

Proverbs for Wisdom

“The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom”

Studies on the Book of Proverbs



By

B R O O K Y R S T O C K T O N

Proverbs for Wisdom

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Fred Bergloff -- lifetime friend, brother in Christ, and a lover of Holy Scripture whose insights into Proverbs inspired me to go deeper into the Wisdom of Solomon.

PREFACE

Like Charles Dickens, we live in “the best of times, and the worst of times.”

Who hasn't listened to the nightly news and concluded that madmen rule the world?

Frustrated with listening to the agenda driven media reports, I started my devotions plowing through Proverbs and was blessed by Solomon's gems.

I realized that all the foolishness we see in politics has its roots in the depravity of human nature that Solomon understood thousands of years ago.

Daily news reports announce current events and the Book of Proverbs sheds Heaven's light upon the reasons so much chaos in world is happening.

Your eyes may be opened to the insights into each of Solomon's 900 proverbs as wisdom unfolds in your own studies. May you gain deep insight into human nature and avoid entrapment by fools in our own time.

Oh, that all of us had his wisdom when we first launched our ships into the sea of commerce. Unfortunately, we don't learn Proverbs and live life, we live life, and then learn proverbs.

Men will search the caverns of the earth to find gold, but few will search the darkness to find grace. Though we live in black times, let us search for wisdom that is more precious than rubies (Job 28:18).

This work, of course is unfinished. Learning, writing, and editing are forever. Enjoy! May the Lord help you to build on the strengths of the wise, and to avoid the errors of the simple.

Brooky Stockton

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS



Figure 1 Upsplash

♦ Called the wisest man who ever lived, this collection of Proverbs is food for the spirit, a candle for the mind, and a torch for the emotions.

Solomon (971-931 BC) is not the only contributor to the Book, but he is the preeminent author.

Proverbs is a study on human nature and the character of God.

Daily news reports announce the foolishness of the day. To know why it happened, read the Book of Proverbs. This collection of axioms is pure ethical truth and at times hard to appreciate, but take his wisdom seriously.

The wisdom in this book is grounded on the "Fear of the LORD" which Solomon learned from his father, King David; that is, the Book of Proverbs is constructed on his father's work.

Psalms deals with the struggles and victories of a man walking with God -- of his struggles with the anomalies in that relationship. Solomon's insights deal with conflicts among people. Psalms is vertical, Proverbs is horizontal; Psalms applies truth upward, Proverbs applies truth outward; Psalms is cotton to the soul; and, Proverbs is burlap to the skin. Psalms rebukes and comforts the soul in relationship to the Lord, Proverbs rebukes and corrects the character of the soul in relation to his interaction with other sinners: wives, sons, friends, co-workers, and society in general.

Because "every man has a fool up one sleeve," Solomon penned these adages to protect his son from fools in his day, and to equip him to be a wise king.

Likewise, studying the Book of Proverbs can protect the reader from fools in Universities, in government, and in the media. Likewise, the one who learns the principles of this book will depart from evil and live a life of love.

In studying Solomon's 900 proverbs notice Solomon's priorities, values, principles, comparisons, and contrasts.

To make wisdom stick in the mind, Solomon embraces a literary form called "synonymous, synthetic, and antithetic" parallelism; that is, the first second

stanza in the couplet either supports, contrasts, or restates the thought in the first stanza.

1 Kings 4:32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

Discern his use of literary devices: allusion, euphemism, allegory, imagery, symbolism, alliteration, personification, and the figurative language he uses as nails to hammer truth into the walls of hearts and minds. However, a cursory look at Proverbs may frustrate the reader because truth is often veiled behind parables. Some principles like “depart from evil” are so simple we miss the profound significance of the epigram. In reading Proverbs, you are looking at pure truth and pure light. All of us need the Spirit’s help not only to see the simplicity of the truth presented, but grace to apply it to our own lives.

Life is a paradox: You don't learn Proverbs and live life, you live life, and then learn proverbs.

The mark of intelligence is the skill of observation. See, hear, and learn. The mark of a wise man is his ability to appropriately apply knowledge to his own life. Know, discern, and apply!

This commentary is my attempt to restate, clarify, and illustrate Solomon’s proverbs. While the King James Bible has served us well, it contains many archaisms familiar to the 16th century mind to which modern readers are unfamiliar. Moreover, the KJV’s antique English grammar in parts of Proverbs tends to cloud communication rather than clarify. Thus, the English reader may find it helpful to refer to other translations in reading this commentary.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 1

PROVERBS OF SOLOMON, SON OF DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL: SECTION ONE (1:1-9:18)

לַאֵלֹהִים יִלְמָדוּ דְבַר חָכְמָה וְיִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת צִוְיֹתָיו

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS



♦ Called the wisest man who ever lived, this collection of Proverbs is food for the spirit, a candle for the mind, and a torch for the emotions.

Because "every man has a fool up one sleeve," Solomon penned these adages to arm his son with wisdom, and to make wise men out of fools. Sometimes Solomon speaks as a father-king, and at other times as a king-father.

Life is a paradox: You don't learn Proverbs and live life, you live life, and then learn proverbs.

The mark of intelligent men is the skill of observation. See, hear, and learn. The mark of a wise man is his ability to appropriately apply knowledge to this own life. Know, Discern, and Apply!

Proverbs 1:1 The Proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;

The Hebrew word for "proverbs" is *mashal* -- the first word in the Book. The first letter of *mashal* in Hebrew is a **Mem** – the symbol of the womb; that is, Proverbs gives birth to wise sayings. Further, the Mem is an ENLARGE **Mem** in the Hebrew. According to Jewish tradition, Solomon fasted 40 days and nights so to prepare himself for the “open” revelation from the LORD.

The root verb of *mashal* describes the act of dominion or ruling and it is used 17 times in the Book. The word is translated “rule” in Genesis 1:18; 3:16; 4:7; “power” in Exodus 21:8; “parable” in Numbers 23:7; and, “rulers” in Judges 15:11; and, “reigned” in 1 Kings 4:21; that is, the Book of Proverbs are absolute rules for living.

Thus, knowing these proverbs is essential to fulfill the most fundamental purpose of man on earth: (1) to “replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over

every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28). and our Lord’s dominion mandate: (2) “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

A proverb is a short, crisp, pithy saying that summarizes a moral principle or essential skill. Solomon shucks the husks of hypocrisy away from the cob so we can get to the kernel of truth that produces good character and happiness.

In studying these proverbs we are NOT looking at nice sayings, but pure truth – the Word of God in all its royal authority and majesty – matters of life and death, of success or failure.

"Solomon" is pronounced *sha lo mo* or *sha lo mah* with a very amatory tone in Hebrew. His name means "peace" and is related to the word *shalom* (*peace*).

"the son of David, king of Israel" not only identifies Solomon’s ancestry but encapsulates his unique authority and qualification to write this work. David was not only a king, he was the "sweet psalmist of Israel" whom God used to write the hymnology of the nation.

Moreover, Solomon does not mention his mother’s name in the Book, but he does refer to her in Proverbs 4:3. Solomon is called the son of David and not the son of Bathsheba because the LORD interposed patriarchal traditions and not matriarchal customs on the nation; that is, God placed the onus of bringing children into the world and rearing them in the lap of fathers. This perspective created responsible fathers. What a corrective tradition that exposes the feminine conventions of the West! Oh, that all men would accept responsibility for the children they bring into the world! Selah!

This does not mean motherhood was unimportant. Solomon exhorts his son to honor and obey his mother (1:8, 6:20, 23:22). Though this was a masculine nation by design, sons were ordered by the LORD to "honor their father AND mother."

2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

"wisdom" (*chomach*) = skills in war; skills in life; skills in relationships. The word wisdom contains the Hebrew letters Chet, Kaf¹, Mem, and Hey

¹ In Hebrew the Kaf is the first of two letters, *koach* ("potential") and *poel* (actual) suggesting that the Kaf enables the latent power of the spiritual (the potential) to be made

indicating that life experience of the righteous (tsaddik) yields the fruit of wisdom.

Wisdom is not the unlimited accumulation of knowledge (light). but the skill to apply knowledge profitably for building relationships, a business, a family, and a church on the foundation of Scripture. It is used 54 times in this Book. In the Hebrew mind, wisdom begins at age 50.

"instruction" (muwcar) = discipline, training, correction, rebuke, teaching principles.

"understanding" (blynah) is personified and it means "perception," "thinking," "discernment," a contrast of ideas. It is used 54 times in this Book; that is, wisdom and understanding are two muscular brothers that protect the man . . . if a man has eyes to see (Deuteronomy 29:4-5).

Knowledge beautifies the man. All knowledge belongs to God. Jesus is called "the word," the visible manifestation of the invisible God. God's message to mankind is His Son. A good man believes *words mean something*. Therefore, a righteous man studies the Word, the meaning of words, their origins, their usage in society, and how to use them correctly (felicity).

Discernment is the ability to know the difference between what people say they are and how they really are.

3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

"equity" (meyshar) = righteousness, fairness, balance, that which is right and good,

Growth in wisdom involves putting your ears on and listening to instruction -- something hard for spirited, hyperactive boys.

4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

"subtilty" (omah) = observant, reasoning, shrewdness, prudence, judicious, sensible, insightful, cultured, esthetic, perspicuity, and discriminating. -- the ability to discern the meaning of words and the ability to learn by observation.

Knowledge: *"There is no poor person except he who is poor in knowledge."* (Talmud: *Nedarim* 41a).

into the actual; that is Kaf enables a man to walk the talk. The letter Kaf means "hand" suggesting that God's hand / palm is over the righteous to protect them.

The English word “man” (isha or na’ar) is used 157 times in Proverbs. Here it refers to a young man over the age of twelve. This book is an anthropological study on human nature.

Men are “living souls” made in “the image of God” and they are not “person,” “human beings,” a “child”, or “individual” or “born alive infants” or “corporations” related to apes as the congress of baboons at the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia defines “homo sapiens” at 1 U.S.C. §8.

These herbs of truth improve the man and protect him from the power of sin. The home turns a boy into a man by teaching him to discern right and wrong, good and bad, clean and unclean, moral and immoral, purity and impurity, holy and profane, excellence and pedestrian, better and inferior.

5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

The wise are teachable and seek the counsel of experienced men. Goals are achieved by the guidance of experts in their field.

“Hear” (shema) is the most fundamental command to master in young men as most youth are not good at listening to their parents or to the LORD (Deuteronomy 6:4 –called the “Shema.”). Hebrew words are made up of three letters called the shresh (root). In the “Shema” the last letter Ayin is enlarged in the Hebrew text – an unusual means of emphasizing the need to “hear and Obey!”

Modern parents seem more eager to teach their toddlers how to talk than how to listen.

Solomon instructs his son. There is no mention of his daughters. His priority was to raise a responsible, masculine son . . . a spiritual but masculine man. God-fearing daughters instinctively follow the character of their father.

A “wise man” is a creature of Almighty God and not a product of evolution. Because the world has [a crisis in anthropology](#) it is important to contrast the high and lofty view of man according to the Bible with the despicable view of man in modern times:

Man is his own most vexing problem.

“Man has allegedly been to the Moon and back, and he can be found in the gutters near skid row. Man has built the T.V., *super* computers, and is studying DNA manipulation. However, it appears more murders have taken place in the 20th Century than at any other time in history. Man’s nobility and degradation are a perplexity to modern anthropologists” ([Stockton, Old Testament Theology](#))

St. Bernard: “Man is nothing but a sack of dung.”

Anthony Fauci: "unvaccinated man is a disease."

Du Maurier: A fungus on the surface of one of the minor planets."

Schoenberg: "A hairless ape"

Sir Julian Huxley: "Man is a cancer upon the Earth."

Hillary Clinton: "Man is nothing but a useless eater."

Nazis: the murder of "the unfit." (Stockton, the Anthropological Crisis)

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

The term "dark" refers to hidden treasures of understanding and not something dishonorable.

Growth in understanding leads one out of darkness into the light; out of naivety into experience; out of ignorance into knowledge; out of sloppiness into orderliness; out of mediocrity into excellence; out of sin into righteousness.

THE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

"The first discourse is prefaced by a *distich* (couplet) which serves as a key-note to all the teaching of the book" (Ellicott).

The "Christian" mind believes everything begins with God: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1; Proverbs 2:5); that is, the foundation of wisdom is Biblical theology.

The fear of the LORD occurs 14 times in Proverbs, and the Tetragrammaton is used 89 times in the Book. The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble . . . he is exalted over all the peoples (Psalm 99:1).

The Hebrew word for "fear" (yirat) begins with a Yod, the atom in the Hebrew alphabet – a symbol of humility and power.

The "fear of the Lord" (yirat Adonai) should not be softened to mean "a little respect." Fear means fear and alarm, but it does not mean cringing terror. The word fear communicates that men need to be in awe, respect, wonderment, and veneration of His Presence – a healthy gratitude of the wonder that He condescends to care for each of us every day.

The ground of fear is knowledge of His infinite and holy attributes as the all-knowing, all powerful Judge - "The eyes of the Lord is in every place beholding the evil and the good" who will judge all men for their sins, and

Who requires blood to atone for sins. A God who judges and requires blood sacrifice warrants a response of fear on the part of thinking men.

On the opposite side of the coin is "love for the Lord" (Ephesians 6:24) -- a deep affection that this Holy God provided a way of salvation . . . of escape from punishment . . . in and through His Son.

In the Old Testament the appropriate response to the knowledge of God is to fear the Lord. In the New Testament, the appropriate response to the knowledge of redemption is to love the Lord. Fear is on one side of the coin; love is on the other.

The fear of the LORD strengthens and beautifies the man. What protein is to a body builder, the fear of the LORD is to soul-builders. The "fear of the LORD" is the product of faith . . . of believing the Holy Scriptures . . . of taking the Word of God seriously.

The fear of the LORD makes up the foundation of wisdom; and, humility is the first step on the stairs to the citadel of knowledge . . . and salvation.

Men have to learn how to love God and hate sin.

"That law which was given amid "blackness, and darkness, and tempest" was enforced by the threat, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). (Ellicott).

We love the LORD because of His attributes, and we fear the LORD because He exercises those attributes in His administration of the universe.

Using the title "LORD" implies authority: from Old French for "authority, prestige, right, permission, dignity, gravity; the Scriptures."

INSTRUCTIONS TO A SON

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

The word "law" (torah) is used 14 times in proverbs. Its first seven uses of "my law" (1-7) refer to family law and the rules of the home - - rules, of course, extracted from the Ten Commandments.

The title "father" (ab) is used 18 times in the Book. It is made up of the first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Aleph and Bet.

"My son" is a young prince destined to rule Israel -- a young boy in need of knowledge, wisdom, and discernment. In Solomon's mind, discernment is obtained by considering the opposites in nature, in circumstances, and in character.

The word “hear” (shema) is the first word in this couplet and it is an imperative requiring obedience; that is, the root meaning of obedience is to hear and obey the instructions of one’s father (ab) and do not forsake the torah of one’s mother (em). “Hear” requires the son to exercise positive energy to listen to his father; “forsake not” requires the son to deny sin’s forces within to neglect or abandon his mother’s teaching – Case law on the 5th Commandment.

The first letter in the Hebrew word for “hear” (shema) is the Hebrew letter *shin* which in the rabbinical mind represents a crown and rays from the sun; that is, hear and you will be crowned with sunshine – “a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee” (4:9). Further, “shema” is the pre-eminent command for the sons of Israel (Deuteronomy 6:4).

In Proverbs 1:8 the the first letter in “shema” is Sheen and it is enlarged – a grammatical way of emphasizing the need for the son to **Hear!**

In Paul’s instruction to youth, he ordered children “to obey” their father and mother; that is, listen to them and do what they say (Ephesians 6:1) – case law for the Fifth Commandment.

In relation to a son, his mother is as important as his father (ab).

[Jewish tradition: The Hebrew letter mem in the word “mother” (em) represents the womb. Thus “em” is a fitting symbol for the mother who carried the son for nine months before giving birth. The first letter in mother is Aleph implying “in the beginning ‘father’ and ‘mother’”.]

Discernment is the ability to know the difference between what people say they are and how they really are.

God orders a man to honor (listen, obey, respect) his father and mother; that is, the first fruit of fearing God is listening to one’s parents. Selah!

"Hearing" and "forsaking not" takes positive, moral energy. A son has no authority to judge his parents. Judging parents is not the duty of sons, but the duty of God. A proud son will however, assume the role of God to judge his parents. A humble son will shut his mouth and listen to his father.

9 For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Wisdom adorns a man, enhances the man, and makes him interesting to people and valuable to his employers.

Temptations to avoid

10 My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

The "sinners" (chatta)² are friends of the prince: sons of government officials, scribes, recorders, judges, captains, accountants, governors, and administrators.

The first lesson human lesson this son-prince had to learn was *to say "No!"* to the schemes of future government officials. Solomon did not raise his son to be a conformist or a puppet of the people, but an independent thinker; God's man, not the people's man.

The first lesson you must know is to say "No!" to the sinners you know.

Under the Doctrine of Acquiescence as well as the Maxim in Law which states that "**silence shows consent**" 6 Barb. [N.Y.] 2B, 35. *Qui non negat, fatetur* and "He who does not deny, agrees," (*Trayner, Maxim 503*).

Enticement to break the Sixth Commandment

11 If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:

"If" is assumed true, "if and they will say . . ."

Notice the temptation comes in the form of an order from government officials, "Come with us . . ." (an imperative in Hebrew). The weak comply, the strong resist; the weak obey, the righteous decline; the sheeple follow, pedestrians talk; the mature ask, "By what authority . . .".

Politicians seek solidarity in power. Power means control over people, assets, and resources; control over a man, woman, or baby's life is ultimate power -- something political tyrants relish and drool to obtain.

"lay wait for blood." What a blunt, brutal statement about government officials! Solomon understood that the powerbrokers around him were capable of murder . . . and entertained secret schemes to murder their adversaries . . . to slander and to ruin them.

Ultimate authority over a man is the power to kill. For this reason, politicians working for the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia covet power to create legislation on matters of abortion, health, and pharma-vax programs -- which is not part of the powers the People gave to their employee-representatives in the original contract of 1791.

"lurk privily" refers to secret power, the powers of darkness, the plots and plans behind closed doors by the "deep state."

² The word for "sin" in the NT means "to fall short of the glory of God." All men are sinners, but not all sinners are wicked (Romans 3:23).

The power to take life judicially requires probable cause. Note the thinking, ways, and motives of politicians in the next verses.

Enticement to break the 8th and 10th Commandment

12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:

“swallow up” is a metaphor for search and destroy (John 10:10). The “us” refers to moonbats and corruptocrats in the government.

“up alive” refers to the brutal ways of political goon squads acting under the banner of “public interest.”

The grave is never satisfied, and neither is the lust of politicians. Depopulation programs existed at the time of Solomon. Corruptocrats love death, but a true statesman promotes righteousness and impedes evil. Bad leaders increase their own wealth but diminishing the wealth of their citizens. They live free while the rest of the population lives in chains to debt-slavery. Fools love death because they hate life in Jesus Christ (8:36).

13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:

Never underestimate the power of the greedy, self-serving lunocrats who hang around large groups in big buildings. When in doubt, follow the money. Corruptocrats in the District of Columbia never have enough and they are always devising new ways and new taxes to transfer money from your bank account to their bank account.

Extortion is prohibited by 18 U.S.C. § 41, Extortion and Threats.

14 Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:

“one” is an adjective referring to unity. “purse” is a metaphor for the commercial motivation of politicians.

Wicked politicians are only as strong as they are united and as weak as they are divided. Divide and conquer.

Evil politicians say glowing things like "we are all books that must be read by other people" . . . "Yes, we can" . . . "Imagine there were no countries" . . . "One love, one heart, one people". . . "We are each other's harvest" (Liberal quotes).

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword (Matthew 10:34). Love division among lawmakers; hate unity among corruptocrats. There is nothing more fearful than an efficient, unified government acting in its own interests against the will of the people.

See 18 USC § 241. CONSPIRACY AGAINST RIGHTS; and, 18 USC § 242. DEPRIVATION OF RIGHTS UNDER COLOR OF LAW.

WARNINGS NOT TO JOIN THE MULTITUDE

15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

Joining a crowd, multitude, a political party, or faction to do evil violates Exodus 22:3-4.

Pedestrians join groups, gangs, clubs, organizations, protests and riots. Wise men walk alone. This is Solomon's command to his son: Don't be a copycat or a sheeple. Walk alone with God and it will be well with your soul.

Qui facit per alium, facit per se – He who acts through another acts himself.

16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

The “their feet” refers to politicians and friends of the prince in verse ten.

Iniquitous people unite around rebel causes that end up dropping anvils on innocent people. They cannot sleep until they have infected, effected, and injected poison into society.

These are the murmurera of Isaiah 59:1, those that visit vanity (chaos) and hatch cockatrice eggs, and build spider webs in Isaiah 59:4-5 in order to shed blood (Isaiah 1:15). See Proverbs 16:17.

17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

“net” is a metaphor for deceptive programs and “tax schemes” enacted by power-grabbers using their position in government as a means to increase their own holdings. Using sackless terms like the “Patriot Act” and “Affordable Health Care” and “Marriage Equality Act” (Obergefell v. Hodges, 2015) they lure their prey, derogate God-given rights³, and capture their assets.

A bird's life is counted as nothing (vain) to politicians. How much more do they discount your life? That baby-kissers care for the life of their constituents is the lie of the twenty-first century.

Racketeering: Practicing artifice and deception such as -- by mislabeling private property as “real property” or “residence” in violation of 18 U.S.

³ **Jus naturale** – Natural law. Or in other words, a system of law based on fundamental ideas of right and wrong that is natural law.

Code § 1346 - Definition of "scheme or artifice to defraud." (See laws against racketeering: NMSA 30-42-6).

18 And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives.

"their own lives" implies that God judges these tricksters. In seeking innocent blood, these terminators can't see that they are killing themselves; their souls; their careers; their families, and any hope of salvation.

19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

These people are susceptible to bribes, and the "pay to play" programs catered by corruptocrats. Behind homicide, intentional or unintentional, is a heart greedy of gain. These greedy cutthroats not only steal people's property, they steal people's lives; and in stealing their property, they cut short their own lives . . . or at least the full enjoyment of life. All government tax programs on private individuals kill the middle class. Taxation is a government approved assassination program . . . especially property taxes. Taxes on gains are acceptable; but, a tax on something merely because it exists is reprehensible and unconstitutional – something repugnant to the Constitution . . . and to the Law of the LORD God!

THE CALL OF WISDOM (Sophia)

"Solomon, having showed how dangerous it is to hearken to the temptations of Satan, here declares how dangerous it is not to hearken to the calls of God" (Matthew Henry).

20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

*Wisdom (sophia in the LXX) is personified as a street vender selling her wares at the city market -- an attractive, fair, worldly-wise business woman.

Her name "wisdom" (Sophia) is mentioned at least 54 times in Proverbs. Sophia stands in contrast to the unprincipled seductress who sells her wares on the street to simple men. Called the "strange woman," she is mentioned directly 11 times in Proverbs.

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

"She" = wisdom or Sophia (Greek).

"concourse" (hamah) = noise, growling, murmuring, commercial vending in the market place.

"gates" refers to the center of government and commerce.

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

The wise love knowledge; but, fools and scorners mock them.

"simplicity" = naivety, open-mindedness, undiscerning, liberality, seducible, friendly, eager to unite, credulous, impressionable, morally flexible, amenable, influenceable, susceptible, cordial, yielding, willing to listen . . . to see . . . to experiment, intellectually pervious. "Simplicity" is not stupidity but undiscerning.

"scorners" = mockers, critics of God's Word, haughty, proud, dismissive, deprecatory, scathing, jeering, supercilious, derisive, insulting, scathing, denigrative, sarcastic, snide, cynical, egotistic, insolent, abusive, contemptible, combative, derogative, snooty, snotty, and malicious.

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

There is no word for "repent" in the Tanach. Rather, Hebrews used the term "turn" (shuw) to express the need for a change in direction.

Sophia calls. Those who pick fruit from Sophia's Tree of Life enjoy the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). This is a precious promise to those who will listen - the spirit of wisdom and knowledge.

CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING SOPHIA'S CALL

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

Sophia offers salvation, but when it is rejected, her sweet tones of mercy transform into the grinding sounds of judgment. The gospel feels like silk to the soul but those who reject it will feel the grit of judgment.

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

"nought" means to make null and void.

Sophia offers salvation, but when it is rejected, her sweet tones of mercy transform into the grinding sounds of judgment. The gospel feels like silk to the soul but those who reject it will feel the sandpaper of Divine sanctions.

Ridicule

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

Sophia again changes her tone. Solomon personifies wisdom as a mocker laughing at her enemy's calamity -- the enjoyment of sweet vengeance flowing like a symphony . . . or, is that the sounds of a hammer on an anvil?

Destruction

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

Responding correctly to Sophia's call leads to spiritual health. Accepting Sophia message is like eating Georgia Peach Pie, but rejecting her message is eating fish-flavored ice cream.

Unanswered prayer

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

God hears the prayers of sinners, but His ears are closed to the prayers of rebels.

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

Want an effective prayer life? Fear the LORD! Wonder why your prayers bounce off the ceiling? Maybe, you are lacking the fear of God – a condition resulting from not hearing the Word of God (Genesis 20:11; Deuteronomy 25:18; Psalm 36:1; 55:19; Jeremiah 2:19; 5:25).

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

The blessings of Sophia require consent. "would none" and "despise all" notify us that fools willfully and deliberately reject Sophia invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Suffer consequences of sin

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

"Therefore" introduces the consequences of rejecting Sophia's invitation. The sinner's rejection of the gospel⁴ seals his ruin: "He who *has* the Son *has life*; he who *does not have* the Son of God *does not have life*" (1 John 5:12).

⁴ **Gospel:** It is good news that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; that He died for our sins according to Scripture, was buried, and rose again the third day; that His death on the cross affects those who believe with blessings related to the kingdom of God: forgiveness,

32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

"prosperity" = life of ease.

"The easy-going indifference to higher truths, is that which destroys"
- Barnes

THE BLESSING OF RECEIVING SOPHIA'S INVITATION

Rest and safety for the righteous

33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

The word "dwell" (shakan) is used 6 times in Proverbs and it means "to settle down" "abode." or "tabernacle": "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell (shakan) among them (Exodus 25:8); "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell (shakan) in thy holy hill?" (Psalm 15:1).

The word "safely" (betach) means "security" and has the same root stem as "trust" in Proverbs 3:5.

The word "quiet" (shaw'an) is a rare Pilel verb⁵ (intense action like a Piel verb) that means "to be at ease," "rest securely," and "to be undisturbed."

Fear makes men afraid, and when people are afraid, they need to rest their souls in the promises of God:

"Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet (shaw'an), and none shall make *him* afraid (Jeremiah 30:10).

Jesus told Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25-26).

◆ Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

justification, redemption, regeneration, eternal life, reconciliation, and sanctification (Mark 1:1; Romans 3:21ff; 1 Corinthians 15:1-12).

⁵ Palel is an extremely rare stem formation in Biblical Hebrew. Many of the occurrences of the Palel stem in the Hebrew Bible are from the root verb יָשָׁן ("to be at ease").

PROVERBS 2

A FATHER'S PROMISE TO A WISDOM-SEEKING SON



Proverbs 2:1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

◆ "receive" and "hide" are two requisites to obtain wisdom.

The "if" is the conditional clause -- the lever that opens the door to the halls of wisdom.

The conditional clause is called the protasis and if the condition is fulfilled, one will experience the apodosis or result.

The treasure to be found is the fear of the LORD in verse 5.

The protasis is hard. Hearing (shema) his Word is not something proud professional fools like some doctors, lawyers, and university professors can't seem to do.

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom (Sophia). and apply thine heart to understanding;

There are no imperatives in this section of Proverbs. Solomon seeks the consent of his son. He does not command or order his son to be teachable. Sons must enroll in Wisdom 101 of their own accord.

"wisdom" is personified: Sophia is mentioned at least 54 times in Proverbs.

*Wisdom ("sophia" in the LXX) takes on the skills of a street vender selling her wares at the city market -- an attractive, mature, principled, fair, aggressive, persuasive, successful, worldly-wise business woman.

Her name "wisdom" (Sophia) is mentioned at least 54 times in Proverbs. Sophia stands in contrast to the unprincipled seductress who sells her merchandise in the market place to simple men.

Called the "strange woman," this madam is mentioned at least 11 times in Proverbs as the feminist despoiler of men. She has other handles: fool, harlot, evil woman, contentious, odious, whorish, clamorous, and the seductress. The world calls these bitter women: floozies, cougars, ho's, fallen women, strippers, street walkers, porn queens, hussies, hookers, hustlers, and cheerleaders.

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

Solomon shifts from the directives of Sophia to the duties of a son. Wisdom cries out to the son, but the son must cry out for knowledge, wisdom, and understanding; that is, "to stand under" the tutorship of Sophia. Sophia offers a contract that requires the student's consent. Without a "yes" – a fulfillment of the protasis, there is no apodosis. Professor Sophia has no obligation to teach and protect the young man. Therefore, enroll now! Sign up!

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

The "her" is Sophia. Men love gold and silver (hidden treasures). As prospectors search for gold and silver medals, the wise son must diligently search for Sophia and her golden-knowledge.

Job 28:18 No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.

“The caverns of the earth may be discovered, but not the counsels of Heaven. Go to the miners, thou sluggard in religion, consider their ways, and be wise” (Matthew Henry).

The pronoun "her" is mentioned 104 times in Proverbs. The pronoun "she" is mentioned 55 times. These female pronouns reference Sophia or the strange woman.

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

This apodosis ("then") begins with the letters Aleph Zayin, the Alpha represents the Source of all knowledge. The Zayin represents a crown of glory as a virtuous woman is to her husband (12:4). Zayin is shaped like a sword (t) and is related to bread and nourishment; that is, Sophia will nourish the soul even if it has to kill adversaries of the soul.

“Yirat Adonai.” The "then" is a promise that follows one's consent to be taught by Sophia -- his precious treasure. The word "understand" in English means "to stand under" -- stand under the fear of the Lord (yirat Adonai) as one's authority on all matters important – to see His authority and grace in all that he does – to bless Him for Who He is and what He does.

The Hebrew word for “fear” (yirat) begins with a Yod, the atom of the Hebrew consonants, the letter symbol for power and humility.

This is the first time Solomon uses the term “God”(Elohiym or Elohim). The reference to the Supreme Being is used 8 times in the Book. The term “God” refers to the *one, infinite, personal, virtuous triune Spirit, the God of Creation, the God of the Bible, the God of Israel, and the God of our Lord*

Jesus Christ. There are many so called “gods,” but there is only one true God and His name is YHWH Whom we respectfully call Adonai (Lord). A study of the Creator in the Tanach will produce faith and faith produces a “fear of the LORD.”

In the mind of Christians everything begins with God, “In the beginning God created . . . “; that is, every task, duty, and privilege Christians enter into begins with “Blessed be the Lord *for . . .* “ (*Baruch Atah Adonai . . .*) (Psalm 28:6)

Foolishness is the sand on which the fool builds his house; the fear of the Lord is the rock on which the wise man builds his house. The fear of the Lord is a product of faith. Study, believe, and fear God! In the New Testament, love for the Lord is a product of faith -- faith in God's redemption at the cross.

BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING THE LORD

6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

This is good news. Sophia comes from the LORD. Most importantly, understanding is a legacy of grace. It is not earned. He gives wisdom and understanding.

Everyone has eyes and ears, but the ability to perceive God at work comes from Him. Israel had eyes to see, but couldn't see; ears to hear, but couldn't hear (Deuteronomy 29:4-5). Strangely, they never asked for it.

Since the LORD loves Sophia, so should her students.

However, there is something about man that cannot naturally see or hear the things of God. Understanding is a gift of God. Pray that God would grant to you the gift of seeing and hearing. Ancient Israel saw Adonai's miracles but they could not see the love of God in what he did for them.

Deuteronomy 29:4 Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

"The righteous" (tsaddik) refers to men who have been declared just by God through their faith in Jesus Christ: “the tzaddik shall live by faith” (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; 5:1). The man who believes in the Father and the Son, the *Aleph* and *Bet*, are baptized (placed into) the community of the *tsaddikim* by the Holy Spirit where the tsaddik are delivered out of all their afflictions (Psalm 34:19).

Job asked the most important question a man can ask: "How can a man be just (tzaddik) before God?" (Job 25:4); Adam sought comfort from guilt by clothing himself in fig leaves; Cain sought comfort in offering beans, beets, and broccoli to God; The fool seeks comfort in his own philosophy (12:15); the wicked seek comfort in their disgusting religious practices (15:3); the British seek shelter from the guilt by trying to combine all faiths into one faith. But, the righteous find shelter from judgment under the blood of Christ (Ephesians 7:7; Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:19; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 12:11). This understanding underlies the term "righteous" in Proverbs.

"buckler" = shield. Wisdom is the armor that protects a man from the flaming darts of the wicked one.

The only shield that can protect a man from the arrows of Divine wrath is the blood of Christ -- the currency of the spirit-world (1 Peter 1:19).

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

The "He" refers to the LORD God who watches over each of his own and guards them.

As a buckler he "keeps" and "preserves" the "paths" and "way" of his "holy ones" (chaciyd). Each one of God's children is a saint. He does not call his beloved "sinners" but saints. Think this way (Romans 6:11).

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

The promise of obtaining wisdom: "righteousness," "judgment," and "equity" (level, straight) are legal terms in common law. The righteous man is a lawful man -- a man in conformity to the law of the LORD God. The path of wisdom prepares a man to be a competent Biblical lawyer -- *an attorney privatus; i.e., "his own private attorney" competent in handling his own legal matters.*

10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

Those that invite Sophia into their hearts burn with desire to know and understand all things. Knowledge is dessert for those invited to the banquet of Christ in the kingdom of God.

11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

The word "separation" comes from the word "separate;" that is, wise men separate good from evil, truth from lies. Discernment is a shield that protects the man from the fiery darts of the wicked one; from hucksters, liars, deceivers, con artists, cheats, hypocrites, fakes, and phonies at universities and in government institutions.

"Deliver me, O LORD, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue" (Psalm 120:2).

Spurious: not genuine or authentic: spurious arguments of tax supporters like "everyone has to pay their fair share." Where is that phrase in law? It is a presumption, not law.

Equivocation: An attempt to mislead by using ambiguous language with a stress upon adverbs and adjectives.

Benefit one: deliverance from the evil man

12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

The evil (ra) man: The word "froward" (tahpukah) refers to deceitful, banal speech; that which is not up to the standards of propriety; that which does not measure up to the canon of God's law. The ra-men are not "bums" on the street, but transgressors of God's law dressed in blue suits and red ties shaking hands in big buildings -- men neglectful of God (Hebrews 2:3).

The word "froward" literally means "turned against, perverse, disobedient; peevish, petulant; adverse, difficult," as a preposition, it means to turn "away from" that which is wholesome and true.

The ra-men in Solomon's son's life were the sons of politicians, government officials, scribes, lawyers, statesmen, judges, and governors, and not riff-raff on the streets of Jerusalem. Apparently, Rehoboam failed to apply this lesson when he followed the advice of his younger advisors and not the advisors of his father on tax issues (1 Kings 12).

13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

Sophia delivers her students from apostates, defrauders in academia, and liars in government.

14 Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;

Sophis delivers her students from revelers and ranters in academia. From those who rejoice in death of Christianity, death of babies, and death on the battlefield.

The Hebrew word "wicked" (ra) refers to people with a profound, conscious commitment to evil; to those with measure of hardness to God and His law-order.

"The two enemies of the people are criminals and government, so let us tie the second down with the chains of the Constitution so the

second will not become the legalized version of the first." (Attributed to Jefferson)

15 Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:

"froward" means deviation from righteousness (normal behavior); that is, God's law. Somehow these ra-men find their way into political office to the detriment of all. The Christian man is a lawful man; the froward man is a lawless man with no anchor in heaven – as crooked as a dog's hind leg.

Sophia delivers her students from swindlers and snookers. Sophia's students are NOT victims; that are victors - not only victors over their own sins, but victors over the vices of others. Like Israel (Jacob), believers wrestle with God and men . . . and prevail!

Benefit two: deliverance from the strange woman

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

The "strange woman" is the opposite of Sophia. Used 11 times in Proverbs, the word "strange" (zuwr) refers to a God-hating woman under the power of Eve's curse -- a seductress using her feminine charms to conquer men. She is called a "stranger" because she is outside the covenant, outside the kingdom, outside of God's law-order living life her way for her own advantage.

All women suffer from Eve's curse, but the strange woman exercises no restraint of her ambition to rule men (Genesis 3:16); no restraint over her tongue; and no restraint over her desires. She is a spider-woman who spins a web of deceit flattering her victims with buttery words while trading sex for money. Many a woman marries for money and not love. Solomon warns his son about the character of these gold-diggers who would pursue him offering to trade coupling for wealth and status.

The word "flattereth" (chalaq) means to "divide and conquer," "to plunder," and to seduce with words smoother than oil.

Fathers must educate sons about the ways of Eve and the seductive tricks used by these female scouts hunting for prey.

God condemned Adam for committing the apex of sins: listening to his wife instead of to Him (Genesis 3:15).

17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

The guide could be "the law" or her father, a friend, or more likely her husband. Forsaking her marriage vows, she morphs into a contentious, hateful-odious woman (30:23).

18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

Her house is a whore house, a place of business where she trades carnal favors for money. Her doors are the gates of hell (5:5) and her paths lead to the catacombs.

Today, many of these strange women live in apartment building and give away their services free.

19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

The strange woman locks her victims in a dark prison never to see the light of day . . . except by the grace and salvation of Christ . . . "of such were some of you" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

See the wonderful salvation story of the Samaritan woman (John 4).

Benefit three: safety and protection

20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.

"that thou mayest" (li-matsown) is a preposition meaning, "in order that" or "for the purpose of."

"good" (tov) is used 43 times in Proverbs. Only God has the authority to define what is good. When men define "good" we end up with whacky doctrines of equality, homosexual marriage, and feminist rulers.

21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

"dwell in the land" is a reference to the Abrahamic Covenant and the Fifth Commandment -- a promise to those who keep covenant with the LORD . . . a promise to men and women faithful to their marriage covenant.

The word "perfect" (tamiyn) means sound, wholesome, reasonable, and obedient to God's law.

22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

The ra-men are careless libertines risking life and limb to obtain sinful pleasures.

"To the wicked their temporal life on earth is all the heaven they will have" (Matthew-Henry).

The wicked are identified as "transgressors" of the law: Terms like lawlessness, antinomianism, trespass, disorderliness, unrestrained, misfeasance, malfeasance, and wrongdoing are stepsisters of the wicked.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 3

BLESSINGS OF WISDOM THAT COME FROM TRUSTING THE LORD



♦ In the first 11 verses, we have a series of twelve (12) jussives (commands) -- or God's 12 step program towards obtaining the blessings of wisdom.

Since the son has voluntarily submitted to Wisdom 101, Solomon exercises authority by ordering his student-son to accept the duty of learning the path of wisdom – a model for fathers to use their authority to build the

family.

The following is a Writ of Mandamus. The son has no options but to obey.

Proverbs 3:1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

Notice the two jussives "forget not" and "keep." Wisdom grows out of the discipline of law. The nouns "law" (torah) and "commandments" (mitsvah) are synonyms. Solomon taught his son law. His course on wisdom made his son a lawyer and student of common law.

The adverb "not" negates the verb "forget;" that is, the sons of wisdom are loyal to the law of the family; they must hold hands with family law and not let go.

Oblivion: Act of forgetting, or fact of having forgotten; forgetfulness. Official ignoring of offenses. Amnesty, or general pardon, as, an act of oblivion. State or fact of being forgotten. (See Black's Law Dictionary, 6th Addition).

Beware of counsel from attorneys (Psalm 1:1). Today's attorneys are not lawyers; they are British "statutors" who study civil codes and regulations.

Long life and peace

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

This is case law for the 5th Commandment -- a strong ordinance with a strong promise.

Mercy and truth

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

Notice the three commands: "Let not . . . forsake," "bind," and "write."

"Mercy" and "truth" are opposite virtues embodied as sensitive doves prone to flight. The wise know how to balance the tension between mercy and truth. Like people who live between the North Pole and South Pole, good men live between the pulls and tensions of mercy and truth.

The word "truth" is employed ten times in proverbs (3:3; 8:7; 12:17; 12:19; 14:22; 16:6; 20:28; 22:21 *2; 23:23). The Hebrew word for "truth" (amet) begins with the Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and ends with a tav, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This the Spirit's way of informing us that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life . . .", the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the Aleph and the Tav and everything in between, our Sovereign, Creator, safety and refuge (John 14:6; Revelation 22:13; Matthew 5:18).

The middle letter in the word truth (Aleph Mem Tav) is the letter "Mem" which is a symbol for the "womb." This is the Spirit's way of informing us that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator and Source of all things.

The Hebrew word for "speak" (hageh) means "to roar," "moan," and "grown" like a lion over his prey (Isaiah 31:4). Does your wife hear you roaring over the Word each morning?

"bind them about thy neck" as a necklace: Be loyal to both. Employ both during the course of life. Life has to be lived accurately between mercy and truth. Without wisdom, families can adopt permissiveness or harshness, the destroyers of truth and mercy.

Binding is not a literal command to tie a symbol of the law on your forehead or to bind your hands with leather straps as modern Ashkenazi Jews do when they pray. This is a spiritual command requiring the student to read, recite, memorize, and repeat the commands so as to write them on the tablets of one's heart.

"write" conveys a sense of permanence, authority, and worth.

Favor and understanding

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

"favor" (chen) = grace and charm. People are attracted to others who display truth and mercy in their walk and talk. A good man not only has outward charms, but inward virtues.

"understanding" (sekel) = reason, prudence, or sensibility as modified by the Hebrew adjective "good" (tov).

"God and man" = jurisdiction, tribunals, jury, judgment

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Before us is the advice of a loving father-king to a beloved son-prince. He wishes the future prince to be guided by the wisdom of God so he will become moral and ethical, tough and tender, strong and stately, intelligent and perceptive, merciful and truthful.

Note the two imperatives: "trust" and "lean not" are verbal synonyms. The adverb "not" negates the action of leaning on one's understanding as a staff or cane.

The word "trust" (batach) in this text is an imperative exhorting sons of wisdom to seek protection in the Lord. The word "trust" is translated "safety" in Leviticus 25:18-19, "dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree," in 1 Kings 4:25, and "dwell between his shoulders" in Deuteronomy 33:12.; that is, Solomon urges the son to place his precious all in the palms of the Lord. Moreover, "safely" is associated with sowing, vintage, eating abundantly after a harvest in Leviticus 26:5, and "sleep" and "rest" in Psalm 4:8.

The opposite of trusting God is "being wise in one's own eyes," trusting in self or leaning on the staff of self. We are trained by humanists to install self as the captain of our soul and the master of our fate. There is even a song bragging about how "I did it my way." But, my-wayism is the way of death (Isaiah 53:6; Proverbs 14:12).

The word "lean" (sha'an) is translated in Genesis 18:4 as ". . . rest yourselves under the tree." One can find rest from the "hustle and bustle of life" and shade from the heat of the day by seeking shelter under one's own branches. The "not" negates this option. Seek shade under God's tree -- the one sprouting green leaves of holiness.

"understanding" (biynah) = one's own faculties (mind, logic, perspective)

The idea here is to trust in the Creator, not the creature; in God, not man; in the Master, not money; in the Savior, not self.

BENEFITS OF TRUSTING GOD

Direction in life

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

God is faithful.

The word “acknowledge” (yada) means to “know” or “perceive” or “learn.”

The word “direct” is the Hebrew word *yashar*. It means to “make straight” or “to make smooth.”

See the "Conditions for Guidance."

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

"Be not wise in thing own eyes" IS THE OPPOSITE of "trusting in the Lord." Notice the two commands: "Be not wise . . ." and "depart from evil." This is a warning to avoid living life "your way" and to live life "His way" under His law and His grace.

When fools look into a mirror, they see themselves as "tall, dark, and handsome," but they are more like cute on a cockroach (12:15, 16:2; 21:2; 30:12).

Fools know everything and never learn anything; wise men are always learning to recognize evil and to conquer it. Narcissists can't escape the orbit of their own self-centered position on matters of controversy. This problem is mentioned five times in Proverbs (3:7, 12:15; 16:2; 21:2; 30:12).

Departing from evil is no minor command. God is not asking men for *mutatis mutandis*⁶ or to rearrange the chairs on the deck of the Titanic, but to put on big man pants, depart from evil, and walk on the highway of the upright (16:17).

During times of apostasy government execs visit the gods of chaos and political lunatics hatch “cockatrice eggs” like (feminism, Sodomy, transvestism, and gender-bender nonsense). When immorality becomes normal, good men drive on the highway of the upright and depart from evil . . . but, in so doing will be considered madmen by the chiefs (Proverbs 16:17; Isaiah 59:1-15).

Health

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

Wisdom is represented as a medicinal herb and a good habit that promotes health.

Wisdom leads to health and life; folly leads to sickness and death.

⁶ Mutatis mutandis (adverb) -- *making necessary alterations while not affecting the main point at issue.*

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

Notice the Piel imperative "Honour" the Lord. Honor the Lord amplifies the meaning of the word "trust" in verses 3-5. Shout "glory to God" by giving to the needs of his people.

Provision**10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.**

This Old Covenant mind perceived that the righteous would be blessed with plenty, and fools would suffer depreciation. The New Testament mind "takes up the cross" in order to find spiritual riches and wealth in Christ. The righteous do not deny that men need the necessities of life, but they do deny that materialism is an ultimate goal in the course of life.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

The trusting man expects God to "direct his paths" but is often confused by the trials and troubles on this path. Men wrongly think that God's leading in life is always downhill and without difficulties.

Solomon wants his son to know that when one asks God to lead him that His leading involves chastening. God's wisdom program is called "chastening" and "correction." Adam's sons need discipline and correction. Chastening is not punishment, but directed learning.

Solomon observed the tendency of men to "rebel" against discipline or "to give up" under correction. Both rebellion and resignation are tendencies that good men must subdue.

Notice the two jussives "despise not" and "neither be weary." Both verbs are negated by the adverbs "not" and "neither." Students in Wisdom 101 are not permitted to rebel . . . or quit.

Note that "rebellion" has a context. Men can only rebel against God's law. There is no such thing as rebellion against man-made statutes. Rebellion in Scripture is always associated with men's hostility to His law. A man who obeys God's law may be incorrectly labeled a rebel against the state; and, a man that is compliant with the state may indeed be a rebel against God's law. Those labeled "rebels" by the State may be followers of Christ -- the preferred status of martyrs in the first century. A man living for the Savior will find himself an enemy of the state because the state is in rebellion against God (Psalm 2, 1 Kings 20).

Love and correction

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

The word "correcteth" (yakach) means to help "make right."

Sons leaning on their own understanding are prone to evaluate a father's chastening as hate: Others ask, "If God loves me, why did he bring this adversity into my life?"

Life is a series of disciplines. Chastening is not punishment, but child training. Tests, trials, and hardships are products of God's love -- life courses to make us better and not bitter; sweeter and not harder; compassionate and not indifferent. Great difficulties make great men.

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men" - President John F. Kennedy.

The tragedy of a bastard is that he or she has no father to teach and train him; to correct and discipline him; to restrain him from being dominated by his own sin.

Solomon wants his son to adjust his attitude and to understand that difficulties are part of God's training program to make him stronger. When God leads, He doesn't place men on a cushion of strawberries. He puts them behind a plow.

Happiness**13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.**

Finding wisdom means finding the LORD. There is joy in learning. You can't find wisdom in universities or colleges; in the mountains of Tibet or yoga meditations in your own heart; nor in studies on religion or in psychology.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" – a fear that comes by faith – a faith that comes by ruminating on the Holy Scriptures..

If you have a choice to go into business and to earn wealth, or to find wisdom while living in poverty, choose the latter.

True Wealth**14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.**

"merchandise" (cachar) = gain, profit, or the traffic of a merchant. Silver and gold stand in juxtaposition to wisdom. Finding Sophia is better than finding gems and precious metals.

Men esteem riches too much, and the cross to little. Men have too much self-esteem and not enough Christ-esteem.

Beware of being led into the dark cave of Eastern Mysticism (Psychology).

15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Sophia is from God and she is set in juxtaposition to precious rubies and all conceivable "desires" of men (chephets = pleasures). No precious jewels or earthly treasures can compare to the wealth of knowing Christ "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

Long life and riches,

16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

"There is not a greater enemy to the fear of the Lord in the heart, than self-conceit in our own wisdom. The prudence and sobriety which religion teaches tend not only to the health of the soul, but to the health of the body" – (Matthew Henry)

Peace and happiness

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

"pleasantness" (no'am) = kindness, favor, delight, pleasure; and, the word "peace" (shalom) is modified by the Hebrew adjective (chal) "all" or "whole;" that is shalom with God and with men. But, there can be no peace among men who have not found peace with God.

Wise men make peace; fools make war. Wise kings exhaust peace efforts; foolish kings provoke war by their pride and their unreasonable demands on other kings.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Sophia's *modus vivendi*⁷ is embodied as a "tree of life" in the garden of the LORD that delights the heart of the trusting man. In her palms is life; but, death rests in the hand of fools.

19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

⁷ **Modus Vivendi** – Way of living

Sophia is from the LORD and is illustrated by the works of creation and the phenomenon of volcanoes, earthquakes, and the wonders of condensation and precipitation.

20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

Rains and dew are very important to arid nations that have months with no rain.

21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

Again, Solomon urges his son to be loyal to Sophia's sound discretion -- to keep his eyes on Sophia and his mind engaged with her instruction . . . and to not be distracted by the follies of youth.

The Hebrew word for "eyes" is "Ayin" and the letter that represents the eyes is the letter "Ayin." The letter that represents the mouth is Pey. In the Hebrew alphabet Ayin comes before Pey leading Rabbi mystics to conclude that seeing is more important than speaking; that one should first observe, then speak. The wise one (Chokhmah) is swift to observe and then speak. The Ayin gives insight, but the Pey gives express to that insight.

Life and grace

22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.

Sophia generates life and stature (grace). Wisdom is a necklace that beautifies; but, foolishness is an ugly, heavy millstone around the neck.

This text is loaded with Hebrew mystical truth. The first two words in Hebrew have two Yods each or four total signifying quadruple power. The Hebrew word "life" (chay) has the letter Chet which is the sign of life. The two Yods in the word "life" (chay) demonstrate the double power of God's Word at work in the soul producing life and wisdom. The Chet is also a symbol of a door -- a Hebrew representation of blood on the doorpost at the time of the Exodus in order to be protected from the death angel. Sophia's words protect the soul and promote life.

Safety and security

23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

Wise men walk upright on level paths; fools trip and fall. Walk with Sophia and you will not crumble, grumble, or stumble. "In everything give thanks . . . for this is the will of God for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Freedom from fear

24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

Wise men are able to rest and to sleep; but, fools worry and fret. "He giveth his beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2).

Notice more commands that lead to freedom starting in verse 25.

25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.

Storms create fear, but the one walking with wisdom is commanded not to fear. The Lord issues his ordinance: "Be not afraid" of sudden, unexpected adversity. A holy man has no authority from the Lord to fear anything but Him!!

"desolation of the wicked" refers to the monsoons that overwhelms them; that is, natural and political storms that frighten natural man. Godly men fear nothing, but fools fear everything.

"I allow thee and require thee not to be afraid, which is both thy duty and privilege" - Matthew Poole.

26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

Under a *strong prohibition* of "be not afraid" (3:25), there is a *strong promise* (3:26): "The LORD shall . . ."

The Lord does not permit his people to be driven by fear, anger, or anxiety (Philippians 4:6-7). *Anger*, *anguish*, and *anxious* borrowings in English: the first from Scandinavian, the second from French, and the third from Latin. In Old Norse (that is, in Old Icelandic), *anгр* and *anгра* meant "to grieve" and "grief" respectively (Compassion.com).

The word "confidence" (kecel) refers to one's loins, flank, hope, and protection -- the armor of a man. The idea here is that the Lord will keep his trusting sons from "being taken" or captured by the sudden desolations that the wicked fear.

The wicked fear, the righteous believe; the wicked exaggerate, the righteous speak truth and in so doing, relieve the stressed of burdens.

Freedom from selfishness infers opportunities to be a blessing to others.

27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

As stewards and not owners of His resources, the LORD exhorts His sons to share their prosperity with the poor and needy.

The righteous are generous; the wicked are stingy.

28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

Actions speak louder than words. This is the Spirit's way of exhorting us to walk the talk; to be generous and not miserly; to be ready to give and to not be hesitant.

The wicked borrow and give reluctantly; the righteous give freely.

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

A prohibition related to the 10th Commandment. The whole law can be summed up in "Do your neighbor no harm." If there is no harm, there are no grounds on which to file a complaint. If no one is injured or property damaged, there is no crime. If our neighbor is injured by our actions, it is the duty of Christian men to make their neighbor whole.

"For a crime to exist, there must be an injured party. There can be no sanction or penalty imposed upon one because of this exercise of Constitutional rights." - Sherar v. Cullen, 481 F. 945 (1973).

The righteous do good; the wicked devise schemes and work in groups to deprive their neighbor of their property. CON-gress comes to mind.

Freedom from strife

30 Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

"Strive" = filing legal complaints in a court of law without probable cause motivated by profit.

The wicked file frivolous lawsuits; the righteous file verifiable claims.

Freedom from envy

31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

The oppressor appears to have all power and all wisdom, but don't be fooled. Wicked men have no power over you as long as you do not contract with them or consent to their power plays.

The Christ-follower is not on top of the income pyramid. He is somewhere in between rich and poor.

Good men do not worship the success of others. Many of those that achieve wealth are the "oppressors" of mankind. Oppressors include but are not limited to government officials, judicial officers, attorneys, arrogant

business men, and the criminal scumbag elite that buy legislators to be their puppets.

Envy is not a crime nor is it full-blown covetousness. Envy is a burning regret of not having more or something better. It is like a fireplace with a high demand for fuel. Those that turn green with envy by mimicking lawless men are camping too near the Poisonous Tree.

In dealing with envy and regret, good men give thanks to God for what they have; fools feed their desires by giving into the commands of lust and regret.

32 For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.

The "froward" man is a perverse man -- one that is twisted and crooked; one that operates outside the standards of God's law -- a pervert.

The root meaning of "pervert" is "to turn" or "overthrow" "or turned from the right way" (French); that is, a pervert is the opposite of a straight man -- a perverted man calls good evil and evil good; war good and peace bad (Isaiah 5:20).

Freedom from the curse and the inheritance of glory

33 The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

See the curses in Deuteronomy 27.

34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

Scorners (luwts) refers to those who chide God's law.

The "he" is the LORD God. Scorners reject God's law-order, but God blesses the humble man.

35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

This is an example of parallelism that contrasts thoughts.

"scorners" and "fools" and "wicked" are synonyms for ra-men.

The righteous are blessed with honor; but fools suffer shame.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 4

A FATHER'S INSTRUCTION ON THE PRIORITY OF WISDOM



♦ This is the education chapter in Proverbs. If there was ever a justification for homeschooling, this is it!

Proverbs 4:1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

"Hear" (shema) - the most fundamental command in Scripture . . . a skill that must be nurtured, developed, and perfected in young men. Solomon puts the onus of learning upon the child, not the mother.

"Attend" means "stand at attention" ready to obey orders. The term "attend" (tendere) comes from a French word meaning "stretch forth the hand" to grab or receive.

Solomon does NOT say to his son, "Listen to your friends," but to "listen to me." A modern father might say, "Zip your lip, and put your ears on."

What is it about adult children that won't, can't, or refuse to ask questions to their parents and to listen to them? Why is that children grow up, leave home, become proud, and never listen to the wisdom of their moms and dads?

"Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature." (1 Corinthians 14:20, Bible, NKJV)

Devotion Demanded

2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

The word "doctrine" (leqach) refers to essential beliefs and teachings of a religion. Here it refers to ethical maxims for godly men. It is translated "gift" in the LXX.

This is a home-schooled son. The home is one of three institutions established by God: the home, government, and the church. The home is the institution of education . . . often filled with delinquent parents. Pity the home where parents send their children to the public fool system to be

taught by drag queens, feminists, and perverts training children in stupidity and critical race theories (2023).

Modern education is more interested in teaching sinners in how to have self-esteem than to think through critical problems.

This father's teaching was good because it was in conformity to the law which is good. Show loyalty to good teaching and *forsake it not*. This is the yoke good fathers put on their sons.

3 For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

Solomon's father was King David and his mother was Queen Bathsheba. David and Bathsheba loved him, and therefore taught him what is right. Solomon homeschools his tender son and encourages him to walk on the path of wisdom. The father, not the mother, accepted the ultimate responsibility for educating his son about essential matters.

4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

David taught young Solomon. Likewise, Solomon expected his son to be loyal to his instruction. This father, not the mother, is the one who accepted the headmaster role of teacher, mentor, and instructor. Devotion to family law means life and happiness; rebellion against God's law results in misery and death.

5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

"decline" (natah) = a jussive meaning "to reach out" "bend" and "bow."

This father placed the onus of learning upon the child. Get . . . pursue . . . focus . . . study . . . acquire . . . remember . . . and forget not.

Forgetfulness (oblivion) is not an excuse; a forgetful child needs the rod to help improve his memory.

Oblivion: Act of forgetting, or fact of having forgotten; forgetfulness. Official ignoring of offenses. Amnesty, or general pardon, as, an act of oblivion. State or fact of being forgotten. (See Black's Law Dictionary, 6th Addition).

6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

"Forsake her not" is a jussive in the emphatic position of the couplet. "love her" is the opposite of abandonment.

The "her" is Sophia (wisdom) the ultimate teacher introduced to the son by the father.

Good students must show loyalty to their teacher. Knowledge and understanding is personified as a guard, defender, and protector. Want safety and security? Be loyal to your father-teacher and his tutor Sophia.

7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

The word "principal" (re-shyith) means "chief" or "beginning." *Re-shyith* is translated "in the beginning" in Genesis 1:1; that is, wisdom is the commander, master, captain, chief-instructor, and helmsman that protects and opens the door of success in all disciplines. Enlist. Hear. Acquire. Follow. Obey. Be loyal.

The word "understanding" means "to stand under" the authority of your teacher.

"Get wisdom, take pains for it. Get the rule over thy corruptions; take more pains to get this than the wealth of this world . . . A soul without true wisdom and grace is a dead soul" - Matthew Henry.

THE BENEFITS OF WISDOM

Honor

8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

"Wisdom" (Sophia) is personified as a competent advocate who promotes a man's honor, competence, and integrity.

"Exalt her" means *to raise her up* and *to set her* on a pedestal. Look! Listen! Learn! Live! Love!

The term "embrace" is a Piel verb implying wholehearted energy.

Embracing Sophia is in juxtaposition to embracing the "strange woman" (5:20) and embracing sleep (6:10; 24:33). The word "embrace" is first used as a hearty family hug when Laban first met his sister's son Jacob: "that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house" (Genesis 29:13).

Grace and glory

9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

Sophia is not only a practical guard "to deliver thee," but an esthetic ornament of grace to beautify thee -- a "crown of glory."

TWO PATHS AND TWO DESTINIES

The path of righteousness

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

Because sons are prone to play rather than listen, Solomon delivers his ordinance: "Hear!" Instruction is not only enjoyable, it is healthy. It adds years to a man's life. Hear and heal; hear and hope; hear and be healthy; hear and be hearty!

11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

This confident father is secure in his knowledge and status. Having found the "green pastures," he instructs his son on how to find the path to Sophia's well-watered savannah.

The "way of wisdom" is the path to meadows green. Life has a purpose, a goal, a destination. A Christ-centered education is the path to green pastures that David and Solomon found (Psalm 23).

12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

"straightened" (yaw-tsar) = distressed, troubled. The path to meadows green is not filled with ruts, pot holes, and stones.

The word "stumble" (kashal) means "to stagger, or totter." It is translated "fall" in Leviticus 26:30.

Life has "steps" and is compared to a methodical walk and some quick bursts of sprinting. Life does not come in fragments but has an end . . . a *que sera sera* . . . a finish line . . . the celestial city. But, there is a danger of stumbling in every stage of life due to weakness within - childhood, the single life, engagement, marriage, business, parenting, grand parenting, and retirement. Troubles and temptations appear during each stage of life which require our wise response. Follow the plan. Stay on the path. Expect reward.

When does a person have to "push the pedal to the metal" and run?

"When thou runnest" refers to running away from temptation. "Flee fornication!" (1 Corinthians 6:18). There is no danger of stumbling when you flee temptation . . . unless you look back (Luke 9:62)!

"He that hasteth with his feet, sinneth" unless one is running from temptation!! (19:2).

13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

Again, Solomon urges loyalty and devotion to his instruction. Sophia not only guards him, he must guard Sophia because her presence assures the man of LIFE! She is a man's guardian angel.

The imperative "take fast hold" (chazaq) means "to grip firmly" with all your strength: hold, possess, detain, carry, bear, accept, sustain, and grasp instruction. "chazaq" is first used of the angels taking the hand of Lot, his wife, and two daughters to lead them out of the City of Sodom before it was destroyed. (Genesis 19:16). Carnal souls have difficulty running from temptation.

Forgetfulness is not an excuse. Disremembering is an act of foolishness that demands a rod to improve the memory (Proverbs 22:15).

The path of wickedness**14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.**

There are two paths and many exits on this journey -- the path of the righteous and the path of the wicked; the path of light, and the path of darkness; the path of law, and the path of lawlessness. Solomon gives no quarter and gives his son no discretion . . . no permission . . . no authority to travel the provocative path of glitter and glamour.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

As a teacher, Solomon is like a bulldog. Using four Hebrew imperatives, he barks out orders emphatically forbidding his son to go down the carnival road of beguiling pleasures. Stop! Resist! Avoid! Avert! Turn! Reform! Flee! Run!

Be warned: During times of apostasy, the more godly you become, the more you will become a target of the apostates:

“Yea, truth faileth; and he *that* departeth from evil maketh himself a prey; and the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased him that *there was no judgment*” (Isaiah 59:15).

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

The "they" refers to hedonistic sinners (rulers and representatives) on the road of sin who never tire of devising schemes to lure and entrap victims into vice (See the 10th Commandment).

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

By comparing violence to wine, Solomon recognizes that miscreants derive pleasure in doing evil. These lions of lust and weasels of wrong cannot sleep until they have devoured their prey. Don't be on the menu!

ILLUSTRATIONS BY METAPHOR

18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

In contrast to the shadowy characters and the cavernous ways of the wicked on the road to ruin is the bright and beautiful path of righteousness.

On this path you will find "the "Sun of righteousness" has arisen (Malachi 4:2), as "the light of the morning, even a morning without clouds" (2 Samuel 23:4), and this light; that is, their knowledge of God, will become clearer and clearer till the "perfect day," when they shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2)." (Ellicott)

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

The wicked are nocturnal creatures that search for victims hiding in the shadows.

The road to ruin is dimly lit, dark, and deranged with dangers. This path is so treacherous even the shadowy characters on this road can't see the hazards over which they trip.

ORDINANCES BY A FATHER TO HIS SON

20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Note the imperatives: "attend" and "incline thine ear." These are not options; they are commands from fatherly authority . . . from a king . . . from the LORD God.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

Two imperative "depart" and "keep." "not" is an adverb negating the verb. "Eyes" and "ears" are the main assets of the student.

Let your eyes not depart from instruction addresses a weakness in sons -- the tendency to be distracted, lose focus, and to meander from duty. "keep them" means don't let your father's words slip out of your mind. Set a guard over them. Distraction from duty is common. Stop being diverted by all the gold and glitter of this world.

22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

Hebrew parallelism presents the results of guarding instruction: "life" and "health."

Follow wisdom and find life; follow foolishness and meet the dragons of death.

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

"with all diligence" is in the emphatic position emphasizing the "above all" importance of guarding the heart, the inner engine of a man. "diligence" (mishmar) means "confinement to prison." It is translated "ward" in Genesis 40:3.

"Keep" (natsar) in an imperative: A man in prison has no rights, no leave, and no vacations. Guarding the heart is a first, primary, fundamental, essential duty of a son . . . and a Christian. Post a sentinel to protect the currents of thoughts crashing on the shores of the will. Post guards. Station a company of soldiers to guard your father's instructions. Arm them with bayonets and gun powder.

"the heart" in this text is the source for "the issues of life" -- the borders, artesian well, or spring of what matters most in life -- the command and control center of a man.

Ellicott said it this way, "From it (the heart) proceed "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works," signs of life marching within the soul; or, "evil thoughts, murders," &c. (Matthew 15:19). "the end of which things is death" (Romans 6:21).

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

Words on the lips reveal what is on the menu of one's heart. "put away" is an imperative ordering the believer to cleanse his mouth and control his tongue . . . to see that ugly words coming from an ugly heart do not turn into ugly deeds.

A "froward" mouth is a "crooked" mouth that deviates from what is normal and healthy. Avoid using "below the belt," gutter language so common in the ghetto. Since goodness and love and thankfulness are normal, a forward mouth is a mouth full of dirtiness, loathing, and complaining. This English word is used 14 times in this book. A devoted Christian eliminates tired, pedestrian language from his vocabulary.

25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

Since the eye is a window to the soul, Solomon urges his son to be careful on what his eyes gaze. Wandering, meandering eyes google on evil. Meandering

eyes are common to men. Focus is essential to walking accurately. Move on. Get refocused. The Scripture admonishes us "to look" and keep on looking "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrew 12:3).

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

“Ponder” (palac) is a Piel imperative – a mental command for the son to vigorously consider “the path of his feet;” that is, his actions, behavior, and conduct.

Watch where you are going in life! There are many things to trip over. Think! Analyze! Evaluate! Choose the smooth narrow path -- that is, the difficult path of obeying God's law.

The way of the righteous is illuminated by the light of God's Word, but the way of the wicked trails off into darkness, blackness, and gloom.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

"Turn" is a Hiphil jussive once again urging the son to force himself not to wander from the path of righteousness; that is, to vigorously employ self-government and to accept responsibility for his carriage. Lack of focus, meandering, and being easily distracted is a natural weakness of sons.

Oh, that Solomon had the ability to supply power to his son to stay on the straight and narrow way. Even the best fathers have sons that go astray: Adam, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, Hezekiah, and Josiah come to mind. The good news is that in the gospel men receive power to obey God's law. Men are not saved by keeping God's law, but they are saved in order to keep His law (Romans 8:4).

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 5

WARNINGS ABOUT THE STRANGE WOMAN



♦ So serious is this subject, Solomon devotes a whole course to overcoming the magical spells of the strange woman.

Proverbs 5:1 My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:

"attend" and "bow" are ordinances from a loving father. To obey is life, and to disobey is

death.

2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.

The purpose of "ordinances" is not the arbitrary exercise of power, but for the edification of the son; that he may develop "knowledge" and "discretion."

Solomon knows that his son's destiny will be determined by whether he passes or fails the first test of manhood - overcoming the seductress.

3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:

The first mark of a "strange woman" is verbosity and a quick tongue. She is NOT a victim; she is a honey trap . . . a predator . . . a cougar on the prowl.

A strange woman lives outside of law, outside of the covenant, and outside of authority. Other names for a strange woman in Proverbs include "fool," "harlot," "contentious," and "odious." We call these kind of women "fallen women," "floozy," "gold-diggers," "cougars," "whores," "liberals," "feminists," "scarlet women," "wenches," "Jezebels," "sluts," "hookers," "escorts" and other street names. Some are married, and some are single.

The "lips of a strange woman" are her tools of seduction. The lawless woman captures weak men with her buttery, sweeter than honey, smoother than oil scripts.

Most women have a one inch nerve from their brain to their tongue, but the words of a seductress are glazed with charm and chime with melodies that harmonize with a man's sensual desires.

4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

The words of a seductress are honey-baked sweet but deadly as wormwood; they tickle like a feather but kill like a dagger.

5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

The lawless woman is a grave digger. Her talk and walk lure men to their death. She promises heaven but her charm leads to hell.

6 Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.

The conjunction, "lest" (pen), is there to prevent something undesirable from happening to his son. Solomon seems to be saying; "Do not study this woman" nor "consider her ways" because her devious mysteries are inexplicable and incomprehensible.

A godly woman is wonderful but predictable, but a strange woman is shocking and unpredictable.

7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.

Note Solomon's orders to his son: "**hear**" (shema). "**depart**" (cuwr / suwr) not from my words but "**remove**" (rachaq) thy way far from her.

The jussive, "depart (cuwr)/ suwr) not from my words" means "do not turn aside," or "do not leave undone." There is no discretion in this Father's commands. A father's order is a binding ordinance on sons. Obey or die.

8 Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:

The command "**remove**" (rachaq) thy way far from her is a Hithpael imperative meaning "make yourself flee." Using modern vernacular a father might say: "Get out of there as fast as your sandals will slap!" Take alternative routes to avoid this kind of women. You are **NOT** strong enough or wise enough to resist her charms. Flee! Run! Sprint!

Fleeing temptation is the only time a man is permitted to be in a hurry. Good men are not hurried men unless they are fleeing from sin.

"Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset. What is anything in life compared to peace of soul?" — Francis de Sales

GOOD REASONS TO AVOID THE STRANGE WOMAN

9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel:

(1) Loss of strength: The word "honor" refers to a young man's strength and vigor. "thy years" refers to the best years of a man's life. The young man who gives the best years of his life to wine, women, and song will end up in the poorhouse and enduring the cruelty of a sick bed.

10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger;

(2) Loss of wealth: Strange women cost money. Why spend money on a woman that can't love and end up in poverty? The strange women and adulterous women like her will stay with you until your money runs out and you're on the street beggin' for your supper.

11 And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,

(3): Loss of health: Predatory women not only rob you of your wealth but your health. Happiness turns to mourning, and sorrow robs one of bodily strength. Few things are more draining than a five-alarm conscience that won't shut off.

12 And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;

(4) Loss of hope and peace: Living with regret is not a roommate with whom you want to lodge.

13 And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

(5) Loss of direction, confidence, and purpose in life. Likewise, living with remorse and guilt are two more leeches you don't want sucking life out of your soul.

14 I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

(5) Loss of innocence: The degenerate man is awake to all the sins to which he is vulnerable -- awakened by the fear of being caught -- even to the crimes for which he could be punished by the congregation. He trembles at the thought of what he has become and what he might have become.

EXORTATION TO BE FAITHFUL IN MARRIAGE

In order **not** to seduce the reader, the Spirit addresses the subject of marital intimacy with metaphors. He does not use bland medical terms or dirty street jargon. He honors marriage and upholds its mysteries using the art of the metaphor. He speaks truth while appealing to the human imagination: waters, fountains, wells, rivers, female deer, and female goats.

Note the use of imperatives (jussives) - the Spirit's authoritative appeal to the sensibility of a holy man.

15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

This simple trope encourages marital faithfulness and the delight it affords compared to the pleasures of sin for a season.

The “strange woman,” on the other hand, says, “Stolen waters are sweet” (9:17). The same metaphor is employed in Song of Solomon 4:15, where a devoted wife is compared to “a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon” (Ellicott).

16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

A metaphor regarding the joy of the conjugal relationship and the delights of holy matrimony – a God ordained relationship designed to keep men from erotic vices offered by the strange woman.

17 Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.'

The joy of marriage and mysteries shared are sacred and cannot be divulged to others. Matters between husband and wife are private. Moreover, intimacy is not a spectator sport.

18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

This is an exhortation to enjoy the marital relationship; that is, God pronounces his blessing on marital love.

19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

The deer and the goat have a reputation for being kind and tender to their young -- a lovely allegory of the nuptial state and the joy of being man and wife.

REASONS TO PURSUE FAITHFULNESS IN MARRIAGE

20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

The term "ravished" (shagah) presents the idea of wandering off the path of righteousness. It means "to go astray" or "meander" "reel" or "stagger" like a drunk man or a beaten boxer before he hits the canvas. "Ravished" is not making love, but being clubbed into submission by a strange woman. She is doing the pounding; the man is receiving the beating. She is the predator; he

is the prey -- not the other way around. This woman is not a victim, but a killer . . . a trespasser . . . an aggressive hunter of souls.

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

If there is a reason to avoid the seductress it is the certainty of detection. Solomon pricks the conscience, "Are you aware of the presence of God?" Awareness of the omniscience of the Almighty saves many a man from many sins.

The personification of "the eyes of the Lord" are a reference to God's omniscience ("omi" = all; science = knowledge). He not only sees, He knows all things from the beginning. Nothing is a surprise to God because He has never learned anything. He knows all things. This knowledge ought to feed faith and promote the "fear of the LORD.'

The noun "ways" (derek) refers to the road, path, or habits of a man. God is thoroughly acquainted with a man's private thoughts, ambitions, motivations, and secret sins.

The Piel participle, "pondereth" (palac), is a judicial term meaning "to weigh in the balances or to make level" (Psalm 58:2; Isaiah 26:7).

22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

Sin is not only addictive; it is compared to being held captive in shackles and chains.

"His own iniquities:" "He has sinned so long that he is "tied and bound," hand and foot, with the "chain of his sins," and cannot get free even had he the wish to do so" - Ellicott.

God is sovereign. He not only knows all things, he appoints our vulnerabilities that we might seek Him and become strong soldiers of the cross.

23 He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

The end of a womanizer is not eternal happiness but death. Because he cannot control himself, he must die for the greatness of his sin against himself.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 6

EXTRICATING YOURSELF FROM BAD CONTRACTS



Proverbs 6:1 My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,

◆ Solomon addresses the problem of simple contracts where the naive end up being a surety for the binding promises of suretyship.

A "surety" is a pledge, a contract, a promise to perform in case the promisor defaults on the obligation to his promisee . . . the only problem, however, is that no man controls the future . . . or the character of the promisor. Promisors tend to be thoughtless and reckless; promises tend to be meticulous and hellacious.

Contracts are good but the parties must have integrity and honesty. To be a surety for a promisor other than you spells "folly." Contracts between promisees and promisors must be made by parties bound to Christian law.

The term "stranger" refers to a promisor who is not part of the covenant, to one outside of law, to one who does not acknowledge the authority of God or one's duty to keep their word (contract).

2 Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

The term "snared" implies that one has been trapped in a bad contract due to haste and a failure to count the cost of the obligation . . . to read the fine print . . . to fully understand the duties of the contract.

Beware of giving any information to a police officer: "What you say can and will be used against you!" – Miranda v. Arizona (1966) (NO EXCEPTIONS!)

Never write a nasty letter to anyone. If you have a beef over a matter, pick up the phone and talk them. If you have something nice to say, write it down, and send it by mail.

3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

Solomon urges his son to give a Notice of Termination to the promisor. In most countries, you have three days to nullify an obligation. Bad faith and fraud justify the termination of any contract.

Coming under the power of a friend makes you a slave to a man -- a surety for his carelessness. Suddenly, your freedom, wealth, and property are under the control of another. Why would you risk your bed for another?

There is a time to terminate a bad contract. Humble yourself. State the reasons you want to terminate the contract. When the other party initiates the contract in bad faith, a law suit is a viable option.

4 Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

Contracts are serious business and you must be awake when you commit to its obligations.

Contracts are part of life and necessary for commerce. You can't avoid contracts but you must remove yourself from bad faith contracts that are one-sided, laced with fraud, or contain unreasonable demands.

Flee government unilateral contracts where you have all the obligations and the government has all the legal benefits; and, unilateral contracts where you sign statements under penalties of perjury and government officers never sign the same contract . . . and, never, ever sign any government form under penalties of perjury. Never trust Employees working for the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia (Psalm 118:8-9).

Giving *no sleep to the eyes* is a metaphor encouraging urgency. Bad faith contracts and adhesion contracts entrap and hold your assets hostage to the promisee. Governments are masters at entrapping people in unilateral contracts: "Under the penalties of perjury, I promise . . ." Therefore, extricate yourself . . . and learn how to fill out gov-forms correctly.

5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

Government officers and shyster business men are hunters searching for easy prey. Don't be a victim of corruption . . . or a serf to these Nimrods . . . or a debt-slave to banksters.

A LESSON FOR SLUGGARDS

6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

Most sons are lazy. The joke of the year in one toastmaster's club was, "I have two sons and two flashlights and they all work."

Solomon, though not addressing his son directly, urges him to study the way of six-legged insects called "ants" in order to increase his industriousness. The little creatures are always busy constructing their ant habitat -- whether they live underground, in mounds built at ground level, in wood structures or in plants or trees. The colonies have no foreman or supervisor to instruct and prod them. They are industrious by nature. Solomon, like

Shakespeare passes his philosophy to his son: "Assume a virtue if you have it not."

Being industrious does not include haste but it does include pace. The man of God is busy, but not hurried; active but not rushed; engaged but not irritable; committed but not fettered with worry, anxiety, and fear.

Diligence is every man's duty. A man taking up his cross to follow Christ must crucify lethargy and impetuosity in order to imitate the admirable industry of the ant.

7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

Ants are productive because it is in their nature to work. They do not need a manager or supervisor. They are self-motivated and naturally ambitious. Sons, however, need external motivation to get them to produce. It is a wonderful day for a father when he sees his sons working without rod and whip.

8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

Diligence is every man's business where he must invest his energies to reap a harvest.

9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

Solomon queries the sluggard: Mankind has built many instruments to wake up, get out of bed, and to get to work -- all in vain.

Feckless: lacking initiative or strength of character, irresponsible, pliable as in *feckless Republicans*.

10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

Solomon peers into the soul of the sluggard sleeping in his warm bed and reads his mind.

"This he speaks in the person of the sluggard, refusing to arise and requiring more sleep" - Benson.

11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Solomon warns the sluggard that his laziness leads to impecunity and destitution.

"armed man" refers to a fully equipped, competent warrior . . . not a woman.

He compares this distress to being robbed by an unscrupulous salesman or being robbed by a thug desperate for money. Laziness robs; laziness kills.

The Hebrew construction in this verse is deliberate and intensive. Beware! Beware! Beware!

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WICKED

12 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.

A description of a naughty, wicked, froward person

(1) a froward mouth:

The term "naughty person" refers to a "son of Belial" or a petty, worthless, proud, ill-tempered man; that is, a self-willed man without compassion or consideration for others. Nabal was called a worthless person who railed on David when David peacefully asked for assistance for his army that guarded the flocks of Nabal (1 Samuel 25).

A "wicked man" (ra) is a lawless person who is an enemy of common law.

The term "froward" refers to actions that deviate from the standard of God's law, from the standards of righteousness. "Naughty," "wicked" men are slicksters that talk silk but deliver burlap – men with tongues as sharp as razors and as foul as a sewer pipe.

13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers;

(2, 3, 4) Eyes, feet, hands: Slicksters are not a devil in a red dress, they are smiling, handshaking devils in blue suits. Since all dress in silk suits, the discerning study body language. The figure of a slickster has squinty eyes, curled lips, "sticky" fingers, and a galloping tongue.

14 Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.

(5, 6) A perverted heart that sows discord: All this slickster-thief thinks about is how to enrich himself at others' expense. It matters not if he splits families, causes men to lose jobs, bankrupts his victim, or fractures relationships – he "soweth discord."

15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

(7) His calamity: "calamity" (ade) = burden, distress, disaster.

The pervert is a brother to a thief. Both create stress for themselves and others.

His calamity comes suddenly reminds us of Nabal who must have had a heart attack when Abigail told him that she had sent provisions to David's men (1 Samuel 25).

A LESSON ON THE CHARACTER OF GOD

The following description of what God hates is preceded by a similar description of "naughty" worthless persons -- a summary of the characteristics of worthless persons (ra-men):

16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

Hate is an attribute of God, not a vice. Six is the number of man; that is, the six corruptions represent the depravity of man.

17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

(1) "proud" - hateful to God, autonomous, self-willed – first in the sins of man.

(2) "lying tongue" - deception, fraud, wrong, perjury, duplicity, dishonesty, insincerity.

(3) "hands that shed innocent blood" - murder, abortion, assassinations, crimes of passion. The word "innocent" means pure or clean. This taking of life is not the work of the justice system, but reckless, careless, intentional killing.

18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

(4) "a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations" – This is not thoughts *de minimis*⁸ or *injuria sine damnum*⁹, but thoughts that yields substantial, measurable harm due to acts of fraud, plunder, extortion, murder, rackets, extortion in violation of the 10th Commandment.

“Fraud in the common law sense of deceit is committed by deliberately misleading another by words, by acts, or, in some instances — notably where there is a fiduciary relationship, which creates a duty to disclose all material facts — by silence.” Quoted 3 times in United States v. Dial 757 F.2d 163 (7th Cir. 1985) (United States v. Tweel (5th Circuit) 550 F. 2d 297)(U.S. v. Prudden) (18 U.S.C. §1341).

Fraus est celare fraudem – It is a fraud to conceal a fraud.

⁸ **De minimis**: about minimal things, insignificant things – too trivial to merit consideration.

⁹ **Injuria sine damnum** – injury without damage.

(5) "feet that be swift in running to mischief" - "Who do not yield to temptation after a struggle against it, but give themselves up as willing slaves to their lusts." – Ellicott

19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

(6) "A false witness that speaketh lies" - baseless gossip, slander, libel, perjury, fraud. "speaketh" literally means "breathes out" or "puffs out."

This category includes men under oath to tell the truth where duty requires truth to be stated. The perjurer not only injures the defendant, but he is a threat to the health of the whole judicial system. Perjury is distinguished from and separate from a lie. One does not owe the truth to men who abuse the truth - See Abraham in Genesis 12, and the midwives in Exodus 1.

Moreover, distinguish between childish liars and professional liars working for the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia.

Q: How do you tell when a politician is lying? A: When they have their mouth open. Since Employees working for the Municipal Corporation are never required to make statements under penalties of perjury, none of them can be trusted. It is so bad, some pundits refer to some presidents as the "Liar and Chief." -- all for national security, of course!

(7) "he that soweth discord among brethren" - This could refer to common gossips, but probably more to the strategies of men in power that practice a "divide and conquer" strategy through misinformation, disinformation, covert operations, propaganda, cheating, sweet-talking accusations, slander, brainwashing, bribes, intimidation, duress, bullying, brow-beating, strong-arming, and coercion.

A LESSON ON KEEPING A FATHER'S COMMANDMENTS

20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

Commands are not options or suggestions. They are ordinances that allow no discretion. Godly fathers give commands and set rules; permissive fathers offer options and avoid absolutes. A mother's commandments come with the authority of God and the husband - or double power. Obey your mother and father. There is no excuse for disobedience.

21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

"Bind" is not literal. It is a metaphor urging the son to study, learn, know, and apply these lessons in his heart of hearts and his walk of walks.

22 When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

The Christian walk is a lonely one, but God's law is a faithful friend that awakens to learn and rebukes us when we are wrong; that guards and protects us from the fiery darts of the wicked one. How much more so for a regenerated man empowered by the Spirit of God!

23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

God's Word is "a Lamp unto my feet and Light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). It is a man's Comforter and Corrector; the Honey and Vinegar one needs to live the abundant life.

The law is light, holy, just and good (Roman 7:12). It is not dark or old fashion. If God's law is not the standard of right and wrong for a Christian, then what is? Beware antinomianism and any vogue doctrine that teaches the Old Testament is irrelevant for modern times. Most religious teachers are more interested in being cute and up-to-date, than being right with God.

A majority of people are like mushrooms.
They are kept in the dark (lack information).
They live on rotted logs (poverty due to the government).
They are harvested for lunch by those who control the farm (globalists).
They never think ...nor understandnor attempt to change ...their destiny.

A LESSON ON THE STRANGE WOMAN

24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

This father is not delivering commands because he has nothing else to do. He shouts orders to protect his son from the venom of a mesmerizing, deadly, swaying cobra. A stranger to holiness, to law, and the Christian gospel, she defines "nasty." Infected by the curse of Eve with a deviant desire to conquer men, she slays them by the sword of her tongue. (Genesis 3:16).

25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

"lust not" (chabad) is a dogmatic ordinance by this father designed to save his son's life; that is, don't be captured by her fluttering, flirting eyes, seductive smile, red-ruby lips, sugar-talk, or voluptuous figure. Bolt! Skedaddle! Hubba bubba! Run! Flee! Vamoose with the "pedal to the metal!"

Beauty without virtue is like a flower without perfume.

26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.

First consequence of consorting with a prostitute: destitution and death.

The woman sounds good enough to eat, sweet as honey but as deadly as hemlock.

Not all whores are single. The whorish slut sniffs around methodically ferreting for prey to devour and destroy – a huntress looking for easy prey to capture the soul of the simple. Don't try to pet this Aztec goddess, or you will be dead before you know she slit your throat.

A LESSON ON THE HIGH COST OF ADULTERY

Because Solomon had a father and mother who committed adultery, Solomon understood the high cost of David's inexcusable sin. His father fell into this sin. Though his own life was spared, David lost 3 sons and a daughter because of his iniquity.

Second consequence of consorting with a prostitute: damage and destruction.

27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

The work of a strange woman is compared to the destruction of a fire . . . of hot coals . . . of trying to build a fire on the naked hearth of one's hairy chest.

28 Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?

Hot coals burn the feet: a hot love-affair with a lady of pleasure roasts the soul.

29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.

The strange woman is a married woman hypnotizing men while drawing them in to the lion's lair. One look, one touch, one kiss, and her toxins paralyze the conscience and render it inoperable.

30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;

31 But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.

Society can tolerate many misdemeanors, but it has no tolerance for men on the wrong side of the sheets. Common crimes require restoration two-fold and five-fold, but adultery is considered so iniquitous and inexcusable, men require a seven-fold penalty. . . even death of the adulteress and her money-bag paramour (Leviticus 20:10).

32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

This may be the greatest understatement in the Book of Proverbs.

Adultery injures man's spirit, soul, and body (1 Corinthians 6:18).

“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (a metonym for the whole man).

The adulterer loses his precious all -- his "precious soul" (6:26). Furthermore, society knows that adulterous hanky-panky is absolutely wrong, bad, immoral, reprehensible, twisted, and worthy of stoning (See the Seventh Commandment; Leviticus 20; 2 Samuel 11; and, John 8: 1-11).

33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

The wound acts like gangrene that is terminal and incurable. Dishonor means that his reputation is irreparable. Men tolerate many weaknesses among neighbors, but no society condones or tolerates adultery. No matter how hard Hollyweird tries to condition society to accept *another mule kicking your stall* the strategy backfires. This sin remains taboo. Adultery smells inexcusable, indefensible, and unforgiveable in the eyes of men.

34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

Scholars define "jealousy," not as petty envy, but as a praise-worthy zeal hard-pressed to preserve something precious; in this case, a marriage.

The rage of a man refers to the husband-avenger who in his burning anger cannot and will not forgive!! A principled, strong man who is the innocent victim of adultery is rightly filled with vengeance, hatred, righteousness, and the wrath. He has no option but to kill his wife and her paramour, or to divorce her immediately without pity. Shame on the man who does not feel this way; the poor sap who can't let go -- the weak-willed cream puff that can't kick an immoral wife out of the house.

35 He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

Dollars cannot soothe the pain of betrayal! A righteous-victim husband will not be pacified by money. His natural instincts demand he kill his adulterous wife and her paramour (radical justice) or to divorce her immediately without mercy (a reasonable antidote). (Note: something is radically wrong with modern pastors who think "forgiveness" is the universal remedy for the sin of adultery. There is a place for forgiveness, but there is a time to put away an adulterous woman. Competent doctors

don't put a band aid on an amputated limb, and competent counselors don't put a band aid over the wounds caused by adultery.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 7

WISDOM THAT PROTECTS A MAN FROM THE STRANGE WOMAN



◆ Knowing that his son would be tempted by the seductress, Solomon orders him to stay away from her house. He shares a story about the death of a young man who fell for her deadly charms -- Solomon's "sex talk" to his son which is not biological or medical, but moral and philosophical.

Ordinances from a wise father

Proverbs 7:1 My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.

"keep" (shamar) is an imperative. This father gives his son no discretion, no quarter, no choice to be taken prisoner.

Disobedience to a Father's moral instruction is a consequential violation of the 5th Commandment.

2 Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

The emphasis in the early chapters of Proverbs is upon "my law", the law of the home.

The command "keep" is repeated a second time. Once would be enough, but twice means the son is without excuse. He is under clear orders. You can die on the battlefield of life, but you can't be taken prisoner.

3 Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

Two more imperatives enforce family law: "bind" and "write." Keep my commandments and live; or break them, and die!

Modern fathers are far too permissive. Learn a lesson on being firm and inflexible on morality. The problem in contemporary homes is not delinquent children, but delinquent fathers fleeing parental duty . . . the failure of men to surrender themselves to the Lord.

4 Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman:

Again, wisdom is personified. He wants his son to make friends with wisdom and understanding.

The strange woman is contrasted with Sophia (wisdom). Sophia is the exact opposite of the strange woman. Sophia is the *isha yaphah* (beautiful woman in covenant with God) and the seductress is the *ishshah zuwr* (the strange woman outside the covenant of God).

The word "strange" (*zwr*) is translated "strange fire" in Leviticus 10:1; "no stranger may eat of holy things" in Leviticus 22:10; and a trespasser in the tabernacle is called a "stranger" who must be put to death (Number 1:51).

The purpose of this father's instruction**5 That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.**

The purpose of this talk with his son is that the young man will not be captured by honey-bait on the lips of the strange women who is a lamp for every moth.

THE STORY OF A FOOL WHO LOST HIS LIFE**6 For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,**

The following facts are not based on hearsay, but upon the experience and observations of Solomon.

The prey is a young, stupid man**7 And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,**

The prey is in the wrong place at the wrong time of night

8 Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house,

This man is not on this street by accident. Curious, this simpleton planned his route in advance.

The unsuspecting prey is being stalked by a predator of the night

Solomon educates his young son about the **Ten Marks of a Seductress.**

9 In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:

The **first mark** of a seductress -- As a creature of the night, she stalks her prey.

The prey comes face-to-face with the huntress

10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart.

The **second mark** of a seductress -- Her luring dress; i.e., she shows more and accentuates more of her assets than godly women deem appropriate.

Clothed seductively dressed like garnishment at a feast, she appeals to the tastes of his eyes in order to get into his wallet.

11 She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:

The **third mark** of a seductress -- Loud and verbose, she roars like a lioness stalking her prey.

The **fourth mark** of a seductress -- This stubborn and rebellious woman hates God's law.

The **fifth mark** of a seductress -- She loves hanging out with the boys and seldom stays at home. She can't stand being alone.

12 Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.

The **sixth mark** of a seductress -- A woman of the night, she hunts for her prey on every street corner.

13 So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,

The **seventh mark** of a seductress -- Aggressive and affectionate, she catches him in her trap. He does not spot her, she spots him first.

14 I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.

The **eighth mark** of a seductress -- Appearing pious, she knows how to talk religion to her undiscerning victim.

Next, she seduces her prey with her smooth, sensual buttery words.

15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

The **ninth mark** of a seductress -- Like the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood she flatters her quarry: "What beautiful eyes . . . what big muscles you have . . . I am lucky to meet you . . . yum yum."

The **tenth mark** of the Seductress -- She offers him a simple contract -- a night of sensual wonders without consequences, without guilt, and without the fear of being exposed (16-21).

16 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.

Sweet sounds and a delight to the eyes . . .

17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

A delight to the senses . . . luxury . . . pleasure . . . scents . . . fragrance . . . aroma. She appeals to all five senses of a man.

18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.

The contract offer . . . a lie as this is not love but lust . . . adultery . . .

The word "solace" (alac) means "to rejoice." The word "solace" (alac) means "to rejoice." "loves" (ohab'im) is plural.¹⁹ For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey:

"goodman" is the Hebrew word for "man" (ish).

An intoxicant for the conscience . . . to alleve fear in the man . . . false assurance of not being caught.

20 He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.

A combination of fact and presumption . . . a presumptive claim . . . there is no danger of being exposed, shamed, and killed.

21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

Solomon emphasizes her smooth, buttery speech -- the "flattering of her lips" - the main weapon in her arsenal of seduction.

22 He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;

Solomon pulls no punches. As dumb as an ox, the victim trots to the slaughter house wagging his tail.

23 Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life!

Sticking his head in the noose, the prey loses HIS LIFE!

More instructions on avoiding the immoral woman

24 Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

Solomon orders his son to "hear" and "to attend" -- to "decline" her contract and avoid her neighborhood (7:25). He requires no discretion. His commands are ordinances from God. Do it or die!

25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

26 For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

Solomon informs his son that he cannot win; that he does not have the strength or wherewithal to resist this vixen. An experienced predator, this wild cat will devour you in one bite. Run! Flee! Split!

27 Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

In case his son can't fully grasp his father's instruction, Solomon repeats the major lesson: This woman's door swings open like the gates of hell into a death chamber torturing men -- the place of beatings and starvation -- the place of lethal injections -- the place of private execution.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 8

WISDOM'S CALL TO THE SIMPLE MEN



♦ A man will meet two venders in his early life: Sophia and the strange woman. One offers eternal pleasures for the soul, the other offers temporal pleasures for the body; one leads to life, the other to death.

Recruitment by Sophia

Proverbs 8:1 Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?

Solomon asks two questions, not because he does not know the answer, but to make the reader think.

Wisdom (Sophia in the LXX) is personified as a street vender selling her wares at the city market -- an attractive, mature, principled, persuasive, worldly-wise business woman.

Sophia is also a figure of the tender graces of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mentioned at least 54 times in Proverbs, Sophia's name means "wisdom." She stands in contrast to the unprincipled seductress who markets her wares to simple men at night. Called the "strange woman," Solomon mentions her at least 11 times in Proverbs as the feminist "bone crusher" of men (See Proverbs 2).

Prominence

2 She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.

"top places" and "paths" refer to the shopping areas of a town on Main Street.

Like all women, Sophia puzzles men, but she does not hide from them. She is not esoteric nor does she lodge in universities, colleges, or synagogues. Don't look for her in Heaven. Search for her in the high places, important places -- in the streets, in the gates, in the market. Be observant of people and their ways, and you will find her.

"I spake openly to the world . . . and in secret have I said nothing"
(John 18:20).

Clear and conspicuous

3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.

The six chamber "gates" in Israel refers to the "seat of government" as well as the market place where people sold and bartered for goods.

Solomon personifies Sophia as a vender in the market retailing her commodities to customers. She works in the daytime, not at night time. A woman of the day, she has nothing to do with the deeds of darkness. A public, open person, she works in the sunshine. She operates a fair, quality, transparent business.

SOPHIA PROMOTING HER WEALTH

4 Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

Solomon continues his personification of Sophia. As a merchant, she calls to men (LXX: anthropos) in every age. She loves to impart her wealth to hungry souls. Unlike the strange woman who poisons men, Sophia's customers become grander, richer, and healthier.

Understanding

5 O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

The Hiphil imperative verb "understand" (biyn) is in the emphatic position and orders students to "stand under" the wisdom-authority of her instruction.

"Simple" and "fools" are brothers. These fraternal twins seem hopeless, but Sophia is persistent. She doesn't give up on them. She makes scholars, statesmen, and doctors out of the unlearned.

It is a mistake to think of fools as street people without a job. Many fools are employed as reporters in the main stream media, as professors in Universities, and government offices.

Excellence

6 Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

"Hear" (shema) is like "hey there" or "Ho" in Psalm 55:1 - an interjection of a vender to get the attention of a shopper. The sweet lips of Sophia are filled with excellent words which find their ultimate fulfillment in the incarnate Word. "Hear" is an invitation term to salvation. How do you get saved?

"Hear" the gospel! Turn away from the cries of other vendors and listen to Christ! The cults are there also. So, beware!

Truth

7 For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

A stellar conversation with Sophia can be described as truthful, helpful, brilliant, incredible, admirable, inspiring, and unrivaled. Other vendors deceive and deprive men of their wealth and health. But, Sophia's deliberations are honest and beneficial.

The word "truth" is employed ten times in proverbs (3:3; 8:7; 12:17; 12:19; 14:22; 16:6; 20:28; 22:21 *2; 23:23). The Hebrew word for "truth" (ameth) begins with the Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and ends with a tav, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This is the Spirit's way of informing us that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life . . .", the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the Aleph and the Tav and everything in between, our Sovereign, Creator, safety and refuge (John 14:6; Revelation 22:13; Matthew 5:18).

The middle letter in the word truth (Aleph Mem Tav) is the letter "Mem" which is a symbol for the "womb." This is the Spirit's way of informing us that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator and Source of all things.

The Hebrew word for "speak" (hageh) means "to roar," "moan," and "growl" like a lion over his prey (Isaiah 31:4). Does your wife hear you roaring over the Word each morning?

Righteousness

8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

Most men have garlic on their breath and poison under their tongue. Consider how our Lord's lips were anointed with grace:

- He never lied or embellished the truth.
- He never swore or used profanity.
- He never used a mince word.
- He never complained. Life's irritations never spawned angry speech, cynicism, or sarcasm.
- He never bragged or boasted; He never uttered words of self-pity.
- He never ranted or spoke in rage.

- He never berated others or exposed their hidden secrets.
- He never answered a harsh word with a threat or bitter invective.
- He never condemned a man that was just; or acquitted a man that was unjust.
- He never spoke when He should have been silent; and was never silent when He should have spoken. Before Pilate he was a sovereign in control of all things; and, before the Roman-Sanhedrin high priest he witnessed the good confession.
- He never said more than needed to be said, or less than a man needed to hear.
- His words contained no poison or venom or bitterness or bait or hooks.
- He never gave a sales speech or advertised the purchase of a commodity.
- He never rambled or continued talking after nothing else needed to be said.
- He never asked a question of which He did not know the answer.
- He never promised more than He could deliver, yet every fulfillment of a pledge was greater than His promise.
- His speech, though gracious, was never sugar-coated or sickly sweet.
- He never gave a man a tongue-lashing . . . or an insincere compliment.
- He never apologized or admitted error or a mistake or confessed a sin. In most men this would be evidence of arrogance and pride, but with Jesus it was because “He knew no sin,” and “did no sin” and “had no sin.”

Clarity

9 They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

Sophia's instructions are clear, straightforward, and unequivocal. After her class, students linger with others excitedly sharing their new insights on the issues of their time.

10 Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

Sophia offers golden commodities -- valuable goods that surpass the offers of stencil and air head candy bars -- goods that must be purchased -- a contract that can be accepted or refused.

Men dig deep in the earth under darkness to find gold, but men can't seem to find the truth of God.

Matthew Henry on Job 28:1-11 . . . The caverns of the earth may be discovered, but not the counsels of Heaven. Go to the miners, thou sluggard in religion, consider their ways, and be wise. Let their courage and diligence in seeking the wealth that perishes, shame us out of slothfulness and faint-heartedness in labouring for the true riches. How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! How much easier, and safer! Yet gold is sought for, but grace neglected. Will the hopes of precious things out of the earth, so men call them, though really they are paltry and perishing, be such a spur to industry, and shall not the certain prospect of truly precious things in heaven be much more so?

11 For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

In comparing Sophia's knowledge to rubies, Solomon wants us to know the value of Christ our Savior . . . of the knowledge of God's Word . . . of law, of gospel, and of the principles of holiness. In contrast to fools who build huts on haughtiness, Sophia builds skyscrapers of hope in the hearts of men.

SOPHIA'S RESUME'

She's a friend of wisdom, prudence, and knowledge

12 I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

Sophia belongs to Christ "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

"Prudence" (ormah) = perceptive, discerning, wholesome, shrewd, insightful, sagacious, farsighted, considerate, astute, judicious, clever, sharp, intelligent, perspicacious, thoughtful, and smart.

Sophia exposes fraud: "witty inventions" (mezimmah) or crafty, clever, schemes, plots, propaganda, indoctrination, devilish lies, equivocation, false promises, misinformation, disinformation, propaganda, psychological operations, and the schemes of clever, deceitful, lying men (politicians) designed to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:1-9).

Attend Sophia's classes and she exposes lies in science, in economics, in law, in education, in politics, in medicine, in sociology and all the disciplines germane to colleges and universities.

She fears the LORD and hates darkness

13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

The word “pride”(ge’ah) is used 6 times in Proverbs and the word “proud” is used 8 times in the Book. The LORD said He would break “the pride of your power” in Leviticus 26:19. The Puritans often emphasized that pride was the sin of sins, the one that God hates most (see Proverbs 6:16 and James 4:6).

Sophia is a resident of the kingdom of light who is at war with the kingdom of darkness. She loves her students, but she hates pride and the deceptive practices of other venders marketing fruits picked from the vines of hopelessness.

She speaks intelligently with facts and truth

14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

As the candle for the mind, Sophia understands wisdom because she is the author of wisdom and understanding. To meet this queen is to gain direction and to grow in strength; to have light and not darkness; to have direction and not chaos.

She installs kings, counsels kings, and decrees justice

15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

Sophia appoints kings. Governments are directed by her providence. The marvelous knowledge of kings and princes were learned in Sophia's School of Wisdom.

Sophia is the chief of staff in all good governments; without her, nations descend into chaos, confusion, and conflict with other nations. With her there is the hope of peace, without her there is a certainty of war. Embrace Sophia and fly the flag of freedom; reject her and wear the chains of slavery.

16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

A bridge of hope, all the good that nations enjoy come from Sophia. But all the wickedness, corruption, and injustice come from themselves. Sophia does not come cheap, she is expensive; tuition is free, but homework is hard. Find her for she has the "big ticket" to the "marriage supper of the Lamb."

She rewards loyalty

17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Sophia loves her customers. Love Sophia and you will feast on the sun-kissed grains of truth; neglect her and you will starve to death eating the husks of depravity.

She possesses the riches of wisdom, knowledge, and righteousness

18 Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

The earlier we enroll in Sophia's classes, the sooner we reap the benefits of her instructions. Park your chariot near the Halls of Virtue and your riches will endure.

She's better than money

19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.

Rulers love money, but those that love Sophia obtain the rhodium honors of knowledge and wisdom; assets that can't be purchased with cheap metals like silver and gold.

She leads and guides

20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

Righteousness, truth, justice, and goodness are evidence that rulers are consulting Sophia and not Satan. She is the guide through the swamp to the Fountain of Youth -- faith in Christ.

She enriches men and makes them better

21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

The word "substance" (yesh) is an unique term meaning "being" or "existence." We tend to interpret this in its philosophical sense to refer to spiritual wealth, but it may imply in a secondary sense to carnal, earthly commodities.

"They who love and seek the wisdom of this book possess Him, and in possessing Him become possessed of their own true being. They are owners and lords of themselves, and have in their hearts a fountain of life, because they have God dwelling with and in them" (MacLaren).

Love money and you may become poor; love Sophia and you become rich in everything of value.

Be careful for what you hunger for you will become the sum total of your desires.

SOPHIA'S PERSONAL HISTORY

She is the possession of the LORD

22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

Sophia was not only present at the beginning of creation, she was a friend of the Creator before His hands framed the foundation of the world. By His knowledge, God created the heavens and the earth; that is, Sophia's knowledge is the possession of Christ for "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

Sophia is a type of Christ . . . an icon of His wisdom . . . the personification of His knowledge . . . a simile comparing his understanding to a wise woman . . . a touching figure of the tender graces of our Savior-Shepherd -- a man with all the strengths of manhood, and all the virtues of womanhood . . . our Creator, Lord, and Master.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." – Declaration of Independence, 1776

She is eternal

23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

The pronoun "I" represents the Lord Jesus Christ as personified by eternal wisdom.

"set" (nakak) means "poured out" or established and ordained as one set on a throne -- as our Lord was "set" as King on Zion (Psalm 110).

This passage demands that when we think of creation, we see with the eye of faith the Son of God; that when we think of the wisdom and knowledge it took for God to speak this world into existence, we think of Christ. To speak of the Creator is to speak of Christ for He is the Creator! He was with God then with God as Savior on this earth; and with God now because –

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . ." (John 1:1-3).

She is before time

24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

Sophia takes us back to the beginning, at that time when there was no time, at that time when there were no clouds or mountains or rivers; to that time

as far as our little minds can go back in history . . . to that time called "in the beginning . . ." -- the great divide between time and eternity.

She is before creation

25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:

Who can grasp eternity? Go back in time as far as your little mind can go and peer over the wall of time into eternity, and Christ was there . . . with the Father . . . and with the Spirit! He was, is, and shall be because He is eternal (John 8:58; Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 13:8; Revelation 1:7).

She was present at the creation of heaven and earth

26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

Before the earth, before the oceans and land appeared, Christ was there.

27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

Before the heavens and the sun and the seas were formed, Christ was there.

28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

Before the clouds and the heavens and the rains were created, Christ was there.

29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

What causes the waters of the earth not to fall off the edge (flat earth) or fling off a spinning ball (round earth)? It is Christ, the Creator of the skies, land, and seas.

She was with God and part of God

30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;

More personification: Sophia (wisdom) is compared to a childhood friend; that is, the knowledge and wisdom of creation was with our Lord from the beginning: "In the beginning was the Word . . ."

She loves mankind

31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

Unlike other vendors at the market, Sophia loves humanity and wants what is best for her customers. How foolish of us to doubt God's love!

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . ."

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . ."
(Genesis 1:16; John 3:16)

Sophia admonishing her audience to listen**32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.**

Because Sophia loves you and has your best interest in mind, she can be trusted: "Believe in God, believe also in me," said Christ (John 14:1).

33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

Sophia places a duty on her customers:

Hear, be wise, and please do not say "No!" Your eternal destiny depends on your decision:

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him" (John 3:36).

Sophia sharing her blessings and warnings**34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.**

Blessed is the man that hears her wisdom in the morning, looks for her guidance during the day, and comes home to her comforts in the evening. Sophia is the Fountain of Blessings, the Sea of Happiness, the Cloud Burst of God's Goodness, the Mountain of Virtue, and the Ocean of Good Things to Come.

35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.

To find Sophia is to find life; to find Christ is to find eternal life and the favor of the LORD.

"For this is the will of My *Father*, that everyone beholding the *Son* and *believing* in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day" (John 6:40).

36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

To find Sophia is to find the Tree of Life; to sin against Sophia is to die under the Poisonous Tree.

Beware of mordant legislation germane to the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia that introduces death into society: feminism, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, lesbianism, transgenderism, gender-binder hogwash and the like.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 9

TWO INVITATIONS BY TWO WOMEN



◆ You are invited to dinner by two women. Both are attractive. One hostess is wonderful, the other is wicked; one heals, the other steals; one meal is healthy, the other is deadly; one fulfills, the other kills.

Which invitation will you choose?

SOPHIA'S DINNER INVITATION

Proverbs 9:1 Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:

Sophia is portrayed as a queen decked in fine jewelry living in a luxury mansion. Her house is in heaven and her pillars are the seven gifts of the Spirit (Isaiah 11:2; Revelation 1:4).

2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.

Her feast is the Lord's Table -- they "did eat and drink." Her wines are spiced to enhance the taste; that is, this feast is an appetizer from "the marriage supper of the Lamb."

3 She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city,

Queen Sophia has many maid servants to be her messengers at major intersections in the cities of the world. Her maids cry out,

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1).

4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

Sophia's *compères solícite* customers,

"Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (Isaiah 55:3).

5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.

“Come” is Sophia’s cry, and it is also Jesus’ gospel invitation term in Matthew on how to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 11:28-29). Don't go to Muhammed or the Dalai Lama, come to Jesus, the Son of God, and find rest (salvation) for your soul.

Sophia's messengers are street hawkers crying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1).

6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

Sophia's message to the simple: "be no longer counted among the weak, who can be “carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14).

“Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” forsake evil and accept my invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb (1Corinthians 16:13) - (Ellicott).

Sophia's Instruction on How to Treat a Scorner and a Wise Man

7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.

Sophia does not invite fools, scoffers, and scorners to this feast. She looks for those hungry for salvation. She does not give that which is holy to dogs (Matthew 7). She doesn't waste her time equivocating with rebels against God's law-order and neither do her messengers.

8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

Fools, in their pride, hate the knowledge of the gospel and they hate correction that comes by looking at God’s law; good men, in their humility, love knowledge and are constantly in search of truth. They love to be proved wrong by reasonable, competent men. Their motto is, "If I am wrong, prove it . . ."

9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

Sophia's *compères* look for men who have not been fiscally drained by other merchants. She summons the humble and teachable to her feast. Proud know-it-alls are not invited. Religious fools devoured by the cults are not invited. But, those hungry, discerning individuals in search of truth are invited to her banquet. Hunger is the basis of growth. Be careful for what you hunger!

Sophia's Gifts

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Sophia reminds her guests that only those who fear the Lord are invited to this heavenly feast. To the Christian mind, everything begins with God (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1). The fear of God comes by faith in hearing the law of the Lord God (28:9; Romans 10:17; Psalm 119:9-10, 18, 77, 97).

11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

Sophia's *compères* offer "eternal life" to those who believe and receive Sophia's invitation (Matthew 11:28-29; John 3:16, 36).

12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

Sophia does not drag men into the kingdom. Each man must accept responsibility for his own soul. Who one can blame God for the loss of their own soul?

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Thus, the greatest sin of all is the neglect of God (Hebrews 2:3).

Sophia's Warning About the Foolish Woman

The foolish woman is the opposite of Sophia.

Both have a dinner invitation. Both work on the streets. Sophia works in the light, the seductress works in the dark; Sophia's home is in Paradise Village, the seductress rents an apartment in the red light district on the south side. Sophia is unseen, but true; the seductress is seen, but false; Sophia is pure, the seductress is defiled; Sophia is holy, the seductress is unholy; Sophia is a dove, the seductress is a cougar; Sophia is simple but intelligent, the seductress is complicated, but stupid; Sophia's ways are sweet, the ways of the seductress are bitter. Sophia provides a feast, the seductress conducts a funeral reception; Sophia's cuisine delights the tastes, the seductress's goodies bloat the belly; Sophia guides men to heaven, the seductress is an escort to hell.

She is foolish and clamorous

13 A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing.

The first mark of a foolish woman is that she is clamorous, verbose, vociferous, blaring, and deafening.

The Hebrew word for "clamorous" (*hamah*) means "to roar, murmur, complain," and "to growl. She is a predator on the prowl. Sophia is quiet and reserved. The seductress is a loud, angry woman. The foolish woman knows

nothing . . . not even how to cook. Sophia knows all things. The foolish woman cannot listen, she can only talk and talk . . . even, you will only learn half of what she knows. Sophia has two ears and pleasant table manners. When she speaks, she opens her mouth with wisdom to the delight of all her guests (31:26).

She is a hunter and a predator

14 For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city,

The seductress is unemployed. She is not at the market, but in her house. This cougar plans her kill and prepares to pounce on her next victim.

She is active and aggressive

15 To call passengers who go right on their ways:

This text describes the ways of this siren as aggressive, violent, and pressing.

THE STRANGE WOMAN'S INVITATION

16 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

The temptress preys on ignorant and dull-witted men. She has the ability to transform herself "into an angel of light" but in reality she is Satan's death angel (Corinthians 11:14). Her victims are malleable sheeple . . . glandular men . . . easily trapped and easily slaughtered.

17 Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

Her offerings are attractive, but deceptive; pleasant but decadent; lively, but slimy; friendly, but deadly. She will trap pagans, but her main target is wealthy, religious men.

18 But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

This woman's doors are the hinges on hell. Those that come under her spell are cast into the eternal cript.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 10

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON: SECTION TWO (10:1-22:16)

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♦ This chapter begins a collection of 375 proverbs on various subjects titled the "Proverbs of Solomon"(10:1 through 22:16).

In interpreting Proverbs, the reader **MUST** understand Solomon's perspective comes **AS A FATHER** or **AS A KING** or **A PARTY TO GOD'S COVENANT**.

Every pronouncement **uses God's law as the standard** for evaluating the character and actions of a man. When man becomes the standard for right and wrong, regimes end up promoting and protecting the wickedness of Sodomites and transvestites.

Therefore, consider the proverbs in the context of a court case where the litigants, wise or foolish, appeared to present their complaint or defense before the king. **A CONTRAST IN DESTINIES**

Every verse in this chapter comes in the form of antithetical Hebrew parallelism - a contrast in thoughts or reflections on opposing ideas either directly or indirectly.

Sophia is calling Christians to think in terms of opposites: light and dark, north and south, up and down, weeds and flowers, good and evil, the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked.

Glad Father v. a Sorrowful Mother

Proverbs 10:1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

A wise son owes his wisdom to a wise father, and a foolish son usually has no father; a wise son makes a father glad because he is the product of his parent's vigorous investment in him; and foolish grieves his mother because she carries the baggage of neglectful training of the boy's father.

The face of glad fathers look like flowers in the springtime, while the face of grieving mothers looks like the last leaf on a winter's limb.

Wickedness v. Righteousness

2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.

An honorable judge or legislator cannot be bought with a bribe. There is no gain in society for wrongdoing; but righteous living profits man and beast (12:10). A society that permits people to profit by crime are accomplices to the commission of crime. The righteousness of the wise feels like solar powered lights, but the wicked have more failures than a dead battery.

"Death" refers to the death penalty, and ultimately to the Day of Judgment. The context determines the interpretation.

Capital crimes merit the death penalty; that is, the death penalty is in place to improve society (Exodus 21:22). The death penalty is a major deterrent to capital crimes. The death penalty is NOT a sign of man's humanity to man, but of the call to justice. Both the saving of life and the taking of life is a duty of man. The modern liberal democratic society has made an idol out of life -- even to the point of going "soft" on crime and eliminating the death penalty altogether.

A society that removes the death penalty denigrates itself and contributes to the rise in crime among humanity. Remove the fear of punishment and crime multiplies like beetles. The problem in today's society is NOT exercise of the death penalty, but delayed justice and decade long appeals in our encumbered judicial system: "When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the ears of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong" (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

The Fate of the Righteous v. the Fate of the Wicked

3 The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

Man succeeds by the grace of God, but God resist the proud. Those who live under kingdom authority are promised all things (Matthew 6:33). but the wicked shall perish.

The wicked look like scarecrows during a famine, but the righteous have a feast to enjoy at the King's table.

The Slack Hand v. the Diligent hand

4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

According to Solomon's observation the rich became rich because they worked hard to obtain their wealth, and the poor became poorer because they pretended to work; that is, they could not produce an honest day's

labor. Poverty is not normally due to the oppression of the rich, but due to a lack of effort and creativity.

Many fools are a geein' when they should be a hawin'. Likewise, many fools are sleepin' when they should be workin'. Stop blaming others for your lack of success and accept for responsibility for your actions.

“Those minds that are deficient in law or legally lazy will be plundered by those managing the government farm.” See *SEDM.org*.

The Worker v. the Sleeper

5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

A wise son works for his father and enjoys the fruits of the harvest; but, a foolish son grieves the whole family because of laziness during the summer working season. The wise sweat, the lazy sleep; the wise have callouses on their hands; the foolish have soft hands. It is impossible for sluggards to have callouses when their hands are in their pocket.

Blessings for the Just v. Violence for the Wicked

6 Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

Well-wishes are conferred by God and men on those that are fair and reasonable, but the mouth that threatens violence will eventually be shut because of shame.

A mouth full of bull's breath needs a bucket of soap to clean up the stink.

Being Remembered v. Being Forgotten

7 The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

Both the righteous and the wicked die. Society suffers a great loss when honest, hard-working man passes on; but, there is no loss to society when the wicked are dead.

We don't know the name of the rich man in hell, but we do know the name of Lazarus (Luke 16). Who cares?

The Wise Heart v. the Foolish Heart

8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

"prating" = bank, brim, edge: one overflowing with words.

The righteous are ready to hear and obey; but a prating fool is slow to hear and quick to speak.

When thinking of fools, think bigger than “street persons.” Consider the prating fools leading the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia.

Uprightness v. Perversion

9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

Those living in the light have no fear of the darkness; but those living in darkness have much to fear from the light. Sinners hide. Walk in the light, and enjoy the level path of righteousness; walk in the darkness, and stumble over the clutter.

A majority of people are like mushrooms.
They are kept in the dark (lack information).
They live on rotted logs (poverty due to the government).
They are harvested for lunch by those who control the farm (globalists).
They never think ...nor understandnor attempt to change ...their destiny.

Joy v. Grief

10 He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall.

"winketh with the eye" = deceit, mischief, devious, secret.

The righteous bring joy to everyone around them, but the fool is a grief to society. Good men work in the sunshine; but, deceivers work secretly in the shadows hiding from authorities. The wicked burn with envy over what others have. The righteous are content with what God gives them.

The Mouth of the Righteous v. the Mouth of the Wicked

11 The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

Righteous men are direct and open about their intentions, but the wicked cover themselves with deceit and malice. The words of the righteous produce life in the family, and the words of the fool grieve the whole community. The words of the righteous soothe like soft cotton, while the mouth of the wicked is curled back at the edges.

Hate v. Love

12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Fools are driven by hate, but the righteous by love. Fools stir up contention with their words, but the righteous clothe the naked and comfort the agitated. Love carries a life-raft; hate carries a battering ram.

Understanding v. Ignorance

13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.

The wise serve the needs of mankind from their knowledge and wisdom; the fool's future is riddled with pain and hardship. There are two tutors in Proverbs: the soft instruction of Sophia, and the painful rod for the back of fools. Both lead to wisdom; but, the way of Sophia is much less painful.

Wise Men v. Foolish Men

14 Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

The wise live near the tree of life, but fools camp under the Poisonous Tree. In the storehouse of the wise one will find knowledge and wisdom; but, the storehouse of the foolish contains wreckage from careless living.

Rich Man v. the Poor Man

15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.

Wealth gives men confidence and power, but poverty drags men down and limits their choices. Wealth is helpful in solving many problems in life, but riches cannot commend a man to God or save the soul.

The Lord Jesus and the apostles were poor in silver and gold, but rich in theology; because they knew God, they had knowledge and power to bless men (Acts 3:6).

The Practice of Righteousness v. the Practice of Wickedness

16 The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin¹⁰.

By "sin" Solomon refers to an act that is *mala in se*, wrong or evil in itself, and not arbitrary acts of the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia which heaves out *malum prohibitums* – acts prohibited by statutes and regulations because they do not promote the interests of government.

¹⁰ Sin is a substantial breach of God's law. Sin is not concerned with peccadillos: *de minimis non curat lex* – the law does NOT govern trifles.

The blessings of God follow those who work and serve the needs of their fellowman; but, ruin and destruction follow the wicked who spread fear and destruction among men. The barns of the diligent are full, but the wicked are one fruit loop short of a breakfast bowl.

The Right Way v. the Wrong Way

17 He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

The road to heaven has a small minority of humble obedient men on its path; but the road to hell is overcrowded with fools who refused to learn the gospel of Christ.

Lies v. Love

18 He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.

There are men that say one thing, but mean another; that hide the venom in their hearts behind insincere compliments.

The righteous are known by what they say and do, but fools shroud themselves behind cloaks of ambiguity, deceit, and disingenuous promises.

"slander" is a violation of the 6th Commandment, and the murder-weapon of choice for politicians.

At the gates of the kingdom, the righteous rejoice, but at the gates of hell the wicked have trembling lips, trembling hands, and knocking knees.

The Listener v. the Talker

19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

The term "words" or "word" is used 46 times in Proverbs. There are good (tov) words (12:25) and bad words that hurt (18:8). but a good man "spareth" his words (17:27).

Some people's tongues are tied in the middle and flappin' at both ends; others have enough tongue for six rows of teeth.

The wise are quick to think and slow to speak; but, fools are slow to think and quick to speak; that is, a mouth that functions like a windmill exposes a person's lack of self-control. A wise man hears; a fool speaks; a wise man speaks deliberately and slowly; a fool speaks randomly and quickly; a wise man has two ears; but, a fool has one big open mouth.

Beware of politicians who use polysemous words – words that have several meanings . . . terms of art like "person," or "individual" or "employee."

Value v. Valueless

20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.

This text expresses the value of a studied tongue. Fools suffer from protrusions of the tongue, but wise men put a bit and bridle in their mouth. Some women can talk the legs off a stove and cook nothing; but, there is a feast to enjoy when a holy man speaks. When a godly man addresses a subject, people listen; when fools speak, people can't wait to leave the room.

Plenty v. Want

21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

The righteous speak truth in conformity to law and their address meets the needs of their audience; but, the words of a fool poison their patrons because their hearts feed on death.

Joy v. Sorrow

22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

The promises of a fool contain snares, chains, and hemlock; but when God blesses a man His provision is free of snags, drawbacks, and fetters. When the devil works, he leaves clutter and chaos behind on the trail; when the Lord leads there are no downsides or hooks or snares to avoid. Satan's ways are like rain at a BBQ; but, the Lord's ways are like a picnic in the park on a sunny day.

The Pleasure of the Wicked v. the Pleasure of the Wise

23 It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.

Fools rejoice in evil, war, and death; but, a wise man rejoices in good, peace, and life. Fools laugh at everything stupid and foolish, but wise men rejoice in wisdom. Fools have no remorse or shame in sin, but the wise are afraid to sin. Fools can laugh over the most atrocious blasphemies, but the righteous consider blasphemy no laughing matter.

Fear v. Fulfillment

24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

The fears of the wicked are poverty, shame, and death; but the righteous are filled with faith, hope, and love. One field is filled with weeds, the others with flowers. One garden with mercy, the other filled with cruelty.

Temporal v. the Eternal

25 As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

Troubles come to all men. The wicked are easily entrapped and defeated. The righteous use troubles as stepping stones to increase faith and to grow in character. The wicked are marked by resignation; the righteous by perseverance. One sows the seed of God's Word; the other calls down thunder and reaps the whirlwind.

Satisfaction v. Disappointment

26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.

As horseradish and vinegar can take the tartar off your teeth so a sluggard who does not complete his task can wash a smile off his manager's face.

Faithful employees bless their supervisors; but, because sluggards are undependable, they multiply grief in the company. The sluggard tastes like vinegar soup and smell like a smokestack in a garlic plant.

Long Life v. the Short Life

27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

Generally speaking those who feed on excesses and pleasures live shorter lives than those who live responsibly. Good works gladden the heart and increase hope; foolish habits grieve the heart and produce anxiety; the faith of the righteous is like sippin' on Chamomile Tea and bad habits are like slurpin' on bat soup that leave your taste buds beggin' for mercy.

Fear of the Lord is a product of faith -- the product of true knowledge about God; and, a lack of faith feels like fear, cold hands, and shortness of breath.

Gladness v. Doom

28 The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.

This is Solomon's way of teaching about the advantages of building a house on the rock v. building a house on sand. The former feels like sunshine and flowers; and, the latter feels like cold snow and crabgrass. Believers experience the hope of righteousness while the wicked have no righteousness or hope. The eyes of the righteous seem to dance with sunbeams while the eyes of the wicked look like those of a dying man.

Beware of political regimes that practice chicanery – the art of deceiving the public by psychological manipulation of terms and ideas. The

government is famous God for practicing *mutatis mutandis* and for making big promises and delivering dribbles and drabs.

Construction v. Destruction

29 The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Those on the path of righteousness receive light and power; while, those on the path of iniquity experience darkness and devastation. The reward of the wicked looks like the swath of a Kansas tornado, while righteousness feels more like super-mellow Saud Beach on the island of Luzon (Philippines).

Security v. Insecurity

30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.

The righteous lean on the Rock of Ages; but, fools totter near the edge of the cliff. Righteousness produces stability; wickedness produces shakiness and frailty. Like Cain, the wicked live like drifters with temporary shelters built on the winds of "change;" but, the righteous are happy residents of the kingdom of God who build their homes on the rock (Philippians 3:20).

Reward v. Punishment

31 The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.

Note how the words of a man reveal his character. Wise men add insight and clarity to a conversation, but fools equivocate and confuse. When the righteous speak they spread sunshine, but when the wicked speak they bark, growl, and snarl at the rest of us. Society awards the wise for their accurate and articulate perspective on the issues of their time; but, society has no tolerance for the smoke-filled opinions of fools.

Acceptable v. Unacceptable

32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

"acceptable" (ratsown) = pleasure, delightful, goodwill, reasonable.

"froward" (tahapukah)= that which is bent and outside the level standards of reason and righteousness.

The righteous provide solutions that are reasonable and acceptable; but fools clutter and confuse their audience with duplicity and high sounding nonsense. The righteous have a cup of love in their fingers, but the wicked are cripts of dead bones.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 11

BLESSINGS FOR RIGHTEOUS



♦ The word "righteous" or "righteousness" is used 54 times in Proverbs and 12 times in this chapter. It refers to a man who lives by the standard of God's law.

The proud man who lives life "my way" stands in the opposite corner from the righteous man.

Happiness

Proverbs 11:1 A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

The LORD delights in truth and fairness. Dishonest commerce disgusts Him. He gave His law to men, not to save them, but to create a just and stable society. Tilled in the meadow of God's goodness, God's law is not only good for me, but for all men and all of man's institutions. When society forsakes God's law, commerce evolves into a criminal enterprise.

Scripture supports the principles of equity, but not equality of results.

All are equal under the Law (God's Law—Ethical and Natural Law): (Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:17-21; Deuteronomy 1:17, 19:21; Matthew 22:36-40; Luke 10:17; Colossians 3:25).

Legal maxims: "No one is above the law;" "Commerce by the law of nations ought to be common, and not to be converted into a monopoly and the private gain of a few." (UCC by Brian Lucas)

Wisdom

2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

Pride refers to one who walks by his own law. This path appeals to fools, strips them naked, and exposes their shame; but, God clothes the humble in royal robes of righteousness. Be humble or stumble. The proud fall because they have no light. But, the light of wisdom leads the lowly.

Guidance

3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

"transgressors" (bagad) = Those who violate the Ten Commandments.

"perverseness" (celeph) = crooked, not straight, turning away from what is right; wrong not in accord with common standards.

Those who walk in the light (of the gospel and his law) can see the contours on the path ahead of them, but transgressors stumble in the darkness because they can't distinguish between right and wrong. Blinded by pride, they become victims of their own sin.

Salvation

4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

"The wages of sin is death."

On the Day of Judgment, riches cannot ransom a man. Heaven's Court cannot be bribed junk metals like gold and silver. But blood? Blood prevails as precious currency in the spirit world. Spirits value blood, not shiny metals. Only the blood of Christ can redeem men (1 Peter 1:19).

To be declared just before God, a man must be clothed in white robes of righteousness. God provides a man with the righteousness he needs and gives him a right standing in his sight through faith in the gospel of Christ (Romans 2:21ff; 4:1-5):

"therefore being justified (declared righteous) by faith we have peace with God" (Romans 5:1).

Stability

5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

"perfect" (tamiym) = sound, whole, or blameless. "Wicked" (rasha) = bad, false, or evil.

"fall" can refer to a man's failure in business or to a guilty verdict in court.

True men are guided by righteousness as revealed in Christ and the Ten Commandments; the wicked are moved by their own passions. The light of righteousness helps a godly man escape hidden troubles while the nefarious stumble over their own wrong doing.

Deliverance

6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.

A “transgressor” is one either ignorantly or maliciously violates one or more of the Ten Commandments.

"naughtiness" (havvah) = evil desires.

Virtue has its own reward; likewise, transgression has its own burdens. The righteous desires of good men will be rewarded; and, the wickedness of the wicked will be punished. Just causes are rewarded in just courts, and bad faith, *mala fide*, causes are dismissed in the same.

7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.

The hopes of the wicked perish at death; but the hopes of the righteous thrive because they are being saved by the present risen life of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:10).

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me **shall never die**. Believest thou this?” (John 11:26)

Likewise, just causes prevail in just courts; and, bad faith suits are dismissed.

8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.

Why is it some men have so much trouble, and other men living in the same neighborhood never experience it?

The righteous escape honey traps, but the undiscerning fall into it. Good things follow the righteous, but trouble shadows the wicked.

9 An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

Perceptive men see through the smoke and fumes of fraud.

"hypocrite" in Hebrew refers to a profane irreligious person. To the Greeks, the word hypocrite was an actor with a mask. The word means "two-faced." A hypocrite says one thing and does another. Atheists are the biggest hypocrites because they borrow Christian values like "good," "just," and "right" to shoulder their causes.

Unlike the cults, Christianity does not permit worshippers to wear a mask.

Double minded men rip open the hearts of others with their sharp tongues. The life-giving words of the righteous calm the anxious, but rescue many from troubled waters.

Honor and respect

10 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.

When righteous men are promoted to positions of power the city rejoices, but when the wicked rule, people are abused and they moan. Righteous rulers protect the rights of the people, but wicked magistrates fracture the rights of men for personal gain.

Human rights are indefeasible: unable to be lost, annulled, or overturned. The whole purpose of government is to protect human rights. See the Declaration of Independence.

11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

A city's orchards enjoy a bumper crop under the management of godly men, but cities plunge into political and economic chaos when they believe the false promises of godless managers / mayors. Good men live in the real world, and make decisions accordingly. Vain men live in a world of fantasy and make dinkum decisions that break the budget and injure human relationships.

Dignity and Poise

12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

Good men respect the rights of others; moreover, they practice self-restraint, self-control, and self-discipline. They have the strength of a horse, but are controlled by the Spirit's bit and bridle. They do their duty without reserve, without regret, and without retreat. Fools, on the other hand, think out loud, do what they want to do even if it damages the neighborhood.

13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Faithful men keep secrets; fools divulge secrets. Good men protect their sources; traitors betray their sources. Many a church has been ruined in "gossip circles." Likewise discontent spreads like pollen on a windy day by discontented employees who have no roots of commitment in the company.

14 Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Good counselors are rare. Nehemiah consulted himself (Nehemiah 5:7). Lacking humility many entrepreneurs don't know how to seek safety in a multitude of counselors and are destroyed for want of good counsel. Seek the opinion of experts in their field.

Motu proprio: initiated with out counsel from others. An apostolic letter in the form of Motu Proprio Similar to **sua sponte** (of his own accord).

Security and Safety and Reward

15 He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure.

The context presumes a contract has been made with another party lacking integrity. The carousel stops for those who become a surety for the debts of another. But, safety abounds for those who push the "No" button to surety agreements -- especially those among family members that don't have the integrity of butter cream cakes.

16 A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches.

“Hebrew, a *woman of grace and favour*, i.e. one who by her meekness, and modesty, and prudence, and other virtues, renders herself acceptable and amiable to God and to men.” (Poole)

Both the gracious woman and the strong man exercise self-restraint over their own affairs and duties.

Mercy and kindness

17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

“troubleth” (a’kar) = “to stir up trouble” and to disturb one’s soul by doing something taboo.

Merciful men (hesed - ish) doeth good to all; and, doing good refreshes the soul. Cruel men do harm to others only to learn they poison their own soul.

Better to spend our lives doing good than to dabble in pickin’ cherries out of another man’s orchard.

Reward and satisfaction

18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

The wicked take “short cuts” and suffer during pickin' season; the righteous sweat during the hot summers and reap a bumper crop during harvest time.

Life

19 As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.

Both righteousness and evil have a reaping season: the former experience a cash crop; the latter a poor harvest.

"True holiness is true happiness" - Matthew Henry.

Uprightness

20 They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.

Instead of helping his neighbor, the perverted heart sows tares in his field. These deviants sour the wine, spoil the crop, and cause grief – an abomination to the LORD. But, those that sow good seed in His field and do good to their neighbor produce the vibrant flavors of *vin ordinaire*.

Do your neighbor no harm!

Deliverance from troubles

21 Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

Great numbers in political causes do not impress God. Jesus called the disciples His "little flock" (Luke 12:32). Unity in unjust enterprises does not stay God's punishment; that is, being on the side of the majority does not guarantee safety. Creating a deal and shaking hands to do evil does not protect sinners. There is safety in the will of God, but there is no safety in the number of sinners who strike hands to arbitrarily do evil.

22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

Another great hyperbole by Solomon: The beauty of a strange woman is like a jewel in a pig's snout; that is, it is meaningless in Faith's Beauty Contest (Hebrew 11). A gold ring in a pig's snout doesn't stop the hog from rolling around in barnyard muck. Natural beauty does not contain the rose water fragrance of godliness.

Goodness

23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

The righteous, being in conformity to God's law, desire only good. But the ambitions of the wicked lead to punishment in court. The wicked seem to want things that injure others and lead to judgment. The desires of the righteous are fulfilled; but, the expectations of the wicked lead to disappointment.

Healthy ambitions provide a banquet for the righteous, but the initiatives of the wicked leave their table bare of bread and water.

Benevolence

24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

There is a farmer who sows seeds on windy days and prospers during the reaping season; and, there is a man who is over cautious and whose meager efforts result in a poor harvest.

There is a righteous man that grows rich by pulling others up the ladder of success. And, there is a man that grows poor by promoting himself and by pushing others down.

25 The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

God often rewards men based on how they treat others. They that show mercy shall receive mercy.

26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

Charles Spurgeon thought this spoke to how we should regard financial markets and transactions:

“Laws which interfere between buyer and seller, master and workman, by any form of law, are blunders and nuisances. Parliaments and princes have hung on to the antiquated absurdity of regulating prices, but the Holy Ghost does nothing of the kind. All the attempts of men to control the price of bread and wheat is sheer folly. The market does best when it is left alone, and so in our text, there is no law enacted and no penalty threatened, except that which the nature of things makes inevitable. God knows political economy, whether men do or not, and leaving the coarse machinery of police regulations, he puts the offender under a form of self-acting legislature which is far more efficient.”

Honor and favor

27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

Because good men seek God they enjoy fruit from the Tree of Life. Because fools seek mischief they are like dogs that eat scraps from the table. "Mischief" is more than seeking sensual delights; it involves injuring others -- a violation of the Ten Commandments.

Growth and grace

28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

A good man can have gold and silver and not trust in them. A beggarly man lacks riches, and invests his hope in obtaining these treasures.

29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.

Trouble comes into the houses of men through the door of avarice, the door of lust, the door of sloth, the door of carelessness, and the windows of bitterness, anger, and pride.

The meek shall inherit the earth, but fools inherit the wind. The wise become sovereigns; fools become slaves.

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Soul doctors are as rare as nocturnists. Most people know when they are physically sick, but don't know when they are spiritually sick. They take sick leave when they are ill, but never take sick leave when their soul suffers. Soul winners are doctors of the soul, and they look for people who know they need a physician. They are wise because they study the state of sinners and God's remedy in the gospel.

Winning souls is not for the novice. It is more than memorizing some four step program for salvation. Soul winning takes a wholesome knowledge of the gospel, wisdom, spiritual maturity, and tons of desire. Very few people are true, competent evangelists. For this reason Solomon said the soul winner is wise . . . and wise men are few and far between.

“If you ain't fishing, you ain't following” – Marion Michaux.

31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

If the righteous are disciplined by God for their sins, how much more shall the wicked be judged for their sins in this life.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 12

BUILDING YOUR HOUSE ON THE RIGHT FOUNDATION



♦ The conjunction "but" (a Vav) alerts us to "antithetical parallelism" (contrasting thoughts).

The Vav is positioned as the sixth letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Used 245 times in Proverbs as an "and" and 25 times as a "but," it looks and functions like a hook. Solomon loves the contrasts of opposite things.

Before us are the building blocks of life. The wise build their houses upon the rock and fools build their houses upon sand.

Build on knowledge and learning

Proverbs 12:1 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

"instruction" (muwcar) is employed 25 times in Proverbs, the word means "discipline;" Used twice in this book, the word "brutish" (ba'ar) means "stupid" or morally "ignorant" like a dumb animal.

He who registers to learn in school loves knowledge; and, knowledge generates light which produces power. But, those who do not love instruction are like animals that do not acquire "God-likeness."

Build with the help of the LORD

2 A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.

The word "favor" (ratson) refers to "pleasure" and "acceptance." It may refer to obtaining favor in a court where the judge stands under the LORD; and, the word "condemn" refers to an equitable sentence at the end of a trial.

Evil behavior (rat'sa) crosses the line and violates God's law. It is used 89 times in Proverbs to show us that condemnation shadows the wicked.

A benevolent soul obtains the LORD's approval; malevolence earns judicial condemnation.

Build on integrity

3 A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

The wicked camps near the Poisonous Tree; the righteous build their house around the Tree of Life.

A man who seeks wealth based on wickedness builds his house on sand: the righteous build their house on the rock by obeying the King of kings.

Wicked causes have no standing in court.

Build with a virtuous wife

4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

The "virtuous woman" (*chayil ishshah*) fears the LORD and submits to her husband (1:7; 31:30); a contentious wife belittles her husband and rots his bones (Ephesians 5:24-25ff).

The word "**virtuous**" is translated "**army**" in Exodus 14:9; "**able**" or "**competent**" in Exodus 18:21; "**valiant**" in Numbers 24:18; and, "**war**" in Deuteronomy 3:18 - - a virtuous woman is a female warrior with *strength* and *might* who knows the enemy. She is her husband's greatest asset!! -

Enrolled in the Lord's army, the virtuous woman defends her castle. The bloody corpses of predators who attempt to take bite out of her children are buried in her front yard.

"shame" is associated with a "contentious woman" (*midyan ishshah*) who strips her husband naked (Genesis 3); that is, she reveals secrets making her husband naked and afraid. Think of Eve.

Kings wear crowns, and virtuous women make kings out of paupers. A man's greatest treasure, he rises up and praises her (31). But, a contentious woman (*ishshah*) shames her husband, stripes him of dignity, and rots his soul.

Build on honesty and sincerity

5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.

Because the thoughts of true men are good and right, they can be trusted; because the thoughts of the wicked are deceitful, they cannot be trusted. Solomon noticed that good men who conformed to God's law obtained favorable verdicts in court; that the deceitful were exposed and punished.

Build on goodness and peace

6 The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.

The words of the "wicked" (rasha) are as smooth as butter, and they poison and kill; the words of the wise prick the heart, and they also heal and restore. The words of the wicked embrace vengeance and death; but, the words of the upright receive the courts favorable ruling.

Build on righteousness**7 The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.**

The word "house" (bet) stands as a metaphor for the principles and ambitions of a man. In Solomon's court, the wicked lost their houses and precious all.

The righteous build their house on the rock, but the wicked build their house on sand. The rock represents His Word, His law, and His gospel.

"One of the most essential branches of English liberty is the freedom of one's house. A man's house is his castle." – James Otis, on the Writs of Assistance, 1761

"Government is instituted to protect property of every sort; as well that which lies in the various rights of individuals, as that which the term particularly expresses. This being the end of government, that alone is a just government which impartially secures to every man whatever is his own." – James Madison, Essay on Property, 1792.

Build on wisdom and purity**8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.**

Fame and honor await the wise; but, shame and scandal await the corrupt. Good men prevailed in Solomon's court, and the causes of the perverse were not well-taken.

Build on your own modest talents**9 He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.**

This humble, contented man has a servant to help him plow and harvest his fields; but the one with a high opinion of himself starved to death.

". . . in his lowly position he is well enough off to keep a slave" (Cambridge). Having the necessities of a trade he plants his field, build his house, and reaps a harvest.

Build on mercy and grace

10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

How many cases did Solomon hear that involved the care of livestock?

A good man studies the needs of his livestock. He feels for them and cares for them, but the wicked are not sentient men, their "mercies" are cruel and harmful. Good men walk their dog every day; cruel men never get off the couch; responsible owners feed their animals quality feeds; fools feed their animal's worthless garbage.

Build on faithfulness**11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.**

He that invests his time and strength into his work shall be satisfied with bread; but, he that likes to party with his friends or go in search of hidden treasures shall come to poverty.

12 The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.

The wicked covet the deceptive practices of wealthy criminals; but, the righteous put their hand to plow and enjoy plenty. Faithfulness turns the key of progress, and deceivers were trapped by their own devices in court.

Beware of subreption by merchants and government officers: deliberate concealment or misrepresentation of facts so as to gain some benefit or advantage.

Build on purity and excellence**13 The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble.**

The wicked are trapped by their injurious words, but the words of a pure soul enable them to avoid trouble. Wicked men have an opinion about everything; but, the righteous man knows when to keep his mouth shut. He doesn't cuss, doesn't swear, doesn't use obscenity, doesn't use vulgarity, and doesn't complain. He works at being a skilled communicator.

Perjury in Solomon's court received its just desserts (Deuteronomy 19:16-19).

14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.

The wholesome words of a righteous man return to him in acts of love and kindness by others.

Build on advice from experts.

15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

The opinions of a fool seem right in his own eyes, advice from the wise wash off of him like water on a ducks back. Solomon counseled many a fool and they all had one thing in common – pride.

This problem of neglecting exculpatory evidence and including only inculpatory evidence against an opponent in a dispute is mentioned five times in Proverbs (3:7, 12:15; 16:2; 21:2; 30:12).

Build on continence (self-restraint)

16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.

Everyone around a fool knows his feelings on a matter; but, a prudent man waits for the right time to share truth that builds rather than shames. The anger of the fool degrades, but the response of the prudent promotes progress. A fool's opinion on matters before the court was immediately made known to all, but Solomon had to draw the truth out of good men.

17 He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.

A good man advances justice by speaking accurately and truthfully; but a false witness assaults justice with distortions and deception.

18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

The participle "speaketh" (ba'taw) refers to one "running his mouth." It is translated "ill advisedly, rashly, and thoughtlessly" in Psalm 106:33.

The rash man belittles others with his verbal jabs and thoughtless comebacks; but, the careful words of the wise are health to the soul.

Build on truth

19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

A good word leaves an indelible impression on the thoughtful man; but, lies are quickly spoken and easily exposed. Facts form the grounds for judicial decisions, while presumptions and opinions are rendered void. Truth endures forever, but lies blend into darkness like the setting sun. Truth was covered until litigants brought their case to Solomon's court, but after Solomon's cross examination all knew the truth.

We are surrounded by so many lies, most people think lies are the truth.

"We'll know our disinformation program is complete when everything the Americans public believes is false" – William J. Casey, CIA Director.

President Obama did Not sign a billmaking it "perfectly legal for the media to purposely lie to the American people" (AP Press, August 27, 2019).

The wretched thing about deception is that the deceived does not know he is deceived.

"Seek the truth, hear the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, hold the truth and defend the truth until death" (John Hus)

Beware of facts, laws, and opinions aliunde (elsewhere) not relevant to the person or to the proper jurisdiction.

Build on trustworthiness, joy, and peace

20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.

Lies lead to wars; but, truth promotes peace and joy. Likewise, careless words create heat in the family . . . and heat in the courtroom.

21 There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.

Innocent men were safe in Solomon's court, but no one is safe in courts where judges have no oath to the truth.

Those just in their cause have no fear; but, defrauders have many fears and worries.

Build on truthfulness

22 Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.

"Abominations" = disgusting.

In matters where truth is essential for just settlement, perjury disgusts the LORD. Truth delights the LORD and those who fear Him.

Build on love and trust

23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.

This is the first time Solomon uses the word “foolishness” (ivve’leth) in the Book. “foolishness” is connected to “my sins” in Psalm 69:5. The word “proclaimeth” (qara) means “to call, recite, summon or to read aloud.” The heart (leb) is a metaphor for the authority and inner administration of a man.

A smart, sensible man restrains his knowledge and his mouth; but, fools are a bubbling pot of gabiness. Be patient in court. Listen, and then speak your peace.

Guard secrets. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. You don’t have to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This is man’s law, not God’s law. You don’t owe the truth to people who will abuse the truth.

Build on diligence

24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

The word “tribute” (mac) means forced labor . . . slavery . . . debt slave . . . serfdom. Note the term “taskmaster” in Exodus one refers to “tax collectors.”

Diligent men are promoted to positions of power; but, lazy men end up as slaves at the bottom of the pecking order.

All of Solomon’s court was made up of rich, aggressive, ambitious men – the best in the nation.

Beware of being a debt-slave on the “Govment” plantation:

“The most fundamental right of all in our republic is self-ownership and control over your body as your absolutely PRIVATE property” (SEDM).

The U.S. "Govment," through psychological manipulation and brainwashing, has turned free citizens into tax-slaves -- something never intended by the Founding Fathers.

"No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws" -- 14th Amendment.

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction" -- 13th Amendment.

Your labor and money you earn belongs to you and not the “Govment.” Neither you or your labor belongs to the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia:

“That every man has a natural right to the fruits of his own labour, is generally admitted; and that no other person can rightfully deprive him of those fruits” (The Antelope, 23 U.S. 66, 10 Wheat 66, 6 L. Ed. 268 (1825)). Source: SEDM, Proof Income Tax Labor is Slavery.

“The right to work in useful employment, and to receive the fruits thereof, is a natural and fundamental right under our system of free enterprise.” *BATTAGLIA et al. v. MOORE*, 128 Colo. 326, 332 (Colo. 1953).

If you think that your labor belongs to CON-gress and that they have a legal right to turn you into a debt slave then you are acting on presumption . . . a postulate not imposed by law; that is, you have become a voluntary mental slave to the State – something forbidden in Scripture and in the U.S. Constitution, Article XIII.

“You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men” – 1 Corinthians 7:23.

But, because of sloth Christian men have become tax slaves to government; that is, they have failed to study the law and principles of freedom to escape the chain placed on them by the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia. Know that U.S. tax laws, 26 U.S.C., apply to government workers, BUT NOT to people in the private sector . . . and, the “Govment” is an expert at making you think otherwise; that is, they don’t want the slaves to know what the law really says and to whom it really applies. Deception makes money and nobody in the Municipal Corporation is going to expose the blinders.

Build on thankfulness and joy

25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

Disappointments depress the heart, but an encouraging word refreshes the soul. Master the gentle rebuke, and men will crown you with honor; master "cut downs" and men will hate your guts.

26 The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.

The righteous man refreshes the soul of his neighbor, while wicked men are a "pain in the neck" to all men.

Build on industry and diligence

27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.

A slothful man won't dress-out his game and carry the weighty package back to his ranch to feed his family; but, a responsible hunter preserves his game in order to provide for his family – regardless of the effort.

Build good habits

28 In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

All the habits of the sensible men tend toward life, but foolish men love death.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 13

TWO PATHS; TWO SETS OF CONSEQUENCES



Solomon orders his son to seriously consider the consequences of his actions.

Faith or foolishness

Proverbs 13:1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

♦ **Scorner:** One that receives no benefit from instruction because of his own depravity, degeneracy, debauchery, and debasement.

To hear is the most fundamental duty of sons. Hearing well marks intelligent children rather than speaking much. “Children should be seen and not heard” was a maxim practiced by parents in the early 1900s. Modern parents are more eager to teach their children to speak than to listen.

Peace or Violence?

2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.

“transgressors” (bagad) is plural and the noun refers to those who have acted treacherously against the LORD and his law-order.

A man lives or dies by his words. Words create life or death. A redeemed man employs wholesome words for the edification of all; and unredeemed man employs vulgar words to his own ruin. Likewise, court cases are won or lost based on facts spoken, tones employed, and the proper appeal to law.

Life or Death?

3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

Want life? Want friends? Guard your mouth. Speak less and listen more. Want to know why you have so many troubles? Study your own talk. Are you attracting coyotes? Maybe you swallowed a dead cat? Noble thoughts attached to noble words pave the way for advancement.

The word “destruction” (mechittah) is used 7 times in this Book and it means “ruin, a breaking of a thing.” It is translated “terror” in Jeremiah 17:17.

Wordy, talkative people will be broken by their words. A fool is more of a fool with his mouth open than his mind shut. Talking is fanatically over pursued. Listening is good, but it is underachieved in most men and women.

Everything or Nothing?

4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

The sluggard has many wants. Because he lusts for everything, he feels like he has nothing. But, hard work supplies all that a man needs.

"fat" implies health and abundance, not biological weight.

Honor or Shame?

5 A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.

No one respects a family of liars, story tellers, fibbers, deceivers, deluders, equivocators, fraudsters, tricksters and the like. Truth triumphs over exaggeration; facts triumph over presumption; and pleasantness triumphs over sarcasm.

Victory or Defeat?

6 Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

The word "overthroweth" (calaph) means "to twist, distort, or pervert;" that is, unrestrained evil within a man corrupts and degrades the man.

The desire to do what is right saves a man from many mistakes; but a careless man multiplies troubles. Walk the trails of the righteous and enjoy your journey.

Riches or Poverty?

7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

"There is a man who lives like a millionaire and is a pauper; another, that of a man who lives like a pauper and is rich" (MacClaren).

8 The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.

The word "ransom" (kopher) means "price." The phrase "man's life" literally reads "soul-man" or "nephesh-ish."

Riches may buy a man in this life, but they are useless at heaven's gates. In relation to eternal matters, a man's soul can only be ransomed by blood, the currency of the spirit world. Heaven does not accept gold and silver as redemption money (1 Peter 1:18-19). Of what use is gold to a spirit?

Light or Darkness?

9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

There are many more lumens in a heart of joy than a complaining spirit. The lamp of the wicked runs on dead batteries and will soon burn out. But the lamp of Christians burns forever because they are connected to the eternal Source of light:

“God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth” (1 John 1:5).

Peace or Contention?

10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

The adverb “only” limits the verb “cometh;” i.e., wherever there is a storm of contention you will find the “pride of your power” (Leviticus 26:19) – an irrational, corrupt sense of one's personal opinion or status.

Solomon the father wants his son to know that pride causes wars; and, that humility drowns out the fires of contention. Be humble or stumble.

The King wants people to know that pride is driving force in every court case. Be humble and settle your case out of court where possible. But, “artificial persons” like corporations have no conscience.

The adverbial particle "only" (raq) limits the action of the main verb "cometh:" that is, contention is the dust storm produced by the chariots of pride dueling for supremacy. Pride is the cause of all wars. Get rid of pride and *shalom* will raise her flag of peace.

“Pride is essentially competitive . . . Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better looking than others. If every one else became equally rich, or clever, or good looking, there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest” (C.S. Lewis).

Increase or Decrease?

11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

The vanity “vanity” (shav’) means “breath” and it is associated with a “lying tongue,” sowing iniquity, and “lies” (21:6, 22:8, 30:8).

Wealth obtained by deception and deceit shall be diminished (reduced); but, wealth obtained by honest business practices shall be increased and enjoyed.

How does this text apply to wealth gained by chasing ambulances?

Fulfillment or Disappointment

12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

Unfulfilled hopes depress the heart; but, fulfilled hopes increase faith; the former triggers death; the latter incites life. You can't throw a wet blanket on a fire and expect to keep warm.

Learn to perceive Providence in every disappointment and you'll be welcome in every home like a long, lost friend.

Reward or Punishment

13 Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

An example of a strong antithetical parallelism! The opposite of fearing the commandment is despising His Word; and, the opposite of destroy (to bind) is reward or *shalom*. Which path will you take?

Fear the LORD's commandments and live, or scorn his law and die; Love the Word and be rewarded, or loathe his Word and be ruined.

Eat biscuits for breakfast or go hungry in the saddle. Scripture is food for the soul, and is as necessary as one's daily bread: “No Bible, no breakfast; no Bible no lunch; no Bible no dinner” is the discipline of godly men.

"No man in this country is so high that he is above the law. No officer of the law may set that law at defiance with impunity. All the officers of the government, from the highest to the lowest, are creatures of the law and are bound to obey it. It is the only supreme power in our system of government, and every man who by accepting office participates in its functions is only the more strongly bound to submit to that supremacy, and to observe the limitations which it imposes upon the exercise of the authority which it gives," -- U.S. v. Lee, 106 U.S. 196, 220 1 S. Ct. 240, 261, 27 L. Ed 171 (1882).

14 The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

"snares" (mow'qesh) = bait, lure, snare.

Departing from evil is no minor command in Proverbs. The English word “depart” is used 13 times in the Book. The Spirit calls men NOT to depart from God’s Word (3:21; 4:21, 5:7), but to retreat from evil (3:7, 13:14, 13:19, 14:27; 15:24; 16:6, 17). It implies building a “middle wall of partition” between the heart and evil.

God is not asking men for *mutatis mutandis* or to reshuffle the hangers in the closet, but to depart from evil, and to walk on the highway of the upright (16:17); that is, radically sever any connection with wrongdoing . . . to pluck out the eye if one is given to lusts . . . to cut off the hand if one is given to stealing (Matthew 5:29). Depart means to leave, retreat, evacuate, decamp, escape, bolt, withdraw, flee, and scoot away from even the “appearance of evil” as fast as your sandals will slap pavement (1 Thessalonian 5:22).

There is the Poisonous Tree, and the Tree of life; troubled waters, and the fountain of living waters.

Obey the law or be in trouble with the law. Transgress God’s law and one could be facing prison time and even the death penalty. Ignore the gospel and one will die twice.

The way of transgressors is as troubled waters; but, the way of faith leads to the fountain of life. Those who have life promote life; those who don't have life fall into the snares of death (1 Corinthians 6:9). Even blind hog can find corn cobs; but a fool couldn't find his supper if it was cookin’ over a fire.

Ponce de 'Leon searched for the fountain of youth. He would have done better to be in the Book searching for the Fountain of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gentle or Hard?

15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

The term “favour” (chen) means grace; the word “hard” (eythan) means “ever flowing” or “permanent.”

The pursuit of goodness has its rewards, and the way of transgression has its punishments. Happiness follows the righteous, but pain follows transgressors. Understanding is satin sheets while transgressors sleep on rocks.

This is another way of sayin', "Don't squat with your spurs on."

Consider the graciousness of Abigail, a woman of understanding and how she in her wisdom appeased David's anger to avoid ruin (1 Samuel 25:3). Consider the rebellion of Vashti against her husband and how she lost her standing as queen and was cast out into the street to forage for food like a prostitute (Esther 1).

Restrained or Unrestrained?

16 Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.

"dealeth" (asah) = make, produce, fashions.

Discerning men increase learning, but the way of fools pacify ignorance.

Fools are so full of stupidity, they couldn't find knowledge if they were locked in a library overnight. Fools speak nothing but trivia that storms their mind; wise men speak thoughtfully, carefully, and slowly.

Profit or Pain?

17 A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.

Because men of integrity follow the light, faithfulness pilots their ships into the harbor of "health" (healing, profit, sound); but men of infidelity steer their ship onto reefs of mischief and misery.

Let us strive to be competent, faithful ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Riches or Poverty?

18 Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

Ignorance leads to poverty and shame, but wisdom leads to riches and honor.

Fools that reject instruction need twice as many brain cells to be a half-wit. Receive correction and be successful, reject correction and experience failure. The dominion mandate of Genesis 1:26-28 requires men to master many skills to conquer his environment and to achieve success.

Good or Evil?

19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

The wise persevere to the end of a project and enjoy its fruits; but, a fool cannot save himself from following evil. Wise men give up everything to find their treasure; but, the fool will not give up anything to find true riches. Learn to finish well . . . to complete chores . . . to wrap up projects. It is too easy to leave things half-done.

Departing from evil is no minor command in Proverbs. The English word "depart" is used 13 times in the Book. The Spirit calls men NOT to depart

from God's Word (3:21; 4:21, 5:7), but to retreat from evil (3:7, 13:14, 13:19, 14:27; 15:24; 16:6, 17).

During times of apostasy government officials visit the gods of chaos and political madmen hatch "cockatrice eggs" like feminism, Sodomy, transvestism, and gender-bender nonsense. When immorality becomes normal, good men drive on the highway of the upright and depart from evil . . . but, in so doing will be considered madmen by government rulers (Proverbs 16:17; Isaiah 59:1-15).

Wise men or Fool?

20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Lowly men stand on the shoulders of wise men to achieve success; but, fools rely on themselves and suffer defeat. Sleep with hound dogs and you'll catch their fleas. Make friends with spiritual men who take the Scripture seriously. Wise men read. The best preachers among us read two or three books a week.

Gain or Loss?

21 Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed.

Evil follows sinners like fire and brimstone follows hell; the righteous are attracted to goodness like bees are attracted to honey. Pursue goodness as God defines goodness. Listen to older men and find wisdom; listen to younger men and be confused.

22 A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

A good, unselfish father leaves his modest wealth to his children, but the criminals lose it all. A spiritual man leaves the treasures of the gospel to his children and grandchildren, but the sinners leave their families with hell to pay.

23 Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.

"tillage" (niyr) = untilled, unplowed fields.

The granaries in Israel are filled by the hard working poor while the proud are ruined by the neglect of their own fields.

"The poor hardworking man, by God's blessing, gains an abundant living; while many (rich persons) are ruined for their neglect of what is right" (Ellicott).

The potential for wealth is in the fields of the rich and poor, but they have to be plowed and planted to reap a harvest.

Love or Apathy?

24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

"Spare the rod and spoil the child." Leniency and permissive are close cousins of hatred. Parents that let their children do anything they want hate their child. Permissiveness is not love, but a form of hatred – the policies of irresponsible, delinquent parents. Moreover, God disciplines his children for their good, not because he is a mean father, but because he loves his children (Hebrews 12).

It is craziness and the height of irresponsibility to even think a child has a choice of gender. Trust Providence, not whacko-politicians.

Full or Hungry?

25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.

The righteous lack many things, but diligence is not one of them.

Fools want everything and have nothing; the righteous have everything (in Christ), and need nothing (but the simple necessities of life).

The ways of the negligent exhaust the man; but the way of the righteous refreshes the soul. Want is a cruel taskmaster that rules over fools; but, when diligence governs the righteous, a sweet harvest comforts the man.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent only His Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 14

THE UNDERLYING TRUTH BEHIND CONSEQUENCES



♦ For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction. Sow faith and reap righteousness; call down thunder and you reap a whirlwind. Preach righteousness and people will hate you (John 7:7); Preach the gospel of wealth and people will love you.

Solomon links blessings with positive character, and troubles with negative character.

Whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap.

Sow wisdom, reap a strong family

Proverbs 14:1 Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

Solomon contrast the way of the wise with the way of fools; “build up” is contrasted with “plucking down.”

"hands" is a "grab-all" metaphor for this woman's temperament, demeanor, discourse, habits, and philosophy.

A godly mother who provides her children with a Christ-centered education is as beautiful as a spring robin; but a foolish woman spreading discontent is as ugly as a bullfrog. The former brings songs of joy into the home; that latter croaks out discord toward all.

Sow hate, reap perversion

2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

The more a man walks with Christ, the more men will hate him (John 7:7; Isaiah 59:15).

"He who fears the Lord walketh in his uprightness. (Comp. John 14:21.) And likewise, “he that despiseth Him is perverse in his ways.” (Ellicott)

When your neighbor's hope is in government, you cannot expect him not to betray you whose hope is in the Lord.

“As described in Heb. 4:12 and like Jesus in Rev. 1:16, we seek to use the word and law of God as a sharp sword to expose and cut off corruption wherever it is found, and ESPECIALLY in government. His word and law is also our armor and shield as we combat the corruption as described in Eph. 6:11-20 and Psalm 91” (SEDM: Introductory Page)

Sow pride, reap folly

3 In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

A “rod” is an instrument used to inflict pain. The instrument of inflicting pain by a fool is his sharp tongue. Though a tongue has no bones, it can break a heart. Words usually don't hurt unless they come from significant people in your life.

Pride has a nursery of screaming brats in the heart of the foolish, but the righteous promote goodness and are as happy as a cat in a cream pitcher.

Words can kill and words can heal. It takes a million positive statements to build up children, and only one insult to send them all crashing down.

“Spiteful words can hurt your feelings, but silence breaks your heart”
-- C.S. Lewis.

Words the wicked use hurt like a Florida sunburn

Sow work, reap a profit

4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

Don't like the dirty chores like cleaning out the corral? Then, sell your ox. But, if you profit from the strength of the ox, then stop complaining about chores. You can't have it both ways: the use of an ox, and a clean barn.

An application: Don't like washing dishes? Then stop eating. If you must cook to eat, then stop complaining about kitchen chores. If you are helped by owning a truck, then don't complain when it is time to change the oil.

Sow truth, reap faithfulness

5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.

Though truth is often hard to discern in matters of controversy, a faithful witness will not perjure himself; but, false witnesses find it easier to lie than to state the facts. Contradictions expose lies. Testifying to the truth

can be burdensome, but the faithful witness speaks the truth regardless of the cost.

“Perjury is the basest and meanest and most cowardly of crimes. What can it do? Perjury can change the common air that we breathe into the axe of an executioner” – R.G. Ingersoll.

Perjury is punished by fines, and, or five years in prison, 18 U.S.C. § 1621.

Not only do witnesses lie, but prosecutors lie. Beware of government liars.

"Show me the man, and I'll show you the crime" - Lavrentiy Beria, head of Joseph Stalin's secret police.

Sow ignorance, reap scorn

6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

Scorner (luwts) = arrogant, proud, sarcastic, mocker.

The scorner cannot find wisdom because God resist the proud (1 Peter 5:5); but, He provides wisdom and understanding to the humble. Be humble, but firm.

Sow intelligence, reap foolishness

7 Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.

There is no way you can correct a fool and maintain common courtesies. Leave his presence and be at peace; remain in his presence and be at war. Leave or grieve; stay and prepare to pay.

Sow foolishness, reap deceit

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

The wise study their duties and the best way to resolve problems, but fools create problems trying to skirt their way around them. Fools are as unstable as flags in the wind, but the prudent are as balanced as three-legged stools.

9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.

Fools mock sin to the ruin of their lives; the righteous treat sin seriously and offer sacrifices according to the law; because fools don't take sin seriously, they reject the gospel

Humble men believe they are sinners, and therefore, please God by seeking salvation in Christ. Fools reject Christ and provoke him to anger; but men of faith reap peace.

It is a mistake to think of fools as street people without a job. Many fools are employed as reporters in the main stream media, as professors in Universities, and professional attorneys; and, all are sinners¹¹.

Sow self-control, reap joy

10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

The term “bitterness” (marrah) is translated “grief” in Genesis 26:35, and the pungent term is used three times in Genesis 15:23 to describe the bitter waters of Marah in the wilderness.

Loneliness arises when you feel no man fully understands your grief. Only the Man of Sorrow understands the depth and breadth of your pain.

Therefore, "cast all your care upon Him because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Sow evil, reap destruction

11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.

"The house" = a strong, permanent stone structure; "the tabernacle" = a tent.

All the ways of the wicked damage their own house; but, the ways of the righteous flourish even though they live in a humble tent. It is not the size of the house that makes the man, but the size of the man that makes the home.

Sow self-trust, reap Death

12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Proud children feel they are right even when they are punished for their disobedience; proud men equivocate with authority and justify themselves even though they are as guilty as dog with ketchup on his nose.

Going one's own way is the very definition of sin.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” –
Isaiah 53:6.

¹¹ Sin is a substantial breach of God's law. Sin is not concerned with peccadillos: de minimis non curat lex – the law does NOT govern trifles.

Sow heaviness, reap silly laughter

13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.

Silly laughter from those avoiding troubles is part of man's irresponsible nature, but the result of not dealing with difficult matters brings more grief. Those that don't fix the leak in the roof will be tip-toeing in water by mornin'.

Sow rebellion, reap grief

14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

"backslider" (cuwg) = "to turn" back from doing what the law requires.

Those that shun their duties in life shall eat the husks, but the dutiful shall eat bread.

Sow simpleness, reap credulity

15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

The word "prudent" (aruwm) means sensible or reasonable.

Wise men are not fideists but empiricists that demand proof of claim with strict proof of claim. Hearsay is not accepted as evidence in court. Claims demand verification.

Onus probandi – Burden of proof

Actori incumbit onus probandi – the burden of proof is on the plaintiff.

Actus Reus¹² Non Facit Reum Nisi Mens Sit Rea – Conviction of a crime requires proof of a criminal act and intent. Or an act does not make a defendant guilty without a guilty mind. Or an act does not constitute guilt unless done with a guilty intention.

5 U.S.C. § 556 (d) Except as otherwise provided by statute, **the proponent of a rule or order has the burden of proof**. Any oral or documentary evidence may be received, but the agency as a matter of policy shall provide for the exclusion of irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence.

¹² A guilty act . . . must come from a guilty mind.

Rule 301. Presumptions in Civil Cases Generally

In a civil case, unless a federal statute or these rules provide otherwise, the party against whom a presumption is directed **has the burden of producing evidence to rebut the presumption.** But this rule does not shift the burden of persuasion, which remains on the party who had it originally

The investigator of fact wants to know: What did you see? What did you hear? What did you touch? What did you feel? To believe a claim without proof of claim is childish. Without facts there are no grounds for reasonable belief.

". . . to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by **many infallible proofs**, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:30)

Beware of claims *nul tiel*: the presumption of law which is not on the books . . . or not on the record such as “everyone must pay taxes,” “you have to obey the government,” “jay walking is a crime,” or “it’s illegal to tape people in a public place,” or “everyone has to obey cops,” or “you need a license to start a church . . . or to get married.”

Sow the fear of God, reap holiness

16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

Wise men depart from evil because they fear the consequences of breaking the law. Fear of getting caught is a driving force in law.

Fools don't think and therefore believe every promise in a sales promotion, but the wise discern truth and lies, good and evil, right and wrong. Consequently, the wise separate themselves from empty promises and proposals that harm others.

Sow anger, reap folly

17 He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.

The adjective “soon” (*qatser*) means “short or impatient.” It refers to a man with a “short fuse” that is easily and quickly agitated.

The Hebrew word for anger is *aph* which means “nose” or “flared nostrils.”

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

Solomon like Job links *fear* and *anger* together (Job 19:29; Proverbs 20:2). An angry man has many fears; that is, anger is a cloak for fear.

The Lord does not permit his people to be driven by fear, anger, or anxiety (Philippians 4:6-7). *Anger*, *anguish*, and *anxious* borrowings in English: the first from Scandinavian, the second from French, and the third from Latin. In Old Norse (that is, in Old Icelandic), *anгр* and *anгрa* meant “to grieve” and “grief” respectively (Compassion.com).

“If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred says of sorrow” (Chinese Proverb).

The person that is easily angered easily agitated and constantly complaining is a fool. Consequently, he who irritates others ruptures his own spleen.

Sow knowledge, reap prudence

18 The simple inherit folly; but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

"Sin is the shame of sinners; but wisdom is the honour of the wise" (Matthew Henry).

"prudent" (aruwм) = studious, observant, wise, discerning, sensible.

Plow up snakes and you're gonna be dancin' in a hog trough. Study to obtain knowledge and you'll be more blessed than the librarian's nephew.

Sow goodness, reap honor

19 The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

Though a long time coming, the fools in politics will eventually bow to the policies of honorable men and admit they are right; the wicked always eat from the table of the wicked because they don't know how to cook anything decent. The wicked bow to the righteous when they know they are meaner than them; but, if they wicked "ain't bowin'," they don't think you're very tough. Christianity needs a few more pastors who are meaner than a junk yard dog.

Sow wealth, reap friendship

20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.

There is a sad disjunction in society in that the rich are loved for their money, and the godly poor are despised because of their poverty. People are attracted to wealthy men; and, are repulsed by the poverty of the poor. The rich are never lonely because they can buy their friends; but, godly men have little cash and few friends. Our Lord was a poor man. No man understood him or fully appreciated his presence among them. The solution is not more money, but more love activated by faith.

Sow mercy, reap happiness

21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

He that does not respond to the struggles of his neighbor sins against God, but he that is merciful to others, will experience the mercy of God.

Hit a hornet's nest and you're gonna get stung; skip rope with children and you be singing, "Happy day to you."

Sow goodness, reap mercy and truth

22 Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.

Evil is in men, not in the environment. Men err because they are evil; but, men who attach themselves to truth and show mercy, shall reap the benefits of doing good.

Kiss mercy and enjoy a life of love; feed the snake and your gonna get bit.

Sow verbosity, reap poverty**Sow labor, reap a profit**

23 In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

There is something about people that is common to all: men would rather talk than work, socialize than perform duties, have a meeting rather than carry out company plans. But, the faithful man who completes his work obligations will reap profits.

Sluggards are so poor you can hear everything but *the rattling of change and the fryin' of meat*.

Sow integrity, reap wealth

24 The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.

Wealth crowns a man with honor among men; and foolishness stick to fools like a grease on a doorknob.

Sow fraud, reap injustice

25 A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.

A true man delivers those who are falsely accused, but deceitful witness multiplies injury and pain.

Speak truth and scare the thunder out of men; but speak lies and people will get hit by the lightning.

Sow the fear of the LORD, reap protection

26 In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

"confidence" (mibtach) = trust, refuge, security

Those who show mercy will receive mercy; those who protect the weak, will model to others how to treat them in their weakness (1 Samuel 26).

The fear of the LORD creates men "hoss high and bull strong." Children love sitting in a daddy's arms on the porch during a thunderstorm. Be strong and create comfort; be weak and you spread fear. Better to be strong than as nervous as a cockroach in a chicken coup.

Sow the fear of the LORD, reap life

27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Those that find the fear of the LORD find life; and, those that know the LORD depart from sin.

The fear of the Lord has no shores and the snares of death have no bottom.

Brave men put their finger in the dike to keep the dam from breaking.

Departing from evil is no minor command in Proverbs. The English word "depart" is used 13 times in the Book. The Spirit calls men NOT to depart from God's Word (3:21; 4:21, 5:7), but to retreat from evil (3:7, 13:14, 13:19, 14:27; 15:24; 16:6, 17).

Sow peace and prosperity, reap loyalty

28 In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.

Kings receive honor when the people prosper, but kings are disgraced when the people are poor. When people struggle to buy bread, they hate the king; when there is bread on the table, they praise the king. Liberalism is a slippery slope to the bottom of the valley, but climbing the hill of righteousness leads to plenty. Help the people to thrive, and the regime will survive.

Sow understanding, reap patience

29 He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

Those that are not easily provoked are wise, and those who are easily perturbed are foolish.

Anger is the hair in the buttermilk, the fly in the ointment, the dead cat down the well. Control anger or defile everyone around you. Anger is as strong as mule's breath. Get rid of it so you can keep your friends. You can cut off a dog's tale, but you can't get it back on. You can't fall into a sewer of rage and come out smellin' like a rose.

The use of the adjective "great" teaches us that those struggling with their temperament need to grow in their understanding of God . . . holiness . . . piety . . . and the cross.

Sow envy, reap discontent

30 A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.

A sound heart is one that contains the Law of God and the power of the Spirit. Envy is the hemlock that rots the bones and poisons the heart.

Envious people live in a cave with their own demons. Burning with envy is like walking on hot coals.

Sow hate for God, reap the oppression of men

31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

To love God is to love your fellow man; and, to mistreat men is an act of hate towards God.

Sow righteousness, reap hope

32 The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

The wicked is overthrown by his misfortune because he has none to help him, but a thunderstorm of troubles does not terrify the righteous.

Sow discernment, reap wisdom

33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known.

Wisdom is hidden in the heart of the wise and prudent men would do well to draw it out; but, a fool's lack of wisdom is immediately known to all because his mouth exposes his ignorance on all things important.

Discernment is the ability to know the difference between what people say they are and how they really are.

A good man knows he does not have to participate in every frivolous discussion of men, but a fool feels like he has to share his opinion on everything.

Sow righteousness, reap a great nation

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

Great nations build society on law. Since gods are the source of law, great nations build their country on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel. But, building a nation on the fickle feelings of the pagan majority is a shame to any people.

Sow wisdom, reap the king's favor

35 The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.

A regal man prefers the company virtuous men regardless of their position in society; but, his anger is stirred by the claptrap, duplicity, and humbug among his advisors.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 15

MORE OBSERVATIONS ON THE FACTS OF LIFE



♦ Galatians 6:7 "You reap what you sow"

Rough words stir up anger

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Calm tones and reasonable answers restore sanity to an emotional feud, but harsh tones and chiding words blasting away in the minor key disturb the harmony in any conversation.

Keep stress under control. Don't speak unless you are calm. Why throw gasoline on an emotional fire?

Emotional maturity is a requisite for the privilege of being heard. Soft tones are like being soothed by a weightless easy-listening watermark sound track that relaxes one into a deep sleep, but grating, high volume tones are like having to endure cringe, death-medal rap.

The word "answer" (anah) is used 11 times in Proverbs. Court cases and difficult people and challenging circumstances require our thoughtful response. Solicitors, salesmen, politicians, co-workers, and con-artist trolling for money call for a right answer.

"A spoonful of sugar to make the medicine go dow-wown . . . go dow-wown."

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

"If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred says of sorrow" (Chinese Proverb).

"Speak when you are angry and you'll make the best speech you will ever regret" – Ambrose Bierce.

"I'm only responsible for what I say, not for what you understand" -- John Wayne.

Wise men use knowledge correctly

2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

Wisdom picks fruit from the Tree of Life, but fools pick fruit from the Poisonous Tree. God did not put here on earth to give our opinions on everything. Listen more; speak less. When you do speak, speak carefully and accurately.

3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

The three “omni” attributes of God characterize him as all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-present.

Finite man cannot hide from the infinite God. He can hide from men and never leave their presence, but man cannot hide from God because He is everywhere. And, though He is everywhere, he can leave, and not be found.

Men do not live to impress God, but because men are impressed by the omnipresence of the infinite God, they live better.

Christ as a Divine Person is sitting at the right hand of His Father in heaven, and He is with men only in the sense that His Spirit is everywhere.

Wholesome words are healthy

4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

A wholesome tongue that picks its words from the Tree of Life becomes a peacemaker, but those who pick their words from the Poisonous Tree sow strife among men. If there is a breach in a relationship, one or both tongues are at the root of the conflict. Check your words; check your tones. What you say can and will be used against you. You have a right to be silent. Exercise it more often.

Never write a letter of complaint to a friend. It will be used as evidence against you. If have something tough that needs to be said, pick up the phone and speak directly and softly; if you see something good, write it down in a thank you note and send it by mail.

Fools despise correction

5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

Rebels against God's law reject their father's instruction, but a son seeking righteousness hears reproof. Learn to love correction.

The wicked sow wild oats

6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

A life lived well is a treasure to any community, but one who rebels against God's Word drains the strength of any people.

Knowledge is on the lips of the wise

7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so.

The wise preserve knowledge, but the heart of fools constructs foolishness. Wisdom is not invented; it is recognized, appropriated, and stored. Foolishness, on the other hand, is manufactured by the factories of sin working day and night in the heart of fools.

Righteous men pray

8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

God receives the prayers of the upright, but rejects the prayers of the profane.

The wicked concoct evil schemes

9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

The habits of a righteous man please the LORD, but the habits of the immoral man disgust Him.

Perverts hate correction

10 Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.

Chastening grieves the rebel to God's law; and, his anger against the Lord is the cause of his misery.

11 Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

A bit of deductive reasoning: Deductive reasoning starts with the assertion of a general rule and proceeds from there to a guaranteed specific conclusion.

The one who created the hearts of men also created heaven and hell. If the LORD knows all about hell and its destruction, how much more does he know what sin is doing to the hearts of men? Likewise, He knows the good that faith is producing in men?

12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.

A scorner avoids serious reflection on his own sinful disposition. His pride keeps him out of church and away from godly men. But, godly men are constantly looking into the mirror of God's Word to see what needs correcting.

A cheerful heart kindles happiness

13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

The word "countenance" (paniyim) refers to the expressions on one's face – the evidence of what is going on in the heart of a man.

Solomon was a student of body language. Body language reveals one's emotions. A happy heart produces cheerful expressions; grieved hearts frown. Look at body language to discover the true conditions of men. Think more about what God is doing and less about what fools are doing. Positive thinking is good if it is true; positive thinking is bad if it is not true.

14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

The wise feed their minds with knowledge; fools feed their minds with foolishness. A happy man thinks about goodness; a depressed soul thinks about everything that is wrong in the world. Sweet people eat honey, sour people suck on vinegar.

15 All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.

Thankful people see God's goodness at work; complaining people see evil at work. Happy people believe all things are working together for good for those who love God; unhappy people do not believe that God can make good come out of evil. Cheerful people skip, but heavy hearts hobble. Those that study God enjoy the honey of knowledge; those that study world events have a storehouse full of bitterness.

16 Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.

The trouble of the wicked is contrasted with the peace of those who love God's law (Psalm 110:15). The fear of the Lord is a product of faith and faith comes by hearing the law of the LORD God. Develop an appetite for God's Word and you'll be a happy person.

17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

There are paradoxes in life, and choices must be made. A happy couple laughing together while eating a leafy, green salad is better than sitting

down to a feast with a bunch of people with bull's breath. It is better to eat with poor happy souls than to attend a banquet with wealthy pagans dressed in tuxes and formal gowns.

Anger leads to strife

18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

“wrathful” (chemah) means “heat, hot, venom, or poison.” Solomon refers to “wrath” 9 times in his Book (6:34, 15:1; 15:18; 16:14; 19:19; 21:14; 22:24; 27:4; 29:22). It is translated “fury” in Leviticus 26:28; the LORD’s wrath in Deuteronomy 29:23, 28; the righteous anger of King Xerxes against Vashti in Esther 1:12; “poison” in Job 6:4; the heat of the Sun in Psalm 19:6; the poison of a serpent in Psalm 58:4; and a battle ramp of briars and thorns in Isaiah 27:4)

Solomon like Job links **fear** and **anger** together (Job 19:29; Proverbs 20:2). An angry man has many fears; that is, anger is a cloak for fear. “It’s a lot easier to be angry at someone that it is to tell them you’re hurt” – Tom Gates.

The word “appeaseth” (shaqat) means to “be quiet or tranquil.”

Anger (heat) begets anger (heat). Angry? Hypervigilant? Lower your temperature. Slow down. Take your foot off the pedal. Change directions. Shift your thoughts. Train your brain to avoid strain. Uncontrolled anger has consequences not only on you, but others in your life.

People with grinding teeth and smoke in their nostrils create tension in relationships; but, people with honey on their lips and love in their eyes make wars to cease.

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

Sluggards have many excuses

19 The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

Work for the sluggard is like eating bark beetles, but work for the righteous is the cream of life.

Some people are so inept they couldn't lick cream off their face in pie throwing contest.

A discerning son brings joy to a father

20 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

Wise sons are the product of his father's investment of time; but, a burdened mother experiences grief because of the inaction of a neglectful father.

21 Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

Fools rejoice in the fruit of folly; wise men rejoice in the "fruits of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23). Feed your mind with violence and you will become violent; fill your mind with God's law and the Spirit will conform you to the image of Christ.

Wise men seek the counsel

22 Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

The teachable seek the counsel of experienced men. Goals are achieved by the guidance of experts.

A wise man practice felicity

23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

A felicitous answer brings joy to the speaker as well as the audience.

There is a joy that dead men can't crush. Speak an appropriate word and enjoy the satin-sheets of wisdom.

Wise men seek Heaven's counsel

24 The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

Wise men seek Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life" because He is the only way to avoid hell and enter the kingdom of God (John 14:6).

25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.

Widows are among the most vulnerable members of society. The LORD does not stand guard over the property of the wicked, but He does stand guard over the property of the widow.

26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

The thoughts of the wicked disgust the LORD, but the thoughts and homilies of the pure not only delight Him, but the audience around them.

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

Discontent destroys the home, but the one who hates bribes has a happy house. Greedy leaders destroy a nation, but leaders who can't be bribed are the wealth and health of the country.

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

Righteous men study felicity in order to provide an accurate, appropriate answer to the issues of their time; but, babel proceeds from inconsiderate, rambling people.

29 The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

God hears the prayers of the righteous, but the prayers of the wicked disgust Him. The LORD is near the righteous, but far from the wicked. He can be found among Christians, but can't be found among the religions of the world. He is with the sons Abel, but against the sons of Cain.

Good news sparks joy

30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.

A heart enjoying the light of God's Word receives joy; likewise, good news makes the bones strong and the heart glad. "Seven days without reading the Bible makes one weak." and, the soul that feeds on Scripture will never be underweight.

Wise men listen to difficult things

31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.

The wise are made better by rebuke, reproof, and correction, but fools are made bitter by the same. The sun that melts the wax also hardens the clay. But, this does not mean one has to tolerate professional critics and field snipers trying to ruin your reputation.

32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

The man that hates learning hates his own soul; the man who loves his soul loves learning.

The man who neglects to study the gospel is an irresponsible man that will lose his own soul; but, "a saved man" is one who accepts responsibility for his own soul, and the duty to maintain it by renewing his mind (Romans 12:1-3).

This does not your have a duty to listen to every critic who is intent on exposing your every flaw in order to shame you. These people need to be flushed out of the bushes and exposed for their malevolent badmouth.

33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

The fear of the LORD beautifies the man. Godliness is always in style. A man who wears holiness will be honored by God and men.

The fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom; and, humility is the first step on the staircase to knowledge . . . and salvation.

The English word “humble” or “humility” (anavah) is used 6 times in Proverbs (6:3; 15:33; 16:19; 18:12; 22:4; 29:23). The Hebrew word for humility (anavah) contains the letter nun which is a symbol of humility.

The noun “humility” (anavah) in this text means “meekness” or “self-restraint.” It is translated “gentleness” in 2 Samuel 22:36.

The word “humility” comes from the Latin word “humus” meaning “of the earth” to be “face down in the dirt.”

Humility does not mean being a “doormat;” or a “push over.” Solomon is not asking for self-effacement. Self-effacement or false humility can be a facet of pride. Humility does not suggest you cannot defend yourself from verbal assaults by emotional bullies; nor does it mean you must deny your strength. But, it does imply being honest about your weaknesses. Further, humility does not infer you cannot promote yourself in market place.

Humility is the opposite of the “pride of power” (Leviticus 26:19). Humility means working at having an accurate, but modest view of one’s self before God -- freedom from arrogance . . . teachability . . . realization of one’s mortality . . . a realization that the man is made of dust and not sky.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 16

LIFE LESSONS FROM A WISE KING TO A FUTURE KING



◆ These observations about human nature came from King Solomon who listened to dispute from parties with different causes and temperaments.

The trouble of the wicked is contrasted with the peace of those who obey God's law (Psalm 110:15).

The fear of the Lord is a product of faith -- of faith that comes by hearing the law of the LORD God (Romans 10:17).

The adjective "better" (tov) is used 20 times in Proverbs and four times in this chapter. Life involves choices and if a man has to make a choice between two paths, Proverbs assist the wise man to make the best choice. The wise observe the following:

Wise men study the LORD's ways by reading the Scripture

Proverbs 16:1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

"preparations" (ma'arak) = plans, arrangement, formation, foundation.

The LORD is the source of all things good. If you aspire to answer the plaintiff in a dispute on the day you are accused before the judge, make sure you pick fruits from the Tree of Knowledge; that is, seek the LORD at all times.

He is not the source of moral evil, but He is the Source of evil-disasters (Isaiah 45:7).

"Man proposes, but God disposes" - a translation of the Latin phrase "*Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit*" (19:21).

"Lord, hear the cry of the afflicted . . ." (Psalm 10:17);

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

Prima facie – At first sight. Or on the face of it.

The wicked can justify everything they do, but truth and righteousness are from the LORD. Even an at-fault defendant has a reason for his deeds. The wicked are in court facing charges because they injured the plaintiff and the LORD uses judges to expose their guilt.

Do what you will, but the LORD holds all men accountable to His law. It is human nature for a man to defend his actions . . . but a godly man submits himself to the judgments of the LORD. He comes out of darkness into the light so that his faults might be known and corrected.

When fools look into a mirror they see superman, but they are more like muscles on a flea. Many feel like a lion, but are only a mouse. Many feel like a clean sheet, but are more like a dirty dish-rag. (See 3:7; 12:15; 21:2; 30:12).

This problem of neglecting exculpatory evidence and including only inculpatory evidence against an opponent in a dispute is mentioned five times in Proverbs (3:7, 12:15; 16:2; 21:2; 30:12).

3 Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

No man can change his nature or disposition, but he can change his habits. Concentrate on the works of your hands and the words of your mouth, and your thoughts will change for the better. If your works are in conformity to law, you will always have a good answer when facing false allegations.

All things, even the wicked, are created by the LORD

4 The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Your theology will mold your interpretation of this verse.

"for himself" (mah-an-eh') is translated "answer," "response," habitation," or "underneath." According to some it means "for a purpose," for the "purpose of," "to serve his own purposes."

“God has made all things for its own purpose. Even the wicked are subservient to his eternal will” (Ellicott

"even the wicked for the day of evil" (Benson) . . . even the wicked are accountable to God's law when they are accused.

There is a day of evil, and the wicked will experience it . . . but made for it? That God makes use of the wicked to execute vengeance on other wicked men is clear in Scripture, but that He made the wicked to suffer their punishments rubs most theologians the wrong way.

Scandals must come but woe to the man through whom they come

5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

"proud" (gabbah) = high.

"Abominations" (tow'ebah) means something that is disgusting and repulsive.

Pride finds comfort in numbers: "hand join in hand." The wicked work in gangs. Think Jewish mafia. But, pious men have the strength to do what is right even though they walk alone. *That others do it* is not an answer accepted in court against a complaint.

A proud mind, a proud heart, a proud look, and proud tongue disgusts the LORD. His Son had every reason to boast, but he was the most humble man to ever live on earth (Philippians 2); all his servants are humble men; Moses was called the meekest man on earth in his day (Numbers 12). Be humble or stumble. The proud will not go unpunished.

All acts of the transgressor are *estoppel in pais* (equitable estoppel); that is, legal acts that prevents a party from using a right against another party when the right arises out of misleading actions from the person claiming the right.

Mercy and truth make society better

6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.

The purpose of the family is education; the purpose of government is justice; and, the purpose of the church is mercy. Here we have the purpose of government: "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged." And, the purpose of the church: "by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."

The purpose of law is not to save men, but to produce an orderly society. When the law is properly applied through the courts towards those that do not respect the rights of others, evil men are fined and the injured are made whole; or, evil men are removed from the public.

The wicked seek to turn government into a benevolent godmother that nurtures people from cradle to grave; but, a righteous king seizes power to arrest the wicked and to dispense justice. Justice preserves society by purging evil from among men; the church preserves society by preaching the gospel and saving souls. Both are necessary. Both institutions multiply confusion when either tries to perform the duties of the other.

Departing from evil is no minor command in Proverbs. The English word "depart" is used 13 times in the Book. The Spirit calls men NOT to depart

from God's Word (3:21; 4:21, 5:7), but to retreat from evil (3:7, 13:14, 13:19, 14:27; 15:24; 16:6, 17). It implies building a "middle wall of partition" between the heart and evil.

God is not asking men for *mutatis mutandis* or to reshuffle the hangers in the closet, but to depart from evil, and walk on the highway of the upright (16:17); that is, radically sever any connection with wrongdoing . . . to pluck out the eye if one is given to lusts . . . to cut off the hand if one is given to stealing (Matthew 5:29). Depart means to leave, retreat, evacuate, decamp, escape, bolt, withdraw, flee, and scoot away from even the "appearance of evil" as fast as your sandals will slap pavement (1 Thessalonian 5:22).

Focusing on obedience creates peace

7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Every verse in Scripture has limitations, and each verse must submit to the authority of the whole.

A man who obeys God's law is a threat to no one.

The man of God seeks to please the LORD, and God in turn reduces tensions even to the point of causing historical enemies to respond favorably to him. Solomon experienced this, but King David, Hezekiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, James, Peter, and John did not. Peace is evidence a man's ways please the LORD, but so is persecution. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12).

Righteousness generates contentment.

8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.

Bigger is not better, and more is not richer. A contented poor man is seldom in trouble with law. Walk in conformity to God's law, and your legal troubles will be few.

Try to conform to 50 codes of the U.S.C. and you will be shuffled around like a hockey puck.

The LORD leads and blesses a righteous man

9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

Here we have another example of the principle: "Man proposes, but God disposes" - a translation of the Latin phrase "*Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit*" (19:21).

Men can make all the plans they want, but God decides their success or failure. Walk in conformity to God's law, and your legal troubles will be few.

Try to obey every rule, regulation, and code of man and your legal troubles are just beginning.

Avoid over persuasion, manipulation, and enticement. Do your best, and leave the results with the Lord.

Righteous rulers love equity

10 A divine sentence is in the lips of the king¹³: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.

This is an ideal statement about law and justice -- something to which all rulers and officials should aspire.

In Israel, kings were deemed to be appointed by God; therefore, their judgments possessed Divine authority. A good king "does not easily" transgress . . . but, transgression is the habit of corrupt rulers.

11 A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work.

The schemes of men to defraud others in order obtain money is profanely legendary.

The LORD loves justice, and when men operate under His law, all the weights and balances are accurate. Thus, fairness in commerce is His work; and, all other inventions of men to promote justice and to diminish fraud is also His work. Where justice prevails, God ordered it to be so. Those operating by a conscience toward God can be trusted to do what is right; and, those operating without a conscience toward God must be view caustiously, even suspiciously.

12 It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.

Justice is an ideal that men should aspire to, but it is the nature of kings to fall short of the glory of God. The only perfect justice on earth took place at the cross . . . and, that seems to be difficult for men to grasp: *Cruci Dum Spiro Fido*.

Make no mistake about it, injustice, corruption, and debauchery among rulers and politicians disgusts the LORD.

¹³ God's law is absolute. Not only are ordinary men subject to God's law, kings are subject to God's law! While citizens have a lean, limited duty to obey rulers, rulers have a maximum duty to surrender their administrations to operate under the law of the LORD God: *Lex non a rege est violanda* – The law must not be violated even by the king.

Loyalty is won and allegiance is lost based on how sovereigns manage their duties to protect the rights of citizens (Declaration of Independence).

Beware of gallimaufry (noun) -- a hodgepodge of laws, statutes, and codes meaning hodgepodge or confused medley of conflicting laws that work to the advantage of the State and the derogation of the rights of man.

Beware of supererogatory (adjective) **acts** of government Subcontractors: "Going beyond the requirements of duty; greater than that required or needed; superfluous. Supererogation is the technical term for the class of actions that go "beyond the call of duty." Roughly speaking, supererogatory acts may be called good but these powers may not be within the authority of the original contract (1791). The government tends to superinduce requirements for citizens beyond the powers of the Constitution.

It is impossible for a statute which violates the Constitution to be valid. All laws which are repugnant to the Constitution are null and void in the 50 several states of the Union.

13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.

Kings have a duty to love righteousness, and to form cabinets out of men who love justice and speak wisely, otherwise their administration will degenerate into chaos and shame.

A righteous king honors his nation and gains the respect of other countries . . . but pity the nation that has a jackass at the helm. He will become the laughingstock of other rulers.

14 The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.

Speak firmly, but respectfully to government officers. Officers of the government are people with feelings and emotions. Raise their anger and they will fire back at you with spears and arrows.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, *live* peaceably with *all men*. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath" (Romans 12:8).

15 In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.

Provoke the anger of civil rulers by your reckless language, and they will run you through with their swords of justice; provide a careful "soft answer" in court and their approval will be like breathing in droplets of dew after a summer rain (15:1).

The goal in court is not to prove how tough you are, but to provide a reasonable, factual answer that conforms to truth.

Wisdom accrues value

16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Wisdom is rare and more precious than silver and gold. A wise and correct answer to a complaint in court is better than having the financial means to pay judgment fees. Rely upon a answer in conformity to law rather than your money.

Godly men flee from evil

17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

Not only are men under duty to obey God's law, kings are under command to surrender themselves to the LORD God. Ideally, kings represent the divine mind on matters of justice. Solomon calls his son to walk on the highway (me'cillah) of the righteousness away from detours to evil with the assurance that God will preserve his administration.

This verse is so simple, we miss the main message. During times of apostasy, truth is outlawed (Isaiah 59:15). Scorners and murmurers rise to power. Political rulers visit the gods of chaos (vanity), and hatch cockatrice eggs (Isaiah 59:4-5) that devour the guts of the nation. The public gropes like blind men searching for light (Isaiah 59:10). During these periods any man who departs from evil is considered a madman (Isaiah 59:15). During seasons of moral and ethical chaos the righteous must stay on the highway of departing from evil. See Proverbs 1:16.

When immorality becomes normal, good men drive on the highway of the upright and depart from evil . . . but, in so doing will be considered madmen by the chiefs (Proverbs 16:17; Isaiah 59:1-15).

Q: What is a man supposed to do when the government he is obligated to honor turns away from God's law and promotes abominations? A: Drive on the highway of the upright and depart from evil.

Thomas Jefferson provides this answer: "When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty."

Pride invites ruin

18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

King Solomon observed that the losing party in a case was often haughty; that the proud party operated ostensibly for justice but without actions to that promote equity. The sign that men are headed for trouble starts when a man becomes arrogant and leaves the path of righteousness. This fact sustains the fear of God in man and preserves him from the peril of the proud.

The kind of pride warned about in this text is NOT "self-confidence" or "joy in accomplishment," but an "independent spirit" where a person establishes himself as his own God, king, and lawmaker; that is, pride that leads to arrogance that gets a case thrown out of court.

Proud men know how to increase their wealth and to preserve their own self-interests.

19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Life involves moral choices and one of them is the kind of people with whom one will associate. Better to mingle with the common man than to run in circles where presumptuous men achieve wealth dishonestly. Better to be a poor man living in conformity to law than to have obtained riches by following the policies of lawbreakers.

“lowly” applies to status . . . the acceptance of one’s limitations as opposed to the false promises of dreamers.

A humble man understands that he is a man and not God; finite and not infinite; of earth and not heaven; in the image of God and not the image of a primate; a sinner and not a savior; a learner and not a wizard.

The English word “humble” or “humility” is used 6 times in Proverbs (6:3; 15:33; 16:19; 18:12; 22:4; 29:23). It’s Latin root is “humus” or “ground.” A humble man does not have his head in the air, but near the earth . . . and, on his face in the dirt when talking to God.

Trusting God yields happiness

20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.

The word "handleth" (dabar) refers to speech in a dispute.

The one who addresses disputations sensibly instead of emotionally will enjoy the fruits of peace and wisdom. Good answers come from prayer, study of God's Word, and dependence on the Holy Spirit. Reckless answers come from a proud heart.

Wisdom employs prudence and produces life

21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.

Kings are expected to have answers to the nation's problems. A pragmatic solution that remedies the challenge and sweetens relationships is the distinguishing mark of sages (diplomats, mediators, counsellors).

22 Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.

Solomon found that his kingly instruction to fools in court about as helpful as a chocolate teapot. Good judgment comes from camping under the Tree of Life, but stupidity comes from eating lemon-drops off the Poisonous Tree. Foolish litigants cannot be helped, advised, or corrected.

23 The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

Wisdom is not part of human nature. A good man must analyze problems correctly, and study how to solve them. A litigant must understand probable cause and answer accordingly. Acceptable answers do not grow on trees. Prudent answers take time to plant, water, and grow.

A church member asked a pastor, "How long did it take you to prepare for that great sermon?" The pastor answered, "Twenty years."

24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

Solomon compares the prudent answer of an honorable litigant to the sweetness of honeycomb. Harsh words stir up strife; and, there are words that calm souls and bring peace to troubled waters. In matters where tempers are hot, always add the sweetness of Christ to the conversation. Be firm, but pleasant to authorities.

Self-righteousness leads to danger**25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**

This is a caution about relying on one's own experience and perspective in advancing matters before a judge. Positions must be grounded on conformity to God's law; that is, the common law. Break His law and one could be facing capital charges which merit the death penalty

This is also a caution about relying on one's own experience and perspective in making difficult decisions. "The way that seemeth right" is opposite the "fear of the Lord" an opposite of what his law requires (Isaiah 53:6). See Proverbs 14:12.

26 He that laboureth laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him.

Hard work that results in excellent products satisfies the man because hunger galvanizes industry.

Moreover, Solomon observed that men are extremely motivated by their own self-interest – a fact of life and a fact of litigation.

The godless heart finds temptation

27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire.

The word “ungodly” (beliya’al) means worthless person. Nabal was called a worthless person who railed on David when David peacefully asked for assistance for his army that guarded the flocks of Nabal (1 Samuel 25).

Unscrupulous men dig pits for their victims, and their lips are set on fire by hell -- a violation of the 6th and 10th Commandment (See James 3 on the tongue).

Some litigants in Solomon's court were evil from head to toe and wrong *nunc pro tunc*.

Chatty people generate friction

28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

Solomon observed that some litigants used uncharitable words that stirred up strife -- that blabbermouths divide friends – that slanderers ended up in court . . . that potty mouths lost the favor of God and men.

In getting angry, hotheads burn their own house down . . . smash their fists through their own door . . . and spill garbage by kicking their own trash can.

Slander is the weapon of choice for politicians; sweet reasonableness marks the choice of peacemakers.

Beware of sophism: using pleasant words in the correct form but are in fact invalid and inapplicable.

Beware of specious logic: thoughts that appear to be right, but are actually wrong; that appear to be good, but are actually harmful to humanity; that sound beautiful, but have ugly effects.

29 A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.

Perceptive judges are aware that depraved men sweet-talk their friends into bad deals and acts of fraud to the injury of both – that they acted perniciously to the injury of their fellow man.

30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.

Some crimes are willful and not accidental. Felonies are usually committed by parties engaged in deliberate, premediated malice. Others are trapped in

wrongdoing because of coercion, duress, and intimidation by government officials.

"Two Enemies of the People are criminals and government, so let us tie the second down with the chains of the Constitution so the second will not become the legalized version of the first." ~ Thomas Jefferson

"Resistance to tyranny is service to God." James Madison.

Grey hairs can be deceptive

31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

Solomon noticed that older men tended to prevail in court over young, proud hot-heads.

Grey hair is a sign of wisdom, but in unstable times this may not be the case. There are young fools and old fools.

Biblical men wore beards as a sign of their sanctification. Sporting a grey hair-beard in Biblical times meant a man had discretion, discernment, and understanding. Grey beards were also a sign of gentleness and honesty. Daughters kissed their fathers on the beard. People would ask, "Are you as honest as your beard says you are?"

Composure under stress reveals the strength of a man

32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

Solomon observed that the calm, reasonable party prevailed over the emotional party. In court, you can be firm, but sweet reasonableness will prevail over a juggernaut of anger.

Victory over one's own temperament is the greatest conquest of all.

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

Fear makes men afraid, and when people are afraid, they need to rest their souls in the promises of God:

"Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet (shaw'an), and none shall make *him* afraid (Jeremiah 30:10).

Anger is a bitter toxin that will poison your soul and kill precious friendships. Conquer it or you will injure many precious souls dear to you.

The LORD is sovereign in all matters of men

33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

Much of what modern men attribute to chance is the result of providence. Some matters are so unbudging they can only be resolved by a flip of the coin. Football games and ties in small town elections come to mind.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 17

VIRTUES TO ADOPT AND SINS TO AVOID



♦ Shakespeare said, "Assume (adopt) a virtue if you have it not."

Adopt a quiet life

Proverbs 17:1 Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.

"sacrifices" = animals slain for supper.

It is better to sit down to beans and cornbread with happy hearts than to be at a steak dinner with whiners and complainers; with arguers and disputers. Eating crackers and cheese with a loving spouse is better than binging on a potted roast with a contentious woman. Better to hang around lambs than to cock-a-doodle-do with the roosters. Better to work alone in a barn than to work beside growlers and grumblers in a city high rise.

Adopt wisdom and perception

2 A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

Think of Ziba and Mephibosheth (1 Samuel 6). Quiet faithful service to a master may result in a share of the business or inheritance.

Adopt God consciousness

3 The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.

As a fiery furnace refines gold and silver, so a fiery trial refines the saint.

Refinement happens because the Refiner of Souls is burning away the dross that you might become His pure and faithful servant?

Adopt genuineness and sincerity

4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

This text expounds violations of the 9th and 10 Commandments.

"naughty" = clamorous, complaining, critical, petulant, and bickering.

Gullibility is a human weakness that must be overcome, but assent to fraud is a sin against the LORD. This text not only condemns liars, but those that listen to them; those that plot schemes to defraud the poor, and those that consent to those schemes; those politicians that promote disinformation and misinformation, and those that support their malfeasance.

Consider the cowardly wickedness of news anchors that consent to their company's slander campaign against a political opponent in order to keep their pay check. Isn't this depraved and immoral?

Adopt kindness

5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

The word "mocketh" (la'ag) means "to ridicule." The word "reproacheth" (charaph) means "to taunt, defy, or blaspheme." The word "unpunished" (naqah) means "to be clear or free of guilt." But, the verb is negated by the Hebrew adverb "not" (lo); that is, blasphemy is extremely serious.

The Creator made all men: male and female, rich and the poor. Those who scorn poor people show contempt for the Creator, and they will be punished by their Maker. Those who consider the less-privileged have a reward from God.

What is it about men that seek pleasure and avoid pain; who prefer the company of the affluent, and avoid contact with those suffering in life?

Our Lord showed the way of love by caring for the poor and interacting with the lower class -- even tax collectors and sinners (Luke 15).

By poor, Solomon is not talking about the homeless drug addict, but the righteous poor struggling to make it in life.

The rich are not better than the poor, nor are the poor less valuable than the wealthy. The view that the rich are blessed by God and the poor are cursed by God is a falsehood of monumental proportions. "Has not God showed the poor rich in faith?" Didn't James condemn those that showed "respect of persons" -- those that honored the rich and dishonored the poor (James 2:5, 9-13)?

6 Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

In relationship to the Fifth Commandment, children and grandchildren are the pride and glory of grandparents; and, honor is due fathers by their children; i.e., obeying parents when children are young and providing for them in their old age.

But, the text does not say that adult children “glory” in their parents. Most grow up, leave home, and become proud and arrogant “doing what is right in their own eyes.”

Adopt an excellent vocabulary

7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.

The word “excellent” (yether) is a good translation, but the term also includes the concept of being laconical – using minimal words to express an idea. Fools can’t be concise or brief. Lies on the lips of a statemen are like mud on an Easter lily.

Intelligence on the lips of a fool is like pretty on a pig; lies on the lips of a prince are like ugly on a Sunday. When a prince lies, he plays the hypocrite; when a fool tells the truth he plays the hypocrite. Great leaders tell the truth; bad leaders fake the facts.

Adopt a generous spirit

8 A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.

A lesson on bribery: Bribes are precious gems to those who receive them, and corrupt politicians will employ all their skills and charms to obtain these prized inducements.

In America, government officers are required to file an oath and two affidavits that they did not receive consideration for an appointment to office (5 U.S.C. §§ 5331, 5332, 5333).

Adopt forgiveness

9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

Kindness, silence, patience, and forgiveness are spices that sweeten the pie, while criticism, defamation, and muckraking poison the pot. Rebuke gossip and you save friendships; tolerate the sin of gossip and you destroy relationships.

Adopt a teachable spirit

10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.

A kind, respectful admonition to a mature Christian is twice as effective in promoting good as beating a fool in the head with a big stick.

Adopt obedience to God

11 An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

Rebels against God's law run campaigns on the slogan, "Change is coming" and "Change you can believe in;" Evil candidates call for toleration for the minority until the minority come to power, then they call for the elimination of the majority.

Revolution, rebellion, revolt, insurrection, and subversion away from Biblical values (family values) to the immoral values of Sodom represent the politics of those working for the slithering serpent hanging on the branches of the Poisonous Tree.

Adopt the ability to avoid dangerous people

12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.

Better to meet a momma bear robbed of her baby cubs on a lonely mountain trail than to meet a drunken fool exiting a local pub.

Adopt moral integrity

13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

To render evil for good is the Achilles heel of judges. The one rendering evil for evil is like a fool who releases a rattlesnake in his own house. Someday it's gonna bite 'em.

Adopt a calm and tranquil spirit

14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.

The beginning of contention is like a small leak in a dam, but as it grows it turns into a flood destroying everything in its path. Therefore, be wise in what you say and how you say it.

Feuds among men are like a runaway train going downhill, they can't be stopped by throwing peanuts at the locomotive. Only the sweetness of Jesus can calm the strife between two hotheaded Irish women. Humility, patient-silence, and self-control is the oil of the Spirit that reduces friction between hammer and anvil.

Adopt an honest perspective

15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

Inverted justice is an atrocity to any judicial system and disgusting to the LORD. Topsy-turvy justice broke Israel (1 Samuel 8:3; Psalm 82:2; Isaiah 5:7), and it shames nations. A country in decline will not punish the rich and famous for their crimes against humanity, but they do put a heavy finger on private Citizens for minor infractions. A judicial system which punishes the righteous taste like sauerkraut in milk.

Adopt a mind for truth and wisdom

16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?

Though a fool pays the tuition to go to school he remains a fool because his heart is not in it.

Adopt faithfulness in order to be a true friend to others.

17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

True friends tell you the truth; rebuke you when you are wrong; encourage you when you are weak; and, pick you up when you fall down.

Adopt streetwise sense when it comes to suretyship

18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.

This is another lesson on suretyship. There is great danger in being personally bound to pay for the debts of another. But, there is safety in saying "No!" to surety contracts -- especially those among family members that lack integrity. Fools tend to believe every word their friends say and are too quick to sign contracts. Let nothing important be done in haste . . . without analysis . . . without counting the cost.

Adopt a calm, peacemaker attitude

19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.

The LORD gave His law to Israel to create a safe and orderly society. Those who break His law create conflict because rights are injured and people are hurt. Careless, reckless people make bad neighbors. Where men are not committed to law, no one is safe.

“exalteth his gate” refers to “trying to be better than the Jones;” The Spirit is not condemning “pride of ownership” or having a neat, quality home, but he does condemn the kind of pride that must have a bigger, better house than one’s neighbors in order to draw attention to himself.

20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.

"froward" (iqqesh) is in the emphatic position of the sentence and it means "bent, twisted, or perverted;" that is, a froward heart is a heart that bends away from God's law.

No good can come from perverted behavior . . . perverted speech . . . perverted thoughts. A profane tongue has a foul mouth and a pungent smell. Better to kiss a dead skunk than to be around people with a stinky mouth.

Adopt a plan to be a good father

21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy.

Foolish, rebellious, disobedient sons who are addicted to life's pleasures to the ruin of the family are a great grief to responsible fathers.

The lesson here is be a good son and a blessing to the family. Why be a jackass that everyone hates?

Adopt a cheerful, thankful heart

22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

A cheerful heart is a Christ-centered heart; and, the one that has joy in the Lord refreshes souls around him. Avoid being a murmerer and find something to rejoice about.

Adopt honesty and contentment

23 A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.

You can't blame the desperate for offering a bribe, but it is sin to accept it; that is, wicked men accept bribes, hush-money, and payoffs. God judges the acceptor of bribes not the one who offers the bribe.

In U.S. federal law, it is a felony to accept a bribe which can result in a 15 year prison sentence (18 U.S.C. 201(b)). Officers in the U.S. government must file an oath and two affidavits. One of them is that the officer has not received bribes coming into office, 5 U.S.C. §§ 3331, 3332, 3333.

In modern times you would be hard pressed to find one officer in government that has filed a competent oath and the two required affidavits. Where faithfulness to law is lost, treachery abounds.

Adopt realistic goals

24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

Free men under God's law set reasonable goals and are focused on achieving them; but, fools are dreamers and adventures who wish to travel the world, see everything, and do nothing.

Adopt a childlike spirit of obedience to God

25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.

This text brushes against the 5th Commandment and the duty of sons to honor their parents. Disobedient sons grieve their fathers and shame their mothers.

Adopt justice

26 Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.

Corruption is marked by punishing the righteous and rewarding the guilty. Injustice injures both parties and is an assault on all of society.

Adopt a hunger for knowledge and loconical demeanor

27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.

The word "spareth" (chasak) means "to withhold, to restrain, and to keep back. Moreover, it is in the emphatic position in the sentence.

The word "excellent" (yaqar) means "valuable, precious, prized, splendid, and rare."

Self-restraint is the most valuable of all virtues. Those who master their temperament are victor's over their greatest enemy - self.

Good men restrain from talking much. Men with poise and constraint are rare. A man who restrains his mouth and is slow to speak sits among the wise.

Beware of politicians who talk too much and listen too little. There is no subject of substantial public interest that finds an unbiased media willing to discuss it.

28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

Calmness, poise, and composure are the marks of a wise man. The fool who "zips it" will appear to have his seams together.

In Solomon's time, men valued competence, self-restraint, and personal responsibility which is in contrast to our time when men feel compelled to share their opinions on everything in social media.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 18

RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT PROMOTES HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



Be open minded

Proverbs 18:1 Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.

◆ The text describes the self-absorbed man addicted to his own interest.

The word “intermeddleth” (gala) means to lay bear or expose one’s self.

"The separatist seeketh after his own desire, against all improvement he shows his teeth" (Ellicott).

He who separates himself from the counsel of the wise serves himself and not the community. Fierce independence is good, but isolationism can be unduly burdensome and overwhelming.

Be understanding

2 A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.

A fool has no interest in learning; rather, his only interest is spouting off his own opinions. Know anyone like this? "Every man has a fool up one sleeve." Fools talk; wise men ask questions and listen.

Be respectful

3 When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach.

“contempt” (buwz) means treating someone as worthless in the sense one despises another. It refers to one casting “insults” in Psalm 32:19.

"ignominy" (ga'lown) = shame and dishonor.

Contempt (ra'sa), resentment, disrespect, and defiance have their source in wicked men.

Show contempt in a court of law and you will be shuttled off to jail; show contempt to God, and you will be cast into everlasting darkness (Matthew 22:13).

Be sensible

4 The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.

This lovely metaphor teaches us that words of a wise man are simple, but deep; profound, but clear; short, but powerful; chilling, but refreshing.

The first word in the Hebrew is the word *mayim*—of which the first letter (a Mem) is the symbol of water or the “spring of Torah.” A Mem represents the sea of Torah, the ocean of Torah, knowledge, and wisdom. Thus, the wise words of the *Lamed-Vad Tzaddikim* come from reflection on Torah.

Be confrontive. Show contempt toward the wicked

5 It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

Bias judges are prone to make judicial decision in favor of the "rich and famous," the government plaintiff, and brother-attorneys; but, issuing summary judgments in favor of the government to the detriment of a righteous poor-sap citizen injures the whole judicial system . . . but this happens a thousand times a day in the West.

Beware of deleterious, substantive unconscionability which refers to contractual terms that are unreasonably or grossly favorable to one side and to which the disfavored party does not assent.

Be calm and tranquil

6 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.

Fools comprise both men and women. The panning of a contentious man or a contentious woman calls for a slap in the face . . . but, not a fist in the face. Verbal correction is acceptable, but no respectable free man has to endure a railing – “SCOLD implies rebuking in irritation or ill temper justly or unjustly.

The whole liberal notion that good men must endure an angry, blustery tirade by a fool is humanistic nonsense that rewards the blasphemer and punishes the victim; that is, a twisted dictum that turns justice on its head. Railing is a form of murder . . . and the death penalty was attached to this capital crime (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21; Mark 15:29; Luke 23:39; 1 Timothy 6:4; 2 Peter 2:11; Jude 1:9).

Don't tolerate railing. Develop the heart of a dove towards sin; and, the hide of a rhinoceros when it comes to criticism. There is a time to issue the ordinance of a slap, but that might not be well received in today's inverted political climate. Beware, these are not healthy times.

Be constructive

7 A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

The revving up of a motor mouth without the brain in gear stresses the babblers to the destruction of his reputation in the community.

We believe in freedom of speech in relationship to debating political ideas; but, no man has God's sanction to murder others with his or her tongue. A tongue is only six inches long, but it can slay a man six feet tall.

God places a limit on free speech:

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearer” (Ephesians 4:29) – case law on the 6th Commandment.

Be upright

8 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

That "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words may never hurt me" is not true. Most people are sensitive souls who do not deserve to be treated harshly. Abusive language hurts! Angry words hurt! Lies hurt! Obscenity hurts. Slander hurts. To say profanity doesn't bother you is to admit sin is acceptable to you. Wake up! Man up! Stand up! Speak out!

28 U.S. Code § 4101 – Definitions: “The term “**defamation**” means any action or other proceeding for defamation, libel, slander, or similar claim alleging that forms of speech are false, have caused damage to reputation or emotional distress, have presented any person in a false light, or have resulted in criticism, dishonor, or condemnation of any person.”

“**Verbal assault** is a communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on another person, with a present intent and ability to act on the threat” (Law Insider).

Retort: “Do you need to take some time to calm down so we can continue this conversation?”

Be industrious and productive

9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

The brothers of sloth are thieves, liars, cheats, murderers, and vandals.

“The chief enemies of republican freedom are **mental sloth, conformity, bigotry, superstition, credulity**, monopoly in the market of ideas,” – Adderly v. Florida, 385 U.S. 39 (1966).

Be a light

10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

Run to the LORD in the time of trouble and you will find him to be a storehouse of mercy, grace, patience, and goodness. If you are faithful to obey His law who can rightly accuse you of wrongdoing? The cross is the City of Refuge for sinners.

Be humble

11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit.

For the proud, gold can buy nice things in this life, and money is a defense against many enemies, but it cannot buy a ticket out of hell (1 Peter 1:19).

The poverty of the rich is that they rely upon their wealth instead of the Lord. Better to trust in the Lord than to trust in your money. Many political candidates for office rely upon their own success to their own shame.

12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.

The word “destruction” (sheber) means “fracture, or breaking.”

Before giving birth to destruction one will experience contractions caused by pride; and, the first step on to the stage of honor begins with humility. Humility is realizing who you are and why you are who you are and not trying to be who you are not.

Pride here is NOT "self-confidence" or "joy in accomplishment," but an "independent spirit" where a person establishes themselves as their own god, king, and lawmaker.

Humility is not self-deprecation, but realizing who you are -- a man or woman made in the image of God, a creature of Almighty God, a son of Adam, a king on the earth without subjects, a mortal man on the land whose life is but a vapor (James 4:14).

Be a good listener

13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

The mark of a fool is that he has an answer before you finish your question; that is, he speaks before he thinks. Wise men think three-dimensionally, but fools think linearly.

Wise men listen, fools talk; wise men think, fools react; wise men are calm, fools are turbulent. The fool speaks before he thinks, and the wise man thinks before he speaks. Honor shadows the wise; shame shadows the fool.

Be virtuous and valiant

14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

Strong men endure hardship, weak men resign; the strong give thanks and pray, the weak complain and quit; the strong draw their strength from God, but the weak rely on their own brawn.

The vaults of the human heart are easily fatigued; but the granaries of the LORD God are brimming full. The strong, though troubled, have enough strength in reserve to minister to others; the weak and troubled drain everyone around them of energy. The strong are like an oasis in the desert; the weak are like a desert without an oasis.

Be thoughtful and discerning

15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.

This text does not say the prudent teach but that they obtain knowledge. Solomon informs us that sages store knowledge into their depot of discernment; fools catechize their opinions to anyone who will listen.

Be competent

16 A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

A man skilled in his trade will stand before kings because rulers look for the brightest and the best to serve them.

Be inquisitive and hear both sides of a story

17 He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

A lesson for parents and pastors: perceptive people listen to both sides before forming an opinion. The plaintiff always seems right until the jury hears from the defendant.

Be indifferent and without partiality in matters of dispute

18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.

Some matters must be left to the wisdom of providence. Drawing straws, rolling the dice, and flipping the coin can solve many disputes. A flip of the coin at the beginning of the game makes both players and coaches happy.

Be tranquil and gentle**19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.**

It is easier to conquer Rome than to win back an offended family member. Resolving these disputes is like scaling the walls of a castle -- not easily accomplished.

Crimes must be reported to civil authorities, but conflicts in human relationships must be handled with patience and integrity by the parties themselves.

Wounds are bad, but the offender causing the "hurts" by his own sin has the greater need.

Wounded people must accept the responsibility to manage their pain with integrity! They must learn NOT to view themselves as victims, but as God's servant sent to heal the lack of integrity / love in the sinner causing the harm. Selah!

God calls wounded people not to retaliate, gossip, or to complain, but to admit their "hurts" . . . and go the offender . . . and wisely, graciously, firmly confront them with their actions or words that caused the injury.

The offender has a duty to listen, ask questions, and to evaluate his actions -- to repent and ask forgiveness if necessary and where appropriate. Many times the problem is NOT due to lack of integrity in the alleged offender, but due to a weakness in the offended party. Selah!

By "offense" we are not talking about getting one's feelings hurt, but a substantial injury due to the misconduct of the offender. People who wear their feelings on their sleeves are always hurt – toughen up cupcake!

But, you are not being a snowflake if you are injured emotionally or otherwise because an offender violated your God-given rights. The word "offense" in Matthew 18 is the Greek word *skandalon* which refers to a serious injury due to a violation of the Ten Commandments.

Toughen up and stand up for your rights . . . and dignity as a child of God. Do not let anyone fulminate against you . . . even your boss.

Be felicitious

20 A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

Industry is rewarded with payment for work provided; and, wisdom is rewarded by sensible answers to passionate complaints. Complainers are intense and animated. A judicious answer calms the plaintiff and reduces tension in the dispute.

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

A cruel response to controversy is a dagger in the heart to human relationships, but a gentle, calm, gracious answer in the dispute restores hope in an fearful heart.

Be careful, amiable, and prayerful

22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

Marriage, love, and companionship is the will of God for most men, and finding a good wife is from the LORD. The verb "findeth" (acquires) implies that good wives are hard to come by; that is, they are as rare as diamonds on the sidewalk. A man won't find a good wife in the camps of feminists, disco clubs, "masked" communities, or public schools. Chaste women love church, Christian activities, family gatherings, and close association with other "females" their own age. Beware of the girl who likes to hang around the boys.

Be kind and considerate

23 The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

Humble kings resort to diplomacy, goodness, and reason as the grounds of concord; but, the affluent trust in their wealth and answer controversies harshly, aggressively, and explosively -- a manner of action that does not resolve the dispute -- a response that only makes matters worse.

24 A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

A literal translation of the first stanza is, "A man with many friends injures (ra) *himself* . . ." (Hithpolel verb). The verb is translated "we deal worse with thee" in Genesis 19:9; that is, a man with many friends can't meet all the expectations of people in that relationship.

"Rather, a man of many friends will suffer loss, for he will impoverish himself by constant hospitality, and in time of trouble . . . *these "friends"* will desert him (Psalm 41:9); but "there is a friend," one in a thousand, 'that sticketh closer than a brother.'" (adapted from Ellicott).

'Must perform all kind offices to his friend, which is the very end of friendship, and the way to preserve it; and there is a friend that sticketh closer — To him that desires and needs his help; who is more hearty in the performance of all duties of friendship; than a brother" (Benson).

Notice the word "sticketh." If your friend is on a horse he can't tame, help him! Visit him! Be a good friend and stick to them like a stamp on an envelope.

If you are having problems in your relationships you may have too many obligations. No man can meet the high expectations of one person, much less the expectations of a whole group. Acquaintances can be many, but friends are few.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 19

THINGS TO AVOID



Avoid perversion

Proverbs 19:1 Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

♦ perverse" (iqqesh) = one who turns the truth upside down - also translated "froward" in English -- a libretto sung to a lover by one with lying lips.

"Better" (tov) means "good." It is translated "sweet" in Genesis 2:9; S.S 1:3; "fragrant cane" in Jeremiah 6:20; and "pleasant" in Hosea 4:13.

It is better to be poor with your integrity in tack, than to be sitting on a pile of gold obtained by fraud. Having integrity is like sitting on the couch listening to a score of classical music by Mozart, but riches gained by deception is like having to listen punk rock blaring at full volume from a teenager's stereo.

Avoid ignorance

2 Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.

Men experience two problems in life: (1) they don't know what to do to improve their life; and (2) they know what to do, but don't have the resources to do it. Knowledge is good, ignorance is bad! What good can a soul do without knowledge; and, why hurry if you don't know where you are going? A soul with knowledge enjoys a soundtrack performed by the NY Philharmonic orchestra, but a hurried soul without knowledge is like having to endure Chicago, street-vending rap.

Hurriedness is a sin. Buzz and bustle is a clanging gong that irritates the Spirit. Those who trust God are seldom in a hurry. Wise men walk, fools run; Wise men pace, fools race; Wise men are breathless, fools are restless. The only time the Spirit permits his servant to run is when he has to flee temptation or persecution.

Slow down. Escape the tyranny of the urgent. Get out from underneath information overload.

Avoid foolishness

3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD.

The word "fretteth" (za'aph) means anger, wrath, or out of harmony.

Morons bring disaster upon themselves by sowing foolishness; foolishness is planted by those who are angry at God. Men angry at God blame Him for all their troubles, and credit Him with none of their successes.

Much of a man's frustration with God comes from the man's refusal to accept God's rules for living life . . . because the man refuses to be the creature . . . because he wants to be his own god . . . because he desires to control his own destiny. Why get angry over rain, wind, gravity, or a squeaky door? A man must not only accept the moral laws of the LORD God (Exodus 20). he must also accept the laws of nature; that is, the creative order of the universe. Submit and enjoy *pax bono* (peace); bolt and experience *bellum* (war) in your soul.

The one boiling over with anger leaves a nasty mess for the cook to clean up.

Avoid flaunting your wealth**4 Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.**

This is a text about the power and love of money. Those who love money are birds of a feather that stick together. The rich don't have friends; they have acquaintances. The rich can buy their way into social circles; the poor have to work at having friends -- not because there is something wrong with being deprived but because the rich don't know how to be a friend to the needy.

The ground is level at the cross. Start there.

Avoid liars**5 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.**

Perjury violates the 9th Commandment. Under the common law, perjury was punished according to the black rule of justice: "Then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst" (Deuteronomy 19:19).

6 Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.

Everyone loves the gifts of a rich benefactor, but who will seek out the wisdom of a poor country preacher wealthy in the knowledge of God's Word? It is the nature of things for people to worship the god of money, and despise true wealth. Men travel the world in search of gold, but won't open a Bible to learn about One greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42).

Avoid poverty

7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.

"The sense may be, that the poor man hunts after words—i.e., seeks to get promises of help from his friends, and these end in nothing—mere talk" (Ellicott).

He who asks for help with a compelling bad-luck story in order to touch the passions of men will find out the promises of help will come to nothing. Men have a hard time letting go of money to help people in need even though adversity knocked the wind out of them. Men are not outfitted to give to the endless needs of the poor, but they seem to have an endless attraction to the wealth.

Christ was forsaken by his disciples but His fellowship with the Father sustained Him.

Beware of con artists with hard luck stories that appeal to your compassion in order to motivate you to depart from your money.

Avoid foolishness

8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good.

Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, but it ends with a deep love for Him. Getting wisdom is like climbing a mountain. It is hard, but the pure air refreshes the hiker. Those who find understanding not only have joy, the hum in their heart comforts those around them.

"Get wisdom, take pains for it. Get the rule over thy corruptions; take more pains to get this than the wealth of this world . . . A soul without true wisdom and grace is a dead soul" - Matthew Henry.

Avoid falsifiers

9 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.

Liars and perjurers face fines for contempt of court. Perjury not only injures the truth, it threatens the integrity of the judicial system.

Avoid complimenting fools for there is nothing complimentary about them.

10 Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes.

“Delight” (ta anuwg) refers to luxuries and comforts.

It is not good to comfort a fool, nor is it suitable to appoint an untrained, undisciplined servant to a high office. Comfort and luxury will ruin a fool; freedom and power ruin a servant.

Appointing an opinionated cocktail waitress to be a legislator creates hell on earth for citizens.

Avoid choler

11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

"discretion" (seh'kel) refers to one's good sense.

“deferreth (arak) means “to prolong.”

“anger” (aph) refers one with flared nostrils.

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

Solomon noticed that many plaintiffs in court were the kind of men who couldn't “bury the hatchet” or “let a minor offense” pass. They sued everyone who annoyed them.

Great men have conquered the Mt. Everest of self with all its choler and passions. Moreover, great men do not feel like they have to confront every problem rearing its ugly head in society or challenge every fool blabbering at them. God is not calling us to change the world, but to conquer our own passions. The great challenge for Christian men is to put off the works of the flesh and to put on the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:15ff).

Avoid contempt

12 The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.

Men respect the ferocity of lions and avoid the thorny forests where they roam. Likewise, discerning men avoid provoking the ire of men in positions of power. Their anger can rip you to shreds; but, their favor is as refreshing as an afternoon rain on a summer day. Government officials can use their power to comfort or kill depending on how they are approached.

No man responds well to people yelling in their face. You can be firm, but you must show respect. Show contempt and the bailiff will march you off to the nearest prison cell.

Avoid feminists

13 A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.

A "foolish son" and the calamity of having a "contentious wife" are linked. Even the strongest of men can't figure out how to please an unhappy combative woman. The word "contentions" is a noun or fact of life; the word means "to strive," "to challenge," "to belittle," or "to dominate."

The problem in this home is NOT the husband-father, but the wife-mother. Who can live with a blabbering, complaining, critical, commanding feminist? No man! And, the feminist movement is training young women to be contentious by the millions to the ruin of the nation.

When marriages are on the brink of divorce, "Christian counselors" tend to blame the man for not being more loving and for NOT "submitting" to the demands of his never-wrong wife. So called "Christian counseling" is upside down. When is the last time you have heard of a woman going to a pastor asking, "Pastor, will you pray for me? I have a problem with being contentious." Is there one "Christian counseling" program in America that addresses the problem of mouthy, contentious wives energized by Eve's curse (Genesis 3:16)?

Most "Christian counseling" is grounded on secular, Hinduistic models of man rather than Holy Scripture.

Because problems are related to sin, men have more in common than they have differences; that is, people's troubles are NOT unique to the individual's personality or background, but generic sins all people must learn to overcome -- thus, the reason for the Book of Proverbs. Solomon's bugbears were not unique to him, but weaknesses common to all.

Avoid passionate decision making**14 House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.**

In contrast to the blabbering contentious wife above, Solomon asserts that a prudent wife who fears God is from the LORD. A single man today will have difficulty finding a prudent wife from the public fool system; he must search for a suitable mate from home-schooling families. It is easier to find gold in "them thar hills" than it is to find a good woman whose price "is far above rubies."

Avoid sloth**15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.**

Solomon links slothfulness, sleep, and idleness to poverty and hunger -- a train wreck that needs no explanation.

Those who take up the cross to follow Jesus are poor, not because of idleness, but because of their occupation with the gospel:

"doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

Consequently, beware of "rich" preachers who have turned the ministry into a business for personal profit.

Avoid rebellion against God's law.

16 He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

Obe

dience to God's law-order saves men from calamity; and, he who despises law will come to ruin.

Anything other than a Christ-centered, law-grounded, gospel-based education is an act of apostasy for a believer. It is a modern heresy that holds *the law has no meaning or binding force on men today.*

Avoid apathy and indifference

17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Solomon observed a lack of sentience among the wealthy. He encourages the well-to-do to help the poor who lack the resources of prosperous business men. He is NOT addressing the problem of the homeless, the drug-addicted, and street beggars, but those who struggle for want of shekels. He reminds the rich that a loan to the poor is a loan to the LORD -- a kindness that will not go unrewarded. The subject here is that of loans, not charitable gifts.

The cure for the able-homeless is not charity, but indentured servitude.

Avoid misplaced compassion

18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Chastening is not punishment, but child training; correction is NOT hitting a child, but the measured discipline of a son. If the boy learns to adjust his behavior, there is hope. Solomon informs us that misplaced pity is a weakness in fathers; that fathers must accept the responsibility for educating their sons through corporal discipline and not give in to slobbery permissiveness. Shame on a man who places this duty on the boy's mother!!

Avoid rage

19 A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.

Anger sown in the field of a young man yields its own brambles, and the one who has a habitual habit of "blowing his stack" must repent again, and again, and again. Anger is a symptom that man wants to be his own god to control others . . . that he has not submitted himself to the Lordship of Christ . . . that he has not come to peace with the sovereignty of God . . . that he does not take sin seriously . . . that he is over ambitious.

Avoid rashness and carelessness in important decision making

20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

Receive little corrections throughout life that you may be wise in the end. Read the Bible daily and you will excel greatly. Be teachable all your life and one day you will be a teacher. Wisdom waits for the student to arrive.

21 There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

Change is the promise of proud politicians. Man is always changing his mind, his plans, and his principles. "But, I the Lord, change not" (Malachi 6:3). His character and His law does not morph through time. Politicians change, but seldom for the better. And, when candidates get in office they act like all the politicians who came before them.

There is no "better" without the counsels of the LORD.

Avoid dishonesty

22 The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.

Who contrasts kindness with lying? But, Solomon did.

A good man is esteemed for his gentleness. No man cares what you do in life as long as you are a "scholar and a gentleman." Proud, pig-headed men are despised by all. Even poor men are highly esteemed if they are kind.

"And a poor man (who would do a kindness if he could) is better than a liar." (Ellicott).

A fair and honest business man is highly esteemed in the West. But, "equality" is not a Biblical value. Equality is a man-made tenet in the communist utopia near the United Nations. Equity, yes; Equality, no!

"That all men are created equal" does not mean "all men are equal in their abilities" or deserve "equal pay;" rather, it means all are equal in the eyes of the law; that the law must treat all men fairly.

Avoid irreverence

23 The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

The fear of the LORD is the road to the abundant life, but departing from the path of righteousness produces its own perils. Love Christ and you will have troubles . . . love evil and evil will knock you to the floor. Do good and your good will come back to you; do evil, and you will be visited by monsters of the night.

Avoid sloth

24 A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

The scene is a banquet in an Eastern home where food is set in the middle of the table. With no spoons and forks, guests eat with their hands.

With satirical hyperbole, Solomon mocks the sluggard commenting on how the couch potato is so lazy he won't even get his hand out of his pocket to grab a piece of free bread at the dining table.

Avoid apathy and permissiveness

25 Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

Administer public punishment to scorners that the simple may learn to avoid the same sins. In contrast to the scorner stands a righteous man who is easily corrected by a kind word.

It is not the job of sons to correct their fathers; but, if needs be, do it gently and respectfully.

"Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren" (1 Timothy 5:1).

Avoid contempt for parents

26 He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

The purpose of the family is to raise a godly seed (Malachi 2). The opposite of godliness are sons who violate the 5th Commandment. A fool that wastes his father's estate due to fraud and makes his aged mother destitute brings disgrace to the family.

Avoid bad advice

27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

A good student must surrender to the instruction of wisdom (Sophia). but he must also vigorously resist revolutionaries seeking to undermine the rule of law. A backward Jew could possess beliefs contrary to the state of Israel, but the law required the death penalty for subversives. No nation can survive that tolerates insurgents trying to overthrow its system of law (Deuteronomy 13).

Avoid mockers and taunters

28 An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.

“scorneth” (luwts) is a verb that means “to mock” or “talk arrogantly about a matter.”

This does not mean all judgments by judges deserve respect. Modern “judges” do not have an oath on record and no longer follow the rule of law. God’s judgments in Scripture deserve ultimate respect, but rulings by administrators working for the Municipal Corporation and its territorial courts must be viewed cautiously, even suspiciously.

Where the courts are bias, fraudsters have no fear of judgment. When litigants mock the courts (“devour iniquity”), the judicial system is corrupt.

29 Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools.

The purpose of government is not to save men, but to purge evil from society by the faithful execution of justice. The punishments of law are made for lawbreakers . . . to motivate them to forsake their crimes and to live according to the rules of a just society. Quick, corporal punishment for misdemeanors is far superior to the long cruel punishments of prison and solitary confinement.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 20

WARNING: SINS TO AVOID



Drunkenness

Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

◆ Excessive wine-sipping has a long and sad history of mocking men; intelligent fellows avoid vintage wines, crafted sherry, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Only drink wine for health . . . and that moderately.

Yes, people have freedom to drink modest portions of rosays not-to-sweet, but good men are controlled by none of it! The healthiest men on earth live on Mt. Athos where they drink a glass of wine in the morning and evening.

Contempt for rulers

2 The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.

Lions are known for their ferocity and their flesh-ripping claws. Likewise, discerning men avoid provoking the anger of a king. Their anger will rip you to shreds. The fool who directs his rage towards a cop or judge will **not** escape a ripping.

Solomon like Job links **fear** and **anger** together (Job 19:29; Proverbs 20:2). An angry man has many fears; that is, anger is a cloak for fear.

Fear makes men afraid, and when people are afraid, they need to rest their souls in the promises of God: “Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet (shaw’an), and none shall make *him* afraid (Jeremiah 30:10).

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

Brawling

3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

Good men avoid offensive language and bitter tones that create strife; but, every fool who gives full expression to his feelings provokes the wrath of the king.

The biggest “Meddler” in one’s private affairs is not your next door neighbor but Subcontracters working for the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia who seem hell bent on collecting our financial records, emails, cell phone data, and private health information.

“The Constitution is a charter of negative liberties; **it tells the state to let people alone**; it does not require the federal government or the state to provide services, even so elementary a service as maintaining law and order” -- Bowers v. DeVito (Aug. 20, 1982).

We are not cattle. We do not need any assistance of “Govment” to tell us what to eat, wear, speak, and think. Not even the States of the Union nor the Subcontractors in the District of Criminal have any authority to horn in on private matters in our lives. Stay out! Go back to your pen in D.C.

Sloth

4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

It is well known that sluggards will use every excuse in the book to avoid work . . . and then invent more. For this reason, sluggards avoid the Book of Proverbs.

Cold, winds, and lions in the street are reasons telegraphed by draggletails why they can’t go to work. God’s men are stronger than their excuses.

5 Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Wise men are humble, restrained, and quiet. Only a man of discernment understands this truth. The humble query the quiet sage to tap into this Bible knowledge and wisdom. Fools do not discern knowledge in older folks. They are only interested in impressing others with their tired sonnets and vanilla opinions. Wise men have drilled into the reservoir of knowledge, but fools simply repeat platitudes, clichés, and buzz words they learned from the mundane media.

Serving two masters

6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

How many wrongdoers did Solomon listen to who did nothing but proclaim their own goodness to justify themselves in a dispute? Every litigant offer good reasons why he should prevail. It is always the other guy’s fault.

Only God has the right to make law and to define goodness. This text informs us about the tendency of men to proclaim themselves to be gods, to make up their own laws, and to make themselves the standard of right and wrong. But, the faithful man proclaims God's law and goodness as the standard for right and wrong.

The word "faithful" implies consistent allegiance to God's law. Modern humanistic man deposits law in We the People or the State. Thus, the State becomes the god of the democratic system. In the West, the U.S. Constitution begins with "We the People" instead of "By the Grace of God" making the people the source of authority for lawmaking. In the Christian system, law comes from the "LORD God who brought you out of Egypt;" i.e., law is a product of Sovereignty and Love.

The Scripture teaches that gods are the source of law, and that *changing laws indicates a change in gods*. In the Christian mind there is only one Lawgiver (James 4:12). and the State is not it. Moreover, since Christ taught the principle that NO MAN can serve two masters, no one can serve the LORD and the State; no one can serve Christ and Congress; the Savior and man-made statutes.

Corruption

7 The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.

Pious men strive to be men . . . just men . . . just, holy men. Therefore, God blesses their families. But, this does not mean all children born in a Christian family will become Christians that serve the Lord. Adam, Isaac, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah experienced pain of sin working in their sons. Every promise has limitations. This text does not act as an insurance policy that guarantees religious people will experience only the blessings of God and not be touched by Adam's curse. This text summarizes the general blessings of integrity which rest upon the pious.

Malice

8 A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.

Fathers know how to say "No, knock it off" to their sons with the glance of an eye without saying a word. Likewise, the countenance of kings renders judgment. Moreover, Christians must be sensitive enough to be guided by the eyes of the LORD God (Psalm 32:8).

Self-righteousness

9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

This is Solomon's way of saying, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Only half-wits trumpet their own purity. But, this is what Solomon witnessed in court -- fools who accepted no fault, admitted no wrong, and confessed no sin. Everything was the other man's fault.

Inequity

10 Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.

How many times did Solomon have to listen to an innocent man accuse a merchant for tipping the scales -- for fraud in the commercial trade?

"For God so loved the world that He gave" men a standard of right and wrong; of good and evil; and what is straight and level "his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The Lord loves honesty, truth, veracity, and authenticity in commerce; but fraud in the market place disgusts Him.

Duplicity

11 Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

Believe what children do, not what they say. Likewise, only a fool believes what litigants say. Decisions must be based on facts . . . on proof of claim with strict proof of claim and not up on opinions.

12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.

True Christians are not fideists that believe for the sake of believing. Like the apostle Thomas, true men are empiricists who demand proof of claim with strict proof of claims. "Just the facts, Ma'am! What did you see? What did you hear?" Proof of claim is what is demanded in courtroom and by the jury looking at Christianity: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us:" (1 John 1:3).

Sloth

13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

Impecunity is the cell mate of sleep. Wake up, go to work, plant and pick, and you'll have food for the winter.

The virtuous woman is first one up and the last one to bed (31:15, 18).

Fraud

14 It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

Solomon observed the vending practices of merchants in the market. When a buyer wanted a commodity, he criticized the product as cheaply made and not worth the asking price; but, when he struck a bargain, he went home and bragged to his friends about "the great deal" he made.

15 There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

Just as men love gold and jewels, men of integrity love words and believe that words mean something. When wise men speak, their words should be treated as a special treasure.

Suretiship

16 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

Another warning against suretyship: (See above on Proverbs 6:1.) When a rash man "becomes surety for another, he must suffer for his imprudence, and learn wisdom by feeling the effects of his folly" (Ellicott).

The word "woman" (isha or ish'shah) is not in the text. A stranger refers to one outside the covenant . . . for one who has not proved his integrity. Only fools risk their own assets in loans to persons of unknown character. When making a loan, you must secure collateral.

Since the word "woman" is not in the text, the idea communicates the foolishness of not securing a down payment on a loan agreement from one that is not part of the covenant.

Without "money on the line" men cannot be trusted. "Putting your money where your mouth is" seals the deal and provides evidence of sincerity.

Deception

17 Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.

Profits obtained by fraud are sweet to begin with, but afterwards the ploy tastes like gravel in apple pie.

Obreption: an act of obtaining something by falsehood -- obtaining anything by fraud or surprise. *Courts seek to obtain jurisdiction by obreption in order to increase revenue.*

Carelessness

18 Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.

No man is an expert in everything. Even experts in one field must consult experts in another field when they are offered an investment opportunity outside their subject of expertise.

Gossiping

19 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Trusting a gossip with secrets is a fool's occupation. Once the wind comes up and scatters the feathers, you can't get 'em back in the basket.

Flattery acts like bait on a hook to snag your precious secrets.

Contempt

20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

This is a commentary on the 5th Commandment. Cursing, gossiping, slandering, muckraking, and "bad mouthing" parents are a death wish. Sons are called to honor their parents not to judge them.

Trickery

21 An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.

An evil plan to obtain an inheritance by a lusty heir earns interest on punishment.

Vengeance

22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

A lesson on vengeance: "*Vengeance is Mine*, I will repay," (Romans 12:29) -- a principle borrowed from Deuteronomy 32:35.

This text illustrates the uncertainty of life:

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:14-15).

Inequity and Disparity

23 Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good.

Another lesson on equity and the character of God - Everyone hates a cheat, and so does the Lord. God loves integrity and hates dishonesty in commerce. Duplicity brings so much pain into innocent people's lives, Good men create a win-win deal – a fair exchange of money for commodities.

24 Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

How can a mortal understand the eternal . . . the invisible . . . the inexplicable, the abnormal, and the coincidental . . . ?

The good and the bad, gains and losses, the lovely and the ugly are so much easier to accept for the man who has committed his precious all to the Lord.

“Shew me thy ways, O Lord” (Psalm 25:3).

Rashness and carelessness**25 It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry.**

One sins when he takes something that has been dedicated to God and then uses it to satisfy one own wants or cravings . . . something devoted to worship and to make it common . . . or useful . . . or profane.

Life calls for discernment. God calls men to distinguish between things-holy and things-profane. Some things are sacred and must be treated as such.

Negligence and nofeasance**26 A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.**

A Biblical government protects people's rights and purges society of criminals. Thus, a discerning king uses his office to condemn and punish criminals -- to rake the wheel of justice over the backs lawbreakers.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small."

Israel had a monarchy under God; America was established as a Republic “under God.” Proverbs has to be applied to America’s unique form of government. In America, We the People are sovereigns, and all government workers are allegedly our “Employees” – officers duty bound to follow the rule of law and to limit their activities to the terms expressed in the original service contract of 1791.

“The Government of the United States is one of delegated powers alone. Its authority is defined and limited by the Constitution. All powers not granted to it by that instrument are reserved to the States or the people” -- United States v. Cruikshank, 92 U.S. 542 (1875).

America is not a place! America is set of ideas germane to the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and those conceptions expressed by the Founding Fathers. Good men love America, but not necessarily their de facto government.

Recklessness

27 The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

“The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (*nephesh*)” Genesis 2:7.

Man is not just a mass of protoplasm. He is not a homo sapien (ape). Nor is he a corporation (a fiction). He is a living *nephesh* with the capacity to commune with the Eternal Spirit. Man is not a worthless piece of trash. Man is valuable . . . of such high value God sent His Son to die for men and to purchase them with his precious blood.

Man is not an evolved amoeba, but a "living soul" endowed by his Creator with certain unalienable rights. He is not the product of two rocks bumping hips, but the product of special creation. "Twice born," the Holy Spirit works to sanctify the spirit, soul, and body of the justified. And, because the breath of God is within him, he can search out mysteries and commune with the Lord.

Futher, man is not only a creation of God, he is under the jurisdiction of the LORD God and accountable to Him. He is not under the jurisdiction of the State unless he has a contract with the State.

Malevolence

28 Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.

Mercy and truth are the foundation of God's throne. Kissing each other at the cross, men are made whole. However imperfect, mercy and truth preserve the regimes of modern governments; without which, nations are swept into the dust bin of history.

Presumption

29 The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head.

Young men glory in their muscle, and old man glory in their wisdom. Young men rejoice in their vigor and courage; old men in their knowledge and experience.

Indulgence

30 The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.

Punishment for folly bruises the body but clears the mind. Discipline hurts the flesh, but heals the soul. Some men are so set on "going their own way" and "doing their own thing," getting off the path of evil requires pain. Men are free to do anything they want as long as they do not injure the rights of others. The only way some men learn NOT to harm others is to experience hurt themselves.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 21

A BETTER LOOK AT THE SUBJECT OF SIN



♦ Proverbs is a sophisticated study of Hamartiology -- the Scriptural doctrine of sin -- of violations of God's law -- of behaviors that fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23; Isaiah 53:6).

Sin shames all people. Notice the sins addressed in this chapter.

"The wages of sin (hamartia) is death"

(Romans 6:23).

God restrains and frustrates the sinful ambitions of kings

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

The most successful king in Israel penned this proverb.

This text rebukes the Armenian man that views politics as a matter of human choices. It is a great heresy to think the sovereignty of God does not exist or that it is not in effect in today. His sovereignty does not change nor does He need to change.

To modern prime ministers have commanding influence over the lives of people. But history teaches us that chiseling rocks and bending the will of a king share much in common.

Because these monoliths are under the LORD's dominion, He can channel them to do His will as easily as manipulating water in one's hand. Known for its cohesive elasticity, water conforms to the shape of the container into which it is poured. Kings are NOT freely moved by the will of the people, but their minds are painlessly moved by our sovereign Lord who "turneth it whithersoever He will" -- as easy as water flows through irrigation channels.

Man proposes; God disposes. The bounties we enjoy and the restrictions we feel coming from citadels of political power are in His hands. While we stand up for a king, we stand and salute the Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 17: 6-7).

The purpose of the cross was to restore man to covenant-keeping rather than covenant-breaking. God-fearing kings surrender themselves to the LORD and His law-order; perverted kings go their own way and chose their own

laws. Good kings seek the blessing of the LORD by obeying Him; foolish kings obey their own lusts bending only to will of others when pragmatism demands it. Righteous rulers ground their administration upon the Holy Scriptures; the regency of the wicked is grounded upon the principles of humanism.

Going my way is sin . . . but, the purpose of Christ's atonement was to regenerate believing men and give them the capacity to keep His law (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 8:1-4).

2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

In every dispute, Solomon listened to two litigants that thought they were right. This problem is mentioned five times in Proverbs (3:7, 12:15; 16:2; 21:2; 30:12).

In relation to civil or political disputes, it is in the nature of men to lay hold of a position, dig in their heels, stay in their trench, and rattle off their inculpatory¹⁴ statements about their opponents. For this reason courts, due to the Brady Rule¹⁵, require attorneys to turn over exculpatory evidence¹⁶ in a criminal case to a defense team before a trial.

The very definition of sin is "going your own way" and "doing your own thing" (Isaiah 53:6). There are few greater errors than the whole notion that a Christian is free to choose his own law order.

Wicked politicians are not dressed in a red Devil's uniform, but in blue suits. These statisticians are not interested in justice, but in raw, naked, partisan power.

No matter how loopy and senseless a government policy, scum suckers have a way to justify it. Under a spirit of deception, politicians seem convinced that outhouses contain piles of gold. Those responsible for public relations talk pretty, but look ugly. Wisdom grows out of contemplations on the Holy Scriptures, not from deliberations by CON-gress (a gathering of baboons).

* The one going to court must have clean hands!

¹⁴ Inculpatory: imputing guilt; tending to incriminate or inculcate.

¹⁵ Brady Rule: The Brady rule, named after Brady v. Maryland 373 U.S. 83 (1963), requires prosecutors to disclose material, exculpatory information in the government's possession to the defense.

¹⁶ Exculpatory: a statement by the defendant that tends to clear a defendant from alleged guilt.

"The principle, 'He who comes into equity must do so with clean hands,' repels a complainant only when his iniquity consists of wrongful conduct in the acts or transactions which raise the equity he seeks to enforce" (Trice v. Comstock, 121 F. 620 (1903)).

Injustice is sin

3 To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

The miscarriage of justice plagues every generation. The perfunctory performances of religious ritual can interfere with honest business. True religion does not include negligence of justice and mercy. We love God not by rigid devotion to religious ritual, but by ministering to the needs of our neighbor.

Pride is sin

4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

Pride mars every good work. Fields tillaged without thankfulness and trust in God produce an insufficient harvest. Crooked rows are plowed when farmers look down: Straight rows are plowed "looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

Alacrity is sin

5 The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.

The plans of the righteous are wholesome and beneficial; but, those who are hasty to get rich short cut themselves and their customers short.

Fraud is sin

6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

How many cases came before Solomon where the aggrieved party was injured because of false promises made by some slick merchant? Commercial schemes to rob men of their wealth is a violation of the 10th Commandment.

Wicked men love death (Proverbs 8-9). Obtaining wealth by fraud and deception is like a wild ride on a rickety old rollercoaster.

7 The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.

Petty theft and sophisticated schemes by thieves rob men of their wealth. Politicians would do well to remember they are scheduled for judgment by Almighty God (Hebrews 9:27).

Arbitrariness is sin

8 The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right.

The word “forward” means perverse, and the word “strange” refers to strangers of God’s law; and, the perverse man is contrasted with the pure man who is devoted to God’s law.

The ways of humanistic man are perverted and lawless, but the pure do what God's law requires. Evil men are not victims of the system, but predators preying on the innocent. Likewise, corrupt politicians seem more interested in raw naked power over their political opponents than in a level playing field.

Contention with a husband is sin

9 It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.

Another great hyperbole by Solomon!

The word "brawling" (midyan) means "contentious" or “quarreling.” Brawling is the natural disposition of every fallen woman -- the impulse to control, criticize, and complain about husbands -- a bent that can only be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

“Brawling woman” are a plague upon all husbands; but, few women will admit they are a pain in the backside. It is easier to blame others than to admit they are contentious and are “Billy Goat” curse to live with.

All women are prone to contend with their husbands, but a spiritual woman will take up the cross and crucify this common sin. Marriages can only survive when women accept the responsibility to live righteously. If her nature rules the home, she invites a “mummy curse” upon her husband and her children.

Failure to quash evil desires is a sin

10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.

The wicked feed every evil desire, but the pious starve lusts. No one is safe when sin rules the heart of a neighbor.

"The wicked must have whatever he has set his heart upon, however much trouble and sorrow he may cause to his neighbour thereby" (Ellicott).

Covert justic by the government is sin

11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

Public punishment inflicts pain on the criminal not only to satisfy vengeance, but to educate the public about the blanket of evil spreading its shroud over all men.

Biblical punishments of criminals like fines, flogging, reparations, and sometimes the death penalty are quick, reasonable, and humane. Modern punishments like long jail sentences, prolonged solitary confinement, and chemical castration are savage and barbarian.

“Invisible punishments” of criminals by government hangmen that diminish the rights of criminals is a mark of tyranny. They are not only cruel by they crush the backbone of moral education.

Failure to love your neighbor in a time of need is sin

12 The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.

Alert to the habits of the wicked, the righteous hope for repentance. If they do not repent, godly men resist their corruption . . . even confronting them for their misdeeds. Some problems are bigger than us. Therefore, good men must trust God to deal with the untouchable depravity operating in the bat caves of his time.

Failure to consider the claims of the poor in a court of law is sin

13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

Failure to hear the problems of the "down and out" endangers one's prayer life. Shut your ears to the down trodden and God may shut his ears to your prayers. Insentience among men wilts the flower; but empathy is like sunshine that causes the flower to bloom. And, God hears the followers of Christ growing in compassion and discernment.

Corrupt solicitation is sin

14 A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.

A beneficent gift of kindness to an offended brother may prevent further controversy. Be merciful and enjoy peace; be harsh and expect conflict. Sow discord and expect a dogfight. Show anger and you may lose your place in Canaan (Numbers 21).

Anger is one letter short of d a n g e r.

"Just a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down."

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

Treading on the rights of others is sin

15 It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Used five times in Proverbs, *iniquity* means "unjust," "not just," or the opposite of being in conformity to law.

Living righteously has its rewards, and living by iniquity has its python tortmentors. Joy grows in the orchard of righteousness but calamity grows in the enchanted gardens of the wicked. There is pleasure in sin for a season, but everlasting happiness awaits the obedient (Jeremiah 35:10).

Fair legislation honors lawmakers, but corrupt administrators must face the gavel of pure justice. For some cheating is the only way they know how to achieve success. They can't learn honesty until their lives are entangled in the arms of justice. Then, they wake up . . . but too late.

Neglecting, ignoring, breaking God's law is sin

16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

Those that stray from God's law shall be trapped in the thorn bushes of condemnation, destruction and death. Bribes, pay offs, and money laundering will not go unpunished. The wheels of justice grind slowly, but the grind exceedingly small. "Let the dead bury the dead" - Jesus.

Drunkenness and Gluttony are sin

17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

The love of cocktails, catnaps, and Irish coffee has ruined many a man and those given to wine shall spend all they have supporting their habit.

Entrapment by coercion is sin

18 The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.

The wicked fall into the traps they set for the righteous.

"Evil doers seem to draw down the wrath of God upon their heads, and so become, as it were, the scapegoats of the comparatively righteous"
Barnes.

Fools dig their own grave by walking away from responsibility. Never surrender; never resign. Stay, fight, and never quit.

Black's Law Dictionary defines "compel" as follows:

"To urge forcefully, under extreme pressure. The word "compel" as used in constitutional right to be free from being compelled in a criminal case to be a witness against one's self means to be subjected to some coercion, fear, terror, inducement, trickery or threat--either physically or psychologically, blatantly or subtly; the hallmark of compulsion is the presence of some operative force producing an involuntary response. U.S. v. Escandar, C.A. Fla., 465 F.2d 438, 442."

Contentious anger by a wife is sin

19 It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Another greater hyperbole by Solomon. The word "contentious" (midyan) means "to contend, to combat, to strive, and to fight against." This prohibitive state is case law for the 6th Commandment, "thou shall not kill."

A combative "angry woman" is a killer with murder in her heart. Her deadly weapons of choice are bullet-like accusations, defamations, vilifications, calumniations, aspersions, denigrations, derogations, and depreciations which she carries in her holster 24 hours a day. And, she is the Annie Oakley of contumely.

The word "angry" (ka'ac) which means "grieve by vexation." It is translated "provocation" in Deuteronomy 32:19; that is, she provokes, pokes, and annoys her husband with her quick wit and acid tongue. The word "contentious" is plural in Hebrew; that is, her anger ignites the fires of contentions. This pin-prick wag has more quills than a family of porcupines; more needles than an 12 acres of saguaro cacti.

The lesson here is similar to the one in verse nine. You can't make peace with a chirping wife with her mouth open. Because there are so many contentious vixens, a beaten man would do better to live alone under a cactus a hundred miles from nowhere than to live with a cantankerous, complaining hellion.

As opinionated dominating wenches shout out orders about what to eat, what to wear, and what to say, they create hell on earth for men . . . and children. Can you say, "Feminism?" No man can live up to the "jump-to-the-moon" expectations of a shrew who equivocates about everything.

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

Overspending, consumerism, wastefulness, extravagance and profusion is sin

20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

A sensible man spends a lifetime saving his wealth, and when he has it, he spends it slowly and wisely. But, a fool "shoots his wad" with one roll of the dice. Self-control grows from virtue, self-indulgence springs from vice; restraint saves; recklessness kills; wise men conserve, fools squander.

21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

Here shines another proverb espousing the benefits of following God's law which are mercy and truth -- two virtues that kissed each other at Calvary (Psalm 85:10-13).

Anger, wrath, rage, fury, resentment, cholera, crossness, furor, agitation, and distemper is sin

22 A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.

Knowing what to do is often more beneficial than having the power to do. Great problems are solved by knowledge and wisdom rather than brute strength. Great athletes work not only on building strength, but mastering technique. A contest by two men of equal power will be won by the man with greater knowledge.

Solomon compares the conquest of his self to a soldier calling the walls of a great city. The most difficult neighbors to live with are the roughnecks, rowdies, and ruffians in your own soul. Defeat these miscreants and you win your greatest battle. Therefore, "take up your cross" and follow Jesus.

Sanguine verbosity, garrulity and blathering is sin

23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

A calm, self-restrained man will enjoy the fruits of peace. The quiet man saves himself from many troubles while the garrulous man creates his own headaches. If you want to enjoy life clam up and be silent as an oyster. Stop wagging your tongue and work like a beaver. If you don't want to "shake, rattle, and roll" with enemy troopers, then button your lip.

Pride and contempt is a sin

24 Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

"wrath" (ebrah) refers to an overflow and excess of fury.

Anger associates with pride, arrogance, and contempt for holiness. Be humble or stumble. God don't like ugly, and He ain't crazy about pretty.

Anger disfigures a man and turns him into a circus, sideshow freak.

No beast is more savage than the rage of wild bores ranging wild in the soul of a man: "The fruit of the Spirit is . . . self-control."

Sloth is a sin including but not limited to indolence, torpidity, and idleness

25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

The man who refuses to work in order to satisfy his desires will end up being the most frustrated man in the county.

"No man is free if he does not ABSOLUTELY own PRIVATE property that cannot be taxed or regulated" (SEDM)

"the property **which every man has in his own labor**, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable" (Butcher's Union Co. v. Crescent City CO, 111 U.S. 746 (1884)).

Miserliness, stinginess, and greediness is a sin

26 He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not.

While the sluggard suffers from his frustration to obtain wealth, the righteous enjoy the benefits of responsible stewardship.

Duplicity is a sin

27 The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

To the stingy, sacrifice hurts; and, his miserliness disgust the Lord. How much more does he provoke the Lord when he shares in order to get, who takes instead of gives, who defrauds others of their property? Yes, there is "pleasure in sin for a season" but afterward sin rots the soul (Hebrews 11:25-26).

Crime pays in this world, but not in the next.

Crime does not pay, but the fool will.

Perjury is sin

28 A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.

Perjurers speaks lies and everyone listens, but when they are proved wrong, the exonerated have much to say.

A man "guilty of perjury and shall, except as otherwise expressly provided by law, be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both." (18 U.S.C. 70 §1621.

When a liar slanders you, you don't know how to answer. But, when you think about the truth of a matter, suddenly the lights come on and the engines of your mind begin to roar.

Discompassion, torpor, and insentience is sin

29 A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.

Callous to rebuke, bone-head pride will not admit wrong. When the righteous stray from the path and their conscience sounds the alarm, they confess their sin, accept responsibility for the pain it caused, and do all they can to heal the ones they hurt.

Restricting religion (Christianity) is a sin

30 There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.

The most wicked among us cannot frustrate the will of God. "The Lord reigns" is the gospel of the Old Testament (Psalm 97:1).

When the wicked unite to build a tower to frustrate God's plans, the Lord turns their foolishness into babel. Who do these arrogant pundits think they are? How can they possibly succeed at building their La La Land utopia here on earth? History is moving toward the kingdom of God and the whore of Babylon can do nothing to stop it.

Trusting government is a sin

31 The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.

Man has enemies. Life has many battles. Men need to go to war to protect rights and property . . . to share the gospel with the lost. While horses may be useful on the Day of Battle, the intelligent soldier makes sure his heart is right with God. One cannot find protection on the back of a warhorse, but under the shadow of His wings one can find safety (Psalm 91:1).

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 22

OBSERVATIONS ON THE RICH MAN AND POOR MAN



Both the rich and the poor must learn to value their reputation

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

◆ A reputation for being an honest and truthful man is important in business . . . if the reports are true; but it is not all

important. Even Jesus was called, "a gluttonous man, and a winebibber and a friend of publicans and sinners!"

Note the Third Section of Proverbs begins in verse 17.

Both the rich and the poor serve the same Creator

2 The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

The word "poor" in Proverbs is often synonymous with righteousness, humility, and honesty.

Men are products of their Maker; not products of evolution. Evolutionists are fools; creationists are the wise men in Proverbs. The one who believes in the "Big Bang Theory" is either insane, lacks the courage to believe in the evidence of the Creator, or has a moral problem that prevents him from coming into the light to acknowledge the truth of the LORD God.

"I do not want to believe in God. Therefore I choose to believe in that which I know is scientifically impossible, spontaneous generation leading to evolution" – George Wald.

The Creator in the Bible is the LORD God, the infinite, person, virtuous, triune Spirit, the God of the Bible, the God of Israel / Church, and the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Creator made all men: male and female, rich and poor. Those who scorn the poor show contempt for their Creator and are accountable to their Maker. What is it about men who avoid contact with those less fortunate?

Our Lord showed the way of love by caring for the poor and socializing with the lower classes -- even prostitutes and sinners (Luke 7:34; Matthew 11:19).

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by **their Creator** with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . . “ – Declaration of Independence

Both the rich and the poor must learn prudence

3 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

“foreseeth” (ra’ah) means “to study, to see, inspect, and consider.”

The “evil” in this passage has to do with societal trends and not natural disasters (Isaiah 45:7). Evil is within men; not in the environment.

Because of his long history of observing trends, the prudent man is a cautious man – a man with prescience. He knows that men are not better than what they pretend to be. Therefore, he protects his wealth and hides from those who parasite off the earnings of others.

Both the rich and the poor must learn to fear the LORD

4 By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.

The English word “humble” or “humility” is used 6 times in Proverbs (6:3; 15:33; 16:19; 18:12; 22:4; 29:23). The noun “humility” (anavah) in this text means “meekness” or “self-restraint.” It is translated “gentleness” in 2 Samuel 22:36.

The greatest riches a man can possess is the fear of the Lord, a good life, and a good reputation. A humble men do not see themselves gods; rather, they fear the LORD. Because they know the truth about the true God, they know the truth about themselves -- that men are created in the image of God -- that they are sinner in need of grace -- that they want to do what is right and to please God.

Where men fear God there is humility. True humility is built on knowledge of the true God; counterfeit humility appears when men neglect the truth about the Creator and become social climbers by developing their own persona.

The word “humility” comes from the Latin word “humus” meaning “of the earth” to be “face down in the dirt.” It means getting off your high horse and stop thinking you are better . . . smarter . . . more noble than other people

It does not mean you must deny your strength, but it does imply being honest about your weaknesses. A man (anthropos) would do well to work on having an accurate view of himself before God . . . that he is made of dust and not starlight; that he is made of earth's stuff and not heaven's stuff.

5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

The word "froward" (iqqesh) means twisted or distorted; that which does not meet the standard of proper behavior. The standard of right and wrong is the Ten Commandments.

Those that practice evil expose themselves to many perils. The wise are careful about the people with whom they associate. The righteous make friends by what they do, and the wicked make enemies by what they say and do.

The ways of a pervert are like walking into a rose bush -- everything becomes a thorny problem. Walk with them and you will get stuck.

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” – 1 Corinthians 15:34.

Both the rich and the poor must accept the duties of parenting

6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

The word "train" (chanak) does not mean "to teach" as much as it means to "discipline" or "guide." The Hebrew word means "to dedicate" like dedicating a new house.

"according to his way," that is, in that course or manner of life which thou would have him to choose and follow. Some scholars read this as *train up a child in the way he is bent; that is*, don't force a rose bush to be an Easter Lilly. You can't train a rooster to purr.

Good parents don't turn their children over to fools to educate them. Homeschooling families have shown us the way. Raise a child in a Christ-centered home, and God's blessings will follow. Send them to the public fool system and they will live like fools.

Both the rich and the poor must avoid becoming slaves to the lenders

7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

The word "ruleth" implies insufferable tyranny. Borrowers become slaves to the lender -- a warning against debt.

In today's world, however, creditors do not loan gold and silver from their own assets, but credit or "money of account." Today's banks don't loan real money, they create digits out of thin air (Modern Money Mechanics). There is a reason the U.S. Constitution only permitted the coinage of gold and silver. Thus, the Christian would do well to rethink this text through in light of the world's fraudulent banking system -- to define "money" correctly and to rethink what "debt" really means. A modern "debtor" is not the same thing as a "debtor" in Biblical times.

The rich Subcontractors in the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia rule over those ignorant of God's Word, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights.

8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

The "rod of his anger" is a metaphor for the cruelty of the iniquitous. The word "fail" (kalah) means "to consume" or "use up." It is translated "finished" in Genesis 2:1; the famine that consumed the land in the time of Joseph (Genesis 41:30); an "end of communing with him" in Exodus 31:18.

This text sheds light on the adage, "Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind:" sow evil and reap wickedness. *Keep your weeds out of my garden*, ordered Solomon! The job of the righteous is to overcome evil by doing well -- to focus on growing love and not just on pulling up the weeds of iniquity.

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

"If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred says of sorrow" (Chinese Proverb).

9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

God's blessing is upon the generous; good men share their abundance with the righteous poor. Givers are seldom in court, but takers and finaglers are often involved in legal disputes.

Both the rich and the poor must confront scorers

10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

The word "cast" (garash) is a Piel imperative meaning "to drive out" with a whip. It is used of God driving Adam and Eve out of the garden in Genesis 3:24; and of Abraham when he "cast out this bondwoman" in Genesis 21:10.

"shall go out" conjures up an image of a dying fire that is not fed more fuel in order to burn.

This passage is mice on rice when it comes to permissiveness. Some parents have more sugar than the Fairy God Mother. Serve horseradish with your chili and it will take the tarter off your teeth; i.e., confront growlers and grumblers and the strife will cease. A responsible parent says, "Paint your ugliness with a smile or you're going to get it."

Parenting is not about being a friend to your children, but about being God's instrument to raise a godly child. The sign of great parenting is not the child's behavior, but the PARENT'S BEHAVIOR!

Give scorning co-workers the snarl of a Canadian Wolf that wolves would be proud of. Stop being so nice to fools. Get meaner than scissors: "Cast out the scorner and the contention will go out."

Both the rich and the poor must grow in purity and grace

11 He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.

This text proceeds on the presumption that the king is a righteous man with a conscience toward God.

Important people are often surrounded by fawners, flatterers, and bootlickers. Flattery will get you everywhere and anything with fools . . . but not with God. As God loves truth, so do righteous kings. Mix truth with grace, and you'll have a winning formula. Speak the truth in love, and the king will love you. Butter 'em up, and they will despise you.

12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.

The eye of Providence preserves knowledge and watches over the righteous, but he overthrows apple-polishers and doormats. He guides the humble, but grinds the proud.

When confronting a public official for wrongdoing, do NOT hesitate to quote Scripture . . . "It is written . . ." is powerful.

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" – Isaiah 55:11.

Both the rich and the poor must make sloth their enemy

13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

The imagery of a lion represents unwanted challenges -- a common theme in Proverbs (19:12; 20:2; 28:1; 15: 30:30).

Because a sluggard discovers a roaring lion on his front doorstep he concludes the worst: "I'm gonna die." But, work never killed anyone. The trouble with many people is that they stop before they start. Get out of bed and chase the cat away.

Both the rich and the poor must avoid the strange woman

14 The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.

The strange woman is the opposite of Sophia in Proverbs. She has the same disposition as the seductress and contentious woman (7:10; 21:19).

Used 11 times in Proverbs, the word "strange" (zuwr) refers to an alien woman under the power of Eve's curse -- a seductress using her feminine charms to conquer men. She is called a "stranger" because she is outside the covenant, outside the kingdom, outside of God's law-order living life her way for her own advantage.

The emphasis here is upon her "mouth" and "deep pit." This is a woman with her tongue tied in the middle and flappin' at both ends -- with all the dangers of a deep, dark mine shaft. She is like a flower without a fragrance; and, a thorn bush without a rose. Her words are slicker than Pennzoil and sweeter than chocolate, but all this sweetness is nothing but bait in her honey trap.

Both the rich and the poor must deal with foolishness in the heart of children

15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

The word "bound" (qashar) means "to bind" or "unite together." The term is used of Jacob's flock which were mingled together (Genesis 30:42); as a metaphor for binding God's Word in your heart in Deuteronomy 11:18); of Rahab binding a scarlet cloth in her window (Joshua 2:18); of Johnathan's soul being knit with David in 1 Samuel 18:1; and "confederacy" in Isaiah 8:12.

Foolishness is not in the environment but in hearts. Solomon's wants parents to know that children are born sinners; that it is in their nature to sin. But, the rod of correction shall drive mischief far from him. Pain is the remedy for foolishness. It doesn't eradicate sin, but it sure motivates a child to sin less and to separate himself from it.

The rod is an instrument of discipline, not punishment. Christian parents don't punish their children. They train them (22:6) like a vinedresser trains the little branches growing out of the main stem. The ultimate remedy for sin is at the cross. Parents teach and train their child to obey them with the hope that when they mature, they will obey the Lord.

Both the rich and the poor must confront oppression and favoritism

16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

The word “oppresseth” (ashaq) means “to press, violate, or defraud.” It is translated “deceive” in Leviticus 6:2 and “deceitfully gotten” in Leviticus 6:4.

To love God is to love your fellowman; and, to mistreat your fellowman is to defy the Lord. God watches how we treat the poor, and He watches those who give to the rich in order to obtain favors. The former gains His approval and the latter His disapproval. Give to the poor and experience gain; give to the rich and experience a loss. Hoarding never ends in happiness, for the heart of a miser always covets for more. Its rabid appetites can only be contained by six walls of a coffin.

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON: SECTION THREE
(22:17 -24:34)

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**Note: Benson observes that 22:17 is the beginning of the Second (third) Part of the Book of Proverbs.

From chapter ten till chapter 22:16 Solomon supplies short pithy sayings on a wide variety of subjects to capture the attention of the readers. Beginning in 22:17 we have long lessons in long sentences. All begin with a command and are delivered in the imperative mood.

Listen

17 Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

“Bow down” means to “(natah) means “to stretch out, pitch, turn, or bend.” Most ears are plugged. Solomon wishes his son to unclog his ears and to listen.

The term "wise" is plural in numbers not unlike a "multitude of counselors."

"Hear" (shema) is the most fundamental duty of men and the most difficult to practice. Hearing is the path to wisdom, righteousness, and salvation; the foundation of national integrity, light for the path, and the remedy for a diseased nation (Amos 5:6).

The highest form of respect an “adult” son can show a father is to listen to him . . . to ask questions . . . and to close his mouth. The pinnacle of disrespect is to interrupt people while they are in the middle of a sentence. It is a great insult to give an answer before a teacher finishes his question.

18 For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

The word “pleasant” (na’iym) means “delightful, sweet, lovely and beautiful.” It also refers to sweet sounding music. It is translated “sweet psalmist of Israel” in 2 Samuel 23:1 and “pleasant harp” in Psalm 81:2.

"within thee" means within your belly -- the inner part of you that governs your whole man -- your spirit, soul, and body. His words are the watchmen at your gates; that is, they will guard you and guide you if they are "fixed" on your lips -- nailed in your mind; i.e., made a permanent part of you (Psalm 141:3).

19 That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.

The word “trust” (mibtach) means “refuge.” It is translated “confidence” in Job 18:14; and, “strong confidence” in Proverbs 14:26.

Solomon declares his purpose -- that men might know God and His promises, and fully come to trust Him . . . and not government (Psalm 118: 8-10).

20 Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

"excellent things" refers to the good things in life, to princely things, to words fit for a king; to *morality, physics, and divinity* (Rabbis) . . . *to things fit for great captains, generals, nobles, or the best sort of musical instruments* (1 Kings 4).

Want to know God? Study His Word. Want wisdom? Study His Word. Want safety and happiness? Study His Word.

21 That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?

People love kings and expect them to have answers that shed light on the issues of their time.

The prince must learn God's Word, not only for his benefit alone, but so others might be blessed by his teaching . . . that they might commit to trusting him . . . that others might learn the gospel and come to know Christ who is *the way, the truth, and the life* to the Father.

That men must supply an answer to accusations is supported by legal maxims:

A matter must be expressed to be resolved (Hebrews. 4:16; Philippians. 4:6; Ephesians 6:19- 21. Legal maxim: “He who fails to assert his rights has none.”).

In Commerce truth is sovereign (Exodus 20:16; Psalm 117:2; Matthew 6:33, John 8:32; II Corinthians; 13:8. Legal maxim: "To lie is to go against the mind." Oriental proverb: "Of all that is good, sublimity is supreme.").

Truth is expressed by means of an affidavit (Leviticus 5:4-5; Leviticus 6:3-5; Leviticus 19:11- 13; Numbers 30:2; Matthew 5:33; James 5:12).

An un-rebutted affidavit stands as the truth in Commerce (1 Peter 1:25; Hebrews 6:13-15. Legal maxim: "He who does not deny, admits.").

An un-rebutted affidavit becomes the judgment in Commerce (Hebrews 6:16-17. Any proceeding in a court, tribunal, or arbitration forum consists of a contest, or "duel," of commercial affidavits wherein the points remaining unrebutted in the end stand as the truth and the matters to which the judgment of the law is applied.).

He who leaves the field of battle first loses by default (Book of Job; Matthew 10:22. Legal maxim: "He who does not repel a wrong when he can, occasions it.") (See Maxims in Commerce by Brian Lucas)

The word "truth" is employed ten times in proverbs (3:3; 8:7; 12:17; 12:19; 14:22; 16:6; 20:28; 22:21 *2; 23:23). The Hebrew word for "truth" (ameth) begins with the Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and ends with a Tav, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This the Spirit's way of informing us that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life . . .", the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the Aleph and the Tav and everything in between, our Sovereign, Creator, safety and refuge (John 14:6; Revelation 22:13; Matthew 5:18).

The middle letter in the word truth (Aleph Mem Tav) is the letter "Mem" which is a symbol for the "womb." This is the Spirit's way of informing us that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator and Source of all things.

The Hebrew word for "speak" (hageh) means "to roar," "moan," and "growl" like a lion over his prey (Isaiah 31:4). Does your wife hear you roaring over the Word each morning?

Rob not the poor

22 Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:

The "poor" are mentioned 38 times in Proverbs.

The word "rob" (gazal) means "to tear away from" or "to seize." It is negated by the adverb "no" which means "Don't do this!" Oppression includes robbery, petty theft, shop lifting, thuggery, abusive practices, or taking advantage of people because of their ignorance and economic weaknesses.

God's law is not only goof for me, it is good for all men and all of man's institutions. Not only should men not steal from one another, governments are prohibited from stealing from the people under color of law.

Oppression includes "government" restrictions on bartering, regulating citizens out of business, and making them apply for expensive licenses. Restricting sidewalk "vending" for "public good" is a favorite tactic of tyrants who hate freedom and who are attempting to bolster their own profits and monopolies.

23 For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

The rich do not become wealthy because they steal from the poor but because they work smart and hard. But, the rich become part of the government. Once in power they know how to oppress the poor through rules and regulations.

Beware of government kleptocracy. Government cannot take anything it wants; it is limited by the Constitution . . . but the Constitution does not enforce itself. It must be enforced by the People.

Avoid angry men

24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

The word "angry" (aph) refers to the nose or one with "flared nostrils."

Who can go through life without friends? All men need a friend. So, the principle choice involves what kind of friends to have. Avoid people who produce sparks or your own house will catch on fire.

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

"Never forget what a man says to you while he is angry" –Thomas Fuller (Puritan).

25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

Anger is a virtue of God, but in sinners it quickly degenerates into a vice. People who are angry about everything have a sickness in their soul and are dangerously contagious. Avoid the disease, and stay far away from them lest their anger-bug jumps on you and build a nest in your temper. Whatever begins in anger ends in shame. Easily agitated is not a fruit of the Spirit but a work of the flesh. Conquer anger, and you can triumph over anything.

Avoid sureties

26 Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.

"strike hands" (taqa kaph) means "to strike a deal" by shaking hands. It refers to a simple contract where one agrees to back up the promises of a friend with his own assets. Not good! He doesn't know the future, and most of his friends are flakier than almond bear-claws.

Beware of signing any government documents under "penalties of perjury" where the Subcontracting officer does NOT have to do the same. "All men are liars," especially "Guvment" workers (Psalm 116:11).

27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

Surety contracts are emotional, thoughtless, and downright stupid. Lenders rightly want guarantees to back their loan -- a loan involving gold and silver from their own assets. To kick start the brain, Solomon queries the sanguine party, "Why are you risking the necessary comfort of your bed for the unnecessary comfort of flaky people?"

Respect people's property and talents

28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

This command is case law regarding the 8th and 10th Commandment, "Thou shall not steal . . . and, thou shall not covet . . ." Moving property markers is a quick-grab scheme to increase one's own real estate holdings -- a form of robbery. The greatest thief among men is Municipal Contractors who continuously invents ways to increase their holding by stealing the property of the poor. Washington D.C. courts placing liens on private property in one of the 50 states is one of the power-grab schemes.

The government's refusal to protect its borders is a way of rewarding thieves of the commonwealth -- a violation of this property right law.

There is only one purpose of government – see the Declaration of Independence:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--**That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men,** deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed

29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

“mean” (chas’hok) mean refers to one low in status.

Success follows diligence, and success is often rewarded by promotions to government offices. Since the government wants the "best and the brightest," successful men form that pool of competent men from which the State recruits its officers.

"He shall stand before kings; he is fit to be employed in the affairs of the greatest princes" (Matthew Poole).

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 23



♦ The Third Section of Proverbs: this chapter continues the thoughts and literary style of the previous chapter. Note the dominance of the imperative and the expanded nature of each topic.

THE DO NOTS

The adverb "not" is used 199 times in Proverbs to negate an action. God's man is a free man except where God has placed prohibitions. There are Ten "Do Nots" in the Ten Commandments; the other "Do nots" are case law adding depth and clarity to the Ten Laws. Ultimately, there are only two law: (1) love God with all your heart; and, (2) do your neighbor no harm.

A righteous man is a free man with unalienable rights. He is free to do most anything as long as he does not harm others or injure their rights.

Do not be a glutton

Proverbs 23:1 When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee:

This passage continues the last thought from the previous chapter which noted that successful men in the private sector will become candidates for public office. Those that sit with kings are competent business men. But, they are flawed men prone to follow their appetite instead of following their own discernment.

Solomon exhorts the new members of his cabinet to not abuse their new found privilege by overeating at the king's table. Gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins, and kings don't want undisciplined men working for them -- neither does the Lord (1 Corinthians 9:27).

Gluttony is one problem; an undiscerning, thoughtless mind is another. The imperative "consider" means to calculate, analyze, and evaluate why you were invited to the monarch's banquet. The adverb "diligently" intensifies the duty "to consider" why you are there. While at dinner get your mind engaged. Don't just eat, THINK!

Gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins: pride, greed, lust, envy, wrath, sloth, and gluttony.

2 And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.

A little hyperbole by Solomon: If you're fat from the sin of indulgence, apply the remedy: "Cut your throat!" That is, if you really want to be an important man, then take drastic measures to slim down! Run! Starve! Diet! or, simply exercise self-discipline -- a fruit of the Spirit.

A lack of self-control is one matter; a thoughtless eater is quite another. The mindless eater will be devoured and out maneuvered by professional deceivers at the dinner table. Moreover, God dismisses gluttons from his service (1 Corinthians 9:27).

3 Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat.

The king's dinner's table is not laid out because of extraordinary love for you. Don't be deceived, these dainties are not offered out of friendship -- the host has an ulterior motive behind these special parties. He don't give "somethin' for nuttin'." He either feels obligated to repay favors obtained or is using the special dinner as bait to procure future favors -- think "fundraising." You are not special! The host wants something from you . . . thus, the "deceitful meat."

Beware of astroturfing – the practice of hiding ones true intent in promoting a specific piece of legislation; that is, to create a false impression about legislation that in reality is a product of a hidden agenda.

Do not strive to be rich

4 Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.

The word "labor" (yaga) means "to toil" or "to grow weary."

This engaging command provokes thoughtful analysis since the preceding verses teach that successful and wealthy men endear the affections of kings.

Solomon does not discourage labor nor does he promote some kind of advantage in poverty. This text is a warning about being over ambitious, over solicitous, and exceedingly blustering.

Who wants to listen to flattery . . . or to a man who is "full of himself" at the dinner table? But, most men are! If egocentric men didn't talk about themselves, they'd have nothing to talk about. Altruistic men can carry on long conversations without using the pronoun "I." Can you? Narcissists talk about themselves; educated men talk about ideas, law, theology, and ethics. Buzzards talk about the latest news feeding frenzy.

5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

"set thy eye" means "to gaze upon" or be spellbound by the illusion of wealth.

It's O.K. to capture wealth, but its not O.K. to let it capture you.

Money has wings and it flies away like an eagle. Our appointment with death is the day we lose it all. Why spend every waking moment living for something you can't keep? Riches are not ours to own, but ours to use.

6 Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats:

The motives of a host are not always apparent; but, an "evil eye" provides evidence of the host's ulterior motives. This host is a not a benevolent philanthropist but a predator hunting for prey; the meal is bait . . . a loan . . . a favor that you must repay.

7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

A warning about deception and ulterior motives: Don't be deceived by a host's friendly words. Something else is stirring in his heart. This is NOT a friendship meal! "his heart is not with thee" means You are NOT a friend! You are a useful idiot. The hosts smiles, raises a glass for a toast to your health, but he is really after your wealth. "Eat and drink" is a contract offer where future obligations are obscure and unstated.

This is NOT a power verse to justify modern psychology (Western Hinduism) that seeks to go in and in and after that in and in to one's thoughts and feelings. It is a way of saying that man is a unit; that you cannot separate the man (host) from his actions; that his evil eye betrays his actions (a banquet); that though he offers you a meal, his heart is not with you.

8 The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.

Though you do not recognize it, the host's "little morsel" is consideration in a contract. "To vomit up" means His loan will come due, and when it does, there will be hell to pay.

Preachers beware! Parishioners don't take you out to dinner because they love you, but because they want something from you . . . the "lunch" is consideration in a contract that requires a future obligation.

Wake up! Learn about human nature.

Do not talk about important matters with a fool

9 Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

Another warning about not giving your best counsel and knowledge to a fool (sons, family members, and close friends): They will waste it like left over syrup on pancakes. Never offer advice to a fool . . . to a person who does not ask for it . . . to a person who does not know you or respect you.

What is about human nature that drives men to advise others . . . to tell others what to do? Zip it!

It is a mistake to think of fools as street people without a job. Many fools are employed as reporters in the main stream media, as professors in universities, and as professional attorneys.

Beware of giving any information to a police officer: "What you say can and will be used against you!" – Miranda v. Arizona (1966).

Do not trespass on the rights of others

10 Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:

Another warning about respecting private property and not trespassing on the rights of the vulnerable: respect borders and property rights.

11 For their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.

The "redeemer" is probably a "kinsmen redeemer" who will take up their cause and beat you with a stick -- "a mighty Deliverer (Exodus 6:6). who will redress their wrongs" (Ellicott).

12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.

In juxtaposition to pursuing the illusive dream of wealth, Solomon exhorts his readers to pursue knowledge and instruction from God's Word -- His law, theology, morals and ethics, science, mathematics, and knowledge of the gospel: "The Lord reigns" (Psalm 97:1).

Do not be a permissive parent

13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Solomon's lessons on parenting: be a disciplined parent, and correct your child so they don't become a drunkard and a glutton -- a narcissistic person who does not respect the rights of others.

A warning against misplaced pity: compassion is both a human strength and a human weakness. In this case, failure to apply the rod toward a stubborn child is pity gone astray (See the prohibitions on misplaced pity in:16, 13:9, 19:21; 25:12).

The problem here is not delinquent children, but delinquent parents. Delinquent parents produce delinquent children. The permissive parent is a cruel parent that covers hatred with the tensile of fake love. Solomon orders Bible parents to love their children and to apply the rod so that sin does not

become a bad habit. Spaking hurt, but the child is not going to die. And, the spanking may deliver their soul from hell.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

The "beating" here is not slugging, knuckling a child, or physical abuse, but measured, constructive discipline -- a painful discipline that motivates the child to let go of their chocolate sins.

The preferred discipline is not "grounding" which is a cruel long term strategy of permissive parents. The rod is quick, short and more effective discipline than robbing a child of freedom for two weeks. It is not the only discipline in the home, but it must be a tool in the arsenal of righteous, caring parents.

15 My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.

Obedient and discerning sons are a joy to fathers.

Something is desperately wrong in the family if a child does not want to please their parents. Something is gravely wrong with a son who despises his Christian mom and dad.

God has not called sons to judge their parents, but to honor them. If you think they need correcting, pray for them and then get about the business of respecting and honoring them. If they need correcting, God has the power and means to do it.

16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

Notice the double metaphor for happiness: heart (15) & reins (16) -- the seat of one's deepest affections. The teacher rejoices over students who love learning, and even more when they can repeat what they learned. *Learn and repeat* is a proven method for learning. Read it! Say it! Remember it!

Do not be envious

17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.

Solomon observed that crabgrass can take over gardens unless plucked up by the root. "Let not . . . envy" is a Piel command to resist -- a command that takes intense energy.

Envy begins with inflammation of the wish bone. When you see yourself turning green with envy, you know you are ripe for trouble. Turn green with envy in this life, and you'll turn grey in the grave. The only person worth envying in this world is the one who doesn't envy.

The remedy for envy is to breathe in the Spirit - "the fear of the LORD" . . . to "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

18 For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

The one who fights envy will not be disappointed. At the end of his fight against sin will be peace.

"An end, which shall be peace (Psalm 37:37). corresponding to the 'manifestation of the sons of God '(Romans 8:19). when we shall be 'like' God (1 John 3:2)" - (Ellicott).

"an end—or, 'hereafter,' another time, when apparent inequalities shall be adjusted (compare Psalm 37:28-38)" (J-F-B).

19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

Another admonishment by a loving father to his son: "Hear" (shema); i.e., put your ears on. Hear, learn, repeat.

The word "guide" (ashar) is a Piel verb -- a powerful, intense command.

"Guide thine heart" prescribes **the necessity self-government** - which is the entire purpose of the Book of Proverbs.

Responsible self-government leads to freedom.

Be free; don't be captured by envy, anger, lusts, desire, or by strange women and other deceivers.

"Freedom" is big in America, but there is no freedom without responsible self-government: the immoral are enslaved to their passions, and feminists are set on fire by envy. It is not possible for a man to do everything he wants to do, but he can do what God wants him to do.

"*Do your duty* in all things, like *the* old Puritan. You cannot *do more*; you should never wish to *do less*" (General Robert E. Lee to his son).

Do not be a drunkard

20 Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:

"winebibbers" refers to drunkards; "eaters of the flesh" refers to gluttons. Better to be with sober pagans than with gluttonous "Baptists."

"Be not" is a command. Avoid people with these outstanding weaknesses. They are nice people until they don't get what they want! Then, nice turns into vice!

More people have drowned in liquor than in the deep blue sea.

"Drunkenness is a flattering devil, a sweet poison, a pleasant sin" (Augustine).

"Heads you win, cocktails, you lose."

Gluttony kills more people than war. Everyone wants a free donut, a glutton wants two.

21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

Solomon observed the relationship between drunkards, gluttony, poverty, and sleep.

"All the crimes on earth do not destroy so many of the human race, nor alienate so much property, as drunkenness" (Francis Bacon).

One of the greatest fathers in the Bible observed that all the troubles in Israel were committed by youth in the city whose families owned vineyards. His order for his sons to live in tents and never drink wine stunned Jeremiah . . . but, God gave the family a special blessing: " 'Jehonadab son of Rekab will never fail to have a descendant to serve me'" (Jeremiah 35).

Do not despise your mother or sell your Father's birthright

22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

Solomon identifies the **great** sins of children: (1) the failure to listen to their fathers when young; and (2) contempt for their widowed mothers when they are older.

23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Some things are collectors' items: truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding are four of them. Virtues are collector items that are not for sale!

"Buy the truth; purchase it upon any terms, spare no pains nor cost to get it" (Matthew-Poole).

You can't chase two rabbits. If you do, you will lose both. But, if you chase truth, you will find it . . . and, it will save you.

Pay NO "attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth" (Titus 1:14).

Hearsay, even from friends, does not equate to Bible truth.

If we don't search for the truth, we will be trapped in the lies of this age.

Stand for truth, or you will sit at the feet of presumption.

Lies in science and politics abound, but truth will prevail.

God is true; His Word is truth; and, His Son is the precious truth (John 14:6). Buy this truth with faith, and you'll be among the richest men in the world.

24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

Righteous sons? What a rare breed on earth!

The father rejoices, not because the son is rich, but because he is righteous - a young man who submits to the law of God and who has developed self-government, self-restraint, and self-control.

By "righteous" Solomon is not referring to soft boys that eat Fruit Loops for breakfast, but to manly sons that eat Iron-man Wheaties, "Fuel for Champions."

25 Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

Solomon repeats the wonderful effects of righteous sons upon responsible parents. Repetition is the Hebrew way of inserting an exclamation point!!

♥ Fathers, ask for your son's heart ♥

26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

What a tender, gentle request by a lion king! Can you feel the satin sheets in this father's heart? Solomon has taken off his tough regal robes to bare his soul. He crawled to the edge of a high cliff on his bare knees to reach out and to save his son. See Solomon at his transforming best . . . in his strongest roll as a father . . . fully exposed . . . unprotected . . . susceptible to rejection . . . vulnerable to be crushed like a little sparrow in the hands of a cruelty - "Please son, give me your heart."

The only thing this father wanted from his son was his heart - "without any reluctance or delay; "and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Benson). Likewise, the only thing a man can give to God is his heart.

What a tender man! There is no greater plea a father can make to a son. Solomon did not ask this young prince to "listen up" **but to give him his heart**. It is good to have the son's mind . . . ears . . . and attention, but this father wanted his son's heart . . . his full trust. A heart in the palms of a loving father will ALWAYS be protected . . . ALWAYS BE SAFE . . . and ALWAYS BE BETTER OFF than one trusting in his own wisdom (3:7; 28:26).

All fathers want their son's trust. Solomon humbled himself, took the risk, and asked for his son's total, and complete trust. Did he get it or was he crushed?

The "heart" is mentioned 81 times in Proverbs.

The one treasure Christian fathers covet the most, and the one treasure they seldom receive is their son's heart. What is it about sons that are "wise in their own eyes" (3:7; 12:15) and will not trust their godly fathers?

What is it about fathers that want their son's ears, but don't know how to emotionally humble themselves and ask for their son's heart . . . for their total and complete trust?

Do not fornicate and do not get drunk

27 For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.

Having asked for his son's heart, this father returns to a major theme in the Book. Knowing that his teenage son is going to be tempted by the seductress, he warns him of this spooky beauty again.

"ditch" and "pit" refer to a deep gulley and a deep well -- a metaphor that stirs the imagination.

The word "strange" refers to a "bedroom bimbo" who is a stranger to the law, to the covenant, and to the gospel. These objects of lust have more sugar than a chocolate factory; more moves than a Super Bowl shuffle, more sins than the tawdriest season in television history; more jingles than Christmas bells; more perfume than a dead skunk; more maggots than a dead carcass; more foul air than mule's breath . . . you get the point.

28 She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.

These scarlet women are lionesses, stalkers, trackers, Nimrods, killers, pit bulls, and hunters of men's souls . . . streetwalkers luring moronic men to the gates of hell.

The word "transgressors" (bagad) can mean "cross the line" into sin; it also means "treachery" -- betrayals of trust by deception and trickery; that is, these honey traps lure their victims with moonlight and honey, then sink their fangs into their prey leaving them paralyzed with guilt and laboring to breathe.

Do not be addicted to alcohol

The second temptation young men face is booze and addiction to alcohol.

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

Solomon runs down the list of self-inflicted sorrows caused by drinking too much wine: setbacks and misfortune, grief and anxiety, strife and discord, impudence and insolence, injury and harm to the body, incoherence and inflammation of the eyes.

"A drunkard is the annoyance of modesty; the trouble of civility; the spoil of wealth; the distraction of reason. He is the brewer's agent; the tavern and ale house benefactor; the beggar's companion; the constable's trouble; his wife's woe; his children's sorrow; his neighbor's scoff; his own shame. In short he is a tub of swill, a spirit of unrest, a thing below a beast, and a monster of a man." (Thomas Adam).

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

What is the source of slurred speech, an unruly tongue, and all this obnoxious behavior? Answer: Those "long at wine" and those that add spices (drugs) to their vodka.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

In Biblical times water was not safe to drink. People added wine to water to kill parasites. Few drank straight red, hedonistic, velvety wine. Solomon, therefore, warns about drinking wine for any other reason than health.

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

Sparkling red, rose wine may look harmless, but it bites like a snake and kills like a rattler.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

Drunks lose their inhibitions, discernment, and discrimination chasing after barroom maids as if they are a warm dinner roll to gobble down.

"perverse things:" The inebriated are known for using careless and reckless words that make hell blush -- for using toilet brush words that smell like stink on a skunk.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

Is there anything more frightening than to be abandoned like a man overboard at sea, or climbing to the top of a mast on a clipper ship? Few men are more vulnerable than a miserable drunk.

35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

This blitzed man is not only asleep when he is drunk, but when he is awake. Because the boozier feels no blows, no guilt, and no shame, he lines up for another beating at the bar . . . until he dies of alcohol poisoning.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 24

THE WAY OF KINGS



Morally Strong

Proverbs 24:1 Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

◆ Solomon warns his son about envying the prosperity of the wicked.

As one begins his Christian walk, takes up his cross, and follows Christ he dies to self and all its wants.

During this early course on piety, one is tempted to envy world-wise men with fast cars, fast women.

This text instructs the pious to separate from hedonists and to avoid their company.

“Bad company corrupts good manners” says Paul (1 Corinthians 15:33).

2 For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.

"destruction" (shod) means "violence," and is translated "robbery" in Proverbs 21:7; and, the word "mischief" (amal) means "trouble."

Very few of one's peers start with nothing and get "everything" honestly.

Solomon observed that the super-rich of his time became wealthy by oppression and fraud. Their conversations are not about how to please God and walk with Him, but how to make shekels.

3 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:

In contrast to the crook who builds his house on the sand are the steady, patient, pious men who build their house on the rock . . . by honesty and hard work. There is no advantage in making a living by oppressing others. The "deals" between good men are a win-win for both parties.

4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

By employing honest business principles, a man can provide all that his family needs . . . as long as it is not furtively stolen by government.

Likewise, true riches involve the fear of the LORD and the wonders of the cross (1:13; 3:10; 22:18; Colossians 2:14).

5 A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.

The envious along with swindlers are weak, pathetic men. But, those who listen to the Word of God are strong (Psalm 29:1) being equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

6 For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Kings not only have personal battles against depravity, they fight the nation's battles and defend their own people. Discerning men are strong, but no man is as strong as the collective ambitions of wicked adversaries. A sensible man surrounds himself with mentors and counselors during every season of life.

7 Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.

"Wisdom" (chokmowth) is plural meaning "wisdoms." True knowledge grounded in the character of God is out of reach for a fool not only because his arms are too short, but because his hands cling to earthly objects.

8 He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person.

The word "mischievous" (mizzimmah) refers to devious devices, plans, and evil schemes to deprive neighbors of their property condemned by the 8th and 10th Commandment.

9 The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.

Not only is foolishness sin, the thoughts of fools is sin. Not only do righteous men berate the depravity of scorners, God condemns their contempt and orders sanctions against them.

10 If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

Strife, envy, and other eruptions of sinful passions from the volcano of the Adamic nature weary the mind, but strong men cap the fissure by saying "No!" (1:10).

If you are impatient and unable to endure the heat of conflict, your strength in Christ is small -- teeny weeny small; that is, you are not a mature, grown-up Christian who has truly taken up his cross to follow Christ.

11 If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain;

Tolerance of sin and cowardliness to confront government transgressors plundering men's property and destroying their life is the outward sign of ignorance of the Bible, ignorance of law and the visible expression of gutlessness.

12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

Cowards spit out flim-flam excuses like dromedary camels for not engaging efforts to rescue innocent people falsely accused and trapped in a corrupt judicial process by monsters pretending to be judges. "I didn't know" is not an excuse.

"Physical courage seems quite common, but moral courage seems quite rare" (Mark Twain).

Know that God despises cowards and that they are first sinners listed on the roster of those in hell (Revelation 21:8).

Enjoys simple things

13 My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste:

Every king was required to pen his own personal copy of the Torah (Deuteronomy 17:18).

This is not a dietary order from Solomon to his son. This is a metaphor urging all men to give their hearts and minds to God's Word -- food for the soul and the honey of a godly man's life.

14 So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

Reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word not only has it rewards, but sustains the hope of the saints.

Harmless

15 Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place:

This is the Solomon's message to the wicked . . . to the lawbreakers under his jurisdiction. Do not harm your neighbor or injure his rights to property or you'll face the king's justice.

16 For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

From the king's point of view "mischief" would mean "trouble with the law." To the common reader "mischief" would refer to bad things that happen to bad people.

"falleth seven times" is Solomon's way of describing God's protection of his lambs.

To the Christian mind, "falleth" refers to moral failures -- a fact all believers experience on their journey to the Celestial City. The wicked fall into sin and wallow in it; when Christians fall into sin, they admit it, get out of the muck, clean themselves off, and get back on the straight and narrow path.

Shun misplaced joy**17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:**

Solomon warns men not to plot against the righteous . . . but, they do. And, when they do, there is something gratifying about seeing an opponent fail, but this pleasure feeds evil in the heart. Our Lord requires love even in the Old Testament lest we be eaten up with desire for vengeance.

18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

God works calamity upon the wicked. It must be done; but, God has no joy in afflicting these people with hardships. Neither should Christ followers. Rejoicing in an enemy's misfortunes is a work of the flesh and not a work of the Spirit.

Unfrustrated**19 Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;**

Solomon expands the term "envy" to include all the evil passions of the wicked.

Solomon passes on the instruction that his father, King David, gave to him in Psalm 37:1 -- "Fret not thyself because of evil doers . . ."

Fretting about the progress of the wicked is a common, but unique condition of godly men.

The word "fret" (*charah*) is translated by the word "hot" ten times; "angry" nine times; "fret" four times; and "burn" once in Scripture. The word "fret" is the same word used in Genesis 4:5: "And Cain was very *wroth*, and his

countenance fell.” The word “wroth” is our word “fret” in Psalm 37:1. “Fret” is a Hithpael verb (reflexive, future) which means the one fretting is causing himself to suffer emotional strain by burning with anger.

The one given to worry injures himself.

20 For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

Solomon repeats the lesson of Psalm 37:28 to his son that he learned from his father. This prince in training could act to dispense justice, but he was not allowed to fret about it.

Righteous people are concerned about the spread of evil in their lifetime. Christians are trained by the media to do something . . . anything: listen, learn, vote, write, protest, jump up and down and scream, etc.

Believers know they should not fret, but they do. They fret because they cannot rest on God's promises; that is, they have not found the grounds on which to live a fret-free life.

You can stop fretting by growing in the following truths about the God of the Bible:

First, know that it is God's job to judge the wicked; that is, to shift the husks from the corn, the goats from the sheep, the tares from the wheat, and the wicked from among the righteous. We have a duty to remove the leaven from our own lives, but we have **NO duty or power** to remove malice and evil in society.

Second, know that God has promised to judge the wicked.

2 For the *wicked* shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. . . . 9 For evildoers shall be cut off . . . 14 . . .

Third, know that God is removing the wicked from society NOW!

Psalm 37:28 For the LORD loveth judgment (mishpat). and forsaketh (leaveth) not his saints; they are preserved (guarded) for ever: **but the seed (zera) of the wicked (rasha) shall be cut off.**

"seed of the wicked" refers to their babies, children, and offspring.

The wicked refers to people who have chosen lawlessness as a lifestyle; people that have no qualms about committing evil.

Fourth, know that God uses the wicked to cut off the seed of the wicked.

Fear of the LORD

21 My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change:

God's laws are fixed; the rotations of the sun, moon, and stars are fixed. Therefore, the morals of Christians should be fixed; that is, don't hang around arbitrary people in a state of moral flux -- that is, chimerical friends who have no root in God's Word -- professors intoxicated by the latest intellectual fad stirring society.

22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?

This is Solomon's way of saying don't fly your kite in a wind storm. It's gonna get ripped to pieces.

THE ALSO ARE SAYINGS OF THE WISE: SECTION FOUR (24:23-24)

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23 These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

The possession of Christians is the fear of the Lord and the rock-foundation on which they build their house.

The wicked build their houses on sand -- the shifting, changing fantasies of quixotic philosophers in every age poking their smiling faces out from behind the Poisonous Tree.

24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:

Cursed be the man that calls good evil and evil good; that call men females, and females men (Isaiah 5:20). Those opening this tomb will find King Tut and die under a mummy's curse.

25 But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.

What a joy it is to provide a true, witty answer to tyranny-loving appeasers and antichrist-embracing lunatics with twisted minds and sprained hearts.

26 Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.

This is Solomon's way of saying every good pun is its own reward; that witty answers are pun-nishments for the arrogant. After all, witty answers are a pundle of joy.

Resolute

27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.

Theodore Roosevelt described “good” this way:

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly. Who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions. Who spends himself in a worthy cause. Who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly so that his place will never be with those timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

A workman is worthy of his hire (Exodus 20:15; Leviticus 19:13; Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7; II Timothy 2:6).

Legal maxim: “It is against equity for freemen not to have the free disposal of their own property.”

Reasonable and truthful

28 Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips.

This is Solomon’s warning against slandering one’s neighbor. What is true does not always need to be known. Share only what people need to know and avoid sharing more information than people have the capacity to handle.

This is also an admonition to tell the truth even when it hurts . . . and to withhold truth from those that abuse the truth.

It took courage for Abraham to lie to Pharaoh about Sarah being his wife and for the midwives to lie to Pharaoh about Jewish mothers giving birth to their sons . . . and, God approved of both. It takes moral courage to lie to those who abuse truth, and it takes courage to tell the truth when lying would provide temporary relief.

The Christian is under obligation to tell the truth where normal communication exists. But God does not require the truth where policemen and judges abuse the truth -- where telling the truth is participation in the crime. No man has a right to know all private truth, and Christians are permitted to withhold truth when corrupt official would use that truth to expedite evil. Scripture warrants concealment of truth from those who have no claim up on it (R. J. Rushdoony).

29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.

This text lays the groundwork for the New Testament teaching of "not returning evil for evil" (Romans 12:17-21) -- very different from the spirit of Leviticus 24:19-20 and the just but harsh rules of the common law.

MARKS OF A SLOTHFUL MAN

30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

This instruction warns us about sowing the tares of evil habits that crop up like weeds in the garden of the soul.

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

Thorn and nettle represent the bad-habits of sloth sown in the garden of the soul; and, broken down walls represent more evidence of laziness. Moreover, the New Testament calls these "weeds" "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16ff) that grow up in the heart of the careless and reckless.

32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.

Solomon's statements are not opinion or hearsay, but facts drawn from his personal experience.

33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

When Solomon looked at the ripe fields of the righteous, he saw a sweating man working hard into the evening surrounded by head-high corn, but as he looked at deteriorated fields with only a few heads of barley, he saw what looked like a Jew sleeping under a tree.

34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

Work hard and reap; sleep much, and suffer want -- deprivation as if a robber stole all of the man's assets.

There are only two choices in life: Sweat and reap, or starve by sleep; pull the plow and profit, or rest in bed and weep; gain by pain, or poverty by vagrancy.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 25

OTHER PROVERBS OF SOLOMON: SECTION FIVE (25-29)

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◆ This chapter begins the third division of the Book that mainly contains PARABOLIC PROVERBS (25-29) -- matters that relate to kings . . . judges . . . and law.

The topics in this section have to do with claims, disputes in court, and matters before kings . . . and to a lesser extent to the common man and his conflicts in the market place.

The principles should also be applied to America's Subcontractors working for the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia and State Subcontractors working for their Employer-citizens.

The reader would do well to understand the limited powers granted to these Subcontractors and the necessity that they limit their actions to the restrictive phrases of the original contract. If we were to accept the Government's arguments, we are hard pressed to posit any activity by an individual that Congress is without power to regulate.

Pastors would do well to sit down, sip tea, and consider carefully this wisdom from God's king-shepherds.

HEZEKIAH'S COLLECTION OF SOLOMON'S PROVERBS

Proverbs 25:1 These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.

These proverbs appear to be sacred memorials copied and collected by Hezekiah's scribes in an effort to preserve a kingly copy of Solomon's wisdom.

2 It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

A Christian who believes in God has the duty to explain the hiddenness of God.

Kings are not gods with the trait of omniscience, but they are triers of fact . . . of claims . . . and administrators of law. This line explains how God ordered things in such a way that sinful man may not operate by presumption . . . that his duty is to find proof of claim with strict proof of claim . . . to be men who form reasonable beliefs based on observable evidence of facts . . . not 100% facts beyond all doubt . . . but evidence beyond reasonable doubt.

3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable.

No man upon earth including NASA can accurately discover the height of heaven, or the depth of earth, nor discern what is contained in them. Kings search out matters before their throne, but their inward thoughts, ambitions, and purposes are hard to discover.

4 Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.

One of the duties of Levantine kings was to hear cases and reach a just and fair decision. But, the king had to sort through a lot of frivolous flim-flam in order to detect the truth in a controversy. But, cross-examination skims the dross off the silver so the judge can see the nucleus of truth in a matter before the throne.

5 Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.

It is the nature of politics that ambitious pagan men covet power. Not knowing the true God, they seek security and safety resident in god-government.

The duties of a king / prime ministers require counsel from competent advisors. Because wicked advisors give bad advice, and good advisors give good advice, how do you tell who is good and who is bad? Clever, unscrupulous men seem to rise to power. Thus, the dilemma of kings! Nevertheless, the principle stands, get rid of the riff-raff around the king, and his policies will bless the nation.

6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men:

This proverb is about being who you are and not trying to be who you are not -- a warning against idiots promoting themselves as a sage -- against ambitious politicians who pretend to be an expert on law, foreign policy, anthropology, theology, economics, medicine, agriculture, architecture, engineering, and market trends.

This proverb is a polite way of saying *don't wiggle your way into a room where elephants bump shoulders*.

7 For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

It is better for the king to observe your competence and invite you to into his presence than to push your way to the front of the line like some kind of teen-age scream fan.

8 Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

"strive" refers to serious matters -- concerns that must be disputed in court. Hezekiah is thinking of criminal actions not about getting your feeling hurt.

In your pride, don't be hasty to file a complaint in court only to have the defendant prove you wrong by his affidavit-facts grounded on fundamental law.

9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another:

By "cause" Solomon refers to "probable cause" and grounds for relief.

A "secret" is an alleged fact . . . an alleged violation of God's law . . . a wrongdoing that needs to be corrected.

This rule forms the grounds of what Jesus said in Matthew 5:23ff about doing all you can to reconcile and settle a dispute with your neighbor outside of court; that is, take the conflict up with your neighbor and work through a resolution with him alone. Don't be a malicious gossip . . . a lesson all churchman need to learn, practice, and teach.

10 Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.

Badmouth a neighbor behind his back and he'll slap you in the face; that is, gossip, whispering, slandering, and accusing a man to others before you confront him personally with his alleged offence, forms the grounds of treason -- an accusation for which there is no defense.

11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

The reasonable party in a dispute delivers a calm, acceptable presentation of the facts and the law before a magistrate -- a fool just blows his top and shouts saucy language at the judge. Thus, an answer fitly spoken in court or out of court is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

12 As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.

Conflict is part of life. All men must learn how to handle quarrels and altercations at the office and at church.

Disagreement on civil matters involving trespasses on personal rights needs to be handled outside of court -- where possible. A wise plaintiff chooses the right words and tones to advance his cause and to provide a reasonable remedy regarding the violation. A wise defendant will listen CAREFULLY to the accuser and do all he can to make the plaintiff whole -- and then some. This unique, positive response to a thoughtful rebuke is a golden treasure few find in the course of life

13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

Sometimes disputes need to be managed by a mediator -- a faithful arbitrator will manage the concerns of the grantor with integrity and skill -- the achievement of this trust by the messenger on behalf of the grantor is like the refreshment of cold snow during the hot, sweaty season of harvest time . . . like a glass of cold water during the dog days of summer.

14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

Those who jaw loudly and provide nothing; who jabber attic and live cellar; talk sweet but deliver sour; and, who promise heaven but bring hell are compared to clouds without rain during the planting season.

Want to be unique? Be a man that keeps your promises.

15 By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

Solomon and Hezekiah had to listen to their share of screaming rants. The kings are telling us that sweet pleadings in soft tones moved them to the bones . . . that the masters of the gentle rebuke obtained their motion for relief. "A spoonful of sugar to make the medicine go dow-wown . . . go dow-wown."

Emotional control is the first requisite in a prayer for relief.

No man responds well when an adversary is yelling at the top of his lungs in his face. Be firm, but reasonable; be direct, but mannerly; be sweet, but not syrupy.

16 Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

A little bit of honey goes a long way in turning the king's heart, but fawning, sugar-blasted, taffy-flattery turned the king's stomach. Be pleasant, but not bootlicking sweet.

17 Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.

Solomon and Hezekiah both observed an overabundance of complaints that arose because of people who made themselves a nuisance to their neighbors by unseasonable visits. Uninvited, unexpected guests can irritate the hair off your neck. Don't be a pest!

18 A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.

"maul" is a hammer -- a metaphor meaning to scatter, divide, or create division among neighbors.

These judge-kings noticed that liars and perjurers were the reason for so many civil disputes and strife in the community; that there defaming tongues were hammers and swords that beat men to the ground and sliced people to pieces.

19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

Healthy teeth are necessary to chew food, and healthy feet are necessary to walk.

How many times did Solomon and Hezekiah see parties bring witnesses to court that fizzled in their testimony because of fear and lack of backbone? He compares these spineless witnesses to broken teeth and sprained ankles that hurt like the blazes.

20 As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.

"nitre" is some kind of mineral water that creates a fizz or saltpeter (potassium nitrate) which explodes -- the ingredients of gunpowder.

"taketh away a garment" refers to the sin of detinue -- a tort of wrongfully holding goods that belong to someone else -- a person or thing detained. DETINUE is an action in law in which a person seeks to get back property of his which is unlawfully held or DETAINED by another.

A witness that cowers and fails to tell the truth is like a donning debt collector that takes your only coat as surety on a cold night, and like an inebriated minstrel that sings mambo to boogaloo, cha cha to salsa, and bachata rhythms to a farmer who has just lost his crops to a tornado.

People who are dedicated to "think positive" ontologies are miserable comforters. Rejoice with the cheerful, learn to weep with those that cry.

21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

Circumstances dictate the proper response. If a man is hungry, feed him; thirsty, give him water. If your court adversary is bound by necessity, bend your soul and do what you can to bring him to rest. You will touch him so sensibly that he may drop his lawsuit; better yet, he may become your friend.

22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

"heaping coals of fire upon his head" refers to the eastern custom of sharing hot coals with a neighbor who's fire had extinguished. The burning coal was carried in a clay pot on top of the head – an act of kindness to the Hebrews.

Be kind to the opposing party and you'll reap the benefits of grace.

23 The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.

Public sins must be confronted. An angry countenance with a bowed head and bent eye brows is sufficient to drive anger out of the courtroom; that is, an angry look by a judge will put a stop to a slanderous tongue . . . likewise in the market place.

Likewise giving people the eye of a mongoose will stop gossip.

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

24 It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.

More hyperbole by Solomon: No one can live with a hot-headed, Irish woman whose tongue is set on fire by hell (James 3). It would be better to sleep on the roof alone and be at peace than have to defend yourself against a red-headed woman boiling with anger.

Another lesson on the difficulty of living with a potty-mouth, hot-headed woman! Strangely, pastors never have women asking them for help because they are a brawling women; that is, brawling women do not see bullet-driven criticism of husbands as a problem in their home. To these scratching wild cats the problem is the man, not them!

25 As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

A letter announcing good news from one you love is like a drink of ice-water on a hot July day. Share good news broadly, but keep bad news under your cuff.

26 A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.

How it must have grieved Solomon and Hezekiah to see righteous litigators cowering before a powerful men out of fear. Oh, how fear chokes a man and makes him grovel in the dust before the wicked. Stand up! Speak up! Toughen up! Don't be a tower of tapioca! Be as mean as an anvil . . . in a nice Christian way, of course.

"Crouch down and lick *the* hands which feed you. *May your chains set lightly upon you*, and *may* posterity forget that ye were our countrymen." — Samuel Adams.

27 It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

A difficult text for sure: This may mean that searching out the truth is honor for the man; but, seeking comfort in the caverns of one's own soul when it is time to stand up and speak up is a shirker-weakness that needs to be overcome by men uncomfortable with courtroom defenses.

"Industriously to seek for honour and applause from men; is not glory — Is not only sinful, but shameful also, and a sign of a vain and mean spirit" (Bensen)

"to search into weighty matters is itself a weight, i. e., people soon become satiated with it as with honey. Possibly a warning against an over-curious searching into the mysteries of God's word or works." (Barnes)

28 He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

How many times have we seen a hot-head pounding his fists and spittin' fire? Such a man is a slave to anyone who pushes his buttons; that is, he is easily captured by sins; easily beaten in a contest; easily defeated in a battle of wits; easily conquered as an unwalled city.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 26

FOOLS, SLUGGARDS, AND GOSSIPS



♥ The following chapters are a collection of Solomon's proverbs culled and preserved by Hezekiah and should be viewed through the mind of a king; that is, they apply to men interacting with kings and judges.

The category of "fool" occurs 10 times in this chapter. The label " sluggard" or "slothful" is employed 17 times in Proverbs and 5 times in this chapter.

Solomon's wisdom comes wrapped in powerful, visual metaphors. Spoon through the crust and you'll get to the pie of truth.

Observations about the Fool

Proverbs 26:1 As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.

We associate snow with winter time and rain for the growing season. Snow in the summertime and rain during the harvest frustrates the work of farmers. As old snow turn into water, compliments for a fool turn into impediments. Likewise, reason concludes honor unsuitable for a fool. A normal society rewards doers and punishes sluggards, but a perverted society rewards fools and punishes producers.

2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

God hears many kinds of prayers -- the cries for blessings and the cries for justice. He honors both. Petitions for judgment (curses) not grounded on probable cause are void *ab initio* or DOA -- dead on arrival. Unjustified, unwarranted, and undeserved petitions for revenge are like flying birds that have no place to land. Suits filed in court without probable cause are void.

Let the wicked beware: God hears writs of grievances and prayers for abatement from those who have been defrauded by the rich and powerful, but prayers for vengeance lacking probable cause are void (James 5).

"He that is cursed without cause, the curse shall do him no more harm than the bird that flies over his head" - Matthew Henry.

3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back.

Both Solomon and Hezekiah issued orders for fools to be punished by flogging to improve the man and society.

Every creature must be dealt with according to its nature, and careless and reckless sinners are not easily corrected by reason and persuasion. As bits and whips are made for horses and donkeys, rods are fitting tools to be employed against stubborn and rebellious men.

The word "fools" (Keycil'em) is a masculine plural and does not include women.

A just public flogging is a far superior punishment than the inhumane sentence of extended jail time.

4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

Neither Solomon nor Hezekiah would lower themselves to the level of answering a fool's rantings and ravings. Rebuttals are fitting for vigorous, reasonable disputes, but there is no way to reason with a unruly, cantankerous cockadoodledoo rooster. Don't waste your time trying to correct fools and reprobates . . . or trying to teach roosters how to be quiet.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

Answer a fool sharply and decisively, but do not prolong your discourse. Answer a fool with a quick kick in the hind quarters, figuratively speaking, lest the donkey of a man take pride and comfort in his braying and bellowing. How many men were cited for contempt of court by the kings of Israel?

Example: (1) "Remember when I asked for your opinion? Me neither." (2) "Do you ever shut up and listen?" (3) "Do you ever get tired of tootin' your horn . . . because I'm tired of listen' to it."

6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage.

If you have urgent business that needs to be done, don't send a fool to do it. Ordering a lazy and worthless son to get a job done will backfire in your face. High expectations of the incompetent will fizzle like a balloon. Give important jobs to men of integrity and rest. The job will get done right and on time.

"Well done is better than well said." – Benjamin Franklin

“The reward of a thing well done is having done it.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

7 The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

As a lame man can't use his crippled legs to climb a set of stairs, it is useless to share a witty saying or moral story with a fool. As a lame man can't make use of his legs, fools don't know how to make use of anecdotes or figures of speech. Insane people don't laugh because they can't distinguish between reality and unreality.

8 As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool.

As stones in a sling are hurled in the air and seen no more, so are wordplays of wisdom in the mind of fools.

9 As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

As drunkards don't feel the pain of being pricked by thorns, fools cannot respond correctly to witicism.

10 The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.

The name of "Elohim" is not in the text. Translators interpreted the word "great" as a reference to God, but it could apply to a great person; that is, there are poor fools and rich fools . . . and big fools reward fools and transgressors.

The Creator of all things governs his creation carefully and wisely; i.e., He dispenses rewards and punishments to the righteous and to the wicked according to their desserts; that He imparts good and evil into the lives of the honorable and dishonorable as He deems appropriate . . . to fit His purpose. Nothing is by accident, and "all things are working together for good to those who love God . . ." (Romans 8:28)

11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

The imagery of a vomiting dog fits the actions of a fool. As a dog returns to his vomit, so fools return to their long term habits of sin. Holy men depart from sin as fast as their sandals will slap.

In relation to Solomon's court, how many fools were repeat offenders?

Because they did something foolish, the word "fool" is applied toward the following persons in Old Testament: Nabal (1 Samuel 25:25), Saul (1 Samuel 26:21), Abner (2 Samuel 3:33), Ammon (2 Samuel 13:13), and outcasts / cavemen (Job 38:8).

Observations about the Arrogant

12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

Is there anything worse than a fool? Yes, there is! A proud man! What a tragedy to have a fool up one sleeve! Who can describe the double tragedy of being an arrogant, braying jackass of a man arguing a lost cause before a judge?

Fools have nugget size brains and bucket-size mouths. There is more hope for a fool with an IQ similar to his shoe size than for a conceited man who is all mouth and no brain.

The Spirit of Christ dwells in the hearts of the faithful, but the big "I" fills the minds of the narcissist.

The best thing about arrogant people is they don't go around talkin' about others.

Observations about the Sluggard

13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.

Oh, the excuses Solomon and Hezekiah had to endure listening to cases.

Lazy people exaggerate dangers. Because a sluggard discovers a roaring lion on his front doorstep after he wakes up, he goes back to sleep. To the slothful man every working hour has its dangers -- dangers that must be avoided by going back to bed.

14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.

Another great analogy by Solomon! As easily as a door swings on its hinges, so does the slothful turn upon his bed. The slothful are easily identified by a little sleep, a little folding of the hands, and lots of snugglin' up to their warm blankies. A bee that makes honey doesn't hang around the hive. It's out among the flowers gathering nectar.

15 The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.

More witty sarcasm by Solomon: Sluggards are so lazy they won't take their hands out of their pocket to climb up a ladder . . . so lazy they won't lick the cream off their face in a pie throwing contest . . . so lazy they stick their nose out the window to let the wind blow it . . . so lazy they wear their pajamas 24 hours a day.

16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

Solomon links laziness to pride. The proud have an opinion on everything. Their mouths are always open because they are right on everything. *They are all spurs and no horse; all hat and no saddle.* Though he has never read the Holy Scriptures, he knows more about the Bible than seven pastors . . . more about politics than seven ambassadors . . . more about health than seven doctors.

Observations about the Gossip

17 He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

Another great analogy by Solomon: Some people are professional butt heads because they butt into every conversation . . . every dispute . . . and every debate. You are gonna get clobbered if you stand between two red-headed Irish women arguing about what's for supper. Stay out of church disputes and keep your expert opinions to yourself. Mind your own business. Churn your own butter, and let others sweat whipping their own cream.

18 As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death,

Madmen are a class of men that appeared in Solomon's court. Political whackos are like archers shooting incendiaries to torch their enemies; that is, legal disputes, internal conflicts, and international wars are started by maniacs . . . psychopaths . . . nut-bags . . . lunatics . . . and dingbats in positions of power.

19 So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?

Ever heard this in court? Real enemies raze their foes (spouses) with vicious cut downs and then run for cover saying, "I was only joking!" Can you say "liar, liar pants on fire?"

Jesters must be confronted and stripped naked so all can see what they really are slanderers, carpers, and criticizers hiding under a cloak of comedy. They must be flogged. Don't tolerate it! Don't laugh! Expose it!

"He that sins in jest, must repent in earnest, or his sin will be his ruin" (Matthew Henry).

20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

This marvelous insight by Solomon teaches us that where there are no whispers, there are no wars. Gossips tend to pluck the chicken till it looks like a dried pea. Quit feedin' the stove with wood, and the fire of contention

goes out. A lesson for politicians -- stop the inflated vilification of your enemies and fighting ceases.

Surround yourself with people who talk about visions and ideas and not other people.

When the Devil calls with gossip to share, hang up the phone!

21 As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

Solomon wants his son to learn about contentious women. But, here he warns him about the contentious man (ish) who is as unwanted as a wart; who is all over the faults of others like a chicken on a June bug; who is always pullin' the wrong pig's ear; the man who makes hamburger out of tenderloin steak. These blabbermouths are like little boys dancing in a pig trough. They always attract attention with their foolishness. As coals are renewed by adding wood so ancient feuds are renewed by shoving planks of bitterness into the hearth.

Words have no wings but they can fly a hundred miles. Careless words spoken can never be recalled. Like feathers in the wind, gossip can't be recalled.

A storm is a brewin' when you hear your co-worker mention, "They say . . ." Pour water on criticism and you'll prevent a house fire. "I have absolutely no opinion . . . interest . . . concern . . . about that at all," is an easy way to stop gossip before it gets started.

22 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

How many defamation cases did Solomon have to settle that involved reckless words spoken by a malicious gossip?

Defamation ruins reputations . . . jobs . . . careers. Forget social credit scores. Bad idea!

The pundit lied when he said, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words shall never hurt me." Accusations are like sandpaper that grates the soul. Those that gather fowl weather around their mouth create lightning storms that strike their victims. Pinpricks of criticism bores a hole straight to the heart leaving one mortally wounded (18:8; 25:1). Throw a wet blanket on the coals of gossip, and fire goes out. Zip the lip and save lives.

Observations about deceivers

23 Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.

Pretended wisdom . . . and pretended love are like silver-plated chards -- beautiful on the outside, but worthless on the inside. The way of a swindler is to bad-mouth a pastor to cover their own fraud.

You can spray perfume on skunk cabbage, but it still tastes like stink. Beware of people with honey-breath and hemlock hearts; the con-artist who talks rich, but makes others poor; the one who comes with presents in order to pillage.

24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him;

The word "dissembleth" (na'kar) means "to use or discern or employ or to disguise" with one's lips his planned deception.

Beware of flattery and fake love; of those who talk peace but have a hurricane of prejudice swirling in their hearts. Men cover up corruption with angel talk . . . with religious reports . . . with red slippers and a hearty handshake. They talk law, but commit crime. Predators deceive in order to capture. Beware!

25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart.

Beware of tricksters that talk sugar but walk sour; "High class" people that prattle pretty but may be flowers without fragrance.

Seven is the number of perfection. Con-artists polish the art of deception.

Beware! Sweet talkin' preachers are more dangerous than those that are serious and grumpy.

Charlatans talk heaven, but walk men to hell; they discuss psychology but not Proverbs; they can quote the rhymes of Mother Goose, but don't know the difference between the Book of Genesis and the Book of Revelation; between justification and sanctification; between faith and faithfulness.

The journalist who graduates from the University of Deception with honors in hypocrisy will talk cake but live hate. Beware of those deceivers that have more moves than a flamingo dancer; with words like a poet, but hearts like a toilet brush.

26 Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.

Solomon drills the reality of deceit into his son-prince. The ring masters of deception love to perform before kings. Covering greed with grace, *hypocrites have more hocus pocus than a Reno-magician; more fizz than a diet-coke; more sparkle than Christmas lights.* Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing.

Like John the Baptist who confronted the Pharisees for their show of religion by dressing in phylacteries and saying long prayers, Solomon expected true men to back their words with their works: *put your money where your mouth is* (Matthew 3:7; James 2).

27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.

Using the imagery of hunters, Solomon teaches his son that deceivers who have more lures than a Canadian trapper are going to step into their own snares; that is, they will be punished after their nakedness is exposed.

28 A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

If you are the recipient of lies, know that hate letters come in taradiddles wrapped with ribbons of love. Eve did not eat rotten grapefruit; she ate poisonous fruit that "was good for food . . . a delight to the eyes, and . . . appeared to make one wise" (Genesis 3:6).

Beware of ugliness with a smile; those that talk attic, but live in the cellar; those that talk rich but ride a stick horse.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 27

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WITH ITS CHALLENGES



Proverbs 27:1 Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

♦ "Boasts" (hala) = "to shine." It forms the first syllable in the word "Hallelujah." In this text the boaster is praising himself and not Jah -- a hint that the boaster lacks a heart submitted to God and relies too much upon himself (James 4:13) – the detestable sin of

presumption (Numbers 14:39-45).

How many empty promises did Solomon hear in court? A man that crows like a rooster may end up having his neck wrung by the king's bailiff.

We are not omniscient and we don't know what tomorrow brings. We can make plans for tomorrow, but we ought to say, "If the Lord wills . . ."

2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

"There may be occasion for us to justify ourselves, but not to praise ourselves" (Matthew Henry).

This is a command. Men would do well to praise what others do and not be so quick to talk about "me," "my," and "I." We only toot our own horn when we are forced to defend ourselves in a formal hearing . . . and, when this happens, tell the whole truth.

This is Solomon's way of informing magistrates to beware of litigants that build air castles and pursue pots of gold at the end of rainbows.

3 A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.

How many hotheads did Solomon have to endure in his court?

"A stone" is an accurate metaphor for a fool's wrath -- as heavy as two granite rocks . . . the weight of which crushes relationships.

"Strike the iron while it is hot" is a rule for blacksmiths, but only fools *strike when the head is hot*.

4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?

"outrageous" (shet'eph) = pour or down pour. It is translated "rinsed in water" in Leviticus 15:11 and "floods of great waters" in Psalm 32:6.

Anger is only one letter short of *d a n g e r*. You can cool down a hothead by giving them a cold shoulder, but how do you put out the fires of envy in a heart burning with lusts? Being overcome with envy is like running into the ocean, the deeper you go, the harder it is to get out.

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.

How many men did Solomon and Hezekiah have to endure that talked pretty but lived ugly?

It's quite easy to open your mouth in a fit of anger and dump out 12 acres of garbage on an offending co-worker, but it takes needlework skill to go to them calmly, in love, and to repair the tear.

There is no such thing as "secret love." The Biblical man (or woman) shows his faith by his works (James 2). If a spouse or friend injures you, love goes to them in private to share with them what they did wrong . . . not to blast 'em for their sin, but to help improve them so they don't do it again.

"A soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1).

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

Recognize the difference between true love and fake love. Friends speak "the truth in love" even though it hurts, but fake love (kisses) of an enemy are buttered in deceit; a person who pretends to love you by showering you with what you want to hear is more of an enemy than a friend.

7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

Be careful for what you desire, for you will become the sum total of his desires.

A hungry man spends the whole day searching for a scrape of bread. The man who overeats loathes dessert. A man filled with a love for the world has no room for the love God. Hunger for the world; and, hate God; or, hunger for Christ, and hate the world.

Cruci dum spiro fido. ++-----

'The *world* has been *crucified* to me through the cross, and I to the *world*. But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14).

8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.

The further a bird flies from her nest in search of food, the more she is exposed to predators. The more a business man travels the world, the more he is tempted to visit Greta's Dancing Dollies.

9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

Solomon compares advice from good friends to scented oils and expensive perfumes that refresh and comfort the soul. Spread hope, not fear. Share fresh insight into God's Word, not tired platitudes.

10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.

A longtime friend of a father who has proved his faithfulness is a family treasure. An aged friend will never give you bad counsel. Out of love for your father and you, he gives counsel that will protect and preserve you.

Better to seek help from a near neighbor than comfort from a brother afar. Better to seek help from a nearby neighbor than a kinsman you know and but lives miles away.

Men of character love . . . not because of who you are, but because of who they are -- loving men. Unfortunately, Rehoboam lost the kingdom because of his failure to learn this lesson.

11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.

Wise sons are an asset to godly fathers enduring the heat of unmerited criticism; that is, they provide evidence of a father's integrity. But, foolish sons listen to their father's critics, believe them, and add to the father's distress.

Sometimes a man's family is his only asset . . . comfort . . . and treasure. What grief for a great Father like David to have a bitter, thankless, ambitious son like Absalom! Consider the grief the sons of Adam, Noah, Jacob, Samuel, Hezekiah, and Josiah gave to their fathers.

12 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.

"prudent" (Aruwm) means "sensible," and "discerning."

A prudent man has foresight; a fool only learns from hindsight. A moral man foresees the consequences of sin and stays out of the way of mules kickin' the barn. Fools are attracted to the hullabaloo and get struck during the excitement.

13 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

How many complaints did Solomon hear about fraud regarding a grantor who did not secure a guarantee of performance based on the pledge of a grantee's assets?

Another warning against suretyship: (See above on Proverbs 6:1.) “

When rash men "become surety for another, he must suffer for his imprudence, and learn wisdom by feeling the effects of his folly" (Ellicott).

A stranger is one who is not trained in law nor a member of the commonwealth of Israel. He is one who has no history of proving his financial integrity. When a party's sincerity is in doubt you must ask for proof of claim . . . proof of fidelity by demanding earnest money or a pledge of assets. There are more flakes in this world than there are faithful men. Don't be a victim of camelion's changing colors.

14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.

We all like to be blessed, but not at 6:00 in the morning! Pick an acceptable time to express gratitude. Roosters can crow at dawn, but friends had better wait till after breakfast to share their cock-a-doodle-doo. Be friendly, but not a nuisance.

15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.

The adverb "contentious" is used in 21:19 with the word "angry." A contentious wife is an aggressive, argumentative, and antagonistic shrew who has perfected the art of torturing a man. She inherited her *combative nature* from Eve, but fed her *pretty little villain* with the falsehoods of feminism (Genesis 3:16).

These anvils of wrath have forded their anger into sharp swords. Their toothpicks of criticism and cyclones of examinations are compared to a leaky roof on a rainy day. Many wives are contentious by nature, but few will admit their stormy condition.

It's easy for women "counselors" to beat men into submission with a guilt stick, than it is to confront a smoldering volcano of the same sex.

16 Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself.

You might as well try to stop a Kansas tornado from blowing across the plains than to stop this woman's hurricane of wrath. Gesture "No" and she'll eat your hand. Skilled in equivocation, she slips through rebuttals like oil on a butter knife.

17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Solomon shows a little wit here: Fellow soldiers in the Lord's army have steel-like character, and when soldiers clash, their instruments of war are sharpened into deadly swords. These quarrels sharpen the mind, invigorate affections, refine doctrines in Theology, and polish discernment.

18 Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.

This is case law on the 8th Commandment -- "Thou shall not steal" - (Deuteronomy 25:4; 1 Corinthians 9:9)

A man has a right to earn a living wage from the work he performs. To withhold wages or to cheat a man of his wages are grounds for a formal complaint of fraud -- a violation of the 10th Commandment (James 5).

Diligence, patience, and faithfulness have its reward. Though one's calling may be hard, stick with it. Prosperity awaits the steadfast.

19 As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

Water served as a mirror which allowed men to see a glimpse of their facial features.

"What is in our own hearts we find in others also" (Ellicott).

Our troubles are not unique. The problems we face are common to all men. The good that we seek will find its match in the face of others. Our facial features are different from those around us, but we all want the same thing: purpose, happiness, security, love, honor, freedom, etc. Look at others and their struggles, and we discover we are not different from other men.

"Except for the grace of God, there go I."

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

20 Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Solomon learned that the hearts of jealous litigants are a shoreless sea of want. As the grave never has enough clients, so man's lusts are never satisfied.

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you" (St. Augustine).

Two ticks without a host will end up in court pleading their own parasitical cause.

21 As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.

As silver is refined to purify the metal, so the testing of a man reveals the character of a man. As silver is heated to test its purity, so a man's praise must be tested to see if it is genuine. Praise must be refined like silver to see if it is real.

"It is not the size of the man in the fight that matters, but the size of the fight in the man that matters."

22 Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

"bray" (ka'thash) means to pound or grind.

We have here a fact about fools. Millstones are used to separate the wheat from the chaff. Though you grind a fool under a millstone like wheat, He will not depart from his folly. Most men learn from their trials. Pity the man that can't learn from his mistakes; and, shame on the man who won't let go of sin no matter how many times he's flogged.

23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

A careless man has no cause that can be sustained in court no matter who he blames.

Success takes diligence, and the successful pay attention to detail. A steward must faithfully take care of small things before he can be trusted with big things. "Little foxes spoil the vine" and attention to detail secures the harvest.

"The difference between something good and something great is attention to detail." - Charles R Swindoll

24 For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?

Riches are not easy to obtain, nor are they easy to retain. The "crown" earned in one generation can be forfeited by the next generation. What is

easily gained is easily lost. Exercise due-diligence to preserve your assets and to increase your holdings.

25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.

Solomon describes the seasons of life -- acts of nature which no man can control -- acts of God for which no man is responsible. Hay appears and disappears. Not everything can be blamed on man! Losses due to snow cannot be blamed on the harvesters. One explosion from a volcano dumps more carbon dioxide into the air than all living things have produced since creation. Gains and losses due to changing seasons are from God. Accept it. Those who fight the laws of nature contend with their Creator.

The consortium of self-interested Municipal Corporation Subcontractors that spray the skies with chemical poisons, that attempt to control the weather, that fear climate change, that are hellbent on gene therapies, and injecting artificial, man-made toxins into human foods under the banner of health ought to be charged with fraud and reckless endangerment. After these madmen playing gods are found guilty, they ought to be taken to the public square and beat with a stick.

Beware of legislative remora (hindrances) that produces chimerical (illusory) allegiance to perceived public policy and the Barmecidal (imaginary and disappointing) belief that the People are subjects of the state . . . subjects that must obey the will of the collective (communism). America is a republic, not a democracy.

“Pure democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have, in general, been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.” – James Madison, Federalist 10, 1787

26 The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.

Every profession has its chores. Every season of life requires diligence and attention to detail: spring time and harvest, the rainy season or and the dry season, winter time and summer time, cold days and hot days. A farmer must concern himself with wheat in the fields, and herbs (greens) on the hills; lambs for slaughter, and goats to market; lambs for food and clothing, and goats to sell for cash profits.

The lesson here is to accept your calling and to carry out your duties -- the fun tasks and the difficult tasks; chores you like and chores you don't like; the easy ones and the dreaded ones.

27 And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.

It takes time, talent, and money to run a business. The man who accepts responsibility for the good, bad, and ugly connected with his duties will supply enough goat's milk and bread for his family and servants.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 28



MARKS OF RIGHTEOUS RULERS

◆ This chapter could be called, "Proverbs for Government Officials" as it contains insights from Solomon who administrated disputes brought to his court.

Note the marks of a righteous public servant.

Courage

Proverbs 28:1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Note the correlation between wickedness and fear; righteousness and courage. The guilty hide when no man is pursuing; the righteous having nothing to fear.

Fear marks the wicked, but courage marks the upright; fragileness describes the unjust, but hardiness defines the just; timidity epitomizes the conformist while courage denotes the righteous.

Like a mouse, the vile scurry and hide in times of trouble; but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

Competence

2 For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.

As a nation's sins increase, so do its chiefs, but when a righteous ruler comes to power he sustains and stabilizes the nation. If a king stumbles many ambitious men appear ready to fill his place.

The root problem of a nation is not economics but transgression of God's law. The signs of God's judgment are (a) a series of princes who rule for a short time and (b) multiple princes vying for power. During times of political chaos, many experts surface proclaiming they have the answer to the nation's political problems.

False shepherds kill, maim, and destroy (John 10:1-10). Ultimately, there is only one true shepherd who has the competence and character to lead the flock. Good rulers submit their administrations to Him.

Compassion

3 A poor man that oppreseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

How many cases did Solomon adjudicate that involved poor men who could be called tyrants?

"oppression" (ashaq) = press down, violate, defraud.

Evil in-all includes the poor. The poor are NOT more righteous, or more sinful than the rich. Both groups contain sinners who fall short of the glory of God.

The righteous man, comforted by the Lord in his past troubles, shows compassion to the oppressed. But, the profane-poor calloused by their past troubles abuse their fellowman. The ruthless use of power by the hardened-poor is compared to a brutal hurricane with torrential rains and high winds that level everything in their path.

Confrontation

4 They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.

The word "law" (torah)¹⁷ refers to God's law, the Ten Commandments, and relevant case law. There is only One Lawgiver (James 4:12). What Americans call "law" is NOT law; modern "law" are statutes passed by Congress that apply ONLY in the District of Columbia.

4 U.S.C. §72. Public offices; at seat of Government

All offices attached to the seat of government shall be exercised in the District of Columbia, and not elsewhere, except as otherwise expressly provided by law.

(July 30, 1947, ch. 389, 61 Stat. 643 .)

"Act of Congress" at Rule 54(c) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure:

"Act of Congress" includes any act of Congress locally applicable to and in force in the District of Columbia, in Puerto Rico, in a territory or in an insular possession.

¹⁷ Jus scriptum: all law is written. If it is not written, it is NOT law; unwritten "law" is usually nothing more than presumption. For this reason Jesus said to Satan, "It is written." That is, Jesus stood on grounds of substantial law, not PRESUMPTION; that is, He appealed to ultimate authority of belief and practice (Matthew 4:4-6).

God's law has jurisdiction over all men and all of man's institutions. He has the right, power, and authority to interpret and to apply His law on earth. Failure to see NT commands as case law regarding the Ten Commandment is the product of more than a little evil. True Christians do NOT heed the taradiddle of antinomianism are perpetuate the foolish notion that the Torah is irrelevant to Christianity.

How many arguments did Solomon hear in court where a litigant said, "So-and-so does it?"

What others may, I cannot; what others can do, I may not.

Anarchists approve of the sinful acts of subversives by praising their belligerence, but the righteous rebuke them vigorously and do their utmost to oppose their lawless enterprises.

The word "law" (torah) is used 14 times in Proverbs. Its first seven uses refer to "my law" or family law established by the husband-father. The last seven uses of the term "torah" in Proverbs refer to the law of the LORD God -- the Ten Commandments and relevant case law. Traditionally, the first five books of Moses have been called "the Torah."

The Torah is a revelation of God and His righteousness; that is, His law reflects His character. If a man wants to know God better, he must study God's law-order.

"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97).

"Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments" (Psalm 119:137)

There is no contraction between law and grace. The opposite of law is not grace, but lawlessness; the opposite of grace is not law, but permissiveness (Jude). While the law is not a mediator between God and man, it was given to create a stable society. The law, therefore, is for Christian men and a Christian society.

Moreover, there is nothing more delinquent among Christians than the presumption that believers are free to choose their own law-order. The cross saves sinners, not to make them lawmakers, but to empower them to become law keepers (Romans 8:4).

Further, this nation was founded on the rule of law, not the rule of man. Today, however, the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia seeks to eliminate the rule of law and replace it with the will of Congress.

"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other" - John Adams.

Beware of the sin of presumption where a common belief is taken as true that has NEVER been recorded in the Federal Register (Numbers 14:39-45; 44 U.S.C. §§ 1501 et seq., particularly § 1505(a))

Holy

5 Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.

As a king Solomon made judicial decisions. He observed that pedestrians disapproved of God's judgment because they did not understand God's character. The righteous approve of God's justice because they "stand under" the authority of the LORD God and His law-order (Exodus 20:1).

Upright

6 Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

Both the rich and poor brought their causes before Solomon. He observed it was better to be righteous and poor, than wealthy and immoral.

Life involves choices. If one has to choose between a life of riches gained by corruption, or a life of poverty with integrity intact, chose the latter. Sailing in rowboat on calm waters is better than sailing on a private yacht through a tropical storm.

Wisdom

7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

All kinds of litigants appeared in King Solomon's court.

A son's friend can be a lifeboat on stormy seas or he can be a millstone around the neck. A companion of lawless men not only results in trouble for the son, but shames the father. A man who keeps the law not only pleases his father, but enjoys peace and comfort from the Holy Spirit. A partner of fools soon picks up the habits of a fool.

A man is known by the friends he chooses.

Beware of all shades of antinomianism. Keeping God's law is good because the law is good. Forsaking the law in the name of freedom leads to anarchy. Men need law to define right and wrong. When your neighbor keeps the law, you can rest. Your neighbor has no fear of you when you keep the Ten Commandments. The law was not given to save men but to build an orderly society. There is all the difference in the world between being saved by law, and being saved in order to keep the law (Romans 8:4). "If ye love me," said Jesus, "keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Crime is NOT a racial problem. It is a human problem. Both black and white must be taught God's law and the gospel which enables them to keep His Word.

Beware of the ultra vires acts of self-interested Municipal Subcontractors that exercise powers and authority not included in the original service contract of 1791 such as "defining marriage," producing chem-trails in the sky, "phony vaxxines" (GMOs) in the name of pseudo-science, the "Green Agenda," and "carbon taxes." There is NOT one word in the original service contract that grants these criminals authority to say one word about our health! We are not cattle on their farm; and, they are not our cattlemen.

Authority exercised in Congress' capacity as a government for federal territories (Guam, Puerto Rico, et al.) does not extend to the several States and the population at large.

Ratio decidendi – Principle or reason underlying a court judgement. Or the rule of law on which a judicial decision is based. The *ratio decidendi* is fatally flawed because it is not grounded in God's law or Constitutional law. It is a weak principle because it fails to acknowledge the principle of the rule of law. When the Supreme Court justified homosexual marriage it did so *ratio decidendi*.

"State officials thus cannot consent to the enlargement of the powers of Congress beyond those enumerated in the Constitution." [New York v. United States, 328H 505 U.S. 142; 112 S.Ct. 2408; 120 L.Ed.2d. 120 (1992)]

Pity

8 He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.

In the American system of justice, all matters are commercial. Likewise, financial interests of litigants dominated the cases heard in Solomon's court.

Usury: lending money at high interest rates in order to make money off people who will be debt slaves for life.

Usury is a scheme to defraud men of their property in violation of the Tenth Commandment.

"Banking was conceived in iniquity and was born in sin" (Josiah Stamp).

Deuteronomy 23:19 Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:

Under Divine Providence, the wealth of usurious loan-sharks will be taken from them and given to those that will be just and merciful.

Obedient

9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

God hears the prayers of righteous men, but the prayers of the miscreant are disgusting to the Lord.

Solomon refused to hear the complaints of criminals claiming some kind of injury. Felons do not deserve justice.

What hypocrisy for a man to claim the benefits of law while being a transgressor of law!

It behooves every Christian man to become a student of God's law and the fundamental laws of America, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights . . . or he will become a debt slave to the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia (1 Corinthians 7:23).

“The main reason to learn about law is so that we become closer to our Creator. Secondly, by doing so, we maximize our blessings IN THE NEXT LIFE and minimize our curses IN THIS LIFE as documented in [Deut. 28](#). Deut. 28 describes curses upon societies or unbelievers rather than individuals, while blessings are upon BOTH societies and believing obedient individuals. God's character is UNCHANGING and eternal, and spans both the ENTIRE Old and New Testament. God didn't suddenly STOP caring about our obedience to His holy law in the New Testament” (SEDM: “On Why We should Learn and Obey Biblical Law”).

Integrity

10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

Politics can be a nasty business with politicians doing all they can to ruin their political opponent. The upright statesman shall be sustained by his faithfulness, but wicked politicians shall fall into their own traps.

Questions authority

11 The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

This is what Solomon observed about rich men filing a complaint in his court.

Because of his wealth, the rich man has an over inflated, high opinion of himself, but the poor know him better than he knows himself. With only a few questions, the poor are able to expose the rich-hypocrite as a proud and miserable man.

Beneficent

12 When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.

When the righteous rule, men rejoice; but when the wicked govern the righteous go into hiding. Sensible rulers are a blessing to a nation, but when perverts come to power, the righteous are deemed as madmen because they refuse to comply with the lies perpetuated by perverts.

In an age where men are brainwashed by fictions, telling the truth becomes an extraordinary thing. And, the rancorous will hate you for it.

Righteous men avoid dealing with a consortium of corrupt Municipal Corporation Subcontractors. They hide, not because they are fearful, but because the powercrats despise non-conformity to their lies and depravity; that is, the tyrants target the righteous for destruction (Isaiah 59:15; Proverbs 11:21; 14:2).

"When righteous men rejoice — Are encouraged and promoted to places of trust and power; there is great glory — In that commonwealth" (Benson).

The opposite for courage is not cowardice, it is conformity. Even a dead fish can go with the flow -- Jim Hightower.

Beware: if you separate yourself from lies, fake science, fake news, presumptive laws, and government propaganda, you will be a target for defamation and ruin. Likewise, if you are not being battered for your faith, you may not be confronting the sins of the age (Isaiah 59:15; John 7:7; 2 Timothy 3:12; Proverbs 16:17).

Reliable

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Solomon learned that cross examination of both parties was the light that exposed the secret sins of a party.

Sinners that hide their sins and cover their crimes like Adam and David shall not prosper, but a faithful prince shall thrive. A great leader is a faithful man who has forsaken the way of duplicity. Likewise, innocent parties walk in the light. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Piety

14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

A good man is a happy man because he is careful to obey God's law, but the careless and reckless have many troubles.

When piety is at work in public officials their goodness will be revealed in their walk and talk.

Great statesmen serve God in private as well as in the public. They are holy within and without; at home and at work; in the dark as well as in the light. What you see is what you get. Hypocrites, on the other hand have two minds, two hearts, two lives, and one motive -- the advancement of self.

Gentle

15 As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

The Spirit compares heinous overlords to roaming, cruel predators eager to pounce on the people in order to satisfy their own lusts. Competent rulers promote peace and prosperity of the nation, but tyrants devour the nation's resources in order to fulfill their own pleasures. When good men are in power their policies increase the wealth of the people; when corruptocrats are in power they become wealthy and the people become poor.

Purity

16 The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

The power of a prince is his pure devotion to the LORD. There is power in freedom from rapacity, avidity, and voracity. A godly prince eats fruit from the Tree of Life, and avoids walking near the Poisonous Tree.

How many bribes were offered to King Solomon to rule in favor of the solicitor?

When a competent, caring prince rejects "pay offs," the nation prospers, but a greedy, money-hungry self-serving monarch crushes the people. Evil monarchs lose the confidence of the people, while good leaders are faithful to the people's trust. Wicked rulers kill the goose that lays the golden egg; good rulers invest in goose farms.

Equity

17 A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.

Nations are governed by the principle of *lex rex* or *rex lex*. A righteous nation applies the law equally to rulers and the people, but a lawless nation excuses the crimes of its rulers. Immoral people turn a blind eye to the sins of their king, but moral people demand equal application of law. *What is good for the goose is good for the gander.*

The *doctrine of interposition* places a moral duty on subordinate magistrates to confront superior magistrates that break the law (1 Samuel 15: 2 Samuel 12).

Virtuous

18 Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.

Virtue saves honest regimes from many troubles, but corruption causes the regime of depraved rulers to fall into political ruin. Toilet brush magistrates must be flushed out of office.

By “perverse” Solomon refers to those who maliciously and willfully break God’s law – that is, true crime.

Industrious

19 He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.

Hard work combined with honesty and competence increases wealth, but carelessness and corruption leads to poverty.

The careless and the corrupt have no business taking their causes to court.

Faithful

20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

One must live life as a steward of the gifts of God. Faithfulness is required.

Hurriedness is a sin. Faithful men walk; fools run; faithful men pace themselves, fools pant; wise men remain calm, fools get excited; fools talk, the wise listen; fools dash, wise men slow down; fools react, wise men decontract. The only time the law permits a holy man to run is when he is fleeing from sin . . . or persecution (1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14; 2 Timothy 2:22; 6:11; Luke 3:7; John 10:5; Matthew 10:23; 24:16).

It takes a long time to say something worth repeating. And we should never say thing that does not take time to say it correctly.

Follow the Benedict Rule: "Benedict created the rule at a time when the Roman Empire had collapsed in the West, and Europe was being overrun by barbarian tribes, most of them pagans. It looked like Christianity in Europe was finished. Benedictine monasteries, more than anything else, kept the faith alive . . . Benedict’s emphasis on obedience to a supervisor is intended on the one hand to stop monks from excesses, and on the other to spur on the less enthusiastic. And lastly, the monastery was envisaged not as a prison camp to punish offenders, but as a loving community where people come together to

help each other in their chosen path, to submit their entire lives to the will of God" (Christian History Institute).

Fair

21 To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress.

Parti pris: a bias or preconceived opinion. Bias and prejudice in the courtroom injures the lives of innocent people; but corruption, bribes, and "pay offs" threaten the entire justice system. The court "bench" is a bank. When the judicial system appears to be corrupt, follow the money.

God calls us to respect rulers, but not to worship them. In America, federal and judicial rulers are required to take an oath to the Constitution, Article VI. In exchange for their oath, we give them our trust.

But, what if government officials do not have an oath on file? Do they deserve our respect? No! Officers without an oath are imposters at best and traitors at the worst, and God does not require us to show respect to usurpers acting under color of law . . . or color of office that confers validity upon acts performed while acting under color of official title.

Remember, every Subcontractor in the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia must have an oath and two affidavits, signed, sealed, and notarize or they are committing treason against the Constitution (5 U.S.C. §§3331-3333).

Contentment

22 He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

How many cases did Solomon adjudicate where one party attempted to use the court as a means to make money? Courts must make the injured whole, but they are not in place as a revenue scheme so the avarice litigant can earn shekels.

"an evil eye" is one that envies the prosperity of others, and keeps all he has for himself - (Ellicott).

Great rulers are thankful for what they have and live within their means; wicked rulers complain about what they don't have while driving the nation into debt.

Money is a source of power. Rulers that are hasty to increase their budget will find themselves eating out of a pig trough. Haste is the sin of ambitious men.

"Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast" - William Shakespeare.

You will never stumble running from sin . . . unless you look back; but, you will stumble running toward wealth.

Let us be on time to work, and slow to grumble.

“The hurrier I go, the behinder I get.” - Lewis Carroll

“People forget how fast you did a job – but they remember how well you did it” – Howard Newton

Teachable

23 He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

True friends rebuke you so that you will not stumble, but the faithless let you crumble under your own burdens and trip over your own vices. You will be more helped by faithful critics than by the pleasantries of the faithless.

"It is curious – curious that physical courage should be so common in the world, and **moral courage so rare**' – Mark Twain

Honorable

24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.

How many probate inheritance disputes did Solomon oversee?

Parents are vulnerable because they exercise so much good will and trust toward their children. But, a treacherous son will win their parents trust and then rob them of their assets thinking it is not a transgression because his parents owe him.

Though he sin in the darkness against his parents, he is no better off than a thief who steals in the light. The one who steals from his parents is no different than bank robbers . . . and just as worthless.

Peaceful

25 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.

Oh, the number of proud, arrogant litigators Solomon must have seen in his court?

Solomon informs us that the waves of strife are driven by the winds of pride; that pride is the spark that ignites the fires of contention Where there is discord among brethren, there is pride.

Proud men create wars and suffer from its devastation, but the LORD blesses humble men with preservation. Pride creates contention and division; the humble are rewarded with compassion and conciliation.

Confidence

26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

“trusteth” (batach) refers to that upon which one relies for success.

The word “delivered” (malat) means “to escape or be saved from some catastrophe.”

The first four words in Hebrew are abrupt and decisive. Trust in your own heart and be a fool or trust in the Lord and be wise. Trust in yourself and be frustrated or trust in the Lord and be delivered. The wise walk by faith, fools walk by their own feelings.

Generous

27 He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

The opposite of love is not hate, but apathy.

Compassion combined with giving is the mark of a good man, but dispassion combined with greed is the mark of an evil man. Blessing is connected with generosity, while the curse is connected with cruelty. Selfish men run from the troubles and the pain of men, but the just searched them out.

When Jesus was in the synagogue his eyes saw the lame, but others only saw their friends.

Prudent

28 When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.

When tyrants come to power, prudent men lie low; and, when these pirates perish, righteous men increase (and come out of hiding).

There is a time to be bold and assertive, but when maniacs are in power, sane men keep their head down.

"When power is put into the hands of the wicked, wise men decline public business" - Matthew Henry.

"The elevation of the wicked to power drives men to seek refuge from tyranny (compare Pr 28:12; 11:10; Ps 12:8)" - JFB.

Psalm 118:8-9 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

“I own I am not a friend to a very energetic government. It is always oppressive.” – Thomas Jefferson, Letter to James Madison, 1787

“The Constitution sought to divide the delegated powers of the new Federal Government into three defined categories, Legislative, Executive, and Judicial, to assure, as nearly as possible, that each Branch of government would confine itself to its assigned responsibility. The hydraulic pressure inherent within each of the separate Branches to exceed the outer limits of its power, even to accomplish desirable objectives, must be resisted.” Quoted in *Finck v. City of Tea*, 443 NW 2d 632 - SD: Supreme Court 1989.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 29

KINGS, SERVANTS, AND SONS



Proverbs 29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

◆ All criminals have a hardened neck that will not turn away from evil and to stand under God's law. The more a criminal comes to court, the more callous he becomes; and, the more angry and severe the judge will be.

2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

The word "authority" (raba) means increase in numbers, dignity, or power.

Righteous magistrates are a blessing to the people and the people rejoice when they occupy the offices of government; but, when godless pagans come to power, the people squeal like piglets.

People grieve when rulers of the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia take bribes and shame the nation by their lawless deeds. The righteous have to hide because they are deemed madmen by the liars and chief (Isaiah 59:15; Proverbs 11:21; 14:2).

We wish for the immediate recognition of the federal, Municipal Corporation crimes on the land and against the Law of the Land and against the American People. We wish for the punishment of their crimes against Mankind and against their Employers. The usurpers on the territory of the District of Columbia stand condemned for impersonating public officers, for fraud, and for breach of written contracts.

3 Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.

Fathers of the righteous have cause to rejoice, but fools don't care about whether their fathers glow or chill -- whether they are glad or mad. How their fathers feel about them fornicating with women is of no concern to these fleshly, glandular men.

4 The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.

Good magistrates promote justice; corrupt officials take bribes; impartial magistrates cause nations to prosper; unscrupulous magistrates sink the nation into chaos and confusion.

So many programs including the Green Agenda by Municipal Corporation Subcontractors housed in the District of Columbia are not about green grass, but about green paper.

5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.

A mouse-trap contains bait. A brown-nosier uses honey as bait to snare his victims; that is, he kills the man with a pretense of kindness. Con-artists don't tell you hard things, they tell you what you want to hear . . . they sell the sizzle not the steak.

Consider how many lies the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia perpetuates under the banner of “safe” and “effective” health agendas . . . and pseudo-science – powers never given to these Subcontractors . . . self-assumed prerogatives to increase their services and expand their own powers at our expense.

6 In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

If there is a fly in the pie, the wicked put it there; if there is a trap in the trail, a trapper put it there. When the righteous strike a deal it becomes a win-win for both parties; both sides rejoice and sing.

Where there are self-interested commercial corporations in the business of providing government services, they force-sell their services in order to grab regulatory powers related to health or medicine in order to increase their control over the people and their private lives – powers not in the social contract.

7 The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

In making a contract, a righteous man discerns the poor man's state of affairs: needs and difficulties; but, the wicked could care less about the afflictions of the poor and pretend to be ignorant about poor man's limitations.

Ideally, the American social contract between We the People and the Municipal Subcontractors demands these employees not infringe on the rights of their Employers -- many of whom are poor. See the Bill of Rights.

8 Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.

Those that laugh at sin and mock God's law are the cause of a cities troubles, debts, and disputes; but, a moral leader works to remove obstacles that cause dissension and disagreement. He has no tolerance for usurpation of powers under color of law or color of authority by Subcontractors working for the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia.

9 If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.

Unless a foolish-politician is confronted with his reckless policies he will push his taradiddle "full steam ahead." But, good men will confront the proud-fool urging him to bury his fraudulent project designed to increase his power while derogating the God-given rights of the People.

Whether the rebuke is harsh or gentle, the fool will not depart from his ideological madness. Therefore, don't spend a lot of time polishing the rhetoric of your rebuke, just do it. There are no golden words that can relieve the tension. Be brief, direct, and reasonable. Leave the results with God.

10 The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul.

Realize the righteous will always have enemies. Don't take opposition and criticism too personally. There will always be reputation-assassins in every political forum. Don't be like Jell-O nailed to the wall. Man up! Toughen up! Harden your soul to unjust panning.

We wish for the immediate recognition of the crimes of the bloodthirsty hell-bent on controlling mankind through color of law. We wish for their arrest for their attempts to ruin Creation with their self-serving commercial for-profit schemes and their willful meddling against Nature. We wish for their arrest and prosecution for their misrepresentations against science and reason, their attempts to legalize and self-permit their lies and premeditated crimes against God and Man.

Solomon is not addressing sins of ignorance or factum¹⁸, but flagrant, willful violations of God's law.

11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

A fool blows his stack, spills his guts, and struts around like grebe courtship dancers slamming their fists on the table; but, the wise are restrained and guarded.

¹⁸ Beyond human foresight.

Using psychological mumbo jumbo: “Hyperverbal speech may show up as a symptom of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or anxiety” – Healthline.

12 If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.

Servants are trained to take orders, not to make independent decisions. Therefore, when their leaders are deceived by lies, servants fall into line underneath the policies of the deluded.

Christians, on the other hand, are servants of God and not servants of men. They possess an internal clock . . . a measuring stick to scale proposals called the "conscience."

1 Corinthians 7:23 Ye are bought with a price; be *not* ye the *servants of men* . . .

For this reason democrat-communist countries must destroy Christians because they are not easily controlled by tyrants.

“The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.” – James Madison, [*Federalist* 47](#), 1788

13 The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes.

"poor" is equivalent to righteous men.

The Lord created both the poor and the rich, the righteous man and the deceitful man. Both share common needs and the fact that both are going to die. Both kinds of men are accountable to Him. In his light, both understand their destiny -- rewards for the righteous, and punishment for the wicked.

14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

The rich oppress the poor and the wicked sue the righteous; but, a Solomon-like magistrate will dispense justice; and, in administering justice, God blesses his administration.

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

A wise father will use the rod as a tool to educate an unruly child. He uses a rod, not his hand. This is measured, limited discipline, not wild ranting anger. **Reproof is NOT** a tongue lashing, but direct, reasonable, limited statements about the right and wrong of an act.

Punishment is not discipline. Punishment is an act of vengeance making the child pay for his sins. Discipline corrects without injuring the child or his

ego. God disciplines his children to improve them, not to impair them. If Christ paid for all our sins, how many are left for us to pay for?

Good parents discipline their children for their good; bad parents punish their children mentally, emotionally, and physically.

Children are sinners and have no trouble finding folly. They cannot be trusted. If left in the home without mom to supervise them, children will break the rules and shame the family.

16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall.

The purpose of government is to punish crime and to purge society of evil men.

When the wicked increase, crimes increase. When the wicked are promoted to positions of power, they abuse their office by promoting lawlessness and foolishness. When the righteous come to power they confront criminals and bring them to justice.

The main reason the wicked increase is because of bad government by worthless Subcontractors in the Municipal Corporations who do not have an oath of office, betray their oath of office, and who are committed to an agenda given them by their donors. Going "soft on crime" like refusing to arrest thieves who steal less than one thousand dollars of merchandise increases transgressors.

By "getting tough on crime" we do not mean longer prison sentences, but expediting justice for criminal behavior.

17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Proper discipline is a challenge for all parents, but without it there is no peace in the home. Apply discipline to a ranting and unruly child, and you will soon hear the humming of happiness in the home. Be permissive and you will hear the war-drums pounding . . . and, your door bell ringing with policemen out front.

18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

The "vision" in this passage does not refer to the inventions of ambitious men, but to the adherence of law . . . to God's commands . . . to the belief that the "Lord reigneth" (Psalm 97:1).

Without this knowledge burning in the souls of men they wander around picking at straws . . . buying into the latest spin on the news . . . and, seeking cult leaders.

19 A servant will not be corrected by words: for though he understand he will not answer.

Servants are not noted for their creative, energetic, innovative habits. Servants are slaves that hate to work; that is, those with a slave mentality must be commanded, prodded, pushed, and poked to get them off their duff and to do their stuff.

20 Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

Is there anyone worse than a fool? Yes, there is! There is more hope for a dull-witted fool than for a loquacious, loudmouth, gasbag, blustering blowhard.

The wise Christian leader would do well to speak softly and to carry a big stick; that is, to study the art of silence and to develop the skill of saying more with less words.

21 He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length.

The strength of a trained servant is that he has perfected the virtue of faithfulness; and, if the son is as foolish as an ostrich and as crazy as a cuckoo bird, a faithful servant can become a candidate for an inheritance.

22 An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

The Hebrew word for anger is *aph* which means “nose” or “flared nostrils.”

The problem of anger in men is mentioned 13 times in Proverbs (14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 20:2; 21:14; 21:19; 22:8; 22:24; 25:23; 27:4; 29:22).

Anger is closely associated with “fear,” “grief,” and “pain.” “Anger” or *enghe* in old Dutch means “tight, painfully constricted, painful.” The Norse related anger to “distress, grief, sorrow, and affliction” (online etymology).

Solomon like Job links *fear* and *anger* together (Job 19:29; Proverbs 20:2). An angry man has many fears; that is, anger is a cloak for fear.

The Lord does not permit his people to be driven by fear, anger, or anxiety (Philippians 4:6-7). *Anger*, *anguish*, and *anxious* borrowings in English: the first from Scandinavian, the second from French, and the third from Latin. In Old Norse (that is, in Old Icelandic), *anгр* and *anгрa* meant “to grieve” and “grief” respectively (Compassion.com).

“Be anxious (angst) for nothing, but in everything by prayer . . .”
(Philippians 4:6-7).

“stirreth up” (garah) is a Piel verb (intense) meaning to “to excite strife” as in forest fires. “Contention” comes from an old French word (14c) meaning to “vigorous struggle, contest, or fight.”

“strife” (madown) refers to the beginning of contention.

Hot heads with tongues tied in the middle and flappin' at both ends create their own wars. And, people with brains the size of a nugget and a mouth the size of a bucket are not lacking for sins to count. Angry people do the Harlem jitterbug across the Ten Commandments. A person boiling with anger needs to take a cold shower before they burn down their house. If you hear snarling in your house, there is a wolf loose in the den.

Anger (heat) begets anger (heat). Angry? Hypervigilant? Lower your temperature. Slow down. Take your foot off the pedal. Change directions. Shift your thoughts. Train your brain to avoid strain. Uncontrolled anger has consequences not only on you, but others in your life.

23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

The word “pride”(ge'ah) is used 6 times in Proverbs and the word “proud” is used 8 times in the Book. The LORD said He would break “the pride of your power” in Leviticus 26:19. The Puritans often emphasized that pride was the sin of sins, the one that God hates most (see Proverbs 6:16 and James 4:6).

“low” (shaphel) is a reference to catastrophe. Arrogance is the straightest path to failure . . . to rejection . . . to being a despised person. The greatest weakness of the strongest is their pride.

What goes up must come down. A man with his nose in the air can't see where he's going. The higher it goes, the harder he falls (16:18). The proud man who wants to fly with eagles will end up peckin' with the chickens under the porch. The highest trees in the forest get struck by lightning first. Haman had his head so high in the air he ended up having to stick it in a noose (Esther 3-7)

Pride is not the product of success, but of one's false belief about the importance of self.

“The only thing more dangerous than ignorance is arrogance” – Albert Einstein.

Arrogance asks "Who's right?" Humility asks, "What's right?" Be humble or stumble.

The word “humble” (shaphal) is a verb that means “to make one's self low:” that is, get off your high horse and quit acting better than circumstances demand.

24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and betrayeth it not.

The term “partner” is a reference a conspiracy – a secret plan by a group to do something unlawful or harmful. See the crime of conspiracy in the California statutes: Title 7, Part I, “Crimes Against Public Justice [92-186.36 “(4) To cheat and defraud any person of any property”.

It is misprision of felony for failure to report a crime (18 U.S.C. Section 4). The one who knows about a crime and fails to chronicle it, shares in the crime; and, therefore, must share in its penalties (misprision of felony).

Misprision of felony is defined as follows: "One to be responsible for a crime committed by another must in some way make a contribution thereto from his will (Marquette University).

BE ALERT TO HOW FEDERAL SUBCONTRACTORS use color of law and color of authority to convert private property to public property – without consent of the private Citizen.

Conversion is charged **when a person is accused of knowingly or intentionally exerting unauthorized control over property of another person**. This crime differs from theft because there is no element of intending to deprive the other person of the value or use of the property.

25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Fears are numerous: People are afraid of people: afraid to talk to them, to sell them something, to ask questions, to confront them for wrong doing, to share the gospel with a friend. How many brides have been lost because of a young man’s fear of asking a lovely woman to go out to dinner?

The fear of man; the fear of having to balance the truth; and, the fear of taking a risk have their own punishments. The man who trusts in the Lord can afford to withhold the truth from those who do not deserve the truth; and, he can afford to take reasonable risks to advance the will of God knowing that the Lord is a God of grace and recovery.

26 Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the LORD.

Oh, the ambitious men that must have surrounded Solomon and Hezekiah -- litigants hoping to find favor in the king's court. Decision resolves a crisis, and these kings did the best they could to apply the law to their cases. Solomon knew he was limited . . . that true justice must come from the LORD. Pity the naive litigant that thinks he can find justice in Federal and State courts!

"for "every man's judgment cometh from the Lord;" it is He who really decides each man's worth. (Comp. 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Corinthians 4:5.)" (Ellicott)

"Men study to please their rulers, and to ensure their favour, by their obliging behaviour, humble petitions, and various other means, supposing that to be the only way to procure either right or preferment" (Benson).

27 An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.

"abomination" in an ethical or cultural sense refers to something repulsive or disgusting. For example, homosexuality, lesbianism, and Sodomy are an abomination to Christians (Leviticus 18-20; Romans 1:19ff).

Solomon hated injustice, and the duplicitous hated him.

Solomon had a sixth sense about the character of men, and if he perceived that a litigant was more crooked than a dog's hind leg, the gavel came down against him; that is, these deceivers disgusted Solomon . . . and Hezekiah.

It is the nature of things for good men to hate evil men; and, for evil men to hate good men. Only an a dreamer living on Fantasy Island near Lake Looney expects to create a utopia where everything is fair and equal; where there are no bad man, and everyone holds hands singing "Kum Ba Yah."

Lower your expectations of people, accept the incongruities in society, and be at peace. You can't change the nature of the world, but you can change yourself.

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it **must needs be** that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Jesus - Matthew 18:6).

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 30

THE PROVERBS OF AGUR: THE SIXTH SECTION OF PROVERBS (30:1-31:31)

הַאֲגוּרִי - !בִּי רַגְדָּא' יְיָרֵעֵב.דִּי

THE WISDOM OF AGUR



♦ Solomon's proverbs end with the last verse in Chapter 29.

The next two chapters contain the proverbs of Agur, Lemuel, or some unknown author regarding the praise of a virtuous wife -- possibly Lemuel.

Rabbis teach that Agur and Lemuel are pseudonyms for Solomon, but where is the proof? Both Agur and Lemuel appear to be unknown sages in Israel. Because the thoughts in this chapter contain the fragrant wisdom of the Spirit, this proverbial poetry found its way into the Book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 30:1 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,

"Agur" = means "gatherer." He appears to be a Bedouin chieftain known for poetic wisdom. He died in obscurity, but his wisdom lives on through the ages.

"unto Ithiel (God is with me) , even unto Ithiel and Ucal (devoured or I am strong) " appear to be disciples of Agur.

"prophecy" (massa or massah) = of unknown origin, it means "burden." Some read this, "son of Jakeh, son of Massah," an Arabian Bedouin prince.

The word "spake" (dabar) is a common Hebrew word.

2 Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.

The word "brutish" (ba'ar) is usually translated "stupid" or "senseless" which is too harsh for English readers. It could mean, "I am weary" or "I am just a man . . . a fellow pilgrim on this journey called 'life.'"

3 I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

Agur is rather self-effacing. He wants us to know that he did not get his doctorate degree from Jerusalem University, and that he was NOT a professional Hebrew prophet that received a direct revelation from God through dreams. He informs us that his collection of proverbs are based on human observation and life experiences . . . and not on esoteric knowledge.

Though humble and factual, Agur is in touch with holy things.

4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

Agur searched for the knowledge of the holy, but confesses he has not been to heaven, nor did heaven visit him; that he is a common man who had to get wisdom like every other man -- by observation and experience. Agur does NOT claim "God spoke to me" like modern false prophets boast. To do so would be a lie . . . an act of pride. Stating "God spoke to me" is like a man saying, "I went to heaven" to get my knowledge; therefore, "I am better than you." Such a postulate would be like advancing a claim that one can hold the wind in his fist or gather water from the well with his wool coat.

Agur is not stupid! He heard proud, arrogant men of his time making extreme, fraudulent claims about how they came to possess esoteric knowledge of God. So, he asks, "If you have erudite knowledge as you say you have, explain to me the processes of creation . . . of mountains . . . seas . . . and the formation of the end of the earth. What is He like? What is his son's name? Agur raises the question, "Is the earth round or flat? How do you know . . . what is your epistemology . . . what is your evidence?"

BEWARE of any man or woman who claims "God said . . ." or "God spoke to me . . ." or "I had a dream . . ." or "I had an alien encounter." ALWAYS question wild claims. The best men among us DID NOT get their knowledge of God by some special revelation. They obtained knowledge and wisdom like the sages of the ages . . . by personal observation, by studying the Holy Scriptures, and by graduating from the School of Hard Knocks.

5 Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Agur addresses the tendency of men to want to have a unique "touchy-feely" experience with God that endows them with power and authority beyond other men.

Agur acknowledges God's revelation to men in the Word of God . . . that it is pure . . . that it protects those who study the Scriptures; but this Bedouin is humble enough to let his students know that he did not **obtain his knowledge of God in some dream or trance.**

6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Religious people who make claims that "God spoke" to them are liars and deceivers hoping you will be fooled by their fibs and to think that they are really special . . . that their "prophecy" is on par with the Word of God. Taradiddle! Rebuke them!

7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:

Agur was, however, a pious man who prayed; and, we would do well to imitate him!

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

Agur was a man of truth who petitioned the LORD (1) to keep him far, far, far away from foolishness and lying lips -- a prayer consistent with Psalm 120:2; and, (2) to keep him from temptations germane to the state of wealth and poverty. Excess wealth and extreme poverty have their own thrones and snares.

Modern men would do well to repeat Agur's outstanding prayer. With Reuters delivering newspeak, Hollyweird generating fantasy films, and with the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia pumping out misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda, while stealing our wealth through inflation and taxation, Christians need to pray, "Lord, keep me from vanity and lies . . . and poverty."

Nemo moriturus praesumitur mentire – A man will not meet his maker (God) with a lie in his mouth. Or, in other words, 'no man at the point of death is presumed to lie.'

9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Riches tend to cause proud men to deny the LORD and to trust in them; poverty tends to yield pessimism and cynicism.

Taking the name of God in vain does not refer to cursing, but to not taking His name seriously . . . to take his name and then live hypocritically . . . to not proclaim the authority of His name . . . to confess to be a follower of King Jesus and then spend your life obeying every whim and presumptive statute applicable to the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia..

10 Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.

Masters (employers) tend to love and appreciate their servants. To criticize a servant to his master's face turns a smile into a frown and happiness into anger. Master's reserve the right to correct their own servants, but are

deeply offended if you act as their judge. Don't do it or you will be put on the master's "Most Unwanted Guest List." Keep your opinions to yourself! (Proverbs 17:18)!

11 There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

Cursing or railing a father or a mother is a violation of the 5th Commandment, and Agur distances himself from these rebels. Sons are not called to judge their parents, but to honor them. Something is seriously wrong with the man who blasphemes his parents. Only a pervert (4:24) defames his father and mother.

12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

Agur observed that quibblers, carpers, and nitpicks excel in bad mouthing their adversaries, but view themselves as better than others . . . pure . . . holy . . . intelligent . . . and free from moral faults. What pride! What hypocrisy! What duplicity!

This problem of neglecting exculpatory evidence and including only inculpatory evidence against an opponent in a dispute is mentioned five times in Proverbs (3:7, 12:15; 16:2; 21:2; 30:12).

13 There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.

Behind diatribes, censorship, and grumbling is spirit of arrogance and a "better than thou" attitude. Pride on a man is like ugly on an ape. Avoid it.

14 There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

"teeth" and "swords" reference the discontent, bitterness, and malice chomping away at the souls of grumblers.

"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James 4:1).

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:14).

15 The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough:

"horseleach" (aluw'kah) = a leech or bloodsucker.

The leech has a feminine form in Hebrew. The reference to "two daughters" introduces us to female parasites (Give and Give) in the community: gold diggers, hussies, sponges, moochers, freeloaders, bloodsuckers, and sugar babies. Like Solomon, Agur warns his disciples against any contact with "strange" women (outside the covenant; outside of law; outside of grace).

16 The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough.

Agur compares female leeches (1) to **the grave** that is never satisfied . . . that always wants more customers; (2) bitterness due to **infertility**; (3) to **the earth** that never has enough rain; and (4) to **a fire** that never has enough wood; that is, female parasites are constant complainers because they never have enough. Their cry is "give," "give," "give," and "more," "more," and "more" – an inference to the sinful nature of women . . . and men.

Imagine being married to one of these leeches. All the "Christian" counseling in the world cannot equip a man to please a Jezebel; that is, the problem here is not with the man, but with the leech! You'll never hear of a Christian counseling program for leech-wives . . . yet, most problems in marriage can be traced back to these barnacles.

17 The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

Agur returns to the subject of vagrant sons who violate the 5th Commandment -- the son which cast a squinting, scathing, satirical eye towards his father with a sarcastic, scoffing mouth that shows contempt for his mother. It is normal for sons to love their mom and dad, but there is something perverted about maligning one's parents.

18 There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:

The word "wonderful" (pala) refers to something marvelous, extraordinary, bottomless, or unfathomable.

19 The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.

As Agur studies his world, four subjects mesmerize him: soaring eagles, slithering snakes, ships on the sea, and the way of a young man with a lassie in a petticoat.

20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.

Agur shares his observations on the cheating wife. Having observed these moonlighters he was amazed at their callousness. These seducers of men had no conscience. Like women with bad table manners, these "nookies" could zig zag" all night, make artificial "potato pancakes" for breakfast, and never feel shame or guilt for their wickedness.

21 For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear:

The Hebrew word "disquieted" means "to tremble, shake, quake, rage, agitated, or to quiver." The images that follow are volcanic.

Agur observed pressures that break bonds like sticks of dynamite or social earthquakes in society that destroy peace and civility.

22 For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;

A warning about servants: Servants that become masters become despots; and, no man is happy under the command of a tyrannizer.

A warning about fools: No man can put up with a fool especially when he is drunk or has a full stomach? Fools become inebriated with abundance and are exceedingly obnoxious. During the daylight, they plow the field crooked, and at night time, they swagger through the streets like a slush bucket yellin' and hollerin' at the top of their lungs.

23 For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

A warning about odious women: That Solomon and Agur believed it necessary to educate their sons about "strange" and "odious" females stands out in Proverbs.

Augur was not a male chauvinist. He was a wise man of his time. Like Solomon, he trained his sons "in the way they should go" and warned them about odious women (1:8; 22:6). Not all women are odious, but many are . . . and, they can rattle the whole world.

Because we live in a world that idealizes women in glossy photos that accentuate their physical attributes, a young man can grow up with a utopian view of women to his own harm. The Bible neither denigrates nor glorifies women. It tells the truth about the nature of provocative women . . . and, those adjectives are not flattering. Thus, godly men must discern the nature of these goggas and then teach the truth about them to their sons in order to save them from the "spider's web."

In English the word "odious" refers to something repulsive. The Hebrew word "odious" (*sane; saw-nay'*) means "hateful." It is used of men who hate God (Exodus 20:5) and their fellow man (Genesis 37:4). Thus, the

odious woman is a bitter, resentful creature that hates God, His law-order, and men.

The word "married" is the Hebrew word *baal* which means "married" or "to be ruled over" by a husband. It is translated "a man's wife" in Genesis 20:3. By law, a married woman is under the coverture of her husband; and, by law a man is obligated to protect her.

Agur does not address the unmarried, single woman with bad character. He addresses the married woman with odious character. There is something about marriage (authority) which detonates her nuclear impudence.

Notice the effect. Because the odious woman has a tonnage of hate "the earth is disquieted" and "cannot bear" her. Not only can a husband not live with an odious wife no one on earth can live with her either! The world trembles and quakes because of these feminists.

The Hebrew word "bear" (*nasa*) means "to carry, lift up, or to bear." The adverb "cannot" negates the verb; that is, the earth cannot endure the annoyance of an angry woman. No man on earth has the strength to endure this sourpuss. Think of Jezebel, Athaliah, Vashti, and Herod's wife.

Don't accuse Augur of being an Arab male chauvinist. He is a skilled observer of human character. He feels compelled to warn Ithiel and Ulcal about the odious woman who is filled with hate and whose tongue is set on fire by hell.

In contrast to odious women, we have the masterpiece on God-fearing women in chapter 31. Christian women having the mind of Christ are wonderful people to be around. So wonderful is the godly wife, the Book of Proverbs ends with the observation that "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

Finally, consider the earthly-hell created by the feminist movement that manufactures odious women who hate God, hate men, and hate the Ten Commandments. If the earth cannot endure the odious woman, what kind of insanity has gripped society to elect odious women to be Subcontractors in the Municipal Corporation in the District of Columbia and their territorial courts?

A warning about women coming to power: A "handmaid" is an unmarried woman who works for her mistress -- a housekeeper who may be a little bitter about taking orders. Anxious about her newly acquired authority, this promoted biddy feels compelled to prove to others that she is tough and able to rule. Drawing upon her feminine weakness received from Eve (Genesis 3:16) she shamelessly denounces, disparages, denigrates, and deprecates those poor saps under her authority. Any servant questioning her orders is considered a direct threat to her power. Bitter is the life of the man who has to work for a feminist.

24 There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise:

In his studies on zoology, Agur separates the excellent from the normal, the wise from the common; the superior from the ordinary.

25 The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;

The wise ant kingdom: The industriousness of the ant ought to educate us all. The marvel is in their collective, cooperative, peaceful, orderly organization. Jealousy and pride keep men from working together, but there is no tension among ants.

26 The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;

The wise cony kingdom: possibly rabbits, but more likely marmots (*Hyrax Syriacus*) or mice or some other vulnerable critter that seeks shelter in the rocks as a fortress. Their wisdom is that they have learned how to survive among predators without having natural attributes to fight off hunters.

27 The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;

The wise locust kingdom: Their wisdom is that they stay together and work independently without a centralized government ordering them what to do, how to behave, and what to wear.

28 The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

The spider kingdom: their wisdom is that they live like kings without spending shekels like royals.

29 There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going:

"comely" (*tov*) = good, beautiful, or noble. "going" (*yalak*) = walking, strutting, moving.

30 A lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any;

The lion has a mane, looks like a king, and has no fear of anything. Who can go toe-to-toe with a lion bare-handed?

31 A greyhound; an he goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up.

The greyhound (*mothen*) = slender hips. It is uncertain what animal is meant here: Dogs? Foxes? Cheetahs? Horses? Zebras? Men are fascinated at the movements of each. Translators chose the term "greyhound" because they

have thin loins, are extremely fast, and beautiful to watch. What man can out run one of these slender hip creatures?

Male goats (tayish) or rams love to butt heads which captivate their audience. What man can butt heads with a goat and still have his brain intact?

A king because they have a history of staying in power and squashing descent: What man can assault a king and keep his own head?

32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.

Agur, like Solomon, found scandalmongers absolutely disgusting to be around. His message to these profane babblers is "Zip your lip!"

33 Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

Agur, like Solomon, saw anger on a man as "ugly on an ape." His analogies for describing anger that caused contention among men as "the churning of milk that hardens the cream; the wrenching of nose" that causes bleeding. Agur's message to hotheads is that anger is an expensive luxury: "be angry and sin not" (Ephesians 4:26).

"Where there is anger there is pride" -- a forcing of one's will on a given matter. The man who gets angry digs two graves: one for his victim and one for himself.

The greatest challenge of all is not scaling Mt. Everest but conquering one's own temperament. Thus, the first requirement of leadership is emotional control.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

PROVERBS 31

THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL: SEVENTH SECTION OF PROVERBS (30:1-31:31)

`AM*ai WTr;îS.yI-rv,a] aF'ªm;÷ %l,m. laeäWml. yreb.DI



♦ In this chapter, Lemuel paints a beautiful portrait of his queen mother who is most likely the virtuous woman so delicately described below:

Proverbs 31:1 The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.

Ellicott translates this verse, "The words of Lemuel, king of Massâ."

Rabbis interpret "Lemuel" to be a pseudonym for Solomon and for no good reason.

The 5th Commandment demands that sons honor their father and mother. Unlike many cultures, mothers were highly venerated in Israel and mothers to kings received the title, "Queen Mother" (1 Kings 2:19; 15:13). Lemuel, a respectful son, credits his mother for the following vital lessons of life.

Admonitions from a devout father received from his devout mother

2 What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?

These are the words of Lemuel's mother who expresses humility and reticence to instruct this future king. Perhaps, the birth of Lemuel was in response to his mother's vows / prayers for a wise son.

Admonition to avoid women

3 Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

This verse takes us from Lemuel's childhood to his manhood. Now a father himself, he provides instruction for his son -- instruction he received from his godly mother.

Lemuel's mother understood the temptations that would rise up like monsters to devour her son. Likewise, Lemuel passes on these lessons to his son.

The first monster that young men face is the tasty delights that steamy women offer.

He warns his son not to give his mind, emotions, body, or financial resources to these pretty little things in satin dresses and purple robes. Don't be fooled. Don't be captured. Control yourself and guard your whole man! Looks aren't everything. Watch out for pig-ugly under the lipstick. Marriage is fine, but freelancing is not.

Admonition to avoid alcohol

4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:

The second monster a young man faces is dissipation through strong wine; that is, don't indulge in these zing-zang pleasures. You must control it, or it will control you. The wine of concern here is not the adding of wine to water, but drinking red wine dripping with additives that produce intoxication.

Because of their special calling in life, kings had to be alert and in control of their faculties all times. A drunken king is a senile ruler that endangers the whole nation.

5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

Lemuel discouraged his son from drinking cocktails because drunkenness causes forgetfulness of God's law. And, **there is no greater tragedy in life than the neglect and forgetfulness of God's law.**

Drunkenness deprives a man of his reason and sensibilities -- something kings cannot afford to lose.

Moreover, in hearing disputes, kings had to be at their judicial best in order to make fair decisions. Because drunkenness impairs personal judgment, kings had to abstain from zesty wines spiced with intoxicants.

6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.

Lemuel is not suggesting all men abstain from strong drink; only, that the future prince who held the destiny of the nation in the palm of his hands refrain from inebriating beverages.

Everything has a purpose. Wine is good for one's health and finds its purpose in (1) comforting the sick and dying, and (2) as a comfort for the

clinically depressed. Wine, however superficial, does relieve men of their root fears and cares.

7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

Lemuel links poverty with depression; and, wine as a sedative for the depressed poor.

Admonition to protect the vulnerable

8 Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

The third monster a young man has to face is egomania and the challenge to escape the orbit of self-centeredness, narcissism, and hedonism. Lemuel admonishes his son to get involved with the concerns of the weak and afflicted . . . to become an advocate for the causes of poor.

Admonition to judge righteously

9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

The fourth monster this young prince had to face was incompetence and neglect of duty; that is, this young prince would have to work at being righteous, fair, just and discerning in his career as a king. Kings decide disputes. These legal matters require judges to be at their judicial best . . . to act judicially without prejudice for the good of the people and of the nation.

That man is made in the image of God makes justice possible, but man's inclination to sin makes righteousness and sobriety necessary. Truth never damages the cause of justice, but lies threaten the whole system of law and order. The foundation of a civil society is not democracy but devotion to God's law -- not in the will of the People, but in the will of God. Lose sight of God's law and justice-mercy disappears.

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN: SECTION EIGHT (31:10-31)

ac' m.yl ymiä lyIx;â-tv,ae(

The virtuous woman is the Biblical model for all Christian women in every age and every culture! She is set in contrast to the seductive vixen that robs men of virtue and drain them of manliness in verse 3.

Possibly, Lemuel is describing the golden assets of his queen mother.

All Christian women are aware of this passage of Scripture. Most chuckle when they read it, but very few take it seriously. Most women do NOT want to be like this precious gem. Modernists want to be a cross between the painted women on the front cover of Cosmopolitan Magazine and Jessica Rabbit. Great Christian women are a cross between Betty Crocker and Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, feminists in the church hate the Proverbs 31 model (29:10) because their own pea-size brains pumped full of secular nonsense tells them that to be important they must escape kitchen duty and do the paper shuffle in the push and shove of Wall Street.

See Titus 2, 1 Timothy 3, and 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 for NT references regarding the woman's roll.

Her value

10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

Two assets are more valuable than rubies: wisdom and the virtuous woman or *ishshah tzaddika*:

Job 28:18 No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.

"Who can find a virtuous woman?" The word "virtue" (*chayil*) is used twice in Proverbs (12:4; 31:10) and it refers to one's strength and virtue. The word is translated "wealth" in Genesis 34:29; "army" in Exodus 14:4, 9; courage in Numbers 24:18; and to strike fear into the nations in Deuteronomy 2:25.

This is a question. The answer is closer to "nobody" than "somebody." Neither David nor Solomon found this prize (Ecclesiastes 7:26), but Boaz and Elkanah discovered these treasures in Ruth and Hannah (Ruth 2; 1 Samuel 1-2).

A man can't buy this gem, he's not rich enough . . . and besides, she's not for sale.

Her trustworthiness

11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

The virtuous woman holds the heart of her husband in the palm of her hands. It is hers to crush or hers to set free to be the man God calls him to be. She chooses freedom for him and a life of service for herself. Taking up the cross, she follows God's will for her life. What a gem?

It is not easy for a man to be emotionally vulnerable and to trust his wife with his precious all . . . but this man did. Likewise, it is not easy for woman to let go of the reigns over her husband . . . but this woman did. In so doing,

she overcame the curse of Eve and her natural impulse to micromanage her husband (Genesis 3:16). But, it gets better still. Not only did she let go of her impulse to control her husband, she submitted herself to him as head of the home and let him guide her.

Her good

12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Instead of being a harping bloodsucker that drains a man of his will to live, this woman improved the man by ministering to his needs and bringing joy into his life. This woman pursued his interest and promoted his honor.

Men are easy to please as they only have three basic needs: respect, affection, and a hot meal. Most wives can't fulfill any of these, but virtuous women meet all of their husband's needs and then some.

Her hands

13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

The outstanding feature of this woman was not her lips or her hips, but her cracked and chaffed hands. The Spirit draws attention to this woman's hands which He mentions six times in this passage. He mentions no other physical features of this woman. Why?

She did not have painted finger nails nor would her hands make it on the cover of Beyoutiful Magazine. Her palms showed evidence of love: short broken nails, chapped, calloused, cut and rough from milking goats, weaving blankets, sewing clothes, cooking meals, washing dishes, making candles, and brushing her children's hair with a smile on her face. This woman had no tattoos on her hips. The scars on her hands and her work in the home declare her honor.

Her commercial skills

14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

This woman is a shopper's shopper with coupons in hand and with an eye for quality products at reasonable prices. "Ships" is plural. This patron visits local farmer's markets, camel caravan markets, and shipping-freight markets in search of merchandise for her family.

Her daily habits

15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

This matron is an early-bird rising before the rooster crows to prepare meals for her husband, children, and servants.

Modern women don't have handmaids, they have mechanical servants: washing machines, dryers, electric lights, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, and other tools that service the needs of a household.

Her investment savvy

16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She is not a careless and reckless spender, but a careful investor that knows how to navigate on the rough seas of commerce. An acute observer of real estate sales and market trends, she unilaterally purchases usable property - a vineyard to grow grapes and to supply the needs of her family. The Spirit mentions her precious hands a second time. This time they are in the dirt.

Her strength

17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

This description is not a reference to her muscles or her physical strength . . . but to her moral courage. Often tired, she had to force herself to do chores - a sign of mind over matter, and the will over the cravings of the body.

Her work day

18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

Acquiring good merchandise informs us this is not a bland Walmart dog wag wearing spandex suckin' on a bottle of Mountain Dew, but a woman with discriminating tastes -- a matron in pursuit of excellence. We learn she is not only an early bird but a night owl. Sleep? Yes, she sleeps, but it doesn't control her.

19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

This beauty mastered the spinning wheel like modern wives excel in sewing skills. She's a pragmatist, not a dreamy idealist trying to solve the problems in international politics with no ring on their left hand.

Under like modern women who have divided loyalties to a husband, family, friends, bosses, church organizations, and political party promotions, this woman is focused on her family – and God has special rewards for these kind of women.

Her kindness

20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

This woman is not a self-centered narcissist, she is moved with compassion for the poor and does all she can to relieve their suffering.

Her provision for the family

21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

This woman clothes her family in raiment fit for a royal family. "Scarlet" is the regal color of kings. Even the color "scarlet" feels warm.

Her regal dress

22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

"coverings" and "tapestry" refer to blankets and bed coverings. She is clothed -- a modest woman dressing in the finest fabrics; that is, she clads herself in feminine vestments fit for a queen.

Her husband and his status

23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

Her care in the home frees her husband to take part in legal and commercial matters at the city gates.

Her home business

24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

She not only makes clothes for her family, but she has a wholesale business providing homemade clothing to city merchants.

Her character and confidence

25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

"Strength" and "honor" refer to her sparkling character. Because she works and supplies the needs of her family she not only has no fear of the future, the joy of her accomplishments and the pride in her work twinkle with confidence on her happy face.

Her kind wisdom

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

Because of the chatty nature of most women, Rabbis teach that a good woman is silent. This woman was not a chatterbox nor did she take a vow of silence. When she opens her mouth, she speaks with gold-plated wisdom.

Her focus

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

This woman captures the attention of the Spirit from his watchtower in heaven because of the efficient and refreshing manner in which she balances her duties and manages the details of her domestic calling. By using the verb "looketh well" and the noun "bread of idleness" the Spirit draws attention to this woman's intelligent perceptions and her dutifulness to prosper her family business.

Her praise

28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Neither her husband or her children are mumbling moaners; rather, they only have platinum praises for this cherished mother. All their thoughts about this golden treasure to the family tastes like honey.

Her excellence

29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

The phrase "many daughters" is a tender term of affection. "Virtuously" (chayil) refers to one's strength -- the power of an army.

Not only do her husband and children praise her, the Spirit of God sheds light on her beauty and supremacy -- she excels above all the blond bombshells in the market place.

Her inspiration

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

"Favour" (chen) refers to "graces," assets, or "charm."

The key to this woman's success is that she works under the eye of the Lord; that is, she is a God-conscious woman and not a man-conscious social climber.

She works to please him when only He can see and judge. She is not a people-pleaser; rather, she walks in a "manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10).

Men love charm and beauty. The world has hundreds of industries dedicated to enhancing the allure and glamour of women, but these coveted features are deceitful because they add nothing to the family and more often than not they disguise the ugly sins of anger and bitterness. But, the crown of glory on this lovely woman is the fear of the LORD -- a golden asset that honors the sovereignty, holiness, and majesty of the one, true God -- the expression of her faith.

Her reward

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

"her own works praise her in the gates;" observant men count her works and name them one by one. The mere mentioning of them trumpets her worth . . . and no words can add to her orchestra of honor.

This lovely portrait of a godly woman is an ideal presentation designed to be a model for pious women. Don't be discouraged. Life involves time and growth. Grow in the fear of the Lord. Employ your hands; develop life skills; and cloth your tongue with kindness. Set your sights on pleasing the Lord and one day people will rise up to sing your praises.

Remember the Hope: Our Heavenly Father is the God of recovery Who sent His only Son to save His people from their sins - (Matthew 1:21).

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