

CHAPTER 15

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Can you fight a pillow? Impossible. The pillow will take any blows you give it without hitting back. This is no fight; your punches are absorbed, and the pillow is not hurt; so you quickly give up, and the fight is over.

If only we could always be pillows to anger. How can there be a fight, when one party simply turns the other cheek (*Matthew 5:38-42*)?

Truly, here is one of the Holy Spirit's most valuable Proverbs.

If you remember this rule, you can handle every angry adversary and any confrontation.

If everyone practiced this rule, peace would be increased in every place. What A Blessed Rule, From The Prince Of Peace!

A common phrase from schoolyards to explain fighting declares, "It takes two to fight." How true! **If** either party were to stop fighting and show kindness, every fight would end.

Provocative and offensive words, the ones we naturally think of when angry, confronted, or defending ourselves in pride, cause every fight to escalate and continue.

Sometimes offensive words, are rightly called "fighting words." A fight will get worse and do much greater damage, unless you quickly bring the contention to an end (*Proverbs 17:14; 26:21*).

If a party is angry with you, even **if** it is your fault, you can end the matter peaceably by responding gently and kindly, rather than with your own anger in defense (*Proverbs 12:16; 15:18; 29:22*).

Reader, you can and should crush your pride and end the fight. The rule works with family members, job situations, the government, or anyone else. (*Proverbs 13:10; 21:24; 28:25*)

Solomon taught great fear of kings, for kings were very dreadful (*Proverbs 19:12; 20:2*).

But he also taught even their wrath could be pacified by yielding (*Proverbs 16:14; Ecclesiastes 10:4*).

Gentle words are your most powerful weapon against an offended prince, or anyone else (*Proverbs 25:15*).

This is godly peacemaking. Jesus promised blessing on peacemakers (*Matthew 5:9*), and

Jesus taught those who may have offended another to go and be reconciled to them (*Matthew 5:23-26*).

Jesus applied our Proverb by teaching you to agree quickly with your adversary to bring matters to an end.

The Spirit of Christ, which every true saint desires to have, is peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, and makes peace actively (*James 3:17-18*).

The sons of Zeruiah, David's nephews, were too hard for him (*2Samuel 3:39*).

Jesus rebuked, the sons of thunder, James and John, for their ungodly spirit (*Luke 9:55*).

The Lord save us from fighting spirits and give us the meek and gentle spirit of Christ (*2Corinthians 10:1*).

Proverbs 15:2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

You can say the wrong thing. And you can say the right thing the wrong way, or at the wrong time, or to the wrong person.

Wisdom

What To Say-How To Say It When To Say It-Whom To Say It. Four Factors Of Godly Speech!

Truth is not enough. Do you know how, when, and to whom to speak the truth? Fools babble without regard to these four factors of godly speech.

The Holy Spirit taught often that speech is one of the most obvious signs of wisdom or folly (*Proverbs 10:18-19; 15:28; 17:27-28; 18:6-7; 29:11; Ecclesiastes 10:11-14*).

A wise man or a fool can be easily discerned, by his speech. Speech which is measured by content, manner, timing, and audience. The key to this Proverb is the qualifying adverb "*aright*."

What is godly content? The Proverb says wise men speak knowledge. They do not belch vain opinions, which fools love to do.

Wise men speak knowledge acceptably, but a fool babbles offensively without knowing of what he is saying.

Wise men study thoughtfully before they speak (*Proverbs 15:28*).

Wise men crave Words of truth (*Proverbs 22:17-21*).

Wise men know words contrary to Scripture are totally worthless (*Isaiah 8:20*).

Wise men want to edify when they speak (*Ephesians 4:29*).

Wise men speak only **if** they have the truth (*Proverbs 16:23*).

Wise men speak when it is important to the hearers (*Proverbs 29:11*).

Wise men cut their words in half (*Proverbs 17:27-28*).
What is a godly manner? The Proverb says wise men speak "aright", which means rightly, correctly, and properly.

Gracious speech is the most acceptable speech (*Proverbs 22:11; Ecclesiastes 10:12*).

The Lord Jesus spoke this way (*Psalms 45:2; Luke 4:22*).

It is a commandment to speak this way (*Colossians 4:6*).

Gracious speech is agreeable, charming, courteous, gentle, kind, pleasing, polite, merciful, and thankful.

Gracious speech seeks the love of others with each word (*Proverbs 22:1; 24:26; 25:11*).

What is godly timing? A wise man listens before speaking (*James 1:19*).

A wise man makes sure he knows the situation before talking (*Proverbs 15:23; 18:13; John 7:24*).

A wise man alters his speech for his audience (*Proverbs 25:20; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23*).

A wise man lets the knowledgeable speak first (*Job 32:4-7*).

A wise man knows that haste in speech makes him worse than a fool (*Proverbs 29:20*).

Especially is this true, in the house of God (*Ecclesiastes 5:1-7*). Slow down! Listen first, think second, and speak last!

What is a godly audience? Not all deserve Words of Truth spoken graciously at the right time:

Ignore fools after an initial rebuke (*Proverbs 26:4-5*).

Avoid scorners altogether (*Proverbs 9:7-8*).

The Lord Jesus taught this wise rule. Warn the unruly, exhort saints, comfort the feeble-minded, rebuke sinners, and train children (*Matthew 7:6; Leviticus 19:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 10:25*).

Knowledge and truth do not allow speaking any way you wish. Everything, including speech, must be done without offence in Jesus' name (*1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Colossians 3:17*).

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Where will you hide from the LORD? David said, he could not hide in heaven, or hell, the farthest parts of the sea, or in darkness (*Psalms 139:7-12*).

God is everywhere to see everything (*Jeremiah 23:24*).

God is not watching from a distance, as one pagan lied in her popular song. What can you hide from the LORD? David could not hide his thoughts, dreams, or unspoken words (*Psalms 139:1-6*).

Even the intents of the heart are known by God (*Proverbs 15:11; Hebrews 4:12*).

What Will God Overlook? Nothing!

The LORD is in His Holy Temple! His eyelids see all of your hypocrisies, sins, and evil thoughts (*Psalms 11:4; Habakkuk 1:13*).

No matter where you go or what you try to hide, the LORD sees and knows it all. All your ways are naked and opened to the LORD's all-seeing eyes (*Proverbs 5:21; Job 34:21-22; Hebrews 4:13*).

So reader, What is hidden in your bedroom? The LORD sees it, and knows why you have it.

Achan buried stolen stuff in his tent, but the Lord showed it to Joshua; and he and his family were stoned and burned for it (*Joshua 7:1-26*).

What is hidden in your heart? The LORD sees it all! Be sure your sin will find you out! God gave Moses these precious Words (*Numbers 32:23*).

You cannot hide sin, from God. He sees and knows it all, and there is a payment for it! The eyes of the Lord should cause us to tremble in holy fear with any thought of sin.

Men have lied to themselves that God does not see (*Job 22:13-14; Psalms 10:11; 73:11; 94:7; Ezekiel 8:12; 9:9*).

Reader reject such dangerous folly, for it is Satan lying to you.

The LORD also sees your good works. He does not miss a single prayer you make in secret (*Matthew 6:1-8*).

Every good thing you have done will be remembered in the great Day of Judgment (*Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:31-40*).

Christian woman, the LORD sees all you do for your husband and children. Comfort yourself at the end of a long day that your Heavenly Father sees and cares. Remember the case of poor Hagar, the Lord saw her and rescued her in great need (*Genesis 16:1-14*).

God sees all your afflictions, so be comforted in any distress. God even collects and bottles our tears and writes them in His book (*Psalms 56:8*)!

Not a sparrow can fall without His providential care, and you are of more value than many sparrows. Trust Him today.

Proverbs 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

Here is a precious Proverb about speech from King Solomon.

If you appreciate the literary creativity of a Proverb, then you have plenty to consider in this one.

If you crave wisdom and the instruction to live a prosperous life, God has sent understanding from heaven for you.

**You Are Either
A Tree Of Life To Others
Or
A Breach In Their Spirit!**

Reader, what do others think when you talk? Are they delighted? Do they hear your words with pleasure and rewarded with profit? Are your words the helpful Words of truth and wisdom? Do you edify your hearers with kind and uplifting speech?

Are family and friends strengthened by your gracious words? Do you motivate others to godliness and zeal? Are they thankful to have you around? Are you asked for advice? Do you cause hearts to sing?

Reader, is your speech contrary, discouraging, and offensive? Do others consider you irritating and obnoxious and avoid you because of your mouth? Are family and friends tired of your foolish talking, jesting, criticizing, or whining?

Do you leave hearers bleeding from sarcastic cuts and defeated by negative comments? Are others angry about your regular backbiting and talebearing? Are you known as never being cheerful or thankful?

You see you are either a tree of life to others or a breach in their spirit. You either heal and help with your words, or you hurt and injure.

You either instruct and uplift, or you corrupt and offend. *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof"* (*Proverbs 18:21*).

You can be a tree of life, providing kind and useful words to help others; or you can be a breach in their spirit, discouraging and irritating them.

A wholesome tongue is a metonym for good and helpful speech. Such a man, speaks carefully for the pleasure and profit of hearers. He has a healthful effect on others (*Proverbs 12:18*).

Every person can benefit, from such a man, that hears him speak. He chooses his words carefully from a pure heart, does not say more than necessary, and seeks to improve every person he addresses.

Such a man, never wastes words in foolish banter or uses words to hurt. He studies before answering, and he knows the certain Words of truth for his answers (*Proverbs 15:28; 22:17-21*).

**Such A Man Is A Tree Of Life.
Here Is A Powerful Metaphor.**

He provides the fruit of knowledge and wisdom to others by his words (*Proverbs 10:21; 11:30; 15:7*).

Wise men love him and his words (*Proverbs 22:11; 24:26*).

Wise men know they are made better because of hearing his advice, counsel, instruction, reproofs, and warnings.

Such a man disperses knowledge to many, and men crave conversation with him. The simple pursue him, because he teaches them wisdom; the wise seek him, because he makes them yet wiser.

A perverse tongue, represents corrupt and evil speech that hurts and injures others (*Proverbs 12:18*).

This perverse tongue, is criticizing, filthy, and foolish, or it distinguishes whining person that is offensive to all good men.

This perverse tongue, irritates and offends hearers, for words are poorly chosen, the occasion inappropriate, the motives selfish, the content evil, and the effect destructive. Yet he keeps on talking. He is impossible to shut up.

This perverse tongue, spouts foolish answers to questions, sows discord among friends, and promotes sin (*Proverbs 6:19; 15:2, 28; 18:13*).

So what are the consequences of a perverse tongue?

Instead of being a tree of life by giving health and wisdom to others, it creates a breach in their spirit by its corrupt words.

What is a breach in the spirit? A broken, corrupted, damaged, or injured heart!

A corrupt tongue works ruin (*Proverbs 6:14; 12:18; 25:18, 20; 26:28; 1Corinthians 15:33*).

Many wives and children have been defeated and scarred by a cruel tongue. Many others have had reputations destroyed, relationships ruptured, hopes lost, and wisdom forfeited by perverse speech.

A man married to such a woman is in a terrible calamity (*Proverbs 30:21-23*).

A man is pained and tortured at home (*Proverbs 19:13; 21:9, 19; 25:24*)!

A man married to such a woman is shamed and disgraced in public. It would be better to camp alone in the wilderness than to be stuck with this cruel creature (*Proverbs 12:4; 25:15-16*)!

A man married to such a woman, has been slowly bludgeoned to death, by the spirit of an overbearing, nagging, questioning, and suggesting woman.

But a gracious woman, with a mouth speaking kindness and wisdom, is adored and honored by all (*Proverbs 11:16; 31:26*).

A gracious woman, is incredibly rare, and she is sought after by all wise men.

Take Heed, your future happiness or pain is at stake here! Young woman, it is a meek and quiet spirit directing your tongue that is most beautifying (*1Peter 3:3-4*).

Young woman, forget the false glamour of hair, makeup, and clothing! Cultivate this precious spirit!

Reader as a parent, you must teach and enforce a wholesome tongue in your children. **If** this were done, there would be more trees of life in the world. You must eliminate Hollywood's arrogance, jesting, filth, disrespect, and sarcasm.

Children do not have a right to say what they are thinking. Children have a responsibility to think and say what is right!

Reader, as a parent must require your children to speak to you with the greatest respect and to each other with constant kindness and helpfulness. Where are the

mothers that washed a child's mouth with soap for breaking either rule!

How will you speak to your spouse today? How will you address you subordinates, colleagues, or superiors at work? How will you talk to your children or your parents?

Put a guard before your lips, and do not speak unless you have something healthful and wholesome to say that will make your hearers better by the sounds you make in their ears.

Your reputation depends on what you say today! Are you a tree of life or a breach in the spirit?

Here is a further lesson from this wonderful Proverb: Your mouth can only say what is in your heart (*Matthew 12:33-37*).

If You Have Not Thought It You Will Not Say It!

You Cannot Correct Your Speech Without Correcting Your Heart!

A pure heart creates gracious speech that delights even kings (*Proverbs 22:11*).

Therefore, keeping your heart is a priority (*Proverbs 4:23*).

Every sin begins in the heart, and this is true of perverse speech as well (*James 1:13-16; 3:1-18*).

No one spoke, like Jesus of Nazareth (*Psalms 50:4; Luke 4:22*).

Even Jesus' enemies admitted He had no peer in speech (*John 7:46*).

Jesus caused the hearts of good men to burn with joy and understanding (*Luke 24:32*).

The common people heard him gladly (*Matthew 12:37*).

Every minister is bound to follow His holy example of speech (*2Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:7-8*).

Since you have the glorious gospel to proclaim, make sure you do not pollute it with the folly of man.

God gave you a tongue to glorify Him and help others (*Psalms 30:12; 108:1; Malachi 3:16; 1Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 10:24-25*).

Magnifying the LORD is one of the grandest ways to honor God and uplift others (*Psalms 34:1-3*).

Will your funeral be cause to reflect on how your tongue was a tree of life to many, or a breach of the

spirit? Will there be grief for the loss of your words? Or relief that your negative and stinging tongue is gone?

You can have a wholesome tongue and be a tree of life to others.

To do so, your heart must be pure before God, and your mind must be filled with His Word, and you must learn the wise rules for speech, contained in the Bible (*Proverbs 16:23; Psalm 19:7-11; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6*).

You Always Answer For Your Choices To Both God And Men.

Proverbs 15:5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

Son, Give me your heart (*Proverbs 23:26*)!

This Proverb is for you! Let it sink deep in your soul! God in infinite wisdom gave you to me, to train to be great in life.

If you reject or resent instruction, you are making a foolish mistake and will suffer consequences.

If you receive and obey correction and reproofs, you are wise and will be great. I promise you! And I love you!

As is true with all the Proverbs, there is also wisdom for girls and mothers here. The same rules apply to daughters hearing their father's instruction and reproofs. And mothers may also give instruction and reproofs to sons and daughters, along with fathers (*Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; 31:1*).

Son, God gave me several advantages to help you. Only foolish and wild sons reject a father's advice and warnings.

Wise sons will use their father's advantages, to be even greater in life. And this is my great desire for you, to outstrip and surpass me; but you will only do it by receiving my experience and wisdom.

How do you respond to instruction and reproof?

- Do you bristle? Does your face cloud up with rebellion?
- Do you argue or get bitter?
- Do you sneak around your father's rules?
- Do you quietly listen with intent to disobey?
- Do you think I am ignorant and not care about you?

These are lying sins from hell; they will take you to destruction and trouble! Trust me!

A prudent and wise son with a great future will seek his father's counsel and listen eagerly to any advice he can gather.

A prudent and wise son will not be offended by correction, restrictions, or repeated warnings.

Son, can I convince you to trust me? There are reasons I can help you, and I want to give them to you. Will you consider why God chose me to be your father?

Consider my age. I have already lived your life, and far beyond. I have lived as an adult, to reflect on what would be best for you.

The next five years of your life, which you cannot see, are old experiences with me.

- I have already lived this year and next year of your life.
- I already know what they are like.
- I learned what worked and what did not work.
- I suffered, and I succeeded. And I want you to do better.

Consider my perspective. Due to the vanity of youth, you have a shorter-term view of life. You are worried about today. But I am worried about twenty-five years from now, when you will face difficulties and responsibilities you cannot even perceive.

You cannot look ahead like I can look ahead, son, because I am already there. A pretty girl gets you excited, but I look for the character needed for a happy silver anniversary.

Consider my affection. I loved you the first time I saw you. I never want you to be hurt. No matter whom you marry or meet in life, they will not love you as much as I love you. They cannot.

Their love will be mixed with selfish motives, unlike mine. A wonderful wife may love you, but she will not have your perfection before God and man as her chief goal. But that is my only goal for you, son!

Consider my experience. Are you thinking about a car? I bought and sold cars before you were born. Are you thinking about a wife? I have been married more days than you have had breath. Are you thinking about dealing with an enemy? I have had many enemies; I have survived them; I can help you. I have done what you do not know how to do. Trust me. I have experienced pain and trouble, and I want to save you from all of it.

Consider my knowledge of you. I was analyzing you before you knew you were alive. I have memories of years of your life that you cannot recall. I am not blinded by the passions of your deceitful heart. You are lost in many ways right now due to your youth, but I can see clearly what would be best for you. I have

watched you react to many situations as a child, and I know you better than you know you. Let me help you, son.

Consider my neutrality. I am not blinded, or even influenced, by passion for a girl, car, or other foolish pursuit that captivates you. I am an objective observer. I am an impassioned bystander, except I love you and want the best for you. The lusts and peer pressure that control you at times are not in me. I just see the cold facts and what they will cost you in the future. **If** you want an objective opinion, trust my suggestions.

Consider my origin. You did not pick me, and I did not pick you. How are we father and son? God chose me from three billion men to be your father. God chose you to be my son. **If** you resent me, you resent the Lord's choice. There was no accident in this arrangement at all. God knew what you would need to be great, and He helped me learn those things to help you now. God put us together, son.

Consider my beliefs. I am not just your biological source of life. I am a son of the Most High God. I am a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am bound by the fear of the Lord, the love of Christ, and the truth of Holy Scripture to guide you in the wisdom of heaven. My thoughts of you and for you to be grounded in the Word of God. My religion is the only true religion, and God measures everything I say and do toward you. Trust me.

Son, as a father, tell your sons these things and help them understand them. Do not let your son walk away from a confrontation without reminding him of the choice he is making right then.

The choice of wisdom and parental honor by loving and obeying you or one of devilish wickedness and parental dishonor by rejecting you. Tell him the consequences.

Son, as a father, are you giving instruction and reproof? Or is your son floundering through life without much from his father. You had better be helping him, or you are a bigger fool, for you are sacrificing a precious life entrusted to you by GOD. Get with it!

There is only one perfect, loving Father. Thank you, God, for being my Father! Forgive me for every time I have despised and disregarded your instruction and reproofs.

Proverbs 15:6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

Righteousness is true treasure! For righteousness is wealth that will last eternally, being the spiritual gold of God and the characteristic of the new earth, (**2Peter 3:13**).

To be born and reared in a godly home is to have a future understanding of all things new. Those born in a home where righteousness is the chief characteristic are rich, though they may not possess anything of this world's goods,

Those who are rich, without being righteous, shall have trouble along with, the increasing of their riches. *"Godliness with contentment with what one has is great gain," (1Timothy 6:6-8, 17-19).*

There is also troublesome wealth as well. *"In the revenues of the wicked is trouble."* The wealth of the wicked, instead of yielding real happiness, engenders anxieties, jealousies, apprehensions, and a greatly trouble the spirit.

The wicked man, often in getting his riches, has trouble. He has to go against the dictates of his conscience, and to war with the nobler instincts of his being. The wealth of worldly men increases their fears and suspicions.

Men who want to get rich fall into temptation and can be trapped into many foolish and harmful desires, that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with much grief (**1Timothy 6:9-10**).

The wealth of worldly men, build upon to their passions. The wealth of these worldly men, renders the fear of death more distressing.

In keeping riches and wealth, the wicked man has trouble. He holds unto riches with a nervous grasp, fearing lest they should be snatched from his clutch. In leaving riches he has trouble. His wealth gives terror to his dying-bed. *"There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof, to their hurt."* (**Ecclesiastes 5:13**).

The income of the wicked brings them trouble: "Trouble" here signifies the calamity that one person's actions bring upon others.

Consider the case of Achan, who coveted and took the Babylonian garment. His wife and children paid the ultimate price for Achan's greed. (**Joshua 7:18-26**).

Consider the incomes that the wicked have, brings trouble, for there is guilt and a curse: There is pride and passion, and envy and contention; and these are very troublesome lusts, which rob men of the joy of their revenues and make them troublesome to others.

Treasures appropriated unethically are worthless (**Proverbs 10:2**), *"The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death."* (**Proverbs 21:6**).

Also consider, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." (**Proverbs 23:5**).

But there are enjoyable riches. "In the house of the righteous is much treasure."

Whatever is possessed in the house of the righteous, whether children, friends, books, money, is a treasure. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked."

The righteous man enjoys what he has. His treasures have been: righteously won, are righteously held, and righteously used, and in all he has righteous enjoyment.

The Blessing Of Prosperity, is often the reward for righteousness. This is illustrated in the life of Abraham (**Genesis 14:22--15:1; Psalm 1:1-3**).

This is true only in part, there will always be exceptions (**Proverbs 8:21**).

The house of the righteous contains great treasure: "Treasure" is the noun, meaning "wealth". Even though the rich will trust in their wealth (**Proverbs 18:11**).

It does us well to remember that such wealth will not endure forever (**Proverbs 27:24**).

Other Proverbs of the happiness of the righteous, and the misery of the wicked: **Proverbs 10:6, 9, 16, 24, 25, 27-30; 11:3, 5-8, 18-21, 31; 12:2, 3, 7, 13, 14, 21, 26, 28; 13:6, 9, 14, 15, 21, 22, 25; 14:11, 14, 19, 32; 15:6, 8, 9, 24, 26, 29; 20:7; 21:12, 15, 16, 18, 21; 22:12; 28:10, 18; 29:6**.

Proverbs 15:7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so.

Wise Men Use Their Mouths To Give Knowledge

The Speech Of Fools Helps No One!

If you are wise, others will benefit by your words; **If** you are foolish, others will not profit.

A simple figure of speech is evident here. The two pink muscles decorating your mouth cannot hand out knowledge and neither can the fist-sized pump in your chest. These are metonyms for speech, your heart creates words and your lips articulate them.

Wise men use speech to help others, but fools do not. To understand Proverbs, you must learn to recognize simple figures like this, so the more difficult ones will be made easier.

Reader, how will you affect others today by your talking? Will you increase their knowledge? Or Will you merely fill their ears with noise and not profit them at all?

God gave you a heart and lips to praise Him and help others. And God gave you Scripture to fill your heart with knowledge, so you can have wonderful Words to speak (**Proverbs 22:17-21; 2Timothy 3:16-17**).

Words carefully chosen and wisely spoken are beautiful. God and men will hold you in high esteem and favor for both (**Proverbs 12:14, 18; 15:23; 16:13, 24; 22:11; 24:26; 25:11**).

A wise man uses such Words to feed many (**Proverbs 10:21**).

A wise man is a tree of life to those around him, but the words of fools are traps of sin and death (**Proverbs 11:30; 15:4**).

How many do you feed with your words? Fools talk a lot, but their words are just noise (**Ecclesiastes 5:3; 7:6; 10:12-14**).

So God condemned foolish talking and jesting as sins comparable to fornication and filthiness (**Ephesians 5:3-10**).

Let Every Disciple Of Christ Reject Such Speech!

What is knowledge? Knowledge is not trivial facts; it is not news about others; it is not casual conversation; it is not insignificant chatter; it is not worldly discourse. Knowledge is learned counsel that glorifies God and leads a person from sin and toward heaven and holiness.

Every believer can teach. Paul rebuked the Hebrew saints for their ignorance and continued speak of the need for teachers and simple instruction.

It is time for every believer to be able to teach others. But Hebrew believers squandered their learning and faculty of speech, so do many today (**Hebrews 5:12-14**).

Our Lord had the tongue of the learned and knew how to speak well (**Isaiah 50:4**).

Jesus used His faculty of speech to comfort, feed, warn, and rebuke many (**Isaiah 61:1-3**).

Reader, ignorance abounds, and others need you. Will you disperse the knowledge of God today with your mouth? Or will you fill the air with noise and foolishness?

Proverbs 15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

**A Contrast To Consider!
Does The LORD Despise Or Delight
In Your Worship?**

The LORD considers the worship of some an abomination. God does not just dislike their worship: He hates it! But He delights in the prayers of others. What a difference! Is your worship an abominable stench in His Holy nostrils? Or is He pleased with it and your prayers?

When wicked men worship God, no matter how accurate, sincere, or costly the effort, it is detestable, disgusting, and loathsome to Him He hates it (***Proverbs 21:27***)!

God told Israel, "*Incense is an abomination unto me.... Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them*" (***Isaiah 1:12-14***).

God also said: "*I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies*" (***Amos 5:21***).

God hates your sacrifices, prayers, and worship, **If** you come with sin in your life.

**Ritual Without Righteous Living
Is Obnoxious To God!**

God wants your obedience, not your worship! The sacrifice God seeks, is a broken and contrite heart (***Psalms 51:17***).

God did not want offerings from Israel: He wanted obedience (***Jeremiah 7:22-23***).

"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (***1Samuel 15:22***).

Fools put on suits, attend church, carry Bibles, sing hymns, bow heads, make prayers, and worship with sin in their lives!

Fools believe such religious exercises will appease God.

Fools think God will overlook their wickedness, because they attend church. But God hates their hypocrisy.

Fools keep up a pretense, for men to think more highly of them, but God will expose all hypocrites (***Proverbs 26:24-26; Job 27:8; Psalm 144:11-15***).

**Wicked Men Try To Find
Comfort In Ritualistic Religions.**

Israel worshipped Moses' brazen serpent (***2Kings 18:4***), the Ark of the Covenant (***1Samuel 4:3***), the temple (***Jeremiah 7:4***), and the Scriptures (***Jeremiah 8:8***). Catholics wear crucifixes; and Baptists hypocritically attend Bible study.

But these things have no saving power. They simply add condemnation to hypocrites, for the jealous God cannot tolerate the presumptive use of religion by pretenders.

**Unanswered Prayers
Are Your Fault Not God's!**

He always answers the righteous. He may not give them the answer they expect, but He always answers.

Here is how it is your fault! "*Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear*" (***Isaiah 59:1-2***).

Here again is how it is your fault!! "*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination*" (***Proverbs 28:9***).

Accuracy of worship, correctness of doctrine, and sincerity of worship have nothing to do with it. God does not care how accurate, correct, or sincere you are, **If** you come with less than a pure and trembling heart (***Isaiah 66:1-2***).

God does not want a bowed head; He wants a bowed heart (***Isaiah 58:3-7***).

Not working for God, is better than working hypocritically for God (***Revelation 3:15-16***).

Though the wicked man brings costly sacrifices; though he gives many hours of his time; though he leads the worship of God with great fervency; yet God rejects it for the simple and poor prayer of His humble saints! What a contrast!

No matter how much is given to God, the only thing He will accept is the humble petitions of the righteous.

God delights in the prayer of the upright. He hears and answers their prayers with pleasure. "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (***James 5:16***). "

The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (***Proverbs 15:29***).

If sinful fathers give good things to their children, how much more, will God give good things to His children that obey and please Him (**Matthew 7:11**)!

What causes God to despise your worship? A single unconfessed sin! David knew, "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*" (**Psalms 66:18**).

Peter wrote, "*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*" (**1 Peter 3:12**).

If you worship God with sin in your life, you are aggravating your horrible condition before Him. You will bring God's certain wrath down on your head. Examine yourself reader! Repent if necessary! Confess your sins!

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Worship Him with reverence and godly fear! For our God is a consuming fire!

Proverbs 15:9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

God hates the sin, but loves the sinner. When this Proverb is understood, it confirms the message of the rest of Scripture, that God abhors and loathes the lifestyle of wicked persons, and their prayers. This Proverb is not politically correct, but God does not care what men think!

Consider Current Thought. Sodomy is no longer an abomination to the LORD; it is gay! Adultery is no longer an abomination to the LORD; it is an affair! Rebellious children are no longer an abomination to the LORD; they are hyperactive!

But wise men will accept all of God's declarations and hate every contrary opinion (**Psalms 119:128**)!

The Proverb has two contrasted clauses that provide the full meaning. God hates the way of the wicked, and God loves the man pursuing righteousness.

By matching "*the way of the wicked*" with "*him that followeth after righteousness*," we learn that God hates the sinner's lifestyle and loves both the righteous man and his lifestyle. Note the change from sin to sinner in Solomon's list of seven things God hates (**Proverbs 6:16-19**).

It is important to understand that God loves all men. God gave all men opportunities, to receive the gift of salvation. **2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* However, when a man continually rejects this love gift, at some point man steps over the Threshold of Permanence, which is God's final appeal to him. The Holy Spirit no longer convicts him of his sin.

Consider what God says: **Proverbs 15:16** *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:* A man's cup gets filled with the six things that God hates; A man's cup overflows with the seventh abdominal thing. Now he has overflowed God's indignation.

Thus, it can be said, that the sinner in: **Proverbs 6:19** has crossed God's threshold line, this final rejection of God's free gift of salvation. The man receives no more redemption opportunities. His will (volition), has been given to him. God says "okay, do as you will I will take care of this at my final judgment!".

You can see this truth represented over and over in the Gospels. Our Lord would not give soul saving truth to those truth rejecters, and unbelievers because of their continuous rejection of His truth.

Example: **Matthew 13:12-15**, the Lord is explaining his parable of the Sower.

Clearly Jesus' explanation given to His disciples, is because He knew the heart of these unbelievers and scoffers. They rejected His truth, and now in their hearts had passed beyond the point of accepting Him as Savior.

The Lord, gave up on giving them, any more soul saving truth. Study also **John 2:23-25; 5:34; 8:21-47**.

Consider the context. The previous Proverb is similar and helps reveal the hatred God has for sinful lifestyles. "*The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight*" (**Proverbs 15:8**).

God even hates the sacrifice of the wicked, his worship and religious activities. But He loves the prayers of the upright.

When a man chooses to sin against God, He despises and loathes that worship (**Proverbs 21:27; 28:9**).

Many think that good works will save them. What does Jesus Christ mean, when He says to the wicked on the Day of Judgment, "*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*" (**Matthew 7:23**). It should give you reason to pause, if you read the two verses prior, **Matthew 7:21-22**.

What else does the Bible say about those who work iniquity? David wrote, "*For thou art not a God that*

hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing ^{an untruth, a falsehood}: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." (Psalm 5:4-6).

But the Bible has more to say about God's discussed of the "way of the wicked." The Word of God says, "The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble." **Proverbs 4:19**;

And "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them." **Proverbs 12:26**;

And "The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down." **Psalm 146:9**.

God is Holy before He is anything else. God cannot and will not look approvingly on any evil (**Habakkuk 1:13**).

He cannot acquit the wicked (**Nahum 1:3**).

He cannot clear the guilty (**Exodus 34:7**).

God loves righteousness, and hates iniquity (**Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:9**).

He drowned the world, for wickedness, with a flood. He burned up the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins.

He annihilated the seven nations of Canaan.

The Word of God say, He is angry at the wicked every day (**Psalm 7:11**).

How can God love anyone, since all are sinners (**Psalm 14:1-3; Romans 3:23**)?

By the inputting the righteousness of Christ Jesus to those who believe! He knew who would believe in His Son before the world began God knew that they should be holy and blameless before Him in love (**Ephesians 1:3-4**)!

Because of their belief in His Son, God views these believers as perfectly holy in His sight!

God even predestinated, their sanctification, to become His sons by adoption, He has graciously chosen born again believers, by His own will, to make them acceptable (by the process of sanctification) in Christ (**Ephesians 1:5-6**)!

It is for this very important reason that the Bible speaks of Jesus Christ loving the Church (**Ephesians 5:25**).

Nothing interrupts this love of God for His people (**Romans 8:29-39**).

Jesus confirmed that He would not lose a single one that the Father had given Him to save (**John 6:38-39; 10:26-29; 17:2**).

Jesus also confirmed, that He lovingly, chastens His own children, and not the bastards (**Hebrews 12:6-8**).

Men come into this world as fools, and the vast majority, remain fools. Only those born again by the Spirit of God and fear God and tremble at His Word, have a heart to see and believe The Truth (**John 3:3; 8:47**).

It is only they who can understand the things of God (**1Corinthians 2:14; 2Corinthians 4:3-4; 2Thessalonians 2:9-14**).

Proverbs 15:10 Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.

Prove the character of your soul! Can you take correction? Can you take it gladly? Do you appreciate reproof? Do you appreciate the reprover?

Your Attitude Toward Correction And Reproof Says More About Your Heart Than Any Other Measure.

Fools and scorners hate correction and reproof, but both are going to die in their folly. This measure and warning are repeated themes of Solomon in Proverbs (**Proverbs 9:8; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:32; 29:1**)!

You arrived in this world ignorant and depraved. Your heart was dead to God and righteousness, and it was alive to rebellion and sin.

You were given parents, who corrected your childish antics and prepared you to survive life. They reproofed your youthful folly.

If you rebelled against them, then they and a harsh world punished you.

If God has graciously changed your heart through His saving grace, then the only way you can learn, the way of righteousness, is by correction and reproof. You need teachers to rebuke your folly and direct you to wisdom. God has chosen to do this primarily by parents, teachers and preachers.

If you take heed to the warnings and instruction from the Word of God you are prepared for success.

Remember, your depraved heart does not like to be corrected. It resents being reproofed. It does not like to be told you need to change.

Your depraved heart wants to keep its sins. You may even hate those who examine and condemn your conduct.

Reader, these corrections are the very means by which you acquire wisdom and are saved from life's pitfalls!

Don't resent what was ordained for your blessing and salvation? Because your depraved heart loves its own folly!

Two rules are taught in this Proverb.

1. **If** you dislike correction, it proves you have forsaken the way of righteousness and wisdom. A man seeking knowledge and truth does not have such a rebellious spirit.
2. **If** you hate reproof, you will die. Ignorance will trap you, and rebellion will condemn you. Folly and sin will certainly destroy you.

How do ignorant men obtain truth and wisdom? Obviously, they must have warnings and rebukes.

If you resent these means for obtaining wisdom, then you are going to die in your stupidity and stubbornness. The snares of wicked men will deceive you; the various authorities in life will condemn you; and God will ultimately destroy you.

So, examine your heart! Do you love correction and reproof? Do you love the parents, teachers and pastors who correct and reprove you? This is the measure of your character and wisdom.

If you have a problem with being told you are wrong or resenting those who rebuke you, humble yourself before God and beg for His mercy, before it is too late.

Proverbs 15:11 Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

If you think the desires and fantasies of your heart are your own, you are terribly mistaken.

Your secret thoughts are fully known in every aspect and detail to God (***Psalms 44:21***).

Your heart and mind are open books to God. No amount of deception or hypocrisy can disguise them.

Solomon wrote earlier inspired by the Holy Spirit: *the eyes of the Lord behold everything in every place* (***Proverbs 15:3***).

The Holy Spirit also had him write that God will bring every single one of your thoughts and fantasies into judgment, on a day not far away (***Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:16; 1Corinthians 4:5; Revelation 2:23***).

God has seen every thought in your heart. Why would you fear men, who cannot do anything to you, but not fear God, who can cast your body and soul into hell (***Luke 12:4-5***)?

How do the mere thoughts of others modify your conduct, but the fearful implication of God knowing every desire of your heart does not?

One look from God's face will exceed any angry look from men (***Revelation 20:11***).

The omniscient God knows the small details of hell and destruction (***Job 26:6***).

God Also Knows All The Intents Of Your Heart.

There is no aspect of destruction in the earth, corruption of the dead in graves, or torment of a soul in hell that the Lord of creation does not know and understand them altogether.

God knows you perfectly and completely! Do not deceive yourself by thinking that God does not hear or see (***Psalms 97:7-9***).

How Vast The Region Of The Dead? How Many Billions Are Tormented There?

How many bodies are corrupting in the earth, yet God has not lost a single molecule of any one of them, for God will raise them all to stand before Him (***John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15***).

Are you impressed by God's infinite knowledge? He knows your heart even better than you! And you will answer for every thought to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has the keys of hell and of death (***Revelation 1:18***).

David once spoke of hiding in heaven or hell, but he knew that God would be in both places knowing every thought of his heart, every word in his tongue, and every movement of his body (***Psalms 139:1-13***).

All things, every thought and intent of your heart, are completely opened to the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ (***Hebrews 4:12-14***).

Though you cannot know the wickedness of your own heart, God knows it perfectly (***Jeremiah 17:9-10***).

Adam and Eve hid among the trees of Eden, but the LORD knew where they were, and judged them (***Genesis 3:7-12***).

Cain tried to hide the murder of Abel, but the LORD heard Abel's blood crying for vengeance (***Genesis 4:8-12***).

The Lord Jesus Christ knew the very details of Judas' plot, to betray Him for a few pieces of silver (***John 6:64***).

And the fair words of Ananias and Sapphira could not save them from the Lord (*Acts 5:1-11*).

Though the Pharisees, proud religious hypocrites, who measured themselves by outward appearance, kept most of their hatred bottled up inside, Jesus knew their very thoughts throughout His dealings with them (*Matthew 9:4; 12:25; Luke 7:39-40*).

And you reader, may have secret thoughts unknown to all others, but He knows them perfectly (*Psalms 44:21*).

God does not consider them trifles, for even the very thought of foolishness is sin (*Proverbs 24:9*).

Who always wins a debate of one? You do! When you allow a secret fantasy or thought into your mind, you can convince yourself it is allowable or you can get away with it, because you are exposing it to no one but yourself.

However, God has already seen your imagination and condemned it, no matter how highly you think of its ideas (*Proverbs 6:18; 16:2; 21:2*).

This especially applies to sexual fantasies, that you desperately want to hide (*Proverbs 5:19-23*).

If you are ever convinced that someone needs help, or **If** you are ever convicted to do something good, and you excuse yourself from doing it, the Lord saw this discussion in your heart that led to your dereliction of duty. He will repay (*Proverbs 24:11-12; James 4:17*).

Do not discuss within yourself any approval of sin either by commission or omission. Do not lie to yourself!

The Lesson Is Not Difficult! The Application Is!

Your heart, the world, and the devil want you to forget the omniscience of a Holy God. Humble yourself this moment and repent of every thought you have entertained in your heart that is contrary to God and His Word. **If** you do not, the Lord, who knows your heart better than you, perfectly, will hold you accountable for each one.

Reader, do you tremble before God and His Word (*Isaiah 66:2; Hebrews 12:28-29*)?

Take comfort in Peter's desperate appeal to Jesus Christ after His resurrection: "*Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee*" (*John 21:17*).

It is just as true that the omniscient God knows your good thoughts and intentions as well as your bad. But He has blotted out the latter and sanctified the former! Thank the LORD and always give Him the Glory and Honor!

Proverbs 15:12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.

Isolation Avoidance Are Often Signs Of Rebellious Scorn!

Scorners hate being taught or reprovved, so they often despise those who try to teach and reprove them.

Scorners will not go to them voluntarily, for they do not want to be told that their thoughts and ways are foolish.

Good men love those who teach and reprove them (*Proverbs 9:8; 25:12; 27:5-6,9; Psalm 141:5; John 3:21*).

Fools and scorners cannot stand them (*Proverbs 9:7-8; 12:15; 23:9; 2Chronicles 18:7; Amos 5:10; John 3:20*).

When a person resents or avoids a teacher, you have likely found a scorner. We are living in a generation of scorners. See the comments on *Proverbs 9:8; 27:5*.

Why do children isolate themselves and avoid parents? They do not want their sins discovered, and they do not want to be corrected (*Proverbs 13:1; 15:10*).

Why do people avoid church assemblies and isolate themselves when they are at church assemblies? Because they are scorners that think they are superior to the instruction and people there.

Wise parents pursue children who avoid them or their correction.

Wise parents also correct facial expressions or body language that shows a haughty or sullen spirit toward authority, instruction, or correction (*Proverbs 19:25; 21:11*).

The bud of scorn in a child must be nipped quickly and totally, unless you want hell in your home and future (*Proverbs 21:24; 22:10; 24:9*).

Not all scorners are verbal and direct; you must look for quiet scorners. Passive and quiet rebellion is just as wicked as active and noisy rebellion, but it is much harder to detect and deal with than the open sinner. Do not allow the devil to open this door into your home.

Why do "Christians" today want churches filled with entertainment, activities, and fables? Because they are scorners, and they hate being told what to do in their lives by Bible preachers (*2Timothy 4:1-4*).

So called "Christians" today want smooth things that coddle them (*Isaiah 30:9-11*).

Reader, do you love reproof from parents? from your pastor? from other church members? from your spouse? **If** not, what is your problem? Wise men love reproof! What sins are you hiding? Do you have a scornful spirit fighting against authority and correction?

The LORD will punish all scorners. So do not think you will get away with a wicked spirit toward His wise counselors (*Proverbs 3:34; 15:10; 19:29; 29:1; Psalm 18:26; Isaiah 29:20-21*).

Why did the world hate our Lord and crucify Him? Because He reproved their wicked works (*John 7:7*).

Yet Peter and others could not even be pushed away (*John 6:68*)!

Proverbs 15:13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

A smile is the best facial expression you can have. A joyful soul enhances your appearance more than anything else.

A happy face is a wonderful thing, and it is the result of a peaceful and contented heart.

A troubled heart clouds your face, as it saps your features and body of energy and vitality.

**Wise Men Guard Their Hearts
Wise Men Perceive The Hearts Of Others.**

Women spend much time, expense, and effort in being visually attractive.

A warm and sincere smile does more for their appearance than any hairdo, makeup, or accessories could.

Cheerful eyes, a relaxed face, a pleasant smile, and contented posture are much more appealing than fine clothing and perfect features!

A kind and happy smile is ten times better than a bored look, angry face, furrowed brows, or haughty stare!

Reader, your countenance is primarily your facial appearance, but it also includes your demeanor. It is your face and body language combined.

When you are happy and joyful, your countenance reflects this inner condition. And when your soul is burdened under fear, loss, trouble, or worry, your face and body reveal it as well (*1Samuel 1:10, 18*).

When you are happy and excited, whether by circumstances or choice, you have extra energy, light,

and life! And this refreshing posture is often contagious to those around you.

In the same way, when you are sad and discouraged, you have little energy, power, or resolve. And this depressed appearance drags those down that are with you.

What is the lesson? A wise man will rule his spirit to keep it from breaking (**Proverbs 25:28**).

If he is cast down about anything, he will not let it destroy him (*2Corinthians 4:9*).

A wise man will remember the warning to weep without it seriously affecting him (*1Corinthians 7:30*). A wise man will choose a merry heart for his approach to life, for the continual feast it brings (*Proverbs 15:15*).

What is the lesson here? Wise men will consider and discern the souls of others by their outward countenance. True friends are born for adversity, and they will be ready to help in a time of grief or need (*Proverbs 17:17*).

It is the duty of Christians in a church to consider when another member might be hurting (*Romans 12:15; 1Corinthians 12:26; 1Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 10:23-25*).

How do you get a merry heart? It is a choice! Our Lord expects you to be joyful (*Acts 14:17; Philippians 4:4*).

If you know Him, how can you not be content (*Psalms 73:25-26; Hebrews 13:5-6*)?

With your heart in the right place, the Proverb make sense (*Proverbs 15:16-17*).

With eternal life as a gift of God and heaven waiting, what can get you down! And with a cheerful countenance, you give visual proof of Christianity's superiority.

Proverbs 15:14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

**Wise Men Love Learning
Wise Men Crave Knowledge!**

Fools love amusing themselves with foolishness. A man of understanding is not content with knowledge; he wants more! But a fool never considers his ignorance; he continues to make folly the goal of his life!

If you could hear both talk, the wise man says little, knowing his knowledge is limited; the fool, knowing

nothing, belches nonsense, declaring to all that he is a fool (*Ecclesiastes 10:3, 12-14*).

Reader! How is it with you? Do you want to learn? Or do you want to talk?

Proverbs makes this contrast often, *"Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddeth with all wisdom. A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself"* (*Proverbs 18:1-2*). See the comments on *Proverbs 18:1* and *18:2*.

Is your desire for knowledge so great, you organize life accordingly? Does pursuing wisdom get top billing in your life? Or do you use life to tell others what your heart has imagined?

Your Character Is Visible.

If you seek knowledge, you will read the Bible, love preaching, associate with wise men, and avoid folly in every form.

If you are an ignorant fool, you will emphasize business, health, hobbies, amusement, and chitchat.

Which do you prefer? The Bible or your favorite newsletter? Preaching or pleasure? Or is preaching a pleasure? Do you think you know a lot? Or do you crave knowing more? This difference is great!

Cornelius wanted truth! He gathered family and friends to hear Peter (*Acts 10:24*).

God told him that Peter could teach him the truth, so he said to Peter, *"Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God"* (*Acts 10:33*).

But Simon the sorcerer! He heard Peter preach as well, but his belief and baptism were pretensions to see if he could get a little miracle power for himself (*Acts 8:9-24*).

Simon the sorcerer, wanted to buy the Holy Spirit, so he could still be an important player in Samaria! What a Fool!

Israel chose to hear preaching in *Nehemiah 8*. They held a great celebration, because they were so glad to understand the Word of God. And they kept asking for more, continuing the preaching and celebration for seven days, even though it added to their duties.

Wise men, including the queen of Sheba, came to hear Solomon's wisdom, but a greater preacher than Solomon has come (*1Kings 4:29-34; Matthew 12:42*).

Have you heard Him? Do you crave learning of Him (*Matthew 11:28-30*)?

Have you sought for more of Him (*Acts 13:42*)?

Proverbs 15:15 All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.

A Wonderful Life Is A Choice!

Choosing to have a godly and joyful heart. Or Choosing an evil life, filled with trouble, pain, and misery, is also a choice.

Negative and discontented people choose to let circumstances and foolish feelings destroy their lives.

Here is one of the greatest Proverbs. Read it again. Think about its Words. Read it again. Consider its value. It teaches the difference between a miserable life and a wonderful life.

What more could you want? And the Holy Spirit gave it to us in 20 Words of beauty and rhythm.

David said God's Word was more valuable than gold, sweeter than honey, and brings great reward (*Psalms 19:10-11*)!

A Continual Feast Is Within The Reach Of Every Reader Of This Proverb!

It is your choice to avoid the pain, darkness, and sorrow of the hopeless life (*Ecclesiastes 5:10-20*)!

The context, not often significant in Proverbs, gives inside wisdom from, The Only Wise God (*Proverbs 15:16-17*).

After spending his life and a fortune, trying everything, to find happiness and purpose in life, Solomon contrasts and ranks meals and lives within these Words.

Evil in this Proverb is not sin: it is "trouble," without peace or pleasure. An evil life in this sense is hard, painful, and miserable. Scripture uses the Word evil this way often (*Job 2:10; Isaiah 45:7; Amos 3:6*).

His brother and father-in-law hated him; his four wives were envious of each other; he had a perpetual limp; his sons were liars, incestuous, envious, and murderers; his favorite wife died in childbirth; and his favorite son was supposedly killed by wild beasts. It is how Jacob described his troubled life (*Genesis 47:9*).

Afflictions, trouble, difficulties, and disappointments, occur in a sinful world. David said the righteous have many afflictions, but the Lord does deliver them (*Psalms 34:19*).

How you look at troubles makes all the difference in the world!

Do you think about troubles, talk about troubles, focus on troubles, and imagine a few extra evils? Do you let the devil drag your spirit down to the hell of depression and a defeated life? God forbid!

If we totally let down our guard and choose the negative outlook of a discontented complainer, we can list a thousand "afflictions." But 99% of them are insignificant and of no consequence, and the other 1% is totally overshadowed by numberless blessings God has graciously given.

Don't Let Down Your Guard! Lift Up Your Heart!

You know complainers and those that murmur. When you see them, they have a new negative story, begging for your pity.

They have a hangnail; they need more sleep; they're short on money; their car needs brakes; they had to work overtime; their wife is nagging about a leaking roof; their husband works too many hours; she spent too much on groceries; he spent too much on hunting; the kids have colds; the government doesn't use tax money right; no one in the church loves them; their parents haven't sent money in two years; their ungrateful brother wants help moving a piano; their sister is always complaining; they're overweight; they are bloated with gas; you forgot their birthday; and the Lord, doesn't answer prayer fast enough!

All the days of the afflicted are evil! They think they are modern type of Job; but they never had his character, cannot even imagine his trials, and wouldn't know worship from a warship.

If you ask these miscreants what they are thankful for, they develop instant lockjaw! How does God deal with such people? He may just destroy them (**1Corinthians 10:10; Deuteronomy 28:47-48**)!

The bad events that happen to the righteous have four reasons:

1. For the glory of God,
2. For the perfection of their faith,
3. For the chastening of their sins,
4. For the consequences of their foolishness.

Reader, wisely consider that these are really all good events!

1. God's glory should always be our constant goal;
2. Growth in faith is a positive outcome and great blessing;
3. Chastening is proof of God's love, and for our profit;
4. Consequences of our actions drive us toward wisdom.

A wise Christian only has good events in his life! Paul took pleasure in afflictions (**2Corinthians 12:9-10**);

James told us to count them all joy (**James 1:2-4**)!

Paul told us to rejoice always (**Philippians 4:4; 1Thessalonians 5:16**),

Hebrew Christians rejoiced in losing their assets (**Hebrews 10:34**)!

Can you glory in tribulations (**Romans 5:3-5**)?

The man with a merry heart hardly knows he has afflictions. All he sees is God's glory, the blessings of life, and the hope of heaven! He can and will list a thousand things for which he is undeserving and very thankful! Lord, let us ever be such men!

If your priorities are right, saltines and spinach are a two-course feast (**Proverbs 15:17; 17:1**)!

If you look to eternity's weight of glory, earth's afflictions grow strangely dim (**2Corinthians 4:17-18**)!

Godliness with contentment is great gain, regardless of afflictions (**1Timothy 6:6**)!

If you know Jesus Christ, what else in the world could you want (**Hebrews 13:5; Psalm 73:25-26**)!

If you are contented, you can be full without a meal (**Philippians 4:11-13**)!

If Jesus is having supper with you, who cares what's on the table (**Revelation 3:20**)!

Consider the six-fold economic affliction Habakkuk described: **Habakkuk 3:17-19** *Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:*

18 *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will* joy
in the God of my salvation.

19 *The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.*

Here is total financial ruin, but the response of a merry heart!

Believe it, before you faint in the hopelessness of afflictions (**Psalm 27:13-14**)!

If you are guilty of a negative outlook, repent, accept the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, choose to be joyful and thankful in the Lord.

Your pastor will happily give you ten things for which you can give thanks.

**Joy Is A Command, Not An Option;
Joy Is A Duty, Not A Circumstance.**

God expects us to have glad hearts for the abundance of all things, and most people on this earth has even imagined the prosperity we enjoy every day (*Deuteronomy 28:47*).

To whom much is given, much shall be required, which brings our duty of choosing a merry heart to a very high priority!

Jesus Christ came to give His children the abundant life (*John 10:10*)!

This life is full of joy in fellowship with the Father and the Son (*1John 1:3-4*)!

How can you have it? Simple!

Walk in the light of His holiness and confess your sins regularly (*1John 1:5-10*)!

Joy in the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (*Romans 14:17*)!

Hope is the life-spring of joy, and believing saints are full of hope (*2Thessalonians 2:16; 1Peter 1:3*).

Take no thought for tomorrow; He will take care of it; don't be anxious, worried, or fearful (*Matthew 6:34*).

Turn your needs over to the Lord, with thanksgiving, and He will give you peace that passes human understanding (*Philippians 4:6-7*).

If you are looking in the right direction; your life is good now, and it is only going to get better!

Reader, what is wrong in your life? Don't answer that question! Don't even think about it (other than sober and limited self-examination in the Spirit).

Look at the infinite God, Who loves you as His dearly adopted child, and Who is preparing a new home for you to move to very soon! Count your blessings! Name them one by one!

What should we do with those that murmur, who want to live an afflicted life full of misery?

If they are temporarily cast down or weak in the faith, we comfort and support them;

If they are unruly in their complaining, we warn and rebuke them (*1Thessalonians 5:14*).

If they are our children, we punish their ungrateful and negative spirits (*Ephesians 6:4*).

And though we might be basking in prosperity ourselves, we rejoice with trembling, for our prosperity may not continue (*Psalms 2:11*).

For the few who have found the full riches of Jesus Christ, they partake of a continual feast in this life that will extend uninterrupted into eternal glory and the marriage supper of the Lamb. The water at His banquet quenches thirst forever; the bread provides eternal life; and His blood is everlasting.

Seek Him today, Christian reader, and do not end your search until you find Him. There you will find fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore (*Psalms 16:11*).

Proverbs 15:16 Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.

Get Your Priorities Right!

Solomon, who analyzed and tried everything life can offer, compared things for us, so we can avoid perplexity and the pain of wrong priorities.

What is better, being poor with the fear of the LORD, or being rich without it? The answer is simple! Make the fear of the LORD most important in your life, for it has great reward and will save you from trouble.

In other words, "*Godliness with contentment is great gain*" (*1Timothy 6:6*).

Who cares what's in the bank, **If** you know the living God and His Son Jesus Christ? It does not matter what you are eating or wearing, or where you live! The fear of the LORD is a great value to your soul, for the world has none (*Romans 3:18*).

Many thousands of martyrs burned slowly and painfully at the stake with great hope and peace, for their hearts were filled with the fear of the LORD. They would not bow to any man, confess any heresy, nor defraud their Savior or His Scriptures of even one jot or title of glory.

What did Solomon conclude after testing every possible means for human happiness and purpose in life? "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man*" (*Ecclesiastes 12:13*).

Reader, there should be no questions in your mind. This is the most important thing for you to find and keep.

This is no servile fear of miserable anxiety and debilitating intimidation, this is the awestruck reverence and overwhelming affection for God that fills the soul with confident joy!

The fear of the Lord leads to hatred for sin and craving for holiness.

The fear of the Lord causes trembling before His Word and desire to learn.

The fear of the Lord leads to a life of godliness and love, with a fruit bearing life, the world can never know!

The real issue here is the fruit of fearing God, godly living in truth and wisdom.

Note the contrast with "trouble." And compare these similar statements: "*Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right*" (**Proverbs 16:8**).

Also "*Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich*" (**Proverbs 28:6**).

And "*A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked*" (**Psalms 37:16**).

Fearing God will bring peace and joy, confidence and contentment, and all the blessings of heaven (**Proverbs 10:22; Psalms 112:1-3; 115:13; 128:1-6; 147:11; 145:19**). Guaranteed!

Why would you want anything else? Treasure by itself is vanity and vexation of spirit, as Ecclesiastes describes in detail; but it is even more so with the trouble that comes from not fearing the Lord (**Proverbs 12:21; 19:23**).

Even poverty can be okay, **If** you fear the Lord. **If** all this is true, and it is; then great care must be used to marry and live with one fearing the LORD (**Proverbs 31:30**).

Proverbs 15:17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

Collard greens, anyone? **If** love unites the hearts at the table, it sounds like a feast! But **If** there is hatred in any heart, even filet mignon is a bitter disappointment! A tossed salad enjoyed in love is better than a steak dinner where the parties hate each other.

Solomon Inspired By The Holy Spirit Teaches Wisdom By Comparisons. By showing one action better than another, he teaches us wise priorities. In this case, we should value love over dinner fare and material things.

Keeping our relationships loving and peaceful, is more important than picking, the right restaurant and spending a fortune. Even the very poor can do this.

Have you ever had a meal with bitterness, hatred, contention, and resentment there? Do you remember the tenseness? Do you remember the stress? Do you remember how it ruined what should have been a pleasant event? You cannot even remember what you ate for the pain of the atmosphere.

But have you ever had a wonderful meal with just a few simple things, because you loved the persons you were with, and they loved you? Just a salad was plenty, because of the atmosphere. You may not remember what you ate for the sweet pleasure of the company.

Many families have meals with tension and bitterness. Be careful it can become a habit. Be careful you may not even see the error. Be careful pain can become a family tradition.

When the family conversation is negative and critical; the children sarcastically cut each other; and some are sullenly silent in quiet rage. No one truly wants to be there. These things should never be in a Christian home.

Bitter envying and strife are from hell (**James 3:14-16**)!

Peace and gentleness are from above (**James 3:17-18**).

It is the privilege and duty of saints to pursue love and peace.

Our greedy society emphasizes material things as the measure of success. But our Proverb teaches here that the good life is not dependent on what you have, but rather the love you share with others. "*But godliness with contentment is great gain*" (**1 Timothy 6:6**)!

Many measure an evening by the status of the restaurant they visited, the number of courses, or the creativity or expense of the entree'. The more important issue however, should be the company and the relationships among them. Then the menu does not even matter.

How many meals have contentious women spoiled (**Proverbs 12:4; 19:13; 21:9, 19; 27:15-16**)?

What memories do their children have? How often will they come for dinner with an overbearing, critical, and odious mother waiting for them? What will their meals be like? Pity the husband, who cannot move away! See the comments on **Proverbs 17:1**.

Women generally prepare the meal, it should be the role of men to make sure the family loves one another and is at peace. Husbands! Fathers! It is your duty to correct all offenders, mend all injuries, settle all grievances, keep peace, and promote love.

When unity is enjoyed over a meal, it is truly special, no matter what is served. Brethren dwelling together in unity is precious (**Psalms 133:1-3**).

A meal and unity, is the fellowship of a heavenly sort! Let us seek the joy and unity and its fellowship from house to house (*Acts 2:46*)!

What will you do today to correct and perfect relationships in your home? With love in all directions, What is on the table becomes quite irrelevant.

Have you offended others? Have they offended you? Are you harboring bitterness? The remedies are simple, by the grace of our Lord Jesus (*Proverbs 19:11; Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-16; Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-15*).

**Make Yourself A Feast!
Seek Peace And Love One Another!**

Proverbs 15:18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

All angry men will fight at the drop of a hat! And they may drop it themselves! This fighting spirit is from man's depraved nature inherited from Adam (*Titus 3:3; Romans 1:29-31; 3:13-18*).

It is based in man's pride and selfishness, which demand preeminence over others (*Proverbs 13:10; Philippians 2:3-4*).

It is based in hasty anger from an impulsive spirit, which instantly reacts to discredit or dominate others and revenge any offence or wrong (*James 4:1-5*).

A wrathful man is one that gets angry quickly. At even slight provocation, he reacts immediately against the person that offended him. Of course, this provokes the offending party to greater anger as well.

Therefore, what might have been solved easily or might have simply disappeared becomes a major conflict. The wrathful man has stirred up strife beyond what it would have been. His quick anger increases conflicts wherever he goes.

A man that gets angry slowly can calm feelings and end fights. Rather than react with haste or violence, he gently and patiently absorbs the offences of aggressors and causes their fury to dissipate. It is impossible to fight with a pillow!

If it takes two to fight, which it does; then the slow-to-anger person ends fights by calming the escalating emotions and attacks. His lack of anger appeases the strife that briefly appeared.

Angry men are mostly fools, they defy wisdom by their emotional outbursts (*Proverbs 14:17, 29; Ecclesiastes 7:8-9*).

Angry men are dangerous to be around, they will start and aggravate conflicts among men (*Proverbs 17:14, 19; 19:19; 29:22*).

Reader, you should avoid and reject such men, because they will corrupt your noble spirit that hates fighting (*Proverbs 14:7; 22:24-25; 1Corinthians 15:33*).

Wise men learn to rule their spirits and avoid getting angry (*Proverbs 14:29; James 1:19-20*). Solomon said such a man:

A wise man is greater than a man who could defeat a city single-handedly (*Proverbs 16:32*)!

A wise man will defer his anger and pass over the transgressions of others (*Proverbs 19:11*).

A wise man does not want to fight. Soft words work wonders with angry people (*Proverbs 15:1*).

Jesus Christ taught that offering the other cheek was a godly response to provocation (*Matthew 5:38-42*).

Jesus Christ condemned anger without a righteous cause (*Matthew 5:21-26*).

The great ones in the kingdom of heaven are peacemakers, not fighters (*Matthew 5:9; James 3:17-18*).

They are the meek of the earth, and they rejoice to give in to others whenever possible.

Hatred stirs up strife by anger; but love covers all the offences and sins that occur among men (*Proverbs 10:12; 1Peter 4:8*).

Jesus Christ gave the ultimate example of being slow to anger during his outrageous trial and crucifixion (*1Peter 2:19-23; Mark 15:5*). Are you like him?

Proverbs 15:19 The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

Reader, has your life been rough or smooth the last year? What is your outlook? Does the future frighten you, or welcome you?

There is a reason for your answers to these questions:

- Lazy people have two problems in life: things do not work out well for them, they are afraid of the future.
- Diligent men find life is smoother and easier, and they rejoice in the opportunities that diligence

provides. It doesn't matter how many thorns are in your way? You can remove them!

There are two important similes, or identified comparisons, in this Proverb.

A lazy man's life is like a hedge of thorns, which is a difficult and painful obstacle to progress and travel.

A lazy man has a hard time going forward, and he dreads the effort and trouble.

A righteous man's life is like a smooth, paved highway, which makes his travel comfortable and fast.

A righteous man finds progress in life to be easier, and he looks forward to the future.

The Proverb contrasts slothful men and diligent men, wicked men and righteous men. The slothful man is contrasted to the righteous man to teach that slothful men are wicked and righteous men are diligent. God and good men despise laziness and slothfulness for they are terrible sins (**Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:26; 18:9; 24:30-34; 26:16; Genesis 3:19; Matthew 25:26-28; Romans 12:11; 1Thessalonians 4:11-12**).

God's solution for lazy men is starvation (**Proverbs 20:4; 2Thessalonians 3:10**).

How is a slothful man's life like a hedge of thorns?

By his procrastination and neglect of things needful for his progress and success!

By his laziness he creates numerous hardships that make life much more difficult than God ever intended!

By his procrastinating and excusing himself from preparing for the future, a future without assets, credit, skills, or reputation!

The slothful man is defenseless before adversity; he has no capital to invest in anything; he is worthless in the job market; and he has no friends to vouch for him.

How is a slothful man's life like a hedge of thorns? By his negative and wicked attitude! Laziness steals his energy, perverts his heart, and blinds his eyes.

A slothful man thinks he is too tired to work (**Proverbs 19:15**).

A slothful man grieves at the very thought of work (**Proverbs 26:15**).

A slothful man scorns every opportunity to work, in spite of excellent reasons from seven wise and successful men (**Proverbs 26:16**).

A slothful man will claim it is too cold to work (**Proverbs 20:4**).

A slothful man is afraid of lions in the street (**Proverbs 22:13; 26:13**).

A slothful man will imagine and argue for any excuse imaginable to avoid facing the thorns his own laziness has planted!

How is a diligent man's life made plain? By his past efforts that make the present much easier! By careful planning and hard work, he has provided those things necessary for progress and success.

A diligent man knows where he is going, and he has taken the steps to get there.

A diligent man accumulates assets, credit, skills, and reputation.

A diligent man can handle adversity, invest in offered opportunities, obtain replacement employment if necessary, and call upon any number of excellent references to help him.

How is a diligent man's life made plain? His cheerful and righteous attitude toward work!

A diligent man rejoices at the opportunity to work. He is thankful for his job. He offers to work overtime.

A diligent man enjoys helping a business. He appreciates his employers. He sleeps well, but only at night (**Proverbs 6:6-11; Ecclesiastes 5:12**).

A diligent man looks forward to rising and going to work. He dives into projects and finishes them. He is committed to outworking others (**1Corinthians 15:10**).

A diligent man looks for opportunities to work more, for he knows that rewards and riches will follow (**Proverbs 10:4; 12:24; 22:29; 27:18**).

A diligent man finds a reward in labor itself (**Ecclesiastes 9:10**).

A diligent man sees the future full of promise and reward.

A diligent man does not see anything that scares him! He is optimistic about life. He has faced difficult projects before and watched them melt away by diligent efforts.

A diligent man knows that all other things being equal, God will allow afflictions and troubles come to the best of saints, but God will deliver him out of them all (**Psalms 34:19**).

A diligent man knows everyone has troubles; but a righteous man goes forward and clears the thorns of life away; he does not hide in his bed or house like the slothful man.

A diligent man gets up after falling, (*Proverbs 24:16*).

A diligent man never quits and resigns to accept the life of a loser.

If you have been slothful, you know the Proverb is true: you know you have a hedge of thorns in your way.

Your hedge of thorns will not go away just because you have read this wonderful Proverb by Solomon and agree with its lesson.

It will only go away **If** you get up and attack it with the diligence of a righteous man. **If** you do not attack it, the thorns will grow larger and larger until the hedge completely chokes your life down to a miserable failure. Get up! Get going!

There is one other little problem! God despises sluggards and will oppose them in all they do. **If** you have been slothful, then God is your enemy, and nothing is going to work like it should.

God will bless and favor the diligent man. Therefore, **If** you have been slothful, beg Him for forgiveness before you try to remove the hedge of thorns in your own strength. Because **If** you don't, He will blow against your efforts, unless you repent and beg Him for help.

The same rule applies to your spiritual life. **If** you are slothful about your religious duties, you will be discouraged and overwhelmed by the Bible, by the religious confusion in the world, and by your own carnality (*Luke 8:11-18*).

The man who diligently seeks the Lord will easily and surely find Him and His great reward (*Jeremiah 29:13; Hebrews 11:6*).

The Choice Is Yours Clear Away The Thorns Today!

Proverbs 15:20 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

You can make your parents very happy by being wise, and God will bless you for it. Your future depends on pleasing your parents.

God ordained parents, and He expects you to reverence their office and what they have done for you.

God chose your specific parents! The earth has over 4 billion parents, but God chose the two He knew would be best for you, regardless of what you think of them or wish for yourself.

Consider this Proverb. It is in the indicative mood, stating facts without clear advice. Its full value, intent, and force must be discovered.

Since wise sons make glad fathers, is the lesson (1) for sons to be wise, (2) for wise sons to make their fathers glad, or (3) for fathers to train wise sons for their own future gladness? All of these lessons are valid and worthwhile.

How does a foolish son despise his mother? A foolish son despises his mother indirectly by being a source of heaviness and bitterness to her through his foolish living:

"A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother (Proverbs 10:1).

"A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him" (Proverbs 17:25).

Young men should be wise, because:

- Wisdom is the principal thing, and it brings many benefits (*Proverbs 4:5-9*).
- Wisdom also leads to favor with God and men (*Proverbs 3:4; Luke 2:52*).

But the lesson of this Proverb is the effect it has on parents! **If** you choose to be foolish, you offend God: you hurt yourself, you offend other men, and you hurt your parents. Beware!

How important is it to please your parents by being a wise child? Very! Consider the positive and negative.

If you obey and honor your parents, God will bless you with a good and long life (*Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Ephesians 6:2-3*).

God required capital punishment for insolent children; He will do it Himself, **If** the nation neglects its duties (*Proverbs 20:20; 30:17; Exodus 21:15, 17; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18-21; 27:16; Matthew 15:4*)!

God, who gave you your life, told you through this Proverb that He will add to your life, **If** you will live wisely. How? By fulfilling His promise to give a good and long life to those who honor their parents.

Why waste time, money, or effort to live longer by the questionable factors of nutrition, exercise, medicine, or supplements?

What is wisdom? The power of right judgment! The wise man fears God and learns His Word, to know and do the perfect will of God in all situations.

The wise are diligent, gracious, just, merciful, noble, prudent, righteous, and virtuous.

Parents see such children living wisely, and it gives them great joy (*Proverbs 10:1; 17:21; 19:13; 23:15-16, 24-25; 27:11; 29:3*).

Rather than think you have done your duty toward your parents by getting them a card or taking them out to eat, make the fear of the Lord and Bible wisdom the most important things in your life.

This will give godly parents much greater joy than any gift. It is a win-win-win proposition! God will be pleased and bless you for it; wisdom will bring you prosperity and save you from trouble; and your parents will be thrilled.

Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. He grew in wisdom as a boy (**Luke 2:52**).

Jesus had all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (**Colossians 2:3**).

God the Father in heaven greatly loved Him, Jesus pleased Him well (**Matthew 3:17**).

Jesus' mother was pleased with all she heard and saw, and she stayed faithful to His pure doctrine through His death and after His resurrection (**Luke 2:19, 51; John 19:25; Acts 1:14**).

Jesus practiced this Proverb perfectly by being wise for His Father and not despising His mother. Follow His example!

Proverbs 15:21 Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

Fools defy God and waste their lives, because they are rebellious and stupid. But worse than that, they think their idiotic and imbecilic sins are amusing, funny, and pleasant!

Life is a joke to fools, and they laugh themselves right into the grave and hell. But wise men know life is serious, and they delight to live soberly according to God's rules.

Sin is bad enough, sometimes bringing instant death, pain and trouble (**Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:17-19**).

Sin brings lingering death (**Genesis 5:5**).

Sin supports dysfunction (**Job 14:1**).

Sin ultimately brings eternal death to unsaved (**Revelation 21:8**).

In spite of their laughter, a wise man knows hell is coming for them! But to greedily run after sin and laugh at it reveals the dark and profane heart of a fool (**Proverbs 10:23; 14:9; Ephesians 4:17-19**).

It is horrible enough to watch a man, swallow the devil's bait with his hook; but, it is much sadder when that man boasts and laughs about the wonderful taste of the bait, you know you are watching a mindless fool.

In contrast, the wise man examines everything to avoid the devices of the devil (**2Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 4:27**).

If he foolishly takes a bite, he spits it out with disgust!
If the Bible is only half true, sin is a terrible thing, and meeting God after death as a sinner is a horrible prospect.

Deceived fools believe confidently that there is neither God nor sin, until it is too late (**Psalms 36:1-2**).

Men with understanding know life is very serious, and they are grave and sober about it (**Proverbs 14:16; Titus 2:2, 4, 6; 1Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8**).

As the world gets stupider, its rejoicing increases dramatically. Most great grandparents of this generation would gasp to watch the folly of modern sitcoms, but they would be shocked even worse to hear staged studio laughter every 10 seconds!

This generation, of the information age, is more destitute of wisdom than ever before, and they bark and cackle about it like rabid hyenas!

Reader, consider cool high school fools. They laugh about getting drunk and racing! They laugh about sexual conquests! They laugh about cheating! They laugh about vandalism! They laugh about gluttonous gorging! They laugh about everything! They are fools!

Reader, what is folly to you? Do you rejoice at sin (**Job 15:16**)?

Is life a joke and sin a pleasure? **If** you love folly, you hate wisdom; **If** you hate wisdom, you love death (**Proverbs 8:36**).

You forfeit God's mercy in your life, by choosing the lies of folly, or sin (**Jonah 2:8**)!

Or maybe reader, you are like Paul, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (**Romans 7:24**).

A wise man rejoices both in the wisdom of God's Words and in God saving him from folly (**Proverbs 21:15; Psalm 119:111, 162; Jeremiah 15:16; Romans 7:25; Titus 3:3-7**)!

Proverbs 15:22 Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

**A Sure Rule For Success In Life
Is To Submit Decisions To The Review
Of Wise Counselors.**

Solomon, seeking to prepare his son to govern Israel, repeated this axiom several times in his manual of wisdom (*Proverbs 11:14; 20:18; 24:6*).

Solomon knew that many factors could distort a man's decision making, especially when he is personally involved in the matter.

People make plans, to get married, change jobs, respond to an enemy, go back to school, buy a house, find a church, teach children at home, invest in a business, etc.

If you push ahead, without using wise friends, who are not emotionally involved to criticize your ideas, you will be disappointed.

If you humbly, allow wise knowledgeable acquaintances, to review your plans, you can settle on a sure course for your life.

This rule for success is simple. Why do most ignore it? Because they are too proud to ask anyone (*Proverbs 26:12, 16*).

They want no negative criticism (*Proverbs 18:17*).

They are too impatient (*Proverbs 19:2*).

They are already committed. They do not have any wise counselors. They have bad decision-making habits.

When you plan for yourself or family, you are already biased toward your conclusion:

- You are emotionally involved, and you are not seeing clearly.
- Your desires, experiences, knowledge, circumstances, and other factors distort your perception of reality.
- You do not see the danger or weaknesses as easily as will a disinterested third party.

To apply this rule, you need wise counselors. Most men cannot be counselors. You need knowledgeable, insightful, sober, and critical persons.

You do not want someone you can easily persuade. You want negative persons, who see dangers in everything, because you are already positive enough, you would not be considering the matter properly!

You need more than one counselor. Safety and success depend on the multiplied wisdom of many counselors. It takes more humility and time to consult several counselors, but the benefits gained cannot be appreciated, until you have been burned a few times by your own decisions.

King Ahasuerus of Persia wisely trusted seven men to guide him in a matter of passion (*Esther 1:10-22*).

God gave you royal advice by inspiring Solomon to instruct you through His Proverbs. You must then put everything on the table with your counselors. You cannot hold back aspects of your proposal you know are weak or wrong.

You must come totally clean with them. And you must listen and follow their advice. This is not an empty exercise in merely discussing ideas: the purpose is to get the right answer. You must accept their judgment.

What men are useful for such counsel? Men that fear God and know His Word can help, for there is no light in unbelievers (*Isaiah 8:20*).

The children of this world are wise in earthly matters only, like picking a heat pump manufacturer (*Luke 16:8*).

Any decision affecting your heart, your walk with God, morality, or a Bible subject, even if loosely connected, requires faithful and sober Christians, for they only have true wisdom (*Proverbs 1:7; 9:10*).

**You Can Become Such A Counselor
By Learning The Word of God!**

Just the book of Proverbs has much wisdom to save men from foolish decision making involving business ethics, child training, communication, friends, investment scams, marriage, money, speech, whores, wine, work ethics, and many other subjects.

The Word of God, can make simple men wise, and it is your duty and privilege to learn it (*Proverbs 22:17-21; Psalms 19:7; 119:130*).

Proverbs 15:23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

Answering well is a wonderful thing, especially when it is done at the right time! It is as beautiful as gold apples in a silver bowl (*Proverbs r 25:11*)!

Knowing how to answer others is a great skill that wise men will diligently pursue.

The ability to help another with the right words is serving in a precious and profitable way (*Proverbs 12:14; 16:13; 23:16; 24:26; 25:12*).

And one of the finest ways to give and support others is with a kind or wise word when they need it. The Lord Jesus taught that giving is more blessed than receiving (*Acts 20:35*).

There is righteous joy in helping someone with good counsel. But such ability only comes by careful preparation before the opportunity presents itself.

Jesus Christ had this ability. *"The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary"* (*Isaiah 50:4*).

It Is Duty And Privilege To Seek A Wise Tongue To Help Others.

We can learn how to answer every man and take pleasure in doing it (*Colossians 4:6; Galatians 6:1-5; 1Peter 3:15*).

How? Listen very attentively and speak cautiously (*Proverbs 18:13; James 1:19*).

Reduce your words to only valuable ones (*Proverbs 10:19; 17:27-28; Ecclesiastes 5:3*).

Spend time examining speech by prayer (*Psalms 19:12-14; 139:23-24*).

Keep your heart and thoughts pure and wise (*Proverbs 4:23; Luke 6:45*).

Always be gracious in your speech (*Proverbs 22:11; Ecclesiastes 10:12; Colossians 4:6*).

Make the glory of God the object of your speech (*Colossians 3:17; 1Corinthians 10:31*).

Study to make sure all your answers are right (*Proverbs 15:2, 28; 16:23*).

Make sure the words fit the occasion (*Proverbs 10:32; 25:20; 1Corinthians 13:5*).

Choose words that build others up (*Proverbs 12:18; Ephesians 4:29; 1Corinthians 10:24*).

Use gentle words when a person is angry (*Proverbs 15:1; Judges 8:1-3*).

Give certain words of truth rather than opinions (*Proverbs 22:17-22*).

Learn wisdom to solve dilemmas for others (*Proverbs 10:21; 16:21; 27:9*).

Be encouraging and uplifting to others (*Proverbs 12:25; 1Samuel 23:16*).

Use pleasant rather than harsh words (*Proverbs 16:24; Colossians 4:6; Luke 4:22*).

Do not debate or dispute with fools (*Proverbs 23:9; 26:4-5; 2Timothy 2:23*).

Avoid complaining or negative speech (*Proverbs 17:20; Philippians 2:14; Colossians 3:17*).

Reject pride and contention in speech (*Proverbs 13:10; 18:6; 1Corinthians 6:7*).

Let negative words only with seasoned speech (*James 3:9-12; Colossians 4:6*).

Reader, a valued purpose of the church is the mutual help members give one another while waiting for the return of Jesus Christ (*Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:23-25*).

But this great goal will only be realized where members learn to answer well at the right time. If godly speech is learned by all, a church can become the full measure of Jesus Christ (*Ephesians 4:13-16*).

Proverbs 15:24 The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

The way of life is above to the wise: there is a triple antithesis here:

1. The way of the wise, and that of the fool.
2. The one way is above, the other way below.
3. The one way is of life, the other way is of death.

The way of the wise is an elevating way. *"The way of life is above to the wise."* It is above. The Word *"above"* is to be taken, not in its local sense, for that would indicate a mere relative position.

What is above to one creature locally is beneath to another.

What is *"above,"* is also not to be taken in a secular sense. Wise men of this world, may reach elevated secular positions, but very often their wisdom has led them down to pauperism and prisons.

What is *"above,"* is to be taken in a spiritual sense. When Paul commands us to *"set our affections on things above,"* he means not on suns, or stars, or thrones, but on the things of spiritual worth.

The Things Above Mean: The divine principles, the spiritual services, the vital alliances, the honors, of the great and Holy Kingdom of God. The wise man's way is *"above"* to these.

A Wise Man Presses Towards The Mark Of True Greatness!

His destiny is a moral hill. The zone reached today is his starting point for tomorrow.

On its high point that he achieved today, will stand with wider and better prospects tomorrow.

His way is "above." **1John 3:2** *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

The Way of the wise is A Soul-Securing Way. *"Depart from hell beneath."*

Reader, there is a hell! Whether Solomon here points to the scene of retributive misery, or to Sheol (the grave), such a scene undoubtedly exists. Hell is "beneath."

It is beneath in a moral sense. Its ideas, habits, fellowships, are all degrading. Every sin is a wayward step downward into intellectual darkness and moral debasement.

Every step of the wise is a departure from this hell. With his way, he leaves it further in the rear.

Christ shall separate the good from the bad on the Last Day! Just as the shepherd, separates his sheep; the one "shall go into everlasting punishment, but the other to life eternal."

This separation is also going on now. The good and the bad are here parting company, going farther and farther from each other continually; the good are rising higher and higher, on the right hand, into the kingdom prepared for them.

The wicked are now, on the left hand, and going deeper and deeper "into everlasting punishment with the devil and his angels."

Jesus Christ is the way, and he is in heaven, at the Father's right hand. By Him only, can men come to this life. Therefore, those who are in this way have: their thoughts, their hearts, their affections and their words settled (**Matthew 6:21**).

"Faith," which is Christ Way, and by which all Christian men walk with Him, is signified by soaring aloft: mounting up with wings as eagles, by entering within the veil, and dwelling on high, and by looking upwards, and at things unseen, and being the evidence of them.

Proverbs 15:25 *The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.*

Pride brings the LORD's destruction, regardless of popularity and strength.

Humility brings the LORD's blessing, regardless of disrespect and weakness.

The LORD loves to sustain the helpless, and He will destroy the house of those who take confidence in themselves and in their own power (**Deuteronomy**

10:17-18; Job 40:9-14; Psalms 18:27; 146:9; Luke 1:51-53).

The LORD hates pride. He cannot stand a man thinking he is something, when he is nothing.

A man lies to himself with such thoughts of pride (**Galatians 6:3**).

Anything a man is or has was God's gift to him; and man should not glory in it, as **If** he accomplished something himself (**1Corinthians 4:7**).

Reader, not only will God destroy the wicked, but He will also destroy his house (his family and estate), which he vainly thought would endure to all generations (**Psalms 49:11**).

God cast Lucifer out of heaven for pride (**Isaiah 14:14; 1Timothy 3:6; Jude 1:6**).

God crushed King Nebuchadnezzar for pride and left him grazing like a cow for seven years (**Daniel 4:25; 5:20**);

God had Haman and his ten sons hanged on his own gallows (**Esther 7:10; 9:14**).

The LORD loves humility. He will bless the man who trembles before Him (**Isaiah 57:15; 66:2**).

The LORD loves to take the beggar from the dunghill and set him among princes to inherit the throne of glory, as Hannah gloriously described (**1Samuel 2:1-10**).

The LORD is the Protector of all orphans and widows (**Psalms 10:14, 18; 68:5**).

The very idea of altering a widow's property boundaries is fatal folly (**Proverbs 22:22-23; 23:10-11**).

God sent Elijah to preserve the starving widow of Zarephath (**1Kings 17:8-16; Luke 4:25-26**).

God sent Elisha to save another widow from her creditor (**2Kings 4:1-7**).

Consider Naomi, whose borders were confirmed and male descendants included David (**Ruth 4:14-17**)!

Consider carefully the abbreviated story of the Shunamite's borders (**2Kings 8:1-6**)!

The LORD says, ".....*Let thy widows trust in me*" (**Jeremiah 49:11**).

The New Testament, with all its doctrine and strictness, takes special notice and care of widows (**Matthew 23:14; Luke 2:36-38; 7:11-18; 21:1-4; John 19:26-27; Acts 6:1-7; 9:36-41; 1Timothy 5:3-10; James 1:27**).

Reader, your situation is never bleak, if you live humbly before your God. Your Deliverer and Friend is mighty to save (*Isaiah 63:1-6*)!

God will never forsake you; what can man do to you (*Hebrews 13:5-6*)?

Your borders will soon be as sure and evident as those of Lazarus and the rich man (*Luke 16:22-26*)!

Proverbs 15:26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

**Your Mouth Is The Vent Of Your Heart.
Your Words Are Chosen And Formed There.**

Are your thoughts and speech an abomination to the LORD?

Are your words the gracious and pleasant words that rejoice the heart of God and men?

Every time you speak, you reveal to God and man what is in your heart. God and men appreciate and delight in your words, or they abominate and despise them.

Also reader, you are duty bound by your Creator to think upon Him with all your heart (*Deuteronomy 6:4-7*).

The wicked never really think of God (*Psalms 10:4; Romans 1:20-28*).

Their throat is an open grave, revealing decay and death in their hearts (*Romans 3:13*).

Reader, even when you lie, lying words do not lie, they tell the truth about the state of your heart and reveal that you are a liar!

Your heart, whether black with wickedness or gold with purity and white with righteousness, is clearly revealed to God and men by your words.

Fools say, "You cannot know my heart." They deceive themselves. Everyone, including God, knows their hearts by their words (*Matthew 12:33-37; James 3:5-16*).

Solomon warned that God sees everything done in the earth (*Proverbs 15:3*).

David also taught that God hears and analyzes every thought, even before they are expressed in words (*Psalms 139:1-6*).

Imagine that, God knows the thoughts and intents of your heart, and you will give an account for every idle thought and word (*Matthew 12:34-37; Hebrews 4:12*).

Guard your thoughts and words starting right now! God counts foolish thoughts as sin (*Proverbs 24:9*).

Either God is angry with you for what you think, or He is pleased with you. Which is it?

If He is angry, you are hopelessly headed for trouble and possible destruction (*Proverbs 10:7; Psalm 34:16*).

If God is for you, no power can hold back His blessings. Your heart and lips are not your own: you will receive good or evil dependent upon your speech (*Proverbs 18:21; Psalm 12:1-5*).

The thoughts and words of wicked men are arrogant, blasphemous, cruel, filthy, foolish, haughty, ignorant, slanderous, vain, and vicious.

The wicked speak harshly, impulsively, irreverently, loudly, sarcastically, and selfishly.

The wicked babble about abortion, adultery, evolution, gossip, labor unions, movies, self-esteem, sodomy, sports, television, and other vanities. God despises, their thoughts, and their words.

The thoughts and words of pure men are cheerful, gracious, helpful, kind, knowledgeable, merciful, peaceful, virtuous, and wise (*Proverbs 10:20-21; 15:2, 4; 16:23-24; Ecclesiastes 10:12*).

Pure men speak carefully and slowly. Their words are formed in a pure heart, for it is a pure heart that generates gracious words, and even kings desire to be around such men (*Proverbs 22:11*).

Pure men speak words that are pleasant to God and men (*Proverbs 15:23; 24:26; 25:11*).

No man ever spoke like Jesus Christ. Guards sent by His enemies could not arrest Him, for they were overwhelmed by His virtuous speech (*John 7:45-46*).

The Lord's first sermon in his hometown was overwhelmingly gracious, causing skeptics and scorners to pause in their tracks (*Luke 4:14-22*).

After His resurrection, He interpreted the scriptures in a way that caused the hearts of two disciples to burn with pleasure (*Luke 24:13-32*).

How can you, learn to speak like Him? Stop your present habits of thinking and talking, and repent for any foolish speech (*Proverbs 30:32; Job 40:4; Isaiah 6:5*)!

Think only about noble and virtuous things (*Proverbs 4:23; Malachi 3:16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2*)!

Slow down (*Proverbs 15:28; 29:20; James 1:19*)!

Cut your words in half (*Proverbs 17:27-28; Ecclesiastes 10:19!*)

If you cannot say anything edifying about God or men, then stop talking altogether (*Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6!*)

Proverbs 15:27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

The desire to be rich is dangerous to a man's family. He will be tempted to accept bribes or compromise righteousness, which will bring trouble to his wife, children, and estate.

A man that hates bribes or financial compromise will preserve and prosper his family.

"Greed," is excessive ambition and covetous desire for more than you have or should reasonably expect (*Proverbs 1:19; Isaiah 56:11*).

"Gain," is financial success or wealth. The Proverb condemns desiring to be rich, which leads to compromising godliness and wisdom.

The "gifts" are bribes, which are given to pay a man to compromise the law or obtain financial wisdom (*Proverbs 29:4; Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19; Isaiah 33:15*).

A virtuous man will disdain such gifts, for he will not sell his integrity or the approval of God for any price.

There are many temptations associated with desire for financial success, and they often bring pain and trouble to a man's family.

A man who is content with his income, and would never consider cheating for any advantage, will protect and prosper his family.

Beyond bribes, desiring riches brings temptation to compromise in dealings, breaking the law, violating financial wisdom, overworking, being tempted by investment scams, mistreating employees, cheating on giving, neglect charity to over-expand, deprive the family of affection and time, forget your soul, worry about tomorrow, be carnally minded, associate excessively with the world, to be puffed up, despise others, and numerous other sins.

Here is Paul's sober warning: *"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:9-10).*

God's ministers cannot be greedy of gain, for such men will compromise righteousness or the gospel for income (*1 Timothy 3:3, 8; 6:6-10; Titus 1:7*).

This rule matched Moses' requirement for Israel's leaders, to be men, hating covetousness (*Exodus 18:21*).

And John the Baptist told the Roman soldiers, viewing at his baptism, to be content with their wages (*Luke 3:14*).

Two Things Cost Investors And Businessmen, Greed And Fear:

1. Greed causes destruction
2. Fear misses potential gain. Fear is better than greed (*Proverbs 14:23; 21:5; 22:3; 28:11, 19, 22*).

Reader, there are no free lunches: wise men reject even cheap lunches, knowing they are deceptive.

Reader, how much time do you spend thinking about getting ahead? Is it merely the desire, to do with all your might, what God has given you (*Ecclesiastes 9:10*)?

Or reader, is it an obsession to rise, in the esteem, in the world by financial increase (*Proverbs 18:11*)?

Be warned! Are you tempted in any area of life to compromise in order to get ahead? In any of the areas listed above?

Godly men are content with what they have, for they esteem the Lord and His Word their portion forever (*Psalms 19:10; 73:25-26; 119:11; Hebrews 13:5-6*).

Their families will be blessed in the earth (*Proverbs 11:21; Isaiah 65:23*).

Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

Which is better? A quick answer to a question? Or the right answer? Do you feel pressure to answer questions quickly? Kill the need for speed to make sure you are right.

A righteous man may take a while to answer a question, but he will give the right answer in the end; while a foolish and wicked man will blurt out whatever first comes to mind.

To the untrained eye, the righteous man may appear bewildered, while the wicked man, may seem to be a great source of knowledge, for the speed and quantity of his response.

But a wise man will consider this: haste makes waste and quantity usually covers for a lack of quality. The speed and length of an answer are not proofs of a right answer.

Wise men hear and consider questions before forming an answer; for answering a matter before hearing it is folly and shame (*Proverbs 18:13; 25:8*).

Nicodemus appealed to this wisdom of the law to protect Jesus (*John 7:51; Deuteronomy 13:12-18*).

If you answer by first impressions, you will often judge by appearance, rather than righteous judgment (*John 7:24*).

To avoid getting only one side of a story, at least two witnesses to any event is the wisdom of God (*Matthew 18:16; 1Timothy 5:19; Hebrew 10:28*).

This is certainly true in all matters of marriage, business deals, and other two-party controversies. Remember this rule well.

Searching out a matter is the honor of kings, which is to study all the details of a situation before judging (*Proverbs 25:2*).

Wisdom requires circumspection, which is looking carefully in all directions (*Ephesians 5:15*).

Job searched out matters before judging (*Job 29:16*).

Ministers only avoid shame and are approved by God through, diligent study (*2Timothy 2:15; 1Timothy 4:13-15*).

If they teach or answer hastily, they will blunder without inspiration.

If Ahasuerus had studied, he would not have condemned Esther's people (*Esther 3:7-11*).

If Darius had studied, he would not have condemned Daniel to the lions' den (*Daniel 6:1-14*).

There is no shame in saying to those asking you a question, "Please give me a little time to consider your question and prepare a proper answer." Such a response is wisdom. A man who answers hastily is foolish, so discount his answers and do not be like him.

His name is Faithful and True. The Lord Jesus Christ, Whom God made quick in understanding, judges righteously, rather than by merely seeing or hearing (*Isaiah 11:1-5*).

Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Prayer Is Not A Right Prayer Is A Privilege!

The LORD is not obligated to hear the prayer of any man, and He will reject the prayer of the wicked.

The LORD has promised, He will hear the prayer of the righteous.

The LORD will answer them tenderly, mightily, and speedily. This axiom was perfectly understood by the Jews (*John 9:31*).

The wicked are those continuing in sin, any sin, even one sin.

They know they are sinning, but they do not care. They do not confess and forsake it.

The wicked also ignore the warnings of God's Word, His minister, their conscience, and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. They think they can get away with their sin.

The wicked do not think it important to forsake and repudiate. They hide it under a cloak of hypocrisy.

Reader, you can hide sin from your parents, your spouse, your children, your church, and your pastor. They will continue to treat you with the same kindness and affection as in the past.

You can snow friends and family with hypocrisy, but you cannot snow the LORD. He sees the very thoughts and intents of every heart (*Hebrews 4:12*).

There is nothing hid from God's Holy eyes (*Hebrews 4:13*).

The LORD sees perfectly every sin of thought, sin of word, and sin of deed.

The LORD does not overlook sins. Sins grieve and offend Him, and unless sins are confessed and forsaken, He will not hear your prayers. You are doomed to a life without His blessing.

The LORD will bring severe chastening upon you for continuing in sin.

The LORD is not far from the wicked in location and knowledge, for He fills heaven and earth, and no one can hide from Him (*Jeremiah 23:24*).

The LORD is far from helping them, comforting them, blessing them, and having fellowship with them.

The LORD is near at hand to see their wickedness, He is far away from answering their prayers. And in the great Day of Judgment, He will tell them to depart from Him into eternal hellfire (*Matthew 7:23*).

So offensive is sin against the holy God, especially when you know better, that your sacrifices become an abomination to him (**Proverbs 15:8**).

Even when you rebel against the preaching of His Word: He counts your prayers an abomination (**Proverbs 28:9**). See the comments on **Proverbs 28:9**.

The LORD despises your worship, when you are hiding un-confessed sin (**Isaiah 1:10-15; 58:1-11**).

So great is this offence of the lost for their rebellion against Him that God will laugh and mock when sinners need Him (**Proverbs 1:24-31**).

If the unsaved reject God's conviction and instruction now, He will laugh at their calamity later! The unsaved, should not even dare to think, to take preaching lightly.

Lost people should not even dare to think they can keep their sins and God will be merciful.

Because of Saul's wickedness, the LORD left him (**1Samuel 16:14**).

Though he begged for mercy, the LORD had judged him and given the kingdom to David (**1Samuel 15:28-30**).

Saul so desperate for his prayers to be heard he went to, the witch of Endor, to conjure up Samuel, that God did send to him and also condemned him for his sins (**1Samuel 28:5-20**)!

David sinned. And hid his sin and learned a painful lesson. He wrote, "**If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me**" (**Psalms 66:18**).

So David confessed his sin, and the Lord heard him. He wrote, "**But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer**" (**Psalms 66:19**).

Reader, this is your duty, to examine your soul and life for any sins. The man after God's own heart examined himself often and thoroughly (**Psalms 19:12-14; 26:2; 139:23-24**).

The LORD will faithfully forgive you. Then you must confess, immediately and completely, whatever you find by God's conviction. Keep short accounts with God. (**Proverbs 28:13; Job 33:26-28; 1John 1:9**).

Conviction for sin is a blessing from God. It is the loving overtures of your heavenly Father calling you back to Him.

If you continue to rebel however, The LORD will turn in Fatherly anger and chasten you. But He says to you, "**Return unto me**" (**Isaiah 44:22; Malachi 3:7**).

To those who humble themselves and live holy lives, the LORD is always present with deliverance and

blessing (**2Chronicles 16:9; Psalms 34:15-17; 138:6; James 5:16; 1Peter 3:12**).

Listen to the LORD and believe His Word, "**The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them**" (**Psalms 145:18-19**).

Call Upon The LORD Call Upon Him In Truth If You Truly Fear Him

Christian reader, you do not have to be perfect for God to hear your every prayer, but you do need to confess your failures.

Consider Elijah, the wild man that he was. When reviewing the power of his prayers, the LORD comforts us by declaring that Elijah was a man subject to the same passions we face every day (**James 5:16-18**).

The LORD heard every prayer of the Lord Jesus (**John 11:42**).

Jesus always did those things that pleased Father (**John 8:29**).

In Jesus' deepest hour of need, though the cross was unavoidable, His Father sent an angel to strengthen Him (**Luke 22:43**).

The angel of the LORD encamps around us, and delivers us, when we fear Him (**Psalms 34:7**). What a blessed Glory!

Proverbs 15:30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.

"*The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart.*" Not so much the faculty of seeing, but the spiritual light of the eyes of our understanding, when opened by the Spirit of God at conversion; is a marvelous light that souls are called unto.

The light of Christ, the sun of righteousness Himself, the light of the world, the glories of His person and office, the fullness of grace that is in Him, pardon of sin by His blood, justification by His righteousness, and free and full salvation.

Through Christ, the worst and chief of sinners can see the light of God's countenance, His face and favor.

Through Christ, we see the light of the Divine Word, and the precious truths of it.

Through Christ, we see the light of, joy, and happiness of the world to come.

Through Christ, we see the light of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it.

"*A good report makes the bones fat*" or "a good hearing." This is to be understood of the good news, or good hearing, from a far country, (*Proverbs 25:25*).

And of course, the Gospel, which is "*a good report*" (*Isaiah 53:1; Romans 10:16*).

"*A good report*" concerning God: the perfections of His nature, the purposes of His heart, the covenants of His grace, His love, and mercy towards men in Christ Jesus.

"*A good report*" concerning Christ: his person and offices, His incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death; and concerning His resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of God, intercession for his people, and His second coming to judge; His salvation, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him;

"*A good report*" concerning the good land: the heavenly Canaan, and the glories of it, the way unto it, and the persons that shall possess it: and this is a "*good report*" it is good tidings of good things.

"*A good report*" being heard, received, and embraced, greatly contributes to the spiritual health and prosperity of the children of God, it makes them fat and flourishing; such pleasant words are as the honeycomb, sweet to the soul, making a glad the heart, and marrow and health to the bones; (*Proverbs 3:8 12:25 16:24*). Knowledge is information which the mind receives either by: its own studies, its own experience, and its hearing the testimony of others.

Knowledge has different degrees of value, to the hearer, according to the order of subjects which it reveals to the mind, and the value of the testimony by which they are ordered up.

God Is The Highest Subject Of Knowledge!

The text suggests two facts in relation to this knowledge.

1. Knowledge is joyful: "*The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart, and a good report maketh the bones fat.*"

We take the expression "*good report*" as expressing not merely a good reputation or good tidings, but as expressing good knowledge; the best knowledge, is the knowledge of God Himself.

Such knowledge has the same influence upon the soul, as light upon the natural heart. When light breaks in upon the world after a season of thick clouds and darkness, it sets all nature to music. So it is when the soul sees God.

2. Knowledge is strengthening. It "*maketh the bones fat.*" The bones on which bodies strength and stability depend. The cavities and cellular parts of the bones are filled with the marrow; a provision without which they would be brittle and easily fractured.

"*Making the bones fat:*" means, supplying them with plenty of marrow, and thus strengthening the entire structural system. Hence "*marrow to the bones*" is a Bible figure for anything eminently gratifying and beneficial.

What Is The Strength Of The Soul?

Trust in God is strength. The soul possessing firm trust in Him, is mighty, both in endurance and in action; true knowledge gives this trust.

Love for God is strength. Love is soul power. Supreme affection for the supremely good, is unconquerable grace, mercy; knowledge gives this love.

Hope in God for the future is strength. The soul, full of hope, is invincible. And true knowledge gives this hope.

Thus *a good report*, good knowledge concerning God, is to the soul as marrow to the bones.

Proverbs 15:31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.

Reader, a reproof that is given by you according to the Word of God, should be given: in a warm, a fervent, and in a lively manner, with zeal, and with a good spirit, will bless and edify others.

What is Reproof? Reproof always implies blame either real or imaginary. It is a charge of misconduct, accompanied with censure from one person to another.

By the "*reproof of life*" in the text, we shall understand it is God's reproof to sinners. His reproofs are characterized by at least three things:

1. **Truthfulness:** Men often address reproofs to others that are undeserved, implying a fault which has no existence.

Take great care: ill-tempered people are fond of the work of reproaching others. They look at others through their own feelings, and that's not good.

God's reproofs, however, are always truthful. The blame which God charges on man is a fact attested by man's own consciousness.

2. **Necessity:** Men often address reproofs when not needed.

Many parents do incalculable injury to the character of their children, by noticing and rebuking trivial irregularities, which are almost natural to young life.

God reproves men because it is necessary that they should be convicted of sin. The world can only be morally restored by convincing it of sin.

3. **Kindness:** Men's reproofs are often inspired by unkindness. Unkind reproofs, even when true, are often injurious. It is kindness that gives us power for good. So should an effective rebuke be?

The text leads us to consider the acceptance of God's reproof. *"The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise."*

But it must be accepted in a right spirit. The spirit expressed by David, when he said, *"Let the righteous smite me and it shall be a kindness, let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil; it shall not break my head."* (*Psalms 141:5*).

Two advantages are indicated in the text for proper acceptance of Divine reproof: *"He abideth among the Wise."* This is permanent social elevation.

The "wise" are not only the enlightened, but they are perceived holy and the good. The man who obeys the voice of God, gets a permanent place with Him.

Then there is, acquisition of true wisdom. *"He getteth understanding."* (*Proverbs 15:32*).

He learns to repel the evil, and to pursue the good. He receives that wisdom which not only throws a light upon his path, but verifies and strengthens his spirit.

Proverbs 15:32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

Here again is the one of the most common themes of Proverbs. A wise man will gladly hear instruction and submissively take reproof.

A foolish and wicked man will resist them both.

A wise man will gain understanding by receiving correction.

A wicked man who refuses admonition must hate his own soul, for he is guaranteeing his destruction.

Reader resistance to instruction and correction marks a person as a fool.

In fact, this is the surest measure of a man: how well does he listen to reproofs, how eager is he to be taught, how thankful is he to the man that reproves him.

A fool does not like to be corrected, and a scorner hates it!

A fool does not appreciate a reprover, and a scorner despises him.

**Remember
Every Person Arrives In Life
Knowing Nothing.**

The only way he can learn anything is to listen to those God sets up to teach him.

Those older who were born before him and those also who have wisdom from the Word of God!

Those who have experience. Parents, even retarded ones, have greater intelligence and experience than their children, so wise children will hear their reproofs.

When God sends a wise man to you in the course of life, love that man, submit to his correction, and learn from him.

The word "noble" is important (Noble means, having or showing or indicative of high or elevated character).

These are men in God's sight with ready minds for receiving the instruction of God's Word (*Acts 17:11*).

Noble men, listen well with eager anticipation of learning from the man of God.

Noble men, do not consider any man infallible, they search the Scriptures to verify what they hear;

Noble men, do this with a receptive mind, not a belligerent one.

Reader, it is incredibly easy to identify a fool. Listening to a fool, you can hardly get a word in, because they want to be talking. For every suggestion, correction, or warning you give, they have a "but."

A fool will look away, look down on you, or otherwise show their disrespect. While you are talking, you can see their simple mind bubbling up the next things they want to say.

"Understanding" requires a great increase in knowledge and discretion, which can only come, by folly and error being reproofed. No one likes to be corrected, because we are proud and arrogant by our sinful nature from Adam.

The wise man, the man born of God, will put this nature down and humble himself before any who come to instruct him.

How is "instruction" refused?

Instruction is refused by avoiding churches with godly pastors; a foolish man blocks out any teaching that steps on their toes; a foolish man thinks of reasons to excuse their sinful behavior; a foolish man tries to talk over the person correcting them.

Those that refuse instruction try to get rid of those who stand for anything; they apply the words to someone worse than themselves; they look for a fault in the teacher to avoid the force of his words; they accuse him of false motives.

Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

How important is the fear of the LORD for getting wisdom? Absolutely essential! Reader, you will not get close to wisdom without fearing God (*Job 28:28*).

How important is humility to getting honor? Absolutely essential! Reader, you will not get close to true honor without humility (*Proverbs 11:2; 16:18; 18:12; 29:23*).

If you love wisdom and seek the favor of God, then here are the rules for your life. Humble yourself before God and men in the fear of God.

What is the fear of the Lord?

The fear of the Lord is a reverent awe for Him and His power, it is a deep respect for His commandments and laws, it is a fearful regard for the punishment He can bring on the foolish.

The fear of the Lord is not a slavish, demoralizing fear that causes terror or distress. It is a fervent and holy desire to please Him in all things and fulfill His desire for your life as close as possible.

The fear of the Lord is the sober realization that He is God and you are His mere creature.

What is humility?

Humility is the knowledge that you are very fallible, very foolish, and very weak.

Humility is the willingness to reject your own thoughts and opinions in order to be taught by God or men wiser than yourself.

Humility is the ability to take correction, confess your faults, and change your methods based on the instruction of others.

Humility is the discipline to keep your mouth shut, avoid the conflicts of others, and forgive their offences against you.

The importance of these two prerequisites cannot be overstated.

Moses taught the fear of the Lord (*Deuteronomy 10:12*).

Joshua taught the fear of the Lord (*Joshua 24:14*).

Samuel taught the fear of the Lord (*1Samuel 12:14, 20, 24*).

David taught the fear of the Lord (*Psalms 34:9-11*).

Solomon taught the fear of the Lord (*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*).

The fear of the Lord was the conclusion of Solomon's experimentation of man's purpose on earth!

The fear of the Lord is the whole duty of man!

The fear of the Lord is the very foundation of wisdom: without it you cannot even get started (*Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; Psalm 111:10*).

The surest and shortest way to honor, is that of humility! **If** you put yourself down, God and men will lift you up! The lesson is certain; the law is infallible.

God resists the proud, but He helps the humble. It is the way of The One, who cannot stand the stench of human pride!

Joseph reached the throne through the slave market and prison.

Jesus reached the throne of glory through a stable and a cross!

Moses and David became pastors of a nation after pasturing sheep in great obscurity.

Gideon and Jephthah had little pedigree or position, but God promoted them over His people.

Rahab and Ruth were despised foreigners, one a prostitute and one a widow, but both are in the lineage of Jesus Christ!

Daniel and Esther were orphaned early and captured by pagan kingdoms, but both rose to the right hand of power!

Abigail said she was unworthy to wash the feet of David's servants, but he chose her to be his wife!

Reader, when you fear the Lord, you have no fear of man. Fear of man corrupts the hearts of most men (*Proverbs 29:25*).

If peer pressure does not bother you, and **If** threats do not intimidate you, then you will be proportionately wiser, by not wasting mental effort or making moral

compromise, based on what others might think or do.
Can you grasp this wisdom?

When you fear the Lord, you have wonderful knowledge, precepts, and principles that others do not have, you have the Words of God to guide your thinking and actions.

The man who fears the Lord trembles before His Word
(Isaiah 66:2).

Even pagans can recognize the great advantage of the Bible (*Deuteronomy 4:5-8; Psalms 19:7; 111:10; 119:98-100*).

When you fear the Lord, you are accountable to a Judge higher than earthly authority. Men easily sin, when the only risk is the displeasure or punishment of other men. But the fear of God brings the greatest motivation for a man to make wise and righteous choices. It was this fact that kept Joseph back from Potiphar's wife and David from killing Saul.

When you are humble, you think before you speak, and you speak gently and kindly, because you know the foolishness of your heart and lips. Such caution and reservation brings respect and honor, even from kings (*Proverbs 15:1; 16:13; 17:27-28; 22:11*).

When you are humble:

In that position, God gives grace and wisdom. In that position, God avenges you upon your enemies.

In that position, God exalts you above others, for He will crush the proud and promote the humble.

In that position, God knows that exalting you will not bring the arrogance of self-confidence. Reader, you have been shown the way of wisdom and honor. God inspired these Words through the wisest and most honored king in history.

Do you love and fear the God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength? **If** not, humble yourself now and begin!

Do you despise your deceitful heart, hellish lips, and weak flesh enough to cry unto God that you are a lost cause? **If** not, confess your arrogance and begin!