

A BIBLE STUDY ON PROVERBS  
Proverbs 1:1-33

1. What is a proverb? Look it up in a dictionary.
  
2. Who wrote the book of Proverbs? (Cf. 1:1; 10:1; 22:17; 25:1; 30:1; 31:1)
  
3. Who was Solomon and what was he like? (Cf. Prov. 1:1; I Ki. 4:29-34; Eccl. 12:9-10)
  
4. According to Prov. 1:2-6 why was Proverbs written?

Why do you think Solomon would want others to grow wise?

1:7 = Where does true wisdom and knowledge come from? (Ex. 20:20; Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Is. 33:5-6)

5. 1:8-19 = Who should we learn wisdom from? (Cf. Dt. 6:4-9)

Will sinners try to entice us?

Why is peer pressure so hard to resist?

Why would they try to entice the king's son (or anyone else) to join them?

What is their reasoning for doing it?

What reasons does Solomon give his son to stay away from them?

What is the verse 17 referring to?

6. 1:20-33 = Here wisdom is personified as a woman. Does she tried to hide her wisdom?

Who is she crying out to?

What is their general state? (Cf. Is. 32:1-8)

Did they respond to wisdom?

What would wisdom have done if they had responded? (Cf. Ps. 25:14; Ja. 1:5)

What happens when we don't respond to wisdom's rebuke? (Cf. Zech. 7:8-14)

In contrast, what happens to those who listen to wisdom?

How might Galatians 6:7–10 fit with this passage?

## A BIBLE STUDY ON PROVERBS

### Proverbs 1:1-33

Proverbs is a book full of Godly practical wisdom for anyone, at any age, who is willing to learn. Studying and memorizing it will change your life and your thinking patterns. Although Jewish poetry, Proverbs is a book of contrasts more than rhyme: the way of the wise and the way of the fool; the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked; the way of the Lord and the way of the world. Sometimes it's hard to discern what the connection is between these contrasts, but in the Jewish mind there is always a connection. "Sometimes there are two statements—one heavenly and one earthly—to emphasize one point. Sometimes there are two statements saying exactly the same thing, but stated differently to emphasize the real point. It's not always easy to discern what Proverbs is driving at."<sup>1</sup> But we'll work on that. "You will never find such stark contrast in your mind (how you think) and your emotions (how you feel) as when you will when you study the Book of Proverbs. You will begin to see that it is black and white with God. You don't put one foot in the world and one foot with God and try to walk that line. It's 'either/or' in Proverbs."<sup>2</sup>

#### 1. What is a proverb? Look it up in a dictionary.

"A brief popular saying (such as "Too many cooks spoil the broth") that gives advice about how people should live or that expresses a belief that is generally thought to be true."<sup>3</sup>

Proverbs are practical wisdom often written in short couplets which are easy to remember, to-the-point sentences about life. They often make comparisons or summarize a common experience. This is called poetic parallelism.

"In the Bible's Wisdom literature being wise means being skilled in godly living. Having God's wisdom means having the ability to cope with life in a God-honoring way."<sup>4</sup> First we must be rightly related to God and then rightly related to others.

"There are three statements in Proverbs which define wisdom for us. The first is that WISDOM IS THE ATTRIBUTE OF GOD BY WHICH HE CREATES, SUSTAINS, AND CONTROLS ALL THINGS" (Prov. 3:19-20). "Got not only spoke everything into existence, but He sustains and controls it all is well. "When we observe the laws of the universe, we see a reflection of the attributes and character of God, Himself. That is

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<sup>1</sup> Hocking, David, *Practical Proverbs for Your Problems*, Promise Pub. Co., Orange, CA, c 1991, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/proverb>

<sup>4</sup> Walvoord, John F. and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, OT, Victor Books, Wheaton, IL, c. 1985, p. 902.

what we call wisdom"<sup>5</sup> (Prov. 8:12, 22-31). So, everything that happens to us in life is being controlled by wisdom, even when those things don't appear to be wise. "Even when I suffer the consequences of my own foolish actions, I observe quickly that God was wise in letting me suffer... We can easily be fools. Wisdom is God controlling our foolish actions so that we experience an adequate consequence that shows us that we need His wisdom. How fascinating is the wisdom of God!"<sup>6</sup>

The second statement in Proverbs regarding wisdom is this: "WISDOM IS THE ASSET WHICH IS FAR MORE VALUABLE THAN ALL OTHER PURSUITS."<sup>7</sup> All the human education in the world doesn't necessarily give us wisdom. Wisdom often comes through life experiences such as grief, sorrow and pain, misunderstanding and misapplication. And sometimes what we know can stand in the way of wisdom. We should pursue wisdom (Prov. 3:13-18; 4:5-9; 8:10-11, 19; 16:16).

The third statement is this: "Wisdom is also THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S HOLINESS TO ALL WE SAY AND DO"<sup>8</sup> (Prov. 3:7; 4:11-19; 6:23-24; 7:1-5). Wisdom leads to a full life.

See also Dt. 4:5-8; Ps. 19:7.

## **2. Who wrote the book of Proverbs? (Cf. 1:1; 10:1; 22:17; 25:1; 30:1; 31:1)**

Solomon, some other wise guys, Agur son of Jakeh, and King Lemuel.

## **3. Who was Solomon and what was he like? (Cf. Prov. 1:1; I Ki. 4:29-34; Eccl. 12:9-10)**

**Prov. 1:1** = He was the son of David, king of Israel.

**I Ki. 4:29-34** = God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than any other man, including Ethan the Ezrahite – wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke 3000 proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom. (Solomon possessed wisdom in many areas of life, not just the spiritual side.)

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<sup>5</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.* p. 6.

**Eccl. 12:9-10** = Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true. (Solomon didn't keep his wisdom to himself but shared it with whoever would listen.)

#### **4. According to Prov. 1:2-6 why was Proverbs written?**

- for attaining wisdom and discipline; (disciplined skill in right living)
- for understanding words of insight; (mental acumen)
- for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; (high moral standards)
- for giving prudence to the simple (naïve and untaught), knowledge and discretion to the young (inexperienced) – let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance –
- for understanding Proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles (and indirect, oblique, or enigmatic statement—like a figure of speech—which needs interpretation) of the wise.

Proverbs was written "to develop in others, especially the young, a wise, skillful approach to living, which begins with being properly related to the Lord."<sup>9</sup>

#### **Why do you think Solomon would want others to grow wise?**

Those who have God's wisdom love to share it with others. Also having a kingdom full of wise and understanding people would make the kingdom prosper and bring glory to God. The people would be much easier to rule over and there would be much less violence and crime.

#### **1:7 = Where does true wisdom and knowledge come from? (Ex. 20:20; Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Is. 33:5-6)**

From God. Wisdom is an attribute of God, and apart from Him a person is ignorant of spiritual things. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. And all Scripture is given by inspiration of God... (II Tim. 3:16-17). You can't expect to gain wisdom without being in God's Word. If you think there are better answers somewhere else then you're already in trouble: fools despise (hold in contempt) wisdom and discipline. Come in faith seeking the Giver of wisdom.

**Ex. 20:20** = When we learn to fear God it keeps us from sinning.

**Job 28:28** = The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.

**Ps. 111:10** = The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding.

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<sup>9</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.* p. 902.

**Is. 33:5-6** = The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on high; He will fill Zion with justice and righteousness. He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.

Often we find ourselves in a dilemma: Do we believe God's Word and obey it, or do we put our own view on it and twist it to fit our desires? Many people say the Bible is full of contradictions. But the actual problem is that the Bible contradicts the reader, and that causes anger, consternation, etc. Often we don't like what we *do* understand in Scripture. To gain wisdom we must set aside self and seek God (Prov. 3:7).

### **5. 1:8-19 = Who should we learn wisdom from? (Cf. Dt. 6:4-9)**

Our parents. Children who heed parental instruction are respected by people. They would be honored. Rebellion leads to dishonor.

**Dt. 6:4-9** = Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. *Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.* Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (When children ask us about what we do we Col. 1:9-14 should tell them - Dt. 6:20-25.)

#### **Will sinners try to entice us?**

Definitely. But we should not give into them.

#### **Why is peer pressure so hard to resist?**

Generally, we want to be excepted by our peers, to have them like us. To say "no" to their pressure and then be rejected is a hard thing to take, especially for the young. They should avoid these kinds of friends.

The appeal of the wicked is attractive at first. A foolish person may be dazzled by the prospects of acquiring easy wealth and instant gratification, but a wise person looks to the consequences of such sin and folly.

#### **Why would they try to entice the king's son (or anyone else) to join them?**

Because if their peers, especially those of high rank, join them then they have more clout, and there is less chance of them being punished for their crimes. And misery loves company.

#### **What is their reasoning for doing it?**

They expected to get all sorts of valuable things and fill their houses with plunder.

### **What reasons does Solomon give his son to stay away from them?**

- Their feet rush into sin,
- They are swift to shed blood.
- They will eventually get caught because what they are doing is obvious.
- They lie in wait for their own blood; they waylay only themselves!
- Ill-gotten gain takes away the lives of those who get it.

Crime doesn't pay.

### **What is the verse 17 referring to?**

What these gangsters are doing is so obvious that they will eventually be caught and punished. In their stupidity they set a trap for themselves.

### **6. 1:20-33 = Here wisdom is personified as a woman. Does she tried to hide her wisdom?**

No. She is very open with it (shouts out) and wants to share with everyone. She/God is not making it difficult.

### **Who is she crying out to?**

The simple, mockers, and fools.

### **What is their general state? (Cf. Is. 32:1-8)**

Simple ones – those without a moral direction and inclined to evil – love their simple ways. Mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge.

**Is. 32:1-8** = When there is no righteous and just leaders in the country fools are called noble and scoundrels are highly respected, even though they speak folly and their minds are busy with evil: they practice ungodliness and spread error concerning the LORD; they leave the hungry empty and the thirsty without water. The scoundrel's methods are wicked, he makes up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just.

### **Did they respond to wisdom?**

No. Not at all. Why? Because they were wise in their own eyes. "When we think we're wise, we don't have any principle of Gods Word to govern our actions and we shut off

the flow of God's wisdom. People don't have wisdom because they already think they know what's right and what's wrong. We make decisions based on our feelings."<sup>10</sup>

### **What would wisdom have done if they had responded? (Cf. Ps. 25:14; Ja. 1:5)**

She would have poured out her heart to them and made her thoughts known to them.

**Ps. 25:14** = The LORD confides in those who fear Him; He makes His covenant known to them.

**Ja. 1:5** = If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

### **What happens when we don't respond to wisdom's rebuke? (Cf. Zech. 7:8-14)**

When we refuse to obey what we know to be the truth we suffer the consequences for it. "Until we repent and get right with the Lord and deal with our reasons for spurning the wisdom of God, we never get straightened out."<sup>11</sup>

She in turn will laugh at our disaster; she will mock when calamity overtakes us – when calamity overtakes us like a storm, when disaster sweeps over us like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm us. (Spurned advice will haunt the one who rejects it when calamity strikes.) We will call but she won't answer. We will look for her but won't find her because we hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD or except her advice and rebuke. Then we will eat the fruit of our ways and be filled with the fruit of our schemes (you reap what you sow). For the waywardness of the simple will kill them and the complacency of fools will destroy them.

**Zech. 7:8-14** = And the word of the LORD came to again to Zechariah: "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other.' "But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by His Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry. "'When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,' says the LORD Almighty. I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations, where they were strangers. The land was left so desolate behind them that no one could come or go. This is how they made the pleasant land desolate.' "

See also Psalm 66:18.

### **In contrast, what happens to those who listen to wisdom?**

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<sup>10</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.* p. 10.

Those who listen will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.

These are those who realize their accountability before a holy God. They accept reproof/criticism (Prov. 9:8), they learn and grow (Prov. 9:9), they prepare for the future (10:5), they submit to authority (10:8), they continue to learn (10:14), they think before they speak and use a minimum of words (10:19; 11:12; 17:28), they seek to know the heart of a person/matter not just the superficial (11:30), they are prudent, careful about the way they say something (16:21; 10:13), etc.

### **How might Galatians 6:7–10 fit with this passage?**

When we don't respond to the Holy Spirit's rebuke, we will reap what we sow. God knows our hearts and cannot be mocked. We will reap what we sow, whether to please our sinful nature and reap destruction, or to please the Spirit, and from the Spirit reap eternal life. We shouldn't get tired of doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. So whenever we have the chance we should do good to all people, especially to other believers.

### **Homework for Proverbs 2:1-22**

1. Read the passage carefully.
2. What are the conditions for receiving God's understanding and wisdom? (v. 1-4)

How should we seek wisdom? (Cf. Job 28)

3. What are the results of seeking wisdom? (v. 5-11)

According to Col. 1:9-14 why should we seek wisdom and understanding?

Contrast heavenly wisdom with earthly wisdom using Ja. 3:13-18.

4. Who gives wisdom?

What does He do for those who love Him? (Cf. Ps. 34; 91)

5. How does Solomon describe wicked men (v. 12-15)?

What is meant by "the straight paths"?

6. How does he describe the adulteress (v. 16-19)?

What was the covenant she made before God? (Cf. Eccl. 5:1-7)

Why should she be avoided?

7. Whose ways are you walking in if you follow the way of wisdom? (v. 20-22) (cf. I Cor. 11:1)

What is the reward?

What happens to the wicked?

## Homework for Proverbs 2:1-22

**1. Read the passage carefully.**

**2. What are the conditions for receiving God's understanding and wisdom? (v. 1-4)**

- We must accept it (openness), learn/memorize it (retention), listen for it (ear) and apply ourselves (heart) to understand.
- We must *ask* for insight and understanding and *look/search* for it as for hidden treasure. (Is. 33:5-6)

**How should we seek wisdom? (Cf. Job 28)**

With everything we've got. We must expend effort to attain wisdom.

**Job 28** = Man goes to extremes in dangerous places to find gold, silver, and precious stones but he doesn't comprehend the worth of wisdom. It can't be bought. To God alone belongs wisdom. He told man, "The fear of the LORD—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding."

We must seek God, the embodiment of wisdom, if we want to be wise. Wisdom is one of God's attributes.

**3. What are the results of seeking wisdom? (v. 5-11)**

When we seek wisdom with everything we've got, *then* we will understand the fear of the LORD (this is not an option!) and find the knowledge of God (discernment). *Then* we will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.

If we fear God we will hate sin and be committed to a godly lifestyle.

**According to Col. 1:9-14 why should we seek wisdom and understanding?**

That we may know God's will, and that we may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

Our goal should be to please the One who rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Wow! Do we truly understand all He has done for us?

### **Contrast heavenly wisdom with earthly wisdom using Ja. 3:13-18.**

Heavenly	Earthly
Shown by a good life, By deeds done in the humility that come from wisdom.	Harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in heart
Pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.	Boastful, denies the truth Earthly, unspiritual, of the devil*
Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.	Where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

Earthly wisdom isn't something you want to participate in! \* One thing that must be understood is that the demonic world is working hard to appeal to our old nature. (Cf. Ga. 5:16-26)

### **4. Who gives wisdom?**

The LORD, the I AM, the self-sustaining, eternal One.

### **What does He do for those who love Him? (Cf. Ps. 34; 91)**

He gives wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He holds victory (success, the result of sound judgment<sup>12</sup>) in store for the upright (wisdom is a matter of the heart, not just intellectual attainment), He is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of His faithful ones. (It's interesting that we are told to seek wisdom—and obtaining it requires diligence—yet it is a gift from God.)

**Ps. 34** = He answers prayer and delivers/protects them from all their fears/troubles; those who look to Him are radiant and their faces are never covered with shame. The Angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them. Those who fear Him lack nothing/no good thing. He watches over them and is attentive to their cry. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted/shattered and saves those who are crushed in spirit. The LORD redeems His servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in Him.

**Ps. 91** = He is a shelter, refuge, fortress; He is faithful to save and protect from harm/disaster. He will command His angels to guard them in all their ways, to protect, and give victory. "Because he loves Me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges My Name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will

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<sup>12</sup> Walvoord, *Op. Cit.* p. 910.

be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him My salvation."

### **5. How does Solomon describe wicked men (v. 12-15)?**

- Men whose words are perverse (turned away from what's normal)
- Who leave the straight paths (upright) to walk in dark (evil) ways,
- 
- Who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,
- Whose paths are crooked (twisted)
- And who are devious in their ways (distort morality).

### **What is meant by "the straight paths"?**

Living a Godly life of integrity with His wisdom and knowledge; uprightness. The path of life (Mt. 7:13-14).

### **6. How does he describe the adulteress (v. 16-19)?**

- The wayward wife (immoral, outside propriety) with her seductive words (compliments that have a wrong motive),
- Who has left the partner of her youth (husband)
- And ignores the covenant she made before God (no commitment).

### **What was the covenant she made before God? (Cf. Eccl. 5:1-7)**

Her marriage vows and the 7th commandment in particular (Ex. 20:14).

"Moral integrity is rooted in commitment to the Lord... The moment your commitment to the Lord gets weak, your commitment to your spouse starts slipping."<sup>13</sup>

### **Why should she be avoided?**

- Her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead (5:5; 7:27).
- None who go to her return or attain the paths of life.

Compare Job 31:1-12.

### **7. Whose ways are you walking in if you follow the way of wisdom? (v. 20-22) (cf. I Cor. 11:1)**

In the ways of good men, the paths of the righteous. Those who pursue wisdom avoid the wrong kind of people (Ps. 1:1-2).

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<sup>13</sup> Hocking, *Op. Cit.* p. 90.

### **What is the reward?**

They will live in the land and remain in it (agricultural prosperity; a sign of God's favor for the Israelites).

### **What happens to the wicked?**

They will be cut off/torn from the land (exile or death; God's displeasure).

## HOMEWORK FOR PROVERBS 3:1-35

1. Read the passage carefully.
2. (v. 1-4) What does godly counsel do for us?

What causes us to win favor and a good name in God's sight and man's? (Cf. Lk. 2:52)

Why are these so important?

3. (v. 5-6) Why should we trust God completely and not lean on our own understanding? (Hint: what does He know that we don't? Cf. 143:10)

4. (v. 7-8) What does it mean to be wise in your own eyes?

How might fearing God and shunning evil keep you healthy? (Cf. I Cor 11:27-32; Ja. 5:13-16)

5. (v. 9-10) This is a general principle. Does tithing necessarily mean you will be healthy, wealthy and wise? Explain.

Why should we honor God first with our wealth? (Cf. Dt. 8:10-20; I Chron. 29:14)

6. (v. 11-12) Why should we not despise or resent God's discipline in our lives? (Cf. Heb. 12:4-11)

7. (v. 13-18) Why is God's wisdom such a desirable thing?

Why would wisdom be compared to the tree of life? (Cf. Rev. 22:1-2)

8. (v. 19-20) How was wisdom such an integral part of creation? (Cf. 8:22-31; Jer. 10:12-13)

9. (v. 21-26) In these verses what are the benefits of preserving sound judgment and discernment?

Who should we have complete confidence in?

10. (v. 27-28) Why would it be wrong to withhold good or to let someone else do a good deed for someone instead of yourself when you had the power to do it? (Cf. Ex. 23:4-5; Lev. 19:17-18; Acts 26:20; Ja. 2:14-19; I Jo. 3:16-20)

What's wrong with waiting a day to help someone when you have the means to do it now?

11. (v. 29-30) What are good neighbor relations built on?

What would plotting harm or accusing your neighbor for no reason do to these relations? (Cf. Ro. 13:10)

Is trust an easy thing to regain once it's been lost?

12. (v. 31-32) *Envy* is: "painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage."<sup>14</sup> *Perverse* is to turn away from what is right. *Upright* is to have high morals standards. With these definitions how would you interpret this passage?

13. (v. 32-35) How does God feel about the wicked, the proud, and fools?

How about the righteous, the humble, and the wise?

14. Read Ja. 4:1-12 and be ready to discuss it.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/envy>

## HOMEWORK FOR PROVERBS 3:1-35

1. **Read the passage carefully.**
2. **(v. 1-4) What does godly counsel do for us?**

In general they prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. God's blessings will be upon your life because you listen to His wisdom and follow it. If we forget or cease to care about godly counsel in our hearts (will or understanding) we are headed for trouble.

### **What causes us to win favor and a good name in God's sight and man's? (Cf. Lk. 2:52)**

We gain God's favor and man's (good reputation) by following the way of love and continuing to be faithful in everything we do.

**Lk. 2:51-52** = As Jesus grew up in his physical body He was obedient (to subject oneself) to His earthly parents as well as His Heavenly Father. Because of this, He grew (strike forward, make progress) in wisdom and stature, and in favor (bestows or occasions pleasure, gracefulness of person) with God and men. (See also I Sam. 2:26)

### **Why are these so important?**

Love and faithfulness are part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and should be evident in the believer's life. They also sum up the greatest commandments: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:34-40). We can't win God's favor or man's if we're not living in a way that pleases God.

3. **(v. 5-6) Why should we trust God completely and not lean on our own understanding? (Hint: what does He know that we don't? Cf. Ps. 143:10)**

Because our understanding (insight) is limited; we don't see the whole picture. But God does! He knows and understands everything there is to know or understand. Therefore, if we have any wisdom, we should want to be guided by our Heavenly Father. He directs us in the straight course (removes the obstacles to the appointed goal<sup>15</sup>). We can have complete trust or confidence in Him, and all the more as we grow in intimacy with Him.

**Ps. 143:10** = "Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; may Your good Spirit lead me on level ground (uprightness)."

4. **(v. 7-8) What does it mean to be wise in your own eyes?**

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<sup>15</sup> Walvoord, *Op. Cit.*, p. 911.

To think your own wisdom and discernment are better than God's or anyone else's; to not fear/revere the LORD and shun (put away) evil; to make decisions based on feelings. We need to apply God's holiness to all we say and do. When we are wise in your own eyes it blocks us from seeking God's wisdom.

**How might fearing God and shunning evil keep you healthy? (Cf. I Cor 11:27-32; Ja. 5:13-16)**

When a person has a healthy respect for God's power and love, and a clear conscience without guilt or fear, they are usually much healthier (organs – lit. umbilical cord – and structure/bones) than someone who harbors guilt and fear in their heart. Plus, a person who tries to please God receives His blessing; those who don't please Him receive His judgment. Physical and spiritual health are related.

**I Cor 11:27-32** = When a Christian refuses to repent of some sin and yet still partakes of the Lord's Supper, they make a mockery of Christ's sacrifice and receive judgment/discipline on themselves. In Corinth many of them were weak and sick, and some had even died.

**Ja. 5:13-16** = According to this passage some people are sick because of sin in their lives. They are exhorted to call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. We should confess our sins to each other and pray for each other so that we may be healed. The prayer of the righteous man is powerful and effective. (Cf. I John 5:16-17 - A sin unto death)

**5. (v. 9-10) This is a general principle. Does tithing necessarily mean you will be healthy, wealthy and wise? Explain.**

No. We are exhorted to honor God no matter what. Some folks live in miserable conditions, or are persecuted by others even though they are doing the right thing. The health and wealth people would like you to think that you deserve only the best and should always be healthy if you tithe and do everything right in their eyes. They make God into a little genie in a bottle who responds on command to our will. What a mockery! This is not living by faith; this is a form of sorcery! We cannot force God to bless us by our "perfect performance". He is sovereign and does as He pleases. His blessing may not include health and wealth.

On the other side, we can't out give God. Some people are in financial difficulty because they don't give to God. When you give to God off the top it always seems the bills get paid. To give with a cheerful heart and honor the Lord should be our goal. (Cf. II Cor. 8:12; 9:6-15). God should not be "invested in" but honored.

**Why should we honor God first with (the best of - cf. Gen. 4:1-5) our wealth? (Cf. Dt. 8:10-20; I Chron. 29:14)**

Because He is God and deserves our honor. We can do nothing without His enablement. This should be an expression of our gratitude for His provision.

**Dt. 8:10-20** = When things go well we tend to become proud and self-satisfied; we forget that it is the Lord who has given us this great wealth. Without Him we don't even have the ability to produce wealth. Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of the heavenly lights (Ja. 1:16-18).

**I Chron. 29:14** = David understood that everything comes from God and that we can only give back to Him what has originally come from His hand.

**6. (v. 11-12) Why should we not despise (reject, take lightly, or refuse) or resent (loathe or abhor) God's discipline (correction, reproof) in our lives? (Cf. Heb. 12:4-11)**

God disciplines us because He loves us (not because He enjoys causing pain - Lam. 3:27-33), just as a father the child he delights in (is pleased with). He wants only the best for us, and will discipline us to bring about that result. He may use verbal instruction, circumstances or consequences, or he may step in directly and allow illness or pull your plug. (Cf. Acts 5:1-11)

Heb. 12:4-11 = We should be encouraged by the Lord's discipline because it means that He loves us as His own. We should endure hardship as discipline; God is treating us as His children. If we don't undergo discipline when we sin, or just structural discipline, then we probably aren't true children of God. God disciplines those He loves for their good, that they may share in His Holiness (He is remolding us into His image - Col. 3:10; making us into the men and women of God He desires). The discipline may not seem pleasant at the time, but painful, but later on it will produce a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

**7. (v. 13-18) Why is God's wisdom such a desirable thing?**

Because God blesses the man who seeks Him with long life, riches and honor, and much wisdom and understanding. Wisdom is more profitable than silver, gold, rubies; nothing that man desires can compare with wisdom (wealth doesn't always bring happiness). The way of wisdom is pleasant and all her paths or peace/contentment. She is a tree of life to those who embrace her/hold fast to.

Solomon desired God's wisdom above all else, even when God offered him anything he wanted (I Ki. 3:4-15; 4:29-34).

**Why would wisdom be compared to the tree of life? (Cf. Rev. 22:1-2)**

Because God's wisdom brings life and healing, just as the tree of life. Those who follow His ways prosper and are blessed.

Remember that wisdom is an attribute of God, and in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:2-4). Christ is the power and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:18-2:16), and in Him we have life abundantly.

**8. (v. 19-20) How was wisdom such an integral part of creation? (Cf. 8:22-31; Jer. 10:12-13)**

Everything God did in creation was done by His wisdom.

**Prov. 8:22-31** = Wisdom has always been with God, from eternity past. Wisdom was with God, the craftsman at His side during creation, through everything he did. She was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind. (That's why creation is so amazing!)

**Jer. 10:12-13** = It was by God's power, wisdom and understanding that the earth and the heavens were made. Thunder and lightning storms are just a small portion of His mighty power.

**9. (v. 21-26) In these verses what are the benefits of preserving sound judgment and discernment?**

They will be life (to your soul) and honor (grace, charm); you will go on your way and sleep in safety so you don't fear (the present) and your sleep is sweet (pleasant). You won't have to fear (dread) sudden disaster (the future) or the ruin that overtakes the wicked because the LORD will be your confidence (hope) and will keep your foot from being snared (captured).

**Who should we have complete confidence in?**

The LORD. Compare Gen. 15:1. (Prov. 4:27; 19:23)

**10. (v. 27-28) Why would it be wrong to withhold good (from its owners = debts, obligations) or to let someone else do a good deed for someone instead of yourself when you had the power to do it? (Cf. Ex. 23:4-5; Lev. 19:17-18; Acts 26:20; Ja. 2:14-19; I Jo. 3:16-20)**

If there is something good we know we should do and don't do it, then for us it is sin (Ja. 4:17; also cf. Prov. 24:11-12). If God puts the knowledge of some need before you and also the means to meet it, then it would be wrong to not do it or say, "So and so will take care of it," or just hope the situation goes away. When we don't help others we aren't helping our Lord (Mt. 25:31-46) and are heaping judgment on ourselves.

**Ex. 23:4-5** = "If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it." (Also Dt 22:1-4)

**Lev. 19:17-18** = "Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."

**Acts 26:20** = Our repentance before God should be proved by our deeds.

**Ja. 2:14-19** = Saving faith is active faith, reaching out to others in need. Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. Head knowledge isn't enough; we must act on what we know to be true or a need we can meet.

**I Jo. 3:16-20** = Jesus showed us what true love is by laying down His life for us and we should do the same for our fellow believers. If we see a brother in need and don't have pity on him, then we aren't extending God's love (it's not in us). True love is more than mere words; it is active and truthful. Actions show the condition of our hearts.

### **What's wrong with waiting a day to help someone when you have the means to do it now?**

Delayed obedience is disobedience! Hoarding what you have for one more day or postponing payment for your bills won't help you anyway. Plus the person in need or who you owe money to may be desperate at that moment for the help you could give; one more day may put them over the edge physically, financially or whatever. Those we owe money to have bills to pay as well. Keeping accounts clear gives you the freedom to act on those promptings from God to help others.

### **11. (v. 29-30) What are good neighbor relations built on?**

Trust.

### **What would plotting harm or accusing your neighbor for no reason do to these relations? (Cf. Ro. 13:10)**

To plot = "to plow". Has "the idea of plans being thought up or devised as furrows in a field are plowed."<sup>16</sup>

It violates the 9th commandment (Ex. 20:16). It will ruin the relationship. Cause a lack of trust.

"Some of us are just angry, and we don't know if it's jealousy or pride, or envy. Maybe we just don't like the person they aren't like us. What's wrong here? There is no righteous cause."<sup>17</sup> (Mt. 5:22) Love does no harm to its neighbor!

### **Is trust an easy thing to regain once it's been lost?**

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<sup>16</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 913.

<sup>17</sup> Hocking, *Op. Cit.*, p. 122.

No. There is always a niggling doubt in the back of your mind when someone has abused your trust.

**12. (v. 31-32) *Envy* is: "painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage."<sup>18</sup> *Perverse* is to turn away from what is right. *Upright* is to have high morals standards. With these definitions how would you interpret this passage?**

Don't let the seeming pleasures, riches and power of a violent (cruel) man cause you to want what he has or lead you into using the same violent tactics, because the LORD detests (is disgusted with) those who turn away from His righteous laws (the devious), but those who have high moral standards (straight path) He takes into His confidence/ council (is intimate with). (Cf. Ps. 25:14; Prov. 1:23)

**13. (v. 32-35) How does God feel about the wicked, the proud, and fools?**

His curse is on the house of the wicked, He mocks (scoffs, scorns) proud mockers, and fools (stupid, arrogant) He holds up to shame (disgrace, ignominy).

A fool is one who lays up treasures for himself, who wants all the "goodies" of life to somehow sustain the dissatisfaction of his own heart. He cannot see the purpose of God—things don't depend on who God is or what He does.<sup>19</sup> "Fools treat sin lightly, get involved in sin, and mock it and don't think the issue is as severe as what the Bible teaches."<sup>20</sup> They will see the death of their desires for success and greatness because God will never allow it to happen.

**How about the righteous, the humble, and the wise?**

He blesses the home of the righteous, He gives grace (gift of favor) to the humble (afflicted, meek), and honors the wise.

**14. Read Ja. 4:1-12 and be ready to discuss it.**

Pride often manifests itself by anger and results in strife. God looks on the heart and sees all our motives, our pride, and opposes that. But He gives the gift of His favor to those who humbly come before Him, resisting the devil or evil. God has no sympathy with pride whatsoever. It is an abomination to Him. We need to learn to hate our own pride.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/envy>

<sup>19</sup> Hocking, *Op. Cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 21.

"Pride has ruined more Christians who wanted to serve the Lord than perhaps anything else. It will cut off the blessings of God. A lot of us are so dogmatic, that we believe that others will, in time, come to believe what we believe. That's pride. We like to say that others will see we're right when we get to heaven... There is something awful about believing that you can never be wrong."<sup>21</sup>

Check your heart!

### Homework for Proverbs 4:1-27

1. Read the passage carefully.
2. 4:1-9 = Who were Solomon's father and mother? (II Sam. 12:24-25; SS 8:5b)

When did Solomon's father begin teaching him to love wisdom?

How important was obeying God and gaining wisdom to David?

What did David want for his son?

Did Solomon follow his father's advice? (I Ki. 3:4-15)

Why did Solomon want wisdom?

What was he willing to give up to get it?

Did the Lord answer his request? (I Ki. 4:29-34)

What did the Lord give Solomon besides wisdom?

3. 4:10-19 = Solomon is now expressing his desire for his sons to gain wisdom. Did he know what he was talking about?

What benefits would his sons receive by following the way of wisdom? (Cf. Ps. 1; Is. 40:27-31)

Why should they avoid the way of evil men? (Cf. Ps. 1; 73)

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<sup>21</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 106.

How is the path of the righteous different from the way of the wicked? (Cf. II Sam. 23:1-4; Dan. 12:3)

4. 4:20-27 = Why is it so important to guard your heart? (Cf. 22:5; II Chron. 12:14; Mal 2:1-9; Mk. 7:1-23)

Why should God's people have a "clean mouth" and speak what is right? (Cf. Eph. 5:3-4)

Why should we have "blinders" on, so to speak?

What should be our focus? (Cf. Phil. 3:12-4:1; Col. 3:1-2; Heb. 12:1-3)

What does it mean to fear the Lord? (Job 28:28)

How does this fit with verse 27?

5. Is it your desire to gain God's wisdom and understanding? Is your life lived in a way that is honoring to Him? Are you harboring some secret pet sin? Check your heart.

## **Homework for Proverbs 4:1-27**

**1. Read the passage carefully.**

**2. 4:1-9 = Who were Solomon's father and mother? (II Sam. 12:24-25; SS 8:5b)**

David and Bathsheba. They were told to name Solomon “Jedidiah,” loved by the LORD. He was apparently conceived and born under an apple tree. 😊

**When did Solomon's father begin teaching him to love wisdom?**

When Solomon was only a boy, still tender, and an only child of his mother. Bathsheba later had three other sons (I Chron. 3:4b-5).

**How important was obeying God and gaining wisdom to David?**

It was something he urged Solomon to pursue with all his heart and never forgot or swerve from, because wisdom would give life, protect and watch over him. Wisdom and understanding were worth more than anything on earth. They would exalt and honor those who sought them.

**What did David want for his son?**

He wanted him to have real life and honor because he was a man of wisdom and understanding. He wanted Solomon to have God's best.

**Did Solomon follow his father's advice? (I Ki. 3:4-15)**

Yes. Verse 3 says he showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statutes of his father David. And when God appeared to Solomon at Gibeon and asked what he wanted God to give him, Solomon asked for a wise and discerning heart.

**Why did Solomon want wisdom?**

Solomon was overwhelmed by the position he was in as king. He felt like a little child and wasn't sure how to carry out his duties. He wanted discernment (in administering justice) to govern God's people and to distinguish between right and wrong.

**What was he willing to give up to get it?**

He could have asked for anything, whatever his heart desired. But to him, wisdom was more important.

### **Did the Lord answer his request? (I Ki. 4:29-34)**

Yes. In superabundance. He gave Solomon a wise and discerning heart, so that there would never be anyone like him, then or ever. And now he was passing on this great wisdom to his sons. We see three generations in this passage of Proverbs. Pretty cool!

**I Ki. 4:29-34** = God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. His wisdom was greater than all the men of the East or Egypt. He was wiser than any other man, and his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs. He described plant life, taught about animals, birds, reptiles and fish. People from all nations came to listen to his wisdom.

### **What did the Lord give Solomon besides wisdom?**

God gave him what he didn't ask for: both riches and honor, so he had no equal among kings. And *if* he would walk in God's ways and obey His statutes and commands, as his father David, then he would also have a long life.

### **3. 4:10-19 = Solomon is now expressing his desire for his sons to gain wisdom. Did he know what he was talking about?**

Definitely. He listened to his father and sought God's wisdom and experienced its results. He also experienced folly and its results (I Ki. 11; Eccl.)

### **What benefits would his sons receive by following the way of wisdom? (Cf. Ps. 1; Is. 40:27-31)**

Long life, God's guidance in the straight paths (unrestricted), and their steps wouldn't be hampered (narrowed or cramped, that is, they'd not be in distress) and they wouldn't stumble. They should hold onto instruction and guard it well, for it is their life. The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

**Ps. 1** = Those who seek the Lord and his wisdom will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither (strong and fruitful). Whatever he does prospers. The Lord watches over the way of the righteous.

**Is. 40:27-31** = God knows all our ways because He created us. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom it. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (God is always there to give wisdom and support to those He loves.)

### **Why should they avoid the way of evil men? (Cf. Ps. 1; 73)**

Because they cannot sleep till they *do evil*; they are robbed of slumber till they *make someone fall* (consumed with evil). They eat the bread of *wickedness* and drink the wine *violence* ("Sin is so much a part of them that it is like their food"<sup>22</sup>). Their way is like *deep darkness* (intense blackness in the middle of the night) and they don't know what makes them *stumble* (the way of problems and hardships).

**Ps. 1** = Those who walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers (progressive lapse into sin) are like chaff that the wind blows away (fragile, unfruitful and worthless). They will not stand in the judgment but they will perish.

**Ps. 73** = To those looking on, sometimes the wicked seem to have no struggles and always prosper. They're full of pride and they scoff at the things of God. They think God doesn't know what they're doing. They always seem carefree, and increase in wealth. But their final destiny is scary. God has placed them on slippery ground; He casts them down to ruin. They are suddenly destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! He despises them as fantasies. **But...** God is always with those He loves and holds them by the right hand. He guides them with His counsel, and afterward will take them into glory. There's nothing better than Him. Our flesh and heart may fail but God is the strength of our heart and our portion forever. He is our refuge.

### **How is the path of the righteous different from the way of the wicked? (Cf. II Sam. 23:1-4; Dan. 12:3)**

The path of the righteous is full of light, like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness so they can't tell what makes them stumble. Wisdom is learning how to walk with God and stay away from sin.

**II Sam. 23:1-4** = When a king rules in righteousness and the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth (light and life).

**Dan. 12:3** = Those who are wise, or who impart wisdom, will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (Cf. Phil. 2:12-16a)

### **4. 4:20-27 = Why is it so important to guard your heart (inner man, understanding, soul)? (Cf. 22:5; II Chron. 12:14; Mal 2:1-9; Mk. 7:1-23)**

Because it is the wellspring (source) of life. The heart not only represents mental and emotional capacity; it also encompasses one's values (Mt. 6:19-21). And out of one's values comes one's words and actions (Lk. 6:43-45; Mk. 7:20-22). Wisdom is the application of God's holiness to all we see, say and do.

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<sup>22</sup> Walvoord, *Op. Cit.*, p. 914.

**Prov. 22:5** = In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them.

**II Chron. 12:14** = Solomon's son Rehoboam did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the LORD.

**Mal 2:1-9** = God told the priests that He would send a curse on them because they had not set their hearts to honor Him. God had made a covenant of life and peace with Levi; this called for reverence and he revered God and stood in awe of His name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with God in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin. For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction – because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty. But the priests of Malachi's day had turned from the way of God and caused many to stumble; they violated the covenant with Levi. So God caused them to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because they had not followed His ways but had shown partiality in matters of the law.

**Mk. 7:1-23** = Instead of worshiping God from their hearts, the Pharisees followed the tradition of the elders, a bunch of rules and regulations. They were more concerned with the outward appearance than the heart; of their precious traditions rather than the commands of God. But Jesus got on their case and told them that nothing outside a man can make him "unclean" by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of the man that makes him "unclean". For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man "unclean." (Jesus was always concerned about the heart.)

**Why should God's people have a "clean mouth" and speak what is right? (Cf. Eph. 5:3-4)**

Because a perverse (crooked) mouth and corrupt (foul) talk dishonor God. Christians are to be different from the world. God wants us to be joyful people, full of thanksgiving, who speak the truth in love. This verse applies the command to guard one's heart in what one says.

**Eph. 5:3-4** = Among believers there shouldn't be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving (also 4:29).

**Why should we have "blinders" on, so to speak?**

So we don't get distracted by things of the world. This verse applies the command to guard one's heart in what one sees.

**What should be our focus? (Cf. Phil. 3:12-4:1; Col. 3:1-2; Heb. 12:1-3)**

We should keep our focus on God and His Word, the wise path.

**Phil. 3:12-4:1** = Paul depicts the Christian life as a race. The runners, or believers, should forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead, pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus. We should follow the example of other godly believers and stand firm in the Lord.

**Col. 3:1-2** = Since, then, we have been raised with Christ, we should set our hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. We should set our minds on things above, not on earthly things.

**Heb. 12:1-3** = Here the Christian life is depicted as a race as well. Since we have these great examples of faith around us (ch. 11), we should throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and run with perseverance the race marked out for us. We should fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. We should consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful man, so that we will not grow weary and lose heart.

Verses 26 and 27 apply the command to guard one's heart in what one does.

### **What does it mean to fear the Lord? (Job 28:28)**

To fear (reverence, hold in awe) the Lord is to hate evil (Prov. 8:13a).

**Job 28:28** = The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.

### **How does this fit with verse 27?**

We need to learn to hate sin as much as God does. We should consider each step we take and take only ways that are firm or true to God (upright). We shouldn't swerve even a little bit to the right or the left; but keep our feet from evil (Eph. 5:3-4; Dan. 6:1-5, 21-22).

" 'Proverbs provides both a goal and route. The goal is successful living and the route is the way of wisdom'... Though wisdom keeps one on the right path (cf. 2:12-15) here the encouragement is to keep oneself on the straight way."<sup>23</sup> (two-sided coin)

**5. Is it your desire to gain God's wisdom and understanding? Is your life lived in a way that is honoring to Him? Are you harboring some secret pet sin? Check your heart.**

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<sup>23</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 914.

Homework for Proverbs  
Chapter 5

1. Read the passage over carefully.
2. Have you noticed how often Solomon tells his son to pay attention or listen to him. Go back and count how many times you see this phrase in the first five chapters.

Have you ever wished that your children would just listen to you and follow your good advice?

Why is Solomon so intent that his son listen to him this time?

How is the adulteress described?

Why should she be avoided? (Cf. Eccl. 7:26)

How will the end of life be for those who follow her ways?

What should a man do instead? Why? (Cf. Eccl. 9:9; SS 4:15; 7:7-9a)

3. Who instituted marriage and the sex act within marriage? Why? (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:20b-25; Mt. 19:3-6; and the verses in the previous question)

Why is sexual immorality wrong? (Cf. Gen. 39:6-10; Mal. 2:13-16; I Cor. 6:12-7:5; I Thes. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4)

Why do you think sexual immorality in its various forms is such a temptation in society?

What does God say to do when tempted by this sin? (Cf. I Cor. 6:18-20; e.g. Gen. 39:11-12)

Can we hide our sin from the Lord? Why or why not? (Cf. Ps. 139:1-4, 23-24; Heb. 4:12-13)

According to II Chron. 16:9, who does the Lord strengthen?

What happens to the wicked?

4. Sexual immorality is exhibited in various forms but where does it begin? (Mt. 5:27-28; Mk. 7:20-23)

Believe it or not, ladies this is not just a *man* problem. Sexual immorality can come in the form of reading lusty novels, pornography, movies, drooling over a "hunk" that walks by, talking about your mate and your sexual relationship to other people, mulling over the sex act in your mind, etc. It isn't merely the act itself. Most of us have broken the 7th Commandment (Ex. 20:14) at some time or another. Check your heart.

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 5

1. Read the passage over carefully.

2. Have you noticed how often Solomon tells his son to pay attention or listen to him. Go back and count how many times you see this phrase in the first five chapters.

7 times (1:8; 3:1; 4:1, 10, 20; 5:1, 7).

**Have you ever wished that your children would just listen to you and follow your good advice?**

Many times. But there have also been times when I thought I was giving good advice and found God had other plans for them. That doesn't happen with God's wisdom.

**Why is Solomon so intent that his son listen to him this time?**

Because he was warning his son about the adulteress and the folly of falling into her trap. He wanted his son to maintain discretion and preserve knowledge instead of acting the fool.

"When married people honor and respect sex as God instructs them in His Word, they can experience increasing enjoyment and enrichment in their intimacy. But when people break the rules, the result is just the opposite. They experience disappointment and disillusionment and have to search for larger 'doses' of sexual adventure in order to attain the imaginary pleasure level they're seeking... [God] didn't put the 'marriage wall' around sex to *rob us* of pleasure but to *increase* pleasure and *protect* it."<sup>24</sup>

But "it is the character of man and his depravity to take all that God does in extending His wonderful gifts to us and corrupt them and abuse them, and to use them in a way that He never designed."<sup>25</sup>

**How is the adulteress described?**

Her lips drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil (verbal compliments, flattery used for the purpose of seduction and deception); but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Their experience goes from sweetness to bitterness. At first this sin may seem exciting and sweet, but in the end it turns to bitter poison.

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<sup>24</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W., *Be Skillful*, OT Commentary, Proverbs, David C. Cook Pub. Colorado Springs, CO, ©1995, p. 60.

<sup>25</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 37.

### **Why should she be avoided? (Cf. Eccl. 7:26)**

Because her ways lead straight to death and hell. She gives no thought to God's ways; her paths are crooked, but she doesn't even know it. "One of the quickest ways to be defeated spiritually is to be involved in sexual sin."<sup>26</sup>

**Eccl. 7:26** = Solomon found "more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare."

### **How will the end of life be for those who follow her ways?**

The one who takes her path will give their best strength to others, their years to one who is cruel. Strangers will feast on their wealth and their toil will enrich another man's house. At the end of their life they will groan when their flesh and body are spent (disease? Ro. 1:27; I Cor. 6:18). They will wish they hadn't hated discipline or spurned correction, that they had obeyed their teachers and instructors. They will come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly.

"Temptation always includes hopeful promises; otherwise, people would never take the Devil's bait. For a time, it seems like these promises have been fulfilled, and sinners bask in the sunshine of pleasant experiences and false assurances. This is what family counselor J. Allan Petersen calls 'the myth of the greener grass.' People who commit sexual sins think their problems are solved ('She understands me so much better than my wife does!') and that life will get better and better. But disobedience to God's laws always brings sad consequences, and sinners eventually pay dearly for their brief moments of pleasure."<sup>27</sup> The most expensive thing in the world is sin.

### **What should a man do instead? Why? (Cf. Eccl. 9:9; SS 4:15-16; 7:7-9a)**

He should drink water from his own cistern, running water from his own well (sex with his wife). He shouldn't let his springs overflow in the streets, his streams of water in the public squares. They should be his alone, never to be shared with strangers (no adultery). May his fountain be blessed (many children) and may he rejoice in the wife of his youth (one woman man). He should be in love with her, satisfied with who she is physically, and captivated (intoxicated or infatuated) by her love.

Because it is foolish to be captivated by an adulteress or embrace another man's wife for all the world to see (cf. Prov. 6:30-35). And because God created one man for one woman, to enjoy each other physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually for as long as they live. Anything else dishonors God. God sees everything we do and examines all

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<sup>26</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>27</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p.61.

our paths. The wicked man will be ensnared by his own sin and die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly. Would you rather drink pure or polluted water?

**Eccl. 9:9** = We are to enjoy our mate, whom we love.

**SS 4:15-16** = The woman is compared to a garden and invites her lover to enjoy its choice fruits (sex).

**SS 7:7-9a** = The husband compares his wife to a palm tree with her breasts like clusters of fruit. He wants to climb the tree and take hold of its fruit, kiss her all over (more sex).

God has given us freedom of choice. We can use that freedom wisely, or we can abuse our freedom and gradually fall into bondage. Sin promises freedom but only brings slavery (John 8:34; Ro. 6:16). "The cords of sin get stronger the more we sin, yet sin deceives us into thinking we're free and can quit sinning whenever we please. As the invisible chains of habit are forged, we discover to our horror that we don't have the strength to break them."<sup>28</sup> Only through Jesus Christ Who gives us His Holy Spirit do we have the power to conquer sin. Never think that you can handle it yourself.

### **3. Who instituted marriage and the sex act within marriage? Why? (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:20b-25; Mt. 19:3-6; and the verses in the previous question)**

God did. And He has every right to tell us how to do it properly.

**Gen. 1:26-28** = To produce children; to be fruitful and increase in number; to fill the earth and subdue it. To rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

**Gen. 2:20b-25** = To unite a husband and wife as one flesh. For their pleasure.

**Mt. 19:3-6** = God's perfect plan was for a husband and wife to be united as one flesh until one or both died.

### **Why is sexual immorality wrong? (Cf. Gen. 39:6-10; Mal. 2:13-16; I Cor. 6:12-7:5; I Thes. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4)**

It is a sin against God, others, and ourselves.

**Gen. 39:6-10** = It is a sin against the person's mate, or future mate, but ultimately it against God.

**Mal. 2:13-16** = Your break faith with the partner of your youth and your marriage covenant. God hates divorce; it is a violent act.

**I Cor. 6:12-7:5** = The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Your bodies are members of Christ and shouldn't be united with a prostitute. Sexual immorality is a sin against one's own body, and that body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Withholding sex from your mate is also wrong and can lead to a lack of self-control and ultimately to sin.

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<sup>28</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 63.

**I Thes. 4:3-8** = Sexual immorality is a lack of self-control and a sin against another person which God will punish. If we reject God's instruction we reject the one who gives us His Holy Spirit.

**Heb. 13:4** = Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

### **Why do you think sexual immorality in its various forms is such a temptation in society?**

Because the sin nature longs to have its lusts satisfied. When we aren't controlled by the Holy Spirit the flesh has free rein. According to one survey three out of four people in the workplace (non-Christians) are involved in some sort of sexual relationship outside of marriage.<sup>29</sup> Just because it's popular doesn't mean it's right. We should stay away from immoral people except to give them the Gospel.

### **What does God say to do when tempted by this sin? (Cf. I Cor. 6:18-20; e.g. Gen. 39:11-12)**

**I Cor. 6:18-20** = FLEE!

**Gen. 39:11-12** = Joseph left his cloak behind and *ran* out of the house.

Moral integrity is rooted in commitment to the Lord... The moment your commitment to the Lord gets weak, your commitment to your spouse starts slipping."<sup>30</sup>

### **Can we hide our sin from the Lord? Why or why not? (Cf. Ps. 139:1-4, 23-24; Heb. 4:12-13)**

No. He sees and knows everything we think, do or say. "For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and He examines all his paths."

**Ps. 139:1-4, 23-24** = "Oh LORD, You have searched me and You know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue You know it completely, O LORD."

**Heb. 4:12-13** = "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

### **According to II Chron. 16:9, who does the Lord strengthen?**

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<sup>29</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>30</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 90.

Those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

### **What happens to the wicked?**

He is ensnared and held fast by his own sin. He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.

#### **4. Sexual immorality is exhibited in various forms but where does it begin? (Mt. 5:27-28; Mk. 7:20-23)**

The heart.

**Mt. 5:27-28** = Just looking at another person lustfully is committing adultery in your heart.

**Mk. 7:20-23** = Our actions are a result of what goes on in our hearts and minds.

**Believe it or not, ladies this is not just a *man* problem. Sexual immorality can come in the form of reading lusty novels, pornography, movies, drooling over a "hunk" that walks by, talking about your mate and your sexual relationship to other people, mulling over the sex act in your mind, etc. It isn't merely the act itself. Most of us have broken the 7th Commandment (Ex. 20:14) at some time or another. Check your heart.**

## HOMEWORK FOR PROVERBS Chapter 6

1. Read the chapter carefully.
2. 6:1-5 = What does it mean to put up security for your neighbor or strike hands in pledge for another?

Why should we not do this? (Cf. Prov. 11:15; 22:7, 26-27)

What is a person lacking when they do this? (Prov. 17:18)

What does Solomon say we should do if we find ourselves in this predicament? (Cf. Mt. 5:25-26)

Does this mean we should never help someone in this area? What guidelines should we go by?

3. 6:6-11 = What truths can we learn from the ant? (Cf. Prov. 27:23-27; 30:25)

What consequences come upon the sluggard? (Cf. Prov. 18:9; 24:30-34; Eccl. 10:18)

What can these people become like? (Cf. II Thes. 3:11; I Tim. 5:11-15)

What should be done with such a person? (Cf. II Thes. 3:6-15)

What should we be like instead? (Cf. I Thes. 4:11-12; Tit. 3:14; I Pet. 2:11-12, 15)

4. 6:12-19 = What are the characteristics of a scoundrel and villain? (Cf. Prov. 10:10; 16:27-30)

What does he stir up? (Cf. Prov. 10:12; 16:28)

What will happen to him?

What seven things does the LORD hate? (Cf. Ps. 5:4-6; Prov. 8:13; 26:24-26; Zech. 8:16-17)

How should we live instead? (Cf. Ps. 133; Ro. 12:9-14:1; I Pet. 2:11-12)

5. 6:20-35 = Why should Solomon's sons keep their father and mother's commands? (Ps. 119:105)

What will they keep him from?

Is she/he alluring? (Cf. Job 31:1)

What are the consequences of such a relationship?

Why is an adulterer despised?

What is his lot? Why?

How should the church respond to such sin? (Cf. Mt. 18:15-20; I Cor. 5)

What should be the goal of church discipline?

## HOMEWORK FOR PROVERBS Chapter 6

### 1. Read the chapter carefully.

This chapter deals with three things that can destroy a person: unwise financial commitments, laziness, and lust.

### 2. 6:1-5 = What does it mean to put up security for your neighbor or strike hands in pledge for another?

It means you are accepting the responsibility of paying back a high interest loan if they can't or won't pay it back themselves. To be surety (security); to be liable for another's debt. Striking hands in pledge was something like shaking hands. It was like "signing on the dotted line."

#### Why should we not do this? (Cf. Prov. 11:15; 22:7, 26-27)

It can trap you into owing a lot of money, and possibly make it to where you can't pay your own debts (no control). You may lose everything, including your good name. Then what will you do for your own family?

**Prov. 11:15** = "He who puts up security for another will surely suffer, but whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge is safe."

**Prov. 22:7**, = "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

**Prov. 22:26-27** = "Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you."

#### What is a person lacking when they do this? (Prov. 17:18)

He is lacking common sense, or good judgment.

**Prov. 17:18** = "A man lacking in judgment strikes hands in pledge and puts up security for his neighbor."

#### What does Solomon say we should do if we find ourselves in this predicament? (Cf. Mt. 5:25-26)

"Go and humble yourself ("to crush or tread oneself down, to demean"<sup>31</sup>); press your plea with your neighbor! (boisterous, even obnoxious urgency. The outcome of the situation is in the neighbor's control<sup>32</sup>) Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your

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<sup>31</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 916.

<sup>32</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 916.

eyelids. Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler." (Don't even let one night to pass before you free yourself.)

**Mt. 5:25-26** = "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."

**Does this mean we should never help someone in this area? What guidelines should we go by?**

No. You should make sure you know this person very well; that they are a person of integrity, who pays their bills, and will do their best to meet their obligation. Also make sure the contract is legitimate. And don't do it even if you know and love the person if you cannot fulfill the obligation yourself without ruining your own household. Many people have gotten themselves into deep financial troubles by signing for someone else too quickly. It would be better to just give them the money to pay off their debts rather than expect them to repay you. This reduces the pressure financial stress puts on a friendship. And if you lend money to a fellow believer don't charge interest. If you borrow from a friend/fellow believer be sure you pay it back quickly or the Lord will judge you. (Cf. Ro. 13:8-10)

"Just the faithfulness of someone paying on a debt has caused many Christians I know to say, 'I cancel your debt.' Some people don't understand this about Christians. Many who loan people money to help them aren't interested in getting the money back, but they are interested that borrower's character be demonstrated by paying it back."<sup>33</sup>

**3. 6:6-11 = What truths can we learn from the ant? (Cf. Prov. 27:23-27; 30:25)**

The ant is no sluggard. It takes the initiative and works hard in summer to provide for itself in the lean winter months. Planning ahead is something everyone should do for themselves and their family. "The virtue of wisdom is not in being busy but in having a proper view of forthcoming needs that motivate one to action."<sup>34</sup>

**Prov. 27:23-27** = Riches and position cannot be counted on, so it is important to know the condition of your flocks and herds. In the fall, as winter approaches, the lambs and goats will provide plenty of clothing and milk, and maybe meat, for you and your family and servants.

**Prov. 30:25** = "Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer."

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<sup>33</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>34</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 916.

**What consequences come upon the sluggard (slothful, lazy, shiftless, irresponsible)? (Cf. Prov. 18:9; 24:30-34; Eccl. 10:18)**

Poverty will come on him like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man. (He has no goals in life, and doesn't work to accomplish those things he does desire. "A lazy person is one who desires a lot, but simply does not work for it."<sup>35</sup> He squanders his time. He is not reliable when there is work. He makes excuses for his lack of involvement even when faced with hardship.)

**Prov. 18:9** = "One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys." (He puts forth no effort to meet his basic needs.)

**Prov. 24:30-34** = The sluggard pays no attention to the condition of his vineyard or fields. Thorns and weeds are everywhere and the stone wall is in ruins. Poverty will come on him like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man. (He neglects to care for what he already has.)

**Eccl. 10:18** = "If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle, the house leaks." (Things deteriorate.)

**What can these people become like? (Cf. II Thes. 3:11; I Tim. 5:11-15)**

Instead of paying attention to their own business, they are in everyone else's business.

**II Thes. 3:11** = Instead of being busy, they become busybodies.

**I Tim. 5:11-15** = They get into the habit of being idle and going from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.

**What should be done with such a person? (Cf. II Thes. 3:6-15)**

**II Thes. 3:6-15** = Christians should not willingly be a burden to others. We are commanded to keep away from any brother who is idle and does not live according to the teachings given them through the Word. *If a man will not work, he shall not eat* (unless of course he can't). Such people are commanded to settle down and earn the bread they eat, and never tire of doing what is right. If anyone does not obey these instructions, others are to take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

**What should we be like instead? (Cf. I Thes. 4:11-12; Tit. 3:14; I Pet. 2:11-12, 15)**

We should live as good examples and witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ, pleasing him in every aspect of life, so we may win the respect of others.

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<sup>35</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 150.

**I Thes. 4:11-12** = "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody."

**Tit. 3:14** = Christians should "learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives."

**I Pet. 2:11-12, 15** = Christians should be different in this world. They should "live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us." (Daniel 6)

People can be lazy in their spiritual lives, in disciplining or teaching their children, and many other ways. God blesses the person who works hard (cf. Prov. 13:4). But "laziness, in terms of doing what God wants us to do, is the number one mark of an unbelieving heart."<sup>36</sup> Are you just doing enough to get by? Or are you serving the Lord and your fellow believers with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? (Cf. Col. 3:22-25) If it's worth doing, it's worth doing your best.

#### **4. 6:12-19 = What are the characteristics of a scoundrel (worthless, wicked) and villain? (Cf. Prov. 10:10; 16:27-30)**

"Every part of the wicked person's anatomy is devoted to evil and his body language communicates evil (see Rom. 3:10–18.)<sup>37</sup> He goes about with a corrupt mouth (crooked, twisted, he can't be trusted), he winks with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, he plots evil with deceit in his heart (this is where it starts)– he always stirs up dissension (discord).

**Prov. 10:10** = "He who winks maliciously causes grief, and a chattering fool comes to ruin."

**Prov. 16:27-30** = "A scoundrel plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. A violent man entices his neighbor and leads him down a path that is not good. He who winks with his eye is plotting perversity; he who purses his lips is bent on evil."

#### **What does he stir up? (Cf. Prov. 10:12; 16:28)**

He stirs up dissension. He is full of hate.

**Prov. 10:12** = "Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs."

**Prov. 16:28** = He stirs up dissension and separates close friends.

#### **What will happen to him?**

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<sup>36</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>37</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 81.

"Disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy." (Even if we don't see it)

### **What seven things does the LORD hate? (Cf. Ps. 5:4-6; Prov. 8:13; 26:24-26; Zech. 8:16-17)**

The purpose of the 6...7 pattern is not to give a complete list but to stress the final item, as the culmination or product of its preceding items. In this passage the previous six items cause the seventh—dissension.<sup>38</sup>

- Haughty eyes (Pride is usually the basic motivation for all other sins: I Tim. 3:6-7; II Tim. 3:24-26; Is. 14:12-15; Ez. 28:11-15; Prov. 13:10; 22:10; I Cor. 10:12 - cf. Prov. 8:13; 16:5)
- A lying tongue (a deadly force that divides and destroys; can't be trusted; boasting - Prov. 21:6; 26:24; Jo. 8:44; Acts 5:1-11)
- Hands that shed innocent blood (murder pollutes the land - Nu. 35:30-34)
- A heart that devises wicked schemes (miss use of our imagination)
- Feet that are quick to rush into evil (Instant gratification desired)
- A false witness who pours out lies (truth cannot be violated without society ultimately suffering. The British poet John Dryden wrote, "Truth is the foundation of all knowledge and the cement of all societies."<sup>39</sup>) Prov. 14:5
- A man who stirs up dissension among brothers (destroys unity)

**Ps. 5:4-6** = "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with You the wicked cannot dwell. The arrogant cannot stand in Your presence; You hate all who do wrong. You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the LORD abhors."

**Prov. 8:13** = "To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech."

**Prov. 26:24-26** = God will expose the wickedness (seven abominations) of the malicious even though they disguise their deceitful hearts with charming speech.

**Zech. 8:16-17** = " 'These are the things you are to do: speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,' declares the LORD."

### **How should we live instead? (Cf. Ps. 133; Ro. 12:9-14:1; I Pet. 2:11-12)**

- Be humble (Ja. 4:1-10)
- Speak the truth in love (Prov. 12:22; Eph. 4:25)
- Help and lift up the innocent (Is. 58:6-11)
- Devise ways to do good (Gal. 6:9-10)
- Choose right and straight paths for your feet (Prov. 4:10-15)
- Tell the truth in court (Ex. 20:16)

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<sup>38</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 917.

<sup>39</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 83.

- Promote unity and peace among the brothers, encourage them (Ro. 12:18; 15:5-6; Mt. 5:9; Eph. 4:3; Ja. 3:18)

**Ps. 133** = God blesses those who live together in unity.

**Ro. 12:9-14:1** = "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Submit to the governing authorities. Pay your taxes. Love your neighbor as yourself, for love does no harm to its neighbor, and is the fulfillment of the law. Accept him whose faith is weak without passing judgment on disputable matters.

**I Pet. 2:11-12** = Live different from the world. "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."

#### **5. 6:20-35 = Why should Solomon's sons keep their father and mother's commands? (Ps. 119:105)**

They are light (guidance) and the way to life. Notice in chapters 5–7 each warning against adultery is prefaced by an admonition to pay attention to guidance (parents, Word of God). If we trust and obey God's truth, He keeps us from believing the enemies lies. Fill your heart and mind with the Word of God, and never think that you can handle this stuff on your own.

"When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life, keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife."

**Ps. 119:105** = "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

#### **What will they keep him from?**

The immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife.

#### **Is she/he alluring? (Cf. Job 31:1)**

Yes. She is beautiful and captivating, and her tongue is smooth (verbal compliments with the wrong motives). "God's truth should also control the neck, because a man might be tempted to turn his head and look at a beautiful woman for the purpose of lusting (Matt. 5:27-30). He may not be able to avoid seeing the woman the first time, but it's looking the second time that gets him into trouble."<sup>40</sup> No one should lust with the purpose of sexual sin.

**Job 31:1** = Men tend to be very visual when it comes to attraction. Job understood this and said: "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."

### **What are the consequences of such a relationship?**

The prostitute reduces a person to a loaf of bread (to be degraded to the lowest level of poverty - cf. Lk. 15:13-16, 30), and preys upon their very life (sexually transmitted diseases?). No one who touches her will go unpunished. Illicit sex is like playing with fire.

### **Why is an adulterer despised?**

The man who steals out of hunger may compensate for his crime (it will cost him much more than going down to the bakery and buying a loaf of bread). But someone who commits adultery (steals someone's mate) lacks judgment (loses his good sense - David, II Sam. 12) and so destroys himself. He breaks the marriage covenant, arouses a husband's jealous fury, and there is no compensation accepted, however great it is.

### **What is his lot? Why?**

Blows and disgrace are his lot (physical punishment), and his shame will never be wiped away (loses his good name, reputation; emotional distress; congregational disapproval). Because jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge. He will not except any compensation; he will refuse the bribe, however great it is. (Cf. SS 8:6) Indulging in sexual immorality is always a losing proposition.

### **How should the church respond to such sin? (Cf. Mt. 18:15-20; I Cor. 5)**

When it becomes known, it must be dealt with in a timely manner and in accordance with scriptural guidelines.

**Mt. 18:15-20** = A sin must first be dealt with among the two individuals involved. If things are worked out, good. But if not, take along one or two others as witnesses. If things still can't be worked out, tell it to the church leadership; if things still can't be worked out, the sinner is to be treated as a pagan or a text collector (excommunicated, not associated with). This should be done over a period of time so the sinner is given the chance to

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<sup>40</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 64-65.

repent. When godly men in church leadership agree on the discipline than it is already done by God.

**I Cor. 5** = Those who are unrepentant in their sin are to be disfellowshipped (after following the guidelines of Matthew 18). The church cannot tolerate such sin without dire consequences. There is a measure of protection in being part of a church body which is taken away when someone is excommunicated, or handed over to Satan. Paul warned that this man's flesh might be destroyed, or he might die, but his spirit would be saved on the day of the Lord. Believers are not to associate with anyone who calls himself a believer but is in immoral and unrepentant. We shouldn't even eat with such a person. We should "duck" and let God hit them.

### **What should be the goal of church discipline?**

Repentance and reconciliation. When the person repents of their sin they should be lovingly restored to the fellowship.

### Homework for Proverbs Chapter 7

1. Read the chapter carefully.

2. 7:1-5 = What is meant by "store up my commands within you"?

Why is this important? (Cf. Ps. 119:105; Heb. 4:12-13)

What is meant by "the apple of your eye"?

Why should Solomon's teachings be guarded as the apple of your eye?

What is meant by verse three? (Cf. Dt. 6:4-9; Ja. 1:22-25)

Again Solomon is warning his son about the adulteress. Do you think he's worried?

3. 7:6-9 = What did Solomon notice about this youth?

Where were his steps taking him? (Cf. Prov. 5:8; Job 24:15; Mt. 7:13-14)

Was this wise? Why or why not? (Cf. Prov. 4:23; Mt. 5:27-30; Ja. 1:13-15)

Does God provide us a way out of temptation? (Cf. I Cor. 10:12-13)

4. 7:10-23 = How is this woman described?

What does verse 14 mean?

What was she concerned about? What was she not concerned about?

How did she seduce him?

How is his fall described?

5. 7:24-27 = Does this woman have a lot of victims?

What does her way of life lead to? (Cf. Ja. 1:13-15)

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 7

1. Read the chapter carefully.

2. 7:1-5 = What is meant by "store up my commands within you"?

Remember them, memorize them, meditate on them (cf. Ps. 119:9-16).

**Why is this important? (Cf. Ps. 119:105; Heb. 4:12-13)**

Because God's word gives us guidance in every area of life.

**Ps. 119:105** = "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." We may not know the final destination but God gives us light for each step at a time. We must believe and trust Him.

**Heb. 4:12-13** = "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." God even judges our thoughts and attitudes, or motives, by His Word, and someday we will have to give an account for all this.

**What is meant by "the apple of your eye"?**

The pupil (Lit. "Little man of the eye"<sup>41</sup>). The ancients thought the pupil was a sphere like an apple.<sup>42</sup> "Apple is literally the center of a thing."<sup>43</sup>

**Why should Solomon's teachings be guarded as the apple of your eye?**

Just as we diligently guard our eyes from perceived damage (i.e. Raise a hand or an arm in front of them, wear sunglasses or hats, use eyedrops, etc.) because they are valuable to us, we should diligently honor and study God's word and keep it in our hearts/obey it. We should make sure our priorities honor God (Mt. 6:19-24).

**What is meant by verse three? (Cf. Dt. 6:4-9; Ja. 1:22-25)**

Solomon is not speaking of taking in the word by osmosis, but by meditating on and memorizing the word of God, and then, of course, doing it. It would be nice if we could just lay our heads on our Bibles and go to sleep and remember everything in the

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<sup>41</sup> BLB, Lexicon :: Strong's H380 - 'iyshown, "the apple of the eye".

<sup>42</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 919.

morning; or write a few verses on the card and tape it to our heads and remember it, but it doesn't work that way. One's closeness to understanding or wisdom should be like the intimate ties between a husband and a wife or a brother and sister. Work on the relationship.

**Dt. 6:4-9** = Our God is the only God. We should love him with everything we've got, and take His words to heart. We should tell them to our children whenever we get the chance and put little things around us to help us remember His commands. Loving, knowing and sharing God should be part of every aspect of our lives. Practice, practice, practice.

**Ja. 1:22-25** = Hearing the word and agreeing with it mentally is not enough; we must do what it says. If we don't it's like looking at yourself in the mirror and going away and forgetting what you look like. But if we study intently God's law and don't forget what He teaches us (apply it to life), we will be blessed in everything we do.

### **Again Solomon is warning his son about the adulteress. Do you think he's worried?**

The adulteress is smooth, deceitful, slippery.<sup>44</sup>

I'm sure Solomon heard all kinds of things from the other children in the palace since his older brother who died was a result of an adulterous relationship/murder. David and Bathsheba were married by the time Solomon came along, but people have long memories (e.g. Joab -commander of the army; Ahithophel - Bathsheba's grandfather and David's counselor; etc). Solomon didn't want that for his sons. And no wonder Solomon asked God for wisdom to rule His people rightly.

### **3. 7:6-9 = What did Solomon notice about this youth?**

He was a youth who lacked judgment, had no sense, gullible (simple, foolish, naïve, open-minded<sup>45</sup>). He was simple—one without moral direction and inclined to evil.

### **Where were his steps taking him? (Cf. Prov. 5:8; Job 24:15; Mt. 7:13-14)**

Whether he knew it or not his steps were taking him into evil (he definitely wasn't being guided by God's word!). He was going down the street at twilight (pupil of the eye, middle of the night - that is the deepest blackness<sup>46</sup>) near the adulteress's house.

**Prov. 5:8** = Solomon had warned earlier, "Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house." (Don't set yourself up to fall!)

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<sup>44</sup> BLB, Lexicon :: Strong's H2505 - chalaq

<sup>45</sup> BLB, Lexicon:: Strong's H6612 - pēthiy

<sup>46</sup> BLB, Lexicon :: Strong's H380 - 'iyshown

**Job 24:15** = People tend to think that darkness will hide their sin, that no one will see them, but God sees even if no one else does. (In this case somebody was watching - 7:6)

**Mt. 7:13-14** = "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." (The road to sin looks good it first.)

### **Was this wise? Why or why not? (Cf. Prov. 4:23; Mt. 5:27-30; Ja. 1:13-15)**

Definitely not. He was setting himself up to fall into a terrible sin. In almost every case, people who have indulged in sexual sin and suffered for it deliberately put themselves into the place of temptation and danger. It's almost like they dare God to do something about it. But when we willfully disobey God's Word, He doesn't always intervene but allows us to suffer the consequences of our sin. If, instead, we sought the Lord and remembered His Word and the consequences of sin, we would flee! Stay away from people who are immoral except to tell them about Jesus. When that opportunity is gone, flee!

"If you want to avoid the devil, stay away from his neighborhood. If you suspect you might be vulnerable to a particular sin, take steps to avoid it."<sup>47</sup>

**Prov. 4:23** = "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." (Don't dwell on a temptation; it is sure to lead to sin.)

**Mt. 5:27-30** = Adultery begins in the heart; it is not always acted out. Don't set yourself up to fall by dwelling on a lustful thought or taking that second look. (Pornography, sexy romance novels, sexy movies, etc.)

**Ja. 1:13-15** = God isn't the one who tempts us; "but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." (You can't say, "The devil made me do it.")

### **Does God provide us a way out of temptation? (Cf. I Cor. 10:12-13)**

Yes. Just about the time we think we're doing well, we crash! But "no temptation has seized you except what is common to man (you're not unusual). And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear (in His strength). But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." (We need to look for that way out and take it when we find it. Ignoring God's provision will lead us into deep trouble. Taking God's way out may not be easy but it is right and honors Him. It also saves us a lot of heart ache and the consequences of sin.)

### **4. 7:10-23 = How is this woman described?**

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<sup>47</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 920.

She is dressed like a prostitute (immodest) and comes with crafty (hidden, subtle) intent. She is loud and defiant (has cast off restraint and indulges in her lusts), her feet never stay at home (wandering about from inquietude of mind<sup>48</sup>); she lurks in the street, in the squares and at every corner. She is brazen and uses seductive and smooth words to persuade him. (She may look and sound good, but the fact that she's trying to seduce someone tells a great deal about her. She's a married woman with a weak commitment to her husband, and she seems to have no conviction of sin.)

Some people like this may be brazen as this woman is, but often times people use the wounded deer effect so that someone is lulled into "helping them" and fall into sin without planning to. There are many avenues to follow into sin.

Also, Scripture says much about modesty among women (I Tim. 2:9-10; I Pet. 3:1-6). There is quite a difference between being attractive and being sloppy or immodest. In case you haven't noticed, men like to look at women. It's part of their nature. They just have to be careful how long and how often they look. It's up to us as women to make sure we dress in a way that is not provocative.

V. 13 = Notice she grabbed him and kissed him. This was no "holy" kiss! She was going after him, like fresh meat. Even among Christians we must be careful about how much physical contact occurs. "The subtleties of our old sin nature, the characteristics of love before God is such a delicate nature that sometimes we can cross the line. We can go from a spirit-filled attitude and heart to a carnal action without even realizing the steps that lead us there. In one moment, our hearts can be centered on the Lord, desiring to do whatever is pleasing to Him. Then, without even knowing what's happening, we suddenly move into carnality and sin."<sup>49</sup> The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak! Don't ever think you can handle this kind of thing in your own strength. That is very foolish. We need to seek God and learn to trust Him even in this area.

### **What does verse 14 mean?**

Some people believe that she had fulfilled the law in regard to her monthly cycle. Others believe that this refers to "a sacrifice she made (hypocritically, of course) with meat left over (Lev. 7:16-17). Portions of the sacrificial animals were taken home by the offerer. Without refrigeration the meat needed to be consumed; so a feast usually accompanied the sacrifice. Her religious activity, however, was a pretense, an effort to cloud any sense of wrongdoing she may have had."<sup>50</sup>

David Hocking says, "She is saying, 'You don't need to worry about my relationship with God. Everything is fine.' 'I've dealt with my commitment to God and I'm strong there. I

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<sup>48</sup> BLB, Lexicon :: Strong's H1993 - hamah

<sup>49</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>50</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 920.

want you to know that everything is okay between me and God.' " Needless to say, this doesn't make her sin right.

### **What was she concerned about? What was she not concerned about?**

She was concerned about outward appearances—the ritual—but not the spirit of the law (what God thought), or her own heart.

### **How did she seduce him?**

With persuasive words and smooth talk. She was bold speaking about sensuality. She made it sound so good and safe. This was an opportune time for him to visit her. She appeals to his ego by flattering him and making him think he's very special to her: "I would never offer this to anyone else!" She also appeals to his imagination by describing her beautiful bed and the expensive spices that perfume it to lure him in.

Verbal compliments, followed by sensual conversations, are invitations to sexual sin. Even within the church people who date are invited or encouraged to have sexual involvement on the first or second date. This is not okay!

### **How is his fall described?**

"All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter (they may sense something is wrong but they don't understand, they just go), like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life." (She set a trap for him and he fell for it, not realizing that failure to resist this temptation would cost him his life.)

### **5. 7:24-27 = Does this woman have a lot of victims?**

Yes. She has many victims and her slain are a mighty throng.

### **What does her way of life lead to? (Cf. Ja. 1:13-15)**

"Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death."

**Ja. 1:13-15** = Desire, or lust, gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death. (The original LSD trip.)

"A young man involved in illicit sex may die from punishment meted out by an angry husband, or from poverty, or from venereal disease, or from spiritual and emotional anguish."<sup>51</sup> Or God may just decide to take his life. There is a sin unto death (Prov. 29:1; I Cor. 5:5; I Jo. 5:16-17).

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<sup>51</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 921.

Homework for Proverbs  
Chapter 8

1. Read the chapter carefully. Here we have a contrast from the foolish man in chapter 7 to the beauty of God's wisdom.

2. 8:1-11 = Where and to whom does wisdom cry out to?

Does she exclude anyone?

What kinds of things does she say? (Cf. Ps. 32:8-10; Is. 30:19-22; Jer. 6:16)

What is Godly wisdom worth?

3. 8:12-21 = Look up and define "wisdom", "prudence", "knowledge", "discretion".

To fear the LORD is synonymous with what?

What do the following verses say about this? Ex. 20:20; Job 28:25-28; Ps. 86:11; 97:10; 101:1-8; Prov. 14:16; 16:6; Lk. 12:1-7; Ro. 12:9; I Thes. 5:22.

What are some of the things those who love wisdom receive?

4. 8:22-31 = Where and when did wisdom begin?

How did God use wisdom in creation? See also Prov. 3:19-20; Jer. 10:12-13.

What did God say about His creation in Genesis 1:31?

Read Job 37:1-42:6. Jot down what you learn about God and His wisdom in creation from this passage. Don't get too detailed unless you want to. Just note the gist of it.

5. 8:32-36 = What are the blessings of seeking God's wisdom?

What is the fate of those who don't seek wisdom?

Are you seeking God's wisdom? Search your heart.

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 8

### 1. Read the chapter carefully. Here we have a contrast from the foolish man in chapter 7 to the beauty of God's wisdom.

"The lack of virtue that characterized the adulteress is contrasted with wisdom's sterling attributes. Whereas the seductress' ways are secretive and deceptive, wisdom's ways are open and honest. One who succumbs to the adulteress finds shame and death, but wisdom's followers acquire prudence for wise living."<sup>52</sup>

### 2. 8:1-11 = Where and to whom does wisdom cry out to?

She stands wherever people are passing and in highly visible areas. (The gates were where the elders and leaders of the people met to discuss court cases and where business was conducted). She cries out to all mankind; wisdom is available to anyone who wants it.

#### Does she exclude anyone?

No, except possibly the scorners (1:22) because their hearts are too hard to hear. She wants everyone to hear her message. It's never too late to stop being a fool!

#### What kinds of things does she say? (Cf. Ps. 32:8-10; Is. 30:19-22; Jer. 6:16)

She invites the simple and the foolish (those most needing her, yet most likely to ignore her) to come to her to gain prudence ("a sensibleness in one's approach to life, cleverness in a good sense"<sup>53</sup>) and understanding ("insight, or sharp discernment"<sup>54</sup>). She has worthy ("noble or princely", valid, right, they correspond to reality<sup>55</sup>) things to say and speaks what is right and true, because she detests wickedness. Her words are just; none of them is crooked (twisted, doublespeak) or perverse (turned away from the normal). To the discerning and those who have knowledge her words are right ("straightforward or honest"<sup>56</sup>), faultless ("upright or straight"<sup>57</sup>). (Cf. Ps. 19:9; 119:128)

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<sup>52</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 921.

<sup>53</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 921.

<sup>54</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 921.

<sup>55</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 921.

<sup>56</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 921.

<sup>57</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 921.

**Ps. 32:8-10** = "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. Many are the woes of the wicked, but *the LORD's unfailing love* surrounds the man who trusts in him."

**Is. 30:19-22** = God is gracious to those who cry to Him for help. God will send teachers (or possibly the Trinity/Holy Spirit) to give *His guidance* to those who seek it.

**Jer. 6:16** = "This is what the LORD says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find *rest for your souls.*' But you said, 'We will not walk in it.' "

### **What is Godly wisdom worth?**

God's wisdom is incalculable and has much more to offer than perishable riches —"blessings like prudence, knowledge, discretion ("witty inventions" Prov. 8:12), the fear of the Lord, humility, godly speech, wise counsel, understanding, guidance on life's path, strength for the journey, and 'durable riches'. A life that's enriched by God may be poor in this world's goods, but it is rich in the things that matter most."<sup>58</sup> It is worth much more than silver, gold, or rubies; it exceeds any material wealth. Nothing a person desires can compare with wisdom. (Cf. Job 28 and Mt. 6:33)

Do we really regard wisdom as being so valuable? If we did, we would study God's Word more.

### **3. 8:12-21 = Look up and define "wisdom", "prudence", "knowledge", "discretion".**

**"wisdom"**= Knowing how to use knowledge rightly, whether gained from God and/or experience.

**"prudence"** = 1: careful good judgment that allows someone to avoid danger or risks.<sup>59</sup>

**"knowledge"** = 1: information, understanding, or skill that you get from experience  
2 : awareness of something : the state of being aware of something.<sup>60</sup>

**"discretion"** = 2: the quality of being careful about what you do and say so that people will not be embarrassed or offended : the quality of being discreet.<sup>61</sup>

**understanding"** = 1: the knowledge and ability to judge a particular situation or subject."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>59</sup> [learnersdictionary.com](http://learnersdictionary.com), "Prudence".

<sup>60</sup> [learnersdictionary.com](http://learnersdictionary.com), "knowledge".

<sup>61</sup> [learnersdictionary.com](http://learnersdictionary.com), "discretion".

<sup>62</sup> [learnersdictionary.com](http://learnersdictionary.com), "understanding".

## To fear the LORD is synonymous with what?

Hating evil/sin.

**What do the following verses say about this? Ex. 20:20; Job 28:25-28; Ps. 86:11; 97:10; 101:1-8; Prov. 14:16; 16:6; Lk. 12:1-7; Ro. 12:9; I Thes. 5:22.**

**Ex. 20:20** = The fear of God will keep us from sinning.

**Job 28:25-28** = God appraised, confirmed and tested wisdom. "And He said to man, 'The fear of the LORD—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.' " (When we fear God and know His ways we are able to judge a situation and choose rightly.)

**Ps. 86:11** = When we walk in God's truth with an undivided heart (choice) we learn to fear Him.

**Ps. 97:10** = Those who love God should hate evil. God will protect and deliver us.

**Ps. 101:1-8** = David wanted to be blameless before God. He vowed to set no vile thing before his eyes, he would have nothing to do with evil. He wouldn't let evil people hang around him but would encourage the faithful/blameless to work and minister to him. He was determined to oust all the evil he could. (Are you allowing evil to cohabitate with you?)

**Prov. 14:16** = "A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless."

**Prov. 16:6** = "Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil."

**Lk. 12:1-7** = Nothing is hidden from God. The Pharisees were being hypocritical and didn't fear God when they should have. Jesus told the disciples they shouldn't fear those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But they should fear God, who after killing the body, has the power to throw you into Hell. This wasn't meant to be a threat but to be an encouragement to them since He and His Father held them in His hands. They shouldn't fear the powers that be, but trust God and stand for Him.

**Ro. 12:9** = "Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."

**I Thes. 5:22** = "Avoid every kind of evil."

## What are some of the things those who love wisdom receive?

They will possess wise counsel and sound judgment, understanding (insight) and power (valor, courage). They will have the ability to reign and govern justly and righteously. They will be loved by God and known by Him. They will receive riches and honor, enduring ("surpassing" or "eminent"<sup>63</sup>) wealth and prosperity ("righteousness" or godly living<sup>64</sup>). They will possess the fruit of wisdom. This is better than fine gold and choice silver.

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<sup>63</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 922.

<sup>64</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 922.

#### **4. 8:22-31 = Where and when did wisdom begin?**

Wisdom was with God from eternity past, before He created anything. Wisdom is the attribute of God by which He creates, sustains, and controls all things.

**How did God use wisdom in creation? See also Prov. 3:19-20; Jer. 10:12-13.**

In everything He made: the springs abounding with water; the mountains, the hills; the earth, its fields, the dust; when He set the heavens in place, when He marked out the horizon on the face of the deep; when He established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep; when He gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep His command, and when He marked out the foundations of the earth. Wisdom was the craftsman at His side (intimate association). She was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind.

**Prov. 3:19-20** = "By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding He set the heavens in place; by His knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew."

**Jer. 10:12-13** = "But God made the earth by His power; He founded the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding. When He thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from His storehouses."

#### **What did God say about His creation in Genesis 1:31?**

God saw *all* that He had made, and it was *very good*. Nothing was out of place or needed work. It was perfect, done by His wisdom.

**Read Job 37:1-42:6. Jot down what you learn about God and His wisdom in creation from this passage. Don't get too detailed unless you want to. Just note the gist of it.**

Job 36:22-33 = *There is no Teacher like Him*. No one prescribed His ways for Him or tells Him He has made a mistake. *He is great – beyond our understanding!* No one can count His years. He created the cycles of condensation and rain. No one understands how He spread out the clouds or how He thunders from His pavilion. He scatters His lightning about Him. He governs the nations and provides food in abundance.

Job 37 = He created the lightning and thunder; His voice thunders in marvelous ways; *He does great things beyond our understanding*. He sends the storms, the snow and the rain, and fills men's hearts with fear at His power. His breath produces ice and He sends His clouds over the face of the whole earth to do whatever He commands them—to punish men or to water His earth and show His love. No one knows how God controls the clouds and makes His lightning flash, or how the clouds hanging poised, those wonders of *Him who is perfect in knowledge*. No one can help Him in spreading out the

skies, hard is a mirror of cast bronze. *The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power.*

Job 38 = In beautiful poetic form the LORD questions Job about His creation and Job is unable to answer. God laid the earth's foundations, marked off its dimensions and set its footings in place while the angels sang and shouted for joy. He shut up the sea and made boundaries for it; He gives orders to the morning and shapes the earth like clay under a seal. He made the springs and recesses of the deep, and the gates of the shadow of death; the vast expanse of the earth. He knows where light and dark reside; He made the storehouses of the snow and hail which He uses in battle. He knows where the lightning is disbursed and where the wind comes from. He cut a channel for the torrents of rain and a path for the thunderstorm to water even the desert. He knows the rain, the dew, the ice, the frost. He made the constellations and the laws of the heavens. He provides food for the animals.

Job 39 = God keeps track of the animals giving birth and their young growing up. He made the wild donkey in all his wild glory. He made the wild ox in all his great strength, and the ostrich who is foolish yet runs faster than a horse and rider. He created the beautiful horse in all its strength, with its flowing mane, which goes into a frenzy at the scent of battle. He created the hawk and the eagle to soar on the wind.

Job 40 = He made the huge behemoth along with man, which loves the water and is not alarmed even in a flood. He cannot be caught or tamed by man.

Job 41 = He created the fierce leviathan which man cannot tame or subdue. Just the sight of him is overpowering and he is fierce in a fight. If God made leviathan then *who can stand against Him? Everything under heaven belongs to Him.* Leviathan is an amazing creature without equal. Weapons are useless against him. Nothing on earth is his equal – a creature without fear. He looks down on all that are haughty; he is king over all that are proud.

Job 42:1-6 = After all this Job realizes he was speaking of things he did not understand, things too wonderful to know. So he repented.

"Everything that happens in nature is under the direct control of God. He not only created everything, He sustains and controls it all. When we observe the laws of the universe, we see a reflection of the attributes and character of God, Himself. That is what we call wisdom."<sup>65</sup>

**5. 8:32-36 = What are the blessings of seeking God's wisdom?** "Having declared God's truth, wisdom now calls for a decision, as all faithful herald's must do. How people respond to God's message is a matter of life or death (vv. 35-36), and it's impossible to be neutral."<sup>66</sup>

Life and favor ("acceptance, goodwill, or approval"<sup>67</sup>) from the LORD.

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<sup>65</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>67</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 923.

**What is the fate of those who don't seek wisdom?**

Whoever fails to find wisdom harms himself; all who hate her love death.

**Are you seeking God's wisdom? Search your heart.**

Homework for Proverbs  
Chapter 9

1. Read the chapter carefully. This chapter contrasts the two women Wisdom and Folly.
2. Do a contrast of wisdom and folly from this chapter. What differences and similarities do you find?

3. Read Matthew 7:24–27 and contrast the wise and foolish builders.

What does Jesus emphasize about His words, i.e., what should we do with them? (Cf. Ja. 1:22; Jo. 14:23-24)

What happens to both houses?

Why did the first house stand?

Why did the second house fall? (Cf. Ez. 33:30-32)

How does this relate to godly wisdom?

4. 9:7-12 = Contrast the mocker and the wise man.

Why is it useless to correct or rebuke a mocker?

Why does a wise person accept correction or instruction?

Read Acts 18:24–28. Was Apollos knowledgeable? How?

How did Apollos show himself to be wise?

What was the proof?

5. Are you dining with Wisdom and building on the solid rock of God's Word? Check your heart.

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 9

**1. Read the chapter carefully. This chapter contrasts the two women Wisdom and Folly.**

**2. Do a contrast of wisdom and folly from this chapter. What differences and similarities do you find?**

Wisdom	Folly
<p>Wisdom* has built her house; She has hewn out its seven pillars.     (industrious; large and spacious) She has prepared (slaughtered) her meat^     and mixed (diluted or added spices)     her wine; She has also set her table (prepared) She has sent out her maids (searched out)# And she calls from the highest point of     the city (so many hear)</p>	<p>The woman Folly is loud; She is undisciplined and without     knowledge (naïve, gullible,     ignorant; attractive but unruly) [She talks a lot but doesn't     know what's good or bad; she     is foolish] She <i>sits</i> at the door of her house, [lazy] On a seat at the highest point of the city,  Calling out to those who pass by, Who go straight on their way (those who     might not otherwise stop; upright)</p>
<p>"Let all who are simple** come in here!"     she says to those who lack judgment.</p>	<p>"Let all who are simple** come in here!"     she says to those who lack     judgment (intentional copy)</p>
<p>"Come, eat my food and drink the wine I     have mixed. Leave your simple ways     and you will live; walk in the way of     understanding." (Long-term     satisfaction)^^</p>	<p>"Stolen water is sweet; (illicit sex?)%     food eaten in secret is delicious!"     (Instant gratification; appeal to     baser desires)  But little do they know that the dead are     there, that her guests are in the     depths of the grave.***</p>

\* Plural form suggesting wisdom's fullness.<sup>68</sup>

^ The Jewish people didn't always use their flocks and herds for food (except when bringing sacrifices and at festivals), so opportunities to eat meat were infrequent and welcomed.

# "It was customary in those times for a host or hostess to issue two invitations. The first one, given some days in advance, notified the guests of the day and hour of the feast; the second one, given the day of the feast, ascertained who was actually coming (see Luke 14:16-24; Matt. 22:1-14). Knowing the approximate number of the guests, the

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<sup>68</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 923.

cooks could then prepare sufficient meat so that there was plenty for everybody and nothing would be wasted."<sup>69</sup>

\*\* Naïve, gullible. The scorners, who mocked and laughed at wisdom, and the fools, who rejected her, have most likely already fallen to the wiles of Mme. Folly. Here we only see the simple invited (Cf. 1:22 and 8:5 with 9:4). "It's a dangerous thing to reject God's invitation; you never know when it may be your last one (Luke 14:24)."<sup>70</sup>

% "In 5:15–18, Solomon compared the joys of married love to drinking pure water from a refreshing fountain, but Folly (the adulteress) offers stolen water from somebody else's fountain. God ordained marriage to be a 'fence' around the fountain so that nobody will pollute it."<sup>71</sup> (Ex. 20:14)

^^ As long as you have breath it's never too late to stop being a fool!

\*\*\* Notice the result of Folly's invitation is a funeral, not a feast. "This suggests that sexual immorality is the height of folly... Almost every verse in the remainder of the book points to one or both of these paths and/or their consequences."<sup>72</sup>

( ) definitions and ideas come from BKC<sup>73</sup>

[ ] mine

### 3. Read Matthew 7:24–27 and contrast the wise and foolish builders.

Wise Builder	Foolish Builder
Puts God's words into practice. Built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; Yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.	Does not put God's words into practice. Build his house on the sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; And it fell with a great crash.

### What does Jesus emphasize about His words, i.e., what should we do with them? (Cf. Ja. 1:22; Jo. 14:23-24)

We should not only hear them but put them into practice!

**Ja. 1:22** = "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." Cf. Verses 23-25. "Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in the mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away

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<sup>69</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>70</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>71</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>72</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 925.

<sup>73</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 923-925.

and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does." Put your religion into practice. Cf. Verses 26-27. "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight reign on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

**Jo. 14:23-24** = Jesus replied, "If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own; they belong to the Father who sent Me."

### **What happens to both houses?**

The storms of life hit both; no one is exempt.

### **Why did the first house stand?**

Because it was built on the rock of God's Word. The builder put those words into practice. It's not enough to just agree that God's word is right; we must act on its truth.

### **Why did the second house fall? (Cf. Ez. 33:30-32)**

It was built on the sand. The builder did not put those words into practice.

**Ez. 33:30-32** = As for you, Son of Man, your countrymen are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, "Come and hear the message that has come from the LORD." My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but *they do not put them in the practice*. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for *they hear your words but do not put them into practice*." (How many people sitting in church are like this? Is it culture or a relationship?)

### **How does this relate to godly wisdom?**

Wisdom is putting God's words into practice, applying them in daily life. It is not enough to *have* knowledge, one must *act on it* in a godly way.

**4. 9:7-12 = Contrast the mocker and the wise man.** Wisdom is still speaking here. These verses point to the consequences of accepting the two invitations. "Of course, when the simple people accept the invitation, it means leaving the old crowd, and the fools and scoffers will try to talk them into staying."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 39.

## Wise Man

Rebuke a wise man and he will love you.  
Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still;  
Teach a righteous man and he will add to  
his learning.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning\* of  
wisdom, and knowledge of the  
Holy One is understanding (insight  
into life).

He will have a long life.  
His wisdom will reward him.

## Mocker

Whoever corrects a mocker invites  
insult; [ad hominem argument]  
Whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs  
abuse (blotch, defect,  
defamation)

Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate  
you. (unteachable)\*\*

If you are a mocker, you alone will  
suffer.

\* prerequisite<sup>75</sup> We are not very smart unless we have a healthy fear of the Lord. "When we humbly bow before God and ask Him what He wants us to do, we are wise. Whatever we think, say, or do, we are accountable to God."<sup>76</sup>And "the better you know God, the keener will be your knowledge and discernment when it comes to the decisions of life." "...The Lord wants to build godly character into our lives... Character is built on decisions, and bad decisions will create bad character."<sup>77</sup>

( ) definitions and ideas from BKC<sup>78</sup>

[ ] mine

\*\* Are you teachable? Or do you get angry when someone criticizes you, lovingly or not? Do you always think you're right? It's hard not to get your feathers ruffled when being criticized, but listening, accepting that criticism and learning from it is wisdom, even if the criticism is unfounded. Maybe God is teaching you how *not* to respond in kind.

### **Why is it useless to correct or rebuke a mocker?**

Because they will just insult and abuse you. They don't want to hear the truth. They are not open to correction so they will suffer. Wisdom's invitation only makes their hard hearts harder (cf. Pharaoh - Ex. 4-15))

### **Why does a wise person accept correction or instruction?**

Because they fear God and want to grow wiser still and add to their learning. If they're wrong they want to know it. They want the rewards of wisdom. Those who heed

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<sup>75</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 924.

<sup>76</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>77</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>78</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 923-925.

Wisdom respond to and learn from rebuke, add to their knowledge, and enjoy life.  
"Godly character should underlie one's mental sagacity."<sup>79</sup>

### **Read Acts 18:24–28. Was Apollos knowledgeable? How?**

Yes. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. (He was accurate in what he knew.)

### **How did Apollos show himself to be wise?**

When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. They told Apollos about Jesus' life, ministry, entrance into Jerusalem, trial, death, burial, resurrection and ascension into glory (the rest of the story). Apparently, he didn't reject their loving yet firm correction, but applied it in his life (salvation) and to his doctrine.

### **What was the proof?**

He had his fellow Christians' encouragement. And on arriving in Achaia, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. He accepted the reproof and went on to teach more accurately. He understood now how Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures.

### **5. Are you dining with Wisdom and building on the solid rock of God's Word? Check your heart.**

#### Homework for Proverbs Chapter 10

1. Read the chapter carefully. Chapters 1–9 basically contrasted the righteous (wisdom) and the wicked (folly). The next section (10:1-22:16) is the longest section of the book and contains 375 sayings. Generally the thought is limited to two lines of a verse, sometimes a few more. Although chapters 10–15 continue the theme of the righteous versus the wicked, "the frequent change of subject from one verse to another may be intentional, to force readers to grapple with and meditate on the thoughts in one verse before moving onto the next."<sup>80</sup> Some authors handle Proverbs thematically, but we are going to tackle it one verse at a time. Hang in there with me! 😊

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<sup>79</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 924.

<sup>80</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 925.

2. V. 1 = Why does a wise son bring joy but a foolish son grief?

3. V. 2 = Why are ill-gotten treasures of no value? (Cf. Prov. 11:7; Lk. 12:13-21)

Read Micah 6:9–16. What does God think about ill-gotten treasures?

Does wealth in the present life do any good for the afterlife? Why or why not? (Lk 16:1-15)

What does God look for instead?

4. V. 3 = Read Luke 12:22–34. What does God promise to do for those He loves?

What should we do instead of worrying about our needs?

What does God do to the cravings of the wicked?

5. V. 4-5 = Read Proverbs 6:6–11; 12:11; 13:4; 14:23; 15:19 and jot down what you find regarding laziness versus diligence.

6. V. 6-7, 11 = Make a contrast between the righteous and the wicked on these verses.

7. V. 8 = Why is it the wise accept commands?

Why does a chattering fool come to ruin?

8. V. 9 = Compare Proverbs 11:3. Why is integrity so important?

What happens to the unfaithful?

9. V. 10 = Compare Proverbs 6:12–15. How does one who winks maliciously cause grief?

How is he like the chattering fool?

10. V. 12 = How does God feel about those who cause dissension? (Cf. Prov. 6:16-19)

Why is dissension so evil? (Cf. I Jo. 3:11-15)

How should believers respond to others no matter what their attitude? (Cf. Ro. 13:10; I Pet. 4:8)

11. V. 13 = Why would someone who lacked judgment be punished?

12. V. 14 = Read Proverbs 1:20–33. What comes out of the mouth of a fool to invite ruin?

13. V. 15 = How might this verse work out in life?

When is this verse not true?

14. V. 16 = What do you think is meant by "wages" and "income"? (Cf. Gal. 6:7-8)

How does this work out in everyday life?

15. V. 17 = How does our example affect others?

16. V. 18 = How might someone's concealed hatred be made evident?

How is this foolish?

17. V. 19-21 = Why is sin usually around when there are many words?

Read Ja. 3:1-12. Why is the tongue so hard to control?

What does the tongue express? (Cf. Mt. 15:18, Lk 6:45)

How are the words of the righteous like choice silver?

Why is the heart of the wicked of little value? Remember Matthew 15:18.

How might the words of the righteous be nourishing?

In contrast, why does the fool die for lack of judgment?

18. V. 22 = How is this true when the world is full of trouble? (Cf. Ro. 8:28; Ja. 1:17)

19. V. 23 = (Cf. Prov. 2:12-15) Why do fools enjoy evil?

Why does a man of understanding delight in wisdom instead of evil?

20. V. 24-25 = Compare Psalm 37:4 and Luke 6:46–49. Why are the righteous protected and granted their desires while the wicked are swept away by the very things they dread?

21. V. 26 = What do vinegar and smoke do to a person that might be compared to sending a sluggard on a mission?

22. V. 27 = How does the fear of the LORD add length to a righteous person's life compared to the life of the wicked being cut short? Or how does this work out in day today life?

23. V. 28 = Where does the prospect of joy for the righteous come from? (Cf. Paul's example in Philippians 1:12–26)

Jot down some promises from Scripture that give you hope.

Why do the hopes of the wicked come to nothing?

24. V. 29 = How is the way of the LORD our refuge? (Cf. Psalm 37:39–40)

Why is it the ruin of those who do evil?

25. V. 30 = This verse refers to the promise made to Israel that they would inherit the land. But there were conditions, or blessings and curses, that went with this promise. Read Deuteronomy 28 and Psalm 37. Jot down the gist of what you find.

26. V. 31-32 = Why will the tongue of the perverse be cut out?

Are you beginning to see the contrast between the wicked in the righteous? There is a lot more to follow. Hang in there.

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 10

1. Read the chapter carefully. Chapters 1–9 basically contrasted the righteous (wisdom) and the wicked (folly). The next section (10:1-22:16) is the longest section of the book and contains 375 sayings. Generally the thought is limited to two lines of a verse, sometimes a few more. Although chapters 10–15 continue the theme of the righteous versus the wicked, "the frequent change of subject from one verse to another may be intentional, to force readers to grapple with and meditate on the thoughts in one verse before moving onto the next."<sup>81</sup> Some authors handle Proverbs thematically, but we are going to tackle it one verse at a time. Hang in there with me! 😊

### 2. V. 1 = Why does a wise son bring joy but a foolish son grief?

"Have you ever wondered why it doesn't say, 'the grief of his father'? I believe father's grieve, but I believe there's a point to be made there that's very important. The son ought to be very careful how he treats his mother. The son, especially, needs to understand how his actions affect the emotional nature of his mother. A foolish son is a grief to his mother."<sup>82</sup>

"The English words *fool* and *folly* come from the Latin *follis*, which means 'bellows.' It also describes a person's puffed-up cheeks. *Follis* indicates that a fool is a windbag, somebody full of air but lacking in substance. Fools may look like giants, but when the wind is taken out of them, they shrink dramatically and reveal what they really are – pygmies."<sup>83</sup>

Because the words and actions of a wise son bring glory to God and therefore joy to his parents. But the words and actions of a foolish son dishonor God and, therefore bring grief (moral excellence versus vice and perversion) We reap what we sow. Consequences can be great or dreadful. What we do and say definitely affects others. And when we sin we carry the baggage, memories and scars the rest of our lives.

### 3. V. 2 = Why are ill-gotten treasures of no value? (Cf. Prov. 11:7; Lk. 12:13-21)

Because they bring a harvest of bad consequences, and eventually death. In the long run they do not satisfy. Treasures acquired by wrongdoing cannot be carried over in the afterlife; they will be no help in the judgment. (Cf. Prov. 11:4; Mt. 16:26-27; I Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19)

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<sup>81</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 925.

<sup>82</sup> Hocking, *Op. Cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>83</sup> Wiersbe, *Op. Cit.*, p. 90-91.

**Prov. 11:7** = "When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; all he expected from his power comes to nothing."

**Lk. 12:13-21** = Where there is a will, there is a relative! The question was brought to Jesus about dividing an inheritance. But Jesus warned the man to be on his guard against any kind of greed because "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Then he told a parable: A certain rich man enjoyed a huge harvest, so he decided to tear down his old barns and build bigger ones to store his grain in. But he presumed upon God by assuming he would live a long life and take life easy; eat, drink and be merry. God told him he was a fool and that he would die that very night. He would get nothing he had prepared for himself. He was not being rich toward God but was being greedy (his heart attitude was all wrong - self versus God and others).

### **Read Micah 6:9–16. What does God think about ill-gotten treasures?**

To fear the name of the LORD is wisdom. We should heed the rod and the One who appointed it. God will judge all those who used dishonest scales and weights, who were violent, liars, etc. He would destroy them because of their sins. They would eat but not to be satisfied, they would store up but save nothing because He would kill them with the sword. They would plant but not harvest; their harvest would go to someone else. They would be given over to ruin and derision, to bear the scorn of the nations. God takes this pretty serious.

### **Does wealth in the present life do any good for the afterlife? Why or why not? (Lk 16:1-15)**

Only if a person is rich toward God, i. e. has a heart to give to God and others for the glory of God and not their own glory. There are no trailer hitches on hearses. If earthly wealth is not used to further God's kingdom then it is worthless. God knows and judges the motives of the heart. What men value highly (esteem, power, wealth, control, etc.) is detestable in God sight.

**Lk 16:1-15** = The people of this world are shrewd in dealing with their own kind but if they can't be trusted with little or much then no one will trust them with true riches. "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money (stuff)." And God knows the heart/motives. The things men value highly are detestable in God's sight.

### **What does God look for instead?**

The attitude of the heart (Lk. 21:1-4; II Cor. 8:12; 9:6-11).

### **4. V. 3 = Read Luke 12:22–34. What does God promise to do for those He loves?**

The LORD doesn't let the righteous go hungry. He promises to meet their needs – food and clothing.

## What should we do instead of worrying about our needs?

We should remember how God feeds the birds and clothes the flowers. We are to seek His kingdom, and all our needs will be taken care of.

## What does God do to the cravings of the wicked?

He thwarts (opposes or baffles successfully) their evil desires to bring about destruction and disaster.

Again, this is a general statement. It is usually true that the godly do not starve and that the wicked do not get all they desire.

## 5. V. 4-5 = Read Proverbs 6:6–11; 12:11; 13:4; 14:23; 15:19 and jot down what you find regarding laziness versus diligence.

Those who are lazy (slack or deceitful) will be poor (won't work, or won't do a good job of it), but diligence (prudence, hard work) brings wealth. If you gather your crops in summer you're wise, but if you sleep (lit. snore) during harvest you're a disgrace. There's no substitute for hard work! And God blesses diligence. Many employers complain that one of the big problems in business is getting employees who will work. Everyone is trying to get out of work. This should never be said of Christians.

"The words for 'hand' are different in the two clauses as Wordsworth remarks. The first word is *caph*, the open, ineffective, hand or palm; the second term is *yad*, the hand tense and braced for vigorous work."<sup>84</sup>

**Proverbs 6:6–11** = The ant is a good example of diligence. The sluggard rests while the harvest goes unreaped – so poverty comes on him like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

**12:11** = Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies lack judgment.

**13:4** = What the sluggard craves he doesn't get, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.

**14:23** = Those who work hard get a profit, but mere talkers only get poverty.

**15:19** = "The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns (excuses, consequences?), but the path of the upright is a highway" (God clears the way).

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<sup>84</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-4.htm>

**6. V. 6-7, 11 = Make a contrast between the righteous and the wicked on these verses.**

The Righteous	The Wicked
Blessings crown his head	Violence overwhelms his mouth (or his words conceal violence)*
His memory^ will be a blessing	His name will rot (like a corpse)
His words are a fountain of life (like a cool spring to a weary desert traveler)	Violence overwhelms his mouth (or his words conceal violence)

\* " 'The mouth of the wicked concealeth violence,' that he may wait for the opportunity of practising it. The contrast is between the manifest blessedness of the righteous and the secret sinister proceedings of the evil."<sup>85</sup>

^ The lasting, fragrant perfume of a holy life is contrasted with the noisomeness and quick decay of an evil name (comp. Ps. 72:17). As a commentator asks, "Whoever thinks of naming a child Judas or Nero?"<sup>86</sup> "It is a saying of Cicero, that 'the life of the dead lies in the memory of the living.'<sup>87</sup>

**7. V. 8 = Why is it the wise accept commands?**

They listen and gladly follow what is right. The wise are not proud or conceited. They are not above learning from others (teachable) or submitting to another's authority. At the same time they don't display their wisdom.

**Why does a chattering (prating, to babble and talk excessively, prattle<sup>88</sup>) fool come to ruin?**

He is always talking and full of himself so he never listens or learns, or accomplishes what he talks about. He exposes his folly with his rash speech.

**8. V. 9 = Compare Proverbs 11:3. Why is integrity so important?**

A person of integrity doesn't compromise on moral issues. They have an undivided heart before God. This integrity guides a person to do what is right in God's sight so they walk securely.

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<sup>85</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-6.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

<sup>86</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-7.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

<sup>87</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-7.htm>, Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

<sup>88</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 92.

### **What happens to the unfaithful?**

They take crooked (twisted) paths and are found out. They are destroyed by their duplicity.

"Integrity" - "in simplicity," having nothing to conceal or to fear (cf. Matthew 10:16).

"Securely" - having no fear of inopportune exposure, because he has no secret sin.

"Crooked paths" - deals in crooked practices.

"Will be found out" - He shall be exposed and punished, and put to open shame. Having this apprehension always present, he cannot walk with confidence as the innocent does. Hence the antithesis in the text.<sup>89</sup>

### **9. V. 10 = Compare Proverbs 6:12–15. How does one who winks maliciously cause grief?**

He plots evil with deceit in his heart and always stirs up dissension (sinful intentions). He's sneaky. A crafty plotter with malicious intent.

### **How is he like the chattering fool?**

He will come to ruin. Disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy.

### **10. V. 12 = How does God feel about those who cause dissension? (Cf. Prov. 6:16-19)**

He hates them; they are detestable to Him.

### **Why is dissension so evil? (Cf. I Jo. 3:11-15)**

It develops out of a heart filled with hatred. It divides people, causes quarrels, bitterness and more hatred which can lead to murder. Those who despise each other cannot work or live together in peace. (Cf. I Cor. 1:10-17; 3:1-4; Phil. 4:2-3)

### **How should believers respond to others no matter what their attitude? (Cf. Ro. 13:10; I Pet. 4:8)**

In love. "Instead of covering our anger with cheap dross, we should cover others' sins with sincere love."<sup>90</sup> We should have a desire to protect and build up, not tear down others.

**Ro. 13:10** = Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

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<sup>89</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-9.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

<sup>90</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 142.

**I Pet. 4:8** = Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

"Hatred keeps alive the old feeling of revenge, and seeks opportunities of satisfying it; but love puts aside, forgets and forgives all offenses against itself."<sup>91</sup> (cf. I Cor. 13:4-8a)

### **11. V. 13 = Why would someone who lacked judgment be punished?**

Because they make bad decisions which lead to bad consequences (they experience trouble). They are void of understanding.

### **12. V. 14 = Read Proverbs 1:20–33. What comes out of the mouth of a fool to invite ruin?**

Mocking, derisive laughter, careless words which bring trouble on themselves and others. They love their simple ways (no moral direction, inclined to evil), mock people who are wise, and hate knowledge. They do not respond to rebuke and reject wisdom. They ignore good advice until calamity, distress and trouble overtake them like a storm. They hate knowledge and do not fear the LORD, so they will reap what they sow.

A wise person uses few words and stores up his knowledge for the right occasion without spouting off. You never know when you'll need some truth in the Bible to help you overcome a temptation or make a decision, some word of wisdom to encourage or gently rebuke someone. Most folks tend to tune people out who talk incessantly, but they will listen to one who's words are wise and few.

### **13. V. 15 = How might this verse work out in life?**

Wealth can buy protection, provide leisure time to study/gain wisdom, invent, organize and enforce laws, etc. But the poor (feeble, weak, no ability to help oneself) are so busy just trying to survive that they come to ruin. They have no means to defend themselves or provide for their families in times of calamity.

### **When is this verse not true?**

Wealth can turn one's heart from following God and won't help at all in the day of judgment. Also criminals are attracted to the "easy pickings" of the flagrantly and unprotected wealthy while the poor man hears no threat (cf. Prov. 11:4; 13:8).

### **14. V. 16 = What do you think is meant by "wages" and "income"? (Cf. Gal. 6:7-8)**

Consequences; the natural result or return of righteous or sinful living. You reap what you sow. "The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."

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<sup>91</sup><http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-12.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

### **How does this work out in everyday life?**

Generally, when you do what is right you are honored and blessed. Honest labor brings its own rewards. On the other hand, choosing evil ways (sinful purposes) brings punishment.

### **15. V. 17 = How does our example affect others?**

Heeding discipline and following the wisdom of experience shows the way to life while ignoring it leads others astray. When others (especially our children and grandchildren) see how we respond to God's discipline they learn and hopefully take it to heart. People are always watching whether we know it or not. "It's not a matter of *if* you will teach, but *what* you will teach." (Mark Twain) Our conduct affects not only ourselves but those around us.

### **16. V. 18 = How might someone's concealed hatred be made evident?**

By lies and slander. The person who hates someone but tries not to show it often has to lie to cover it up. And hatred often leads to slander. Those who gossip and slander have hatred in their hearts.

### **How is this foolish?**

It will eventually come back on the fool when the truth is known.

"This verse ought to be translated, *He that hideth hatred is [a man] of lying lips, and he that uttereth slander is a fool.* He who cherishes hatred in the heart must be a liar and a hypocrite, speaking and acting in a way contrary to his real sentiments; if he divulges his slander, he is a stupid fool, injuring his neighbour, and procuring ill will for himself."<sup>92</sup>

What is terrifying, is that gossip and slander and lies are rampant in the church today. This shouldn't be!

### **17. V. 19-21 = Why is sin usually around when there are many words?**

Because people stop thinking about what they're saying and just spout off (impetuous speech). They tend to exaggerate, tell "little white lies", slander others and in general be uncharitable. Those who talk the most tend to have the least to say. "Empty barrels make the most noise."<sup>93</sup>

### **Read Ja. 3:1-12. Why is the tongue so hard to control?**

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<sup>92</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-18.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

<sup>93</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 144.

It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. One minute we're praising God and the next we're cursing Him or people, who have been made in His likeness. Just a word or two can cause all kinds of trouble, hurt, and discontent. He who holds his tongue is wise.

### **What does the tongue express? (Cf. Mt. 15:18; Lk 6:45)**

**Mt. 15:18** = "But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' "

**Lk 6:45** = "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks."

### **How are the words of the righteous like choice silver?**

When a righteous man speaks from the wisdom God gives him his words are to be treasured like choice silver. They are precious, tested by fire, purified. They are uplifting, encouraging, true, etc.

Speech is an amazing and valuable gift from God that we often take for granted. We need to use it in a way that honors Him.

### **Why is the heart of the wicked of little value? Remember Matthew 15:18.**

He speaks out of the uncleanness and sinfulness of his heart. It is mere dross compared to choice silver.

### **How might the words of the righteous be nourishing?**

Their words are food for the soul. They teach, support, guide, benefit, etc.

### **In contrast, why does the fool die for lack of judgment?**

He is starving for wisdom, undernourished spiritually, plus he will be judged for the error of his ways.

### **18. V. 22 = How is this true when the world is full of trouble? (Cf. Ro. 8:28; Ja. 1:17)**

Riches from God are without the sorrow of ill-gotten wealth. And spiritual riches come with peace, joy and contentment. When you are enjoying the blessing of the Lord, you're wealthy no matter how much money is in your bank account.

**Ro. 8:28** = "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

**Ja. 1:17** = "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

**19. V. 23 = (Cf. Prov. 2:12-15) Why do fools (thickheaded) enjoy evil?**

Sin is pleasurable until the consequences set in. And the more one delves into the perverseness and twistedness of evil the more one enjoys it. The conscience becomes hardened and one treats sin lightly.

**Why does a man of understanding delight in wisdom instead of evil?**

Because he fears the LORD and wants to please Him, and he understands the consequences of evil. His conscience is tender toward God. Godly wisdom is moral in nature.

**20. V. 24-25 = Compare Psalm 37:4 and Luke 6:46–49. Why are the righteous protected and granted their desires while the wicked are swept away by the very things they dread?**

Because the righteous have set their hearts on seeking God and His will for their lives. They delight in Him. They listen to and obey God's words (put them into practice and build their lives on the solid rock of His Word. The wicked have their hearts set on pleasing themselves/the flesh. They refuse to listen to God's words and, therefore, build their lives on sand and are swept away in the storms of life. They have no foundation. And so the thing they dread consumes them.

"Jarchi illustrates this in the instance of the builders of Babel, who were afraid of being scattered upon the face of the earth, which thing feared came upon them through and for their building of the tower; and so it sometimes is, that the very thing which men fear comes upon them by the means which they take to prevent it; so the Jews were afraid that if their people believed in Jesus of Nazareth, the Romans would come and seize their city and nation, and therefore endeavored to persuade them to reject him; for which rejection of him the thing they feared came upon them;"<sup>94</sup>

"By stressing repeatedly in Proverbs that disaster comes to the wicked and various rewards are for the righteous, Solomon sought to convince the uninitiated and naïve that the long-range, not the immediate, fruits of wisdom and folly should be kept in view."<sup>95</sup>

**21. V. 26 = What do vinegar and smoke do to a person that might be compared to sending a sluggard on a mission?**

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<sup>94</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-24.htm>, Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

<sup>95</sup> Walvoord, *Op. Cit.*, p. 927.

Vinegar sets your teeth on edge and smoke makes your eyes sting and water. Sending a sluggard to do something important can cause the same results because he doesn't accomplish what needs to be done or does it haphazardly causing distress or aggravation to the one who sent him. He's unreliable and more of a nuisance than a help. "Something vexes thee?!"

**22. V. 27 = How does the fear of the LORD add length to a righteous person's life compared to the life of the wicked being cut short? Or how does this work out in day to day life?**

In general the righteous aren't plagued by disease, stress, high blood pressure, etc. because they live lives of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, the wicked are often cut down by disease, killed by those they thought were their allies, or justice catches up with them in their prime.

**23. V. 28 = Where does the prospect of joy for the righteous come from? (Cf. Paul's example in Philippians 1:12–26)**

In knowing, serving and pleasing our Lord Jesus Christ. And in encouraging and bringing joy to others.

**Jot down some promises from Scripture that give you hope.**

John 16:33; Ro. 8:1-4; Phil. 1:6; I Thes. 5:23-24; Jude 24-25. There are so many more!

**Why do the hopes of the wicked come to nothing?**

Because their hopes are built on lies and lead to eternal death.

**24. V. 29 = How is the way of the LORD our refuge? (Cf. Psalm 37:39–40)**

His way leads to life. "The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD; He is their stronghold in times of trouble. The LORD helps them and delivers them; He delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in Him." (Cf. Ps. 91; Prov. 18:10)

**Why is it the ruin of those who do evil?**

Because God will judge everyone according to what he has done. (Cf. Heb. 4:12-13) God is not only a loving, merciful and gracious God, but He is holy and righteous and will judge sin. For those who love and obey Him He is their refuge and strength, but for those who refuse His offer of grace He is a consuming fire (cf. John 3:16-18, 36; Heb. 10:26-31; 12:25-29).

**25. V. 30 = This verse refers to the promise made to Israel that they would inherit the land. But there were conditions, or blessings and curses, that went with this promise. Read Deuteronomy 28 and Psalm 37. Jot down the gist of what you find.**

**Deuteronomy 28** = God promised to bless abundantly the people of Israel if they kept His commands and walked in His ways. He would grant them abundant prosperity in the land He promised them. If they were not careful to obey His commands and decrees they would know His curses in every area of life: from their crops to disease, miscarrying wombs, fever and inflammation, scorching heat and drought, blight and mildew, defeat before their enemies, etc. Eventually He would uproot and drive them out of the land He had given them and send them into exile.

**Psalm 37** = Those who trust in the LORD and do good will dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. But evil men will be cut off while those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land. The meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace. The blameless are known to the LORD and their inheritance will endure forever. Those the LORD blesses will inherit the land, but those He curses will be cut off. Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever. The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever. Wait for the LORD and keep His way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it.

**26. V. 31-32 = Why will the tongue of the perverse be cut out?**

"Brings forth" = germinates as a plant,<sup>96</sup> bears fruit.

Because they do not speak what is right and true, wise or fitting. They are unprofitable. They turn away from what is normal.

"The abuse of God's great gift of speech shall be severely punished. 'For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned' (Matthew 12:36, 37)."<sup>97</sup>

Believers are always to tell the truth, but the way we speak that truth is just as important. It is very easy to hurt someone with our words or tone of voice. We are to speak the truth in love, but sometimes it's better not to speak at all!

**Are you beginning to see the contrast between the wicked in the righteous?  
There is a lot more to follow. Hang in there.**

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<sup>96</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-31.htm>, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary.

<sup>97</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/10-31.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 11

1. Read the chapter carefully.

2. V. 1 = Read Lev. 19:35-36; Dt. 25:13-15; Amos 8:3-7; Mic. 6:9-11. Why is God so adamant about honest scales and accurate weights?

Why does He abhor dishonest ones?

3. V. 2 = How does pride bring disgrace? (Cf 16:18)

Read I Pet. 5:5-11. Why is it wise to be humble? (Think about the context.)

4. V. 3 = (cf. 10:9) Look up "integrity". How does integrity guide an upright person?

Look up "duplicity". How does duplicity destroy a person?

5. V. 4-8 = What is "the day of wrath" referring to? (Cf. I Thes. 1:9-10; 2:13-16; 5:8-11)

Why is wealth worthless on this day?

Whose righteousness delivers us from eternal death?

What does the righteousness (practical day to day) of the blameless and upright do for them?

What happens to the wicked?

Read Ps. 49. How does it fit with these Proverbs?

6. V. 9-11 = Why do people rejoice when the righteous prosper and the wicked die?

What is it about the righteous that causes a city to be exalted?

How do the wicked destroy it?

7. V. 12 = Look up "derides". How does this show a lack of judgment?

Why does a person of understanding hold their tongue in such situations?

8. V. 13 = Why is it important to be careful about who you share a secret with?

Are you a gossip?

9. V. 14 = Why is it wise for a king or president to seek the advice of his counsellors when determining a course of action?

What does it take to run a successful military campaign? (Think practically)

10. V. 15 = Generally speaking, why shouldn't we sign for another person's loan? (Cf. 6:1-5)

11. V. 16-19 = Why don't the ruthless gain respect or benefit themselves?

What do they get instead?

What is meant by "deceptive wages"?

What are the blessings of the kind/righteous?

12. V. 20-21 = What are the consequences of verse 20?

Would you rather bring joy and gratification to your God or cause serious loathing?

13. V. 22 = What things are out of place here?

Why is discretion especially important to a beautiful woman?

14. V. 23 = What is it the wicked put their hope in that brings God's wrath? (Cf. V 4; Jer. 9:23-24; Ro. 10:1-4)

What should we put our hope in instead?

15. V. 24-26 = Read Lk. 6:31-38 and I Tim. 6:17-19. How do the generous prosper?

Why do those who hoard their wealth end up suffering?

16. V. 27 = How might this verse fit with verses 24-26?

17. V. 28 = How would trusting in riches make you like a dead leaf? (Cf. Job 1:20-22; Ps. 1; 92:12-15; Mt. 16:26; Lk. 12:13-21; I Tim. 6:6-10)

What should be our attitude instead?

Why do the righteous thrive?

18. V. 29 = Why would a troublemaker inherit nothing?

Who will he be a servant to?

19. V. 30 = How might winning souls be likened to a tree of life?

How is this wise? (Cf. Dan. 12:2-3)

20. V. 31 = What are we talking about here? (Hint: it starts with a "C")

Read I Pet. 4:12-19. How does this Proverb fit into this passage?

No matter what happens to us, what should we do?

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 11

### 1. Read the chapter carefully.

### 2. V. 1 = Read Lev. 19:35-36; Dt. 25:13-15; Amos 8:3-7; Mic. 6:9-11. Why is God so adamant about honest scales and accurate weights?

The Hebrews used stones for weights. "Dishonesty is robbery... Moses commanded in the law that people use honest weights ("perfect stones"<sup>98</sup>) and measures; since Israel didn't have an official Department of Standards to check on these things, the law wasn't always obeyed."<sup>99</sup> "To increase their profits many merchants used two sets of stone weights when weighing merchandise. Lighter stones were placed on the scales when selling (so that a lesser quantity was sold for the stated price), and heavier ones were used when buying (so that more was obtained for the same price). With the absence of coinage, scales were used in most daily commercial transactions. The reference to 'the Lord' puts commercial matters in the spiritual realm."<sup>100</sup>

Because it is a matter of the heart. No amount of government intervention can change a person. A person who loves God will not cheat his neighbor. Honesty and integrity are the foundation of a godly society based on God's moral laws. But these laws won't be kept if a person's heart is wicked. Because God is holy, He hates sin. Sometimes sin "becomes so identified with the sinner that the very person becomes reprehensible to the Lord. This doesn't negate His love, but we must keep in mind that God's love is a *holy* love as well as a sacrificing love. It's a dangerous thing to play with sin and defy the living God" (Prov. 29:1).<sup>101</sup>

**Lev. 19:35-36** = "Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity. Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah and an honest hin. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt." (Being honest honors God and being dishonest dishonors God.)

**Dt. 25:13-15** = "Do not have two different weights in your bag – one heavy, one light. Do not have two different measures in your house – one large, one small. You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land of the Lord your God is giving you. For the Lord your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly." (God hates/detests sin, and cheating is sin.)

**Amos 8:3-7** = God judged Israel because they trampled the needy and did away with poor of the land. They couldn't wait until the New Moon or the Sabbath was ended so they could sell wheat, "skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with

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<sup>98</sup> Walvoord, *Op. Cit.*, p. 928.

<sup>99</sup> Wiersbe, *Op. Cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>100</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 928.

<sup>101</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.*, p. 192-193.

dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat." God swore he would never forget their sin. (God cares about the needy and the poor who get trampled on when people cheat them. They have nothing extra to get them by.)

**Mic. 6:9-11** = We should fear God who is our judge. Israel was being judged by God because they were wicked: they had ill-gotten treasures, they cut short their measurements, and had dishonest scales and weights. Her rich men were violent, her people liars, so God was going to destroy them. (If we fear God we will be honest in our dealings with others. Cheating others shows no fear of God.)

### **Why does He abhor dishonest ones ("balances of deceit"<sup>102</sup>)?**

Dishonesty to others dishonors God.

Cheating is sin, and God hates/detests sin.

God cares about the poor and needy, and those who cheat them will be judged.

Cheating shows no fear of God.

### **3. V. 2 = How does pride bring disgrace? (Cf 16:18)**

About the time you think you have it all together and you can be proud of yourself, you fall flat on your face! (I Cor. 10:12-13). Pride can bring about some of life's most embarrassing and disgraceful moments.

### **Read I Pet. 5:5-11. Why is it wise to be humble? (Think about the context.)**

In the verses above, Peter had exhorted the elders to be servants to the flock. Young men, in the same way were to be submissive to those who were older than them. Sometimes the young find that difficult because they think they know it all. It is important to be humble, to have a servant's heart. In all this one should not worry but cast their anxiety on God. Pride was the devil's problem. He prowls around looking for others to devour, so we must be self-controlled and alert, resisting him, standing firm in the faith. We're not alone in this struggle. We shouldn't trust in our own strength but realize that God makes us strong, firm and steadfast. He has the power, not us. Pride would like to think otherwise!

Wisdom comes to those with a humble heart. Self-conceit is unteachable but those with humble hearts accept instruction and correction.

### **4. V. 3 = (cf. 10:9) Look up "integrity". How does integrity guide an upright person?**

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<sup>102</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 928.

1: firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values : incorruptibility. The quality of being honest and fair.<sup>103</sup>

A person of integrity (simple straightforwardness, moral wholeness) will not go against God's laws or his own values. His ways are fixed, so his way is plain and secure. Also he is guided by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

### **Look up "duplicity". How does duplicity destroy a person?**

1: contradictory doubleness of thought, speech, or action; especially : the belying of one's true intentions by deceptive words or action

2: the quality or state of being double or twofold<sup>104</sup>

Their deception (or causing others to trip up, subvert, overturn) will come back to bite them (Ps. 35:7-8). When they lie they have to remember the lie, and probably cover it up with more lies, until the whole situation is out of hand. Soon their crookedness will be found out and no one will trust them.

### **5. V. 4-8 = What is "the day of wrath" referring to? (Cf. I Thes. 1:9-10; 2:13-16; 5:8-11)**

When God regulates! His wrath can come at any time (judgment/discipline in this life), but the final day of wrath is the judgment (cf. Rev. 20:11-15).

### **Why is wealth worthless on this day?**

"One of the subtle dangers of wealth is *a false sense of security*."<sup>105</sup> No amount of money can sway God's wrath/judgment. He is impartial and can't be bribed. And no amount of earthly power will affect the outcome. Man's expectations only come to nothing. The wicked man's hope perishes. The only thing that matters is what we did with God's offer of grace and mercy through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

### **Whose righteousness delivers us from eternal death?**

The righteousness of Christ! Nothing we can do on our own will save us. Self-righteousness is a direct affront to God's holiness. (Lk. 18:9-14; Ro. 3:9-31)

### **What does the righteousness (practical day to day) of the blameless and upright do for them?**

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<sup>103</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/integrity>.

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/duplicity>

<sup>105</sup> Wiersbe, *Op. Cit.*, p. 112.

They come to know and understand God and His ways better, and it leads them in a straight (direct, plain, correct, accurate, fewer obstacles) path.\* They are given God's blessings in many ways. They are given direction and often wonderfully delivered/rescued from trouble (Ps. 34:17). Christians most definitely have their share of trials and testing, but God promises to make these experiences turn out for good (Ro. 8:28). "Obedience to the Lord keeps us from many of the troubles that sinners experience, but when the Lord permits us to suffer, He promises to bring us through."<sup>106</sup>

\* I have heard it told that there was a sign at the beginning of the trail west for the wagon trains which said, "Choose your rut carefully; you will be in it for the next 30 miles." The same is true of our spiritual lives. We must choose our path carefully because it determines the destination we'll reach.

### **What happens to the wicked?**

They are brought down by their own wickedness. They are trapped by their own evil desires (strong desires that lead to sin). All they expect from their power comes to nothing (prosperity, impunity, long life). Trouble comes on them instead of the righteous. You reap what you sow! (Ps. 73; Esther 7:10; Dan. 6:24)

### **Read Ps. 49. How does it fit with these Proverbs?**

No amount of wealth or power can extend a man's life, or ransom him from death. Rich and poor all die and their bodies return to dust. Some may think they are invincible, but we all die and then face the judgment (Heb. 9:27-28). But the righteous look forward to their redemption and living with God in glory. So don't be overawed with a person's wealth or splendor; it won't help them in the judgment. There are no trailer hitches on coffins. The wicked who don't understand these things are like the beasts that perish (no hope).

### **6. V. 9-11 = Why do people rejoice when the righteous prosper and the wicked die?**

Because the wicked are bent on destroying their neighbors (reputations) one by one until a whole city is destroyed. But the righteous through their knowledge bring blessings on the city until it is exalted. They keep a city sound economically and morally.

### **What is it about the righteous that causes a city to be exalted?**

As they strive to know and please God (implying active benevolence<sup>107</sup>) they are blessed, and as a result, the whole city is blessed. They make true friends and good

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<sup>106</sup> Wiersbe, *Op. Cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>107</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/11-11.htm>, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

neighbors, and have the important quality of being able to control the tongue. They have God's wisdom/discernment in times of trouble. Overall, the city is safer.

### **How do the wicked destroy it?**

By their hypocrisy, dishonesty, pride, duplicity, wickedness, unfaithfulness, trusting in earthly power and wealth and using it to destroy others, lies, slander, deception, etc. Judgment is sure to fall on a city that is based on wickedness.

### **7. V. 12 = Look up "derides". How does this show a lack of judgment?**

: to talk or write about (someone or something) in a very critical or insulting way : to say that (someone or something) is ridiculous or has no value

1: to laugh at contemptuously

2: to subject to usually bitter or contemptuous ridicule<sup>108</sup>

Speaking like this will cause bad relations (friction, dissension) between neighbors; besides, this is sin. When this is your attitude, it will come back on you. In the end you will be laughed at and ridiculed. Also the one criticized, insulted, or ridiculed may be absolutely right! Then what comes of your mockery?!

### **Why does a person of understanding hold their tongue in such situations?**

Because a man of understanding knows it is not wise to use your tongue as a weapon; it is a betrayal of trust. He would most likely handle a situation with his neighbor quite differently — such as gently rebuking in love, correcting, encouraging, building up, etc.

### **8. V. 13 = Why is it important to be careful about who you share a secret with?**

A wise person holds his tongue even if he knows something unpleasant about his neighbor. This is especially true in counseling. A secret should be kept strictly between the two people involved unless there is immediate danger for the one sharing the secret. Then possibly someone in authority should be involved.

### **Are you a gossip?**

I try not to be!

### **9. V. 14 = Why is it wise for a king or president to seek the advice of his counsellors when determining a course of action?**

Because each adviser comes from a different perspective and may have important information to impart regarding the situation. When one person pushes their perspective/agenda, it may not be beneficial for the nation. A wise King or President

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<sup>108</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/derides>

seeks the advice/guidance ("A nautical term used of steering a ship"<sup>109</sup>) of those who have handled similar situations before, and also learns from the victories and mistakes of others.

### **What does it take to run a successful military campaign? (Think practically)**

People are needed to give advice on military strategy, provisions, food, equipment and vehicles or animals, weapons, landscape issues, weather and the needs regarding that, medical personnel, etc. When a general presses his advantage but outruns his supply train he gets into trouble.

### **10. V. 15 = Generally speaking, why shouldn't we sign for another person's loan? (Cf. 6:1-5)**

Because if they can't pay, the debt comes back on us. If we can't pay it, then our good name and possibly all we have is ruined. We shouldn't be the second on a loan unless we know the person well, and that they are a person of integrity.

### **11. V. 16-19 = Why don't the ruthless ("One who strikes terror because of his wickedness"<sup>110</sup>) gain respect or benefit themselves?**

Because in their desire for wealth and/or power they abuse others and take advantage of them. People fear or hate them instead of respecting them.

### **What do they get instead?**

They may get wealth, but along with it they get, no peace of mind, trouble and eventually death.

### **What is meant by "deceptive wages"?**

Something that appears good but has no lasting value for the afterlife. The wealth, power, influence, etc. of the wicked will not help them in the day of judgment (v. 4).

### **What are the blessings of the kind/righteous?**

They gain the respect of those they help and attain eternal life. Their kindness (loyal love) is reciprocated.

### **12. V. 20-21 = What are the consequences of verse 20?**

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<sup>109</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 929.

<sup>110</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 929.

Judgment for the perverse/wicked (crooked, distorted) and freedom/life for those who are blameless/righteous (morally whole).

### **Would you rather bring joy and gratification to your God or cause serious loathing?**

Joy and gratification, of course! I want Him to delight in me so I will know His blessings.

### **13. V. 22 = What things are out of place here?**

"Israelite women wore nose rings for ornamental purposes, like earrings and rings on fingers today."<sup>111</sup>

Gold rings don't belong in pigs' noses, and a lack of discretion should not be what characterizes a beautiful woman!

### **Why is discretion especially important to a beautiful woman?**

1: the quality of having or showing discernment or good judgment : the quality of being discreet : circumspection; especially : cautious reserve in speech.<sup>112</sup>

To be truly beautiful a woman must be beautiful on the inside even more than the outside. The world preys on beautiful women who have no discretion. And a beautiful woman who is naïve or gullible will be used and abused by those she thought she could trust. To remain pure a woman must be discreet and have discretion/good judgment. On the other hand, how many of us have seen beautiful women who opened their mouths and proved otherwise? Or beautiful women who thought their value lied in their physical beauty and committed suicide as they grew older and thought themselves not to be so beautiful? Thankfully, God looks on the heart!

### **14. V. 23 = What is it the wicked put their hope in that brings God's wrath? (Cf. V 4; Jer. 9:23-24; Ro. 10:1-4)**

They put their hope in worldly wisdom, strength, wealth, influence, self-righteousness, etc.

### **What should we put our hope in instead?**

The righteousness of Christ, and understanding and knowing God, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these things He delights. The righteous desire the very best from the Lord and He grants it to them.

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<sup>111</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 929.

<sup>112</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discretion>.

**15. V. 24-26 = Read Lk. 6:31-38 and I Tim. 6:17-19. How do the generous prosper?**

They reap what they sow. Those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. God blesses diligent people for their generosity.

**Read Lk. 6:31-38** = "Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

**I Tim. 6:17-19** = "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

**Why do those who hoard their wealth end up suffering?**

They are cursed by those they refused to help. (In times of drought and famine hoarding grain can drastically affect prices, especially in a small community - Neh. 5.) And they also reap what they sow. They may find their wealth gone and themselves in need one day only to realize no one will help them. They may end up alone and bitter, and eventually reap eternal death. Not a happy picture!

**16. V. 27 = How might this verse fit with verses 24-26?**

Those who are prone to evil will find they experience evil in ways they never expected (I Pet. 5:8). Also those who love to do evil and search out ways to do it more cruelly will find it becomes easier and easier over time.

**17. V. 28 = How would trusting in riches make you like a dead leaf? (Cf. Job 1:20-22; Ps. 1; 92:12-15; Mt. 16:26; Lk. 12:13-21; I Tim. 6:6-10)**

One of the subtle dangers of wealth is a false sense of security. Eternal life isn't bought with earthly wealth. Those who trust in their riches become more and more obsessed with them. They pay less and less attention to their spiritual life hoping to fill the void/the longing with stuff.

**Job 1:20-22** = We brought nothing into this world and we're taking nothing out. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. We should trust Him instead of wealth.

**Ps. 1** = Those who delight in God's law and follow its commands prosper like a tree beside streams of water because God blesses them. Sinners are like chaff that the wind blows away. They won't stand in the judgment and face eternal death.

**Ps. 92:12-15** = "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The LORD is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in Him.'" (In contrast, the wicked will be forever destroyed - v. 7. They will perish, be scattered - v. 9, be defeated - v. 11.)

**Mt. 16:26** = "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

**Lk. 12:13-21** = A man wanted Jesus to arbitrate between him and his brother over their inheritance. But Jesus told them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Just because you have plenty of good things laid up for many years does not mean you can take life easy; eat, drink and be merry. Your life might end that very day or night.

**I Tim. 6:6-10** = "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

### **What should be our attitude instead?**

First, we need to make sure we can stand before Him clothed in Christ's righteousness, not our own. Then our focus should be on loving God and loving others. We should be thinking of others and how we can please God with what we have. God is interested in where our hearts are, not how much we have. We should be content with whatever we have, knowing God will take care of our needs.

### **Why do the righteous thrive?**

Because they delight in God and His Word. They trust Him in every aspect of life, knowing there is no wickedness in Him. They worship God even in the worst of times, knowing He is in control. For this God blesses them with spiritual, and sometimes physical, abundance. But even if there is no physical abundance they are content with what they have. Their relationship with God and honoring Him are what matter the most.

### **18. V. 29 = Why would a troublemaker inherit nothing?**

Those who dishonor their parents and/or family and cause trouble will be disinherited. They can't be trusted. "A fool is going to see the death of his desire for success and greatness. Our world constantly parades success and greatness. God says that is never

going to happen in a fool's life."<sup>113</sup> People like this think they've arrived and don't need to listen to anyone.

"To bring trouble on one's own family members means that such a person will be disinherited from the estate; he will receive only wind, or nothing. And rather than being wealthy and having servants, such a fool becomes a servant!"<sup>114</sup>

### **Who will he be a servant to?**

He will serve those who were wiser in the way they handled their lives.

### **19. V. 30 = How might winning souls be likened to a tree of life?**

The person who wins (attracts to wisdom, takes) souls becomes a source of meaningful life for others. The righteous fruit they produce sustains themselves as well as others.

### **How is this wise? (Cf. Dan. 12:2-3)**

By living a righteous life that is attractive to others, we inspire them to do the same. This honors God and brings blessing.

**Dan. 12:2-3** = "Those who are wise (or who impart wisdom) will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

### **20. V. 31 = What are we talking about here? (Hint: it starts with a "C")**

Consequences!

### **Read I Pet. 4:12-19. How does this Proverb fit into this passage?**

Just because someone is living a righteous life does not mean they will not suffer. If we suffer for the name of Christ we should be glad and rejoice. If we are insulted because of the name of Christ, we are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on us. We should not be ashamed, but praise God that we bear that name. God will judge His church. But if God deals with His own people, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner who have not received the righteousness of Christ? They don't have much to look forward to.

### **No matter what happens to us, what should we do?**

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<sup>113</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>114</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 930.

"Those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good." (Cf. II Pet. 3)

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 12

1. V. 1 = How does discipline bring about knowledge?

Why is it stupid to hate correction?

2. V. 2-3, 7 = "Crafty" means artfully wicked or perverse. Why would God condemn such a man but favor a good man?

Who establishes and uproots? (Cf. Dt. 32:39; Is. 46:8-10)

What makes the house of the righteous stand firm? (Cf. Mt. 7:24-27)

3. V. 4 = How is a wife of noble character like a crown to her husband? (Cf. Prov. 31:10-12)

What is it about a disgraceful wife that is like decay to her husband's bones?

4. V. 5 = Why would you go to a righteous man instead of a wicked man for plans or advice?

5. V. 6 = What kind of words might endanger a person's life?

How might this be avoided?

6. V. 8 = What does it mean to have a warped mind?

Why would such a person be despised?

Where does wisdom come from?

7. V. 9 = How might pretending to be somebody cause poverty?

8. V. 10 = What is it about a righteous person that makes them care for their animals?

Why are the kindest acts of the wicked cruel?

9. V. 11 = Why does hard work usually bring about abundance?

Who gives the farmer his knowledge? (Cf. Is. 28:23-29)

What does chasing fantasies do for a person?

10. V. 12 = Why would the desires of the wicked cause them not to flourish?

11. V. 13 = How does sinful talk trap a person? (Cf. Eph. 4:25-5:7)

Why does a righteous person escape such trouble?

12. V. 14 = What is this verse referring to? Or how do our words fill us with good things?

13. V. 15 = Why does the way of the fool seem right to him?

Why does the wise person seek advice?

14. V. 16 = Why is it prudent to overlook an insult? (Cf. Prov. 19:11)

Why is it foolish to show your annoyance at once?

15. V. 17 = This one's pretty obvious! 😊

What is the common theme in verses 17–23?

16. V. 18 = Why do reckless words hurt so much?

How do words from a wise person bring healing?

17. V. 19 = Why does the truth endure forever?

18. V. 20 = Does a person with a deceitful heart know joy?

How does promoting peace bring joy? (Cf. Mt. 5:9; Ja. 3:17-18)

19. V. 21 = Again, this is a general statement, because we often see things just the opposite of what this verse says. (Cf. Ps. 73)

20. V. 22 = Read Ex. 20:16; Nu. 23:19; I Sam. 15:29; Is. 45:19; Jo. 14:6; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:13-20; Ja. 1:16-18.

Is truth is important to God?

How is this encouraging to you?

21. V. 23 = Why is it generally prudent to keep your knowledge to yourself?

Why does a fool blurt out folly?

22. V. 24 = How does this verse work out in life?

23. V. 25 = Why is anxiety or worry such a burden to us?

Should we worry? Will it do us any good? (cf. Lk. 12:22-34)

Give an example of a kind word cheering someone up with an anxious heart.

24. V. 26 = Why should a righteous man be cautious in friendship? (Cf. II Cor. 6:14-7:1)

How does the way of the wicked lead them astray? (Cf. I Cor. 15:33)

25. V. 27 = What makes a diligent man prize his possessions while a lazy man could care less?

26. V. 28 = Explain this verse in your own words.

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 12

### 1. V. 1 = How does discipline bring about knowledge?

We learn through discipline. Discipline makes us set aside our own wrong desires and actions and helps us choose the right ones. To willingly accept or desire discipline shows that we desire to be on the right path, to be wise.

### Why is it stupid to hate correction?

To not respond to, or to willingly reject and despise correction hurts yourself. A rebellious spirit is a dangerous thing (cf. I Sam. 15:22-23). To be stupid is "to be brutish or dull minded" like an animal.<sup>115</sup>

### 2. V. 2-3, 7 = "Crafty" means artfully wicked or perverse ("deceptively shrewd")<sup>116</sup>. Why would God condemn such a man but favor a good man?

Because they love to do evil and twist the truth; they turn from what is good to do evil. Any such sin is condemned by God. But He blesses those who do right.

### Who establishes and uproots? (Cf. Dt. 32:39; Is. 46:8-10)

God does. He puts to death and brings to life, He wounds and heals, and no one can deliver out of His hand. He is God, and there is no other. He makes known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. His purpose will stand, and He will do all that He pleases. Rebellion will be dealt with. The wicked will not prosper, and will go into exile away from the land.

### What makes the house of the righteous stand firm? (Cf. Mt. 7:24-27)

The righteous put God's words into practice and obey Him; they respond positively to His discipline. Their lives are built on the solid foundation of God's word so they stand firm in the storms of life. They will live and prosper in the land God gave them (Israel). "The wicked may live in houses, and the righteous have only tents, but with the blessing of the Lord, the righteous person's tent will be a palace!"<sup>117</sup>

### 3. V. 4 = How is a wife of noble character like a crown to her husband? (Cf. Prov. 31:10-12)

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<sup>115</sup> Walvoord, *Op. Cit.*, p. 930.

<sup>116</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.* p. 930.

<sup>117</sup> Wiersbe, *Op. Cit.*, p.156.

She brings him honor. He has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, and is worth far more than rubies. He is encouraged and lifted up because of her diligence and integrity. "Her strength of character...makes her husband proud and honored. She adds dignity to him."<sup>118</sup> A man's real reward in life, his real prize, is his wife.

#### **What is it about a disgraceful wife that is like decay to her husband's bones?**

When a disgraceful (not noble or strong morally) wife brings dishonor to her husband it tears him down and breaks his heart (inner pain). It's like a disease (cancer) that enters his bones and brings decay. Their relationship suffers and so does their relationships with others. It may bring insults and criticism on him, and ruin his reputation and maybe his livelihood as well.

#### **4. V. 5 = Why would you go to a righteous man instead of a wicked man for plans or advice?**

Because their plans and thinking are just and righteous, fair and honest; but the way the wicked think and plan is deceitful, dishonest and self-serving. Since I want to please God in what I do, I would go to a righteous man for advice (cf. Ps. 1:1). What a person does and says is usually consistent with their character.

One must also be careful even among so-called believers. "There is more trouble caused by ungodly, unbelieving counselors among God's people than you can shake a stick at. I can't believe the trouble that Christians get into, listening to unbelievers give counsel." Talk shows, Soap Operas, novels and other literature, television and movies all communicate wrong, deceitful counsel. We need to be careful what we take in.<sup>119</sup> Even Christian counsellors must be checked out thoroughly.

#### **5. V. 6 = What kind of words might endanger a person's life?**

Lies, false testimony, gossip, slander, bad advice or counsel, etc. The righteous try to rescue those who have been falsely accused.

#### **How might this be avoided?**

By living a righteous life so that even when we are lied about, slandered, etc. people know it isn't true (cf. I Pet. 2:11-12; 3:8-17; 4:12-19). Their words can be trusted.

#### **V. 8 = What does it mean to have a warped mind?**

Warp = crooked, distorted, bent, twisted.

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<sup>118</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.* p. 930.

<sup>119</sup> Hocking, *Op. Cit.*, p. 236-237.

"b : to cause to judge, choose, or act wrongly or abnormally : pervert  
c : distort <intellect and learning...warped by prejudices — Irving Wallace> <warps space and time>  
d : to deflect from a course"<sup>120</sup>

"He that is of a perverse heart; Vulgate, "a vain and senseless man;" Septuagint, "one slow of heart (νωθοκαρδῖος)." One who takes distorted views of things, judges unfairly, has no sympathy for others, shall be despised."<sup>121</sup>

### **Why would such a person be despised?**

They are not commended by others, but are despised, because their thinking is wicked, out of line with God's truth, perverted, warped.

### **Where does wisdom come from?**

God. A man is praised according to his wisdom (prudence, sound judgment) because that wisdom is evident in his life and character, his words and actions. He is a man that pleases God (cf. I Sam. 18:5).

### **7. V. 9 = How might pretending to be somebody cause poverty?**

It takes a lot of money and resources to appear a person of wealth and means. Trying to appear as someone you aren't, especially someone wealthy, may drive you over the edge financially (starvation). You may have to live on basically nothing while you appear to have everything. (Ex. Tony's acquaintance, salesman) It's better to be a nobody and yet have food on your table and able to hire a servant (honorable position).

### **8. V. 10 = What is it about a righteous person that makes them care for their animals?**

They are concerned about more than themselves. They have a love and compassion for others, even animals, that comes from God. (He cares even about the little birds and other creatures - Lk. 12:24, 27). They hate to see suffering and want their animals to be content and happy too, their basic needs met.

" 'Cares for the needs of his animal' is literally, 'knows the soul of his beast.' He sympathetically understands the life-needs of his animals (cf. 27:23)."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/warped>

<sup>121</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/12-8.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

<sup>122</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 931.

### **Why are the kindest acts of the wicked cruel?**

Because there's usually an ulterior motive behind their acts of kindness. Or they may do something nice just to turn and do something wicked to get a kick out of it. They enjoy seeing or causing a crushed spirit.

### **9. V. 11 = Why does hard work usually bring about abundance?**

It takes a lot of hard work to get the earth to produce and then to harvest its crops (cf. Gen. 3:17-19). But diligent farming results in plenty of food. A lazy farmer isn't going to get much. God blesses diligence and hard work!

### **Who gives the farmer his knowledge? (Cf. Is. 28:23-29)**

God instructs him and teaches him the right way. All man's wisdom and knowledge comes from the LORD Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.

### **What does chasing fantasies (to pursue frantically things that are empty or worthless<sup>123</sup>) do for a person?**

Nothing. They get nothing done and so have no crops to live on. Then they must beg from others. This shows a lack of good judgment or common sense.

### **10. V. 12 = Why would the desires of the wicked cause them not to flourish?**

When they desire and acquire by devious means the plunder of other evil people they set themselves up for judgment or disaster. They use their time to think up wicked schemes to get plunder instead of seeking God's righteousness. The righteous flourish because they are blessed by God.

### **11. V. 13 = How does sinful talk trap a person? (Cf. Eph. 4:25-5:7)**

They may get caught (entangled) in their lies and have to pay for them. They may speak out of anger and hold that anger, giving the devil a foothold. They use their words to tear others down and so grieve the Holy Spirit. They are full of bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. They deceive others and so bring down God's wrath on themselves.

### **Why does a righteous person escape such trouble?**

Because they put off falsehood and speak truthfully to their neighbors. They don't let the sun go down while they are still angry, and so give the devil a foothold. They work instead of steal so that they can share with others in need. They don't let any unwholesome talk come out of their mouths, but only what is helpful for building others

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<sup>123</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 931.

up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. They don't grieve the Holy Spirit. They are kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave them. They try to be imitators of God and live lives of love, just as Christ loved them. They try to avoid even the appearance of evil and are full of thanksgiving to God.

**12. V. 14 = What is this verse referring to? Or how do our words fill us with good things?**

When we speak kind, encouraging words to lift others up we receive good things, whether from God or through others. We reap what we sow.

**13. V. 15 = Why does the way of the fool (hardened, thickheaded) seem right to him?**

Because he's so full of himself he won't listen to anyone else! He thinks no one else is as smart as he is. He trusts himself. "Pride makes us see ourselves as always being right and it keeps us from seeing it any other way. It keeps us from listening to anybody's counsel and it makes us close minded to everything around us."<sup>124</sup> Fools actually enjoy their foolishness and think they're really living! "You can't warn fools or tell them anything they need to know because they already know everything!"<sup>125</sup>

**Why does the wise person seek advice?**

Because they want as much information as they can get so they can make the right decision. They want to honor God with what they do and say. They know they have a sin nature and don't want to trust themselves but only God. One of the ways He communicates His truth is through wise counsel. It's dangerous to rely on our own wisdom and experience and to ignore the wisdom and experience of other believers who have successfully walked with the Lord."<sup>126</sup>

**14. V. 16 = Why is it prudent to overlook (cover) an insult (a disgrace)? (Cf. Prov. 19:11)**

It is better to have patience and overlook the offense. This doesn't mean that we ignore the insult but that we control our response to it or forgive the person. We should give thanks if we are insulted for the name of Christ. This is to our glory (I Pet. 4:12-19). If we are insulted because of something foolish we have done, then it's better to think about it and try to change rather than respond in kind and lower ourselves to their level.

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<sup>124</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>125</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>126</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 168-169.

### **Why is it foolish to show your annoyance at once?**

Because fools can't control their temper, and responding in kind could cause a fight, hurt a relationship, destroy your testimony, etc. Also, the insult might be a pointed remark about something that needs to change in our life. It's easy to get annoyed when the truth is spoken; it stabs like a knife. Search your heart.

### **15. V. 17 = This one's pretty obvious! 😊**

Gives = "an intensive verb carrying the idea of 'bursts forth' or 'breaks out!'"<sup>127</sup>

### **What is the common theme in verses 17–23?**

What we say! We have the power to hurt or to heal.

### **16. V. 18 = Why do reckless words hurt so much?**

Because thoughtless or impetuous words wound the heart and spirit, causing emotional, spiritual, even physical distress. The little saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me!" is a bunch of bunk. Verbal abuse is very painful!

### **How do words from a wise person bring healing?**

Encouraging words that build a person up can lift them from the pit of despair and bring healing and restoration in their life, especially when using the Word of God (cf. Ps. 107:17-22). Scripture has the power to heal. A kind word, a gentle smile, can change a person's day from being gloomy to sunshiny.

### **17. V. 19 = Why does the truth endure forever?**

Because the truth doesn't change; the facts are the facts. It is absolute! The truth will always be the truth because God is the truth and He doesn't change like shifting shadows! (Ja. 1:17) As soon as the truth is revealed and believed the lie is rendered impotent. Be sure your sin will find you out!

"Only a moment" = "translates an idiom, which is literally, 'the blinking of the eyes' "<sup>128</sup> (Job 20:4-11).

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<sup>127</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 931.

<sup>128</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 932.

"When words can't be trusted, then society starts to fall apart. Contracts are useless, promises are vain, the judicial system becomes a farce, and all personal relationships are suspect."<sup>129</sup>

### **18. V. 20 = Does a person with a deceitful heart know joy?**

They may get a gruesome kind of joy in promoting their deceit, but they don't know true joy.

### **How does promoting peace bring joy? (Cf. Mt. 5:9; Ja. 3:17-18)**

Those who love peace find joy and blessing in seeing it happen. They are true sons/children of God. (Cf. Mt. 5:9; Ro. 12:17-21)

Ja. 3:17-18 = "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness."

Those who are deceitful and like to stir up trouble are full of evil and selfish ambition, and their lives are full of disorder and every evil practice (Ja. 3:13-16).

### **9. V. 21 = Again, this is a general statement, because we often see things just the opposite of what this verse says. (Cf. Ps. 73)**

It is generally true that we reap what we sow, but often the consequences of those who do evil don't catch up to them soon enough in our opinion. We would like to be a fly on the wall and watch it happen! In Psalm 73 Asaph was miserable over the prosperity and health of the wicked, but he came to understand that they were on a slippery slope and would eventually suffer horrible judgment from God. But as a child of the King he would know God's presence here on earth and would be with Him eternally in joy and peace.

### **20. V. 22 = Read Ex. 20:16; Nu. 23:19; I Sam. 15:29; Is. 45:19; Jo. 14:6; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:13-20; Ja. 1:16-18.**

**Ex. 20:16** = "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

**Nu. 23:19** = "God is not a man, that He should lie, not a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?"

**I Sam. 15:29** = "He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man, that He should change His mind."

**Is. 45:19** = "I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness; I have not said to Jacob's descendants, 'Seek Me in vain.' I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right."

**John 14:6** = "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

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<sup>129</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 140.

**Tit. 1:2** = "... a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised from the beginning of time,..."

**Heb. 6:13-20** = "When God made His promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for Him to swear by, He swore by Himself, saying, 'I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.' And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, He confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."

**Ja. 1:16-18** = "Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created."

### **Is truth is important to God?**

Most definitely! It's not in His nature to lie. Lies directly oppose God's standard of truth and are an abomination to Him. God expects His people to be honest in their words as they deal with others.

### **How is this encouraging to you?**

I can count on what He says and know His promises never fail! He is ever faithful!

### **21. V. 23 = Why is it generally prudent (shrewd in a good sense) to keep your knowledge to yourself?**

Because not everything needs to be said out loud. Do you have a desire to protect? Will this knowledge help someone or hurt them? It is wiser to wait until you are asked for information, and then you must be wise to whom you tell.

### **Why does a fool blurt out folly?**

Fools like to hear themselves talk. It makes them feel important in their own eyes. But they don't think about what their words may do to someone else.

### **22. V. 24 = How does this verse work out in life?**

Those who work hard often win a position to be in charge of what ever situation they may be (politics, boss on the job, foreman, administrator, peer leader, etc.), while those who refuse to work, or are lazy, become slaves to others to pay their debts and end up working even harder (cf. Dt. 15:12-18). "The easy life of leisure turns out to be very

costly as the sluggard exchanges his pillow for a plow and has to work off his debts the hard way."<sup>130</sup> As believers, our work ethic should be much different. "If a Christian and a non-believer are working side by side, at the same salary, the Christian should excel every time!"<sup>131</sup>

### **23. V. 25 = Why is anxiety or worry such a burden to us?**

Because we weren't meant to carry such a burden alone. Stress is hard on the body, and when we worry over things that we can't do anything about it's hard on us. Worry, anger, fear, depression, any intense emotion, etc. can cause physical symptoms in our bodies. These things also play on our emotions, and can tear us down spiritually if we aren't careful. Those who are walking in the Spirit daily and being taught by Him will know how to speak a word in season to those who are weary (Is. 50:4).

#### **Should we worry? Will it do us any good? (cf. Lk. 12:22-34)**

No. God tells us not to worry but to trust Him. He also says worry won't do us a lick of good, so why do it? We are to seek God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to us. God will take care of our needs. We don't need to worry about them or be afraid.

#### **Give an example of a kind word cheering someone up with an anxious heart.**

After being criticized for doing something in a way I thought was right and feeling low about it, someone told me I was doing things right because I was seeking the Lord in the matter and wanted His will. It was encouraging.

### **24. V. 26 = Why should a righteous man be cautious (search out or investigate) in friendship? (Cf. II Cor. 6:14-7:1)**

Because he wants to honor God even in his friendships. To be good friends with an unbeliever can and will pull the believer down rather than lift the unbeliever up. Righteousness and wickedness have nothing in common and fellowship doesn't happen between light and darkness. Believers and unbelievers have nothing in common on the spiritual level. God wants us to be holy because He lives in us. We are to be different from the world; to purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and Spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. This doesn't mean we shouldn't befriend someone or be a good neighbor to an unbeliever; we are commanded to be a good example to everyone.

#### **How does the way of the wicked lead them astray? (Cf. I Cor. 15:33)**

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<sup>130</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>131</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 66.

They choose friends of a similar nature and so keep going downhill. Bad company corrupts even good character, and when you have bad character already it just increases the evil. And if they perhaps had some good in them, even this will be led astray.

**25. V. 27 = What makes a diligent man prize his possessions while a lazy man could care less?**

The diligent man has worked hard for what he has and appreciates its value. (Ex. Rachel - things she bought with her paycheck equaled hours of work/her life. She became wiser in how she spent her money and took better care of what she did have.) But a lazy person doesn't work and so has no appreciation for what he does have. He may even destroy or abuse what he has.

**26. V. 28 = Explain this verse in your own words.**

Those who have trusted in Christ's righteousness and who are trying to live a life that honors Him will be given eternal life (this could include temporal blessings as well). (Cf. Ro. 2:5-11)

Homework for Proverbs  
Chapter 13

1. Pray God gives you understanding and insight into His Word. Read over the chapter to get it in mind.

2. V. 1 = This has been a constant theme through Proverbs. Why do you think this is so important to Solomon? Read Prov. 4 for some help.

Did Solomon always follow his father's wise instructions? (Cf. I Chron. 28:9-10; I Ki. 11:1-13) Explain.

What conclusion did he come to at the end of his life? (Eccl. 12:13-14)

3. V. 2-3 = Why is it so important to watch what we say?

4. V. 4 = Explain why diligence is superior to slothfulness.

5. V. 5-6 = What is it about a righteous person of integrity that is so attractive?

How does integrity protect them?

6. V. 7 = Why do people put on pretenses like this?

7. V. 8 = How are the poor blessed in this verse? (Cf. Eccl. 5:12)

8. V. 9 = How might this apply to daily life? (Cf. Mt. 5:14-16)

9. V. 10 = How does pride breed quarrels?

Why is it wise to take advice?

Read II Tim. 2:22-26. Pride is one of the evil desires of youth Paul is warning Timothy about. Pride has no place in the ministry or in any believers life. Why?

How should we respond to those who want to quarrel?

10. V. 11 = Explain why this is true.

11. V. 12 = Why does a person languish when a hope they longed for is deferred?

Give an example of a hope deferred making the heart sick.

What happens when that longing is fulfilled?

Why is it so important to put our hope/trust in the Lord and His perfect timing?

12. V. 13 = Why is it important to respect a command or submit to those over us? (Cf. Ro. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:21-6:9)

13. V. 14 = When is this not true? (Cf. Mt. 7:24-27; Ja. 1:22)

14. V. 15 = How does good understanding make our way easier?

15. V. 16 = What is the fool's folly?

16. V. 17 = How does a trustworthy envoy bring healing?

17. V. 18 = How does ignoring discipline bring poverty and shame?

18. V. 19 = What must we do to have our longings fulfilled? (Cf. Ps. 37:3-4)

19. V. 20 = Why is it important to choose the right companions? (Cf. Ps. 1; I Cor. 15:33)

20. V. 21 = This is one of those general statements. Is prosperity always monetary?

21. V. 22 = A good man's inheritance is not always monetary either. What might this inheritance include? (Cf. Dt. 6:4-9; Ps 61:4-5; Prov. 9:10-12)

22. V. 23 = How often do we see this injustice in our world? Give an example.

23. V. 24 = How does discipline show we love our children? (Cf. Heb. 12:1-11)

24. V. 25 = Again, this is a general statement. Compare verse 23.

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 13

**1. Pray God gives you understanding and insight into His Word. Read over the chapter to get it in mind.**

**2. V. 1 = This has been a constant theme through Proverbs. Why do you think this is so important to Solomon? Read Prov. 4 for some help.**

Solomon was taught by his father David and became a wise man by following his advice. David understood how important it was/is to seek God with all your heart, to desire Godly wisdom and understanding. It is the way to life and health and keeps you from evil. "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." Avoid evil and focus on doing what is right. Mockers do not listen or respond to a rebuke and suffer for it. They show how ignorant they are by the way they respond to advice and reproof.

"The first source of wise counsel is *Christian parents*. Not everybody has the privilege of being raised in a godly home, but even then, the Lord often provides 'substitute parents' who can share the wisdom of the Lord."<sup>132</sup> A wise son is receptive to parental instruction.

**Did Solomon always follow his father's wise instructions? (Cf. I Chron. 28:9-10; I Ki. 11:1-13) Explain.**

No. Although David encouraged and warned him to have a heart fully devoted to a God, in his old age Solomon let himself be drawn away from serving the LORD by his idol worshipping wives. He had a great beginning but ended poorly.

**I Chron. 28:9-10** = "And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve Him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a temple as a sanctuary. Be strong and do the work."

**I Ki. 11:1-13** = Solomon took 700 wives and 300 concubines of foreign descent and they lead him astray. As he grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD by building high places for all the gods of his foreign wives so they could burn incense and offer sacrifices to them. The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although He had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. So God tore the kingdom away from Solomon's son, leaving him only Judah and Benjamin.

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<sup>132</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 169.

### **What conclusion did he come to at the end of his life? (Eccl. 12:13-14)**

Fear God and obey His commands because we are all accountable to Him for all we do, whether known by people or not, and whether our deeds are good or evil (cf. Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:17, 22-4:1; Heb. 9:27).

### **3. V. 2-3 = Why is it so important to watch what we say?**

Because what we say is evidence of what is in our hearts (Mk. 7:20-23). Also, we reap what we sow. If we speak lovingly, kindly, truthfully then it is reciprocated (usually), and we guard our lives, stay out of trouble. But if we speak with treachery, malice, cursing, lies, etc. it leads to violence instead of peace (offense, misrepresentation, physical and/or financial harm) and results in ruin. We can really hurt someone with our hasty and thoughtless speech.

### **4. V. 4 = Explain why diligence is superior to slothfulness.**

Those who are diligent and work hard have their desires fully satisfied (generally diligence is rewarded), but those who are lazy and refuse to work get nothing for their cravings ("deep-seated physical drive or appetite"<sup>133</sup>). They usually live in a fantasy world. And unless others care for them, they live in poverty and hunger. Or, the big thing now is to work "smarter" not "harder" to get ahead. We are told we can get a lot of things in life that we don't have to work for, if we just know how to do it. God doesn't agree; He rewards the diligent. Some people work harder at *not working* than they would on a regular job. It's sad. (Cf. II Thes. 3:6-15). Being able to work is a blessing from God. Laziness is a characteristic of an unbelieving heart.

If we apply this verse to the spiritual realm we see why many Christians don't produce spiritual fruit: they don't pursue God or make it their ambition to be like Him. They miss out on so many blessings!

### **5. V. 5-6 = What is it about a righteous person of integrity that is so attractive?**

They can be trusted because they set a high moral standard for themselves and won't go against it. They hate what is false (hate what God hates), and as believers don't want to shame or disgrace their Lord. They keep their word.

### **How does integrity protect them?**

Because they do what is right, there is no way to bring a true accusation against them (Dan. 6:1-5). But the wicked/sinners reap what they sow (shame = "cause a stink"<sup>134</sup>).

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<sup>133</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933.

<sup>134</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933.

**6. V. 7 = Why do people put on pretenses ("adopted lifestyle rather than to playacting"<sup>135</sup>) like this?**

Possibly because they want to be accepted by a certain crowd (social status). "We live in a world of illusion, with people trying to impress each other... Worth is measured by wealth, not by character and conduct; as long as people have money and fame, they're considered important. To be 'rich and famous' is the ambition of millions of people; until they reach that goal, they enjoy riches and fame vicariously as they follow the career of their favorite celebrities."<sup>136</sup> But material gain is not *true* riches (I Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19). Or, on the other hand, they get tired of people wanting to be "friends" just because they have money. " 'The real measure of our wealth,' said John Henry Jowett, 'is how much we'd be worth if we lost all our money.' Character is more important than position, and wisdom than possessions. God doesn't glorify poverty, but neither does He magnify affluence."<sup>137</sup> Also, "a person may be rich in material goods but have nothing socially or spiritually. Conversely another person may be poor materially but rich spiritually."<sup>138</sup>

**7. V. 8 = How are the poor blessed in this verse? (Cf. Eccl. 5:12)**

No one wants to kidnap a poor person or their children because there is nothing to get from them. The poor laborer can rest peacefully while the rich lie awake and worry over their possessions or their life.

"We must not think that the way of the wealthy is always easy, because there are also perils that accompany wealth and success in life. Wealthy people face problems that people of ordinary means don't face, for an increase in wealth usually means an increase in decision-making, risk-taking, and possibly physical danger."<sup>139</sup>

**8. V. 9 = How might this apply to daily life? (Cf. Mt. 5:14-16)**

The righteous are blessed by God while the wicked are judged. A person who is righteous because they love God is like a bright light on a hill, viewed by the world around them to the praise of God. "If a lamp in a Near Eastern tent went out at night, the surroundings were pitch dark, mindful of the darkness of death."<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933.

<sup>136</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>137</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>138</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933.

<sup>139</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>140</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933.

**9. V. 10 = How does pride ("to boil" means and unyielding arrogance<sup>141</sup> breed quarrels?**

Those who are too proud won't receive a rebuke or accept advice. They always scoff at other's opinions and put their own opinions and ways ahead of anyone else's, including God's, which leads to arguments and quarrels. And when confronted they usually become angry and get out of control. Pride is the root of the problem of quarrels.

**Why is it wise to take advice?**

It shows true humility. Besides, your puffed-up opinion of your own prowess or mental aptitude may be wrong and will lead to your demise. Thoughtfully contemplating good advice and following it, if it applies, will save you from many a pitfall and humiliation. Don't think so highly of yourself that you can't learn from others.

**Read II Tim. 2:22-26. Pride is one of the evil desires of youth Paul is warning Timothy about. Pride has no place in the ministry or in any believers life. Why?**

Because everything we receive comes from God (Dt. 8:17-18; I Chron. 29:14-16; I Cor. 4:6-7), and we should be doing everything through the power of the Holy Spirit, not our own strength (Gal. 5:16-26). And our reputations are in God's capable and loving hands, not ours.

**How should we respond to those who want to quarrel?**

We must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. If they still oppose us, we should gently instruct them, in the hope that *God* (not us) will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

**10. V. 11 = Explain why this is true.**

Those who get money dishonestly or illegitimately (taking from the job, stealing from parents, cheating on taxes, extortion, over charging, etc) usually don't care how it is spent because they didn't work for it. Also, "beware of people who promise to make you wealthy without asking you to work or take any risks."<sup>142</sup> A person who is careful to put aside a little money with each paycheck will eventually have a nice nest egg. God blesses the labors of people who are honest.

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<sup>141</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933.

<sup>142</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 102.

**11. V. 12 = Why does a person languish when a hope they longed for is deferred** ("put off or long drawn out"<sup>143</sup>).

Possibly because this hope consumes them, they want it so badly, whether it's a good thing or not.

**Give an example of a hope deferred making the heart sick.**

Wanting to see a child come to know the Lord or grow in their faith, but they rebel and go the other way, and/or die in the process.

**What happens when that longing is fulfilled?**

The heaviness/disappointment is lifted and they are filled with joy and life.

**Why is it so important to put our hope/trust in the Lord and His perfect timing?**

If we can't rest in the Lord we grow heart sick and possibly physically ill. We worry and fret which does no good for anyone.

**12. V. 13 = Why is it important to respect a command or submit to those over us? (Cf. Ro. 13:1-7: Eph. 5:21-6:9)**

Because God commands it! And those who scorn ("to despise, hold in contempt, or ridicule"<sup>144</sup>) instruction will pay for it. Those who respect authority are rewarded. We are blessed when we obey God's commands.

**Ro. 13:1-7 =** "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves." ... This also includes paying your taxes.

**Eph. 5:21-6:9 =** "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right... Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord... Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ... Masters, treat your slaves in the same way..."

"Knowing and obeying the will of God can't be a halfhearted endeavor on our part, a hobby we indulge in when there's an emergency or when we 'feel like it.' God wants us

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<sup>143</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933.

<sup>144</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933.

to trust Him with all our hearts and acknowledge Him in all our ways. Knowing and doing the will of God isn't a 'spiritual technique' that we use occasionally; it's a committed lifestyle that involves everything we do."<sup>145</sup>

"To deliberately act apart from the instruction of the Scriptures is to rebel against the revealed will of God... To ignore the Word of God is to deprive ourselves of the guidance we need for making the decisions of life."<sup>146</sup>

### **13. V. 14 = When is this not true? (Cf. Mt. 7:24-27; Ja. 1:22)**

When righteous teaching isn't listened to and practiced! Many people may hear the truth, and even mentally agree with it, but if they don't follow it, it does them no good (caught as in an animal trap that ensnares suddenly). Obedience to God is not an option if you want His blessing.

**Mt. 7:24-27** = Those who hear God's words and put them into practice have a solid foundation to sustain them in the storms of life. Those who don't put them into practice are foolish and have no foundation; they will suffer catastrophe in the storms of life.

**Ja. 1:22** = We need to be *doers* of the Word, not just hearers!

### **14. V. 15 = How does good understanding make our way easier?**

We win the favor/grace of God and His people and, therefore, are blessed. We understand the issues of life from God's perspective instead of the world's. The hard life of the unfaithful possibly "refers to the calloused, ongoing conduct of the wicked, who are so entrenched in their ways that they find it difficult to turn from them."<sup>147</sup>

### **15. V. 16 = What is the fool's folly?**

The fool doesn't act out of knowledge. A prudent person uses their knowledge or good judgment to avoid danger or risks, and to please God. But a fool plunges into situations without wisely considering his options or controlling his speech. He is "like a peddler who openly spreads his wares before the gaze of all men."<sup>148</sup> "As we seek to know God's will, we must gather all the facts we can and assess them, because our decisions must be based on knowledge and not hearsay."<sup>149</sup>

### **16. V. 17 = How does a trustworthy envoy bring healing?**

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<sup>145</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>146</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>147</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933.

<sup>148</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 933-934.

<sup>149</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 171.

He can be trusted. He gets the job done, bringing about a good result, contributing to the welfare of those who sent him. An untrustworthy or wicked messenger brings trouble instead.

### **17. V. 18 = How does ignoring discipline bring poverty and shame?**

"Unfortunately, some people weren't disciplined when young and taught the importance of work. Listening to orders and obeying them, paying attention to correction and reproof and not repeating mistakes, and respecting supervision are essential to success in any job. It's worth noting that the prodigal's first request was 'Father, give me!' But when he returned home, his desire was 'Make me as one of thy hired servants' (Luke 15:12, 19). He'd learned the value of his father's discipline and the joy of hard work."<sup>150</sup>

If you don't learn to live a disciplined life you fall into debt and end up with a bad name. How many people do we know who have to have the latest gadget or toy, or the best house or vehicle? If they miss out on the overtime they count on they can't make their payments and lose everything. On the other hand, those who respond to discipline are honored. They buy only what they need and make sure they can make the payments or are debt free because they save up for what they want.

### **18. V. 19 = What must we do to have our longings fulfilled? (Cf. Ps. 37:3-4)**

We must trust and obey God and make Him our delight, then our desires will be His desires and will be fulfilled. But fools detest turning from evil. They want to be involved in it.

**Ps. 37:3-4** = "Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart."

### **19. V. 20 = Why is it important to choose the right companions/teachers? (Cf. Ps. 1; I Cor. 15:33)**

Because those we hang out with make a huge impact on our lives and character. "No matter how strong you are in the Lord, if you have wicked friends, they are going to lead you astray."<sup>151</sup> Whether it's on the campus, or the job front, or whatever, people need to remember to choose their friends carefully! Don't just desire to be in the "in" crowd. A Christian may have all the best intentions of leading their unsaved friends to Christ but it seldom happens that way. Usually the believer gradually falls into sin and the results are devastating (a companion of fools suffers harm). If you want to live a life pleasing to God and be wise, honest, etc. then you need to choose those kind of people to hang out with. Wisdom may also be learned from the wise people in Scripture, or autobiographies and biographies of godly people.

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<sup>150</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 106-107.

<sup>151</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 77.

**Ps. 1** = "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers (Notice the progression downward.). But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, not sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."

**I Cor. 15:33** = "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.' "

### **20. V. 21 = This is one of those general statements. Is prosperity always monetary?**

No. God blesses those who honor Him with spiritual blessings, family or "adopted" family, honor, etc. Money can be a blessing from God, but often it is the devil's way of getting a believer distracted from spiritual things and onto worldly things. Misfortune may happen to believers as well as "sinners" (like an animal chasing them from which they cannot escape). But God can use those "misfortunes" for our ultimate good.

Note: "Proverbs was originally written for Jews under the old covenant; under that covenant, material blessing was a part of God's promise to Israel (Deut. 28:1:14). Believers today can be sure of God's provision for their every need as they obey His will (Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:24-34). It sometimes looks to us as though the righteous are suffering and the wicked prospering, but faith sees beyond today and considers where the godless end up (Ps. 73)."<sup>152</sup>

### **21. V. 22 = A good man's inheritance is not always monetary either. What might this inheritance include? (Cf. Dt. 6:4-9; Ps 61:4-5; Prov. 9:10-12)**

A lot of good people have no "inheritance" to pass on to their progeny. But they may pass on spiritual blessings instead. If we love God with every part of our being and the life of Christ is evident in every aspect of our daily lives, then our children will know that what we say and do is what we believe. There will be no doubt in their minds, even if they choose to rebel for a period of time. And those children who are raised in godly homes receive God's blessing and protection as well as they grow up.

Warren Wiersbe writes, "When I was born, a doctor told my parents that I wouldn't live beyond the age of two; yet the Lord enabled them to raise me, even though I wasn't a robust child. Why did I survive? Partly because of a great-grandfather who had prayed years before that there would be a preacher of the gospel in every generation of our family – and there has been!"<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 154-155.

<sup>153</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 157.

**Dt. 6:4-9** = "Here, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commands that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

**Ps 61:4-5** = "I long to dwell in Your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of Your wings. For You have heard my vows, O God; You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name."

**Prov. 9:10-12** = "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer."

## **22. V. 23 = How often do we see this injustice in our world? Give an example.**

Many Christians throughout the world live lives of poverty, and even when they are blessed with an abundant crop or some other blessing the authorities take it away. The rich and/or powerful like to keep their thumb on the poor so they don't rebel and cause trouble. These people are involved in events over which they have no control.

"The prophets condemned wicked rulers and businessmen who crushed the poor and seized what little they had (Isa. 3:13-15; 10:1-4; Amos 2:6-7; 4:1; 5:11-12; 8:4-10). When there's justice in the land and people fear the Lord, then the poor have a voice and protection from oppression."<sup>154</sup>

## **23. V. 24 = How does discipline show we love our children? (Cf. Heb. 12:1-11)**

"Many modern educators and parents revolt against the biblical teaching about discipline. They tell us that 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' is nothing but brutal prehistoric pedagogy that cripples the child for life. But nowhere does the Bible teach blind brutality when it comes to disciplining children. The emphasis is on love, because this is the way God disciplines His own children... Do we know more about raising children than God does?"<sup>155</sup>

Discipline, even though it is often frustrating and/or painful, results in good character. Parents who love their children want them to grow up being people of good character, of moral integrity, and most of all loving the Lord. Since the old sin nature is so strong in every person it takes a lot of effort and consistent, loving discipline to bring about good in a child. "A loving parent inflicts temporary discomfort on his children (by spanking with

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<sup>154</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>155</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 124-125.

a rod) to spare them the long-range disaster of an undisciplined life."<sup>156</sup> It is the same in our relationship with God: discipline is evidence of God's love for us. This is hard to take sometimes! And often we would like God to "love" someone else for a while. 😊  
Permitting someone to go on and ruin their life is not showing love to them. Love says, "Stop!" "If a child runs into the street, chasing a ball, it is NOT loving to say, "I believe you should find your full potential. Find out who you are.' Love says, 'Stop!' and runs out and grabs the child in time... That's the way God works with us. God loves us so much that He disciplines us to teach us things we can never learn any other way."<sup>157</sup>  
Undergoing God's discipline should cause us to love Him more and hold Him in awe because He does it for our holiness – separation from a sinful lifestyle.

**Heb. 12:1-11** = To run the spiritual race takes spiritual discipline. Christ was our example, who endured horrible opposition from sinful man. We shouldn't make light of the Lord's discipline, or lose heart when He rebukes us, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and punishes everyone He excepts as a son. When we go through discipline, we should remember that God is treating us as sons. It's just like when a child is disciplined by his father. If children are never disciplined, then they are counted as illegitimate children and not true sons. Our human fathers disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

**24. V. 25 = Again, this is a general statement. Compare verse 23.**

This statement may be true sometimes, but, just as often, injustice sweeps away the abundance of the righteous. But God supplies the physical needs of the righteous.

Homework for Proverbs  
Chapter 14

1. Read over the chapter to get it in mind.
2. V. 1 = How might this proverb apply to day to day life?
3. V. 2 = We have learned that walking uprightly comes from fearing the LORD. What causes the devious to despise the LORD? (Cf. Ps. 10)
4. V. 3 = How does a fool bring about his own punishment?

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<sup>156</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 934.

<sup>157</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 192.

How are the wise protected?

5. V. 4 = Why was having an ox so important to people during this time?

Why would it be considered a blessing?

6. V. 5, 25 = Pretty obvious. Why is the truth so important in a court room setting?

7. V. 6 = Why does the mocker find no wisdom? (Cf. Prov. 1:20-33)

8. V. 7 = Why should we avoid foolish people?

9. V. 8 = Why is it important to give thought to our ways?

Why are fools deceived?

10. V. 9 = Why would a fool mock at making amends for sin?

Why would the upright want to make amends?

11. V. 10 = What does Heb. 12:15 say about bitterness?

Why is it important to forgive those who have sinned against us?

Bitterness and joy can be infectious, but why can no one else truly share our joys and sorrows?

12. V. 11 = Notice the seeming permanence of a house versus the temporariness of a tent. Why would the tent of the upright flourish while the house of the wicked is destroyed?

13. V. 12 = What is it in a person that makes them think their ways are right when they aren't? (Cf. Ro. 7:5; 8:5-8)

If we aren't living to please God then where are our ways taking us?

What has Jesus Christ done to save us? Give the Gospel in a nutshell.

14. V. 13 = Is everything perfect in life? How can we laugh and be grieving at the same time?

15. V. 14 = What does Gal. 6:7-10 say about this?

16. V. 15 = How does this verse fit with 14:8?

17. V. 16 = Once again we see that those who fear the LORD avoid/shun evil. Why is this so? (Cf. II Cor. 5:9-10)

What is it about the fool that gets him into trouble?

18. V. 17 = How does 17a fit with 16b?

What is it about a crafty person that makes them hated?

19. V. 18 = "Simple" in Proverbs generally denotes one without moral direction and inclined to evil. Why do they inherit folly?

Why are the prudent/carefully wise crowned with knowledge?

20. V. 19 = What does Revelation 3:7–13 say about this?

21. V. 20 = The prodigal son found this out in Luke 15:13–16. Why is this true?

22. V. 21 = How does this verse fit in with verse 20?

How does God feel about the poor? (Cf. Dt. 15:1-11; Ps. 82:1-4; Prov. 14:31; 19:17; 22:2, 9; 31:1-9, 20; Mt. 25:31-46; Ja. 2:1-7)

23. V. 22 = What does this tell you about the things we think on? (Cf. Phil. 4:4-9)

Where should our focus be? Back your answer up with Scripture.

24. V. 23-24 = How might these verses fit together?

25. V. 26-27 = Cf. 18:10. Why/how does the fear of the LORD provide a refuge and life?

26. V. 28 = If a king has a large population and/or people pouring into his country what is generally true about his reign?

Also, what is he getting from all these people?

Read Genesis 14:17–24. Why do you think the king of Sodom wanted his people back?

Can a king be a king with no people?

27. V. 29 = When you see a patient person, what does it generally tell you about them?

On the other hand, what is true about a quick-tempered person?

28. V. 30 = What does this verse tell you about the soul, mind, and body? (Cf. Ja. 5:13-16)

29. V. 31 = Who hears the cry of the poor? (Cf. Ja. 5:1-6)

30. V. 32 = What is the refuge of the righteous even in death? (Cf. Ro. 5:1-11; II Cor. 4:7-5:10)

31. V. 33 = Read Proverbs 1:20–33. How does wisdom make herself known?

32. V. 34 = Give an example of God's blessing on a nation because they turn to Him. Then give an example of God's judgment on a nation because of sin.

33. V. 35 = Read Matthew 18:21–35. Why did the servant incur his master's wrath?

What could he have done that would have caused his master to delight in him?

Are you a wise or shameful servant of God?

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 14

**1. Read over the chapter to get it in mind.**

**2. V. 1 = How might this proverb apply to day to day life?**

This could have to do with a literal house, since neglect or abuse by someone foolish would result in the house eventually falling down. But I believe there is more to it than that. The wise woman takes care of her family and causes her household to flourish in a multitude of ways both physical and spiritual (cf. 24:3-4), where the foolish one doesn't care if the children are disciplined, or fed, or have clean clothes and beds, or learn about God and His Word, etc. If she has a husband she doesn't take care of him either or care about his integrity. This is basically hearing God's word but not doing it. The foolish man built his house on the sand and when the storms came it fell with a great crash (Mt. 7:24-27).

"A woman who has no fear of God, who is willful and wasteful, and indulges her ease, will as certainly ruin her family, as if she plucked her house down."<sup>158</sup>

**3. V. 2 = We have learned that walking uprightly comes from fearing the LORD, and those who fear the LORD have a desire to walk uprightly. What causes the devious to despise the LORD? (Cf. Ps. 10)**

The devious person has no fear of God, and they show disdain for God and His Word. A person's attitude towards the Lord shows up in their behavior.

**Ps. 10 =** He is arrogant and devises schemes, hunting down the weak. He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD. In his pride there is no room in his thoughts for God. It seems his ways are always prosperous even though he is haughty and God's laws are far from him; he sneers at all his enemies. He thinks nothing will shake him, and he'll always be happy and never have trouble. He curses, lies, and threatens. He thinks God doesn't see when he murders and abuses the innocent and helpless. He thinks God won't call him to account. But God will eventually judge the wicked. He hears the cries of the afflicted and defends the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.

**4. V. 3 = How does a fool bring about his own punishment?**

The fool (someone who is arrogant, hardened and thick headed in his ways<sup>159</sup>) doesn't think before he speaks and brags about his atrocities. He expands on the story to make himself look good in his own eyes. He may not look so good to others (cf. II Sam.

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<sup>158</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-10.htm>, Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary.

<sup>159</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p.934.

1:1-17). He always thinks he's right in his own eyes. "The way a proud man talks is like a 'rod', hitting people over the head. Some people blister others by the way they talk. They put you down."<sup>160</sup>

### **How are the wise protected?**

The wise think before they speak and use few words. They speak the truth with kindness and don't boast about their own prowess.

### **5. V. 4 = Why was having an ox so important to people during this time?**

There was only so much a man could do in his own strength. Having an ox increased his productivity tenfold.

### **Why would it be considered a blessing?**

Because he could get much more done in less time and, therefore, have a much bigger harvest. "Meaningful results of any kind require investing time, money, and work."<sup>161</sup>

### **6. V. 5, 25 = Pretty obvious. Why is the truth so important in a court room setting?**

Because it saves lives and convicts the guilty. False testimony, on the other hand, "which deliberately deceives, may send the innocent to death or prison while wrongly acquitting the guilty. People who witness in court cases are in a strategic position; they can have a great influence over other peoples lives."<sup>162</sup>

"An accused criminal in Israel could be condemned on the testimony of two or three witnesses; if the case involved a capital crime, the witnesses had to be the first to cast stones (Dt. 17:6–7). The law forbade the bearing of false witness (Ex. 20:16; 23:2; Dt. 5:20), and anyone found guilty of perjury was given the punishment that the accused would have received (Dt. 19:16-18). If my testimony could save an innocent person from death, and I refused to speak, then my silence would be a terrible sin."<sup>163</sup>

### **7. V. 6 = Why does the mocker find no wisdom? (Cf. Prov. 1:20-33)**

He's blind to the truth because he thinks he knows it all and despises those who don't agree with him. He has no fear of God. According to Proverbs 1, he delights in mockery and hates knowledge. He doesn't respond to wisdom's rebuke but rejects it, ignoring all her advice. Disaster will eventually overtake him like a whirlwind. Then he will call but

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<sup>160</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 108

<sup>161</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 934.

<sup>162</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 936.

<sup>163</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 138-139.

wisdom will not answer; he will look for her but not find her. Since he hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, since he would not accept wisdom's advice and spurned her rebuke, he will eat the fruit of his ways and be filled with the fruit of his schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to wisdom will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.

Mr. Wiersbe says this about mockers: "Scorners can't find wisdom even if they ask for it, because learning God's truth demands a humble mind and an obedient will. What scorners lack in knowledge they make up for in arrogance. Instead of sensibly discussing a matter with those who could teach them, they only sneer at truth and deny it. My Hebrew lexicons describe them as 'frivolous and impudent.' Having no intellectual or spiritual ammunition, the scorner depends on ridicule and contempt to fight his enemies."<sup>164</sup>

The discerning, on the other hand, seek and understand the truth so knowledge comes easily to them. They don't parade themselves about as wise people but when they give wisdom they say it so that the listener knows they are aware that they need what they're saying as surely as the listener does. You're not wise when you talk down to people.

### **8. V. 7 = Why should we avoid foolish people?**

Because they don't have the knowledge of God; they just spout out their own foolishness, and can't offer you anything of value. You don't want to lower yourself to their level.

### **9. V. 8 = Why is it important to give thought to our ways?**

We need to think about what we're about to do, whether it honors God or not, or whether it's dangerous or foolhardy. We need to take time to take an honest look at facts. This pleases God and also protects us.

### **Why are fools deceived?**

They are blind to the truth and mock it, and so are deceived. They think their own ways are right. "What they think is sophisticated 'tolerance' is only spiritual ignorance, because they lack the ability to discriminate between truth and error."<sup>165</sup> "In his comments on Groundhog's Day, Brooks Atkinson writes: 'People everywhere enjoy believing things they know are not true. It spares them the ordeal of thinking for themselves and taking responsibility for what they know.'<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>165</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>166</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 88.

People foolishly cling to deceptive illusions. Some of these delusions are: "There are no consequences, so do as you please." "If it feels good, it is good." "The important thing in life is to have fun." "There are no absolutes." "The older generation can't teach you anything." "Commitment is enslavement. Stay free." We can't build our lives on lies. These lies can be so damaging that people become depressed, even suicidal, because they are not building on God's truth.<sup>167</sup>

### **10. V. 9 = Why would a fool mock at making amends for sin?**

Because they don't realize they are sinning (Eccl. 5:1) or think they'll never get caught (Ps. 10). Also they have no respect for those they have sinned against. They think God doesn't see them and won't judge them.

### **Why would the upright want to make amends?**

Because they want to please God and have a good relationship with people around them.

### **11. V. 10 = What does Heb. 12:15 say about bitterness?**

It is a root that grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

"We do not know what stings of conscience, or consuming passions, torment the prosperous sinner. Nor does the world know the peace of mind a serious Christian enjoys, even in poverty and sickness."<sup>168</sup>

### **Why is it important to forgive those who have sinned against us?**

Not only for the benefit of those who have sinned against us, but for our own selves as well. Unforgiveness turns to bitterness and grows and grows unless cut out at the root. When God has forgiven us such a huge debt, how can we refuse to forgive our neighbor such a small thing (Cf. Mt. 18:21-35).

### **Bitterness and joy can be infectious, but why can no one else truly share our joys and sorrows?**

"Neither our joys nor our sorrows can be wholly shared with another; no person stands in such intimate relation to us, or can put himself so entirely in our place, as to feel that which we feel. There is many a dark spot, many a grief, of which our best friend knows nothing; the skeleton is locked in the cupboard, and no one has the key but

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<sup>167</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>168</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-10.htm>, Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary.

ourselves."<sup>169</sup> Praise God that Jesus knows our sorrows and our joys more than we ourselves do. What a friend we have in Jesus!

**12. V. 11 = Notice the seeming permanence of a house versus the temporariness of a tent. Why would the tent of the upright flourish ("Bud or sprout," like a tree budding with blossoms or sending out shoots. This pictures growth, prosperity, and stability.<sup>170</sup>) while the house of the wicked is destroyed?**

Because God blesses and protects the upright but destroys the wicked. "The wicked may live in houses, and the righteous have only tents, but with the blessing of the Lord, the righteous person's tent will be a palace!"<sup>171</sup> The upright have permanent eternal dwellings even if they have nothing permanent here.

**13. V. 12 = What is it in a person that makes them think their ways are right when they aren't? (Cf. Ro. 7:5; 8:5-8)**

The sinful nature or flesh.

**Ro. 7:5** = "For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death."

**Ro. 8:5-8** = "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of the sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."

**If we aren't living to please God then where are our ways taking us?**

"The wages of sin is death!" (Ro. 6:23)

**What has Jesus Christ done to save us? Give the Gospel in a nutshell.**

He gave His life and rose from the dead to pay our sin debt, turning God's wrath away from us, so that we could be declared righteous and saved from eternal death.

**14. V. 13 = Is everything perfect in life? How can we laugh and be grieving at the same time?**

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<sup>169</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-10.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

<sup>170</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p.935.

<sup>171</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 156.

No! "...Outward mirth often cloaks hidden sorrow... And the end of that joy is bitterness; it has in it no element of endurance, and when it is past, the real grief that it masked comes into prominence."<sup>172</sup> Or God may give us joy in spite of our sorrow (Ps. 30:4-5).

### **15. V. 14 = What does Gal. 6:7-10 say about this?**

Consequences. We reap what we sow.

**Gal. 6:7-10** = "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

### **16. V. 15 = How does this verse fit with 14:8?**

A simple person, or a fool, is easily deceived because they are naïve and gullible, and have no convictions about anything; but a prudent person thinks before they act.

### **17. V. 16 = Once again we see that those who fear the LORD avoid/shun evil. Why is this so? (Cf. II Cor. 5:9-10)**

Because when we fear God we want to please Him, which means we avoid or shun evil. Paul uses the word "flee" (I Cor. 6:18-20; 10:14; I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:22). "Wise people don't take unnecessary chances and experiment to see how close they can get to the precipice without falling off."<sup>173</sup>

**II Cor. 5:9-10** = "So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

### **What is it about the fool that gets him into trouble?**

He resists the Lord. He is hotheaded and reckless. He doesn't want to please anyone but himself. "Anger is the opposite of the wisdom of God and God calls us fools when we rage and blow our tops."<sup>174</sup>

### **18. V. 17 = How does 17a fit with 16b?**

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<sup>172</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-13.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

<sup>173</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>174</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 115.

A fool is hotheaded and reckless or quick-tempered, and therefore does foolish things. " 'Flying off the handle' – not controlling one's temper – causes a person to do and say ridiculous things, which he may later regret and be unable to undo."<sup>175</sup>

### **What is it about a crafty person that makes them hated?**

They are sneaky, scheming, and devious. No one can trust them.

### **19. V. 18 = "Simple" in Proverbs generally denotes one without moral direction and inclined to evil. Why do they inherit folly?**

Because their goal isn't to please God and they easily fall into evil (gullible). They reap what they sow. "The tragedy is that simple people actually love their simplicity and have no desire to change. Because they don't take a stand for anything, they fall for everything; this saves them the trouble of thinking, studying, praying, and asking God for wisdom. Instead of working hard to dig into the mines of God's wisdom (2:1-9), the simple prefer to take it easy and pick up whatever cheap trinkets they can find on the surface."<sup>176</sup>

### **Why are the prudent/carefully wise crowned with knowledge?**

Because they seek God and want to please Him.

### **20. V. 19 = What does Revelation 3:7–13 say about this?**

The Church in Philadelphia loved God with all their heart and served Him with what little strength they had, without denying Jesus' name. They endured persecution patiently. Jesus said He would make the liars, come and fall down at their feet and acknowledge that He loved them. Life may be difficult here on earth, but when Jesus returns He will set things right (I Pet. 2:11-12; 3:13-17).

### **21. V. 20 = The prodigal son found this out in Luke 15:13–16. Why is this true?**

The rich have many so-called "friends" who want to get in their pockets, but the poor have nothing to give and so are shunned. The prodigal son spent all his wealth and then found out his "friends" were nowhere to be found.

### **22. V. 21 = How does this verse fit in with verse 20?**

It is wrong of someone to shun (despise, hold in contempt, belittle, ridicule) his neighbor just because he is poor. Instead he should be kind to the needy. This brings blessing

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<sup>175</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 935.

<sup>176</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 88.

from the Lord. "Any attitude of condescension is a sin and it hurts the friendship you have with those people."<sup>177</sup>

**How does God feel about the poor? (Cf. Dt. 15:1-11; Ps. 82:1-4; Prov. 14:31; 19:17; 22:2, 9; 31:1-9, 20; Mt. 25:31-46; Ja. 2:1-7)**

When you mess with, mistreat or abuse the poor and needy you incur God's wrath.

**Dt. 15:1-11** = At the end of every seven years God told the Israelites they must cancel any debts against their fellow Israelites. If there happened to be a poor person nearby He commanded them not to be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Rather they were to be openhanded and freely lend the person whatever they needed without thinking "the year for canceling debts is near" and showing ill will towards them and giving them nothing. The poor might then appeal to the LORD against them and they would be found guilty of sin. Instead, give generously to the poor "and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land."

**Ps. 82:1-4** = God said He would judge those in positions of authority who defended the unjust and showed partiality to the wicked. Instead, they were to defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

**Prov. 14:31** = "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God."

**Prov. 19:17** = "He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward him for what he has done."

**Prov. 22:2, 9** = "Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all." "A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor."

**Prov. 31:1-9, 20** = King Lemuel's mother taught him not to get caught up in women and wine, because these make you forget what the law decrees, and deprives all the oppressed of their rights. Instead, he was to give to those in need and speak up for those who could not speak for themselves, for the rights of all who were destitute. He was to speak up and judge fairly; and defend the rights of the poor needy. The wife of noble character "opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy."

**Mt. 25:31-46** = When the whole world stands before Jesus in His glory and He judges them He will say to those on His right, "Come, you who were blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." When the righteous ask him when they ever had done this for Him, He replies, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did

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<sup>177</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 78.

for me." Those who didn't care for the hungry and needy didn't care for Jesus and so were tossed into eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

**Ja. 2:1-7** = God forbids showing favoritism of the rich over the poor. When you do you are discriminating among yourselves and becoming judges with evil thoughts. "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love him? But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of Him to whom you belong?"

### **23. V. 22 = What does this tell you about the things we think on? (Cf. Phil. 4:4-9)**

To plot translates "to plow," from which comes the idea of plans being thought up or devised as furrows in a field are plowed.<sup>178</sup>

If we constantly dwell on the bad things it will lead us down the wrong path, lead us straight to condemnation. But if we dwell on things that honor God and help others we produce good fruit (Gal. 5:22-23).

**Phil. 4:4-9** = We should always be rejoicing in the Lord and dealing gently with others around us. The Lord is near. We shouldn't be anxious or worry about anything, but in everything with a worshipful and thankful attitude present our requests to God. And His peace, which is beyond human understanding, will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. We should think on things that are noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. And we should learn from those godly people around us and put it into practice. Then God's peace will be with us.

### **Where should our focus be? Back your answer up with Scripture.**

On Jesus (Heb. 12:1-3) and on heavenly things, not earthly (Col. 3:1-4); the eternal, not temporary (II Cor. 4:16-18).

### **24. V. 23-24 = How might these verses fit together?**

A fool may talk a good game but yield nothing because he never acts, while the wise who work hard show a profit as proof of their diligence/wisdom (crown). "The wise have something to leave their children, but fools waste both their wealth and their opportunities to increase it."<sup>179</sup>

"A new college graduate was asked if he was looking for work. He thought for a minute and then replied, 'No, but I would like to have a job.' That seems to be the attitude of too

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<sup>178</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 913.

<sup>179</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 95.

many people today. Poet Robert Frost said, 'The world is full of willing people: some willing to work, the rest willing to let them.'<sup>180</sup>

**25. V. 26-27 = Cf. 18:10. Why/how does the fear of the LORD provide a refuge and life?**

God is unchanging (immutable) and faithful. Those who fear and trust Him have a secure fortress or strong tower in His Name to run to in times of trouble. He is their security and protection. This will protect their children as well as they submit to and obey Godly parents on into adulthood, learning to fear and trust God themselves. Trusting and obeying God brings life (fruitful oasis versus arid desert) and protects a person from physical calamities (brought on by rebellion and foolishness) and spiritual death. Those who fear the Lord are characterized by strong confidence and trust in Him; "it brings confidence of refuge from all that is a threat and an intimidation in your life."<sup>181</sup>

**26. V. 28 = If a king has a large population and/or people pouring into his country what is generally true about his reign?**

He has a healthy and prosperous, and hopefully godly, reign, blessed by God so that people want to be there.

**Also, what is he getting from all these people?**

Taxes, revenue, honor, respect (Ro. 13:1-7), workers, etc. People are his greatest resource.

**Read Genesis 14:17–24. Why do you think the king of Sodom wanted his people back?**

Because the people were his source of revenue, taxes, workers, etc. without them he would have nothing.

**Can a king be a king with no people?**

No. He is one only in name. If he has no responsibilities then he has no respect either.

**27. V. 29 = When you see a patient person, what does it generally tell you about them?**

That they are a person of understanding and have learned to wait on the Lord.

**On the other hand, what is true about a quick-tempered person?**

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<sup>180</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>181</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 229.

Their folly is evident to everyone. Displays means "to exalt or lift up for show."<sup>182</sup> "A fool is known for anger and resentment, and he often explodes at the most unexpected times."<sup>183</sup> If he had wisdom and understanding he would be slow to fly off the handle.

**28. V. 30 = What does this verse tell you about the soul, mind, and body? (Cf. Ja. 5:13-16)**

Body, soul and mind are intricately connected. Each affects the others. If we carry guilt, grief, envy, bitterness, etc. then these things can cause physical ailments and spiritual issues as well. When we are joyful and at peace our bodies and minds are most likely healthy and vibrant. When illnesses effect our bodies or minds it can cause distress, depression, unrest, etc. to our souls as well. Trusting God and placing our lives in His capable hands brings peace and rest and joy once again in spite of the ailments.

"A heart at peace (or, 'a mind of health,' i.e., a healthy disposition) helps produce a healthy body, but envy, an ardent agitating desire to have or achieve what one sees in others, produces adverse affects physically (on bones)."<sup>184</sup>

According to Ja. 5 our spiritual focus, mental attitude, participation with and accountability to the body of Christ is extremely important. Confession and prayer is good for the soul, mind and body.

**29. V. 31 = Who hears the cry of the poor? (Cf. Ja. 5:1-6)**

God does, the LORD Almighty. He is their protector and defender. He will judge those who take advantage of or abuse them (Ex. 22:22; Dt. 10:18; 14:29; 26:12; 27:19). Those who oppress the poor show contempt for their Maker, which is a dangerous position to be in; you will find yourself fighting against God. But whoever is kind to the needy honors God. God doesn't show favoritism. The poor, as well as the rich, are made in the image of God, so the way we treat the poor is the way we treat God. Churches that show deference to the rich and ignore the poor have forgotten the Royal law, "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Ja. 2:1-13) Jesus identified with the poor and the outcasts. We should show them compassion as well.

**30. V. 32 = What is the refuge of the righteous even in death? (Cf. Ro. 5:1-11; II Cor. 4:7-5:10)**

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<sup>182</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 936.

<sup>183</sup> Hocking, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>184</sup> Walvoord, *Ibid.*, p. 936.

Remember verse 26! Even if we die physically because of injustice we have a secure position in Christ, peace with God, eternal life with Him, a new body, and a heavenly home.

**Ro. 5:1-11** = We have been declared righteous and have peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ. We stand by God's grace. And we rejoice in the confidence of seeing God's glory. We rejoice in the spiritual growth produced by suffering and the Holy Spirit working in our lives. God loved us when we were His enemies and died for us. We are saved from God's wrath and made right with Him through Jesus Christ.

**II Cor. 4:7-5:10** = God has poured His Spirit into these frail bodies of dirt to show that this amazing power is not ours but from Him. His Spirit keeps us going in spite of persecutions and troubles. And Christ's life is revealed in our mortal bodies. We have the confidence that God, who raised Jesus from the dead, will also raise us with Him and present us in His presence for His glory. Therefore we don't lose heart because these hardships are temporary and nothing compared to eternal glory with Christ. This body of dirt will be replaced by a glorious eternal, spiritual body. Meanwhile we groan, longing for that new body which God destined us for and gave His Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our glorious future. So we live by faith, not by sight, and make it our desire to please Him, knowing we are accountable to Him.

### **31. V. 33 = Read Proverbs 1:20–33. How does wisdom make herself known?**

Wisdom is everywhere present if we just look for her. She makes herself obvious to those who long to know her and seek her out. But to those who reject her she refuses to answer.

### **32. V. 34 = Give an example of God's blessing on a nation because they turn to Him. Then give an example of God's judgment on a nation because of sin.**

In America, in the latter 18th century, believers began praying for revival because America was going downhill fast. Revival came and God blessed this nation for many years afterwards. In the mid 19th century America was again struggling spiritually and God brought on us the Civil War.

In the book of Judges we see Israel going through cycle after cycle of blessing, apathy, rebellion, judgment, repentance, and blessing again. Israel is the only nation that has a special covenant relationship with God (Gen. 12:1-3; Ps. 33:12), but the principle of this verse still stands. "Deuteronomy 12, Amos 1–2, and Romans 1:18–32 make it clear that God judges the Gentile nations for their sins, even though He didn't give them the same law that He gave Israel (Ps. 147:19-20). National leaders can't escape the judgment of God when they lead the people away from God's holy standards. Legalizing sin doesn't make it right. No wonder Thomas Jefferson wrote, 'Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.'<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Wiersbe, *Ibid.*, p. 158.

**33. V. 35 = Read Matthew 18:21–35. Why did the servant incur his master's wrath?**

Because even though the master had forgiven the servant's huge debt he was unwilling to forgive a fellow servant's small debt.

**What could he have done that would have caused his master to delight in him?**

He could have responded as his master did and forgiven his fellow servant's debt.

**Are you a wise or shameful servant of God?**

Our wonderful Lord has forgiven us a debt that is beyond any paying for it ourselves. By His grace we have been set free and owe nothing but obedience to Him. We should therefore be willing to forgive anyone who sins against us. This pleases God and causes Him to delight in us.

Homework for Proverbs  
Chapter 15

1. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance then read the chapter to get it in your mind.

2. V. 1, 18 = Why is it wise to be patient and answer gently when someone speaks harshly to you?

How might Romans 12:18–21 fit with this proverb?

3. V. 2 = Have you ever been in a situation like this where either you or someone else was commended for saying something wise and knowledgeable, but someone else degraded the truth? Explain.

4. V. 3 = God is omnipresent (everywhere present) and omniscient (all-knowing). How does this make you feel? (Cf. II Chron. 16:9a; Ps. 11; 34:11-16; Prov. 5:21).

Does knowing this make you desire to please and obey Him more? Why or why not?

5. V. 4 = When we are not speaking in a way that encourages and brings healing what are we doing to that person/s?

Read I Sam. 23:15-18. How did Jonathan encourage David?

Read Eph. 4:29. What does a healing tongue say?

6. V. 5, 10, 20, and 31 = Why is it prudent to heed correction?

What brings joy to a person's parents?

When a person listens to a life-giving rebuke who will he feel at home with? Why?

7. V. 6 = What kind of treasures might the house of the righteous contain?

How does the income of the wicked bring them trouble?

8. V. 7 = Why don't fools have any godly knowledge to share?

9. V. 8, 9 and 26 = Notice the progression of these verses.

Why does God detest/loathe the sacrifice of the wicked? (Cf. Is. 1:1-20; Jer. 6:16-20; Hos. 5:4-7; Joel 2:12-14; Mal. 1:6-14)

Read I Sam. 15. Why did God reject Saul as king?

What does God desire more than burnt offerings and sacrifices?

What does it mean to "pursue righteousness?"

What do the pure think about that pleases God? (Cf. Phil. 4:8)

10. V. 11 = What is meant by Death and Destruction?

Read Jer. 17:9-10. Who truly knows a person's heart? (Cf. Heb. 4:12-13)

11. V. 12, 14 = Why does a mocker resent correction and refuses to consult the wise?

12. V. 13, 15 = What gives a person a happy heart and, therefore, a cheerful countenance?

Why/how do heartache and oppression crush the spirit?

Can a person be cheerful in spite of trouble and heartache? Explain.

13. V. 16-17 = What things are better than great wealth? Why?

14. V. 19 = Why is the way of the sluggard blocked with thorns while the path of the upright is a highway?

15. V. 21 = Why do those who lack judgment delight in folly?

What does it mean to keep a "straight course"?

16. V. 22 = Why do we need many advisers to have a successful plan? (Cf. 20:18, 24:5-6)

17. V. 23 = Why does a person find joy in giving an apt reply or a timely word?

18. V. 24 = How does wisdom prevent a person's early demise?

19. V. 25 = How does God feel about pride? (Cf. Prov. 3:33-35; I Pet. 5:5-7)

What is God to the widow and orphan? (Cf. Dt. 10:16-18; Ps. 68:5; 146:9)

20. V. 27 = What does a greedy man do that brings trouble on his family?

How could he avoid this?

What did Jesus say about greed in Luke 12:15?

Does a greedy person have any part in the kingdom of God? (I Cor. 6:9-11) Why or why not?

21. V. 28 = What does it mean to weigh your answers?

Why is this important?

22. V. 29 = When will God not hear our prayers? (Ps. 66:18-20)

23. V. 32 = When a person ignores discipline who does he despise?

What do we gain when we heed correction?

24. V. 33 = What do we gain by fearing the LORD?

Read Ja. 4:10. Why/how does humility come before honor?

Read Lk. 14:7-11. What did Jesus teach about humility in this passage?

Read Phil. 2:1-11. How is Jesus the perfect example of humility?

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 15

**1. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance then read the chapter to get it in your mind.**

**2. V. 1, 18 = Why is it wise to be patient and answer gently when someone speaks harshly to you?**

Because a thoughtful, gentle (soft) answer turns away wrath and calms a quarrel. (Speaking softly can also help you control your own anger.) It can "dispel a potentially tense situation by dissolving the person's wrath (rage). Being conciliatory in such a situation requires forethought, patience, self-control, and kindness, virtues commonly lauded in Proverbs."<sup>186</sup> "Solomon isn't advising us to compromise the truth and say that what's wrong is really right. Rather, he's counseling us to have a gentle spirit and a conciliatory attitude when we disagree with others. This can defuse the situation and make it easier for us to settle the matter peacefully."<sup>187</sup> But a quick temper with harsh (hurtful) words stirs up anger and dissension rather than dissolving them; it destroys unity. Notice that argumentativeness and anger go together.

**How might Romans 12:18–21 fit with this proverb?**

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." (Some people won't let you live in peace. But make sure you are doing your best to live at peace with everyone.) "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord." (Don't take things into your own hands; trust God to deal with the situation and rest in that.) "On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will keep burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (When we respond with love, kindness, compassion, mercy, etc. evil is overcome was good. Hopefully the sinner will repent!)

**3. V. 2 = Have you ever been in a situation like this where either you or someone else was commended for saying something wise and knowledgeable, but someone else degraded the truth? Explain.**

Yes. An answer was given from God's word that was wise and intelligent but the foolish person degraded God's word and the wise person because they had no answer to respond with. This is the ad hominem argument. The foolish person, of course, looked foolish (gushing forth or bubbling forth his folly; he couldn't or wouldn't control his speech) and the wise person made God's truth attractive and desirable.

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<sup>186</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.*, p. 937.

<sup>187</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.* p. 136.

**4. V. 3 = God is omnipresent (everywhere present) and omniscient (all-knowing). How does this make you feel? (Cf. II Chron. 16:9a; Ps. 11; 34:11-16; Prov. 5:21).**

Comforted, secure and greatly loved, but really under conviction when I do something wrong. You can't hide anything from God. Sinners take a warning!

**II Chron. 16:9a** = "For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him." (When we serve God with wholehearted devotion He strengthens us to do what He wants us to do.)

**Ps. 11** = Even when it seems the wicked are in control and the foundations are being destroyed, God is sovereign and reigns from His throne. He examines the righteous and judges the wicked. Upright men will see His face! (The upright will be able to gaze on God's face and not shrink back (Rev. 21:1-4), but the wicked will be destroyed.)

**Ps. 34:11-16** = "Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their cry; the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth." (The Lord loves those who fear Him/the righteous, and He listens to their cry for help.)

**Prov. 5:21** = "For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and He examines all his paths."

**Does knowing this make you desire to please and obey Him more? Why or why not?**

Yes. Because He loves me so much! And He watches over me to strengthen and protect me as I seek to do His will out of love for Him.

**5. V. 4 = When we are not speaking in a way that encourages and brings healing what are we doing to that person/s?**

Crushing their spirit/depressing them instead! This is sinful! Some people even cover up their malicious intentions with outwardly kind words. This is also sinful.

**Read I Sam. 23:15-18. How did Jonathan encourage David?**

When David was running for his life, Jonathan went to him and helped him find strength in God. Jonathan loved David more than his own self and was willing to be second-in-command to him even though Jonathan was the crown prince. They made a covenant to remain faithful to each other and to God (Cf. I Sam. 18:1-4; 20:8, 16-17). He contributed to David's emotional and spiritual health.

**Read Eph. 4:29. What does a healing tongue say?**

It says only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

### **6. V. 5, 10, 20, and 31 = Why is it prudent to heed correction?**

Because those who spurn, ignore or hate discipline are coarse and hardened fools and despise (hate) themselves (as well as others/parents and ultimately God). Stern discipline (moral correction) and even death awaits those who leave the path of righteousness/wisdom. But those who heed correction show prudence, gain understanding, and show respect for themselves and others, as well as God. They also bring joy to their parents.

And it doesn't matter if your parents treated you badly. God will still hold you accountable for your attitudes toward them, and He will deal with them!

### **What brings joy to a person's parents?**

When you heed correction and show yourself to be wise and understanding.

### **When a person listens to a life-giving rebuke who will he feel at home with? Why?**

The wise. Because he listens to and acts on a life-giving rebuke. This shows wisdom.

### **7. V. 6 = What kind of treasures might the house of the righteous contain?**

Good will, wisdom, peace, humility, honor, integrity, joy, love, the fruit of the Spirit, etc.

### **How does the income of the wicked bring them trouble?**

There are consequences for what ever we do, good and bad, so the wicked bring trouble on themselves.

### **8. V. 7 = Why don't fools have any godly knowledge to share?**

Because they spurn God and His wisdom. They think they know everything but instead spread folly. Wise people want to know the truth; they share helpful facts and can instruct the ignorant, but a fool doesn't want people to know the truth.

### **9. V. 8, 9 and 26 = Notice the progression of these verses.**

Outwardly religious versus the prayer of the heart.

The ways/lifestyle of the wicked versus those who pursue righteousness.

The thoughts (schemes) of the wicked versus the thoughts of the pure.

It all starts in the heart and mind.

**Why does God detest/loathe the sacrifice of the wicked? (Cf. Is. 1:1-20; Jer. 6:16-20; Hos. 5:4-7; Joel 2:12-14; Mal. 1:6-14)**

Because it comes from selfish motives/hypocrisy, not a pure heart.

**Is. 1:1-20** = Israel, as a whole, had rebelled against God and didn't know Him. They were a sinful nation, loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They had forsaken the LORD and turn their backs on Him. God had disciplined them, judged them, but they hadn't responded. Still they came with their sacrifices and burnt offerings. God took no pleasure in them; they were meaningless, detestable, evil. His soul hated them, they had become a burden to Him and He wouldn't listen to their prayers because their hearts were full of sin and their hands were full of blood. Everyone did wrong instead of right. No one sought justice or encouraged the oppressed, or defended the fatherless and the widow. God told them to repent but they didn't listen.

**Jer. 6:16-20** = "This is what the LORD says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.' But you said, 'We will not walk in it.' I appointed watchmen over you and said, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But you said, 'We will not listen.' Therefore hear, O nations; observe, O witnesses, what will happen to them. Here, O earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law. What do I care about incense from Sheba or sweet calamus from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable; your sacrifices do not please me.' "

**Hos. 5:4-7** = "Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God. A spirit of prostitution is in their heart; they do not acknowledge the LORD. Israel's arrogance testifies against them; the Israelites, even Ephraim, stumble in their sin; Judah also stumbles with them. When they go with their flocks and herds to seek the LORD, they will not find Him; He has withdrawn Himself from them. They are unfaithful to the LORD; they give birth to illegitimate children. Now their New Moon festivals will devour them and their fields."

**Joel 2:12-14**= " 'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.' "

**Mal. 1:6-14** = The priest's did not honor God or show Him due respect, but only contempt for His name. They placed defiled food on the altar and said the LORD's table was contemptible. They brought blind, crippled and diseased animals for sacrifice, then wanted God to accept them. God's response was: "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to My name, because My name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty. Still they were contemptuous and brought

injured, crippled or diseased animals even though they had bowed to give an acceptable one. God said they were cursed, for He is a great king and His name will be feared among the nations.

### **Read I Sam. 15. Why did God reject Saul as king?**

He turned away from God and didn't carry out His instructions. Instead of totally annihilating the Amalekites and their possessions, he pounced on the plunder and did evil in the eyes of the LORD. Though he had once been a humble man he had become proud. Yet instead of being the leader he should've been he yielded to the people and gave in to them.

### **What does God desire more than burnt offerings and sacrifices?**

Obedience. For rebellion is like the sin of divination and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Pride leads to our downfall.

### **What does it mean to "pursue righteousness?"**

To love and seek God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. To offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, and to not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of your mind through God's Word and the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 2:17-18) We should yield ourselves as slaves to righteousness (Ro. 6:15-23).

### **What do the pure think about that pleases God? (Cf. Phil. 4:8)**

They think about how to please God, and gradually they learn to think about whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy. We need to think about what we are thinking about!

### **10. V. 11 = What is meant by Death (Sheol) and Destruction (Abaddon)**

The unseen spiritual world and/or the grave and the dead in it. Even the darkest pit lies open before the eyes of the LORD. In Rev. 9:11 The king of the abyss is called Abaddon or Destroyer. Nothing is hidden from God.

### **Read Jer. 17:9-10. Who truly knows a person's heart? (Cf. Heb. 4:12-13)**

Jer. 17:9-10 = "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? 'I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve' "

God knows us better than we know ourselves (cf. Ps. 139).

Heb. 4:12-13 = "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

**11. V. 12, 14 = Why does a mocker resent correction (rebuking or reproving) and refuses to consult the wise?**

A mocker resents correction because he thinks he knows it all, and he will not consult the wise because he would have to admit he doesn't know something, and this from someone he has formerly mocked. Instead, he feeds ("grazes" like cattle and is content<sup>188</sup>) on folly, and therefore has no moral strength. But the discerning seek knowledge because they know it will make them a better person.

**12. V. 13, 15 = What gives a person a happy heart and, therefore, a cheerful countenance?**

This kind of person has their focus on God and find the good in everything. They feast on God's goodness. Even when they are in the midst of hard times they can laugh because they know God is in control.

**Why/how do heartache and oppression crush the spirit?**

If we let the heartache and oppression consume us it will crush our spirit. We become depressed/bowed down and can't see beyond the darkness and grief.

**Can a person be cheerful in spite of trouble and heartache? Explain.**

Yes. If they keep their focus on God and his goodness and sovereignty then their hearts have a continual feast. They know there is an end to the heartache and oppression. (Cf. Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 12:1-3) "Happiness and depression are issues of the heart. What a person is inwardly has more lasting impact on his emotional state than do his circumstances."<sup>189</sup> (II Cor. 4:7-20)

**13. V. 16-17 = What things are better than great wealth? Why?**

Having a respect and love for God and people. Because this ends turmoil and hatred and puts our hearts at rest. Peace and love are of greater value than great wealth with turmoil and confusion. (Ro. 13:8-10; I John 3:11-24; 4:7-21) "Love makes one's difficult

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<sup>188</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.* p. 938.

<sup>189</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.* p. 938.

circumstances endurable, whereas hatred undoes all the enjoyment that good food might otherwise bring."<sup>190</sup>

#### **14. V. 19 = Why is the way of the sluggard blocked with thorns while the path of the upright is a highway?**

Because the sluggard is too lazy to clean away the brambles, so his path is blocked with thorns (obstructions, problems that keep a person from getting what he wants). He always has an excuse and ends up in poverty. "Evangelist Billy Sunday defined an excuse as 'the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie,' and he was right. People who are good at making excuses are rarely good at doing anything else."<sup>191</sup> But the upright work hard and choose rightly, so their path is a highway, open and free.

#### **15. V. 21 = Why do those who lack judgment ("void of heart"<sup>192</sup>) delight in folly?**

Because their minds are closed to honesty and truth but open to deception and mockery. They won't learn from God's Word. Things that the wise know to be unsafe or untrue delight those who lack judgment. (Cf. I Pet. 4:1-5)

#### **What does it mean to keep a "straight course"?**

People of understanding take the right path that pleases God. They do what honors Him. (Prov. 3:5-6)

#### **16. V. 22 = Why do we need many advisers to have a successful plan? (Cf. 20:18, 24:5-6)**

One or two people are usually not wise enough, or in the "know", about every aspect of a campaign. Getting advice from a variety of people will give you more insight into what is needed to win the war. A wise leader will seek out the knowledge of his subordinates and bring it all together for a successful campaign.

#### **17. V. 23 = Why does a person find joy in giving an apt reply or a timely word?**

It is always nice to have the right answer or an appropriate or encouraging word at the right time. When we are walking in the Spirit and being taught by the Lord we will know what to say (spiritual radar). A wise person will not take credit himself but will give glory to God.

#### **18. V. 24 = How does wisdom prevent a person's early demise?**

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<sup>190</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.* p. 938.

<sup>191</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.* p. 105.

<sup>192</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.* p. 938.

They don't take unnecessary chances or do foolish things that may harm themselves or others. They think before acting.

### **19. V. 25 = How does God feel about pride? (Cf. Prov. 3:33-35; I Pet. 5:5-7)**

God mocks or opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. He promises to destroy the house of the proud. Pride gets us into lots of trouble; it can lead to a person's downfall. A proud person usually has little to be proud of! We need to remember that any talents or abilities we have come from God and not from ourselves. We need to honor him with those talents and abilities. (Cf. Dt. 8:17-18; I Chron. 29:14; Is. 26:12; Ro. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:1-11)

### **What is God to the widow and orphan? (Cf. Dt. 10:16-18; Ps. 68:5; 146:9)**

A husband (?) and a father. Their defender and sustainer. Scripture constantly exhorts people to take care of the widow and the fatherless because they are vulnerable and easy prey. (Cf. Dt. 24:17-21; 27:19; Is. 1:17; Ja. 1:27; etc) Boundaries were especially important in Israel as the land was to be kept within the family unit (Dt. 19:14; Prov. 23:10-11). Property lines were marked by stones not fences; these ancient landmarks were to be honored and protected. But many people saw stealing the property of the poor as a quick way to get rich. So God said He would keep an eye on the widows' property lines. It is not wise to rob the poor; they have a big Defender!

### **20. V. 27 = What does a greedy man do that brings trouble on his family?**

Greedy = "to cut or break off" suggesting they make gain unjustly or by violence.<sup>193</sup>

Possibly accepts a bribe (dishonesty - Some people call them "deals" now) to silence him regarding the truth of some matter or to make him stir up trouble for someone. Or he wants something so badly he puts himself and his family into debt. The wrong attitude toward money can wreck marriages, friendships and even destroy a home.

Greed can also destroy a ministry. Many pastors expect "bribes" or honorariums to perform weddings or other services when it may go against their conscience because they need or want the money. It's better to do what we know will honor God and let Him take care of our needs.

### **How could he avoid this?**

Refuse the bribe and stick to the truth. Or save up money until he can actually afford something instead of going into debt.

### **What did Jesus say about greed in Luke 12:15?**

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<sup>193</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.* p. 939.

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

"Needs" are quite different from "wants" and there are many areas of life where greed can be a factor. If we aren't walking in the power of the Holy Spirit our old nature creeps in and takes over - Gal. 5:16-26. God calls greed "idolatry" because we place other things in the place God should rightfully occupy in our lives. (Cf. Ro. 1:28-32; I Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:3-7; Col. 3:5-6; I Pet. 5:2-3; II Pet. 2:14-16)

### **Does a greedy person have any part in the kingdom of God? (I Cor. 6:9-11) Why or why not?**

No. Because greed is sin and if it is a constant desire in a person's life they need to check to see if they are really saved and/or repent and get right with God. Notice Paul says "that is what some of you *were*. But..."

A good way to cure greed is to give to others in need. "John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, taught his people:

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can."<sup>194</sup>

### **21. V. 28 = What does it mean to weigh ("carefully muses on or considers"<sup>195</sup>) your answers?**

Think about how you will respond before you just blurt out the first thing that comes to mind; that may be evil, offensive, crude, untruthful, etc. Impetuous speech can wound others.

### **Why is this important?**

Because as believers we represent Christ to the world. We need to make sure what we say honors God; that our words are appropriate, proper, and acceptable. (Cf. Eph. 5:1-20; I Pet. 3:15-16)

### **22. V. 29 = When will God not hear our prayers? (Ps. 66:18-20)**

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<sup>194</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.* p. 185.

<sup>195</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.* p. 939.

When we cherish or harbor (unrepentant) sin in our hearts. (Cf. I John 1:5-2:6)

**23. V. 32 = When a person ignores discipline who does he despise?**

Himself, as well as God and others. He's definitely not helping himself.

**What do we gain when we heed correction?**

Understanding. We tend to learn more by correcting our mistakes or having to ask forgiveness for a sin or blunder than if we had never done anything wrong. I guess it's human nature to learn the hard way. "How we accept and apply rebuke is a test of how devoted we are to truth and wisdom and how sincere we are in wanting to know God's will."<sup>196</sup>

**24. V. 33 = What do we gain by fearing the LORD?**

Wisdom, humility and honor.

Charles Bridges defines the fear of the Lord as "that affectionate reverence by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's law. His wrath is so bitter, and His love so sweet; that hence springs an earnest desire to please Him, and—because of the danger of coming short from his own weakness and temptations—a holy watchfulness and *fear*, 'that he might not sin against Him.' "<sup>197</sup>

**Read Ja. 4:10. Why/how does humility come before honor?**

Because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. When we humble ourselves before God He will lift us up.

**Read Lk. 14:7-11. What did Jesus teach about humility in this passage?**

Don't put yourself forward in a place of honor only to find someone more distinguished will be given your seat and you will be humiliated. But take the lowest place so that you may be asked to move to a place of honor. "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

**Read Phil. 2:1-11. How is Jesus the perfect example of humility?**

Even though He was equal to God the Father He lowered/humbled Himself to become like one of us, a servant. The Almighty eternal Creator of the universe, who fills heaven and earth, stepped into time and space and became a helpless baby, lived a life of self-sacrifice while enduring this sinful world—an affront to His holiness—and offered

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<sup>196</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.* p. 169.

<sup>197</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.* p. 24.

Himself in our place as the perfect sacrifice for sin, turning away God's wrath from us and taking it on Himself. But that's not the end of the story! God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Hallelujah!!

### Questions for Proverbs Chapter 16

Ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance, then read the chapter.

V. 1, 4, 9 = What do these verses tell you about man's will and God's sovereignty? (Cf. Prov. 19:21)

V. 2 = Do we always understand our own motives? Who does?

Read I Sam 2:3; I Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:12-13; and Jam. 4:1-3. What do these verses tell us about our motives?

V. 3 = What all is entailed in committing to the Lord whatever we do? (Cf. Ps. 37:1-9; Prov. 3:5-6)

V. 5 = What is it about pride that God detests? (Prov. 8:13; Is. 14:12-15; Dan. 4; Ro. 12:16; I Cor. 13:4-8a; I Tim. 3:6-7; II Tim. 2:22-26; I Pet. 5:5-7)

V. 6 = Look up the word "atone". How were our sins atoned for? (cf. Lev. 17:10-12 with Ro. 3:21-26; Heb. 2:14-18; I John 2:1-2; see notes on each verse)

What is it about love and faithfulness to others that atones for sin?

What is it that keeps us from sinning? (Cf. Ex. 20:18-21; Job 1:8; 28:28; 31:16-23; Ps. 85:8-9; Lk. 12:1-12; Phil. 2:12-13)

V. 7 = How do we please the LORD? (cf. Ro. 12:1-15:13)

V. 8 = How might injustice ruin a promotion or an increase in wages?

Why would it be better to have little or no promotions but remain righteous?

V. 10 = Oracle = A divine sentence or decision. Why should the king not betray justice or err in judgment?

V. 11 = If honest scales and balances are from the LORD, where are dishonest ones from? (Cf. Lev. 19:35-36; Dt. 25:13-16; Prov. 11:1; 20:10, 23; Amos 8:4-7; Mic. 6:9-13)

According to the verses in Amos and Micah, why would God to be so adamant about honest scales and weights?

V. 12-13 = Read II Sam. 7 and Jer. 23:5-6. David's throne was established through righteousness, specifically God's righteousness. Who would come through David's line and eventually reign as King forever and ever?

What does a righteous king detest, and what does he take pleasure in?

Why would this be so?

V. 14-15 = Why is it dangerous to arouse a king's wrath?

Why would a person seek his favor?

V. 16 = Read I Ki. 3:4-15; 4:29-34; 10:23-24. What did Solomon choose when God came to him?

What did God give Solomon besides?

V. 17 = What highway or way is Solomon speaking of here? (Cf. Prov. 4:23)

How would Proverbs 8:13 fit with this verse?

V. 18-19 = How does pride lead to a person's downfall? (Cf. Prov. 11:2; 18:12)

Read I Cor. 10:1-13. Israel, and apparently the Corinthian's, were full of spiritual pride. What does God say to be careful of?

What does God provide for us when temptations come if we will just look?

Read Is. 57:15. Who does God promise to dwell with?

V. 20 = How might Proverbs 3:5-6 fit with this verse?

V. 21-24 = What do these verses tell us about our words?

What is it about the wise that makes them persuasive or promotes instruction?

V. 25 = Why does mankind seem blind to his own demise? (Cf. Is. 53:6)

Who saves us from our "own way"?

V. 26 = Even if a laborer works in harsh or poor conditions with no reprieve or promotion in sight, what drives him on?

V. 27-30 = How would a scoundrel's speech be like a scorching fire? (Cf. Prov. 6:12-15)

What does it mean to be perverse?

How does God feel about one who stirs up dissension? (Cf. Prov. 6:16-19)

How does gossip separate close friends? (Cf. Prov. 17:9)

V. 31 = What makes the righteous flourish into old age? (Cf. Ps. 92:12-15; Is. 46:3-4)

V. 32 = Why would patience be better than great strength or victory in the battle?

Where does true patience come from? (Cf. Gal. 5:22-23)

V. 33 = Read Acts 1:23-26. Does anything happen by chance?

Who is ultimately in control?

## Questions for Proverbs Chapter 16

**Ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance, then read the chapter.**

**V. 1, 4, 9 = What do these verses tell you about man's will and God's sovereignty? (Cf. Prov. 19:21)**

Somehow we have free will even though God is sovereign (cf. Ro. 8:28-11:36). Scripture teaches both: to emphasize one and not the other would lead to doctrinal error. And no matter how we try to force our will on the situation, God is still in control and uses even our rebellion and sin for His good purposes (Gen. 45:4-7; 50:19-21). We can't thwart His will. "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails." (Prov. 19:21) "God expects us to use our brains and make plans, but He also expects us to submit those plans to Him and let Him make the final decision." "If we've yielded to the Lord and our plans are not His plans, He will show us what's right and steer us away from what's wrong."<sup>198</sup>

"A person may make plans (placing things in order, like arranging soldiers in battle lines; cf. Gen. 14:8) in his heart...but God guides what comes out of the heart in man's words (the reply of the tongue). God in His sovereignty prevails over man...One's heart and his speech are closely related."<sup>199</sup>

"Divine sovereignty doesn't destroy human responsibility and turn humans into robots. God expects us to study, think, weigh possibilities, and make decisions, but we dare not 'lean on (our) own understanding' (3:5-6). God promises to give wisdom to those who ask (James 1:5)..."<sup>200</sup>

**V. 2 = Do we always understand our own motives? Who does?**

No. God does. We often do things for the wrong reasons and don't even realize it, or we look good on the outside but behind our actions are impure motives. Remember our motives are weighed by the LORD. It's always wise to check our hearts (cf. Lk. 6:41-42; Gal. 6:1-5; Phil. 2:1-4)

**Read I Sam 2:3; I Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:12-13; and Jam. 4:1-3. What do these verses tell us about our motives?**

**I Sam 2:3 = God knows when we are motivated by pride and weighs our deeds.**

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<sup>198</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.*, p. 171-172.

<sup>199</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.* p. 940.

<sup>200</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.*, p. 194.

**I Cor. 4:5** = Don't worry about judging yourself or another because God is the final judge; "wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God."

**Heb. 4:12-13** = Because God's Word is living and active, "it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

**Jam. 4:1-3** = Our hearts and minds are a battleground for our desires and motives. Wrong motives cause fights and quarrels, and wrong desires. We don't have because we don't ask God. When we do ask, we don't get what we want because we ask with wrong motives, desiring to fulfill the lustful pleasures of our flesh. God knows our proud sinful hearts.

### **V. 3 = What all is entailed in committing to the Lord whatever we do? (Cf. Ps. 37:1-9; Prov. 3:5-6)**

**Ps. 37:1-9** = We shouldn't be fretting over things or be envious of others, but trust the LORD and do good, delighting ourselves in the LORD, then He will give us the desires of our hearts. We should commit our way to the LORD and trust in Him; we should be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him, not fretting when others get away with evil. We should refrain from anger and turn from wrath; we shouldn't fret – it only leads to evil, and evil people will be cut off.

**Prov. 3:5-6** = "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight."

See also Ja. 4:13-17. Committing (lit. "Rolling") our plans to the Lord is essential to success.

### **V. 5 = What is it about pride that God detests? (Prov. 8:13; Is. 14:12-15; Dan. 4; Ro. 12:16; I Cor. 13:4-8a; I Tim. 3:6-7; II Tim. 2:22-26; I Pet. 5:5-7)**

Pride puts "self" on the throne (independence) where God alone belongs. Pride is the worst form of idolatry and will not go unpunished. " 'Be sure of this' is a translation of the idiomatic phrase 'hand-to-hand' ... This may refer to clasping hands over an agreement on a transaction, which closed a deal. What is certain is that sinners will be punished and the righteous will not be."<sup>201</sup> God guarantees it.

**Prov. 8:13** = There is no fear of God nor a hatred for evil in pride. "To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech."

**Is. 14:12-15** = Pride was Satan's downfall. He wanted to be like God and rule in His place. (Cf. Ez. 28:11-19)

**Dan. 4** = King Nebuchadnezzar was warned by God in a dream that if he didn't renounce his sinful pride he would be brought down and made like an animal for seven years until he did repent. Daniel exhorted him to repent as well. But one year later he was walking on the roof of his palace, and his pride overwhelmed him. He took credit for

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<sup>201</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.* p. 929.

building the great city of Babylon as *his* royal residence, by *his* mighty power and for the glory of *his* majesty. Immediately his dream came true. Seven years would pass until he acknowledged that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes. Nebuchadnezzar was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. Finally he admitted his pride and in humility looked to God, and his sanity was restored. Then he praised the Most High and honored and glorified Him who lives forever. He admitted that God does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: "What have You done?" Then God restored Nebuchadnezzar to be even greater than before. Nebuchadnezzar praised and exalted and glorified "the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble."

**Ro. 12:16** = "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."

**I Cor. 13:4-8a** = "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, *it is not proud*. It is not rude, *it is not self-seeking*, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

**I Tim. 3:6-7** = A pastor "must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil (brought down in disgrace). He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap." (Pride, hypocrisy, etc.)

**II Tim. 2:22-26** = A pastor must also "flee the evil desires of youth (the pride and desire to always be right), and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will." (Dissension, argumentative spirit, quarreling over words, etc.)

**I Pet. 5:5-7** = We should deal with each other in humility because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." When we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, God will lift us up in due time. We shouldn't worry about it because He cares for us and our reputations.

"We often look for pride in some outward manifestation, but God looks on the heart (see I Sam. 16:7). Sometimes people who appear to be proud aren't as proud as the one who is proud in his heart. I've found that some people with bad self-esteem, who really don't understand their relationship with God, can manifest very prideful ways when, in fact, they are not very proud at all. They may be scared to death, and insecure. The thing to understand is that pride grips the heart even though it may not be manifest outwardly. That pride, in our hearts, is an abomination to God." Saying "I hate myself!" is an expression of pride. (Cf. Eph. 5:29). "You are so proud that you want to bore the rest of us by saying that you hate yourself. Don't do that! The truth is that you love yourself

and, if I were you, I would try to love God with all my heart and love '*your neighbor as [much as you love] yourself.*' Pour your interest into other people and not into yourself since this stirs up the pride problem."<sup>202</sup>

**V. 6 = Look up the word "atone". How were our sins atoned for? (cf. Lev. 17:10-12 with Ro. 3:21-26; Heb. 2:14-18; I John 2:1-2; see notes on each verse)**

Atone = Reconcile; to supply satisfaction for.<sup>203</sup>

Atonement = The reconciliation of God and humankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.<sup>204</sup>

**Lev. 17:10-12 with Ro. 3:21-26** = The Israelites and the aliens living among them were told not to eat blood or they would die. "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I (God) have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life." "But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified (declared righteous; formal and legal acquittal from guilt) freely by His grace through the redemption (to buy out of; release on payment of ransom) that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Him (public display) as a sacrifice of atonement,\* through faith in His blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance (to refrain from enforcing something, patience without anger, delay of wrath) He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – He did it to demonstrate His justice at the present time, so as to be just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus." (\* ... As the One who would turn aside His wrath, taking away sin...; mercy seat, covering)

**Heb. 2:14-18** = "Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels He helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement\* for the sins of the people. Because He himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted." (\* ...and that He might turn aside God's wrath, taking away...)

**I John 2:1-2** = "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have One who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice\* for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." (\* He is the One who turns aside God's wrath, taking away our sins, and not only ours but also...)

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<sup>202</sup> Hocking, *ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>203</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/atone>

<sup>204</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/atonement>

## **What is it about love ("loyal love") and faithfulness to others that atones for sin?**

When someone you have sinned against sees your change of heart it may make up for your sin in part. God's *hesed*, or loyal love and faithfulness has provided a way for sin to be atoned for through His son Jesus Christ. There is no greater love (I John 3:16).

## **What is it that keeps us from sinning? (Cf. Ex. 20:18-21; Job 1:8; 28:28; 31:16-23; Ps. 85:8-9; Lk. 12:1-12; Phil. 2:12-13)**

The fear of the LORD. Take the fear of the Lord out of our hearts and we will sin.

**Ex. 20:18-21** = When God came down on Mount Sinai the people were terrified. But notice what Moses said, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."

**Job 1:8** = God's description of Job was that there was no one on earth like him; he was blameless and upright, a man who feared God and shunned evil. Wow!

**Job 28:28** = And God said to man, "The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding."

**Job 31:16-23** = Job did what was right because he feared destruction from God, and for fear of His splendor he could not do such things.

**Ps. 85:8-9** = "I will listen to what God the LORD will say; He promises peace to His people, His saints – *but let them not return to folly*. Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in our land."

**Lk. 12:1-12** = Nothing can be kept secret from God. Everything will be revealed. We shouldn't fear man who can only kill the body, but we should fear God who, after killing the body, has power to throw you into hell. And yet we are greatly loved, and known intimately. Don't deny Jesus before man or you will be denied by Him before the Father and the angels. (Cf. Heb. 10:26-31)

**Phil. 2:12-13** = In obedience to Christ we should live out our faith with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in us to will and to act according to His good purpose.

## **V. 7 = How do we please the LORD? (cf. Ro. 12:1-15:13)**

Romans 12:1–2 sums up these chapters beautifully. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will." We please God by offering ourselves to Him and by avoiding evil. Romans 12:21 says "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." If we submit to God's Authority, and the authorities He has put in place, as well as loving our neighbors and living in peace with them, we're on the right track. Romans 13:10 says, "Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." We are all accountable to God (Ro. 14:10-12).

## **V. 8 = How might injustice ruin a promotion or an increase in wages?**

Those who gain status or money (revenue, income) by injustice are being watched by those around them who are just waiting for them to fall. When you step on others to promote yourself or gain wealth there's a hard fall coming. Jimmy Durante was asked why he was always so nice to those around him when he was going up the ladder of success. He responded with, "Be kind to people on the way up - you'll meet them again on your way down."

## **Why would it be better to have little or no promotions but remain righteous?**

Because being righteous before the Lord, and maintaining that relationship with Him, is more important than promotions or wealth. Plus, those who are dishonest will be punished. Money is a matter of values/motives.

## **V. 10 = Oracle = A divine sentence or decision. Why should the king not betray justice or err in judgment?**

Because he was put in his place of authority by God as His representative and is responsible before Him for all that he does and says (cf. Dt. 17:14-20). I wouldn't want to be those leaders who misuse their authority and have to answer to the King of kings and Lord of lords. (Cf. Ps. 82; Prov. 31:1-9; Hab. 1:2-4)

## **V. 11 = If honest scales and balances are from the LORD, where are dishonest ones from? (Cf. Lev. 19:35-36; Dt. 25:13-16; Prov. 11:1; 20:10, 23; Amos 8:4-7; Mic. 6:9-13)**

Mankind. Once Israel had a king, he established the weights and measures (royal standard - II Sam. 14:26). Those who dealt dishonestly disobeyed both the king and God. Dishonesty is robbery.

**Lev. 19:35-36** = "Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity. Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah (dry) and an honest hin (wet). I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt."

**Dt. 25:13-16** = "Do not have two different weights in your bag – one heavy, one light. Do not have two different measures in your house – one large, one small. You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. For the LORD your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly."

**Prov. 11:1; 20:10, 23** = "The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are His delight." "Differing weights and differing measures – the LORD detests them both." "The LORD detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please Him."

**Amos 8:4-7** = The prosperous in Israel trampled the needy and did away with the poor of the land, saying, " 'When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?' – skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a

pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat." God swore He would never forget anything they had done.

**Mic. 6:9-13** = To fear God's Name is wisdom, but the people of Israel ignored God's law and filled their houses with ill-gotten treasures. They used the short ephah, which is accursed, dishonest scales and false weights. Her rich men were violent, her people liars who spoke deceitfully. So God destroyed them because of their sins.

**According to the verses in Amos and Micah, why would God to be so adamant about honest scales and weights?**

Because the poor and needy were being abused. God hates anyone who deals dishonestly, and especially those who take advantage of the poor, widows and orphans, and aliens.

**V. 12-13** = Read **II Sam. 7** and **Jer. 23:5-6**. **David's throne was established** (made firm or secure) **through righteousness, specifically God's righteousness** (I Ki. 3:6). **Who would come through David's line and eventually reign as King forever and ever?**

Jesus Christ, Messiah, the Promised One. He will be called The LORD Our Righteousness.

**What does a righteous king detest, and what does he take pleasure in?**

A king detests wrongdoing and takes pleasure in a righteous and honest person who speaks the truth. Leaders need righteousness and justice.

**Why would this be so?**

Because he wants his kingdom to prosper, and he wants people he can trust. (Cf. Dan. 1:18-20; 2:45-49; 4:8, 18, 27; 6:1-5, 21-28) Dishonesty and injustice will cause his reign to topple.

**V. 14-15** = **Why is it dangerous to arouse a king's wrath?**

Because he has the power of life and death. (Dan. 2; 3; 6; Esther 4:9-16; 7) "A king's power is irresistible; one's only recourse is to seek to pacify it."<sup>205</sup>

**Why would a person seek his favor?**

Because his favor means blessing, advancement, wealth, power, etc. (Daniel, although he wasn't afraid to go against the king's word if it directly contradicted God's word;

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<sup>205</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.*, p. 940.

Esther 3) "A rain cloud in spring (the 'latter rain' in March or April) was welcomed as rain was needed for a good crop."<sup>206</sup>

**V. 16 = Read I Ki. 3:4-15; 4:29-34; 10:23-24. What did Solomon choose when God came to him?**

He asked for wisdom and discernment to distinguish between right and wrong to govern God's people and administer justice. (Cf. Job 28)

**What did God give Solomon besides?**

**I Ki. 3:4-15** = He gave Solomon a wise and discerning heart, so that there was never anyone like him. He also gave him both riches and honor—so that in his lifetime he had no equal among kings. God also promised him a long life if he would walk in God's ways and obey His statutes and commands as his father David had done.

**I Ki. 4:29-34** = God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than any other man... And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke 3000 proverbs and his songs numbered 1005. He described plant life..., taught about animals, birds, reptiles and fish. Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

**I Ki. 10:23-24** = King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. And they all brought gifts.

**V. 17 = What highway or way is Solomon speaking of here? (Cf. Prov. 4:23)**

The path we chose to follow through life—God's way or ours (our conduct). Above all else we should guard our hearts, for the heart (mind, inner life with its drives, appetites, and desires) is the wellspring of life.

**How would Proverbs 8:13 fit with this verse?**

To fear God and to hate evil is the way to life. Pride chooses its own way, not God's.

**V. 18-19 = How does pride lead to a person's downfall? (Cf. Prov. 11:2; 18:12)**

When a person has their nose in the air they can't see where they're going! 😊 Pride blinds a person to the pitfalls they might otherwise notice. They are so sure of themselves that they don't take heed to warnings and get blindsided. Pride is so despicable in God's sight that a person should avoid it even if it means being economically oppressed.

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<sup>206</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.*, p. 940.

National pride can also be a big problem. God spoke to the people of Edom through the prophet Obadiah about their pride (Obadiah 3-4). America is a nation filled with pride and most of it not good. Have you ever seen the bumper sticker with the American flag saying "The power of pride". Pride may be our downfall. That bumper sticker should say "The power of prayer!" We need to humble ourselves, get on our knees and pray for God's forgiveness. (Cf. Israel in II Chron. 7:14)

**Read I Cor. 10:1-13. Israel, and apparently the Corinthian's, were full of spiritual pride. What does God say to be careful of?**

We shouldn't set our hearts on evil things as they did (idolatry, sexual immorality, provoking God to wrath, grumbling, etc.) but learn from their examples. The Israelites thought because they were God's people they were immune to His wrath and could do as they pleased. They presumed upon God. They had no fear of God and ignored or flat out rebelled against His commands. They became full of spiritual pride and fell resoundingly! (Cf. Ex. 32; Num. 12-14; 16-17; 21:4-9; 25)

**What does God provide for us when temptations come if we will just look?**

A way out! God constantly told the Israelites how they could avoid judgment and please Him, but they didn't take heed. We should take heed not to do the same!

**Read Is. 57:15. Who does God promise to dwell with?**

The contrite (crushed, broken, dust) and lowly (humble) in spirit. He will revive them.

"The saintly Scottish preacher James Denney said, 'No man can bear witness to Christ and to himself at the same time. No man can give the impression that he himself is clever and that Christ is mighty to save.' That quotation should be printed in large letters and displayed in every church sanctuary and conference auditorium where God's people gather. It might humble some of the preachers and musicians who call so much attention to themselves that the hungry sheep can't see Jesus. If the greatest sin is the corruption of the highest good, then people who use the Christian religion to promote themselves are guilty of great transgression."<sup>207</sup>

**V. 20 = How might Proverbs 3:5-6 fit with this verse?**

When we trust in the Lord with all our hearts and not our own understanding, when we acknowledge Him and heed (ponder or takes note of) His instruction, He directs our path and blesses us.

**V. 21-24 = What do these verses tell us about our words?**

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<sup>207</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.*, p. 186.

Our words can be used for good or for evil. The wise/discerning (the ability to see to the heart of the matter) use pleasant (sweet, attractive, helpful) words and promote instruction (make learning desirable); their understanding (insight) is a fountain of life (refreshing, life-sustaining, inexhaustible), guided by their wise hearts. Their pleasant (delightful) words are like a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. They are careful of what they say so as not to hurt someone, but help them, encourage them. "The wise person understands that the way they say something is very important to the ability of the hearer to except it."<sup>208</sup> Fools, on the other hand, spout out folly and bring punishment on themselves.<sup>209</sup>

### **What is it about the wise that makes them persuasive or promotes instruction?**

They have discernment and understanding (discretion); their words are pleasant (eloquent, persuasive) and life-giving (comforting, soothing to both soul and body), sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. "Gentle, kind words, by soothing the mind, give the body health,"<sup>210</sup> or make a person feel better physically.

### **V. 25 = Why does mankind seem blind to his own demise? (Cf. Is. 53:6)**

Because we have all gone astray and turned to our own way. Also see II Cor. 4:4.

"The wise person checks on the destination before buying tickets (4:26), but modern society thinks that people can violate God's laws and escape the consequences. They're sure that whatever has happened to others will never happen to them. Sad to say, their ignorance and insolence can never neutralize the tragic aftermath that comes when people break the laws of God."<sup>211</sup>

### **Who saves us from our "own way"?**

Our wonderful God through His son Jesus Christ. He took our sins on Himself. We just need to except His offer of grace and not trust in ourselves. (Eph. 3:8-9)

### **V. 26 = Even if a laborer works in harsh or poor conditions with no reprieve or promotion in sight, what drives him on?**

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<sup>208</sup> Hocking, *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>209</sup> ( ) Walvoord, *ibid.*, p. 941.

<sup>210</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/16-24.htm>, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

<sup>211</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.*, p. 61.

His hunger. "Hunger can motivate people, sometimes even lazy people, to work so that with their wages they can buy food. This verse has an interesting word play: though a person is working as a laborer for someone else, his appetite is 'working' for himself."<sup>212</sup>

"The belly is the teacher of all arts, The parent of invention."

"He who wants bread thinks of everything."

"Need makes the old wife trot;" as the Italians say, "Hunger sets the dog a-hunting."  
(Kelly)<sup>213</sup>

### **V. 27-30 = How would a scoundrel's (lit. "a man of belial\* <sup>214</sup>) speech be like a scorching fire? (Cf. Prov. 6:12-15)**

\* Belial means someone who is worthless and wicked. Later the word came to be used of the devil, the most worthless, and wicked person of all. (Cf. II Cor. 6:15)

He has a corrupt mouth and is always plotting evil with deceit in his heart (body and soul, determined to do evil), stirring up dissension. He utters maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about others. His words can literally scorch or burn them. But he in turn will be suddenly destroyed – without remedy.

"A scoundrel plots evil. 'Plots evil' is literally 'digs a calamity,' which suggests the effort he puts forth to dig a pit to trap others. One of the main ways in which he does this is by words that burn like...fire (cf. James 3:5-6)."<sup>215</sup>

### **What does it mean to be perverse?**

Wrong or different in a way that others feel is strange or offensive. Turned away from what is right or good; corrupt; improper; incorrect. <sup>216</sup>

"Stirs up dissension" is literally, "sends forth," which may signify "scatters as seed" or "hurls as a missile weapon." The character intended is the perverse man, who distorts the truth, gives a wrong impression, attributes evil motives; such a one occasions quarrels and heartburnings."<sup>217</sup> He sows seeds that produce a bitter and divisive harvest.

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<sup>212</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.*, p. 941.

<sup>213</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/16-26.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

<sup>214</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.*, p. 941.

<sup>215</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.*, p. 941.

<sup>216</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perverse>

<sup>217</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/16-28.htm>, Pulpit Commentary

"The person who walks in the way of wisdom would immediately detect his deceit and avoid him." "Discord and division in the church are terrible sins because they are contrary to the spiritual unity that Jesus prayed for (John 17:21) and that the Spirit was given to produce in the body (Eph. 4:1–6). How can lost sinners ever believe that God loves *them* when God's children don't even love *one another*?"<sup>218</sup>

### **How does God feel about one who stirs up dissension? (Cf. Prov. 6:16-19)**

He hates him; such a man is detestable to Him. Pretty strong words!

### **How does gossip separate close friends? (Cf. Prov. 17:9)**

Gossip causes dissension and may cause close friends to doubt and mistrust each other. When one repeats a matter meant to be private it causes anger and mistrust, hurt feelings, etc. Gossips "are Satan's bellows to blow up contention."<sup>219</sup> Love wouldn't do such a thing (17:9). True friends know how to keep a confidence (11:13). If you go about whispering about a friend, you're destroying that friendship. Even if you know the truth, it doesn't mean it should be repeated. "If there is love in your heart, it might cover what the truth is, so that it can be properly resolved and handled."<sup>220</sup>

V. 29 = A violent person isn't happy with just doing evil himself, he entices his neighbor to go with him down a path that is not good.

### **V. 31 = What makes the righteous flourish into old age? (Cf. Ps. 92:12-15; Is. 46:3-4)**

Righteous living and great faith in God Who sustains them.

**Ps. 92:12-15** = "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The LORD is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in Him.' "

**Is. 46:3-4** = "Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you."

### **V. 32 = Why would patience be better than great strength or victory in the battle?**

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<sup>218</sup> Wiersbe, *ibid.*, p. 46 and 83.

<sup>219</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/16-28.htm>, Pulpit Commentary

<sup>220</sup> Hocking, *ibid.*, p. 166.

Because a patient person can stand back and see the possible outcome of the situation; they wait instead of getting riled up or getting others riled up. They have control over their own spirit. "In a land where safety depended on might and skill in warfare, this statement may seem surprising. Yet conquering oneself...is of greater virtue than conquering a city."<sup>221</sup>

### **Where does true patience come from? (Cf. Gal. 5:22-23)**

From God. It is part of the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

### **V. 33 = Read Acts 1:23-26. Does anything happen by chance?**

Some things may seem to happen by chance, but God controls even them. Peter and the other apostles understood this, so when they cast lots they knew God would make His will known through them. (Cf. Ex. 28:29-30; Esther 3:7; 9)

### **Who is ultimately in control?**

Our sovereign God.

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<sup>221</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.*, p. 942.

Questions for Proverbs  
Chapter 17

Remember to ask the Holy Spirit for His guidance, then read the chapter.

V. 1 = Why does strife ruin a good meal?

Read Phil 4:12-13. How might this passage fit in with the first part of Prov. 17:1?

V. 2 = How might this be true?

V. 3 = What do the crucible and furnace do for silver and gold? (If you're not familiar with the process look it up. Cf. Ps. 12:6 and Prov. 25:4)

What are some ways God tests our hearts? (Cf. Gen. 22:1-19; Job 23:8-12; Prov. 16:2; 27:21; Jer. 17:9-10; I Cor. 3:10-15; I Thes. 2:1-6a; Heb. 4:12-13; Ja. 1:2-12; I Pet. 1:3-9)

V. 4 = Why do the wicked/liars listen/pay attention to evil/malicious words instead of good/pure ones?

V. 5 = Why would mocking the poor show contempt for their Maker?

Why would gloating over someone's disaster bring punishment? (Cf. Ps. 137; Prov. 24:17-18; Ez. 25; 35)

V. 6 = What is it about grandchildren that makes a crown or dignity to the aged?

In our society the children are usually the pride of the parents. So how might the parents be the pride of their children?

V. 7 = Why are arrogant or eloquent lips unsuited to a fool?

Why are lying lips unsuited to a ruler?

V. 8 = How does a bribe bring success to the one who gives it? (Cf. Dt. 16:19; Prov. 18:16; 19:6)

Why is a bribe generally wrong?

V. 9 = How is covering over an offense promoting love? (Cf. Ro. 12:21; 13:8-10; I Cor. 13:4-8a; I Pet. 4:8)

What does gossip do instead? (Prov. 11:13; 16:28; 18:8; 26:20)

What should be our response when we hear gossip?

V. 10 = Why does beating a fool do no good while a simple rebuke impresses a man of discernment?

V. 11 = Compare Prov. 16:14. Why is a rebellious/evil person put down without mercy?

Read I Ki. 1-2. Why did Solomon deal so harshly with these men?

What does God think of rebellion? (Cf. I Sam. 15:22-23; Is. 1:10-20)

Who do we rebel against when we rebel against the person in authority over us? (Ro. 13:1-7)

V. 12 = What happens when a bear is robbed of her cubs?

How is meeting a fool in his folly worse?

V. 13 = Nabal was an evil fool. Read I Sam 25. What was his response to David after all David had done for him?

What was David ready to do to Nabal? (Remember David had been anointed as king so Nabal's response was to the king.)

What did Abigail do to remedy the situation?

How did God deal with Nabal and vindicate David?

Read II Sam. 12:1-14. What did God say through the prophet Nathan would happen to David and his household because of his sin?

V. 14 = What happens when a dam is breached?

How is a quarrel or dispute like breaching a dam?

What can be done to prevent this?

V. 15, 23, and 26 = Compare Dt. 16:18-20; II Chron. 19:4-11; Ps. 15; Prov. 21:15; 24:23-25; Is. 5:20-25; Ro. 13:1-7. Explain why it is so important to have honest judges.

Who are they representing?

What are they doing when they accept bribes and judge dishonestly?

What happens when innocent people are punished for their integrity?

V. 16 = According to this verse what should money be used for?

V. 17 = What will a true friend do when you are in trouble or suffering adversity? Why?

Read John 15:12-15. What did Jesus tell us about friends in this passage?

V. 18 = Why does it show a lack of judgment to sign your name as a second on someone else's loan? (Cf. Prov. 6:1-5)

V. 19 = Why would God consider quarreling a sin that invites destruction? (Cf. Prov. 13:10; II Tim. 2:22-26; Tit. 3:9-11)

V. 20 = What is a deceitful tongue evidence of? (Mt. 12:33-37; 15:16-20; Mk. 7:20-23)

Who are we accountable to for our words?

V. 21 and 25 = Why does a foolish child bring grief to their parents?

V. 22 = Why is it so important to have a good attitude about things even when in the midst of a tough situation?

What do the following verses say about this topic? (Eph. 5:19-20; Phil. 4:4-9; I Thes. 5:16-18)

V. 24 = Why is it so important to "keep wisdom in view"?

V. 27-28 = Compare Prov. 10:19; 29:20; Eccl. 9:17. What happens when people use a plethora of words without thinking before they speak?

What qualities does a person of knowledge and understanding possess?

Why are they listened to more than a shouting fool?

How might a fool be thought wise?

## Questions for Proverbs Chapter 17

**Remember to ask the Holy Spirit for His guidance, then read the chapter.**

Verse 1-20 each have to do with strife or peace in some measure.

### **V. 1 = Why does strife ruin a good meal?**

Because there is no peace and quiet. Strife ruins the atmosphere and causes indigestion. Harmony lead to peace and contentment. "A man who does right and is poor, is better off than a rich man who has compromised."<sup>222</sup>

### **Read Phil 4:12-13. How might this passage fit in with the first part of Prov. 17:1?**

Contentment lends to peace and quiet. When we trust God for our needs we have His peace.

### **V. 2 = How might this be true?**

A disgraceful son is often disinherited. A wise servant (one who gives heed to instruction) is to be appreciated and commended/rewarded. He is worth more than several disgraceful sons. (Cf. Gen. 15:2-3; 24. I'm sure this servant was rewarded! Although he didn't replace Isaac. Also I Ki. 12. Jeroboam vs. Rehoboam)

### **V. 3 = What do the crucible and furnace do for silver and gold? (If you're not familiar with the process look it up. Cf. Ps. 12:6 and Prov. 25:4)**

Refines and purifies them under intense heat. It removes the dross or impurities and makes it flawless, useful for the smith to make beautiful things. God also refines and purifies his children so that they are useful to Him, and He renews us in knowledge in the image of our Creator (Col. 3:9-10).

### **What are some ways God tests our hearts? (Cf. Gen. 22:1-19; Job 23:8-12; Prov. 16:2; 27:21; Jer. 17:9-10; I Cor. 3:10-15; I Thes. 2:1-6a; Heb. 4:12-13; Ja. 1:2-12; I Pet. 1:3-9)**

**Gen. 22:1-19** = Isaac was the son of the covenant God made with Abraham, but God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. It was a test of Abe's faith and love for God (cf. Heb. 11:17-19).

**Job 23:8-12** = We seldom understand all that God is doing but He knows everything about us, and when He has tested us, we will come forth as gold. We just need to trust Him, believe His Word, and obey.

**Prov. 16:2** = We may do something innocently enough, but God weighs our motives.

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<sup>222</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.* p. 56.

**Prov. 27:21** = We are tested by the praise we receive. Do we get puffed up with pride or are we humble?

**Jer. 17:9-10** = We don't even understand our own hearts, but the LORD searches our hearts and examines our minds, to reward us according to our conduct, according to what our deeds deserve.

**I Cor. 3:10-15** = When our motives are pure and we obey God's word, we will be rewarded. But if our motives are impure or we don't teach God's Word accurately, we will receive no reward. (Cf. Ja. 3:1)

**I Thes. 2:1-6a** = When we present the gospel our appeal should not spring from error or impure motives, nor should we try tricking someone. On the contrary, we should speak as people approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel. We shouldn't try to please man but God, who tests our hearts. We should never use flattery, nor should we put on a mask to cover up greed. We should not look for praise from man, but from God.

**Heb. 4:12-13** = "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

**Ja. 1:2-12** = He tests our faith through trials. These trials develop perseverance so that we may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. God will give us wisdom to understand if we just ask and believe. Those who stand the test will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.

**I Pet. 1:3-9** = God has redeemed us and given us an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. He shields us by His power, but for the present we may have to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. "These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

Trials are an important part of our spiritual growth, but we seldom appreciate that fact. Usually we whine and cry about trials. A. W. Tozier said, "It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply." This song expresses the struggle quite well.

Blessings by Laura Story

We pray for blessings, We pray for peace,  
Comfort for family, protection while we sleep.  
We pray for healing, for prosperity.  
We pray for Your mighty hand to ease our suffering.  
All the while, You hear each spoken need.  
Yet love is way too much to give us lesser things.

Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops?

What if Your healing comes through tears?  
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near?  
What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise?

We pray for wisdom, Your voice to hear,  
We cry in anger when we cannot feel You near.  
We doubt Your goodness, we doubt your love  
As if every promise from Your Word is not enough.  
All the while, You hear each desperate plea  
And long we'd have faith to believe.

Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops?  
What if Your healing comes through tears?  
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near?  
What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise?

When friends betray us,  
When darkness seems to win,  
We know that pain reminds this heart  
That this is not our home,  
It's not our home...

Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops?  
What if Your healing comes through tears?  
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near?  
What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise?

What if my greatest disappointments  
Or the aching of this life  
Is the revealing of a greater thirst this world can't satisfy?  
What if trials of this life  
The rain, the storms,  
the hardest nights...  
Are your mercies in disguise?

**V. 4 = Why do the wicked/liars listen/pay attention to evil/malicious** ("engulfing ruin, destruction, as accomplished by one person against another"<sup>223</sup> **words instead of good/pure ones?**

Because that's what their heart is like and they are drawn to more wickedness/evil. They feed on and perpetuate what enhances their characteristics. They don't want to listen to God's wisdom, His pure and good promises and commands. It is like fingernails on a chalkboard to their spirits.

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<sup>223</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.* p. 942.

"One of the marks of a liar is that they enjoy listening to lies... It's a basic rule of life that the ears hear what the heart loves, so beware of people who have an appetite for gossip and lies."<sup>224</sup>

If you hear someone like this you should stop them and say, "Wait a minute, you don't have the right to say such things. Let's go to ? and check that out to see if it's true before you slander them."

#### **V. 5 = Why would mocking the poor show contempt for their Maker?**

Compare James 1:9-11; 2:5-7. The poor are made in God's image just like everyone else. And God has chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him. Earthly wealth is temporary. Those who have to trust God for their very existence tend to have a much richer, stronger faith. God said there would always be poor people and we should take care of them, not show contempt for them or abuse them (Dt. 15:7-11). If you love and honor God you will also have mercy and compassion on people who are in need.

#### **Why would gloating over someone's disaster bring punishment? (Cf. Ps. 137; Prov. 24:17-18; Ez. 25; 35)**

God will see and disapprove and turn His wrath away from him. God sees our hearts and will judge our wicked thoughts.

**Ps. 137** = The Babylonians tormented the Israelites by demanding songs of joy from them while they were in captivity, and the Edomites watched and gloated over Israel's downfall.

**Prov. 24:17-18** = "Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the LORD will see and disapprove and turn His wrath away from him."

**Ez. 25** = Because the Ammonites said "Aha!" over God's sanctuary when it was desecrated and over the land of Israel when it was laid waste and over the people of Judah when they went into exile; because they clapped their hands and stamped their feet, rejoicing with all the malice of their hearts against the land of Israel, God said he would exterminate/destroy them. Because Moab and Seir said, "Look, the house of Judah has become like all the other nations," therefore God punished them. Because Edom took revenge on the house of Judah and became very guilty by doing so, therefore God took vengeance on them through Israel. Because the Philistines acted in vengeance and took revenge with malice in their hearts, and with ancient hostility sought to destroy Judah, therefore God destroyed them and carried out His vengeance.

**Ez. 35** = God judged Edom because they harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax. Since Edom didn't hate bloodshed, God filled their country with their slain and made them desolate forever. Because they said Israel and Judah would be

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<sup>224</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.* p. 140.

theirs and they would take possession of them, even though God was there, God would treat them in accordance with the anger and jealousy they showed in their hatred of Israel and Judah. Then they would know God heard all the contemptible things they said against Israel: "They have been laid waste and have been given over to us to devour." They boasted against God without restraint, and He heard it, so He made them desolate.

Those who judge or gloat over others will be judged in the same manner.

#### **V. 6 = What is it about grandchildren that makes a crown or dignity to the aged?**

Children and grandchildren are blessings from God (Ps. 127:3-5) and a cause for joy. To be surrounded by the flower and potential of youth is like wearing a beautiful crown.

#### **In our society the children are usually the pride of the parents. So how might the parents be the pride of their children?**

By honoring God with their lives, loving Him and loving others. This shows up in the attitude of the children.

#### **V. 7 = Why are arrogant or eloquent lips (lit. "Lips of excess", one who says too much) unsuited to a fool ("one who lacks spiritual perception and sensitivity")?**<sup>225</sup>

Arrogant =

- 1: exaggerating or disposed to exaggerate one's own worth or importance often by an overbearing manner <an arrogant official>
- 2: showing an offensive attitude of superiority : proceeding from or characterized by arrogance <an arrogant reply><sup>226</sup>

Eloquent =

- 1: marked by forceful and fluent expression <an eloquent preacher>
- 2: vividly or movingly expressive or revealing <an eloquent monument><sup>227</sup>

Because a fool has nothing to be arrogant or eloquent about! He shouldn't speak much because he seldom knows what he's speaking about, and he doesn't want people to know the truth (cf. Nabal, I Sam. 25).

#### **Why are lying lips unsuited to a ruler?**

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<sup>225</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.* p. 942.

<sup>226</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/arrogant>

<sup>227</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/eloquent>

Because a ruler sits in the place of authority and has been placed there by God. He represents God and, therefore, shouldn't lie. He should be a man of integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. People expect their leaders to lead them in the way of truth, and they want to be told the truth, not be lied to.

**V. 8 = How does a bribe bring success to the one who gives it? (Cf. Dt. 16:19; Prov. 18:16; 19:6)**

Unless the person being bribed is honest and refuses the bribe, the person who uses bribes will get what he wants. Bribes are effective. (This verse is not encouraging bribery - vs 23)

**Dt. 16:19** = "Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous."

**Prov. 18:16** = "A gift opens the way for the giver and ushers him into the presence of the great."

**Prov. 19:6** = "Many curry favor with a ruler, and everyone is the friend of a man who gives gifts."

**Why is a bribe generally wrong?**

Because they generally come with ulterior motives that don't honor God. We want what we want whether it's right or wrong!

**V. 9 = How is covering over an offense promoting love? (Cf. Ro. 12:21; 13:8-10; I Cor. 13:4-8a; I Pet. 4:8)**

It is an act of love to cover over (pass over and forgive) an offense. "Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Love is patient, kind, does not envy, does not boast, is not proud. It is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered, and keeps no record of wrongs. It does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. We are to "love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude (plethora) of sins." (Also Lev. 19:18; Prov. 10:12; 17:17)

"Some of the highest honor belongs to members of the body of Christ who have had transgressions committed against them, who refuse to tell anyone else. They simply confront the one who transgressed against them and wait patiently for the Lord to solve it, and if He never does, they still will not seek revenge. That is godliness." The flesh desires to tell others when we've been transgressed against. "We feel the need to get it off our chests." We may even tell them not to pass it on. "What's the matter with us? If we would only become stronger in our desire to protect, stronger in our desire to defend, stronger in our desire to have only those people deal with it who really need to

deal with it, we would see more healing in the body of Christ than hurt. The rest of us should stay out of it."<sup>228</sup>

### **What does gossip do instead? (Prov. 11:13; 16:28; 18:8; 26:20)**

If you have a close friend, more than likely you know something about them that might hurt them. You know when they've failed. A gossip separates close friends, by betraying a confidence instead of keeping a secret. His words stab a person in the heart of their emotions, and stirs up suspicion and quarrels. Gossip is a seed that produces division and God hates a divisive person (Prov. 6:16-19). Those who bring another person into a discussion by betraying a friend's confidence may lose their good reputation and their friend.

### **What should be our response when we hear gossip?**

We should refuse to be a part of it and gently rebuke the person gossiping. We should also say something positive in favor of the person spoken about.

### **V. 10 = Why does beating a fool do no good while a simple rebuke impresses a man of discernment?**

A fool is so full of himself that he can't or won't learn from punishment, but a person of discernment (wisdom) realizes he should listen to a rebuke and take it to heart. He doesn't think so highly of himself that he can't learn from others. He is sensitive and responsive. Only God can change the heart; we can't change anyone.

### **V. 11 = Compare Prov. 16:14. Why is a rebellious/evil person put down without mercy?**

Because he insists on being rebellious and doesn't learn from correction or rebuke. If a person has been corrected or rebuked several times and still doesn't respond, there is no option left but punishment without mercy.

### **Read I Ki. 1-2. Why did Solomon deal so harshly with these men?**

Because what they had done were acts of treason and murder! They were given the chance to prove themselves as worthy men, but they continued to conspire against the king or disobeyed his commands. Their hearts never changed.

### **What does God think of rebellion? (Cf. I Sam. 15:22-23; Is. 1:10-20)**

God wants obedience rather than outward forms of religion. "For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry." When Saul's heart became full of pride and he disobeyed God's command he was rejected as king (I Sam. 15). The

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<sup>228</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.* p. 167.

Israelites' sacrifices became detestable to God because their hearts were plotting evil even while they performed their religious duties. When they prayed, God said he would not listen because their hands were full of blood. He exhorted them to stop doing evil and learn to do right, to come to Him in repentance and He would cleanse them and bless them, but they refused (Is. 1). Rebellion is putting yourself in charge instead of letting God be God.

**Who do we rebel against when we rebel against the person in authority over us? (Ro. 13:1-7)**

God. "The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves." The one in authority is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. So submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This includes taxes, revenue, respect, and honor.

**V. 12 = What happens when a bear is robbed of her cubs?**

Mama becomes a hellish fiend determined to retrieve her babies. Anything that gets in her way is destroyed. (Cf. Hosea 13:8)

**How is meeting a fool in his folly worse?**

A fool will lead you down a path to spiritual destruction even worse than physical pain and death. A fool is more destructive than a raging bear. "Consider meeting a fool with a knife, or gun, or even behind the wheel of a car; a mother bear could be less dangerous."<sup>229</sup>

**V. 13 = Nabal was an evil fool (a matter of the heart). Read I Sam 25. What was his response to David after all David had done for him?**

He belittled and insulted David and refused to give his men anything. Most people would have been glad to give David something in return for his protection. And especially at a festive time, hospitality was an expected and honored thing to do. Instead, Nabal was greedy, surly and mean. Even his servants considered him nasty and mean, and his wife said he was just like his name – Fool, and folly goes with him.

**What was David ready to do to Nabal? (Remember David had been anointed as king so Nabal's response was to the king.)**

David was angry and said, "It's been useless – all my watching over this fellow's property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one

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<sup>229</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.* p. 943.

male of all who belong to him!" Nabal's response galled David so deeply that he was ready to avenge himself with his own hands instead of letting God deal with his enemy. Abigail recognized this. She was a wise woman.

### **What did Abigail do to remedy the situation?**

She packed up a bunch of food, put it on donkeys and went to find David. When she found him she reasoned with him in a manner that was very wise. She knew David would be King and didn't want him to have needless bloodshed on his hands by avenging himself. She understood God's plan for the kingdom much better than her husband.

### **How did God deal with Nabal and vindicate David?**

When Abigail told him how close they had come to disaster and all the things that had happened his heart failed him and he became like a stone (stroke?). About 10 days later the LORD struck Nabal and he died. Abigail was asked by David to become his wife! That's how much respect and honor he had for her.

### **Read II Sam. 12:1-14. What did God say through the prophet Nathan would happen to David and his household because of his sin?**

Because he struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be his own, the sword would never depart from his house. Because he despised the word of the LORD and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be his own, the thing he had supposedly done in secret would be done to his wives in broad daylight before all Israel. By his sin he had made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, so the son born to him and Bathsheba would die.

### **V. 14 = What happens when a dam is breached?**

The land below the dam is flooded, and depending on the size of the lake behind the dam, houses and other buildings are destroyed as well. It can be total destruction for miles.

### **How is a quarrel or dispute like breaching a dam?**

Once people start quarreling or disputing, anger usually takes over and is very destructive, whether in words that wound, or in physical blows, seeking revenge, etc.

A quarrelsome spirit is another seed to division. Behind arguments is a very bad spirit.

### **What can be done to prevent this?**

Drop the matter; let it go before it festers and erupts like a volcano.

**V. 15, 23, and 26 = Compare Dt. 16:18-20; II Chron. 19:4-11; Ps. 15; Prov. 21:15; 24:23-25; Is. 5:20-25; Ro. 13:1-7. Explain why it is so important to have honest judges.**

Without honesty justice is perverted (bent) and partiality shown. This is not acceptable to God.

**Who are they representing?**

The LORD. "Consider carefully what you do, because you are not judging for man but for the LORD, who is with you whenever you give a verdict. Now let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery." (II Chron. 19:6-7) "The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves." (Ro. 13:1-2)

**What are they doing when they accept bribes and judge dishonestly?**

They are perverting justice, blinding the eyes of the wise, and twisting the words of the righteous (Dt. 16:19). "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,... who acquit the guilty for bribe, but deny justice to the innocent... For they have rejected the law of the LORD Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the LORD's anger burns..." (Is. 5:20-25). God judges such things, but he blesses those who keep their oaths even when it hurts, who do not except a bribe against innocent (Ps. 15:4-5).

**What happens when innocent people are punished for their integrity?**

Justice is not done and evil prospers. "To show partiality in judging is not good: Whoever says to the guilty, "You are innocent" – peoples will curse him and nations denounce him." (Prov. 24:23-24) But "when justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers" (Prov. 21:15). "But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come upon them" (Prov. 24:25).

Note V. 15 = Isn't this exactly what God did for us through His Son Jesus Christ? The Just One died for the unjust and took our judgment (I Pet. 2:24; 3:18). He was condemned so we could be justified (declared righteous) when we put our faith in Him Who rose from the dead (Ro. 4:5).

**V. 16 = According to this verse what should money be used for?**

To get wisdom! (Cf. Prov. 4:7) Fools have no desire for gaining wisdom.

**V. 17 = What will a true friend do when you are in trouble or suffering adversity? Why?**

Love you and stick by you no matter what others to do or say. They are loyal, consistent, never short-term. That's what we need when we're in a crisis. They will also tell you the truth! Someone has said, "A true friend stabs you from the front!" Confrontation isn't fun but it's often necessary.

"[T]rue friendship is based on love, because only love will endure the tests that friends experience as they go through life together... It's possible to have many companions and no real friends."<sup>230</sup>

### **Read John 15:12-15. What did Jesus tell us about friends in this passage?**

- "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." A true friend is willing to sacrifice himself for his friend.
- We are God's friends if we do what He commands us.
- Friends know everything about you, and they share everything with you.

### **V. 18 = Why does it show a lack of judgment to sign your name as a second on someone else's loan? (Cf. Prov. 6:1-5)**

Because they may back out on their promise or suffer severe financial loss in a crisis and not pay their debt. Therefore you will be stuck with the debt and you may not be able to pay it. You may lose your good name as well as everything you own. If you have been trapped by your own words or promise into a high interest loan, do everything you can to get out of the situation in a godly manner. On the other hand, it's often better to simply give a person what you can when they need something instead of doing a loan. Then you aren't hurt when they can't or won't pay it back.

### **V. 19 = Why would God consider quarreling a sin that invites destruction? (Cf. Prov. 13:10; II Tim. 2:22-26; Tit. 3:9-11)**

Because pride (wealthy people build high gates as a matter of pride) and the desire to always be right are usually behind a quarrel, and this is sin! Quarreling inevitably leads to trouble. And God literally hates a person who stirs up dissension among others (Prov. 6:16-19).

**Prov. 13:10** = "Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice."

**II Tim. 2:22-26** = "Flee the evil desires of youth (Pride, the desire to always be right), and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading

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<sup>230</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 126-127.

them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will."

**Tit. 3:9-11** = "But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned."

**V. 20 = What is a deceitful tongue evidence of? (Mt. 12:33-37; 15:16-20; Mk. 7:20-23)**

A perverse (twisted or distorted) heart.

**Mt. 12:33-37** = "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

**Mt. 15:16-20** = "What comes out of our mouth's comes from our hearts. "For out of the heart, evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man unclean..."

**Mk. 7:20-23** = "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'."

**Who are we accountable to for our words?**

God. He's the ultimate Judge.

**V. 21 and 25 = Why does a foolish (dull, thick headed, and lacking spiritual perception and sensitivity) child bring grief to their parents?**

Because they create problems and bring sorrow/disappointment. No one wants to see their child do evil and suffer for it. "One of the greatest strengths in a parent's life is to have children that respond to them and their authority... Nothing can rip the heart out of a parent more than a child that does not respect their authority and position... There is more pain in the body of Christ over foolish children who have failed to respect their parents than perhaps any other matter."<sup>231</sup>

**V. 22 = Why is it so important to have a good attitude about things even when in the midst of a tough situation?**

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<sup>231</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.* p. 31p

Because the attitude of the heart affects us physically as well as spiritually. It's a choice! A cheerful (happy) heart is good medicine! A crushed spirit (depressed or saddened) dries up the bones.

**What do the following verses say about this topic? (Eph. 5:19-20; Phil. 4:4-9; I Thes. 5:16-18)**

**Eph. 5:19-20** = "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**Phil. 4:4-9** = "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

**I Thes. 5:16-18** = "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

**V. 24 = Why is it so important to "keep wisdom in view"?**

We need to keep our eyes focused on what's important and deal with reality, not fantasy. (Cf. Phil. 3:7-4:1) God's Word helps us keep our feet on the ground and make wise decisions. Fools just don't get this. And we don't want to be fools.

**V. 27-28 = Compare Prov. 10:19; 29:20; Eccl. 9:17. What happens when people use a plethora of words without thinking before they speak?**

They may hurt others by talking too much, they may make themselves out to be fools, or they may simply wear their listeners out (energy vampires)! "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise." (Prov. 10:19) Any fool can wax eloquent about something but that is not the way of wisdom.

**What qualities does a person of knowledge and understanding possess?**

They use words with restraint and are even-tempered ("cool of spirit"; keeps their "cool"<sup>232</sup>). They think before they speak and don't gab. They make sure God's Word is the controlling factor in what they say. "Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him." (Prov. 29:20)

**Why are they listened to more than a shouting fool?**

They *should* be listened to because they possess wisdom. "The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools." (Eccl. 9:17)

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<sup>232</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.* p. 944.

## How might a fool (arrogant, hardened) be thought wise?

By keeping his mouth shut. But that doesn't usually happen because fools like to speak even when they have nothing to say.

### Homework for Proverbs Chapter 18

Pray for God's guidance then read over the chapter to get it in mind.

V. 1 = How is an unfriendly man described here?

Why would someone who is selfish defy all sound judgment?

V. 2, 13 = How do these 2 verses compliment each other?

What is the difference between hearing and listening?

Why is it so important to listen? (Cf. Prov. 29:20)

V. 3 = Wickedness = rāshâ', raw-shaw'; from H7561; morally wrong; concretely, an (actively) bad person:— condemned, guilty, ungodly, wicked (man), that did wrong.<sup>233</sup>

Contempt = disrespect, shame

Shame = shameful deed

Disgrace = insulting language, rebuke

How do wickedness and shameful deeds bring contempt and disgrace?

V. 4 = What is the difference between deep waters and a bubbling brook?

How are the words of a person's mouth like deep waters?

How is wisdom like a bubbling brook?

V. 5 = What does it tell you about a person who is partial to the wicked yet deprives the innocent of justice?

How does the LORD feel about this (Prov. 17:15)?

V. 6-7 = What are the consequences of a fool's (dullard, arrogant) speech?

How might his speech be a snare to his soul?

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<sup>233</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H7563&t=NIV>

V. 8 = Why is gossip so delectable?

What is gossip a sign of? (Cf. II Cor. 12:20 and Gal. 5:16-26)

What should we do when tempted to listen to gossip?

V. 9 = Read Prov. 6:6-11; 19:15; 20:4; 21:25; Eccl. 10:18; II Thes. 3:6-15. Why is one who is slack (lazy) in his work a brother to one who destroys?

What might a lazy person become?

What models/examples are we given in these verses to follow?

What should be done to someone who can work but won't work?

V. 10 = What does God's name represent? (Cf Ex. 34:5-7)

How does God describe Himself?

Read Ps. 9:9-10; 37:39-40; 121; John 17:11-12, 15. What is it about God's name that keeps the righteous safe?

What does He keep us safe from or deliver us from?

How should we treat His name? (Dt. 28:58-59; Job 28:28; Ps. 103:1; Is. 57:15; Phil. 2:9-10)

How should we *not* treat His name? (Cf. Ex. 20:7; Lev. 24:10-16; Ps. 139:20; Zech. 5:1-4)

V. 11 = What is the problem with the wealth in this verse?

Can wealth save you or give you true life? (Cf. I Tim. 6:17-19)

V. 12 = Compare Prov. 11:2; 16:18. What leads to a person's downfall?

Read II Chron. 26. How did King Uzziah start out?

What led to his downfall?

What did he do in his pride?

What was his punishment? How was it appropriate to his sin?

How might David and Solomon have understood that humility comes before honor?

V. 14 = How important is the spirit of a person in relation to the body?

V. 15 = What makes a discerning/wise person desire knowledge?

V. 16 = What is it about a gift that helps a person gain access to people of higher station?

V. 17 = Why is it so hard to discern right from wrong in a case like this?

Read Luke 22:66-23:25 and John 18:28-19:16. Was Pilate in a good position to understand Jesus' case? Why or why not?

Why did he cave to the wishes of the Jews?

If he was an honorable man, what should he have done instead?

V. 18-19 = Remember, the Jews believed God was behind the casting of lots and would answer them through them (16:33). Why would casting the lot settle a dispute?

Why is an offended person so unyielding and a dispute seemingly impossible to end? Think about what's at stake.

V. 20-21 = What kind of words will bring about satisfaction for a person's hunger?

Why are our words so powerful?

Read Ja. 3:1-12 then Gal. 5:16-26; Col. 3:1-17. What is the only way to tame the tongue? Be specific.

V. 22 = Why is this so? (Cf. Gen. 2:18-24; Ps. 128; Prov. 19:14; 31:10-12; Eph. 5:25-33)

V. 23 = What does this verse tell you about many rich people?

V. 24 = Are all companions true friends?

What will a true friend do? (Cf. Prov. 27:10)

Who is our truest friend? (Cf. John 15:13; I John 3:16)

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 18

**Pray for God's guidance then read over the chapter to get it in mind.**

### **V. 1 = How is an unfriendly man described here?**

As one who pursues selfish ends and defies (mocks) all sound judgment. He is one who despises others and lives only for himself.

### **Why would someone who is selfish defy all sound judgment?**

Because he lives for himself and refuses to listen to the wisdom of others. Self is his first priority. He doesn't think anyone else is good enough to advise him, so avoids friendly relations. Self-centeredness is contrary to sound judgment. And God doesn't want any "Lone Ranger" Christians. Fellowship and accountability are very important.

### **V. 2, 13 = How do these 2 verses compliment each other?**

Someone who answers before listening may think they know what someone is going to say, so they try to save time by answering before the person is finished. Or, more than likely, they are thinking up their own opinions to air instead of truly listening. They are full of themselves. The fool has double trouble: a "closed mind" and an "open mouth."<sup>234</sup> He's always talking too much with no content. The Indians said of a fools talk: "High thunder, but no rain."<sup>235</sup> We often hurt others by impetuous speech.

### **What is the difference between hearing and listening?**

Hearing: To be aware of or perceive sound.

Listening: To hear something with thoughtful attention and give consideration to.

### **Why is it so important to listen? (Cf. Prov. 29:20)**

First of all, it is part of being polite. Also, without listening we don't truly know what the person is really saying, or we may miss part of it because we are thinking up an answer already. This shows we think more of ourselves and our own opinion than we do of them. "Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him."

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<sup>234</sup> Walwoord, *op. cit.*, p. 944.

<sup>235</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

**V. 3 = Wickedness = rāshâ', raw-shaw'; from H7561; morally wrong; concretely, an (actively) bad person:— condemned, guilty, ungodly, wicked (man), that did wrong.<sup>236</sup>**

**Contempt = disrespect, shame**

**Shame = shameful deed**

**Disgrace = insulting language, rebuke**

**How do wickedness and shameful deeds bring contempt and disgrace?**

Someone who is morally wrong, or is an actively bad person with shameful deeds, will find himself the brunt of disrespect, insulting language, disgrace and rebuke. On the other hand, someone who is like this often shows disrespect and insults others.

**V. 4 = What is the difference between deep waters and a bubbling brook?**

Deep waters (or possibly a cistern) may be stagnant and/or hide things not seen on the surface, while a bubbling brook is fresh, clean and open to view.

**How are the words of a person's mouth like deep waters?**

A person may say something and mean something else, or have a hidden agenda, or just be unwise and unhelpful. Or they may appear to be kind while inside they hate you and wish evil to come to you.

**How is wisdom like a bubbling brook?**

God's wisdom is refreshing and available, helpful and encouraging, to anyone who wishes to look. It is a constant source of truth, discernment, discretion, counsel, sound judgment, understanding, insight and power (Prov. 8:7, 9, 14). "When we listen to and appropriate the words of a godly person, it's like taking a drink of refreshing water."<sup>237</sup>

**V. 5 = What does it tell you about a person who is partial to the wicked yet deprives the innocent of justice?**

They aren't honest and may be taking bribes. They certainly aren't trying to honor God!

**How does the LORD feel about this (Prov. 17:15)?**

He detests (to feel intense and often violent antipathy toward: loathe<sup>238</sup>) these things.

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<sup>236</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H7563&t=NIV>

<sup>237</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>238</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/detest>

## **V. 6-7 = What are the consequences of a fool's (dullard, arrogant) speech?**

"One of the first ways to identify a foolish person is how quickly they get into arguments."<sup>239</sup> This argumentative spirit brings him strife (quarreling, controversy), invites a beating, is his undoing (destruction, ruin) and a snare (trap, injury) to his soul. His thoughtless speech gets him into trouble. He also has the displeasure of God.

### **How might his speech be a snare to his soul?**

What comes out of the mouth is a reflection of what is in the heart or soul (Mt. 15:16-20). A person like this is in danger of physical and spiritual death.

## **V. 8 = Why is gossip so delectable?**

Choice morsels = lit. "things greedily devoured". "Hearing gossip is like eating a delicacy (something not everyone else hears). Therefore, like food being digested, gossiped news is assimilated in one's inmost parts (i.e., is retained and remembered)."<sup>240</sup>

Our old nature/flesh loves to get hold of juicy tidbits of information. Gossip satisfies that fleshly desire to have one up on someone, maybe to feel superior. And the more influential a person is, the more we like to spread rumors. "It's hard to accept the fact that we enjoy hearing about or telling about things that are none of our business."<sup>241</sup>

### **What is gossip a sign of? (Cf. II Cor. 12:20 and Gal. 5:16-26)**

It is a sign that either you are living in the flesh/sinful nature instead of the Spirit or you weren't saved in the first place. Christians are not exempt from sinning, but if gossip is your continual practice then you need to check your heart to see if you are really saved. If you are really in tune with the Spirit, then you will not want to sin!

### **What should we do when tempted to listen to gossip?**

Tell the gossiper you don't want to hear such things and try to say something positive regarding the person gossiped about. Ask the gossiper if they have gone to the person they are talking about and confirmed the information and gotten permission to pass it on. Half truths and lies will destroy a person's reputation quicker than anything. Gossip produces a bitter and divisive harvest.

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<sup>239</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>240</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 944.

<sup>241</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

**V. 9 = Read Prov. 6:6-11; 19:15; 20:4; 21:25; Eccl. 10:18; II Thes. 3:6-15. Why is one who is slack (lazy) in his work a brother to one who destroys?**

He doesn't store up provisions in the summer when he can, so is impoverished and starving in the winter months (Prov. 6:6-11). A shiftless man goes hungry (Prov. 19:15). A sluggard does not plow in season, so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing (Prov. 20:4). The sluggard craves more and more yet refuses to work, so his cravings become the death of him (Prov. 21:25). If a man is lazy/idle the rafters sag and the house leaks (Eccl. 10:18). They become busybodies and cause dissension in the body of Christ (II Thes. 3:6-15).

A poor or unfinished job differs little from a job someone demolishes; they both have no value. The sluggard wastes God-given resources. "Someone might have worked hard to do something for the Lord, or for his family, and a lazy person can come in and destroy in short order what has been done over a long period of time."<sup>242</sup>

**What might a lazy person become?**

A deep sleeper and hungry. Impoverished or dead. A person with a leaky house. They become busybodies.

**What models/examples are we given in these verses to follow?**

The ant has no commander, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. Paul, Silas and Timothy set the example. They were not idle and didn't eat anyone's food without paying for it. They worked night and day, laboring and toiling so they wouldn't be a burden to anyone.

**What should be done to someone who can work but won't work?**

Keep away from them. Don't feed them. They should be taught to settle down and earn the bread they eat. If they don't listen and respond don't associate with them. Yet don't regard them as an enemy but warn them as a brother.

**V. 10 = What does God's name represent? (Cf Ex. 34:5-7)**

Who He is! His revealed character. His name is our strong tower/safety.

**How does God describe Himself?**

"The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children

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<sup>242</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" (consequences - Num. 14:33).

**Read Ps. 9:9-10; 37:39-40; 121; John 17:11-12. What is it about God's name that keeps the righteous safe?**

**Ps. 9:9-10** = He is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know His Name (Him), trust Him, for He has never forsaken those who seek Him.

**Ps. 37:39-40** = "The salvation (deliverance) of the righteous comes from the LORD; He is their stronghold in times of trouble. The LORD helps and delivers them; He delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in Him."

**Ps. 121** = "I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—He who watches over you will not slumber; He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."

**John 17:11-12, 15** = We are protected by the power of God's name (Father and Son) so we may have unity. Jesus protected His disciples by that name. He didn't pray that the Father would take them out of the world, but that He would protect them from the evil one (see note on Lk. 11:4; also II Thes. 3:1-3; I John 3:8, 5:18-20).

**What does He keep us safe from or deliver us from?**

Oppression, trouble, the wicked, you foot from slipping, the sun and moon (nature, the elements), all harm, your coming and going, the world system, the evil one (Satan).

**How should we treat His name? (Dt. 28:58-59; Job 28:28; Ps. 103:1; Is. 57:15; Phil. 2:9-10)**

**Dt. 28:58-59** = We should obey Him and reverence His glorious and awesome name or suffer the consequences.

**Job 28:28** = We should fear (reverence, hold in awe and respect) Him.

**Ps. 103:1** = We should praise His holy name with all our being.

**Is. 57:15** = His name is holy so we should be contrite and lowly in spirit before Him.

**Phil. 2:9-10** = Bow and worship before Him (Jesus).

**How should we *not* treat His name? (Cf. Ex. 20:7; Lev. 24:10-16; Ps. 139:20; Zech. 5:1-4)**

**Ex. 20:7** = We should not misuse the name of the LORD our God.

**Lev. 24:10-16** = We shouldn't blaspheme the Name of the LORD with a curse (curse God).

**Ps. 139:20** = We shouldn't speak of Him with evil intent or misuse His name.

**Zech. 5:1-4** = We should not swear falsely by His name.

### **V. 11 = What is the problem with the wealth in this verse?**

In contrast to verse 10, the rich trust in (think, imagine) their wealth to deliver them or keep them safe. They imagine themselves invincible (unscalable wall); they become arrogant (cf v. 23). Wealth can help in many instances but it shouldn't be a person's sole security (cf. Lk. 12:13-21).

### **Can wealth save you or give you true life? (Cf. I Tim. 6:17-19)**

No. Wealth can not replace the Lord as our base of security, or give us the life that is truly life. Wealth is very uncertain, and definitely temporary. It is God who richly provides for everything we need and enjoy. He is our Protector and our Salvation!

It is also wrong to trust in oneself!

### **V. 12 = Compare Prov. 11:2; 16:18. What leads to a person's downfall?**

Pride! A haughty spirit!

Haughty: having or showing the insulting attitude of people who think that they are better, smarter, or more important than other people; blatantly and disdainfully proud.<sup>243</sup>

### **Read II Chron. 26. How did King Uzziah start out?**

He sought God, feared God and did what was right in God's sight. And God gave him success. He became very powerful.

### **What led to his downfall?**

After he became powerful his pride led to his downfall.

### **What did he do in his pride?**

He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. This was something only the priests descended from Aaron who had been consecrated were allowed to do. (Cf. Nu. 16)

### **What was his punishment? How was it appropriate to his sin?**

God afflicted him with leprosy. He was excluded from the temple and had to live in a house by himself, relieved of responsibilities. How sad for a man who loved God.

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<sup>243</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/haughty>

## **How might David and Solomon have understood that humility comes before honor?**

David was anointed king but was on the run from Saul and considered a traitor for years. He learned a lot of humility and patience. (I Sam. 21-II Sam. 5) Solomon was young when he became king and in humility sought God's wisdom and understanding. God not only gave him what he asked but wealth and honor as well. (I Ki. 3:1-15)

## **V. 14 = How important is the spirit of a person in relation to the body?**

Our spirits sustain us in sickness and trouble, (strong-willed, know the Lord well, humble) but when we have a crushed or afflicted/sad/broken (depressed) spirit we don't handle life well. When a person is sick *and* depressed, medicine doesn't work nearly as well and will hardly sustain them. What goes on inside of us affects our bodies and vice versa.

## **V. 15 = What makes a discerning/wise person desire knowledge?**

They understand that they need God's wisdom and discernment to deal with life, not their own, so they have a teachable spirit and seek to learn more.

## **V. 16 = What is it about a gift that helps a person gain access to people of higher station?**

Gifts break down barriers and show good will. (Cf. II Sam. 17:27-29 and 19:31-38; I Ki. 10:23-25) But they shouldn't be used as bribery.

## **V. 17 = Why is it so hard to discern right from wrong in a case like this?**

First impressions are hard to get past and words can be twisted to benefit the questioner or turn against the defendant. Great discernment is needed in such a case. That is why Solomon wanted "a discerning heart to govern (God's) people and to distinguish between right and wrong." (I Ki. 3:9) A judge must listen to both sides of a case before making a judgment. You can't always believe the first thing you hear about a matter because it may be wrong. "Not that we're questioning and doubting what somebody says, but that we are careful with a desire to protect, to love, to forgive, and to heal."<sup>244</sup>

## **Read Luke 22:66-23:25 and John 18:28-19:16. Was Pilate in a good position to understand Jesus' case? Why or why not?**

Not really. The Jewish leaders lied about Jesus and Jesus refused to answer any but the most pertinent questions (regarding who He was). King Herod was of no use either. If he had really wanted to know the truth he could have found out but Pilate wanted as

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<sup>244</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

little to do with the Jews as possible. The Romans hated the Jews and vice versa. Some sources state Pilate was known for his cruelty and for executing people without a trial.<sup>245</sup>

### **Why did he cave to the wishes of the Jews?**

Because he was under a lot of political pressure. Anyone who claimed to be king was considered a traitor to Caesar and was executed. Pilate believed Jesus to be innocent and that the jealousy of the Jews had brought Him to trial, but Pilate didn't want another rebellion on his hands so he gave into their will.

### **If he was an honorable man, what should he have done instead?**

He should've refused to buckle under the pressure and freed Jesus.

### **V. 18-19 = Remember, the Jews believed God was behind the casting of lots and would answer them through them (16:33). Why would casting the lot settle a dispute?**

Because the matter was settled by God.

### **Why is an offended person so unyielding and a dispute seemingly impossible to end? Think about what's at stake.**

A person's pride, integrity and reputation are at stake. Conflict or litigation can go on for years unless something is done. An offended person can be as unyielding as an iron gate. Sometimes it's harder to forgive a Christian than it is an unbeliever because we expect more from our fellow believers. And contention does not draw spouses together either. It drives them apart. Arguments, dissensions, conflicts, constant nagging, and emotional irritation all put up barriers that are difficult to bring down.

### **V. 20-21 = What kind of words will bring about satisfaction for a person's hunger?**

Words that get a person a job and keep it, or make their life better (cf. Prov. 12:14; 13:2). Words of integrity, grace, encouragement, truth, etc. "Lord, let my words be sweet because I may have to eat them." Our words express who we are and can either make our lives pleasant or miserable (consequences). Don't let your words come back to haunt you.

### **Why are our words so powerful?**

Words come from the heart and can kill or give life, wound or heal, tear down or encourage. Those who love to talk need to be especially careful.

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<sup>245</sup> <http://www.biography.com/people/pontius-pilate-9440686> and <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Pontius-Pilate>

"A judge speaks some words and a guilty prisoner is taken to a cell on death row. A gossip makes a phone call and a reputation is blemished or perhaps ruined. A cynical professor makes a snide remark in a lecture and a student's faith is destroyed. Never underestimate the power of words. For every word in Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*, 125 people died in World War II."<sup>246</sup>

**Read Ja. 3:1-12 then Gal. 5:16-26; Col. 3:1-17. What is the only way to tame the tongue? Be specific.**

No man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison (Ja. 3). But, if we live by the Spirit we won't gratify the desires of the sinful nature. We need to keep in step (cadence) with Him or the old nature comes out (Gal. 5). We need to focus on Christ and things above; put to death/rid ourselves of whatever belongs to our earthly nature and put on the new self (we have a choice), which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. We should be exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit and living with forgiving, peaceful and thankful hearts, praising God with gratitude so that whatever we say or do glorifies our Lord (Col. 3).

**V. 22 = Why is this so? (Cf. Gen. 2:18-24; Ps. 128; Prov. 19:14; 31:10-12; Eph. 5:25-33)**

God made a man and a woman to be two parts of a whole; they compliment each other. When a man finds a wife he becomes more himself, more complete; they become one. "God intended husband and wife to be a spiritual, functional unity, walking in integrity, serving God, and keeping His commandments together. When this harmony is operative, society prospers under God's hand"<sup>247</sup> (Gen. 2). Then God blesses them with children and grandchildren (Ps 128). When a man finds a prudent wife then he knows that she is a blessing from the LORD (Prov. 19:14). A wife of noble character is hard to find, but when a man does she is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life (Prov. 31:10-12). Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church (marriage is a picture of Christ and His Bride, the Church. He laid down His life for us). When he loves his wife (feeds and cares for her) he is loving himself just as Christ loves us (Eph. 5:25-33).

"Blessed is the marriage in which the husband acknowledges God's goodness to him in giving him his wife! When a husband takes her for granted, he grieves both her and the Lord. He should love her and be loyal to her all the days of his life."<sup>248</sup> A man's real

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<sup>246</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>247</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>248</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

reward in life is a good woman. Men may talk about all that they achieve, but the real prize of a man's life, is his wife.

### **V. 23 = What does this verse tell you about many rich people?**

They think their wealth gives them more clout, more privilege, so they become arrogant and harsh. They think they are a law unto themselves. The poor man has no money to offer as a bribe or to pay a debt so pleads for mercy (cf. v. 11).

### **V. 24 = Are all companions true friends?**

No. A person may have many companions but no true friends. And too many "friends" can be an emotional drain on your life and ruin it.

### **What will a true friend (lit. "one who loves"<sup>249</sup>) do? (Cf. Prov. 27:10)**

They are loyal and will stick by you when disaster or trouble (lit. to "be broken in pieces"<sup>250</sup>) comes upon you. When you're in trouble is when you'll find who your friends really are. "True friendship is based on love, because only love will endure the tests that friends experience as they go through life together."<sup>251</sup> We also need friends who will speak the truth in love, not just what we want to hear. True friends are willing to confront you. "It could be a small thing – like a crooked tie or a button that isn't buttoned. Friends will tell you things that no one else will tell you. Friends will offer you a breath mint!"<sup>252</sup> Two or three intimate, close friends is all we need. Jesus chose Peter, James and John to be His inner circle, His close friends.

"Closeness means that you can share whatever you want to share and know that your friend will receive it in the right spirit and do what he can to help you. It means that you aren't hiding from your friend. You have transparency, openness, honesty between you. A lot of people who are married aren't best friends. There is a little counsel or confrontation that happens between spouses sometimes. If it does, things break out in open hostility and war. There's very little closeness in some marriages today."<sup>253</sup> This is a shame!

### **Who is our truest friend? (Cf. John 15:13; I John 3:16)**

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<sup>249</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 945.

<sup>250</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 945.

<sup>251</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 126-127.

<sup>252</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>253</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 82-83.

Jesus. He laid down His life for us because of His great love for us; and we ought to be willing to do the same for our fellow believers.

### Homework for Proverbs Chapter 19

V. 1 = Why is it better to be poor and blameless versus a rich fool who is perverse? Look up "perverse" if you're not sure about the definition.

What does it mean to be blameless? You can look it up in a Bible Dictionary or [blueletterbible.com](http://blueletterbible.com) (cf. Gen. 6:9; 17:1-2; Job 1:1; Ps. 119:1; Eph. 5:25-27; Phil. 2:14-16a; I Thes. 5:23-24; Tit. 1:6-9). Note: There are two aspects to being blameless.

V. 2 = This proverb may be applied in a physical sense as well as a spiritual sense. Give an example of a physical application.

Read Ro. 10:1-4. Why was the "spiritual zeal" of the Jews not good? Or what were they doing wrong? Also compare Mark 7:1-23 and John 5.

What did they need to change?

V. 3 = Why might this be so? (Cf. Ps. 36:1-4)

V. 4, 6-7 = What kind of "friends" usually hang around the wealthy?

Why would someone want the favor of a ruler?

Why would a poor man's relatives and friends desert him?

V. 5, 9 = Read Ex. 20:16; 23:1-9. What does God say about bearing false witness?

Why is it so important to speak the truth?

V. 8 = How does getting wisdom and cherishing knowledge cause your soul to prosper?

V. 10 = Why is it not fitting for a fool to live in luxury?

Why would it be bad to have a slave rule over princes? (Cf. Eccl. 10:5-7, 16-17)

V. 11 = Why does patience come with wisdom?

How is it to a person's glory to overlook an offense? (Cf. Prov. 12:16; Mt. 5:11-12; Lk. 6:22; I Pet. 3:8-16)

V. 12 = What does the roar of a lion do to its prey?

Why would a king's rage be compared to this? (Cf. Prov. 20:2)

How is his favor like the dew on the grass?

How might a person respond to his ruler's anger? (Eccl. 10:4) Why?

Read Joel 3:16. How might this verse fit with the proverb?

V. 13-14 = What do a foolish son and a quarrelsome wife have in common?

What does a constant dripping do? (Cf. Prov. 27:15-16)

How does a prudent wife avoid this? (Cf. Prov. 31:10-12)

V. 15, 24 = Can a person who sleeps all the time make a living?

Describe a lazy person/sluggard.

V. 16 = How might obeying instructions guard your life?

Contrast this verse with 16:17.

V. 17 = What does Mt. 25:31-46 say in regard to this?

V. 18 = Why is discipline so necessary for a child? (Cf. Prov. 22:15; 23:13-14)

What does discipline show? (Cf. Heb. 12:4-11)

V. 19 = Why would a hot-tempered person have to be repeatedly rescued?

Why should you not associate with such a person? (Cf. 16:29 and 22:24-25)

V. 20 = Why is it wise to listen to advice and accept instruction?

What is usually the problem with the young?

V. 21 = Read Ps. 33; Is. 14:24, 27; 43:11-13; 55:6-11. What do these passages tell us about the LORD's purposes?

V. 22 = Compare 20:6. From what I can find, this verse is referring to the heart/desire of a person to do good, whether it is in their ability or not. With this context in mind, why would it be better to be poor than a liar?

V. 23 = Why does the fear of the LORD bring contentment? (Cf. Eccl. 5:18-20)

How can we learn to be content in spite of trouble or hardship? (Cf. Hab. 3:17-19; Phil. 4:10-13, 19)

V. 25 = A mocker is someone hardened in their disposition, while the simple are still open to positive influences. With this in mind, why would flogging a mocker help the simple to learn prudence? (Cf. Prov. 1:1-7)

Why would a discerning person gain knowledge through a rebuke?

V. 26 = Read Ex. 20:12; Dt. 5:16. How does the situation in this proverb break God's command? (Also cf. Prov. 28:24)

Read Mk. 7:1-13. How were the religious leaders encouraging people to rob their parents?

What do Is. 58:6-7 and I Tim. 5:8 say about this?

How should we treat our parents, even if we don't like them or they aren't believers? (Cf. Eph. 6:1-3)

V. 27 = What happens when we refuse to listen or ignore good advice?

Why is reading and studying God's Word, and fellowship in the body of Christ so important? (Cf. II Pet. 1:12-15; 3:1-2)

V. 28 = Why would someone who is corrupt mock at justice?

Explain the second half of this proverb.

V. 29 = Why do you think this proverb follows v. 28?

Why does there seem to be no hope here as in v. 25? (Cf. Prov. 1:8-33)



## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 19

**V. 1 = Why is it better to be poor** (destitute or hungry, not from being lazy) **and blameless** (morally whole) **versus a rich fool** (dull, thick headed) **who is perverse?** **Look up "perverse" if you're not sure about the definition.**

Perverse = Turned away from what is right or good: corrupt.<sup>254</sup> Twisted, devious.

To be poor and blameless, yet content and joyful, is of greater worth than being a rich and perverse fool. Being right with God and man (integrity), and looking forward to a heavenly home are riches of a different sort.

**What does it mean to be blameless? You can look it up in a Bible Dictionary or [blueletterbible.com](http://blueletterbible.com) (cf. Gen. 6:9; 17:1-2; Job 1:1; Ps. 119:1; Eph. 5:25-27; Phil. 2:14-16a; I Thes. 5:23-24; Tit. 1:6-9). Note: There are two aspects to being blameless.**

Blameless = no fault or evil; integrity, innocence, complete, upright (BLB). As believers we have been given Christ's righteousness (positional), but on a practical level we are to choose by the power of the Holy Spirit to live an upright life of integrity and blamelessness.

**Gen. 6:9** = "Noah was a righteous man, blameless (upright in conduct - BLB, Heb.) among the people of his time, and he walked with God."

**Gen. 17:1-2** = God Almighty told Abram to walk before Him and be blameless (upright in conduct - BLB, Heb.).

**Job 1:1** = Job was "blameless (morally and ethically pure, having integrity - BLB, Heb.) and upright; he feared God and shunned evil."

**Ps. 119:1** = "Blessed are they whose ways are blameless (upright - BLB, Heb.), who walk according to the law of the LORD."

**Eph. 5:25-27** = "...Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (morally - blamelessness in character and conduct - BLB, *Vine's*)."

**Phil. 2:14-16a** = "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless (unblameable, faultless - BLB, *Vine's*) and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like the stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life—"

**I Thes. 5:23-24** = "May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless (no cause for censure - BLB, *Vine's*) at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it."

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<sup>254</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perverse>

**Tit. 1:6-9** = "An elder must be blameless (see below), the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless— not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (BLB)

106 Adjective Strong's Number: g410 Greek: anenkletos

Blame, Blameless:

signifies "that which cannot be called to account" (from a, negative, n, euphonic, and enkaleo, "to call in"), i.e., with nothing laid to one's charge (as the result of public investigation), in 1Cr 1:8, RV, "unreproveable," AV, "blameless;" in Col 1:22, AV and RV, "unreproveable;" in 1Ti 3:10; Tts 1:6, 7, AV and RV, "blameless." It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person. This is to be the case with elders.<sup>255</sup>

**V. 2 = This proverb may be applied in a physical sense as well as a spiritual sense. Give an example of a physical application.**

Being excited and full of enthusiasm to climb a mountain, but in such a hurry that you miss the right path and fall off a cliff. Eager to complete an exam in school the teacher had said to study hard for, but don't read the instructions which say, "Sign your name and turn in the test."

It's as dangerous to run ahead of the Lord as it is to lag behind. Psalm 32:9 tells us to not be like the horse or the mule. The horse rushes ahead and the mule won't budge, and both attitudes are wrong. "Even the great apostle Paul didn't always know exactly the way God was guiding, and he had to pause in his work and wait for divine direction (Acts 16:6-10). Our times are in His hands (Ps. 31:15), and the Father is always on schedule (John 11:6-10)."<sup>256</sup>

**Read Ro. 10:1-4. Why was the "spiritual zeal" of the Jews not good? Or what were they doing wrong? Also compare Mark 7:1-23 and John 5.**

Their zeal (inner drive or vitality<sup>257</sup>) is not based on knowledge (exact or full knowledge, discernment, recognition - BLB, *Vine's*). They did not know (ignorant of - BLB, *Vine's*)

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<sup>255</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G410&t=NIV>

<sup>256</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>257</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 945.

the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, not submitting to God's righteousness

### **What did they need to change?**

They needed to quit trusting in their own ability to fulfill the law and rely on Christ's fulfillment of the law for us (Ro. 8:1-4).

### **V. 3 = Why might this be so? (Cf. Ps. 36:1-4)**

The sinful nature wants to blame anyone or anything but itself. It may bring problems on itself but is ready to blame the results or consequences on the will of the Lord.

**Ps. 36:1-4** = "And oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes. For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin. The words of his mouth are wicked and deceitful; he has ceased to be wise and to do good. Even on his bed he plots evil; he commits himself to a sinful course and does not reject what is wrong."

Compare Ex. 5–15 where Pharaoh saw his country ruined by God's plagues yet refused to give in to the LORD. He raged against God and Moses and even pursued the Jews to take them back, only to lose his best soldiers the Red Sea. "God's discipline helps a wise person obey the Word, but punishment only makes a foolish person more wicked. The same sun that melts the ice hardens the clay."<sup>258</sup>

*Everybody Else But Me* by Don Francisco<sup>259</sup>

Now way back there, in Jesus' time, the Pharisees walked so proud  
They thought that they had the way to God; they prayed their prayers out loud  
But Jesus said they had hell to pay for the pretense and the games they'd play  
I'm glad that's not like us today; we wouldn't act like that

Everybody else but me  
Everybody else but me  
He was talking to the hypocrite and pharisee  
Everybody else but me

I went to church one day last month; the preacher he preached real good  
He talked about 'true commitment'; 'New Testament brotherhood'  
He talked about watching the things we say: the gossip that can wound and slay  
I sure wish Joe had been there that day, 'cause he really needed to hear it

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<sup>258</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>259</sup> [http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Don\\_Francisco:Holiness\\_\(1984\)](http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Don_Francisco:Holiness_(1984))

Everybody else but me  
Everybody else but me  
He was talking to the hypocrite and pharisee  
Everybody else but me

Jesus made disciples; he told them what they had to do  
Turn their backs on everything, except what he'd called them to  
He said, "Take up your cross; follow me; deny yourself and you'll be free"  
Ah, but he meant those guys back in Galilee; that was just for them back then

Everybody else but me  
Everybody else but me  
He was talking to those people back in Galilee  
Everybody else but me

Everybody else but me  
Everybody else but me  
He was talking to the hypocrite and pharisee  
Everybody else but me

#### **V. 4, 6-7 = What kind of "friends" usually hang around the wealthy?**

Those who want to get into their pockets, or gain position or power by their association.  
"Wealth is a wonderful servant for humble people but a terrible master for the proud."<sup>260</sup>

#### **Why would someone want the favor of a ruler?**

"Curry favor" = (lit., "stroke the face") refers to blatantly insincere flattery. Flattering a ruler is often done to take advantage of other people, sometimes to pervert justice."<sup>261</sup>

Power, prestige, position, wealth, etc. Very seldom would it be for pure friendship.

#### **Why would a poor man's relatives and friends desert him?**

Because he has nothing to offer them but his friendship/himself and he may need something (food, money, help) from them. They may want to avoid the embarrassment of associating with poor people.

#### **V. 5, 9 = Read Ex. 20:16; 23:1-9. What does God say about bearing false witness?**

Repeating a proverb shows the seriousness of the subject.

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<sup>260</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>261</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 946.

**Ex. 20:16** = "You shall not to give false testimony against your neighbor."

**Ex. 23:1-9** = "Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness. Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, and do not show favoritism to a poor man in his lawsuit. If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it. Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits. Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous. Do not oppress an alien; you yourselves know how it feels to be aliens, because you were aliens in Egypt."

### **Why is it so important to speak the truth?**

Because God says we should! If we love God and love our neighbor we will speak the truth in love. We shouldn't let peer pressure drive us to do something wrong. Believers should avoid even the appearance of evil (be blameless - v. 1). "He that lieth fryeth!" (Harold Weaver)

### **V. 8 = How does getting wisdom and cherishing knowledge cause your soul to prosper?**

By gaining Godly wisdom and knowledge, and putting it into practice, you strengthen your character and learn to fear God more and more. As you trust Him your soul is content and at peace, things the world can't give you. This is not vanity but a sincere concern for one's eternal destiny.

### **V. 10 = Why is it not fitting for a fool to live in luxury?**

Because fools hate knowledge and don't respond to rebuke. Their whole character is centered on self; they are wasteful and wouldn't use their wealth to help others unless it benefitted themselves. Luxury is inappropriate and lost on them. (Cf. I Tim. 6:17-19)

### **Why would it be bad to have a slave rule over princes? (Cf. Eccl. 10:5-7, 16-17)**

They most likely haven't been raised to be leaders or know how to manage wealth and run a country. They may abuse their sudden ascension to power and cause mayhem. Unless it is an unusual situation, a slave is probably unqualified to lead so it disrupts the order of things. Not that princes are perfect!

**Eccl. 10:5-7, 16-17** = "There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler: Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones. I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves." "Woe to you, O land whose king was a servant and whose princes feast in the morning. Blessed

are you, O land whose king is of noble birth and whose princes eat at a proper time—for strength and not for drunkenness." (Cf. Amos 6:1-7)

### **V. 11 = Why does patience come with wisdom?**

Because wisdom understands you must be patient and wait on the LORD, to listen for His voice (cadence). Patience is also part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-26).

Wisdom tells us not to be easily upset by people who offend us, knowing that to harbor resentment or attempt revenge only leads to more trouble. It's more important to have your heart right with God than to get revenge for some slight. And to keep bringing up and repeating a transgression against you will just stir up your anger, and we've learned what anger can lead to!

### **How is it to a person's glory (honorable) to overlook an offense? (Cf. Prov. 12:16; Mt. 5:11-12; Lk. 6:22; I Pet. 3:8-12)**

**Prov. 12:16** = To get riled up over an offense (show annoyance at once) and to seek vengeance shows a person is not prudent (showing careful good judgment<sup>262</sup>).

**Mt. 5:11-12** = We are blessed when people insult us, persecute us and falsely say all kinds of evil against us because of Christ. We should rejoice and be glad, because great is our reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before us.

**Lk. 6:22** = "Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man."

**I Pet. 3:8-16** = "Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, 'Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.' Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."

### **V. 12 = What does the roar of a lion do to its prey?**

Frightens its prey so that they run into the jaws and claws of the lioness. Or, the roar can mean that he is angry.

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<sup>262</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prudent>

### **Why would a king's rage be compared to this? (Cf. Prov. 20:2)**

Because he could frighten you into insensibility or fleeing into more trouble, or his anger may mean your death.

### **How is his favor like the dew on the grass?**

It is a blessing, refreshing and life giving.

### **How might a person respond to his ruler's anger? (Eccl. 10:4) Why?**

Stay calm instead of leaving your post. Calmness can lay great errors to rest. (Cf. Eccl. 8:2-6) Usually when someone flees it is an indication of guilt. And a predator loves the chase!

### **Read Joel 3:16. How might this verse fit with the proverb?**

Those who have rejected God's salvation or angered Him in their wickedness will fear Him when He appears in all His mighty power. But those who love and obey Him will find He is their refuge and stronghold. Judgment versus blessing.

### **V. 13-14 = What do a foolish son and a quarrelsome wife have in common?**

They are ruin, catastrophe and irritation to the father or husband. He may be engulfed in an agony that sinks him into depression and despair.

### **What does a constant dripping do? (Cf. Prov. 27:15-16)**

It is a constant and relentless irritation and is also a sign of trouble (leaky roof, sand in the faucet, etc.) A wife who constantly argues, nags and refuses to cooperate (rebellious) will cause trouble for her husband, and possibly cause him to look for attention elsewhere. He can't trust or rely on her and after awhile doesn't want to come home because his home is full of unrest, chaos, etc. when all he wants is peace and love. She is an emotional irritation. (It can be the husband rather than the wife but Solomon was a man with a household full of bickering and contentious women! Eccl. 7:28; I Ki. 11:1-13)

### **How does a prudent wife avoid this? (Cf. Prov. 31:10-12)**

She seeks the Lord and wants to please Him as well as her husband. She brings her husband good, not harm so that he has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She has a submissive spirit and respects him (cf. Eph. 5:21-33; Tit. 2:3-5; I Pet. 3:1-7) A prudent wife knows it is better to have God's riches than earthly riches. She is a discerning woman. "The ingredient that makes [a good wife] what God wants her to be

is truly the Lord's working in her life. That in turn, becomes a great blessing to the husband."<sup>263</sup>

"A young man may receive part or all of his parents' estate by virtue of his having been born into the family. A prudent wife, however, is from the LORD. This is a strong statement in a culture in which fathers often selected wives for their sons. Probably then 19:14b refers to God's providence in guiding fathers who selected their future daughters-in-law."<sup>264</sup>

"Blessed is that marriage in which the husband acknowledges God's goodness to him in giving him his wife! When a husband takes her for granted, he grieves both her and the Lord. He should love her and be loyal to her all the days of his life."<sup>265</sup>

### **V. 15, 24 = Can a person who sleeps all the time make a living?**

No! (Cf. Prov. 20:4, 13) They sleep and are oblivious to the precious time they are wasting.

V. 15 = "The word for "sleep" (תַּרְדֵּמָה, *tardemah*) is that used for the supernatural sleep of Adam when Eve was formed (Genesis 2:21), and implies profound insensibility."<sup>266</sup> A deep sleep—a state of utter indifference.<sup>267</sup>

V 24 = "Indolence, when indulged, so grows upon people, that they have no heart to do the most needful things for themselves."<sup>268</sup>

"He finds it too great an exertion to feed himself, an hyperbolical way of denoting the gross laziness which recoils from the slightest labour, and will not take the least trouble to win its livelihood. An Arabic proverb says, 'He dies of hunger under the date tree.' "<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>264</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 946.

<sup>265</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>266</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/19-15.htm>, Pulpit Commentary.

<sup>267</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/19-15.htm>, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

<sup>268</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/19-24.htm>, Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

<sup>269</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/19-24.htm>, Pulpit Commentary

**Describe a lazy** (not liking to work hard or to be active<sup>270</sup>) **person/sluggard** (a habitually lazy person<sup>271</sup>).

Always sleeping, shiftless (1 lacking in resourcefulness : inefficient 2: lacking in ambition or incentive : lazy <shiftless freeloaders><sup>272</sup>), no inclination to exert themselves or do anything worthwhile. (Cf. II Thes. 3:6-15) New Testament believers "were happy to care for those who needed help and couldn't care for themselves, but they had no time for freeloaders who lived by the sacrifices of others (Acts 2:44-47; I Tim. 5:3-16)."<sup>273</sup>

#### **V. 16 = How might obeying instructions guard your life?**

Obeying might keep you from taking the wrong path, whether in a physical sense or a spiritual sense (self-preserving). This could keep you from falling off a cliff or getting involved with the wrong people, etc. (self-destructive). Someone who is contemptuous of obeying instructions or just does what he wants will eventually pay the price: physical and/or spiritual death.

#### **Contrast this verse with 16:17.**

Those who are upright try to avoid evil; by doing this they guard their lives. "To deliberately act apart from the instruction of the Scriptures is to rebel against the revealed will of God."<sup>274</sup> God reserves the right to recall you to the factory if you disobey and refuse to repent (cf. I Cor. 5; I John 5:16-17).

#### **V. 17 = What does Mt. 25:31-46 say in regard to this?**

This is a concern that goes beyond pity to actually giving a helping hand and meeting people's needs where they are at. When we reach out to others in need, or those who are in prison and feel hopeless, we are actually doing it for God. "...Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." God will reward those who love Him and love others as well (Mt. 22:34-40). "When we assist the poor, we are investing with the Lord, and He will see to it that we get our dividends at the right time."<sup>275</sup>

#### **V. 18 = Why is discipline so necessary for a child? (Cf. Prov. 22:15; 23:13-14)**

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<sup>270</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lazy>

<sup>271</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sluggard>

<sup>272</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/shiftless>

<sup>273</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>274</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>275</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

Because folly is bound up in the heart of a child. At least if he is disciplined there is the hope that folly will be driven out of him and he will become wise over time. (This is a strong warning against parental passivity.) Corporal punishment will not harm him if done correctly and will actually save his soul from death.

"Chasten thy son while there is hope — Before custom in sin, and thy indulgence have made him hard-hearted and incorrigible; and let not thy soul spare for his crying — Forbear not to give him due and necessary correction, through a foolish and destructive pity, excited by his tears and cries; for it is better he should cry under thy rod, than under the sword of the magistrate, or, which is more to be feared, that of divine vengeance."<sup>276</sup>

### **What does discipline show? (Cf. Heb. 12:4-11)**

It shows that the child is loved and accepted as one of the family; delighted in (Prov. 3:11-12). Those who are not disciplined are illegitimate children and not true sons. "Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace (versus folly) for those who have been trained by it."

### **V. 19 = Why would a hot-tempered person have to be repeatedly rescued?**

Anger produces strife (Prov. 30:32-33). Someone who is easily angered is always getting himself in tough situations and needing rescuing. The problem is that once you have rescued them you will probably have to do it again and again because they don't learn. It may be better to just back off and let them pay the penalty.

### **Why should you not associate with such a person? (Cf. 16:29 and 22:24-25)**

Because a violent person entices his neighbor and leads them down a path that is not good. If you hang around people who are hot tempered and easily angered, you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared. Then you become the fool (cf. Eccl. 7:9).

### **V. 20 = Why is it wise to listen to advice and accept instruction?**

Because it shows a humble, tender and receptive spirit. The wise long to be wiser still and listen to those they know to be wise; they don't trust in themselves. Even old people need to be receptive to listening and learning more of God's wisdom. No one can ever say they've arrived. And a lot of older people have forsaken the way of the Lord and have lost His wisdom.

### **What is usually the problem with the young?**

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<sup>276</sup> <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/proverbs/19-18.htm>; Benson Commentary.

They think they know everything and aren't willing to listen to those who have some experience in life. A friend of ours had a sign on their doorway that said: "Teenagers leave home now while you still know it all!" We certainly won't be wise in God's eyes if we are "wise in our own eyes."

**V. 21 = Read Ps. 33; Is.14:24, 27; 43:11-13; 55:6-11. What do these passages tell us about the LORD's purposes?**

**Ps. 33** = He is faithful in all He does; the earth is full of His unfailing love. Yahweh spoke the heavens and the earth into existence so He has no trouble foiling the plans of the nations or thwarting the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations. He knows our hearts and considers everything we do. A strong person or a strong military is not enough to save, but God saves those who fear Him and trust in His unfailing love. We hope in Him, for He is our help and our shield.

**Is.14:24, 27** = "The LORD Almighty has sworn, 'Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.' " "For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart Him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?"

**Is. 43:11-13** = "I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from Me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—I, and not some foreign god among you. You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God. No one can deliver out of My hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"

**Is. 55:6-11** = "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: it will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.' " (God is sovereign, omnipotent, transcendent; His purpose prevails.)

"A person may and should make plans (cf. 16:1, 9) but God can sovereignly overrule and accomplish His purpose through what one seemingly plans on his own."<sup>277</sup> All our plans should be committed to the Lord; then He will guide us in what we say and do (cf. Ja. 4:13-17).

"The proud mind of sinful man rebels against the very thought of the sovereignty of God and affirms, 'I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.' Charles Spurgeon said, 'No doctrine in the whole Word of God has more excited the hatred of mankind than the truth of the absolute sovereignty of God. The fact that 'the Lord reigneth' is

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<sup>277</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 947.

indisputable, and it is this fact that arouses the utmost opposition of the unrenewed human heart."<sup>278</sup>

**V. 22 = Compare 20:6. From what I can find, this verse is referring to the heart/desire of a person to do good, whether it is in their ability or not. With this context in mind, why would it be better to be poor than a liar?**

It is better to have the desire to do good (unfailing love) and be unable to fulfill it (poor) – to be a faithful person, maintaining your integrity, and yet be poor – than to have the ability to do good (wealth) and decline to do it or make false excuses. Poverty is preferable to lying. To lie to someone is an attack upon their dignity, respect and integrity, yet people do it even to their friends to protect themselves.

**V. 23 = Why does the fear of the LORD bring contentment? (Cf. Eccl. 5:18-20)**

Because those who hold God in awe and reverence understand that all good things come from Him (cf. Ja. 1:17), and even when life seems toilsome we can find joy in the fact that God is in control and loves us.

The second part of this verse doesn't mean that those who fear the Lord never see trouble, but that they have an anchor through all of life's storms. They are grounded on bedrock (Jesus Christ). The fear of God is characterized by strong confidence and trust in Him.

**How can we learn to be content in spite of trouble or hardship? (Cf. Hab. 3:17-19; Phil. 4:10-13, 19)**

**Hab. 3:17-19** = Habakkuk learned that God's ways are eternal (3:6); God would judge evil in His own good time. Meanwhile, he had to keep his focus right. "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to go on the heights."

**Phil. 4:10-13, 19** = Through life's struggles, Paul had learned to be content whatever the circumstances. He knew what it was to be in need, and he knew what it was to have plenty. He had learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. He knew he could do everything through Christ who gave him strength. He understood his God, and understood that "my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." And those riches are beyond imagination.

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<sup>278</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

**V. 25 = A mocker is someone hardened in their disposition, while the simple are still open to positive influences. With this in mind, why would flogging a mocker help the simple to learn prudence? (Cf. Prov. 1:1-7)**

They might see that sin doesn't pay by a living example and reform their ways. " 'The simple' are the untaught, uninitiated, open-minded, who here are warned by the public punishment of another."<sup>279</sup>

**Why would a discerning person gain knowledge through a rebuke?**

A discerning person understands that a rebuke, whether well-intentioned or not, is a means of gaining better understanding, of looking at your life and determining if you need to change in order to please God (doing what is right and just and fair). And even if no change is needed, it helps the discerning person to deal with people who aren't always looking out for their best interests.

**V. 26 = Read Ex. 20:12; Dt. 5:16. How does the situation in this proverb break God's command? (Also cf. Prov. 28:24)**

If we want God's blessing, we must honor our parents; not honoring them breaks God's command. Children who abuse their parents, or refuse to take care of them in their need, bring shame and disgrace. And those who rob their parents and say, "It's not wrong" – they are partners to him who destroys. This is despicable.

**Read Mk. 7:1-13. How were the religious leaders encouraging people to rob their parents?**

Instead of helping their parents they were giving their money "to God", and were doing nothing for their parents. By doing this they were breaking the commandment of God (nullifying His Word) and dishonoring their parents.

Many people who followed Jesus were being "put out of the synagogue" (John 9:20-23), meaning they were considered "dead". No one would buy from them or sell to them, they were estranged from their family, friends and acquaintances. They were left poverty stricken and alone. And people in their old age were being left destitute by children who were either duped by the religious leaders into giving their money to the Sacred Treasury or, perhaps, didn't like their parents. So the only help these poor people had would've been from their children – their Social Security – but now that was gone!

"The word "corban" is a Hebrew word, meaning "that which is brought near," "a gift or offering to God." Hence, figuratively, the place where these offerings were deposited was called the "corbanas," or, "sacred treasury" (see Matthew 27:6, κορβανᾶν). Hence to say of anything, "It is Corban," was to say that it had a prior and more sacred destination. And when it was something that a parent might need, to say, "It is Corban," i.e. it is already appropriated to another purpose, was simply to refuse his request and to deny him assistance, and so to break one of the first of the

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<sup>279</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 947.

Divine commandments. Thus the son, by crying "Corban" to his needy parents, shut their mouths, by opposing to them a scruple of conscience, and suggesting to them a superstitious fear. It was as much as to say, "That which you ask of me is a sacred thing which I have devoted to God. Beware, therefore, lest you, by asking this of me, commit sacrilege by converting it to your own uses." Thus the parents would be silenced and alarmed, choosing rather to perish of hunger than to rob God. To such extremities did these covetous scribes and Pharisees drive their victims, compelling a son to abstain from any kind offices for his father or his mother."<sup>280</sup>

By saying their money was "Corban" they were free from their obligation to help their parents.

### **What do Is. 58:6-7 and I Tim. 5:8 say about this?**

**Is. 58:6-7** = Fasting in and of itself does nothing for you. What God wants is obedience from the heart, and part of that is "not to turn away from your own flesh and blood."

**I Tim. 5:8** = "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

### **How should we treat our parents, even if we don't like them or they aren't believers? (Cf. Eph. 6:1-3)**

We should obey ("with inward reverence and promptness, as well as in the outward act"<sup>281</sup>; those who are still under the care of their parents) them (unless it goes against God's Word) and honor (love, obey, assist them into their old age) them so it will go well with us and that we may enjoy a long life.

### **V. 27 = What happens when we refuse to listen or ignore good advice?**

We stray from God's truth, His words of knowledge. Being wise is not a static state. If you stop listening and learning you go backwards. We can never have enough of God's wisdom and knowledge.

### **Why is reading and studying God's Word, and fellowship in the body of Christ so important? (Cf. II Pet. 1:12-15; 3:1-2)**

We need to read and study God's word so we will remember it. Our little minds often leak and don't retain things unless we repeat them over and over. And "to ignore the Word of God is to deprive ourselves of the guidance we need for making the decisions of life."<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/mark/7-11.htm>; Pulpit Commentary

<sup>281</sup> <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/ephesians/6-1.htm>; Jamieson-Faussett-Brown Bible Commentary

<sup>282</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

**II Pet. 1:12-15** = "So I will always *remind you of these things*, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to *refresh your memory* as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to *remember these things*."

**II Pet. 3:1-2** = "Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as *reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking*. I want you to *recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles*."

**V. 28 = Why would someone who is corrupt mock at justice?**

They have no reverence for the place of justice and the fact that it was instituted by God. (Cf. Dt. 16:18-20) They are worthless and wicked.

**Explain the second half of this proverb.**

People who are truly wicked at heart relish evil like a favorite meal. For them, more is better. They pursue sin with an insatiable appetite.

**V. 29 = Why do you think this proverb follows v. 28?**

To show there are consequences for such things.

**Why does there seem to be no hope here as in v. 25? (Cf. Prov. 1:8-33)**

These are hard-hearted mockers and fools with little hope of changing because they're set in their ways, incorrigible. According to 1:8-33 these people rush into evil but waylay only themselves, forfeiting their lives. They rejected wisdom when she called and didn't give heed when she stretched out her hand, they ignored her advice and would not except her rebuke. They hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, so they will suffer the consequences.

**Homework for Proverbs  
Chapter 20**

**V. 1 = Why would wine be compared to a mocker and beer to a brawler?**

**How is someone led astray by them?**

**Why is this not wise?**

**V. 2 = We pretty much covered this one with 19:12 but why is it dangerous to anger a king?**

**V. 3 = Why is it honorable to avoid strife?**

**Why is it foolish to start a quarrel? (Cf. 17:14)**

**V. 4, 13 = What happens to those who are lazy and sleep all the time?**

**How should a Christian brother who is lazy be dealt with? (Cf. II Thes. 3:6-15)**

**V. 5 = Why would the purposes of a person's heart be compared to deep waters?**

**How might a person of understanding get someone to reveal their true purposes and motives?**

**What truly reveals our thought and attitudes? (Cf. Heb. 4:12-13)**

**V. 6 = How do unfailing love and faithfulness go together? Can you have one without the other? (Cf. Gal. 5:22-23)**

**Why is it so hard to find someone like this?**

**Who is truly faithful and full of unfailing love? (Cf. Ps. 33:4-5, 18, 22)**

**V. 7 = Why are the children of a truly righteous person blessed? (Cf. Gen. 18:18-19; Dt. 6; 11)**

**V. 8, 26 = What kind of king is needed to winnow out the wicked?**

**What does a threshing wheel do?**

**What might the wicked be compared to (cf. Ps. 1:4-6)**

**V. 9 = Is there anyone who is without sin? (Cf. Eccl. 7:20; Ro. 3:23)**

**Read Ps. 18:20-24. How could David say this?**

**Read Ps. 15. How might this psalm apply to this proverb?**

**V. 10, 23 = We've covered this topic pretty thoroughly in 11:1 and 16:11, but just to review read Lev. 19:35-36; Dt. 25:13-16; Ez. 45:9-12. Why does God detest differing weights and measures? (Cf. Ex. 20:15)**

**V. 11 = What do our actions tell others about us? (Cf. Phil. 1:27; Tit. 1:15-16; Ja. 2:14-26)**

**What good are words if they're not backed up with actions?**

**V. 12 = Do a little research on ears and eyes. Why are they so special?**

**Could they have happened by chance?**

**V. 14 = Why would someone do this?**

**V. 15 = Why would someone who spoke with knowledge be compared to a rare jewel? (Cf. 1:7; 8:12)**

**V. 16 = Elsewhere in Scripture (Ex. 22:25-27; Dt. 24:10-13) God tells His people not to hold a person's cloak as a pledge overnight because it may be all they have to sleep in. Garments were hard to come by and expensive. So why would this proverb recommend doing such a thing?**

**V. 17 = Why would food taken by fraud taste sweet at first but end up like gravel in one's mouth?**

**V. 18 = Why would someone waging a war need the advice and guidance of others? (Cf. Prov. 15:22; 24:5-6) Think about what all is entailed in a war.**

**V. 19 = Why would someone who talks a lot be likely to betray a confidence? (Cf. 11:13)**

**Why is keeping a confidence so important?**

**V. 20 = Why is cursing your parents considered by God a crime deserving death (the lamp is metaphorical for life; to go out is death - 13:9)? (Cf Ex. 20:12; 21:17; Lev. 19:3a; 20:9; Dt. 27:16; Prov. 30:17; Mt 15:3-9)**

**How are we to treat our parents instead? (Cf. Eph. 6:1-3)**

**V. 21 = Why might sudden prosperity not prove satisfying? (Cf. Prov. 19:26; Lk. 15:11-32)**

**V. 22 = Does vengeance belong to us or God? Why? (Cf. Lev. 19:18; Dt. 32:34-35; Ps. 9:11-12; 73:18-20; Prov. 24:28-29; Ro. 12:17-21; Heb. 10:26-31)**

**How are we to treat other people according to these verses?**

**V. 24, 27 = Why don't we understand our own ways? (Cf. Prov. 21:2; Jer. 17:9-10)**

**How might we delude ourselves?**

**Who/what do we need to guide us? (Cf. Ps. 119:105; 139:23-24; I Cor. 2:6-16)**

**V. 25 = How important does God consider a vow? (Cf. Lev. 27:28-29; Nu. 30; Dt. 23:21-23; I Sam. 1; Mal. 1:14; 2:13-16; Mt. 5:33-37)**

**Read Judges 11:29-40; 21:25. What did Jephthah do wrong?**

**How did he pay for his rash vow?**

**V. 28 = Who all does a king need to love and be faithful to so his throne is secure? (This may take a little thinking!)**

**V. 29 = A man's strength can be a glorious thing, but what often happens when we depend on our own strength instead of God's? (Cf. Hab. 1:11)**

**What does gray hair imply? (Cf. Ps. 92:12-15; Prov. 16:31)**

**When we learn to rely on God instead of ourselves how might He use us even more in our old age? (Cf. Jer. 9:23-24; Phil. 4:12-13; Col. 1:28-29)**

**V. 30 = What does discipline/corporeal punishment do for us? (Cf. Heb. 12:10-11; I Pet. 4:1-2)**

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 20

### **V. 1 = Why would wine be compared to a mocker and beer to a brawler?**

In this verse they are "personified as people of degraded character... The idea is that wine mocks the one who drinks it and beer makes him aggressive."<sup>283</sup> When they are abused or used in excess the person becomes just like the mocker and the brawler. They lose self control and may do or say things they would never do otherwise.

### **How is someone led astray by them?**

They think they are stronger, more handsome, more beautiful, wiser, more engaging, etc. than others when under the influence. Or some people become angry and mean. Alcohol also creates a thirst for more alcohol while never satisfying that thirst.

"The excessive use of intoxicants excites the drinker to boisterous behavior and aggressive and belligerent attitudes; it confuses the senses so that he is out of control."<sup>284</sup>

### **Why is this not wise?**

It makes you stupid/foolish and leads to trouble that may have lasting consequences.

### **V. 2 = We pretty much covered this one with 19:12 but why is it dangerous to anger a king?**

Because he has power over life and death. If you anger him you may suffer severe punishment or even forfeit your life (Esther 7). Calmness and faithfulness can settle the situation (Eccl. 8:2-6; 10:4).

### **V. 3 = Why is it honorable to avoid strife?**

Because avoiding strife (bitter sometimes violent conflict or dissension<sup>285</sup>), or unnecessary confrontation, honors God and keeps a person from getting into a fight that may end badly. "The honorable person stops short of undignified and unedifying wrangling; this is the person who has the capacity of preserving a working relationship

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<sup>283</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 948.

<sup>284</sup> Gaebelin, Frank E., gen. ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, Zondervan Pub. House, Grand Rapids, MI, © 1991, p. 1039.

<sup>285</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/strife>

with even the most difficult people."<sup>286</sup> Wisdom is learning how to walk with God and stay away from sin; arguing for the sake of arguing is sin.

**Why is it foolish to start a quarrel ("includes the idea of snarling like a dog"<sup>287</sup>)? (Cf. 17:14)**

It's like breaching a dam; you open yourself up to all kinds of disputes and trouble. This is the manner of the fool.

We can avoid arguments by overlooking insults (12:16), dropping issues that are potentially volatile (17:14), and by getting rid of mockers (22:10). There is a time for arguing, such as when Paul and Apollos argued in defense of the Christian faith (Acts 17:1-4, 16-17; 18:27-28).

**V. 4, 13 = What happens to those who are lazy and sleep all the time?**

"In the Middle East the season for plowing and planting is the winter, the rainy season. A sluggard avoids the discomfort and work of plowing a muddy field in the cold..."<sup>288</sup>  
Sluggards don't like discomfort.

They grow poor and have nothing to eat, no harvest. Perhaps they did it at the wrong time or halfheartedly. Either way they got nothing. God blesses the person who works hard no matter what the circumstances.

**How should a Christian brother who is lazy be dealt with? (Cf. II Thes. 3:6-15)**

Keep away from every brother who is idle (lazy) and does not live according to the teaching you received from us (v. 6). "If a man will not work, he shall not eat" (v. 10). They should settle down and earn the bread they eat (v. 12, be diligent). "If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother" (v. 14-15).

**V. 5 = Why would the purposes of a person's heart be compared to deep waters?**

Often we have hidden motives or agendas that others don't realize, or are hard to fathom, just as dangerous things/obstacles may be hidden in deep waters unbeknownst to swimmers or boaters.

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<sup>286</sup> Gaebelein, *ibid.*, p. 1040.

<sup>287</sup> Gaebelein, *op. cit.*, p. 1040.

<sup>288</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 948.

## **How might a person of understanding get someone to reveal their true purposes and motives?**

A person of understanding is often discerning; they are wise and ask the right questions, but also understand when the person may be avoiding the truth or flat out lying. On the other hand, we may not be aware of or understand our own motives. A godly counselor may be able to help us.

## **What truly reveals our thought and attitudes? (Cf. Heb. 4:12-13)**

God's Word by the power of His Spirit. We are accountable to God for our thoughts and attitudes as well as our actions. Nothing in all creation is hidden from His sight!

## **V. 6 = How do unfailing love and faithfulness go together? Can you have one without the other? (Cf. Gal. 5:22-23)**

They are part of the fruit of the Spirit. Someone who has unfailing love will be faithful and the faithful person will be showing unfailing love.

## **Why is it so hard to find someone like this?**

Because people still fight the old sin nature even when they belong to God. It takes a true humility, a giving up of one's self, to truly love and be faithful. Selfishness can have no part in it, making it difficult to find a person you can depend on. It is important to keep one's word/commitments.

## **Who is truly faithful and full of unfailing love? (Cf. Ps. 33:4-5, 18, 22)**

The LORD. He is faithful in all He does. The earth is full of His unfailing love. His eyes are on those who fear Him and hope in His unfailing love. His unfailing love rests upon those who put their hope in Him. What a wonderful God we serve! He is dependable.

## **V. 7 = Why are the children of a truly righteous person blessed? (Cf. Gen. 18:18-19; Dt. 6; 11)**

Because they benefit from the lifestyle, integrity (example) and blessings of their parents. They are also encouraged to be the same kind of people: to learn to love God themselves and live a righteous life, living out the claims of their faith. Someone has said: "It's not a matter of *if* you will teach but *what* you will teach." Children are always watching! "When parents walk with God, they give their children a heritage that will enrich them throughout their lives. Godliness puts beauty within the home and protection around the home."<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

**Gen. 18:18-19** = "Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him."

**Dt. 6** = The LORD gave His commands, decrees and laws to be taught and observed in the land, so that Israel's children after them might fear the LORD their God as long as they lived by keeping His decrees and commands, and that they would enjoy long life. The people were to love their God with all their heart, soul and strength, and to keep God's Commandments in their hearts. They were to impress them on their children by talking about them in every aspect of life. They were to be careful not to forget the LORD or follow other gods. When their children asked them questions about God's laws they were to tell them all that God had done for them, passing on the history.

**Dt. 11** = The people were to remember that it wasn't their children who saw all the mighty wonders and miracles God did for Israel in Egypt and the desert, but it was them. So they were to tell their children. Obedience would bring blessings. They were to fix God's laws in their hearts and minds and teach them to their children, as well as write them so that they would prosper and live long in the land. If they loved God, walked in His ways and held fast to Him, He would drive out their enemies and make them fear Israel. They could choose to be blessed or cursed.

#### **V. 8, 26 = What kind of king is needed to winnow out the wicked?**

A righteous one who follows God's laws himself and is full of God's wisdom so he is able to discern the truth. "Kings often served as chief judges... By carefully examining (with his eyes) a case, a just king could detect (winnow or sift out; cf. Proverbs 20:26) evil motives and actions. He could not easily be fooled."<sup>290</sup> "A just government roots out the evils of society. Unfortunately, no government has ever lived up to this ideal."<sup>291</sup> Only when Christ reigns will that happen.

#### **What does a threshing wheel do?**

It separates the grain from the chaff so it can be winnowed and only the clean grain remains.

#### **What might the wicked be compared to (cf. Ps. 1:4-6)**

Chaff that the wind blows away. They have no substance and won't be able to stand in the judgment or assembly of the righteous. They will perish. A righteous King is able to discern who is right and who is wrong (cf. I Ki. 3:16-28; Ps. 72:1-4)

#### **V. 9 = Is there anyone who is without sin? (Cf. Eccl. 7:20; Ro. 3:23)**

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<sup>290</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.* p. 948.

<sup>291</sup> Gaebelain, *op. cit.*, p. 1042.

Not one! To claim such a thing would "be to say that moral perfection was attained and that one was therefore acceptable to God."<sup>292</sup>

**Eccl. 7:20** = "There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins."

**Ro. 3:23** = "[F]or all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,..."

### **Read Ps. 18:20-24. How could David say this?**

David hadn't committed any willful sins; his heart was right before God. No one can be pure/clean except when forgiven by God by trusting in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Everyone has hidden faults we don't even realize we've done (cf. Ps. 19:12-13). The human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). Looking at this proverb should cause us to be more humble and understanding of the failures of others.

### **Read Ps. 15. How might this psalm apply to this proverb?**

This is someone who does their best to serve God and obey Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength (Mt. 22:34-40). It doesn't mean they're perfect but that they keep "short accounts" with God.

### **V. 10, 23 = We've covered this topic pretty thoroughly in 11:1 and 16:11, but just to review read Lev. 19:35-36; Dt. 25:13-16; Ez. 45:9-12. Why does God detest differing weights and measures? (Cf. Ex. 20:15)**

**Lev. 19:35-36** = "Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity. Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah and an honest hin. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt."

**Dt. 25:13-16** = "Do not have two different weights in your bag—one heavy, one light. Do not have two differing measures in your house—one large, one small. You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. For the LORD your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly."

**Ez. 45:9-12** = "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You have gone far enough, O princes of Israel! Give up your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Stop dispossessing my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. You are to use accurate scales, an accurate ephah and an accurate bath. The ephah and the bath are to be the same size, the bath containing a tenth of a homer, and the ephah a tenth of a homer; the homer is to be the standard measure for both. The shekel is to consist of twenty gerahs. Twenty shekels plus twenty-five shekels plus fifteen shekels equal one mina."

God detests differing weights and measures because this is a way of stealing, breaking one of the Ten Commandments (and he reveals what is in the person's heart). By being

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<sup>292</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1042.

dishonest and cheating people in business dealings, they were dispossessing them, causing them to lose what little they owned. This was especially hard on the poor people. Instead of taking care of the poor, they were robbing them. God hates any kind of dishonesty.

**V. 11 = What do our actions tell others about us? (Cf. Phil. 1:27; Tit. 1:15-16; Ja. 2:14-26)**

What is in our hearts. What a person says does not always indicate what he truly is; actions and conduct reveal a lot about a person, even a child.

**Phil. 1:27** = "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel." (Our conduct should honor Christ so others know what we stand for.)

**Tit. 1:15-16** = "To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good." (Our actions speak the truth about what is in our hearts.)

**Ja. 2:14-26** = Our faith should be backed up by our actions. It's not enough to say we believe in God—even the demons believe and shudder; our faith should be acted upon (Abraham and Rahab). Faith without deeds is dead!

**What good are words if they're not backed up with actions?**

They are worthless! This is true even in a child: we see the heart by what they do.

**V. 12 = Do a little research on ears and eyes. Why are they so special?**

When dealing with people it is important to use both these senses. We need to listen with our ears but also observe with our eyes what people do. God gave us our senses for a reason.

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/04/health/unique-body-parts/> is one site to check out. Our eyes and ears, plus other parts of our body, are so unique to us personally that they can identify us from any other person on earth.

<http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/eye-disorders/biology-of-the-eyes/structure-and-function-of-the-eyes> Our eyes are so amazing they couldn't have happened by chance. Only our magnificent Creator could have arranged such things as eyesight and hearing for us. Here's another one. [http://www.ivyroses.com/HumanBody/Eye/Anatomy\\_Eye.php](http://www.ivyroses.com/HumanBody/Eye/Anatomy_Eye.php)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3Oy4lodZ4>

<http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/ear,-nose,-and-throat-disorders/biology-of-the-ears,-nose,-and-throat/ears>

<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/ear,-nose,-and-throat-disorders/biology-of-the-ears,-nose,-and-throat/introduction-to-biology-of-the-ears,-nose,-and-throat>

### **Could they have happened by chance?**

Definitely not. There are too many things in each organ that have to be perfect for it to function properly. Once again our Creator does all things well!

### **V. 14 = Why would someone do this?**

Because they want to get the price down, yet really want the item. And when they get what they want for a good price, then they go and brag about the good deal they got. A person who sells products needs to be on guard against dishonest bargain hunters. "Shrewdness is one thing, but deceitful misrepresentation in the deal in order to buy undervalue becomes unethical."<sup>293</sup>

### **V. 15 = Why would someone who spoke with knowledge be compared to a rare jewel? (Cf. 1:7; 8:12)**

Because they fear God and possess His wisdom. This makes their knowledge incomparable to worldly knowledge. To find someone like this is difficult, especially in politics or government where people lie and wheedle their way into the graces of whoever is in power. Those who speak the truth (wise and appropriate words that fit the occasion) with integrity are few and far between (cf. Dan. 2 and 4).

### **V. 16 = Elsewhere in Scripture (Ex. 22:25-27; Dt. 24:10-13) God tells His people not to hold a person's cloak as a pledge overnight because it may be all they have to sleep in. Garments were hard to come by and expensive. So why would this proverb recommend doing such a thing?**

"A debtors outer garment could be taken by a creditor as collateral to guarantee that the debtor would pay."<sup>294</sup>

**Ex. 22:25-27** = "If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest. If you take your neighbors cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate."

**Dt. 24:10-13** = "When you make a loan of any kind it to your neighbor, do not go into his house to get what he is offering as a pledge. Stay outside and let the man to whom

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<sup>293</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1044.

<sup>294</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 949.

you're making the loan bring the pledge out to you. If the man is poor, do not go to sleep with his pledge in your possession. Return his cloak to him by sunset so that he may sleep in it. Then he will thank you, and it will be regarded as a righteous act in the sight of the LORD your God."

Because putting up security for strangers and prostitutes is not a wise idea. This person could lose everything he has. Keeping his garment as a pledge may limit the risk. "People should be held to their obligations... A person who foolishly becomes responsible for another person's debts should be made to keep his word."<sup>295</sup>

**V. 17 = Why would food taken by fraud taste sweet at first but end up like gravel in one's mouth?**

Because the person is delighted that they have gotten what they want (acquiring anything by dishonest means, taking advantage of others, may bring short range pleasure), but the consequences get rather chewy! (long range) Sin seems sweet/pleasant at the moment until we suffer the consequences (cf. Prov. 7:14-23; 9:17). Sin does not satisfy!

**V. 18 = Why would someone waging a war need the advice and guidance of others? (Cf. Prov. 15:22; 24:5-6) Think about what all is entailed in a war.**

**Prov. 15:22** = "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."  
**Prov. 24:5-6** = "A wise man has great power, and a man of knowledge increases strength; for waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers."

Often a person's advisers (leaders) come from a different perspective or may have facts unknown to you that are appropriate to the task at hand. A war is a huge endeavor that includes everything from food to maps to weapons to transportation to the weather to medical personnel and equipment to a menagerie of other things. No wise person should tackle such a project without a lot of advice from capable and knowledgeable people (Lk. 14:31-32). In the battles of life we need to seek counsel from wise and experienced believers who have steadfastly walked with the Lord. If we want to avoid a fall we will get wise counsel.

**V. 19 = Why would someone who talks a lot be likely to betray a confidence? (Cf. 11:13)**

Because they like to hear themselves talk, and always like to have one up on someone else. (With some it may not be a malicious act; they just talk to much!) If they can find some juicy tidbit to share with another they are extremely happy. People who talk a lot will probably divulge information that should be kept confidential. If they are willing to talk to you about others, they are willing to talk to others about you!

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<sup>295</sup> Gaebelain, *op. cit.*, p. 1044.

" 'Flattering with your lips' in this context is interesting because you're actually revealing secrets, but doing it in a way that deceives the person that you're talking to. So you wind up being a gossip."<sup>296</sup>

### **Why is keeping a confidence so important?**

If you can't keep a person's confidence you won't have many, if any, friends, at least the right kind of friends. You can't be trusted. You can cause all kinds of harm as well.

### **V. 20 = Why is cursing your parents considered by God a crime deserving death (the lamp is metaphorical for life; to go out is death - 13:9)? (Cf Ex. 20:12; 21:17; Lev. 19:3a; 20:9; Dt. 27:16; Prov. 30:17; Mt 15:3-9)**

cursing = "treating lightly, contemptuously". This "can be done in a number of ways, including denying and disparaging one's origin and background." "For the lamp to go out would mean death and possibly also removal of posterity. In actual practice this may have been a social punishment only, that he be considered as one who is dead."<sup>297</sup>

Because you are breaking God's command and will receive His curse not His blessing. Disrespect for parents usually begins with disrespect for God's Word.

**Ex. 20:12** = "Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

**Ex. 21:17** = "Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death."

**Lev. 19:3a** = "Each of you must respect his father and mother,..."

**Lev. 20:9** = "If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head."

**Dt. 27:16** = " 'Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother.' Then the people shall say, 'Amen!' "

**Prov. 30:17** = "The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures."

**Mt 15:3-9** = "Jesus replied, 'And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, "Honor your father and mother" and "Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death." But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God," he is not to "honor his father" with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, "These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men," ' "

### **How are we to treat our parents instead? (Cf. Eph. 6:1-3)**

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<sup>296</sup> Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>297</sup> Gaebelin, *op. cit.* p. 1046.

With honor/respect, so "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." This was the first commandment with a promise: blessing of you obey and a curse/death if you disobeyed (Dt. 27:16). God considered this command very important!

**V. 21 = Why might sudden prosperity not prove satisfying? (Cf. Prov. 19:26; Lk. 15:11-32)**

Because it was gained unjustly (robbing parents; unlawful or unrighteous act) or not at the proper time (too young or not wise enough to use it properly). "Such wealth may be squandered and often squelches initiative and work. As a result, the recipient is not...blessed at the end, or later."<sup>298</sup> The prodigal son realized he had sinned against God and his father by demanding his part of the inheritance early and then squandering it in wild living. So often when people inherit something they didn't work for it damages them in some way.

**V. 22 = Does vengeance belong to us or God? Why? (Cf. Lev. 19:18; Dt. 32:34-35; Ps. 9:11-12; 73:18-20; Prov. 24:28-29; Ro. 12:17-21; Heb. 10:26-31)**

**Lev. 19:18** = "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD."

**Dt. 32:34-35** = "Have I not kept this in reserve and sealed it in My vaults? It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them."

**Ps. 9:11-12** = "Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what He has done. For He who avenges blood remembers; He does not ignore the cry of the afflicted."

**Ps. 73:18-20** = "Surely You place them (the wicked) on slippery ground; You cast them down to ruin. How suddenly they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! As a dream when one awakes, so when You arise, O Lord, You will despise them as fantasies."

**Prov. 24:28-29** = "Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, or use your lips to deceive. Do not say, 'I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did.' "

**Ro. 12:17-21** = "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written, 'It is Mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

**Heb. 10:26-31** = "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How

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<sup>298</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 949.

much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "It is Mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

To God. Because God is the ultimate Judge and knows the heart, not us; only He can repay evil justly. He also knows when the appropriate time for judgment/punishment is. We want it right now! He doesn't forget or ignore the cry the of afflicted, and when He judges/punishes He does a thorough job. When we are angry and dwell on getting revenge it turns our hearts to do evil. We need to trust God to deal with the situation and rely on Him.

### **How are we to treat other people according to these verses?**

We should treat them as we would want to be treated. We should be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody and, as far as it depends on us, live at peace with everyone. Instead of revenge, our goal should be like God's: repentance and restoration. When we see our enemy hungry or thirsty we should meet their need in the hope that they will be grieved over their sin and repent. If they don't, we know God will deliver us and judge them. Those who *deliberately* keep on sinning have nothing to expect but the fearful fiery judgment of God

### **V. 24, 27 = Why don't we understand our own ways? (Cf. Prov. 21:2; Jer. 17:9-10)**

**Prov. 21:2** = "All a man's ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart."

**Jer. 17:9-10** = "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, and according to what his deeds deserve."

Because our minds are warped by our sinful natures (noesis = the action of perceiving or thinking; noetic = of, relating to, or based on the intellect<sup>299</sup> The noetic effects of sin). There is also the fact that, since God is sovereign and works in spite of us, we don't always understand or know what the lesson is until we've either passed or failed, and sometimes never! That's where faith comes in.

### **How might we delude ourselves?**

By thinking our ways are right when they aren't; by making excuses for our sins. We may not even be aware that our thinking is wrong.

### **Who/what do we need to guide us? (Cf. Ps. 119:105; 139:23-24; I Cor. 2:6-16)**

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<sup>299</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/noetic>

We need to become new creatures in Christ; then we need to listen to the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, and read, study, meditate on, and memorize God's Word so we know His will and can make the right choices to obey and follow His commands and will in any and every situation. We should be dependent on God every step of life's journey. The closer we are to God and the more we are in His Word and listening to the H. S. the less self-deception or indifference there will be.

**Ps. 119:105** = "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

**Ps. 139:23-24** = "Search me, O God, and know my thoughts; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

**I Cor. 2:6-16** = "We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been kept hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him' — but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 'For who knows the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?' But we have the mind of Christ."

**V. 25 = How important does God consider a vow? (Cf. Lev. 27:28-29; Nu. 30; Dt. 23:21-23; I Sam. 1; Mal. 1:14; 2:13-16; Mt. 5:33-37)**

**Lev. 27:28-29** = "But nothing that a man owns and devotes to the LORD—whether man or animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD."

**Nu. 30** = "Moses said to the heads of the tribes of Israel: 'This is what the LORD commands: When a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.' The same goes for a young woman living in her father's house unless her father forbids her. If she marries after the vow and her husband forbids her to do it then she is released from her vow, otherwise it stands. "Any vow or obligation taken by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her." If a married woman makes a vow, her husband may confirm or nullify the oath. If he waits a long time after hearing about it and then nullifies it, he is responsible for her guilt.

**Dt. 23:21-23** = "If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth."

**I Sam. 1** = Hannah was not able to have children. Even though her husband loved her dearly, the rival wife irritated her to the point of despondency. So at the annual sacrifice *Hannah made a vow to God* that if He gave her a son she would give him back to the LORD to serve Him as a Nazarite all his life. Eli the priest thought she was drunk, but when she told him she was praying out of her great anguish and grief he blessed her. When they went home, she conceived and gave birth to Samuel (heard of God). The next year Hannah didn't go to the annual sacrifice. She told her husband she would wait until Samuel was weaned, then she would present him before the LORD, and he would live there always. *Her husband agreed but counseled her to keep her vow.* When he was weaned, Hannah took Samuel, young as he was, to Shiloh and gave him to the LORD to serve at the tabernacle under Eli the priest.

**Mal. 1:14** = "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,' says the LORD Almighty,' and My name is to be feared among the nations."

**Mal. 2:13-16** = "Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because He no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, 'Why?' It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. 'I hate divorce,' says the LORD God of Israel, ' and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,' says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit and do not break faith."

**Mt. 5:33-37** = "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, 'Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.'"

When we makes oaths freely by our own mouths, He considers them binding, because we are making them to the LORD Almighty, the Great King over all the earth who is to be revered and feared. If we break a vow we are cursed, and God will not accept our prayers or sacrifices. And there is no need to swear by something to emphasize your point. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No!" Your word should be good enough.

**Read Judges 11:29-40; 21:25. What did Jephthah do wrong?**

He made a vow without thinking of the possible consequences. It was what he thought was right at the moment. Dedicating something rashly was considered a trap because it could lead someone into financial difficulties or worse.

### **How did he pay for his rash vow?**

He lost his daughter, his only child. Remember, God put Jephthah in a position to deliver Israel from their enemies, but He never condoned human sacrifice (cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:1-5; Dt. 12:29-31; Jer. 19:1-6; 32:35). At this time, the Israelites were doing whatever they felt was right at the time, mixing pagan ideas with God's commands.

### **V. 28 = Who all does a king need to love and be faithful to so his throne is secure? (This may take a little thinking!)**

First and foremost, God! Then his wife/wives and children, his country and his people. He must be loyal and merciful. Kings are often assassinated because of jealous children, officials, etc. Ultimately, only God can make a dynasty secure (cf. II Sam. 7:11-16).

### **V. 29 = A man's strength can be a glorious thing, but what often happens when we depend on our own strength instead of God's? (Cf. Hab. 1:11)**

It's easy to become guilty of self-worship. We rely on ourselves instead of on God. Then it becomes our work instead of God's work, and the results are obvious.

### **What does gray hair imply? (Cf. Ps. 92:12-15; Prov. 16:31)**

That we lived a righteous life and learned a little wisdom over the years; that we have some dignity, honor, experience to share with others.

**Ps. 92:12-15** = "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, 'The LORD is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in Him.' "

**Prov. 16:31** = "Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life."

### **When we learn to rely on God instead of ourselves how might He use us even more in our old age? (Cf. Jer. 9:23-24; Phil. 4:12-13; Col. 1:28-29)**

**Jer. 9:23-24** = "This is what the LORD says: 'Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' declares the LORD."

**Phil. 4:12-13** = "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or

hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

**Col. 1:28-29** = "We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me."

We learn to rely less on ourselves and more on God. Then His power is evident in our lives and great things are done for His glory not our own.

**V. 30 = What does discipline/corporal punishment do for us? (Cf. Heb. 12:10-11; I Pet. 4:1-2)**

**Heb. 12:10-11** = "Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

**I Pet. 4:1-2** = "Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God."

Physical punishment may produce spiritual growth, turning us from sin. It should help us to mature. If we respond well to God's discipline it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace; and suffering for Jesus' Name makes a believer not want to sin anymore or live for himself but for Christ alone.

### Homework for Proverbs Chapter 21

V. 1 = This proverb should be an encouragement to us with our present political situation. Why? (Cf. Ezra 6:22; Ps. 47:7-9)

V. 2 = Refer back to 20:24, 27. Why would our ways seem right to us even when they aren't? (Cf. Jer. 17:9-10)

What does the LORD look at? (Cf. Heb. 4:12-13)

V. 3 = How might this proverb fit with v. 2?

Read I Sam. 15. What did God command Saul to do?

What did Saul do instead? Why?

What was God's/Samuel's response?

Who did Saul fear more than God?

What does God delight in (cf. Ps. 51:16-17; Is. 57:15; 66:1-2; Micah 6:6-8)

V. 4 = What does God hate? (Cf. Prov. 6:16-19)

Read Mt. 6:22-23. What is this passage referring to?

How do our priorities affect us?

If we are proud, who are we serving?

V. 5 = Why are the plans of the diligent not made in haste?

Why does haste lead to poverty?

V. 6 = Why is a fortune made by deceit like a fleeting vapor?

How does it become a deadly snare? (Cf. I Tim. 6:6-10; 17-19)

Why is wealth dangerous to our spiritual state, whether gained justly or unjustly? (Cf. Mt. 6:19-34)

What should we seek instead?

V. 7 = What is this proverb talking about? (Hint: it starts with a "C")

Why do the wicked refuse to do what is right? (Cf. Prov. 21:10a)

V. 8 = Why would the way of the guilty be devious?

Why is the conduct of the innocent upright?

V. 9, 19 = If a woman had written this it could be said of a man as well! 😊 Why are these proverbs so true?

V. 10 = Why do the wicked crave evil and refuse to be merciful?

V. 11 = Why would punishing a mocker (hard-core; see v. 24) help the simple (not yet set in their ways) gain wisdom?

Why do the wise accept instruction and, therefore, get knowledge/wisdom?

V. 12 = How does this proverb give us hope in an evil world? (Cf. Ps. 73)

V. 13 = What happens when we refuse to help others and/or say, "But we didn't know!" (Cf. Prov. 24:11-12; Micah 3:1-4)

V. 14 = Why do gifts and bribes given in secret calm down a situation?

Does this mean God condones the giving of bribes? Why or why not? (Cf. Ex. 23:8; Dt. 16:18-20; 27:25; Ps. 26:9-10)

V. 15 = Why does justice done bring terror to evildoers?

V. 16 = Why does straying from the path of understanding lead to death (contrast 3:5-6)?

Why is it so important to keep in the Word, prayer and fellowship?

What happens if we stop?

V. 17 = What is it about seeking pleasure that leads people to the poor house?

V. 18 = How do the wicked/unfaithful become a ransom for the righteous/upright? (Cf. 11:8)

V. 20 = How is the wise man like the ant (cf. 6:6-8)?

Why does the foolish man have nothing?

V. 21 = How does Ro. 2:5-11 fit with this proverb?

V. 22 = Read II Sam. 5:6-10. How was David wise in how he attacked and defeated the Jebusites.

Why is wisdom, and not just strength, needed to conquer the mighty?

V. 23 = Why is it so important to watch what we say (cf. 18:21; James 3:1-12)?

Why is the tongue so powerful?

V. 24 = Why do those who have so little to be proud about seem to have excessive pride?

V. 25-26 = Why does the sluggard always want more?

Why do the righteous give without sparing? (Cf. 22:9; Mt. 6:19-34; Phil. 4:14-19)

V. 27 = Does God listen to the prayers or accept the sacrifices/ministry of a person who is sinful and unrepentant or has ulterior motives? Why or why not? (cf. I Sam. 15:22-23; Ps. 66:18; Is. 64:4-7; Mal. 2:13-16)

What pleases God more than mere sacrifices/duty? (Cf. Ps. 40:6-8; 69:30-31)

V. 28 = (cf. 19:5, 9) Who will perish or be destroyed besides the false witness?

Why would this be so?

V. 29 = Why do the wicked often put up a bold front?

Why do the righteous not need a "bold front"?

V. 30 = This may seem obvious, but why can't human or angelic wisdom, insight or plans succeed against the LORD? (Cf. Ps. 33:6-11; Is. 7:5-9; 8:9-10; 14:27; 46:8-11)

Read Acts 5:17-42. What wisdom did Gamaliel have for the Sanhedrin?

How does this encourage you?

V. 31 = Not only can we not succeed *against* the LORD, but we can't succeed *without* Him either. Read the following passages (reading the whole chapter, if you have time, might give you more insight). What do they tell us about victory?

I Sam. 17:41-47 =

II Chron. 20:14-17 =

Ps. 33:13-19 =

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 21

### **V. 1 = This proverb should be an encouragement to us with our present political situation. Why? (Cf. Ezra 6:22; Ps. 47:7-9)**

Because no matter who gets in office in these elections, God is sovereign. He directs the course of events according to His will and purpose (just like a farmer channels water where he wants and regulates the flow). Even evil people are ultimately used by God to bring about what God ordained. Things go much easier when these people seek to do God's will instead of pushing their own agenda, but even so, God works and moves as He determines. (Cf. Is. 55:8-11)

**Ezra 6:22** = "For seven days they celebrated with joy the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because the LORD had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria, so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel."  
**Ps. 47:7-9** = "For God is the King of all the earth, sing to Him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted."

See also Ex. 10:1-2; Is 10:5-7; 45:1-6; Ezra 7:21; Neh. 2:1-8.

### **V. 2 = Refer back to 20:24, 27. Why would our ways seem right to us even when they aren't? (Cf. Jer. 17:9-10)**

**Jer. 17:9-10** = "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, and according to what his deeds deserve."

Because our minds are warped by our sinful natures (noesis = the action of perceiving or thinking; noetic = of, relating to, or based on the intellect<sup>300</sup> The noetic effects of sin). There is also the fact that, since God is sovereign and works in spite of us, we don't always understand or know what the lesson is until we've either passed or failed, and sometimes never! That's where faith comes in.

### **What does the LORD look at? (Cf. Heb. 4:12-13)**

He looks at the heart and mind; He knows our thoughts, our motives. We can fool people for a while (cf. I Tim. 5:24-25; II Tim. 3:1-9), but we can't fool God.

**Heb. 4:12-13** = "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's

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<sup>300</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/noetic>

sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

### **V. 3 = How might this proverb fit with v. 2?**

We can present all the sacrifices we want, we can give to ministries, we can teach S.S., we can run soup kitchens, etc., but if we don't do it out of love and obedience for God and a desire to please and bring glory to Him, it is all worthless. We can do all these things and yet treat our families and neighbors badly, cheat in business, have a sinful and rebellious heart, etc., and God calls it worthless, sinful, demonic. (cf. Is. 58) It is hypocrisy!

### **Read I Sam. 15. What did God command Saul to do?**

To punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Saul was to attack and totally destroy everything that belonged to them. He was not to spare anything, but put to death people and animals.

### **What did Saul do instead? Why?**

He spared Agag, their king (status symbol) and the best of their animals, everything that was good. They were unwilling to destroy the good stuff. They said it was to sacrifice to the LORD.

### **What was God's/Samuel's response?**

Although Saul was once humble, he had become proud. He didn't obey the LORD but pounced on the plunder and did evil in the eyes of the LORD. "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king."

### **Who did Saul fear more than God?**

The people, his army. He let them sway him from doing what was right.

### **What does God delight in (cf. Ps. 51:16-17; Is. 57:15; 66:1-2; Micah 6:6-8)**

God delights in those who fear Him, who come to Him in humility, who love justice and mercy over mere formality.

**Ps. 51:16-17** = "You do not delight in sacrifice or I would bring it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

**Is. 57:15** = "For this is what the high and lofty One says—He who lives forever, whose name is holy: I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."

**Is. 66:1-2** = "This is what the LORD says: 'Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where is the house you will build for Me? Where will My resting place be? Has not My hand made all these things, and so they came into being?' Declares the LORD. 'This is the one I esteem; he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My word.' "

**Micah 6:6-8** = "With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

#### **V. 4 = What does God hate? (Cf. Prov. 6:16-19)**

Pride, lies, murder, wicked schemers, those quick to do evil, false/lying witnesses, one who stirs up dissension. Pride was the sin that brought Satan/Lucifer down (Is. 14:12-15; Ez. 28:11-19)

#### **Read Mt. 6:22-23. What is this passage referring to?**

Our priorities. We can't serve ourselves, the world and the devil and expect to please God. We can't put God on a back burner and just use Him for "fire insurance". If that's our attitude then we are full of darkness not light.

#### **How do our priorities affect us?**

Whatever our focus is on (earthly or heavenly treasures; self or God) that is what we will pursue, that is what will consume us; it will be our life. Our priorities will be easily seen in what we do and how we live.

#### **If we are proud, who are we serving?**

Ourselves, and ultimately Satan. We should not be proud since everything we have (our strengths, abilities, talents, even our very breath) comes from God (Dt. 8:17-18).

#### **V. 5 = Why are the plans of the diligent not made in haste?**

Because plans made in haste often fail because they are not well thought out. The diligent are careful to seek out God's will and wise advice before determining a course of action.

#### **Why does haste lead to poverty?**

"Haste makes waste!" Plans fail for lack of counsel. Those who try get rich quick schemes often end up poor because they "put all their eggs in one basket" and don't work for it. Shortcuts often lead to pitfalls. Those who put aside a little here and a little there will end up with a nice nest egg.

### **V. 6 = Why is a fortune made by deceit like a fleeting vapor?**

Earthly treasures are fleeting and can't be depended upon to last. And gaining a fortune through lies is doubly deadly. Why? Because the person's heart is not right before God and they are willing to do or say anything to gain wealth. Punishment awaits those who commit such crimes.

### **How does it become a deadly snare ("seekers of death"<sup>301</sup>)? (Cf. I Tim. 6:6-10; 17-19)**

When we are not content with what we have we pursue wealth to the detriment of our walk with God and our family life, etc. This pursuit becomes a trap/snare that brings unhappiness, discontent, and death. When we are trusting God for our daily needs and giving to His work we are living the life that is truly life.

**I Tim. 6:6-10; 17-19** = "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they will take hold of the life that is truly life."

### **Why is wealth dangerous to our spiritual state, whether gained justly or unjustly? (Cf. Mt. 6:19-34)**

We can easily begin depending on our wealth instead of on God to supply our needs. It leads our hearts astray, and we gradually push God out of the picture and try to handle things on our own. But God can take away wealth as easily as He gives it.

**Mt. 6:19-34** = "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and

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<sup>301</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 950.

steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' Or 'What shall we drink?' Or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

### **What should we seek instead?**

His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to us as well. God and His kingdom should be our priority, our all! And our heart's desire should be to be like Him.

### **V. 7 = What is this proverb talking about? (Hint: it starts with a "C")**

Consequences! Their own violence will turn on them and drag them down (boomerang effect).

### **Why do the wicked refuse to do what is right? (Cf. Prov. 21:10a)**

Because they crave evil (not passive/choice). The more you do evil, the more you want; the more you serve God and obey Him, the more you want to. It's a matter of the heart!

"Refuse" = see also II Thes. 2:5-12; II Pet. 3:3-7 and Rev. 16:7-11.

### **V. 8 = Why would the way of the guilty be devious?**

Because they don't want to be caught, so they lie, sneak around, etc. One lie leads to another to another to cover for themselves. After awhile they can't remember all their lies.

### **Why is the conduct of the innocent upright?**

They have nothing to hide so no reason to be anything but upright.

**V. 9, 19 = If a woman had written this it could be said of a man as well! 🙄 Why are these proverbs so true?**

Because living with someone who always wants to pick a fight and/or is always grumpy, spiteful, ill at ease, etc., gets depressing and it rubs off on the other person if they're not always on their guard. People like this are hard to live with!

**V. 10 = Why do the wicked crave evil and refuse to be merciful?**

Again, it's a choice. They refuse to do what is right, and the more evil they do the more they want to do. They have no desire to be merciful. (Cf. Ro. 3:9-18) Their thinking is warped (noetic effects) by their sin nature.

**V. 11 = Why would punishing a mocker (hard-core) help the simple (not yet set in their ways) gain wisdom?**

Because the simple still have a chance of changing their ways and avoiding becoming a mocker. Seeing a mocker punished should bring them up short and hopefully make them think.

**Why do the wise accept instruction and, therefore, get knowledge/wisdom?**

Because they know how important gaining knowledge/wisdom is and how it pleases God. They have a whole different perspective.

**V. 12 = How does this proverb give us hope in an evil world? (Cf. Ps. 73)**

We know God will deal with the wicked. They won't get away with their sin permanently.

**Ps. 73** = Asaph saw the wicked getting away with their sin supposedly until he sought God about the matter and realized they were on a slippery slope heading nowhere good unless they changed. He, on the other hand was protected, guided, and strengthened by God, Who would take him to glory.

**V. 13 = What happens when we refuse to help others and/or say, "But we didn't know!" (Cf. Prov. 24:11-12; Micah 3:1-4)**

When we are in distress and cry out for help, we won't be answered either! God knows the heart!

**Prov. 24:11-12** = "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this,' does not He who weighs

the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it? Will He not repay each person according to what he has done?"

**Micah 3:1-4** = "Then I said, 'Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel. Should you not know justice, you who hate good and love evil; who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones; who eat my people's flesh, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot?' Then they will cry out to the LORD, but He will not answer them. At that time He will hide His face from them because of the evil they have done."

#### **V. 14 = Why do gifts and bribes given in secret calm down a situation?**

Because those who get really angry/wrathful are usually those who will also accept a bribe. They use their anger as a weapon to get the response they want.

"The effect of bribery (Pr 17:23) is enhanced by secrecy, as the bribed person does not wish his motives made known."<sup>302</sup>

**Does this mean God condones the giving of bribes? Why or why not? (Cf. Ex. 23:8; Dt. 16:18-20; 27:25; Ps. 26:9-10)**

No! Because bribes pervert justice!

**Ex. 23:8** = "Do not accept a bribe, for *a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous.*"

**Dt. 16:18-20** = "Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for *a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.* Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you."

**Dt. 27:25** = "*Cursed* is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person."

**Ps. 26:9-10** = "Do not take away my soul along with sinners, my life with bloodthirsty men, in whose hands are wicked schemes, whose right hands are full of bribes." (Eternal consequences for the unrepentant.)

#### **V. 15 = Why does justice done bring terror ("dismay, ruin, undoing"<sup>303</sup>) to evildoers?**

Because they don't want to be held accountable for their crimes. Justice done in a timely fashion makes people think twice about committing more crimes, and brings joy to the righteous. "How people respond to justice reveals their character."<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/proverbs/21-14.htm> - Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary.

<sup>303</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 951.

<sup>304</sup> Gaebelain, *op. cit.*, p. 1054.

**V. 16 = Why does straying from the path of understanding lead to death (contrast 3:5-6)?**

Because you are leaving (wandering away from) God's ways and doing your own thing (resting among the "shades" or the dead - physical death<sup>305</sup>). You fall into Satan's traps. We need to trust God's direction.

**Why is it so important to keep in the Word, prayer and fellowship?**

There is no such thing as neutral in the Christian walk: either you're going forward or backwards spiritually. Being in the Word, in prayer and in good Christian fellowship keeps us accountable, encouraged and going forward in our walk with Christ. It's kind of like the old fire triangle: it takes fuel, oxygen and heat to keep a fire going. Well it takes time in the Word, in prayer and good accountable fellowship to keep a Christian on the right track.

**What happens if we stop?**

The fire goes out! We start living according to the flesh instead of the Spirit and nasty things come out of us instead of good (cf. Gal. 5:16-26). We can even forget we were saved (cf. II Pet. 1:3-11).

**V. 17 = What is it about seeking pleasure that leads people to the poor ("deficient, destitute, or in need"<sup>306</sup>) house?**

They put their pleasure/self before anything else (idolatry - excessive, uncontrolled pleasure): common sense, neglect their relationship with God, with mate and family, etc. They usually are in debt up to their eyebrows, and if they lose hours at work they can't pay their bills. Learning to be content with what we have is part of a right relationship with God (cf. Phil. 4:10-13). "Unbridled love of the finest things of life is very costly."<sup>307</sup>

**V. 18 = How do the wicked/unfaithful become a ransom for the righteous/upright? (Cf. 11:8)**

They suffer the evil they have planned for the righteous (Haman vs. Mordecai in the book of Esther). We don't always see this in our time frame but God will deal with the wicked in His timing.

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<sup>305</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1054.

<sup>306</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p 951.

<sup>307</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1055.

"God will cause that to fall on their own heads, which they intended against the just by delivering the just, and putting the wicked in their places."<sup>308</sup>

### **V. 20 = How is the wise man like the ant (cf. 6:6-8)?**

He stores up food and supplies during the harvest so he has them when needed the rest of the year. He isn't wasteful and creates a material environment for gracious living and hospitality.

### **Why does the foolish man have nothing?**

Because he splurges when he has stuff and is wasteful; he devours all he has, or lets money run through his hands. He isn't wise in thinking ahead (short-sighted) for possible needy times but squanders his resources.

### **V. 21 = How does Ro. 2:5-11 fit with this proverb?**

God deals with us according to our hearts and our actions. To those who seek Him and His ways (persist in doing good) He gives, glory, honor, righteousness/prosperity, immortality, and peace (cf. Mt. 5:6; 6:33). But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there is only His wrath and anger, trouble and distress.

### **V. 22 = Read II Sam. 5:6-10. How was David wise in how he attacked and defeated the Jebusites.**

The Jebusites thought they were invincible, that even the blind and the lame could ward off the enemy. But David showed them otherwise. He didn't waste lives by a direct assault on the imposing walls of Jerusalem, but he snuck in through the water shaft.

"The first expedition of David, as king of the whole country, was directed against this place, which had hitherto remained in the hands of the natives. It was strongly fortified and deemed so impregnable that the blind and lame were sent to man the battlements, in derisive mockery of the Hebrew king's attack, and to shout, "David cannot come in hither." To understand the full meaning and force of this insulting taunt, it is necessary to bear in mind the depth and steepness of the valley of Gihon, and the lofty walls of the ancient Canaanitish fortress."<sup>309</sup>

"Despite the difficulty, David and his men took the city. Since the water shaft is mentioned, some think that David sent his men through what is called 'Warren's Shaft.' Whatever exactly their tactics, David and his men persisted through difficult circumstances to defeat an overconfident enemy.

"On the same principle, King Jesus conquers old strongholds when he becomes king over our life. Territory that should have been given to Him long ago is now conquered. 'I want to say to you in

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<sup>308</sup> <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/proverbs/21-18.htm> - Geneva Study Bible.

<sup>309</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/jfb/2Sa/2Sa\\_005.cfm?a=272006](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/jfb/2Sa/2Sa_005.cfm?a=272006); Jamieson, Fausset & Brown :: Commentary on 2 Samuel 5.

the name of the Lord Jesus that there is no habit that has gone so deep but that the power of the blood of Jesus can go deeper, and there is no entrenchment of sin that has gone so far but the power of the risen Lord, by His Holy Spirit, can go further.' (Redpath)<sup>310</sup>

### **Why is wisdom, and not just strength, needed to conquer the mighty?**

Because strength can only do so much against those of equal or greater strength. Wisdom (the tactician, brilliant strategy) can find their weaknesses.

### **V. 23 = Why is it so important to watch what we say (cf. 18:21; James 3:1-12)?**

Because the tongue has the power of life and death. We can build up or encourage people, or we can destroy or discourage them. We can also get ourselves into deep trouble/calamity (social/legal difficulties) by what we say. Like a small spark which sets a whole forest on fire, the tongue can set the whole course of a person's life on fire; it shows what is in a person's heart and is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. When we praise God, then curse people we aren't righteous.

### **Why is the tongue so powerful?**

Because what we say can affect another person's life for good or evil, and it can affect our own lives this way also. Our words are powerful!

### **V. 24 = Why do those who have so little to be proud about seem to have excessive pride?**

Because they are full of themselves, think they're superior, instead of humility and the fear of the Lord. They refuse to submit to His law and wisdom. They are most unpleasant!

### **V. 25-26 = Why does the sluggard always want more?**

Because he wants what he refuses to work for, so he can't get it. His mind dwells on it but he won't do anything about it; he wants the easy way out. Or he sets his goals so high, so far out of reach that he paralyzes himself. We always seem to want what we cannot have.

### **Why do the righteous give without sparing? (Cf. 22:9; Mt. 6:19-34; Phil. 4:14-19)**

Because they know their needs are supplied by God. They don't worry about what they will eat or drink, or what they will wear; they give generously without holding back, and seek to promote God's kingdom and His righteousness. They have learned to be

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<sup>310</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide\\_2Sa/2Sa\\_5.cfm?a=272006](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_2Sa/2Sa_5.cfm?a=272006); David Guzik :: Study Guide for 2 Samuel 5.

content whether they have a lot or a little. They walk by faith, not by sight (Abraham vs. Lot - Gen. 13).

**V. 27 = Does God listen to the prayers or accept the sacrifices/ministry of a person who is sinful and unrepentant or has ulterior motives? Why or why not? (cf. I Sam. 15:22-23; Ps. 66:18; Is. 64:4-7; Mal. 2:13-16)**

No. Because they are "cherishing" sin in their hearts. (Cf. Ez. 14:1-11; I Pet. 3:1-7) God wants obedience from the heart, not superficial religion (hypocrisy). "The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable—how much more so when brought with evil intent!" (Pride, deceit, trying to buy acceptance with God, etc.) "God abhors worship without righteousness," or genuine submission to God.<sup>311</sup> God requires true repentance and a resolution to live for Him in righteousness and truth.

**I Sam. 15:22-23** = "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry."

**Ps. 66:18** = If we cherish sin in our hearts the LORD will not listen to our prayers.

**Is. 64:4-7** = God loves to help those who do right. But He becomes angry when we continue to sin and hides His face from us and makes us waste away.

**Mal. 2:13-16** = The people were complaining that God didn't accept their offerings but they were committing adultery and divorcing their wives. They were breaking their marriage covenants. God hates divorce because it is a violent act, a tearing of what was "one" into two.

**What pleases God more than mere sacrifices/duty? (Cf. Ps. 40:6-8; 69:30-31)**

Obedience!!! People who want to do His will above all else, and who praise His name in song and glorify Him with thanksgiving.

**V. 28 = (cf. 19:5, 9) Who will perish or be destroyed besides the false witness (perjurer)?**

Those who pour out lies and whoever listens to them.

**Why would this be so?**

Those who constantly lie as a matter of course will be judged. And if you listen to lies you become a part of them. You become part of the problem instead of the solution, and will also be judged.

Note: Apparently there is a better translation than I have in my older NIV: "A false witness will perish, but a careful listener will testify successfully." Here to listen carefully

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<sup>311</sup> Gaebelain, *op. cit.*, p. 1058.

means "to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience, etc.; causatively, to tell, etc.)"<sup>312</sup> This is someone who listens with the intent purpose of discerning the truth in a situation, and won't be put down or refuted in cross-examination.

### **V. 29 = Why do the wicked often put up a bold front?**

Because they are arrogant, full of bullheaded bravado, or they want to cover up what they've been doing or saying. They want to appear as if they've done nothing wrong and persuade others to believe them, or justify themselves.

### **Why do the righteous not need a "bold front"?**

They have nothing to hide. They give thought to their ways, are consistent, so they don't have to worry about a cover-up. A bold front is no substitute for sound principles. Someone who doesn't lie or break the law isn't always looking over their shoulder either.

### **V. 30 = This may seem obvious, but why can't human or angelic wisdom, insight or plans succeed against the LORD? (Cf. Ps. 33:6-11; Is. 7:5-9; 8:9-10; 14:27; 46:8-11)**

Because He is God (sovereign and all-wise) and we and the angels aren't! Humans and angels are created beings and have no knowledge or wisdom even close to what God has. Besides, He is all-knowing, all-powerful and everywhere present. We can't get one over on Him! "Human 'wisdom', 'insight' and 'counsel' must be in conformity to the will of God to be successful."<sup>313</sup>

**Ps. 33:6-11** = "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; He puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere Him. For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm. The LORD foils the plans of the nations; He thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations."

**Is. 7:5-9** = "Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah's son have plotted your ruin, saying, 'Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it.' Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'It will not take place, it will not happen, for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Resin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people. The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.'"

**Is. 8:9-10** = "Raise the war cry, you nations, and be shattered! Listen, all you distant lands. Prepare for battle, and be shattered! Prepare for battle, and be shattered! Devise

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<sup>312</sup> BLB, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H8085&t=NIV>

<sup>313</sup> Gaebelain, *op. cit.*, p. 1059.

your strategy; but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us."

**Is. 14:27** = "For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart Him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?"

**Is. 46:8-11** = "Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please."

### **Read Acts 5:17-42. What wisdom did Gamaliel have for the Sanhedrin?**

He told them to let the apostles go rather than put them to death. "For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

### **How does this encourage you?**

We have a BIG God! If God wills something to happen, it will happen no matter how desperately people try to thwart it. And we can rejoice when counted worthy to suffer disgrace for His Name. We shouldn't give up.

**V. 31** = **Not only can we not succeed *against* the LORD, but we can't succeed *without* Him either. Read the following passages (reading the whole chapter, if you have time, might give you more insight). What do they tell us about victory?**

**I Sam. 17:41-47** = No matter how big our "giants", and how small our strength, the battle is the LORD's and victory rests with Him.

**II Chron. 20:14-17** = When the odds are against us we shouldn't be afraid or discouraged because the battle is not our's, but God's. We just need to stand firm on His promises and see the deliverance the LORD will give.

**Ps. 33:13-19** = The LORD sees all that goes on here on earth and knows the hearts of all. "No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine."

No matter how well we plan for the battle, we need to acknowledge that God is the source of victory and rely on Him.

**Homework for Proverbs  
Chapter 22**

**V. 1 = Why is having a good name/to be esteemed so important?**

**What do you usually think of when you hear a person's name you know?**

**V. 2 = What importance does this statement have for us?**

**Read Eph. 1-2. What has God done/provided for us in Christ?**

**Does it matter who we are or what status we have on earth to be able to enjoy these blessings?**

**V. 3 = Give a possible example for this proverb.**

**V. 4 = Again this is a general statement because many believers suffer and lose their wealth or property for the sake of Christ. Compare Mt. 5:10-12. What will we receive instead of earthly wealth, honor and life?**

**V. 5 = What might some of these thorns and snares in the path of the wicked be?**

**Why is it so important to guard your soul/heart (cf. 4:23)?**

**V. 6 = "Train" means "to put something into the mouth, to give to be tasted".<sup>314</sup> Another way to put it would be "to create a hunger in." Why is this important in the raising of a child? (Cf. Dt. 6; Ps. 119:33)**

**Why is it so important to live out the truth in front of your children and grandchildren? (Cf. Eph. 6:4)**

**V. 7, 26-27 = How is it that the rich rule over the poor?**

**Why is the borrower servant to the lender?**

**What happens if you can't repay a debt?**

**What should you do to get out of such a predicament? (Cf. 6:1-5)**

**V. 8 = Compare Gal. 6:7-8. What are we talking about here?**

**V. 9 = What does it mean to be generous?**

**Why are those who are generous blessed?**

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<sup>314</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H2596&t=NIV>; Prov. 22:6

**What does generosity say about a person?**

**V. 10 = Why does getting rid of a mocker end strife, quarreling and insults?**

**What is it about a mocker that stirs things up?**

**V. 11 = Why would a king want someone like this for his friend?**

**David had a friend named Hushai? Read II Sam. 15:32-37; 16:15-17:23. What did Hushai do to help his friend?**

**What kind of position did this put him in?**

**Why would Hushai be willing to do this?**

**V. 12 = What does the first part of this verse mean?**

**How does the second part fit in with what we just learned about Ahithophel in II Sam 16-17?**

**V. 13 = What is the sluggard doing when he says things like this?**

**V. 14 = What is meant by the "mouth of an adulteress"?**

**Compare Eccl. 7:26. How does one escape the snare of an adulteress/adulterer?**

**V. 15 = Why is folly bound up even in the heart of a child?**

**Why is discipline (corporal punishment) so necessary to save a child from his folly?**

**V. 16 = Why are these two things wrong, and why do they eventually lead to poverty?**

**What other kind of poverty might a person like this end up with?**

**V. 17-21 = Why did Solomon write down the sayings of the wise?**

**What purposes do they have?**

**Why is it important to apply what we learn and have it ready to answer others?**

**Who do they teach us to ultimately trust?**

**How are these sayings described?**

**V. 22-23 = Who is the protector of the poor and needy?**

**Read Amos 4:1-3. Why did God promise to punish the women of Israel?**

**Read Dt. 15:1-11. What did God command regarding the poor?**

**V. 24-25 = Why is it unwise to make friends with someone who is hot-tempered?**

**What does God say about anger in Eccl. 7:9 and Eph. 4:26-27?**

**V. 26-27 = We've hit this theme several times in Proverbs. Why is it foolish to put your name as a second on someone else's loan? (Cf. 22:7)**

**V. 28 = The land was very important in Israel as part of God's Covenant and their inheritance. What does God say about moving boundary stones?**

**What are you doing when you move one?**

**Read I Ki. 21. Why did Naboth refuse to sell Ahab his vineyard?**

**Why did God send Elijah to pronounce judgment on Ahab and Jezebel?**

**V. 29 = Why would a king want a skilled man to work for him?**

**Read II Chron. 2. What kind of man did Solomon want to oversee the work on the temple? Why?**

**What kind of man did Hiram send him?**

## Homework for Proverbs Chapter 22

### V. 1 = Why is having a good name/to be esteemed so important?

Because your reputation rests on having a good name (well thought of, engaging qualities). People will come to you for business, advice, etc. if you have a good reputation, where someone who doesn't have a good name will only attract scoundrels. It also means you are honest and trying to please God. Wealth is no substitute for a good name/good morals. Often the seeking of wealth destroys good character. Having people respect and admire you is better than silver or gold. "...our proper joy is 'not in the power we wield, but in the love in which we are held.'"<sup>315</sup>

### What do you usually think of when you hear a person's name you know?

You think about what that person is to you, their character, whether you can trust them or not, etc. Associations. David was a man of his word. Compare II Sam. 9 with I Sam. 18:1-4; 20:12-17, 42; 23:15-18; 24:1-22.

**Who was Mephibosheth?** Jonathan's son.

**Why did David want to show kindness to him for Jonathan's sake?** To honor the oath that he had sworn in the name of the LORD to both Jonathan and Saul.

**How does David seem to value his given word?** It seems to be a priority for him. There is an old English saying that goes, "Still, as of old, man by himself is priced; for thirty pieces, Judas sold himself, not Christ." One's integrity is bound up in how they keep their obligations. Judas sold his integrity, not Christ. What price do we set upon our own loyalty and obligations.

**What was Mephibosheth's situation when David found him?** He was staying at someone's home. His father's goods and property were in the hands of others and he seems to have been at the mercy of the kindness of others.

**What did David do to show him kindness? What might he have expected?** He probably hoped that David would forget about him. In changes of dynasty, new rulers often put to death any possible rivals to the crown. When David sent for him, Mephibosheth was very likely fearful that his life was about to end. David took him in and saw to it that the property that was rightfully his was restored to him and that he was provided for and that he was cared for and included in the royal household (place of honor). His grandfather's former servant was charged with working his land and sending the income to Mephibosheth.

God's name is attached to His character. We can trust Him because He is good and never changes!

### V. 2 = What importance does this statement have for us?

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<sup>315</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1059.

We are all equal in God's sight, on a level playing field, and all made in God's image. No one gets extra "Brownie points" with God. The way we treat each other, including the poor, is the way we treat God (cf. Mt. 25:31-46; Ja. 2:1-8).

### **Read Eph. 1-2. What has God done/provided for us in Christ?**

Grace and peace (1:2)

God has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ (v. 3)

We were chosen to be holy and blameless in His sight before the creation of the world (v. 4)

Because He loved us He predestined us to be adopted as His children, in accordance with His pleasure and will, to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves (v. 5-6)

Redemption through His blood (v. 7)

The forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding (v. 7-8)

He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, to be put into effect when the times have reached their fulfillment (v. 9-10)

We were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we might be for the praise of His glory (v. 11-12)

We were included in Christ when we heard the the gospel (v. 13)

Having believed, we were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit (v. 13)

Our inheritance is guaranteed (v. 14)

When we ask, God will give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that we may know Him better (v. 17)

We may also have enlightenment in order that we may know the hope to which He has called us, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power (like resurrection and sovereign power) for us who believe (v. 18-21)

We are part of Christ's church (His Bride, His Body) (v. 22-23)

Because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved (2:1-5)

We have been raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenly realms, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus (v. 6-7)

Your salvation is the gift of God, not your works, so no one can boast (v. 8-9)

You are God's workmanship (work of art), created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (you have a job) (v. 10)

We who were once separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenant of the promise, without hope and without God in the world, now, in Christ, have been brought near through the blood of Christ (v. 11-13)

He Himself is our peace - peace with God and peace between Jew and Gentile (v. 14-17)

We both have access to the Father by one Spirit (v. 18)

We are fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household (v. 19)

We are God's holy temple/dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit (v. 20-22)

Here is a study I did on Eph. 1 awhile back. It was interesting.

1. As saints (someone who has trusted Christ as Savior and Lord) we are set apart as holy (separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God). (Cf. Ro. 10:9-10)
2. We have grace (unmerited favor) and peace (harmony, absence of conflict) from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Cf. Eph. 2)
3. God our Father (indicates intimacy with). We can be intimately acquainted with the Creator of the universe and the Author of our salvation, the Lord (master, owner) Jesus (Yahweh is salvation) Christ (anointed, Messiah).
4. We should praise (speak well of, celebrate His goodness) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because He has blessed (to make happy, cause to prosper) us in the heavenly realms (the position of believers in Christ - 2:6 - where they possess every spiritual blessing) with every spiritual blessing (the blessings that accrue to regenerate man) in Christ. (Cf. John 1:15-18; I Pet. 1:3-5; II Pet. 1:3-4)
5. He chose us (to pick out, select, with kindness and love) in Him before the creation of the world (Gen 1) to be holy (set apart, consecrated) and blameless (without blemish, faultless) *in His sight*. (Cf. Ps. 65:1-4; Mt. 25:34; II Tim. 1:8-12; I Pet. 1:1-2;)
6. In love (sacrificial love) (cf. John 3:16; Ro. 8:28-39; I John 3:16)
7. He predestined us (marked out or predetermined beforehand, from eternity past)
8. To be adopted (a term involving the dignity of the relationship of believers put into the position of sons by the Holy Spirit) as His sons (not just into the family but having all the rights and privileges of sons) through Jesus Christ, (cf. Ro. 8:15-17 with Lk 1:68-75; Gal. 3:26-4:7; Tit. 3:4-7)
9. In accordance with His pleasure and will (desire)—
10. To the praise (commendation, approval) of His glorious (due acknowledgment of the exhibition of His attributes and ways) grace,
11. Which He has freely given us in the One He loves (Jesus). (Cf. Eph. 2:8-10)
12. In Him we have (hold) redemption (release on payment of ransom) through His blood, (cf. Col. 1:13; I Tim. 2:3-6; Heb. 9:11-15)
13. the forgiveness (dismissal, release, remission) of sins (a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness) (cf. I John 1:9)
14. in accordance with the riches (spiritual) of God's grace that He lavished (to make to abound, e. g. to provide a person richly so that he has "abundance") on us with all wisdom and understanding (prudence). (Cf. I Cor. 1:18-2:16; I John 3:1-3)
15. And He made known to us the mystery (that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit; truth revealed - Col. 1:26) of His will (gracious design) (cf. Eph. 3:1-13; Col. 1:24-2:5)
16. according to His good pleasure (gracious purpose, willing resolve), which He purposed (foreordained, set forth with personal interest) in Christ, (cf. Ro. 8:28)
17. to be put into effect (arrangement or administration) when the times will have reached their fulfillment (end of an appointed period)—to bring all things in heaven

and earth together (consummation) under one head (unity), even Christ (God sums up all things in Christ). (Cf. Gal. 4:4; Col. 1:15-23)

18. In Him we were also chosen (assigned a portion), (cf. I Pet. 2:9-10)
19. having been predestined (determined beforehand) according to the plan (purpose) of Him who works out (active, operative) everything in conformity with the purpose of His will (counsel, result of determination), (cf. Is. 55:10-11)
20. in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise (commendation, due acknowledgment) of His glory (the exhibition of His character/attributes and ways/operations). (Cf. Mt. 5:14-16; I Pet. 2:11-12)
21. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word (direct revelation) of truth (in contrast to perversions of it), the gospel (good news) of your salvation (spiritual and eternal deliverance). (Cf. Ro. 10:9-17)
22. Having believed (to place confidence in, to trust; reliance upon, not mere credence), you were marked (ownership and security, together with destination) in Him with a seal, the promised (a gift graciously bestowed) Holy Spirit, (cf. John 14:15-17; Ro. 5:5; 8:9-27; I Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 4:30)
23. who is a deposit (pledge assured by God to believers) guaranteeing our inheritance (perspective condition and possessions of the believer) (cf. II Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5)
24. until the redemption (deliverance of the believer from the presence and power of sin, and of his body from bondage to corruption at the coming of Christ) of those who are God's possession (a thing acquired)— (cf. Job 19:25-27; Ro. 8:18-27; II Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:21-24; 3:20-21)
25. to the praise (commendation, due acknowledgment) of His glory (the exhibition of His character/attributes and ways/operations). (Cf. II Cor. 1:18-20; I Tim. 1:17; Ps 8; 33; 34:1-3; 68:19-20; 89:1-18; 100; 105:1-4; etc.)

1:15-23 = For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith (trust, belief) in the Lord Jesus and your love (agape, self-sacrificing) for all the saints (set apart as holy, separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God), I have not stopped giving thanks (gratefulness) for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father (the source from whom all Divine splendor and perfection proceed in their manifestation, and to whom they belong), may give you the Spirit of wisdom (in spiritual things) and revelation (the communication of the knowledge of God to the soul), so that you may know (full, or thorough knowledge, discernment) Him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart (faculty of knowing) may be enlightened (spiritual enlightenment) in order that you may know (get knowledge of, understand, perceive) the hope (favorable and confident expectation of the unknown and the future) to which He has called (of heavenly origin, nature, and destiny) you, the riches (spiritual and moral) of His glorious inheritance (we are His inheritance) in the saints, and His incomparably (to throw over or beyond) great (mega) power (in action) for us who believe (are persuaded of and confident in). That power (energy) is like the working of His mighty strength (ability, strength afforded by power), which He exerted (active or operative) in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand (place of authority and power) in the heavenly realms, far above all rule (holy and evil angels) and authority, power and dominion (grades in the angelic orders), and

every title (for all that a "name" implies, of authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the "name" covers) that can be given, not only in the present age (indefinite duration) but also in the one to come (necessity and certainty of what is to take place). And God placed (to rank under, subject) all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head (authority, rule) over everything for the church (the company of the redeemed throughout the present era), which is His body (mystic body of Christ, the Church, not the building), the fullness (that which has been completed, the complement) of Him who fills everything in every way (all things in all the members).

**Does it matter who we are or what status we have on earth to be able to enjoy these blessings?**

No. Only that we trust Christ for our salvation. All these blessings come to us from the Father through Christ.

**V. 3 = Give a possible example for this proverb.**

Amateur storm chasers who get themselves, or others, hurt or killed. They should see the danger and take refuge and leave storm chasing to the professionals. Those who are shrewd (wary) wisely avoid the dangers of life. "The simple person is unwary, uncritical, and credulous; he is not equipped to survive in this world and so blunders into trouble."<sup>316</sup> Some people have to learn the hard way, or maybe not at all.

**V. 4 = Again this is a general statement because many believers suffer and lose their wealth or property for the sake of Christ. Compare Mt. 5:10-12. What will we receive instead of earthly wealth, honor and life?**

Spiritual wealth and honor and life. Those who are persecuted because of righteousness will receive the kingdom of heaven. When we suffer for Jesus sake, we have great reward in heaven.

**V. 5 = What might some of these thorns (traps) and snares in the path of the wicked be?**

Consequences of their actions, pride, circumstances God puts there to bring them up short, the law, the hatred and loathing of the righteous, the treachery of their companions or adversaries, their own blindness to the truth, their boldness in doing wrong and thinking they are invincible, etc.

**Why is it so important to guard your soul/heart (cf. 4:23)?**

Because it is the wellspring of life! Everything starts in the heart, and what comes out of a person is the expression of what is already there (cf. Mt. 15:16-20). If we let our hearts follow wrong paths we will soon be going backwards in our faith. Some people think a

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<sup>316</sup> Gaebelin, *op. cit.*, p. 1060.

little won't hurt, but that's how it begins; a little becomes a little more until we are calloused to the Holy Spirit's conviction (cf. I Tim. 4). We must always be on guard, alert to the dangers (I Pet. 5:8-9). Spiritual pride will bring us down every time (cf. I Cor. 10:11-13).

**V. 6 = "Train" means "to put something into the mouth, to give to be tasted".<sup>317</sup> Another way to put it would be "to create a hunger in." Why is this important in the raising of a child? (Cf. Dt. 6; Ps. 119:33)**

Because a child needs to develop a healthy desire to love and please God. "Early training secures habitual walking in it."<sup>318</sup> (character forming) Just like a desire for certain foods we love, we need to desire to do God's will and please Him because we love Him. This desire can't be forced on anyone; it is "caught" more than taught. A child needs to see that their parents' faith is vitally important to them and how it works out in real life, through good times and bad times. They need to see that their love for God envelops and consumes every part of their being (heart, soul and strength) in every aspect of life (when you sit at home, walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up). God's Word should permeate their hearts and have a prominent place in the home. It should be constantly talked about and not forgotten, and when children ask questions, always be ready to give them an answer from God's Word. Parents shouldn't dabble in the things of this world because it leads to sin and is a poor example. If children are taught and memorize God's Word they will remember it later in life when they need it. "There is only one right way—the way of life—and the educational discipline which directs young men along this way is uniform."<sup>319</sup>

**Why is it so important to live out the truth in front of your children and grandchildren? (Cf. Eph. 6:4)**

Because if they can't see that your life backs up your words then they will throw out God's truth and rebel. If it isn't real to you, why should they devote their lives to it? If you're no different than the world, why should they be any different? If you force them to go to church but don't go yourself, or your church face doesn't match your rest of the week face then they will see the hypocrisy and be just like you or totally resistant to God's truth. You can't expect them to do what you say but not what you do. You may rouse them to wrath (exasperate -Eph. 6:4) instead of winning them to Christ.

Remember, many of these proverbs are general truths brought to bear on specific situations, not absolute guarantees. Many Godly parents have raised children in the fear of the LORD only to sadly watch them rebel and turn against Him.

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<sup>317</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H2596&t=NIV>; Prov. 22:6

<sup>318</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/jfb/Pro/Pro\\_022.cfm?a=650012](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/jfb/Pro/Pro_022.cfm?a=650012); Commentary by A. R. Fausett

<sup>319</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1062.

## **V. 7, 26-27 = How is it that the rich rule over the poor?**

They have the power and resources to control others where the poor do well just to survive.

## **Why is the borrower servant to the lender?**

Because the borrower owes the lender, and until the debt is repaid the lender can legally take what he has or put him in servitude to get back his money or item. The Israelites often sold themselves into slavery to pay off debts (cf. Ex. 21:2-7). You are never really free while in debt! "Diligent people are careful not to incur debts they can't handle... It's a dangerous thing for people to become greedy for more and more money and to overextend themselves to acquire it. Each of us must discover at what financial level God wants us to live and be content with it" (Prov. 30:7-9).<sup>320</sup> A good Depression era saying to live by is "Use it up, wear it out; make it do, or do without." We'd all be surprised at how much money we'd have left over if we did this.

## **What happens if you can't repay a debt?**

Your very bed can be snatched from under you, all the things for bare survival.

## **What should you do to get out of such a predicament? (Cf. 6:1-5)**

Go and humble yourself and press your plea with the lender. Do everything you can to get out of debt in a Godly manner. If it takes months and years to do it, then so be it. But don't run up more debt in the meantime, and bankruptcy is usually "legal theft."

## **V. 8 = Compare Gal. 6:7-8. What are we talking about here?**

Consequences! You reap what you sow. When we sow to please the sinful nature (or flesh - Gal. 5:19-21) we reap destruction (bad consequences and/or eternal death). When we sow to please the Spirit, from the Spirit we reap eternal life (good consequences - Gal. 5:22-26). The idea is to live by, or keep in step with (cadence) the Spirit so you don't gratify those fleshly desires.

"The symbol of the rod here represents his power for doing evil. One would conclude that in reaping trouble this fellow will no longer be able to unleash his fury."<sup>321</sup> (manipulative techniques)

## **V. 9 = What does it mean to be generous?**

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<sup>320</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>321</sup> Gaebelain, *op. cit.*, p. 1062.

To be characterized by a noble or kindly spirit; to be liberal in giving.<sup>322</sup>  
"A good eye" (benevolent disposition, keen social conscience, and concern for the poor) as opposed to the "evil eye" that is stingy and covetous.<sup>323</sup>

### **Why are those who are generous blessed?**

Because they share what they have with those in need. They have a heart like God, full of compassion. Their acts show what is in their hearts. They are genuine.

### **What does generosity say about a person?**

That they aren't just thinking about themselves, but others; that they want to please God. They are following the great commandments: Love God and love others (Mt. 22:34-40). "Because he is not the prisoner of his selfish desires, he achieves the highest degree of self-fulfillment."<sup>324</sup>

### **V. 10 = Why does getting rid of a mocker end strife, quarreling and insults?**

Because a mocker is one who enjoys stirring others up and quarreling for the sake of quarreling. They are toxic and spread the infection. They insult or attack their opponents (ad hominem argument) instead of facing the truth or refuting it. Before any serious discussions can happen he must be thrown out. All it takes is one stubborn troublemaker to destroy the unity in a family, church or Bible study group.

### **What is it about a mocker that stirs things up?**

They make fun of the truth or the one who speaks it; they aren't happy unless everyone else is thrown off kilter because they really don't have the answers. (Cf. II Tim. 3:1-9; II Pet. 3:3-7)

### **V. 11 = Why would a king want someone like this for his friend?**

Because this is someone he can trust and who has a good way with people.

### **David had a friend named Hushai? Read II Sam. 15:32-37; 16:15-17:23. What did Hushai do to help his friend?**

He went back into the lion's den (Absalom's lair). He had to be a man of gracious speech to work his way into Absalom's graces.

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<sup>322</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/generous>

<sup>323</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1063.

<sup>324</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1063.

### **What kind of position did this put him in?**

A dangerous one. He was taking his life in his hands by doing this because if Absalom found out he was being tricked he could have had Hushai killed in a moment!

### **Why would Hushai be willing to do this?**

Because David was his friend and needed him to get information and change the thinking of Absalom so he could escape. Ahithophel was known for giving wise advice, but God through Hushai frustrated that good advice to bring about Absalom's demise. Hushai was willing to lay down his life for his friend.

### **V. 12 = What does the first part of this verse mean?**

God guards the truth/knowledge (its principles and possessors). Truth doesn't change. God ensures that truth, not deception, succeeds.

### **How does the second part fit in with what we just learned about Ahithophel in II Sam 16-17?**

Ahithophel had become unfaithful to God and to David because of his frustration over his granddaughter Bathsheba (II Sam. 11:3; 23:34) and that whole scenario. He chose to side with Absalom (II Sam. 15:12, 31) but God frustrated his wise advice. Maybe because he had lost face or because he knew Absalom would fail to usurp the throne, he went home, put his house in order, and committed suicide.

### **V. 13 = What is the sluggard doing when he says things like this?**

Making frivolous/absurd excuses not to work. But it just makes him look like a fool/ridiculous. "Evangelist Billy Sunday defined an excuse as 'the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie,' and he was right. People who are good at making excuses are rarely good at doing anything else."<sup>325</sup>

### **V. 14 = What is meant by the "mouth of an adulteress"?**

Her sly, conniving, flattering and seductive speech that convinces a man to sleep with her (cf. 6:20-7:27), leading to destruction (sin and its punishment).

### **Compare Eccl. 7:26. How does one escape the snare of an adulteress/adulterer?**

Live to please God, then you will recognize the trap and avoid it, escape. Those who are under the LORD's wrath will either be oblivious to the danger, find excuses, or not care about the consequences; they will fall into the pit.

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<sup>325</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

### **V. 15 = Why is folly bound up (firmly fixed) even in the heart of a child?**

Because they are born with a sin nature (arrogance, flippancy, hardness of heart, etc.) and want to please themselves just like anyone else.

### **Why is discipline (corporal punishment) so necessary to save a child from his folly?**

Because corporal punishment is a strong deterrent and leads to a change in principle(s) (character adjustment). "As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined."<sup>326</sup> When there is no threat of punishment the child does what he wants. When he knows punishment will be exacted he thinks twice about doing something wrong, especially if he has been brought up to fear God as well as his parents. This gives the child a more hopeful future. A child has to learn to respect authority, whether God, parents, teachers, the judicial system, etc.

### **V. 16 = Why are these two things wrong, and why do they eventually lead to poverty?**

These two things have the same root desire: to get rich, have power.

Oppressing the poor (extortion) is harming those who have no power to protect themselves or retaliate. God constantly warns about this in Scripture, and rather, encourages openhandedness to those who are in need (cf. Dt. 15:1-11). God is the protector of the poor. Harming them brings judgment from Him!

Giving gifts or bribes to the rich so you can get on their "good" side is not the right way to handle things either. This is a way of trying to avoid retribution or consequences for doing something wrong/shady and/or gain wealth/status/influence/favoritism.

### **What other kind of poverty might a person like this end up with?**

Poverty of spirit. A person like this is so consumed with self that they miss the joy and richness of living a life of honor and integrity. Most likely they aren't saved either which has even direr consequences.

### **V. 17-21 = Why did Solomon write down the sayings of the wise?**

To teach true and reliable words.

### **What purposes do they have?**

1. It is pleasing to have them in your heart and ready on your lips (pleasant store of wisdom).

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<sup>326</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

2. To teach us to trust in the LORD deeper.
3. So we can give sound answers (reliability).

### **Why is it important to apply what we learn and have it ready to answer others?**

So we can give Godly and accurate advice/counsel to others who seek it and share our faith (cf. Col. 4:5-6; I Pet. 3:15-16). It's worthless to have a Bible and not study it and take it to heart.

### **Who do they teach us to ultimately trust?**

The LORD, our Creator and Sustainer.

### **How are these sayings described?**

Wise, pleasing, counsel (advice), knowledge (instruction), true, reliable, sound. Anyone with a grain of sense would find them desirable!

### **V. 22-23 = Who is the protector of the poor and needy?**

God. The LORD will take up their case (court) and will plunder those who plunder them. (Cf. Prov. 17:5; Ps 12:5-8) It is contemptible to rob the defenseless poor, but since it is usually easy it is quite tempting as well.

### **Read Amos 4:1-3. Why did God promise to punish the women of Israel?**

Because these "cows" oppressed the poor and crushed the needy. They sat around and demanded their husbands wait on them so they could get drunk. "It is a cowherd's rough picture of women: a troop of kine-heavy, heedless animals, trampling in their anxiety for food upon every frail and lowly object in the way."<sup>327</sup> In their luxury they are thoughtless and brutish. They will get a dose of their own medicine from God.

### **Read Dt. 15:1-11. What did God command regarding the poor?**

At the end of every seven years they were to cancel any debt owed them by a fellow Israelite. They were not to be hardhearted or tightfisted toward their poor brothers. Instead, they were to be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they needed. They were to be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: "The seventh year, the year for canceling debts is near," so they didn't show ill will to their needy brethren and give them nothing. This was sin (Ja. 4:17). If they gave generously, without a grudging heart, then God would richly bless them.

Quite an example for us! We have found it is better to lend without expecting anything in return and trust God to take care of us.

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<sup>327</sup> <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/expositors/amos/4.htm>

### **V. 24-25 = Why is it unwise to make friends with someone who is hot-tempered?**

Because you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared (cf. Prov. 3:31-32; 16:29; 19:19; 30:32-33). Their ways could prove injurious or even fatal. Choose your friends wisely.

### **What does God say about anger in Eccl. 7:9 and Eph. 4:26-27?**

Eccl. 7:9 says, "Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools." So God equates those who give in to unrighteous anger with a fool.

Eph. 4:26-27 says, "In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold" ("opportunity, power, occasion for acting"<sup>328</sup>). Being angry with sin/evil isn't wrong, per se, but what we do with that anger is what matters. When we hold on to it, or are angry with the person rather than the sin, we are in danger of letting Satan have an opportunity to derail us into sin instead of righteousness.

### **V. 26-27 = We've hit this theme several times in Proverbs. Why is it foolish to put your name as a second on someone else's loan? (Cf. 22:7)**

Because if they don't pay the loan back it falls on you, and if you don't have the means to pay it you could lose everything you have, including your good name; your very bed could be snatched from under you ("the shirt off your back" or "everything but the kitchen sink"). Don't make rash promises and become foolishly entangled in others' financial problems. You are never really free as long as you owe someone (22:7).

### **V. 28 = The land was very important in Israel as part of God's Covenant and their inheritance. What does God say about moving boundary stones?**

Don't do it! (Dt. 19:14; 27:17; Job 24:2; Prov. 23:10-11; Hos. 5:10) Those who do are under God's wrath and cursed.

### **What are you doing when you move one?**

Stealing someone's inheritance, given by God. "The boundaries were sacred because God owned the land and had given it to the fathers as their inheritance."<sup>329</sup> A person could easily extend their own property by moving the stones (fences today) at the

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<sup>328</sup> <http://biblehub.com/greek/5117.htm>

<sup>329</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1067.

boundary lines, but to do so was a "major violation of covenant and oath... No law will protect people when integrity is absent."<sup>330</sup>

**Read I Ki. 21. Why did Naboth refuse to sell Ahab his vineyard?**

It was the inheritance of his fathers.

**Why did God send Elijah to pronounce judgment on Ahab and Jezebel?**

Because he had murdered a man (and his sons - II Ki. 9:24-26) and seized his property.

**V. 29 = Why would a king want a skilled man to work for him?**

Because he wants the best, not a slipshod job. Someone who is diligent, prompt and skillful in their work is often promoted.

**Read II Chron. 2. What kind of man did Solomon want to oversee the work on the temple? Why?**

A man skilled, experienced. Because the temple had to be great, large and magnificent because God is greater than all other gods. It was not meant to contain Him but to offer sacrifices to Him.

**What kind of man did Hiram send him?**

Hurum-Abi, a man of *great* skill, trained and experienced. It's amazing all the things this man had the ability to do. (Cf. Ex. 35:30-36:1)

**Homework for Proverbs 23**

**V. 1-3 = Compare Ps. 141:3-4. When you eat with a person what does that usually mean?**

**On the other hand, you may crave the luxuries of the wealthy but what can they lead to?**

**And what usually happens when a person who is not used to delicacies and wine indulges in too much?**

**V. 4-5 = Why should a person not make their whole focus the gaining of wealth?**

**What can happen to earthly wealth? (Cf. I Tim. 6:17-19)**

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<sup>330</sup> Gaebelin, *ibid.*

**Read I Tim. 6:6-10. What is more important than wealth?**

**What can happen to those who want to get rich?**

**V. 6-8 = Why should you avoid eating the food/delicacies of a stingy man?**

**Why would you have wasted your compliments?**

**V. 9 = Compare Mt. 7:6. Why is it worthless to speak wisdom to a fool?**

**V. 10-11 = Refer back to 22:28. Who took up the case against Ahab and Jezebel when they murdered Naboth and seized his inheritance?**

**Who does God especially defend? Why?**

**Even when people get away with such things here on earth, who will they ultimately have to give account to? (II Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27)**

**But what is God's heart in the matter? (Cf. I Ki. 21:27-29; Ez. 18:30-32; II Pet. 3:8-9)**

**V. 12 = Why is this so important? (Cf. 22:17-21)**

**Read Prov. 2-3 and jot down all the benefits of wisdom and knowledge?**

**V. 13-14 = Compare 19:18 and 22:15. What benefits does discipline hold? Are they just physical? Explain.**

**V. 15-16, 22-25 = According to these proverbs what makes a parent glad?**

**Why is this so? (Cf. III Jo. 2-4)**

**Why should we listen to our parents?**

**V. 17-18 = Why is it wrong, even dangerous to envy sinners? (Cf. 24:19-20)**

**Read Ps. 73. What had Asaph done? Why?**

**What did he think at first?**

**What changed his mind?**

**What did he have in comparison to the wicked?**

**What should we be zealous for instead? (Cf. Ro. 12:11)**

**What does it mean to fear the LORD? (Cf. Ex. 20:1-21; Prov. 3:7; 14:16)**

**What is our future hope? (Cf. Ro. 5:1-11; 8:12-25; II Cor. 5:1-10; Heb. 6:13-20; 12:14-29; I Pet. 1:3-9)**

**V. 19-21 = Why is it so important to guard your heart? (Cf. 4:23)**

**How do we do this? (Cf. 3:5-6)**

**Why is it foolish to join drunkards and gluttons? (Cf. I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:1-7)**

**V. 26-28 = Read Prov. 5 and 22:14. Describe the prostitute/adulteress.**

**What is the result of not heeding the wisdom of a father?**

**V. 29-35 = How is the drunkard described? (Also v. 20-21)**

**Why can alcohol be so attractive?**

**Is it really? (Cf. Prov. 20:1; Is. 28:7-8)**

**What is drunkenness a sign of? (Cf. Is. 5:11-17, 21-25)**

**What will God do to those who are habitually drunk? (Also I Cor. 6:9-10)**

## Homework for Proverbs 23

### **V. 1-3 = Compare Ps. 141:3-4. When you eat with a person what does that usually mean?**

That you agree with their lifestyle and may take part in their evil deeds, or that you are being honored in some way, or that it is a setup and the ruler has ulterior motives. You shouldn't indulge in a ruler's food because it could either ruin your chances for advancement, or the ruler wants something from you or is observing you. His impressive feast may not be what it seems.

### **On the other hand, you may crave the luxuries of the wealthy but what can they lead to?**

They are deceptive and may give you a bellyache if you're not used to them. Plus the lifestyles of the rich and famous aren't always as nice as they may appear. Seeking to ingratiate yourself with them may lead to sin and your downfall.

### **And what usually happens when a person who is not used to delicacies and wine indulges in too much?**

They may overindulge and become sick or drunk and so make fools of themselves. You should be on your best behavior (humble and restrained, don't gorge) when dining with someone of position, and also be aware of the dangers. (Remember Naboth -I Ki. 21)

### **V. 4-5 = Why should a person not make their whole focus the gaining of wealth?**

It takes their focus off of pleasing God and onto pleasing themselves. We should use our energies to serve our Lord not burn ourselves out to get rich (workaholics).

### **What can happen to earthly wealth? (Cf. I Tim. 6:17-19)**

Earthly riches are temporary and can disappear as fast as they come. "In the ancient world the figure of a bird flying off symbolized fleeting wealth. It is therefore folly to be a slave to it."<sup>331</sup> Wealth is uncertain at best and gives us no standing with God. Only what we do for God with a willing and pure heart matters. In this way we take hold of the life that is truly life. We should put our hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment! (Cf. Lk. 12:13-34)

### **Read I Tim. 6:6-10. What is more important than wealth?**

Godliness with contentment (Phil. 4:10-19). We need to understand that we brought nothing into this world and we're taking nothing out! There are no trailer hitches on caskets. As long as we have our basic needs met we should be content.

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<sup>331</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1068.

## **What can happen to those who want to get rich?**

They fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (Cf. Lk. 16:13-15)

## **V. 6-8 = Why should you avoid eating the food/delicacies of a stingy man?**

Because he is always thinking about the cost (feigning generosity; "evil eye" versus "bountiful eye" in 22:9<sup>332</sup>). He may have put on a feast or invited you to save face, but his enthusiasm is a coverup for his lack of true generosity and hospitality.

## **Why would you have wasted your compliments?**

Because his heart is not with you; he is being hypocritical. He will begrudge you every bite you have eaten. And when you realize you were not welcome you will be repulsed and wish you could vomit up the little you did eat. "Eating and drinking [with him] is as if one should swallow a hair."<sup>333</sup> Stingy people make social occasions unpleasant.

## **V. 9 = Compare Mt. 7:6. Why is it worthless to speak wisdom to a fool ("dull, thick-headed, stubborn"<sup>334</sup>)?**

Because he does not welcome and will scorn the wisdom of your words. It's like giving something nice to dogs, or throwing pearls to pigs. They will trample them and then may turn on you to harm you. The fool doesn't appreciate any wisdom but his own. (Cf. Prov. 1:20-33) "Some hate the critic in direct proportion to the justification of the criticism."<sup>335</sup>

## **V. 10-11 = Refer back to 22:28. Who took up the case against Ahab and Jezebel when they murdered Naboth and seized his inheritance?**

God. He sent the prophet Elijah to pronounce judgment on them.

**Who does God especially defend** (Defender = "*goel*, a person responsible for meeting the needs of a troubled or defenseless close relative"<sup>336</sup>)? **Why?**

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<sup>332</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1068.

<sup>333</sup> Gaebelien, *op. cit.*, p. 1069.

<sup>334</sup> Walvoord, *op. cit.*, p. 956.

<sup>335</sup> Gaebelien, *ibid.*

<sup>336</sup> Walvoord, *ibid.*

The orphans and the widows (Dt. 10:17-18; Ps. 10:14, 17-18; 68:5; 82:3; 146:9). Because they have no one else to defend them, especially in a godless society.

**Even when people get away with such things here on earth, who will they ultimately have to give account to? (II Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27)**

God. We must all give an account for what we did here in this life.

**But what is God's heart in the matter? (Cf. I Ki. 21:27-29; Ez. 18:30-32; II Pet. 3:8-9)**

That sinners repent in humility and be saved.

**I Ki. 21:27-29** = God delayed judgment on Ahab because he humbled himself and went around meekly. Whether he was truly saved or not is not known, but God saw it and put off the disaster He had threatened.

**Ez. 18:30-32** = "Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? *For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!*"

**II Pet. 3:8-9** = "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. *He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*"

**V. 12 = Why is this so important? (Cf. 22:17-21)** This is an introductory verse to sayings 11-30.

Because we need to grow in the knowledge and instruction of the LORD, and to always have a sound answer ready for those who ask about our faith in Christ. Learning with diligence and paying attention to His Word also helps us to trust Him more. God's truth never changes; it is true and reliable.

**Read Prov. 2-3 and jot down all the benefits of wisdom and knowledge?**

Chapter 2: When we seek God's wisdom with all our hearts, then we will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God (v. 5). Through God we gain victory and have His protection (v. 7-8). We will understand what is right and just and fair— every good path (v. 9). Wisdom and knowledge will be pleasant to our souls, and discretion and understanding will guard us (v. 10-11). Wisdom will save us from the ways of wicked and perverse men (v. 12-15). We will be saved from adultery and death (v. 16-19). If we seek God's wisdom we will walk in the ways of good and righteous men, and live in the land (God's blessing - v. 20-22).

Chapter 3: God's wisdom prolongs our lives and brings prosperity (v. 1-2). We will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man (v. 3-4). God will direct our paths (v.

5-6). Fearing God and shunning evil brings physical health (v. 7-8). When we honor God with our best we will be blessed (v. 9-10). God disciplines those He loves (v. 11-12). Those who find wisdom and understanding are blessed spiritually and physically (long life, riches, honor, pleasant ways, peace, health - v. 13-18). We understand God created the heavens and the earth (v. 19-20). Sound judgment and discernment are life and honor for us. We have safety and don't need to fear; our sleep will be sweet. We don't need to fear sudden disaster for the LORD will be our confidence and protection (v. 21-26). We will treat others right (v. 27-30). We won't envy the violent and perverse but will be taken into the LORD's confidence (v. 31-32). The LORD will bless our home and give us grace and honor (v. 33-35).

**V. 13-14 = Compare 19:18 and 22:15. What benefits does discipline hold? Are they just physical? Explain.**

It will not cause a child's death, but will help a child understand the folly of their ways and save their soul from death (physical and spiritual/moral, emotional and social too). It gives them hope for this life and the afterlife. To die prematurely from folly/stupidity would be a consequence of not being trained or not obeying the training.

When God disciplines us it is for our good, so we will be more like Him. He loves us and wants us to share in His holiness, righteousness and peace (Heb. 12:4-11). He is our example when disciplining children and grandchildren.

**V. 15-16, 22-25 = According to these proverbs what makes a parent glad?**

15-16 = When a child has a wise heart and speaks what is right before God and man (direct and honest - no discrepancy between words and intentions).

22-25 = When a child listens to their parent's wisdom and seeks wisdom, discipline and understanding; when they are righteous and wise.

**Why is this so? (Cf. III Jo. 2-4)**

Because it means they are on the right path and will do well in life, avoiding the pitfalls of evil because they are seeking God and His truth. As the Apostle John said to his friend Gaius, "It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." I know I am filled with joy and excitement when I hear my own children (and others we have taken in, plus fellow believers) are seeking the Lord and growing in their faith. It is inspiring and encouraging.

**Why should we listen to our parents?**

Because they have years of life experience and gathered wisdom, plus, if they are growing believers they have Godly wisdom as well. Also, listening to them is part of honoring them (Ex. 20:12). They are our primary source of wisdom. Of course, not

everyone has Godly or even good parents, but God often substitutes a grandparent, close relative or friend who can share God's wisdom to a child or young person.

### **V. 17-18 = Why is it wrong, even dangerous to envy sinners? (Cf. 24:19-20)**

Because evil people have no future hope and they will die in their sin unless they repent.

### **Read Ps. 73. What had Asaph done? Why?**

He had envied the arrogant when he saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Because they seemed to have everything going for them: no struggles, healthy and strong, free from burdens and human ills common to others; they were full of pride, violence, iniquity, evil conceit beyond limit; they scoff, speak with malice, threaten oppression; they claim heaven but take possession of the earth, saying, "God doesn't see or care." They seem to always be carefree and increasing in wealth.

### **What did he think at first?**

That he had remained pure and innocent in vain, only to suffer. If he had spoken in his oppression in such a way he would have betrayed other believers. He was grieved, embittered, senseless and ignorant, wanting revenge (brute beast).

### **What changed his mind?**

He entered the sanctuary of God (holiness) and understood the final destiny of the wicked. They are on slippery ground and God will judge them, destroy them, and despise them as fantasies. They have no power over God.

### **What did he have in comparison to the wicked?**

God's presence, guidance, counsel, and an eternal home in heaven. Nothing on earth could compare with his relationship to God. Even if his body failed, God was his strength and portion forever. It was good to be near God and make Him his refuge, and tell of all His deeds (faithfulness).

### **What should we be zealous for instead? (Cf. Ro. 12:11)**

The fear of the LORD. "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."

### **What does it mean to fear the LORD? (Cf. Ex. 20:1-21; Prov. 3:7; 14:16)**

To hold Him in awe, respect, reverence, so that we keep His commands and don't sin.

Ex. 20:1-21 = God spoke to the people from Mt Sinai and gave them the 10 Commandments. When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear and were afraid to have God speak any more or they would die. But Moses said, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."  
Prov. 3:7 = "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil."  
Prov. 14:16 = "A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless."

**What is our future hope? (Cf. Ro. 5:1-11; 8:12-25; II Cor. 5:1-10; Heb. 6:13-20; 12:14-29; I Pet. 1:3-9)**

**Ro. 5:1-11** = We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. This also causes us to rejoice in our sufferings because they produce in us Godly character. This hope (confidence) does not disappoint us because God has poured out His love (enough to die for us when we were His enemies) into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. We are reconciled to God and don't need to fear His wrath.

**Ro. 8:12-25** = We are God's adopted children with full rights as heirs (positional). (We have the privilege of calling Him "Daddy.") This fallen world is nothing compared to the glory to follow, the glorious freedom of the children of God. We wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies (ultimate). (Cf. Phil. 3:20-21)

**II Cor. 5:1-10** = God has given us His Spirit guaranteeing our eternal body in heaven. We long for this!

**Heb. 6:13-20** = We who have fled to Jesus for salvation have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. We have access into the very presence of God.

**Heb. 12:14-29** = We don't have to come to God in fear. We come in the faith and confidence that we are part of the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. We have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly. To the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. We have come to God, the Judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, so let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."

**I Pet. 1:3-9** = We have been given new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.

**V. 19-21 = Why is it so important to guard your heart? (Cf. 4:23)**

Because it is the wellspring of life. Everything starts in the heart.

**How do we do this? (Cf. 3:5-6)**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart (inner man, mind, will) and lean not on your own understanding (don't depend on yourself; support yourself): in all your ways (road,

journey) acknowledge Him (know Him) and He will direct (make smooth, straight, right) your paths. <sup>337</sup>

**Why is it foolish to join drunkards and gluttons? (Cf. I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:1-7)**

Instead of going to work they are sleeping off their excess and end up poor. Drunks and gluttons are the epitome of the lack of discipline; they are stubborn and rebellious. "Time, energy, money, and opportunity are wasted when leisure and pleasure control a person's life."<sup>338</sup> Drunkenness and gluttony are usually symptoms of much deeper problems.

I Cor. 6:9-11 = Those whose lives remain unchanged by the salvation of Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit will not inherit the kingdom of God. God considers them wicked. Gal. 5:19-21 = These are acts of the sinful nature. Those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. When we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit we should live differently. Eph. 5:1-7 = There shouldn't even be a hint of these because they are improper for God's holy people (idolatry). People like this have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God, instead God's wrath abides on them. Do not be partners with such folks.

This doesn't mean a true believer won't slip up occasionally, but in general, these things shouldn't define their lives. (Cf. II Pet. 1:3-11; I John 1:5-2:6, 15-17) If they refuse to repent God has the option of pulling their plug! (Cf. I Cor. 5). Only God truly knows the heart, but believers should not associate with those who call themselves fellow believers but live this way.

**V. 26-28 = Read Prov. 5 and 22:14. Describe the prostitute/adulteress.**

The prostitute is a deep pit and the wayward wife is a narrow well. The danger is active; she pursues/lies in wait for her prey, and multiplies the unfaithful among men.

Prov. 5 = The lips of an adulterous drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not. She ruins a man. A man should not let his sex life be known to the public, but he should be faithful to his wife and love her. Besides, God sees what we do. The wicked man will die for lack of discipline, let astray by his own great folly.

Prov. 22:14 = "The mouth of an adulterous is a deep pit; he who is under the LORD's wrath will fall into it."

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<sup>337</sup> <http://biblehub.com/hebrew/734.htm>

<sup>338</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

## **What is the result of not heeding the wisdom of a father?**

Sin, ruination and death!

## **V. 29-35 = How is the drunkard described? (Also v. 20-21)**

He has woe and sorrow, strife and complaints, he picks quarrels and fights with resulting bruises, is enamored with the beautiful color and poisons his system with alcohol, gets bloodshot eyes, loses control, is confused, is unable to speak clearly, imagines things, is insensitive to pain, he raves on and on, and becomes drowsy resulting in poverty.

## **Why can alcohol be so attractive?**

It can be a social thing. It has a beautiful color and sparkles in the cup, it goes down smoothly.

## **Is it really? (Cf. Prov. 20:1; Is. 28:7-8)**

No. Excessive drinking will, in the end, bite like a snake and poison like a viper. You have a warped view of reality and act like a fool. You become a slave to it.

Prov. 20:1 = "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise."

Is. 28:7-8 = "And these also stagger from wine and reel from beer: priests and prophets stagger from beer and are befuddled with wine; they reel from beer, they stagger when seeing visions, they stumble when rendering decisions. All the tables are covered with vomit and there is not a spot without filth."

Not a pretty picture!

Note: Wine is mentioned dozens of times in the O. T. and was considered a gift from God, along with oil and bread (Ps. 104:15; see also Gen. 27:28 and Dt. 7:13). God doesn't forbid the use of alcohol, just the abuse of it. A Japanese proverb says: "First the man takes a drink; then the drink takes a drink; then the drink takes the man."<sup>339</sup> As believers we shouldn't be controlled by anything except the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

## **What is drunkenness a sign of? (Cf. Is. 5:11-17, 21-25)**

They have no regard for the deeds of the LORD, no respect for the work of His hands. It shows a lack of understanding and arrogance. They are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight (fools). They have rejected the law of the LORD Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel. They are under God's wrath.

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<sup>339</sup> Wiersbe, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

**What will God do to those who are habitually drunk? (Also I Cor. 6:9-10)**

They will not inherit the kingdom of God but will be thrown into hell. (Rev. 20:11-15; 21:27) Thank God for His mercy and grace to those who repent!