince that lacks understanding is also a great oppressor; But he that hates covetousness shall prolong his days"* (28:15-16).
1. We have noted in this study some facts about God's expectations of the king (see study # 40):
    - a. He is to reign in wisdom with justice (Proverbs 8:15-17).
    - b. The king's judgments are made with wisdom (Proverbs 16:10).
    - c. His rule is with kindness and truth (Proverbs 20:28).
    - d. The king's favor is with the wise (Proverbs 14:35).
    - e. His nation is exalted when the citizens act wisely (Proverbs 14:34).
    - f. The nation that acts in folly and wickedness will experience the king's wrath (Proverbs 19:12; 20:2, 26).
    - g. Wicked men fear to stand before a just king (Proverbs 20:8).
    - h. God's will is that man honor the king (Proverbs 24:21).
    - i. No matter the course the king takes God's providence will be exercised over the mighty kings of the earth (Proverbs 21:1).
    - j. A king who takes away the wicked shall have his throne established in righteousness (Proverbs 25:4-5).
    - k. The king is to *"hate covetousness."*
  2. While God, and consequentially man, has expectations for the kings of a land some do not live up to said mannerism. Some are *"wicked"* and *"lack understanding."* Like a roaring lion over a prey he devours the poor with greater taxes and hard labor. Such a man does not meet the approval of God nor man (see Rehoboam).

- Q. *"A man that is laden with the blood of any person Shall flee unto the pit; Let no man stay him"* (28:17).
1. Those who commit murder usually go in hiding.
  2. Solomon instructs all else to give such a man no help.
- R. *"Whoso walks uprightly shall be delivered; But he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once"* (28:18).
1. Once again we find the theme of Proverbs.
  2. Do what is right and good things will result. Do that which is perverse or wrong and experience the fall of trouble.
- S. *"He that tills his land shall have plenty of bread; But he that follows after vain persons shall have poverty enough"* (28:19).
1. The same statement is made at Proverbs 12:11. Once again the diligent worker is contrasted with the lazy sloth. Those who work shall have plenty but those who are lazy shall be in want of bread.
  2. Those considered "*vain*" or "*void of understanding*" (12:11) follow after worthless people (i.e., people who are sinful and speak with perverted lips / Proverbs 6:12), commit adultery (Proverbs 6:32), they are simple (Proverbs 7:7; 9:4-6), despise their neighbors (Proverbs 11:12-13), and to them belong the rod upon the back (Proverbs 10:13) (see study # 15).
- T. *"A faithful man shall abound with blessings; But he that makes haste to be rich shall not be unpunished"* (28:20).
1. The "*blessings*" that await the faithful man who fears God are enumerated above at Proverbs 28:14).
  2. Nothing but punishment awaits the man whose life long ambition was to get rich. Consider the attributes of riches discussed in Proverbs (see study # 32):
    - a. Riches will not last for ever (Proverbs 13:11; 23:4-5).
    - b. Having the riches of this world may cause some to not care about others less fortunate (Proverbs 18:23).
    - c. A man with a vain imagination puts his trust in this world's riches (Proverbs 11:28; 18:11; 23:4-5).
    - d. No amount of this world's riches may save a man from one sin (Proverbs 13:7-8) or from the wrath of God (Proverbs 11:4-6). Such a one is due eternal punishment (Proverbs 28:20).
- U. *"To have respect of persons is not good; Neither that a man should transgress for a piece of bread"* (28:21).
1. Why is it that some exercise the spirit of "*respect of persons*?" Some exercise favor over others due to family relationships, skin color, friendships, past associations, and geographic familiarity. With God truth is truth and justice is justice (see Proverbs 18:5).
  2. The word "*neither*" connects the respecting of persons to a man stealing bread to satisfy his hunger. It is no more right to favor a person based on reasons other than truth than it would be for a man to steal bread because he is hungry. One may say, "I will condemn anyone else for robbing the grocery store of food but I cannot condemn my life long friend." With God justice is justice and no such lines of favoritism or situation can change that (see Amos 5:24) (see study # 17 and # 49).
  3. No matter what man's approach or attitude may be toward righteousness and justice truth remains truth (always has and always will) (see 2 Timothy 2:9-19).
- V. *"He that hath an evil eye hasts after riches, And knows not that want shall come upon him"* (28:22).
1. The man with an "*evil eye*" was said not to have your best interest at heart (see Proverbs 23:6-8). Others come to represent stepping stones to this man and he has no remorse while stepping hard on those stones.
  2. Now the evil eyed man is depicted by "*hasting after riches*." There are dangers associated with such a quest in life (see above). This man will receive the reward of riches which is an eternity of punishment (see Proverbs 28:20) (see study # 32).
- W. *"He that rebukes a man shall afterward find more favor Than he that flatters with the tongue"* (28:23).
1. Solomon had earlier said, "*Better is open rebuke than love that is hidden. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; But the kisses of an enemy are profuse*" (27:5-6). A true friend will tell you what you need to hear rather than what you want to hear. Sometimes people think they are doing a friend good by not saying anything about their friend's fault. To openly rebuke another is likely to

- embarrass and hurt the feelings of that person. Solomon says; however, "*Faithful are the wounds of a friend.*" Though I may have had my feelings hurt or was embarrassed when someone rebuked me openly it nonetheless is what I need.
2. If nothing is said I may continue on my wayward path. Those who are my enemies will tell me all is well rather than point up my shortcomings of sin or error in judgment.
- X. "*Whoso robs his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression, The same is the companion of a destroyer*" (28:24).
1. Imagine a young man or woman going into their parents closet and taking money from some hiding spot that was to be used for groceries or paying bills. Imagine the child taking money period from their parents without the parents knowing about it. Imagine the child going to the store or restaurant and blowing the money.
  2. Should that child feel good about themselves? Solomon says that such actions are transgressions and one who would do such a thing is a companion to destroyers (you are no different than the worst of the slothful good for nothing fools that Proverbs speaks of).
- Y. "*He that is of a greedy spirit stirs up strife; But he that puts his trust in Jehovah shall be made fat*" (28:25).
1. The greedy person is put in contrast to the one that "*puts his trust in Jehovah.*" The greedy person puts his vain imagination of trust in wealth and thereby exercises a spirit of greed to attain more and more (see Proverbs 18:11).
  2. Strife is stirred up by this person because he has little care for others and seeks only to gratify his personal need for riches (see Proverbs 18:23) (see study # 32).
- Z. "*He that trusts in his own heart is a fool; But whoso walks wisely, he shall be delivered*" (28:26).
1. The "*fool*" is further identified as one who places trust in his "*own heart*" (see study # 42). This man places hope in his own personal opinions, convictions, and conscience rather than the word of God (see Proverbs 14:12; 16:2, 25; 21:2; 26:12) (see study # 49).
  2. The wise put their trust in Jehovah and His divine revelation (see study # 39).
- AA. "*He that gives unto the poor shall not lack; But he that hides his eyes shall have many a curse*" (28:27).
1. What we do to the poor we do to God (Proverbs 17:5; 19:17) (See study # 58).
  2. What we do to the poor we also do to ourselves (Proverbs 21:13; 22:9, 16, 22-23).
- BB. "*When the wicked rise, men hide themselves; But when they perish, the righteous increase*" (28:28).
1. Men hid from the wicked because such men bring trouble and calamity to the lives of others.
  2. The righteous increase when the wicked perish out of the land because they are no more a threat to happy and joyous living.

## Chapter 29

### I. Sundry Antithetic Proverbs (29 all):

- A. "*He that being often reprov'd hardens his neck Shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*" (29:1).
1. The English Standard Version Bible reads, "*He who is often reprov'd, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.*"
  2. How could one come to be so hardened in sin that he could in no way be healed or find a remedy for his spiritual illness? This man has come to be so blind of his sin that he never recognizes a need to change. He is having too much fun or too much misery to think about repentance. This man does not consider spiritual matters (see Hebrews 10:26-31; 1 John 5:16-17) (see study # 90; Hard Hearts).
- B. "*When the righteous are increased, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man bears rule, the people sigh*" (29:2).
1. This same passage is found at Proverbs 28:28. Men hid from the wicked because such men bring trouble and calamity to the lives of others.
  2. The righteous increase when the wicked perish out of the land because they are no more a threat to happy and joyous living (see also Proverbs 11:10-11 and 28:12) (see study # 40).

- C. *"Whoso loves wisdom rejoices his father; But he that keeps company with harlots wastes his substance"* (29:3).
1. Having studied the majority of the book of Proverbs gives you and I a greater picture of the heartaches and happiness that occurs in the home due to a child's approach to Godliness and wisdom. Wisdom is that which brings happiness to an individual both now and forevermore. To not gain wisdom is to choose a rout of heartaches and troubles in life. A father would rejoice with his son who loves wisdom because the aged man knows about the troubles of life and the eternal troubles of hell. Likewise a father would mourn a child whose approach to life and eternity is foolishness because the aged man knows all the consequences associated with such decisions.
  2. Consider the picture of parental responsibility and divine expectations in the home (see study # 47):
    - a. Parents are commanded to instruct and chasten children that they may come to be wise (Proverbs 19:18; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14).
    - b. Children are told to hear and gain interest in the instructions of their parents that they might gain wisdom (Proverbs 1:8-9; 6:30).
    - c. Those children who hear, gain interest, and obtain wisdom make their parents happy and those who will not do so bring sorrows to their home (Proverbs 10:1; 15:20; 17:21, 25; 23:15-18; 27:11).
    - d. Not only do the rebellious children bring sorrow to their mother and father but they bring troubles (Proverbs 19:13) and shame to the home (Proverbs 17:2; 19:26-27; 28:7).
  3. The child who rejects the wisdom of his father and goes to harlots waste his parents substance. Recall that Solomon had said, *"My son, give me thy heart; And let thine eyes delight in my ways. For a harlot is a deep ditch; And a foreign woman is a narrow pit. Yea, she lies in wait as a robber, And increases the treacherous among men"* (Proverbs 23:26-28).
- D. *"The king by justice establishes the land; But he that exacts gifts overthrows it"* (29:4).
1. How does a king establish a land by justice? A nation that is "*established*" is one that has a wise, kind, and just king (Proverbs 8:15-17; 16:10; 20:28). A nation that is "*established*" by the king is a land that is exalted among other nations for their citizens good behavior (see Proverbs 14:34). To achieve an "*established*" nation of exaltation and justice the king must take away the wicked out of the land (Proverbs 25:4-5).
  2. A political recipe for disaster is to have a nation with a king that demands higher taxes upon its citizens that what they can bear and permits ungodliness to thrive (see Proverbs 28:2-3) (see study # 40).
- E. *"A man that flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his steps. In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare; But the righteous doth sing and rejoice"* (29:5-6).
1. How is it that flattery is a net or snare that would cause one harm? Solomon had earlier warned of the use of flattery in that it has the power to cause one to think more highly of themselves than they ought (see Proverbs 26:28). Solomon also said that flattery may be done to make someone feel ok or justified in their wrong doing (Proverbs 28:23).
  2. The righteous will be careful not to receive words of flattery when they ought to be shamed and neither will he permit himself to have an over inflated view of self.
- F. *"The righteous takes knowledge of the cause of the poor; The wicked hath not understanding to know it"* (29:7).
1. The Bible in Basic English reads, *"The upright man gives attention to the cause of the poor: the evil-doer gives no thought to it."* Throughout the study of Proverbs we find God's special care and interest for those who have attained poverty due to some calamity in life (Proverbs 22:22-23). The wise will not only take notice of the poor but they will show pity and mercy to them by giving them help (Proverbs 19:17; 20:13; 22:9; 28:27).
  2. The wicked do not so much as even take notice of a poor man who suffers due to some calamity in life (see study # 58).
- G. *"Scoffers set a city in a flame; But wise men turn away wrath"* (29:8).
1. It has been a while since we have visited with the scoffer in this study. Let us recall who the scoffer is: The word scoffer means to make fun of or treat others with disrespect. Here is what Solomon has to say about the scoffer (see study # 70):

- a. The scoffer is filled with pride and arrogance (Proverbs 21:24).
  - b. He will not take correction for his wrongs (Proverbs 9:7-9; 15:12).
  - c. He will not give a moment to listen to rebuke (Proverbs 13:1).
  - d. He hates knowledge and correction (Proverbs 12:1).
  - e. He seeks for wisdom; however, he does not find it because he looks in all the wrong places (Proverbs 14:6).
  - f. He is equated to the simple (Proverbs 19:25) (see study # 5).
  - g. He is a man of contention, argumentative, and angry (Proverbs 22:10).
  - h. He is an abomination to others (Proverbs 24:9).
  - i. There is hope for the scoffer (Proverbs 19:25, 29; 21:11).
2. The scoffer "*sets a city in a flame*" because of his contentious and proud spirit.
- H. "*If a wise man hath a controversy with a foolish man, Whether he be angry or laugh, there will be no rest*" (29:9).
- 1. Consider the attributes of the fool (see study # 42):
    - a. The fool loves to do sinful things (Proverbs 10:23).
    - b. He has no spiritual interest (Proverbs 18:2).
    - c. He measures himself by his personal conscience and opinions rather than the word of God (Proverbs 12:15; 28:26).
    - d. He has no shame about himself (Proverbs 13:6).
    - e. He is disrespectful to God and his fellow man (Proverbs 14:16).
    - f. He loves to argue with people (Proverbs 18:6).
    - g. He has no control over his anger and lets it all flow from his lips (Proverbs 29:11).
  - 2. Considering these attributes it stands to reason that if a wise man has a controversy with such a man there will be no rest for the man of understanding. The fool will continue to argue and act disrespectfully because he just simply does not reason as does the wise man. He could care less if a matter were spiritually right or wrong.
- I. "*The bloodthirsty hate him that is perfect; and as for the upright, they seek his life*" (29:10).
- 1. The idea seems to be that the wicked cannot stand the man who is upright and perfect with the Lord. They do not like the Christian because he is different and his manner of life convicts the sinful man of wickedness (see 1 Peter 4:4). When one's manner of life (i.e., his mannerism, his dress, his language) condemns others they are not happy. They are being exposed as wicked and wrong before others and they will not stand for this (see John 15:18ff) (see study # 87; Why are the Righteous Persecuted?).
  - 2. The objective, therefore, of the wicked is to make the perfect man just as they are (i.e., sinful and wicked in practices, language, and dress) (see study # 26).
- J. "*A fool utters all his anger; But a wise man keeps it back and stills it*" (29:11).
- 1. The book of Proverbs has painted pictures of various characters and attributes of man. We have looked carefully at the identity of a fool above (see Proverbs 29:9). A large portion of the Proverbs make **a clear distinction between the wise and the fool**. Here we have another of the distinguishing characteristics that make a distinct difference between the wise and fool. What we ought to begin to see is that there are no blurring of the lines that God draws. A fool is a fool and the wise are wise. Truth sets the distinct difference between these two (see study # 49).
  - 2. Consider the wise (see study # 39):
    - a. The wise are prudent, have knowledge, and seek discretion (Proverbs 8:12; 16:21).
    - b. The wise put their trust in Jehovah rather than self and thereby have a spirit that fears Jehovah (Proverbs 9:10; 28:26).
    - c. The wise recognize wickedness (Proverbs 22:3) and depart from it rather than seeking pleasure from sinful things (Proverbs 14:16).
    - d. The wise will listen to and regard correction (Proverbs 15:5).
    - e. The wise place high value upon prudence, knowledge, and discretion (Proverbs 16:16; 23:23).
    - f. The wise are interested in learning more about the things of God (Proverbs 16:21).
    - g. The wise controls their temper (see study # 45).
- K. "*If a ruler hearkens to falsehood, All his servants are wicked*" (29:12).

1. The ruler of the land who surrounds himself with lying councilors shall hear falsehood.
  2. When the king's servants speak falsehood they prove themselves to be wicked.
  3. The point being that the king should not only choose wise servants but have the ability and fortitude to identify lies (see study # 40).
- L. *"The poor man and the oppressor meet together; Jehovah lightens the eyes of them both"* (29:13).
1. Solomon had previously said, *"The rich and the poor meet together: Jehovah is the maker of them all"* (Proverbs 22:2). While there are things that separate man (race, economic, and or social background) there are also things that puts us all on a plane of equality. The first of all great equalizers of man is that God created us all. Secondly, we find from the verse under consideration that God *"lightens the eyes of all."*
  2. While each of us come from various backgrounds we nonetheless stand on a plane of equality in relationship to God's word. The Word of God has been delivered to man and each man has the opportunity to do with it what he will. Each man is given the same truth. The same word of God that is available to me to read is also available to Barack Obama, George Soros (socialist, factious, divisive, and wicked), Bill Gates, or Warren Buffet. This being the case we find that all men share in responsibility to that revealed standard of truth (see study # 50 and # 73).
  3. Jehovah brings the light of understanding to man through creation (Romans 1:20ff) and revelation (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:1) (see study # 91; Evidences that Produce Faith).
- M. *"The king that faithfully judges the poor, His throne shall be established for ever"* (29:14).
1. Solomon has explained how a nation is *"established"* (see notes above at Proverbs 29:4). The *"established"* nation is a nation whose king and people are concerned about their moral and spiritual standing with God. Take that away and the nation falls (see study # 40).
  2. The test to see whether a nation shall be established in morality and Godliness is how they deal with the poor of their land. The book of Proverbs has clearly set forth the standard in relationship to dealing with the poor. Those who are too lazy to work are not to eat (we are to even let them starve) (Proverbs 21:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). The king who faithfully judges the poor (i.e., makes wise judgments of man's needs based upon his personal efforts) will establish his kingdom. The king that gives to the sluggard who will not work shall bring down his kingdom (Proverbs 10:4) (see study # 40). Herein is the roots of socialism. Socialism is an attempt to put all men on an equal plain in relationship to economical and true social standing. The idea is that poverty would be eradicated if all wealth is shared. The problem with this system is that not all are motivated to work and so you have many doing the work for the slothful who will not work. You have the slothful benefiting from the hard work of another who spent years in college or some type of training and is a hard worker who burns the candle at both ends. Such practice is against our Bible's instruction.
- N. *"The rod and reproof give wisdom; But a child left to himself causes shame to his mother"* (29:15).
1. Recall that we have noted again and again that the child who rejects his parents instruction brings shame to the parents and home (Proverbs 17:2; 19:26-27; 28:7; 29:3).
  2. The mother (or father) who leaves a child to his own doings rather than correcting with the rod and reproof will produce a foolish child of shame. Remember, *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him"* (Proverbs 22:15). The objective of corrective measures (whether it be with the rod or with verbal instruction) is to bring the child to understanding, prudence, discretion, and wisdom. The parent who loves their child will do this (see study # 47).
- O. *"When the wicked are increased, transgression increases; But the righteous shall look upon their fall"* (29:16).
1. The more sinful people that are involved in sinful things the more sin they participate in (they are emboldened with each other).
  2. Eventually their sinful practice will catch up to them and they will pay the high price of their wickedness (sickness, disease, jail time, and even death) (see study # 25).
- P. *"Correct thy son, and he will give thee rest; Yea, he will give delight unto thy soul"* (29:17).
1. Rest and happiness in the home come when a child grows up to be a young man or woman of wisdom (Proverbs 27:11).



2. No such rest and happiness is in the home when a child takes the rout of foolishness (see study # 27 and # 47).
- Q. "*Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; But he that keeps the law, happy is he*" (29:18).
1. This verse is a continuation of the idea presented above at Proverbs 29:13. While all mankind has the word and equal opportunity to examine truth and conform their lives to it the reality of the matter is that many have "*no vision*" (i.e., they do not consider the words of morality and law and are blinded to creation and revelation). The further one goes in this direction the more "*the people cast off restraint.*"
  2. Note again the distinction between two individuals. First you have the man who has cast off restraint. Now we examine the man who keeps the law. True happiness is found in the man who would keep the law (see study # 56).
- R. "*A servant will not be corrected by words; For though he understand, he will not give heed*" (29:19).
1. The idea seems to be that one who is a servant or slave "will not be corrected by words" alone.
  2. He may understand what you are saying but to put wisdom into practice is not something he is willing to do.
- S. "*Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him*" (29:20).
1. This passage is very similar to Proverbs 26:12. The fool has greater hope of gaining wisdom and life than the man who makes a self assessment and concludes that he is wise though he be a fool.
  2. Another area of one's character that renders him hopeless is being quick to speak rather than using discretion and caution. Even the fool has more hope than this man.
  3. Let us not, therefore, be so quick to want to say something. Let us hear a matter out (see also Proverbs 17:28).
- T. "*He that delicately brings up his servant from a child Shall have him become a son at the last*" (29:21).
1. There seems to be a few ideas as to the obscurity of the Hebrews words for this verse. The idea is either that if you pamper a young servant in his early years he will grow up to disrespectful to you (the idea being that the young servants should be treated hard from the beginning so that they do not take advantage of you latter).
  2. The other idea is that a delicate or pampering of a young servant will prove to make him more respectful and responsible to you in his older years.
- U. "*An angry man stirs up strife, And a wrathful man abounds in transgression*" (29:22).
1. Solomon had earlier wrote, "*A wrathful man stirs up contention; But he that is slow to anger appeases strife*" (Proverbs 15:18).
  2. Anger and man's wrath does nothing but stir up contention (disagreements and conflicts) with others and sinful behavior (Proverbs 15:1, 4, 18) (see study # 45).
- V. "*A man's pride shall bring him low; But he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor*" (29:23).
1. Pride and humility are contrasted (see study # 31 and # 67).
  2. The man of pride and arrogance will be brought low in that eventually his character flaw is rejected by most all. The humble man is loved and honored by his fellow men. Consider the man of pride in Proverbs (see study # 31):
    - a. Pride brings shame to a man's life (Proverbs 11:2).
    - b. The proud heart is an abomination to Jehovah (Proverbs 16:5).
    - c. The Lord will root up the house of the proud (Proverbs 15:25).
    - d. Pride brings a man low in the eyes of others (Proverbs 29:23).
    - e. Pride brings a man to destruction (Proverbs 16:18-19).
- W. "*Whoso is partner with a thief hates his own soul; He hears the adjuration and utters nothing*" (29:24).
1. To hate one's own soul is to give up on an eternal hope of heaven. Those who wrong their souls are those who commit adultery (Proverbs 6:30-32), refuse to be corrected (Proverbs 15:31-32), speak words of foolishness (Proverbs 18:6-8), have little to no knowledge of divine things (Proverbs 19:2), and commit sins in general (Proverbs 8:35-36) actually hate their own souls and are destroyers thereof.
  2. To partner with a thief is to participate in acts of unrighteousness and folly. Such a one certainly hates his own soul (see study # 51).
- X. "*The fear of man brings a snare; But whoso puts his trust in Jehovah shall be safe*" (29:25).

1. The fear of man brings him to trust in riches (Proverbs 11:28; 18:11; 23:4-5), a strong city (Proverbs 21:22), and one's own heart (Proverbs 28:26). The "snare" is that in all reality none of these things can save one from one sin. The apostle Paul commanded Timothy to show no fear of man (2 Timothy 1:7) and so did our Lord Jesus (Matthew 10:28) (see study # 88; The Fear of Man).
  2. Having fear of man is put in contrast with putting one's "*trust in Jehovah*." God commands that man put their trust in Him (see Proverbs 3:5-6; 9:10). When one trusts the Lord with all their heart they give heed to His divine words (Proverbs 16:20). Such a life brings happiness and contentment (Proverbs 28:25) (see study # 89; Trust Jehovah).
- Y. "*Many seek the ruler's favor; But a man's judgment cometh from Jehovah*" (29:26).
1. Solomon has told us that those a righteous king favors are those who fear God and seek wisdom in this life (see Proverbs 14:35).
  2. Note; however, that man should not live in the fear of Jehovah to gain the favor of the king but rather the favor of Jehovah (see Proverbs 12:2). When men fear Jehovah they hate evil and will naturally be favored by the ruler!
- Z. "*An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous; And he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked*" (29:27).
1. Note the clear distinction between the two classes of men. The unjust is in contrast with the righteous and or upright. Each are an abomination to each other.
  2. There is no blurring of the lines (see study # 74).

## Chapter 30

- I. **The Identity of the Awesome Works of Jehovah as Opposed to Man's Mental Limitations (30:1-6):**
- A. "*The words of Agur the son of Jakeh; The oracle. The man saith unto Ithiel, unto Ithiel and Ucal:*" (30:1).
1. Who are Agur, Ithiel, and Ucal? There are a variety of ideas. Some believe Agur to be an allegorical designation of Solomon (this stems from the idea that every proverb written in this book was written by Solomon ~ see Proverbs 1:1). Others believe Agur to be the brother of Lemuel mentioned at Proverbs 31:1. Still others believe this to be a man from the geographic area of Massa.
  2. Ithiel and Ucal are possible sons, disciples, or contemporaries of Agur (Solomon / brother of Lemuel / person of Massa).
- B. "*2 Surely I am more brutish than any man, And have not the understanding of a man; 3 And I have not learned wisdom, Neither have I the knowledge of the Holy One*" (30:2-3).
1. Consider two other renderings of this verse: "*For I am more like a beast than any man, I have no power of reasoning like a man: I have not got wisdom by teaching, so that I might have the knowledge of the Holy One*" (Bible in Basic English Version). The New American Standard Version reads, "*Surely I am more stupid than any man, And I do not have the understanding of a man. Neither have I learned wisdom, Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One.*"
  2. Our natural question is this: Why is Agur so hard on himself? Is he truly ignorant with no wisdom nor knowledge of the Holy One at all? Is Agur frustrated because, though he has learned wisdom and the knowledge of God, he fails to make its applications in his life through sin and weakness? Was Agur making a similar confession to that of Socrates in that he believed himself only to be wise inasmuch as he had knowledge of his ignorance?
  3. Asaph had made a similar statement when he said, "*So brutish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee: Thou hast holden my right hand. Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory*" (Psalms 73:22-24). Is Agur comparing his wisdom and understanding to that of God and thereby seeing his ignorance? The context will prove that man must know his place in this world that God has created. We are all beast like, ignorant, or brutish in relationship to Jehovah God (see study # 92; Know your Place).

- C. *"4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in his garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?"* (30:4).
1. With this verse we begin to see that Agur's statement of ignorance and beastlike in reason is an humble comparison of his own being with that of Jehovah. Lest man begin to think that he is something in this life let us consider Jehovah that we keep our proper place. We are designed to be in subjection and obedience to His divine being (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:15-16) (# 92).
  2. Agur looks to Jehovah. The Lord of the heavens ascends and descends from different dimensions of time and space (the heavenly spiritual realm and the earthly fleshly and physical realm). Who can understand how God is able to literally grasp the wind in his fist and control the boundaries of waters. Jehovah established the most remote parts of the earth while man struggles to simply find these places.
  3. Agur asks for the name of such a one who has such power and infinite wisdom. Is there a man who is able to do such things? Tell me the name of such a man and who is his son, *"if thou knowest."* The answer, of course, is that there is no such man. When man comes to understand his lowly before Jehovah God then he will be ready to gain true wisdom. I do not know how God formed this world. Yes, He spoke it into existence, but can I explain such power? Can I mimic that great power? What part of creation can any man truly explain? All man can do is research and study what is happening in our cosmos but we can and will never be able to explain the prime mover, Jehovah, in all of His infinite power and wisdom. Jehovah once asked Job, *"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding"* (Job 38:4).
  4. All the things of this universe may be studied and figured out as far as it workings; however, to actually hang the moon in the cosmos and control the tides of the ocean is another thing. If no man has the power to do such no man has the power to direct man's path but God (see study # 83). To do so would be to exercise a daring and careless spirit (see 2 Peter 2:10).
- D. *"5 Every word of God is tried: He is a shield unto them that take refuge in him"* (30:5).
1. The word *"tried"* is identified as tested, proved, flawless and pure. When one considers the magnitude of the unsearchable ways of the all wise Jehovah God we conclude that His words are divine, flawless, and pure. Our minds are made to tremble at his awesome knowledge and power. These flawless words do not need my help whatsoever (# 83).
  2. Though Jehovah's being is out of man's reach in understanding above those things that are revealed of him we do see that his objective is to shield and give refuge to mankind. What comforting words! The all knowing all powerful God who dwells in all places and creator of the universe desires to shield and give refuge to them who would so seek it. Man's shield and refuge are found in Jehovah's words.
- E. *"6 Add thou not unto his words, Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar"* (30:6).
1. Young's Literal Translation reads, *"Add not to His words, lest He reason with thee, And thou hast been found false."* The Bible in Basic English reads, *"Make no addition to his words, or he will make clear your error, and you will be seen to be false."*
  2. Agur has painted the obvious contrast between Jehovah and man in relationship to understanding and power. The all wise and powerful God has spoken words that give comfort and protection to man in life. If man can only be seen as a mere beast of ignorance in relation to Jehovah how is it that this beast **dare** add to divine words and instructions? (see 2 Peter 2:10ff).
  3. All words that relate to Jehovah's divine being and divine instructions for man's eternal existence must mirror His divine revelation else be identified as lies. The divine command is thereby, *"Add thou not unto his words"* (see also Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Revelation 22:18). Jehovah has set a standard in His divine words and they are not to be marred in any way (see study # 49; and # 83).

## II. Agur's Observations of Life (30:7-33):

- A. *"7 Two things have I asked of thee; Deny me them not before I die: 8 Remove far from me falsehood and lies; Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is needful for me: 9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is Jehovah? Or lest I be poor, and steal, And use profanely the name of my God"* (30:7-9).

1. Agur, in light of man's ignorance in relationship to Jehovah's divine power and wisdom, asks for two things from the Lord. First, he asks that falsehood and lies be "*removed far from me.*" A "*lie*" is that which adds to divine revelation which God had not said (see 30:6 above). The lie is set in contrast to truth. Those words that do not represent truth are lies. John writes, "*no lie is of the truth*" (1 John 2:21). Those who speak lies will find themselves in the eternal pits of hell (Revelation 21:8). Agur humbly request that he would never give in to temptation to altar God's divine standard.
  2. Secondly, the humble, conscience, and fearful Agur request that the Lord would permit him to be neither in poverty or obtain riches. Those in extreme poverty are tempted to steal bread to survive (see Proverbs 28:21). The poverty does not justify wrong but may be a strong pull to do the wrong. Likewise, riches have a strong pull (see study # 32):
    - a. Having the riches of this world may cause some to not care about others less fortunate (Proverbs 18:23).
    - b. A man with a vain imagination puts his trust in this world's riches (Proverbs 11:28; 18:11; 23:4-5).
    - c. No amount of this world's riches may save a man from one sin (Proverbs 13:7-8) or from the wrath of God (Proverbs 11:4-6). Such a one is due eternal punishment (Proverbs 28:20).
- B. "*10 Slander not a servant unto his master, Lest he curse thee, and thou be held guilty*" (30:10).**
1. Slander falls within the realm of gossip and lies (see Proverbs 10:18; 11:13; 18:8) (see study # 28).
  2. The slandering man causes the one lied about to curse thee and thereby the guilt of sin is self inflicted.
- C. "*11 There is a generation that curse their father, And bless not their mother. 12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, And yet are not washed from their filthiness. 13 There is a generation, oh how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. 14 There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, To devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men*" (30:11-14).**
1. While Agur considers the magnitude of Jehovah and the significance of divine revelation he reviews those who are blind to such things.
  2. Where shame and extreme guilt ought to reign in the hearts of those who curse their father and mother, measure themselves by themselves, proud, and devour the poor who have experience great calamity in life there is rather a numbness to their minds.
  3. Here are people who do not know their place in this world. To reject the instructions of the all powerful and all knowing Jehovah is to exercise a spirit of the greatest arrogance.
- D. "*15 The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, Yea, four that say not, Enough: 16 Sheol; And the barren womb; The earth that is not satisfied with water; And the fire that saith not, Enough*" (30:15-16).**
1. The "*horseleach*" (vampire - ASV footnote) is equated to the blood sucking leech. This grotesque bug has two daughters that are never satisfied (i.e., always crying for more and more).
  2. Agur identifies four things "*that are never satisfied*" (note that man ought to be satisfied with the things he is blessed with yet many cry for more and more). The author of Hebrews writes, "*Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee*" (Hebrews 13:5). Here are the four things:
    - a. The first thing never satisfied is "*Sheol*" (hell) (see Proverbs 27:20). Men are never satisfied with sin and so hell is never satisfied with enough souls (see study # 85).
    - b. Secondly, the barren womb is never satisfied. The woman who is unable to bear children will not rest until she conceives.
    - c. Thirdly is the earth never saying enough to water. The perpetual need for water in the form of rain will always be.
    - d. Lastly, fire never says enough. A forest fire will never quit or say enough as long as fuel remains on the ground. The fire continues to move to more fuel (dead twigs, leaves, and various forms of wood).

- E. *"17 The eye that mocks at his father, And despises to obey his mother, The ravens of the valley shall pick it out, And the young eagles shall eat it"* (30:17).
1. We have studied about the heart wrenching consequences of parents who wind up with a fool in life. Solomon wrote, *"A foolish son is a grief to his father, And bitterness to her that bare him"* (Proverbs 17:25 see also Proverbs 10:1; 17:21; 19:13, 26-27; 28:7).
  2. While we find the grief and pain caused to the rebellious child's parents in previous chapters we now find the personal consequences to the child who would be rebellious against his parents. The picture painted here is not pleasant (see study # 47). Young people ought to consider the all wise, powerful, and knowing Jehovah before they choose a life of foolishness.
- F. *"18 There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Yea, four which I know not: 19 The way of an eagle in the air; The way of a serpent upon a rock; The way of a ship in the midst of the sea; And the way of a man with a maiden. 20 So is the way of an adulterous woman; She eateth, and wipeth her mouth, And saith, I have done no wickedness"* (30:18-20).
1. Agur contemplates things that are *"too wonderful for me... which I know not"* (i.e., things that are beyond his ability to know).
  2. The four things are (see study # 93; Things that Man Cannot Know):
    - a. The way of an eagle in the air: There is something majestic, commanding, mysterious, and enigmatic about an eagle in flight. John Denver sang the song, "Rocky Mountain High" in which he claimed a man would be poorer if he never saw an eagle fly (see Job 39:27).
    - b. How does a snake, having no legs, push itself over a rock that is smooth.
    - c. Equally mysterious is a ship tacking through the ocean and making its way to some destination. To this point we may say, "But I can know about these things." The objective of Agur's statement is not the simple sight of these things but rather the ways of these events transpiring when we do not see them. Can I see the sky and say, "An eagle flew there" without having seen the eagle? Its like the old saying, "If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to witness it does it still make a sound?" Yes, but only God knows it.
    - d. Lastly, Agur says that *"the way of a man with a maiden"* is beyond his knowledge. The statement is explained by verse 20 (i.e., the adulterous woman). Obviously sexual intercourse is under consideration. As one cannot look to the sky and say an eagle flew through this area when there is not eagle there and as one cannot look at a rock and say, "A snake must have slithered across here," and finally, one cannot look to the oceans and see a trace that marked the passing of a ship. Likewise, one cannot look at a woman and conclude that she has had sexual intercourse. Only the Lord knows these things (and the woman who had done so).
- G. *"21 For three things the earth doth tremble, And for four, which it cannot bear: 22 For a servant when he is king; And a fool when he is filled with food; 23 For an odious woman when she is married; And a handmaid that is heir to her mistress"* (30:21-23).
1. Agur explains four things that are intolerable and go against nature itself.
  2. The four unnatural things are (see study # 20):
    - a. A servant who becomes king (unnatural because servants are not to rule nations).
    - b. A fool when he is full of food (the fool is unwilling to work and thereby should not have anything to eat).
    - c. An *"odious"* (hateful, bitter, and no qualities to make her loved) woman who gets married (see study # 36). It would be unnatural for her to be married because she does not make herself attractive to anyone.
    - d. The handmaid who receives the inheritance of her mistress. The handmaid has not the background of dignity and wealth to be a recipient of such fine things.
- H. *"24 There are four things which are little upon the earth, But they are exceeding wise: 25 The ants are a people not strong, Yet they provide their food in the summer; 26 The conies are but a feeble folk, Yet make they their houses in the rocks; 27 The locusts have no king, Yet go they forth all of them by bands; 28 The lizard taketh hold with her hands, Yet is she in kings' palaces"* (30:24-28).
1. Agur observes four little things of this earth that are great in wisdom (stature does not measure the degree of wisdom). The idea is that things are not always as they may seem to the human mind.
  2. Consider these four giants of wisdom:

- a. First is the ant. The ant, in my estimation, is one of the most fascinating insects. Though the tiny ant may seem insignificant it is said to be the strongest living creature in relationship to size. The ant's quality of wisdom is depicted in its extreme work ethic (see Proverbs 6:6-11).
  - b. The coney is a "gray or brown backed animal with white on the belly; it is like the alpine marmot, scarcely of the size of the domestic cat, having long hair, very short tail and round ears. It is found on Lebanon and in the Jordan and Dead Sea valleys" (Smith's Bible Dictionary pp. 122). Though a weak animal it strengthens its position by the solid rock it builds its home in.
  - c. The locust, though having no king, travel in great bands with foresight and guidance to their place of devastation to crops.
  - d. Finally, the wise little lizard is considered. The lizard may seem insignificant yet it finds itself in the most royal of palaces.
- I. **"29 There are three things which are stately in their march, Yea, four which are stately in going: 30 The lion, which is mightiest among beasts, And turns not away for any; 31 The greyhound; The he-goat also; And the king against whom there is no rising up"** (30:29-31).
- 1. Agur considers four "*stately things*" in their march:
    - a. The lion, mightiest of beasts and king of the jungle.
    - b. The greyhound (zebra or war horse) known for their stately gate.
    - c. The he-goat
    - d. The irresistible king who reigns with justice and wisdom allowing no uprising of wickedness.
  - 2. Here are now the five sets of four things Agur observes:
    - a. Four things not satisfied.
    - b. Four things too wonderful to comprehend.
    - c. Four things intolerable or things that go against the natural order of things.
    - d. Four little things that are great in wisdom.
    - e. Now, four stately things.
- J. **"32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, Or if thou hast thought evil, Lay thy hand upon thy mouth. 33 For the churning of milk brings forth butter, And the wringing of the nose brings forth blood; So the forcing of wrath brings forth strife"** (30:32-33).
- 1. The final words of Agur. Agur closes with the admonition of people to recognize when they have acted out in foolishness by elevating yourself through boasting or arrogant behavior. If you have participated in this put your hand over your mouth (i.e., stop it). Recognize the wrong and stop doing it. Know your place before the Almighty (see study # 92).
  - 2. To continue lifting up oneself may lead to fighting and strife with others. The Bible in Basic English reads verse 33 as follows, "*The shaking of milk makes butter, and the twisting of the nose makes blood come: so the forcing of wrath is a cause of fighting.*"

## Chapter 31

### I. King Lemuel receives advise from his Mother (31:1-9):

- A. **"The words of king Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him"** (31:1).
  - 1. The identity of king Lemuel is unknown.
  - 2. What follows in the next nine verses is a mother's advise to her son. While much of the book of Proverbs is instructions from a father to son (see Proverbs 4:1-5) we want to also note that the mother has a part in instructing her children (see Proverbs 1:8-9).
- B. **"2 What, my son? And what, O son of my womb? And what, O son of my vows?"** (31:2).
  - 1. The Bible in Basic English reads, "What am I to say to you, O Lemuel, my oldest son? And what, O son of my body? And what, O son of my oaths?" The idea behind the repeated questions appears to be the outward words of a mother's inward thoughts for her son. She contemplates her beloved son whom she apparently prayed fervently to receive in her youth. She wants the very best for him and so delivers the following advise. What mother would not want the best for her son?

2. Children are left to do with the instructions of their parents as they choose. Some reject and rebel while others listen and learn.
- C. "3 *Give not thy strength unto women, Nor thy ways to that which destroys kings*" (31:3).
1. There are three things that Lemuel's mother instructs him about. While in the 1980's people warned of sex, drugs, and rock and roll Lemuel's mother warns the king about wine, women, and worldliness.
  2. What "*strength*" is Lemuel's mother warning him not to give to women? What is it about a woman that serves as a potential destroyer to kings?
    - a. Samson was intoxicated with Delilah's love and he was destroyed (Judges 16).
    - b. Solomon was destroyed by his 700 wives and 300 concubines in that they lead him away from Jehovah with their idolatry (1 Kings 11:1-5).
    - c. The book of proverbs records the destructive consequences of giving one's self to a harlot (Proverbs 5:1-15).
  3. Lemuel's mother is warning her son of the potential danger that lies within the bosom of "women." Though to the eye they may appear beautiful and fun yet to give one's self over to the ungodly is to fall from grace.
- D. "4 *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; Nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink? 5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, And pervert the justice due to any that is afflicted*" (31:4-5).
1. Secondly, Lemuel's mother warns him about the erring affects of alcohol. Solomon has had some things to say about drinking intoxicated wine:
    - a. "*Hear thou, my son, and be wise, And guide thy heart in the way. Be not among winebibbers, Among gluttonous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags*" (23:19-21). Drinking wine makes one lethargic, lazy, and unwilling to work. Such a state brings one to poverty.
    - b. "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; And whosoever errs thereby is not wise*" (Proverbs 20:1). Wine stirs up fights and contention. Those who drink wine are not wise.
    - c. Wine can cause one to loose control of their sexual passions (Proverbs 9:1-3).
    - d. Wine will cause one to loose control over one's self and so man is commanded not to even look upon it (Proverbs 23:29-35).
    - e. Now we find Lemuel's mother advising the king not to drink intoxicating wine. To do so subjects one to "*forgetting the law*" and "*perverting justice due to the afflicted.*" The intoxicated person's mind is not fit for making judgments of law and considering one who is afflicted. The king's mind must be sharp and ready to defend and uphold the law with justice. The man who is intoxicated is not sharp or ready for anything other than sleep.
  2. The apostle Paul preached on the sin of even partaking of one drink of alcohol for reasons other than medicines. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7, "*So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night.*"
    - c. Paul contrast "*sleep*" and being "*drunk*" with "*watching*" and being "*sober.*" To sleep and be drunk is to be oblivious to one's surroundings.
    - d. To be on watch is the complete opposite of sleeping. To be "*sober*" (*nepho*) = "to drink no wine... to be sober, dispassionate" (LS 532). The illustration of the effects of alcohol on an individual is most effective in this context. Alcohol, even when drunk in moderation, causes one's judgment to be effected (Proverbs 31:5; Isaiah 28:7-8), takes away one's understanding (Hosea 4:11), makes one sick (Hosea 7:5), and causes a loss of mastery over self (Proverbs 20:1). Such a state of mind is dull, uninterested, tolerant, lethargic, apathetic, and generally of little care. The Hebrew Christians were guilty of this and thereby were in jeopardy of loosing their souls (cf. Hebrews 5:22; 6:12). A parallel to this passage is found at I Peter 4:3; 5:8.
- E. "6 *Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, And wine unto the bitter in soul: 7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, And remember his misery no more*" (31:6-7).
1. A king, responsible for representing justice, could in no way afford to affects of alcohol while ruling the kingdom. If wine dulls the senses to pain and causes one to forget his sorrows then the

- king could have no part of it. We may recall that Jesus was offered "*wine mingled with myrrh*" so that his pain may be dulled yet the Lord refused it (see Mark 15:22-23).
2. Drugs of all sorts have their proper place of dulling the pain and we are thankful for that; however, healthy people do not have pain needs but rather responsibilities.
  3. Who does beer and wine belong to? Beer and wine belong to people with problems (health or misery). Beer and wine belong to those of the world who do not want to have a sober outlook upon their current responsibilities. Beer and wine belong to the worldly who seek to dull their senses. The Christian is not one with the problems of the world and should thereby not look to dull any senses with the use of alcohol (see study # 65).
- F. "*8 Open thy mouth for the dumb, In the cause of all such as are left desolate. 9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, And minister justice to the poor and needy*" (31:8-9).
1. Our study of Proverbs has yielded a treasure chest of information regarding how men are to govern kingdoms (see study # 40):
    - a. He is to reign in wisdom with justice (Proverbs 8:15-17).
    - b. The king's judgments are made with wisdom (Proverbs 16:10).
    - c. His rule is with kindness and truth (Proverbs 20:28).
    - d. The king's favor is with the wise (Proverbs 14:35).
    - e. His nation is exalted when the citizens act wisely (Proverbs 14:34).
    - f. The nation that acts in folly and wickedness will experience the king's wrath (Proverbs 19:12; 20:2, 26).
    - g. Wicked men fear to stand before a just king (Proverbs 20:8).
    - h. God's will is that man honor the king (Proverbs 24:21).
    - i. No matter the course the king takes God's providence will be exercised over the mighty kings of the earth (Proverbs 21:1).
    - j. Here, we find that the expectation of a king's rule and kingdom is that of righteousness.
  2. The ruler who does not succeed in the eyes of a nation is the man who gives place to the wicked rather than exercising justice and displays a spirit of covetousness by exacting high taxes from his subjects (Proverbs 28:15-16; 29:2-4).
  3. The king, above all people, should never have respect of persons. The same law that governs the educated may govern the "*dumb*." The same law applies to both rich and poor. Lemuel's mother encourages her son to be fair, just, and righteous (i.e., exercise lawful judgment on all). Many times the dumb and poor do not get proper representation due to their state of being. Solomon had earlier wrote, "*The king that faithfully judges the poor, His throne shall be established for ever*" (Proverbs 29:14).

## II. The Worthy Woman (31:10-31):

### Foreword to Study:

Proverbs 31:10-31 sets the tone for God's expectation of women for all time. While there is much to be said about a man and his duties in the home this study examines the wife and mother. Proverbs 31:10-31 serves as a commentary explaining Paul's admonition for women to "*rule the household*" (1 Timothy 5:14) and be "*workers at home*" (Titus 2:5). The chapter expands upon and removes the cloud of uncertainty as to what being a "*help meet*" is all about (Genesis 2:18). Keil and Delitzsch remark that "The housewife is depicted here as she ought to be; the poet shows how she governs and increases the wealth of the house, and thereby also advances the position of her husband in the common estimation, and he refers all these, her virtues and her prudence, to the fear of God as their root" (Keil and Delitzsch volume 6, page 480). The worthy woman is a rare person among humanity because she aids the man in every aspect of the home. Not many women have the desire, grit, health, physical strength, and stamina to do what this woman does. To examine the worthy woman of God in the scriptures is to embark upon a journey that leaves a man at awe in relationship to this person's faith, work ethic, love, devotion, and trustworthiness. This article shall serve to identify the worthy woman as revealed in God's divine revelation.

Before examining Proverbs 31 we must note that the 30 chapters leading up to this chapter have constructed concrete pictures in our minds regarding this woman. This woman is gracious (Proverbs 11:16), discrete (Proverbs



11:22), concerned about the spiritual welfare of her children (Proverbs 10:1), and she is the "*crown of her husband*" (Proverbs 12:4). Carefully note that Solomon wrote, "*Every wise woman **builds** her house; but the foolish pluck it down with her own **hands***" (Proverbs 14:1). The HANDS of a woman play a large part of identifying the worthy woman as we shall see in our textual study below. The hands that work are praised while the hands that are slothful are condemned (Proverbs 6:6ff). A woman's hands aid (help meet) her husband in every aspect of the home (i.e., rearing children, promoting love and discipline, promoting spiritual growth, keeping up with the chores of the home, and providing food, shelter, and clothing).

One grave mistake brethren make today is to condemn a woman who works in this world. Bible women worked! Eve was Adam's help meet (Genesis 2:18). Ruth, the Moabite proselyte was known as a worthy woman because of her extreme work ethic and kind disposition toward her mother-in-law (Ruth 1:8, 14; 2:2, 7, 11, 17-18, 23; 3:10-11). Lydia was a seller of purple from Thyatira who had a household (Acts 16:14-15). Priscilla shared a "*trade*" with her husband as "*tentmakers*" (Acts 18:2-3). The worthy woman of Proverbs 31 was a literal work horse. Bible women worked and God commands that such women who aided their husbands in every aspect of the home were to be praised rather than condemned (Proverbs 31:30-31). Women at every stage of life are found working in the Bible. That which sets the worthy woman apart is that we enter her life in the midst of children yet she is able to take care of every aspect of the home. Not many women are able to do this. Not many women have the passion, drive, physical and emotional strength to do such work. The worthy woman is indeed a rare jewel.

It is fascinating to note that Proverbs 31:10-31 is written in alphabetic acrostic form known as *Abecedarius*. Each verse of Proverbs 31:10-31 begins with a letter in the Hebrew alphabet beginning from the first to last. Psalms 119 is a more notable form of *abecedarius* writing that we are familiar with. Other Bible writings in this form are the book of Lamentations and Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145. The objective of acrostic literature is to serve as a memory aid. It was the obvious intention for the author to have his readers remember these divine instructions through this method of writing. Psalms 145 is said to be cited three times a day in Jewish services due to its acrostic style. To be sure that Bible women would forever remember their duty to the home the author wrote in a style of writing that would help them do this. Let us now consider Proverbs 31:10-31.

A. "**10** *A worthy woman who can find? For her price is far above rubies*" (31:10).

1. The Hebrew word "*worthy*" (*chayil*) is found 243 times in the Old Testament and translated in various forms in various context. The word may mean strength, might, efficiency, wealth, force, or army. The King James Bible translates the word as "**virtuous**" (the idea of being honorable and upright). We shall permit the text before us to precisely define the word "*worthy*."
2. Note first that the worthy woman is valued "*far above rubies*." Like precious stones of great worth so the worthy woman is such a treasure that is hard for men to find ("*who can find*" such a woman??). Solomon wrote, "*Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor of Jehovah*" (Proverbs 18:22). Solomon had earlier said, "*House and riches are an inheritance from fathers; but a prudent wife is from Jehovah*" (Proverbs 19:14). Solomon also wrote, "*My soul searches but I have not found: one man among a thousand I have found but a woman among those I have not found*" (Ecclesiastes 7:28). **Here is a woman who is hard to find and extremely valuable to a man. She is not common among women.** What is it that makes this woman so different and valuable? A study of Proverbs 31 yields the answer. This woman is a rare jewel in that she stands out as one strong, willing, and able to meet all the work that is involved in having a home. Most women can only handle parts of the home's needs.

B. "**11** *The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he shall have no lack of gain*" (31:11).

1. The "*gain*" (spoil - ASV footnote) that such a blessed husband has from this woman is her aid in all aspects of the home (i.e., rearing children, promoting love and discipline, promoting spiritual growth, keeping up with the chores of the home, and providing food, shelter, and clothing). The woman who meets the identity of "*worthy*" has the **trust** of her husband. The husband will trust this woman's marital fidelity and her genuine love for their children's spiritual well being (Proverbs 10:1).
2. The "*worthy woman*" gives no cause for the man to be concerned of adultery, ruinous behavior around children, or the home period. Her desire for the overall well fare of her home is well

known. The worthy woman is a "*crown of her husband*" in that he trust her and is not ashamed of her ways (Proverbs 12:4 / 7:17-20). The woman who lacks discretion, lacks kindness, flirtatious with other men, lazy, and odious is an embarrassment and rottenness in the bones of her husband (Proverbs 7:9-12).

- C. "12 *She doeth him good and not evil All the days of her life*" (31:12).
1. Note the relationship between a husband and the worthy woman to this point. Her words and actions have brought a high degree of **trust** to the relationship. The trust the husband has toward this woman is due to the fact that he receives **gain** and **good** from her "*all the days of her life*."
  2. The godly woman is depicted as one who "*builds her house*" as opposed to the foolish woman who "*plucks it down with her own hands*" (Proverbs 14:1). Solomon had wrote at Proverbs 9:1 that wisdom builds her house upon seven pillars. The seven "*pillars*" of wisdom are consistently identified in Proverbs as truth, instruction, knowledge, understanding, prudence / discretion, a diligent work ethic, and the fear of the Lord. The wise woman will apply these principles to her approach of her house. She has nothing but the best intentions for her household and this is why she "*doeth good and not evil*" to the husband.
  3. Some women "*doeth evil*" to their husbands and thereby wreck the home. We see over and over the admonition to steer clear of adultery in Proverbs yet many women give no heed to such warnings. Some wives are like a leaky faucet that drips and drives a man mad by bickering, arguing, nagging, pride, never wrong, never wanting to loose and argument, never receptive to any kind of advise, rejecting even the loving caring words of her husband (see Proverbs 19:13; 21:19; 25:24; 27:15-16; 31:23).
- D. "13 *She seeks wool and flax, And works willingly with her hands.* 14 *She is like the merchant-ships; She brings her bread from afar*" (31:13-14).
1. Young's Literal Translation reads, "*She hath sought wool and flax, And with delight she worketh [with] her hands.*" Note the word "*hands.*" The worthy woman's hands are working hands rather than idle hands. The chapter will repeatedly bear out the importance of this woman's hands.
  2. "Wool and linen were the most common fibers woven into cloth for garments (Leviticus 13:47ff etc.), although any blending of the two was expressly forbidden (Deuteronomy 22:11). Wool was of considerable commercial value and was accepted as tribute from Moab by the king of Israel (2 Kings 3:4; Isaiah 16:1)... Wool provided clothing for the rich (James 5:2, by implication), in contrast to the rough sheepskin clothing of the destitute (Hebrews 11:37)" (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia {hereafter - ISBE} v. 4, page 1101). "*Flax*" is the oldest known textile fiber, and in antiquity linen was the preferred fabric for clothes, especially in Egypt, where the priestly garments were of pure linen... Flax is produced from the herbaceous plant *Linum usitatissimum* which grows up to 4 feet in height and is probably native to Mesopotamia. The tough fibers of the stalks are separated from the soft, nonfibrous parts by prolonged soaking in water. When dried the fibers are removed by combing" (ISBE v. 2, page 313).
  3. The husband trust in this woman because she brings him gain and good. Here she is depicted as "*seeking*" wool and flax working "*willingly with her hands.*" Her diligent work at gathering the stalks for flax and getting wool with her labors brought gain to the home. Her home was clothed and she obviously, like a "*merchant ship*" loaded down with products for sale, takes the extras and sells them for gain.
- E. "15 *She rises also while it is yet night, And gives food to her household, And their task to her maidens*" (31:15).
1. While everyone else is sleeping she is at work for her family. The family must eat and she works diligently to see to it that there is food on the table for her husband and children. Not only is she making sure her family is fed but she diligently sees to it that the "*maidens*" are taken care of as well. During these days some Israelites had slaves that worked around the house to accomplish its goals.
  2. This worthy woman has slaves and she takes care of their needs for their work too. Many women today have all they can handle around the house during the day yet the one rare

jewel is not finished in the day she works through the night. This is what separates her from most other women.

F. *16 She considers a field, and buys it; With the fruit of her **hands** she plants a vineyard*" (31:16).

1. Here is a woman whose husband trust her because she has proved herself to him by bringing him gain and good through hard work of seeking wool and flax. She has sold the wool and flax and clothed her family thereby taking care of the family's body and financial needs. Again, not many women are willing or able to do such.
2. This woman's **hands** of labor do not stop at wool and flax. After careful consideration of various land this worthy woman purchases a field, with the money she earns selling the wool and flax, to construct the vineyard (see Proverbs 31:24). Once again, with her **hands** "*she plants a vineyard.*" Planting a vineyard was no piece of cake. Extreme labor went into constructing a vineyard. Consider these words from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia volume 4, page 986-987. "The common grapevine is mentioned in Scripture from the time of Noah... it became an important item of the Hebrew economy (Deuteronomy 8:8; 6:11 etc.); wine represents one of God's best gifts to human beings (Judges 9:13; Psalms 104:15). Viticulture (the cultivation of grapes) has always been prominent in the hill country of Samaria and Judea where the natural contours provide excellent terraces (cf. Isaiah 5:1ff). In early days the vine lay along the ground or trailed over walls and rocks (cf. Genesis 49:22), but later it was supported by poles or trellises (cf. 1 Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4 etc.). Constant care was necessary to ensure a fruitful vine. After the rains any damage to the terraces was repaired, and the ground was dug and cleared of weeds. Because of the delicate structure of the vine, damage was easily sustained by the plant, whether from storms, animals depredations, or the destruction caused by trespassers or pillagers. As in other plants, the quality of the fruit was safeguarded by the pruning of the branches. This operation was performed with pruning hooks (Isaiah 2:4; 18:5 etc.). Dead branches were pruned in spring (Leviticus 25:3ff etc.) and were gathered for burning (John 15:6). Foxes and jackals menaced the ripening grapes and in some districts wild boars damaged growing vines (Psalms 80:8, 12ff etc.). In the vineyards one or more stone towers were erected, in which the vinedressers lived (Isaiah 5:2; Matthew 21:33 etc.). The vintage season usually began in September and was a joyful occasion. Towns were often practically deserted as the people moved to temporary lodges in the vineyards. The grapes were gathered and carried in baskets or on a yoke to the big stone winepresses, which usually consisted of two containers, one above the other, hewn out of the solid rock (Joel 3:13 [Matthew 4:13] etc.)." For more on the labors involved in the vineyard read Matthew 21:33-34.
3. The point is obvious and only those who are willfully blind miss it. This woman was an extremist when it came to labor. The vineyard would not only include buying the land and planting the vines but also all that goes with a vineyard (i.e., purchasing the vines, preparing soil, planting vines, erecting poles or trellises, repairing damaged plants, keeping ground free of weeds that would suck up the needed nutrients for the vines, guarding against trespassers, pruning the vines with pruning hooks, gathering pruned deadwood and burning it, guarding the vines from jackals and boars, erecting a tower and wall for vineyard's protection, harvesting, and processing grapes into wine). The worthy woman was involved in this. Again, these types of works is what separates her from women who can only take care of the immediate needs of the home such as laundry and dishes. While there is nothing wrong with taking care of these necessities we must note that the worthy woman goes beyond the simple work of "house wife" duties. Not all women are willing or able to do such things. A rare jewel indeed!

G. *"17 She girds her loins with strength, And makes strong her arms"* (31:17).

1. Here is a strong armed woman whose callous hands are not that of holding a remote control to the television but with shovel and pruning hooks in hand she digs, plants, prunes, and builds in extreme labor.
2. This woman, as is further brought out below, is not only physically strong but mentally strong. There is no circumstance of the economy or weather that she fears because she knows and is confident that her labors will bear fruit. When things get hard she works harder. Indeed, a rare jewel.

- H. *"18 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable: Her lamp goes not out by night. 19 She lays her hands to the distaff, And her hands hold the spindle"* (31:18-19).
1. This hard working strong armed woman **knows** that "*her merchandise is profitable*" (i.e., the wool, flax, and wine from the vineyard). These products are sold and she thereby brings her husband gain and good. Note that this hard working woman burns the candle at both ends (*Her lamp goes not out by night*). While all else are sleeping she "*lays her hands to the distaff.*" The distaff is the idea of "reaching to pull the prepared fibers from the stick on which they were held" (ISBE v. 1, pp. 969) (to understand what is under consideration see notes regarding flax and wool above at Proverbs 31:13). Please note that over and over the worthy woman's **HANDS** are being referred to. These are not the hands of idleness! Many women's work ends with daylight but not the worthy woman. Indeed, a rare jewel.
  2. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy regarding the church's responsibility to financially support widows who were over 60 years of age at 1 Timothy 5. Paul commanded; however, that widows under 60 not be supported. Paul writes, "*And withal they (widows under 60 years old) learn also to be idle, going about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. I desire therefore that the younger widows marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling:*" (1 Timothy 5:13-14). Both Greek works of Moulton and Liddell and Scott define the word **idle** as used by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:13 as "**unemployed, living without labor, and lazy**" (Moulton 50; LS 114). God intended for these women to work like Priscilla the tent maker (Acts 18:1-2) and Lydia a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God (Acts 16:14). When these women were fully taking care of their homes they were "**ruling the household**" well.
  3. Notice also that Paul speaks of the public's perception of this woman. If she goes about not working and being a busy body she gives "*occasion to the adversary for reviling.*" The exact issue is brought up at Titus 2:3-4 where Paul writes, "*that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor, not slanderers nor enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is good; that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed:*" (Titus 2:3-5). The **reputation** of the Cretans was sloth and gluttony and for this cause they were not "*sound*" (Titus 1:12-13). If Christian women were have the reputation of "*sound in faith*" they were not to be idle in the home. Those who were idle gave cause for the world to have a faulty view of the Christian. The Lord is very concerned about the public's perception of what a true Christian is (see 2 Samuel 12:14; Philippians 1:28; 2:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:14; 6:1). When people looked to the worthy woman's work ethic her husband is magnified at the gate (he enjoys a good **reputation** in that his wife is a hard worker, lovingly in subjection to him, and she sees to it that the affairs of the home are taken care of... he trust her and has great gain and good because of this) (see Proverbs 31:23).
  4. It was Ruth's work ethic that caused Boaz to say, "*And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou sayest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a worthy woman*" (Ruth 3:11). All the city witnessed Ruth's extreme work ethic in addition to her kind care and concern for her mother-in-law (see Ruth 2:1-2, 7, 17, 23).
  5. The worthy woman's perception among those of her local society should be that of a hard working woman who sees to the needs of her home. She, and all who would wear the name worthy, are "*workers at home*" (Titus 2:5) and thereby they "*rule the household*" (1 Timothy 5:14). Her work of great labor is all for the home (i.e., **her concerns are domestic**) (more on Titus 2:5 at Proverbs 31:24).
- I. *"20 She stretches out her hand to the poor; Yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy"* (31:20).
1. Notice that the worthy woman's cup runs over due to her work ethic.
  2. She is such a hard worker that she has excess of that which her immediate family needs and she is able to help the poor (those who have experienced a calamity in life that causes them to be unable to sustain themselves).
- J. *"21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household; For all her household are clothed with scarlet"* (31:21).

1. While the slothful woman sits around twitting her thumbs and fretting over how her family will survive the harsh weather the worthy woman is *"not afraid."* **There is no fear in those who are willing to work!** The worthy woman is not waiting for a handout from anyone. The apostle Paul said, *"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, if any will not work, neither let him eat"* (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Note that the phrase, *"let him eat"* is one word in the Greek and is neuter (i.e., male and female under consideration) (Friberg's Analytical Greek New Testament page 632).
  2. The worthy woman's *"household are clothed with scarlet."* Scarlet "is applied to fabrics or yarns used in association with royal or gorgeous apparel (see 2 Samuel 1:24; Proverbs 31:21; Lamentations 4:5; Jeremiah 4:30; Nahum 2:3; Matthew 27:28; Revelation 17:4; 18:12, 16)" (ISBE v. 1 page 732). The worthy woman's family did not run around town looking like poverty stricken people with holes and shabby clothes. Her children and husband wore the clothes of gorgeous royalty. They were able to have these things because of the wife and mother's extreme work ethic.
- K. "22 *She makes for herself carpets of tapestry; Her clothing is fine linen and purple"* (31:22).
1. No one can accuse the *"worthy woman"* of being a slothful sluggard (see Proverbs 6:6-11 etc.). Once again we see her at work *"making for herself carpets of tapestry."* Tapestry was a "fabric used both for bed coverings (Proverbs 7:16) and, perhaps, for clothing (Proverbs 31:22)" (ISBE v. 4, page 726). Seeing that her clothing is addressed secondly in this verse it seems likely that her bed coverings are under consideration in the first clause.
  2. Now the attire of the worthy woman is addressed. Did the worthy woman go around with sack cloth or old worn out poverty stricken clothes while her household dressed like royalty? No! The worthy woman's *"clothing is fine linen and purple."* Purple, "The most highly prized dye in the ancient world obtained from the secretions of four mollusks native to the eastern Mediterranean. Various shades could be produced by mixing secretions from different species, by adding salt or other substances, or by using procedures such as double dyeing... Since approximately eight thousand mollusks were required to produce one gram of purple dye, purple cloth was extremely expensive, and the Bible refers to it almost exclusively as used by kings or for cultic purposes... it indicated the awe-inspiring luxury of King Solomon's palanquin and of the hangings in the palace of King Ahasuerus (Ester 1:6)... they could also be a sign of well deserved prosperity (Proverbs 31:22)" (ISBE v. 3 page 1057). The worthy woman of Proverbs 31 wore luxurious clothing fit for kings because of her extreme work ethic. The fine things the family had were products of her hard work. The book of Proverbs brings out the fact that those who work hard and fear Jehovah have the luxuries of this life and those who will not have nothing (see Proverbs 22:4). Though these fine things of life belonged to the worthy woman they were not what defined her. This woman was rather defined by her *"fear of Jehovah God"* (Proverbs 31:30; see also 1 Timothy 2:9ff; 6:9).
- L. "23 *Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land"* (31:23).
1. Please note that the context of these verses is dealing with the wife identified as *"worthy."* Though her husband's position is mentioned it is only to illustrate where he is in the eyes of others due to the devotion and extreme work ethic of his wife. This man, who is blessed with a worthy woman, is *"known in the gates"* (where affairs of the city were discussed) due to his wife's labors.
  2. What are men known for today? The old saying, "Behind every great man is a great woman" is not used to often anymore because there are few worthy women. As stated earlier, a man or woman's reputation in the public's eyes says much about their character. The worthy woman's husband enjoyed a good reputation due to his wife's good work.
- M. "24 *She makes linen garments and sells them, And delivers girdles unto the merchant"* (31:24).
1. Again this wife identified as worthy is depicted as a work horse. She works with wool and flax, sells these linens, buys a field with the money, plants a vineyard (extreme labor and enormous

project not to be tackled by the slothful - see Proverbs 24:30-34). With the monetary gains from the vineyard she feeds and clothes her household like royalty. She also, with the excess, is able to help the poor and needy.

2. While many today claim that if a woman steps out of the house for labor she is in sin the worthy woman of God's word leaves the home to take her merchandise to the market and sells to merchants. Brethren confuse the man being the head of the home with being the only one permitted to work. That is a man made concocted idea no where found in the Bible. Again, others turn to Titus 2:5 and claim that she must work only in the home without examining context and the entirety of the role of the woman throughout the Bible. Our denominational friends do this kind of studying when they look to passages like Romans 10:9 and conclude that believing and confessing Jesus as Lord is the only thing people have to do to be saved. God's people are commanded to handle aright the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15). I often refer to Bible study as an exercise in connecting dots. The more I study a given subject within its context and within the confines of the subject throughout the entire Bible the more clear the picture becomes. Paul's point to Titus is that the woman is not to be lazy and idle like the Cretans (Titus 1:12). The word used by Paul, "*workers at home*" (Greek *oikouros*) is found this one time only in the entire Bible (Titus 2:5). We cannot thereby go to other text to see how the word is used to get a greater understanding as we would with other word studies. What we must do is look to the meaning of the word and the entire Bible's teaching on women. The Nestle and Marshal text translates the one Greek word "home-worker" (NM 847). When we divide the word up into syllables its root word "*oikos*" = "home, or one's house" (LS 546) and "*ergon*" = "work... mind your own business... one's business or proper work" (LS 311 – 312). Proverbs 31 and the examples of Eve, Ruth, Priscilla, and Lydia help us understand that this woman's work revolved around the family and home but that cannot be interpreted to mean that she cannot work outside the home. Why? Because the Bible gives many examples, as we have sited, of women who did. The work involved in having a home exceeds the raising of children, teaching Bible, providing secular education, sharing and promoting in the love of a family, and doing every day house chores. A home can only exist if money is being earned and bills paid.
  3. Here is a woman whose work has everything to do with the home! The husband may be involve in the matters of city and foreign affairs at the gate yet the worthy woman's care and concern is directed at the home. Whether the woman of the year 2011 has a job, works hard schooling the children at home, stays at home to work or takes work when available in various forms the thought is clear, she is to work hard for her family. Many judgments must be made in every home. Women with infants would be limited in what they could do in relation to laboring in linens and constructing a vineyard. Each family will assess their current condition and do what is best for the home.
- N. "*25 Strength and dignity are her clothing; And she laughs at the time to come*" (31:25).
1. The wife wearing the identity of "*worthy*" clothes herself in strength and dignity. When other women throw up their hands and give up, claim exhaustion and quit, or are too lazy to take care of the home the worthy woman digs in and prepares for the worst. She has a never quit attitude no matter the circumstances of life.
  2. Here is a woman not easily discouraged by bad news or changes in the financial landscape. If she has to work harder to make the same amount she did when days were good she will. This woman is not moved by adversity but rather embraces and is mentally prepared for all the curve balls of life that are thrown at her. This woman is mentally and physically strong. A rare jewel in today's world of pampered do nothing women. Solomon said, "*The desire of the sluggard killeth him; For his hands refuse to labor*" (Proverbs 21:25). Many women want the fine things of life yet are unwilling to lift a finger to work. Women who demand or expect the things of this life from their husband yet lift no finger to aid their husbands with the home can never meet the identity of "*worthy*" so long as they make such demands.
- O. "*26 She opens her mouth with wisdom; And the law of kindness is on her tongue*" (31:26).

1. The worthy woman is not only concerned with the physical things of life but she is also identified as wise and kind. Solomon had earlier said, "*A gracious woman obtains honor*" (Proverbs 11:16).
  2. Here is a woman whose mannerism is that of being courteous, polite, kind, and considerate of others. Furthermore, her wisdom defines an intense interest for spiritual matters. Solomon has revealed to us that the woman of God's approval is expected to act with discretion (Proverbs 11:22) and prudence (Proverbs 19:14).
- P. "*27 She looks well to the ways of her household, And eats not the bread of idleness*" (31:27).
1. Are you seeing a pattern here yet? God's divinely ordained worthy wife is not lazy but rather a hard worker. The Lord condemns the "*idle*" (see, as was stated above, 1 Timothy 5:13; Titus 1:12ff). The entire study of Proverbs proves God's **INTENSE** hatred for the sluggard (see Proverbs 6:6-11 and a multitude of other passages). This woman's conviction of "*idle*" time is made well known. Only those women who share an equal intense work ethic can relate to these words.
  2. Here is a woman who hears other women talk of soap operas, computer games, sleeping in, and boredom and says, "such words are foreign and unbelievable." This woman is not concerned with boredom because her plate is overflowing as she burns the midnight oil working. Her attention is to her household and she is not bitter about this. She embraces her God ordained role with her Lord, husband, and children.
- Q. "*28 Her children rise up, and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her, saying: 29 Many daughters have done worthily, But you excel them all*" (31:28-29).
1. This wife and mother is observed by her family as well as the society she lives in. Her children see how hard she works without complaining providing for their food, clothing, and spiritual well being. Such acts of love are returned with great respect, honor, and praise. The children have a high estimation of their mother because she makes it evident by her works that she loves her children.
  2. Likewise her husband also sees all his wife's hard work and praises her saying, "*Many daughters have done worthily, But you excel them all.*" Women are not given a free pass in the realm of respect but they must rather earn it from their husband and children (see Proverbs 12:4) . As this woman lives, works, and conducts herself in wisdom her husband's natural response is that of great respect, honor, and love. He knows her love for him and he returns that love to her (see 1 Peter 3:7).
  3. The worthy woman's husband makes an observation. He looks at other wives and their work and compares them to his wife's work. He acknowledges that many have done worthily (they aid their husbands in all aspects of the home the best they can). Yet there is something that separates the worthy woman from all else. This woman excels all other women in that she provides aid in every aspect of the home. Some would ask the question, "Is it sinful for a woman not to have some source of income to aid the husband in the home?" The answer is found here. Not all women have the grit, strength, health, and passion for the home as the "worthy woman." Again, we must note that she is a rare jewel. Not all women can measure up to this woman. Not many will at all. If you have a worthy woman give her praise and let no man condemn her.
- R. "*30 Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; But a woman that fears Jehovah, she shall be praised*" (31:30).
1. Grace and beauty are "*vain*" (i.e., worthless) in relation to the husband and children's needs. The worthy woman is on the opposite spectrum of worthlessness, "*For her price is far above rubies*" (Proverbs 31:10b). Solomon said, "*Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion*" (Proverbs 11:22). A woman who is elegant and beautiful has nothing on a woman whose whole life is devoted to God and her family and she will work till all her families needs are met. Note; however, that we would be in error to think that this woman walks around haggardly looking, with no makeup, lowly or

poverty stricken clothing, as though she were attempting to "look the part" of a worthy woman. This woman worked hard and dressed herself like royalty (remember, "*her clothing is of fine linen and purple*" - Proverbs 31:22). She made herself up to look appealing to her children and husband; however, her personal beauty was only a byproduct of her extreme labor. **Her real concern was meeting Jehovah's requirements for a God fearing worthy woman.**

2. The woman who is truly "*praised*" is the woman who "*fears Jehovah*." The idea of "*worthy*" is now complete. The worthy woman is one who is trustworthy, loves her family, and is a diligent worker. Such a disposition is identified as "*fearing Jehovah*." The subject of "*fearing Jehovah*" comes up often in the book of Proverbs. Note that "*fearing Jehovah*" means: To be wise (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:34), to depart from evil (Proverbs 3:7), to hate evil, pride, arrogance, the perverse mouth, and the evil way (Proverbs 8:13), and to walk upright (Proverbs 14:2). The wise woman who hates evil and walks upright before Jehovah is the woman in whom her husband trust as she brings him gain and good in this life through an intense work ethic. The woman who takes care of all aspects of the home is identified as fearing God.
- S. "31 *Give her of the fruit of her hands; And let her works praise her in the gates*" (31:31).
1. Such a hard working woman deserves the "*fruit of her hands*." **One last time this woman's hard working hands are mentioned.** The fruits of her hands would include not only the money from the sell of her linens and wine from the vineyard but also the respect, praise, and honor for working so hard.
  2. This woman's reputation precedes her and is manifested in her products she brings to the merchants for sell. She is certainly due the praise she receives. She is well dressed, well mannered, and enjoys a well reputation among all who know her. The apostle Paul said that we are to give "*honor to whom honor*" is due (Romans 13:7). Such a woman deserves honor and is to be praised rather than condemned by uninformed brethren.

## Conclusion:

God's expectation for the woman is set in His divine standard. When the Lord created the woman he referred to her as man's "*help meet*" (Hebrew *ezer*) (Genesis 2:18). The Hebrew word *ezer* is found 21 times in the OT and is usually translated "*help*" (i.e., "to give assistance to; aid" [American Heritage Dictionary 604]). What did the man need assistance and aid doing? The man needed assistance in keeping God's laws (Genesis 2:16), replenishing the earth through reproduction (Genesis 1:28), subduing and having dominion over animal life (Genesis 1:28), and tending the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15) that they may eat food (Genesis 1:29). She was to be his partner in this work. The Lord never intended for the man to do everything in the home. God's arrangement was for there to be a man and woman working together. Many women are limited in what they can do. Some are limited by strength and health. Others are limited by an unwilling and lazy heart. Still some are limited by preconceived ideas of what God's worthy woman is. Each man ought to consider his wife's abilities and not demand more out of her than what God does knowing that she is the "*weaker vessel*" (1 Peter 3:7). Many do well but there is one that excels them all.

Man's help meet is a woman who fears Jehovah in that she "*rules the household*" (1 Timothy 5:14). She has a never quit attitude and is not easily discouraged. She is the workhorse among workers. She is very uncommon in that she knows her place. She is in subjection to her husband, her head, yet continues without complaint in her God ordained work in the home (Ephesians 5:22ff). She is careful to not to have "*dominion over a man*" as God has ordained (see 1 Timothy 2:12-15). She voluntarily remains silent in the assembly of saints on the Lord's day and thereby displays a spirit of lowliness before men and respect for God's order (1 Corinthians 14:34ff). Truly such a woman is a find that can scarcely be put into words. Such a hard working woman may be inclined to demand a greater role in the church and society; however, the worthy woman loves being a woman of God. A lovely person indeed! Not many women are willing to accept such a place. Not many women will accept such a place. She is a rare jewel indeed (Proverbs 31:10). Men who have found such a prize ought to praise her and thank the Lord.