

CHAPTER 26

Proverbs 26:1 As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.

Fools should be despised, so we have a simile to compare honoring them with unnatural weather and a farming disaster. Snow in summer is not right; it is contrary to nature: and rain can ruin a harvest, when farmers try to get a season's crops into storage. Neither of these events is right, useful, or desired; and they cause trouble, confusion, and loss. These weather events are not seemly; neither is honoring a fool.

What does "seemly" mean? The Bible uses "meet," "fit," and "right" as synonyms, and the Oxford English Dictionary states: "Seemly. Suitable to the person or the occasion; appropriate." So we easily understand, it is not suitable, appropriate, proper, or fitting to honor a fool.

Men honor fools for several reasons. They do not appreciate the danger of a fool; or recognize a fool. The fool may be their friend; or a family member, so they assume kindness is appropriate, and they can help a fool by mercy and honor.

What Is A Fool?

- A fool rejects instruction (*Proverbs 23:9*).
- A fool assumes he is right (*Proverbs 12:15*).
- A fool rejects correction (*Proverbs 15:10*).
- A fool loves to argue (*Proverbs 19:13*).
- A fool talks too much (*Proverbs 15:2*).
- A fool slanders people (*Proverbs 10:18*).
- A fool holds heavy grudges (*Proverbs 17:12*).
- A fool is very stubborn (*Proverbs 17:10*).
- A fool is not successful (*Ecclesiastes 10:15*).
- A fool enjoys mischief (*Proverbs 10:23*).
- A fool easily deceived (*Proverbs 14:15*).

This is the basis for a definition. Now, do you know any fools? Of course, you do. How will you treat them? With honor and mercy? How much do you truly trust God's wisdom?

God condemns fools, and we should treat them accordingly. Fools are properly treated by:

- Avoiding them (*Proverbs 13:20; 14:7*).
- Not talking to them (*Proverbs 23:9; 26:4*).
- Rebuking them (*Proverbs 26:5*).
- Beating them (*Proverbs 26:3*); for stripes may help them (*Proverbs 10:13; 17:10; 18:6; 19:29; 20:30*).

Foolishness is bound in a child's heart, but the rod will drive it far away (*Proverbs 22:15*).

So rather than honoring a foolish child, teach him wisdom with reproof and a rod (*Proverbs 29:15*).

Honor to a fool will increase their foolishness (*Proverbs 30:22*).

Honor to a fool, will encourage others to be fools (*Proverbs 21:11*).

Fools might reconsider their folly, if everyone rejected and rebuked them.

Rulers may violate this Proverb by honoring fools and servants, and such a nation is in peril. Labor unions, child rights, are typical examples. (*Ecclesiastes 10:5-7*)

Jesus would not honor fools, and He died for it; because the Pharisees and other religious fools could not stand his life, answers, and condemnation (*Mark 3:1-6; Matthew 23:1-39*).

Proverbs 26:2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

When trouble comes, it is not an accident or pagan Fate. The LORD blesses, and the LORD curses. And He does not curse randomly or foolishly. There is always a just cause for His judgment. Curses come to rest on men and their homes for good cause, just as surely as wandering birds and flying swallows end up back at their nests.

Though not obvious to us, the bird and the swallow have a purpose in their wandering flight patterns, so trouble from the LORD falls on no man without a holy reason.

Our view of life's events and its ebb and flow is like observing the apparent random flight of birds, but their flight has purpose and they always arrive at their appointed destinations.

If you choose a carnal life of selfish interest in this world, the Lord will curse you (*Proverbs 3:31-35; 11:26; 21:12; 28:27; Psalm 37:22*).

When God curses a man, a family, or a nation, it is horrible (*Leviticus 26:14-40; Deuteronomy 11:26-29; 28:15-68; 29:14-29*).

God knows you and your worst fears; He knows what will make your life worse than death. Fear Him!

Solomon agrees with Paul, *Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

The way of transgressors is hard. Don't think for a minute judgment will not come or your troubles are mere chance. (*Proverbs 13:15*)

God cursed the ground with thorns for Adam's sin (*Genesis 3:18*).

God can curse your life with thorns as well (*Proverbs 22:5*).

When God sets His face against a man, great evil is coming (*Leviticus 20:5; Jeremiah 21:10*).

Re-gathered Israel neglected God's worship, so He threatened and cursed them (*Haggai 1:5-11; Malachi 1:14; 2:2; 3:9; 4:6*).

God warned them of a curse that would consume the stones and timbers of their homes (*Zechariah 5:1-4*).

God can tear your foundation of life down! Beware lest He curses you for trusting in the flesh and departing from Him (*Jeremiah 17:5*).

In the day of adversity, consider well. Your troubles are not an accident or a random event; they were prepared and sent by the most High. (*Ecclesiastes 7:14*)

To warn of His curses, Israel had a public assembly to list them in responsive reading (*Deuteronomy 27:11-26*).

Forty two children should have considered this before they mocked Elisha (*2Kings 2:23-25*).

It is an ignorant man who does not know the LORD purposes good and evil (*Lamentations 3:37-38*).

The LORD's greatest curse is for our sins, and it brings a certain eternity in the Lake of Fire (*Matthew 25:41*).

But Jesus Christ was made a curse for us, so that we will be free from any curse in heaven (*Galatians 3:13; Revelation 22:13*)! Hallelujah!

And those who do not love our Lord will be cursed at His coming, *Anathema Maranatha* (*1Corinthians 16:22*)!

Proverbs 26:3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back.

If you think you could talk wisdom into a fool? How would you do it? Fools don't learn by words, because they cannot. That is why they are fools. They must be controlled with physical constraints and punishments like mindless brute beasts (*Proverbs 10:13*).

Words are wasted on a fool (*Proverbs 26:4*).

We should only converse enough, to rebuke his ignorance, lest he add conceit to his folly (*Proverbs 26:5*).

A reproof will work with a wise man, so we call it "a word to the wise," more than a hundred stripes only will with a fool (*Proverbs 17:10*).

It is a shame our urban society no longer needs service from brute beasts like the horse and ass, for this Proverb would need little explanation.

Men who grew up on farms using these beasts learned to control and direct them with physical constraints and punishment. But PETA and the PTA have just about stolen such wisdom from our "civilized" nation.

A whip or riding crop helps a horse remember its duties. A horse seeing its rider get on with a riding crop will behave better than with a rider without it, even if it is not used! It has felt the stinging whip before, so it minds its manners, though it has no understanding. Even the best horses are whipped to get their top performance, as shown in a horse race.

A bridle is perfect to direct an ass, mule, or horse. A piece of metal against their lips reminds them to go in the direction their master chooses, especially with the four feet of leverage the reins give on either side. What a marvelous device! (*Psalms 32:9; James 3:3*)

Our enlightened society, encouraging punk rockers with pierced tongues, to slam each other in mush pits, thinks fools will become wise with pampering and a new environment. But every farmer, especially those missing higher education, knows better.

Educators tell us gentle words will make a fool wise, but the wisdom of God says they are wasted words and will lead a fool to greater foolishness.

A fool will think he is worthy of conversation, which he is not (*Proverbs 26:5; 2Timothy 2:16, 23; Titus 3:9*).

And a fool will despise the wisdom of your words and then use them against you (*Proverbs 23:9; Matthew 7:6*).

They say a new environment will make him wise, but the wisdom of God rejects this as well. *Isaiah 26:10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.*

A washed pig in your manicured back yard will create its own mud, with urine and your flowerbed, for wallowing in less than an hour!

A dog with manicured toenails, a pink bow around its neck, and gourmet cuts of meat will still eat its own vomit. And these are the pictures God gives of a fool's character (*Proverbs 26:11; 2Peter 2:22*).

They tell us that better education will make him wise, but it was our institutions of higher learning that created and promoted the hippie anarchist fools of the 1970s.

The tree-hugging, family-breaking, baby-aborting anarchist fools of today. Education didn't help Columbine High School in Colorado, or any other high school with dangerous fools.

They tell us better jobs and more money will make a difference. But you would never know by watching the fools among today's athletes.

Multi-million dollar salaries for playing games has not taught them any wisdom. Mike Tyson averaged about \$1 million per minute of boxing time, but he may be dumber than the animals mentioned above.

Love and affection are not right for dealing with a fool, for it will inflame his conceit and justify his idiotic ways of living. By the way, what a sure way to discourage the hearts of wise men to see fools receiving esteem and respect. Fools should not be given any honor or attention (*Proverbs 26:1, 8; 19:10; 30:21-23; Ecclesiastes 10:5-7*). See the comments on *Proverbs 26:1*.

It is shameful when so-called Christian leaders consider the pampering of children, as a strong argument for discipline.

Humanistic psychologist disdained the use of the rod and call for squeezing the trapezoid muscle of a child instead. Today he wouldn't even go that far. Obviously, he never worked on a farm.

Corporal punishment for fools is a wonderful thing, as creative and useful as whips and bridles for brute beasts.

And to the degree it is reduced in our discipline-hating and rebellion-pampering society, we will continue to decline as a nation and society.

This Proverb alone should justify the Bible at the top of every bestseller list. Lord, help us.

Flogging was once the universal means of maintaining family, domestic, military, and academic discipline.

The hickory stick was a wonderful way to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. Now you can hardly even find an accurate entry in an encyclopedia for this former widely used public punishment for criminals. See the comments on *Proverbs 22:15*.

They say corporal punishment is not a deterrent, but such insane notions are the results of academicians who were not raised in real homes, never visited a farm, never worked in the real world, and who hallucinate outside the realm of reality.

Everyone knows pain is a deterrent. Children learn about fire and heat, weak branches in trees, and stairs by experiencing them! Not by learning their scientific principles through verbal instruction!

A whip does not give a horse intelligence, nor does a bridle help an ass; neither will the rod give wisdom to an incorrigible fool (*Proverbs 17:10; 27:22*).

The rod, like the whip and bridle, is merely God's means to punish and control fools. However, with our children, we may expect and believe the good fruit of character to develop (*Proverbs 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17*).

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a willing and obedient Servant to His Father by simple instruction and also to his parents (*Isaiah 50:4-6; Luke 2:51*).

There was no need for a rod in His training. Yet He knew how to make a whip and use it effectively when driving fools from His Father's House of Prayer (*John 2:12-18*).

Proverbs 26:4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

It is wrong to debate with fools. They do not deserve knowledge or truth. Wisdom is too precious to waste on them.

Wise men have better uses of their time. And arguing is a fleshly lust. For these reasons, it is a sin to debate with men who do not clearly display godly wisdom and righteousness. By doing so, you descend to their profane level.

You should say enough to shut their mouths, but anything more is folly and sin (*Proverbs 26:5*).

Fools deserve no honor, and only a beating will truly help them (*Proverbs 26:1; 26:3*).

To keep them from thinking they are right, it is proper to briefly refute their idiotic notions.

Truth does not back down from any, but it has no obligation to waste its time on any, either!

Jesus plainly confirmed Solomon by teaching, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (*Matthew 7:6*).

Jesus often rebuked the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, lawyers, and scribes of His day, but He avoided any foolish wrangling with them.

If you debate truth with a fool, he will first despise the wisdom of your words and ridicule the precious things you tell him (*Proverbs 23:9*).

You will degrade the truth by letting him mock and reproach it. He will then twist your words and use them against you, because his heart is black with hate and violence. Leave him alone, and let him rot! (*Isaiah 29:20-21*)

Too harsh, you say? Jesus called them dogs and pigs - vile animals and perpetual examples of beastly cruelty and selfish greed, among other despicable traits. When told He had offended the Pharisees, He said to His apostles, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (*Matthew 15:14*).

How do you spot a fool? Easy. Listen to him talk, and measure his walk (*Proverbs 14:7; 20:11*).

- A fool talks a lot,
- A fool likes his own ideas,
- A fool gets angry easily,
- A fool always excuses his conduct,
- A fool belittles others,
- A fool prefers teaching to being taught,
- A fool wants to debate most everything,
- A fool resents authority,
- A fool disdains convention, or talks profanely.
- A fool also does not live according to the Bible and has no spiritual fruit, which are the absolute and final measures of wisdom.

Your flesh, wants to get in the last word with a fool, or believes you can persuade him by reasoning, or thinks love will win the day, and sees no risk to your own soul (*2Timothy 2:24-26; 1Corinthians 15:33*).

But there is danger here, so Paul warned against the foolish questions or vain babblings of foolish men (*1Timothy 1:3-7; 4:7; 6:20; 2Timothy 2:14-16, 23; Titus 1:14; 3:9*).

Proverbs 26:5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

Fools think and speak contrary to God, truth, and wisdom.

Wise men shut their mouths, lest they presume their thoughts are acceptable or right.

If a fool is not rebuked, he will become conceited in his error and turn into a scorner: (*Proverbs 26:12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*) Before his case is utterly

hopeless, and truth lies mangled in the mud, it is good to destroy his foolish ideas.

Solomon also taught not to answer fools, or engage in foolish debates with them, or you will become like them (*Proverbs 26:4*).

Fools do not deserve attention, discussion of their ideas, or answers to their questions. Paul warned ministers to ignore and reject foolish questions and vain babblings (*1Timothy 1:3-7; 4:7; 6:20; 2Timothy 2:14-16, 23; Titus 1:14; 3:9*).

In the larger context, Solomon forbids giving honor to a fool (*Proverbs 26:1*).

Solomon warned that God has cursed a fool's folly (*Proverbs 26:2*),

Solomon concluded that the only treatment that truly works is physical restraint and corporal punishment (*Proverbs 26:3*).

Solomon further explained a fool's character and the treatment he deserved in the verses following (*Proverbs 26:6-12*).

Fools vary in education and intelligence. Great fools write books, Teach at the university level, Work in the media, or preach on Sunday.

They espouse evolution,
They defend sodomy,
They protect abortion,
They promote marijuana,
They justify labor unions,
They condemn corporal and capital punishment,
They reject God, and outlaw prayer, among other forms of demented thinking.

These fools must be shut up. Do not expect them to receive truth or wisdom. God has turned them over to reprobate minds (*Romans 1:18-28*).

They cannot recognize truth, even if it shines daily from the sun and nightly from the stars and moon (*Psalms 19:1-6*).

You meet fools every day. Foolishness abounds in America, partly because no one will speak out against it. When they say or do something foolish, it is your duty, and blessed privilege, to correct them with truth.

But after you shut their mouths, you must ignore them, lest you cast pearls before swine and give holy things to dogs (*Matthew 7:6*).

Jesus was a master at shutting fools' mouths. He discerned their foolish thoughts, and He would turn their carefully planned questions upside down.

When Jesus was through, they could not answer, nor did they want to ask any more questions (*Matthew 22:15-46*).

Paul testified before Greek philosophers in Athens, the very fools modern America worships for their hallucinations about life (*Acts 17:16-34*).

He opened by charging them with superstition, and He closed by telling them about the coming of Jesus to judge them!

Proverbs 26:6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage.

Fools cannot be trusted. They are too lazy, stupid, and willful to do a job right. Carrying a message is an easy task, but a fool will not do it right or on time.

You might as well cut a man's legs off and send him! You will damage your purpose and your reputation, for the message will not be communicated as you intended. Are you a fool? Do you avoid fools?

Solomon had no use for fools, and he warned his son against them. A king could easily damage his authority, reputation, and integrity by using fools for government service.

A wise man will protect the integrity of his projects and his reputation by avoiding fools as much as possible. He will only use faithful persons, especially for important matters.

Fools must be avoided, but you must also avoid being a fool yourself! This chapter of Proverbs begins with an extended indictment of fools (*Proverbs 26:1-12*).

There are lessons to be learned:¹How to identify a fool, ²How to treat a fool, and ³How to avoid being a fool. All these lessons are important, and you must learn all of them to truly be a wise man.

"*Sendeth a message*" is synecdoche for any important task (*Proverbs 10:26; 13:17; 25:13*).

The message may be about business, politics, or religion; but correctly conveying a request, information, or an order, is important.

If the message is not delivered properly, the project at stake and the reputation of the person sending the message will be damaged.

What is a fool? A person that does not fear God (*Psalms 14:2*).

Wisdom begins by fearing God, but a fool lacks this basic requirement (*Proverbs 1:7; 9:10*).

Rejecting the fear of God, a fool is also given to conspiring, dreaming, lying, sleeping, talking, and excusing himself.

A fool hates listening, obeying, and working. He wants to do things his way (*Proverbs 28:26*).

"*Cutteth off feet*" describes the choice to trust a fool for an important job. You might as well cut the feet off a messenger: the job will not be done right!

"*Drinketh damage*" is a metaphor for receiving lots of damage, as it is used elsewhere (*Job 15:16; 34:7*).

It is wrong to trust a fool or be a fool. Reader, are you a joy to those who trust you and give you assignments, or are you a painful irritation (*Proverbs 10:26; 25:13*)?

Do you also protect yourself by avoiding fools? It is not enough to be faithful; you must also use faithful men.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest message of all, so requirements for a minister are strict (*1Timothy 3:1-7; 2Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5-9*).

These restrictions cannot be compromised without damaging the saints and Churches of Jesus Christ (*2Corinthians 2:17; 4:2; 2Peter 2:1-2*).

Proverbs 26:7 The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

A crippled person trying to walk, run, or dance is a difficult sight to witness! His legs do not function as a coordinated pair. Being not equal in length, strength, or coordination, they cause his movements to be unprofitable.

In the same way, a fool using parables or Proverbs to teach wisdom is absurd, contradictory, ridiculous, and unprofitable. Solomon here provides another indictment of fools (*Proverbs 26:1-12*)!

Parables and Proverbs are the dark sayings of the wise (*Proverbs 1:5-6; Psalm 78:2*).

Parables and Proverbs are the carefully contrived means of teaching wisdom in few words, with striking force.

Parables and Proverbs are taken from everyday life, they have a figurative meaning requiring skill and understanding to interpret and explain.

Parables and Proverbs are formed with interesting similes and metaphors for appeal and challenge.

Parables and Proverbs are really too much for a fool, who is a man without understanding or wisdom.

Fools should be taught; they should not teach.

Fools should listen; they should not talk.

Therefore, fools should not have the honor of a public forum for their babblings (*Proverbs 26:1, 8*).

Fools should be ignored or shut up by wise rebukes (*Proverbs 26:4-5*).

Fools lack of common sense and spiritual understanding denies them any right to take the deep things of God's Word into their mouths. A fools sinful living habits and profane treatment of religious matters preclude them from touching God's holy things.

Fools would do much better and be perceived more kindly, if they kept their mouths shut (*Proverbs 17:28*)!

But it is impossible for fools to shut up and listen and learn, they must continually be babbling in their ignorance, for that is one of the chief marks of a fool (*Proverbs 15:2; Ecclesiastes 5:3; 10:3, 12-14*).

Identifying fools is quite easy: all you have to do is listen for the one talking the most. So fools in both the pulpit and pew take up the Word of God and try to teach wisdom.

A fool thinks the sound and sense of words are equal, they need no interpretation, so the cripple stumbles into confusion and heresy!

Sound bites are good enough for a fool! Why worry about context or the spiritual intent of words, he argues: the Bible means what it says, and says what it means.

The fool doesn't know or understand the minister's work of reading distinctly and giving the sense of a reading (*Nehemiah 8:8; Ecclesiastes 8:1; 2Peter 1:20*).

A fool thinks reading and study are the same, he assumes thinking and studying are the same, so the cripple stumbles without preparation.

Anyone should be able to give their opinion on a matter, he argues: we are all God's children and have the Spirit to expound and teach the truth.

The fool has neither the God-given aptitude for the work, nor invests the sweat to save him from doctrinal shame (*Proverbs 15:28; 1Timothy 3:2; 4:13-15; 2Timothy 2:15; Titus 1:9*).

A fool opens his mouth wide and belches about doctrine and principle, but his life never matches the Scriptures he uses, so the crippled fool stumbles and falls into the gutter of hypocrisy.

He fools some by his loud profession of faith and wisdom, but the Lord Jesus Christ will expose his nakedness in the Day of Judgment (*Matthew 7:21-23*).

A fool fails one of the chief duties of a teacher, to be an example of the truth (*1Timothy 4:12, 16; Titus 2:7*).

Is this Proverb literally true? Until you have heard a spiritualizing fool with the Song of Solomon or the parable of the Good Samaritan, you cannot appreciate just how ridiculous a dancing cripple can be!

Until you hear a fund-raising fool abuse and twist the Proverbial Words, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish*," you cannot fully grasp the danger and folly of a cripple on a balance beam! See the comments on *Proverbs 29:18*!

What lessons can you learn here? Be swift to hear and slow to speak (*James 1:19*).

Do not be eager to be a teacher, for they shall receive the greater condemnation (*James 3:1*).

Silence is golden, especially if God or men have not called you to be a teacher (*Hebrews 5:4*).

Make sure your life teaches louder than your words (*Matthew 23:14-15*).

Our Lord Jesus was no cripple! His legs were equal and very strong! He was perfectly fit as the greatest teacher of wisdom in the history of the world!

Jesus' prudent use and interpretation of Parables and Proverbs was exceptional! He was greater than Solomon!

His skill and power in teaching caused men to tremble in amazement and avoid questions (*Matthew 7:28-29; 22:46; Luke 4:22; John 7:46*).

Proverbs 26:8 As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool.

Fools, nor folly, are worthy of honor or respect; they should be despised and rejected.

Since wisdom is noble and holy, wise men should be honored;

Since folly is evil and profane, honoring a fool is contrary to all godly sensibilities.

It is as wrong and confused as tying a stone in a sling, so it cannot come forth when the effort is made to throw it.

A sling was made of a small piece of leather, with a thong attached to each of its two sides. With a stone on the leather, it was whirled once or twice and one thong released, which threw the stone with great force.

David killed Goliath with a sling, and Benjamin had 700 left handed slingers, who were incredibly accurate (*Judges 20:16*).

The rounded stones ranged from golf ball to tennis ball size and could be thrown beyond 400 yards, with historical evidence that marksmen could pick the point on an enemy's face to hit.

If a stone were bound in the sling, when the release thong was let go, the stone could not leave the sling.

The pent up centrifugal force could cause the stone, bound in its pouch, to hit you in the face! At the least, binding a stone in a sling was totally counterproductive and wasteful; at the worst, it was fatally dangerous to the thrower!

What does the simile about binding a stone in a sling mean? At the very least, it expresses that honoring a fool is counterproductive and wasteful; at the worst, it is very dangerous, for the misplaced honor could come back to severely hurt you.

If you honor a fool, you are going to suffer for it, for an honored fool is an unbearable thing (*Proverbs 23:9; 26:4-5; 29:9; 30:21-23; Matthew 7:6*).

The Holy Spirit's Proverbs are rules for a wise life (*Proverbs 1:1-6*).

Twelve rules about fools, to help us walk wisely (*Proverbs 26:1-12; Colossians 4:5*). See the comments on *Proverbs 26:1*.

Natural men are fools; God commands us to be wise. Therefore we see the constant conflict between wisdom and folly, wise men and fools. A simple rule of wisdom is to honor wise men and choose them for your friends. The contrasting rule is to despise and reject fools.

Discrimination is good and holy. Wise men discriminate between good and evil,

Wise men discriminate between wisdom and folly, and
Wise men discriminate between wise men and fools.

God discriminates in the distribution of many blessings and curses according to the character and conduct of men. While He sends sun and rain on both good and bad, He also rewards and punishes men.

To treat all men equally, irrespective of character and conduct, is to promote fools in their folly, and to discourage wise men for their wisdom, which truly deserve the honor.

Mere existence or a natural relationship is no reason for honor, unless the person is in a God-ordained office deserving honor.

Unconditional honor is ignorantly dangerous. There is no place or reason for delighting in fools. All honor should promote wisdom! (*Proverbs 19:10*)

A character trait of the citizens of Zion, the true children of God, is to condemn and despise fools and to honor and promote wise men.

When David listed the marks of the sons of God, he included, "*In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD*" (*Psalms 15:4*).

David practiced it in his own home (*Psalms 101:3-8*)!

Elisha, as a prophet of God, had this to say when meeting King Jehoram (Ahab and Jezebel's son) and King Jehoshaphat, "*As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee*" (*2Kings 3:14*). He would not honor the fool!

Parent, do you make a difference between wise and foolish children, and their wise and foolish acts!

The difference you make should be consistent and obvious, for the reward of wisdom and punishment of folly. This will build a noble family by God's method.

Can you find a reason to honor a wise child today to the neglect of a foolish child? Do it!

Pastor, do you make a difference between wise and foolish members, and their wise and foolish acts! The difference you make should be consistent and obvious, for the reward of wisdom and punishment of folly.

This will build a noble church by God's method. Can you find a reason to honor wise members today to the neglect of foolish members? Do it!

Let neither parents or pastors be guilty of the evil that irritated Solomon.

Solomon wrote, "*There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth*" (*Ecclesiastes 10:5-7*).

Put folly down, and set wisdom in great dignity, by honoring the wise person and contemning the fool.

By avoiding, neglecting, reproving, and rejecting fools, the righteous can be salt in the earth to preserve the wise and corrode the foolish (*Matthew 5:13; Colossians 4:6*).

By the same treatment, they will be the children of light to expose and reprove fools. It is the blessed privilege

of saints to follow this and similar rules for treating fools. (*Ephesians 5:8-13*)

Our Lord was the perfect example of applying this Proverb. He condemned and rebuked foolishness, wherever He found it, even among His own disciples (*Matthew 22:34-46; 23:17-19; Luke 24:25-26*).

But the Lord exalted wisdom as high as He could, even calling His obedient followers His mother, brothers, and sisters (*Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 11:27-28*)!

Proverbs 26:9 As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

A parable is a dark and obscure saying, like Solomon's Proverbs, which requires careful interpretation and application to be profitable.

Because a fool has no understanding, he ends up using a Parable to his own hurt, much like a drunkard too intoxicated to handle thorns properly and ends up piercing his hand with one! Wisdom is only for wise men!

The lesson is simple. Fools are unfit teachers of God's wisdom: they will only hurt themselves trying to interpret dark sayings of wise men.

Peter warned about unlearned men wresting Scripture to their own destruction; he admitted Paul wrote things hard to be understood (*2Peter 3:15-16*).

A fool lacks: mental ability, patience of character, humility of spirit, the revelation of God, and rules of interpretation. All are necessities. The purpose of the Proverb is less obvious.

Truth And Wisdom Are Wonderful Things

The principal things to seek and obtain in life (*Proverbs 3:15-18; 4:5-9; 8:11; 16:16; 23:23*).

But a fool has no right to them: they are high out of his reach (*Proverbs 17:16; 18:2; 26:5*).

Solomon ridiculed a fool attempting to teach truth or wisdom, to attempt to exalt the glory of both to wise men. They are only treasures to wise men, because they know the fools of this world will never find them.

The Words of wisdom are plain to those that understand and right to them that have knowledge. But fools have neither understanding nor knowledge. (*Proverbs 8:8-9*)

Fools take the Words of the wise and pierce themselves by misinterpreting and misapplying them.

Fools study lazily and miss the right divisions in sense and application to be approved workmen in God's Word of truth (*Proverbs 18:1; 2Timothy 2:15*).

Fools are shamed in doctrine and practice!

Building committees use [*Proverbs 29:18*] to justify new construction, when the text really means they have lost the Word of God! The thorn pierces their hand!

Pitiful preachers, think the Parable of the parables was to hide truth from the people (*Matthew 13:1-18*)!

The thorn pierces their hand! Similar examples of parables and thorns could go on forever, especially with the modern Bible versions and their corruption of Solomon's Proverbs.

If you wish to be wise and understand the dark sayings of God, you must humble yourself before Him, which is the beginning of wisdom and understanding (*Proverbs 1:7; 9:10*).

If you wish to be wise and understand the dark sayings of God, you then must tremble before His Word and believe every Word is pure (*Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 66:2*).

If you wish to be wise and understand the dark sayings of God, you then must beg Him for the wisdom you do not have (*Proverbs 2:1-9; James 1:5*).

If you wish to be wise and understand the dark sayings of God, you then with total confidence in God's revelation, can see the great darkness that covers the minds of most men (*Isaiah 8:20; 1Timothy 6:3-5, 20-21*).

Learn to despise the words of fools (*Psalms 119:113, 128; 2Corinthians 2:17*).

Proverbs 26:10 The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.

There is only one true God, the Creator of all things, and His name is LORD.

He is the Mighty God, and He rules the universe as the only independent and infinite Being.

The LORD is the sovereign Lord of all creatures.

The LORD punishes ignorant and slothful fools and rebellious and presumptuous sinners. Neither will escape His certain judgment.

What can we know about God? We see in nature His eternal power and Godhead by reasoning from the effects to the cause (*Romans 1:20*).

Only the demented deliberate scorners give evolution a thought, all knowledge based understanding men, know there is a glorious Creator. The sun, stars, oceans, hurricanes, seasons, creatures, life, and death all testify of Him clearly. (*Psalms 19:1-6*)

What else can we know about God? The one and only inspired book in the world, the Bible, describes Him in wonderful detail. He alone is named Jehovah, I AM THAT I AM, the eternal God existing in and of Himself (*Exodus 3:14; 6:3*).

The LORD is the Mighty God, and He ridicules all other gods as the imaginations of foolish men (*Isaiah 9:6; 44:9-20; Psalm 135:5-18*).

Anything else? The LORD will not acquit or clear sinners by any means (*Numbers 14:18; Nahum 1:3*).

Sinners will all be punished (*Psalms 9:16-17; 50:21-22*)!

The LORD Jehovah cannot stand fools, and He despises and hates wickedness (*Psalms 5:5-6; 11:5-6; Matthew 7:23*).

The LORD keeps a record of every sin, and He will judge every sinner severely (*Revelation 20:11-15*).

The LORD can punish you in this life and/or in the next, and men ought to fear before Him (*Ecclesiastes 3:14; Luke 12:4-5*).

God punishes fools and transgressors. A fool is a transgressor, and a transgressor is a fool. A fool sins by ignorance and/or slothfulness; a transgressor sins presumptuously and rebelliously; and both are worthy of judgment (*Psalms 19:12-13; Luke 12:47-48*).

When distinguished, in this Proverb, we look for their differences. (*Psalms 14:1; 36:1*)

What are the lessons? Live soberly and righteously in light of this great Sovereign (*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*).

Do not fret about sinners getting away with their wickedness (*Psalms 37:35-36; Ecclesiastes 5:8*).

Do not think about taking vengeance into your own hands (*Nahum 1:2*).

Use all instructional means to avoid being a fool; and Pray and work against presumptuous sins.

Commentators, most of whom question God's Words. See how they alter this verse to read, "A great man grieveth all; and he hireth the fool; he hireth also the transgressors." What a travesty!

The elliptical sense of God is beyond them (it is in italics in the King James Version).

This same conceit caused them to say Elhanan killed Goliath (*2Samuel 21:19* in any other version) and to miss Jesus arguing from an italicized Word (*Matthew 22:31-33* cp *Exodus 3:6*).

Reader! Have you been a fool? Are you a fool? Have you been a transgressor? Are you a transgressor?

If you give a positive answer even one of these questions, you are in dire trouble, for God will reward you, and the wages of sin is death (*Romans 6:23*)!

Is there any hope for you? Absolutely none based on your abilities, pedigree, or worth!

The only hope for you is a Savior, a Mediator, a Daysman, or a High Priest with an infinite sacrifice (*Matthew 1:21; 1Timothy 2:5; Job 9:33; Hebrews 7:25-27*)!

God planned redemption in Christ Jesus before He formed all things, and He will deliver every one of those who trust Him from the just and terrible reward of their sins (*John 6:39; 10:26-29; 17:2; Romans 8:29-39; 9:14-24; Ephesians 1:3-12*).

Lay hold of your salvation by believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and doing works of righteousness for Him (*2Peter 1:5-11*).

Proverbs 26:11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

The natural creation contains powerful object lessons for our instruction. The despicable trait of dogs impresses on our minds just as the disgusting nature of sin and the insanity of our returning to sin!

Common in Proverbs, is a simple simile making a comparison between a natural object and a moral principle. Similes are identified by their use of "like" or "as." In just fourteen Words, we have a powerful description and condemnation of fools.

Also common in Proverbs, we have one of God's incredibly diverse creatures, chosen to give us an object lesson. We also read of the ant, lion, spider, swine, coney, eagle, horseleach, snake, greyhound, goat, and locust. See the comments on *Proverbs 30:24*.

The dog is not our Creator's best friend. Scripture mentions dogs forty times without one positive note.

Dogs are vile creatures representing sodomites, wicked men, devils, greed, noise, and viciousness. They are compared to pigs. They are a byword. But sinners still exceed them with the greedy and voracious appetite they have for their distasteful sins!

A disgusting trait of dogs is to eat their vomit. When their belly must reject offending matter, they return and eat it again. It is a shame we do not have the same sickening horror for sin that we do for this picture of a dog vomiting his filth and eating it.

What a great benefit for our souls, if we could learn to abhor our sinful lusts!

Though man was made in the likeness of God, a little lower than the angels, our God compares our fallen state to one of His most despicable creatures. Satan told our first mother, "Ye shall be as gods." But the righteous Judge declared, "Ye are as dogs."

Vile comparisons are used in the Bible to show man's despicable character and treatment of the Most High, as in Ezekiel chapters 16 and 23.

Peter declared this to be a true Proverb (*2Peter 2:20-22*). He used it to condemn those who forsake their conversion and return to the vomit of this world, as Lot, Solomon, Demas, and others.

To escape the pollutions of this world and then return to be entangled and overcome in them, again puts a man in a worse condition than before conversion.

Folly is sin. Even the thought of foolishness is sin (*Proverbs 24:9*).

Folly causes great shame and pain in souls and lives (*Proverbs 13:15; Psalm 36:2; Jeremiah 2:19*).

Sin Hurts:

- It hurts families;
- It hurts fortunes;
- It hurts fame;
- It hurts health.

Yet men rush back to sin again and again, even after sober and vehement oaths of repentance and reformation.

What is wrong with them? Their instincts are depraved and defiled! They love that which they should hate, and they hate that which they should love! They are perverse!

A bad heart attack will get a man's attention, even a lazy glutton! A couple days after bypass surgery, he wants the intimate details of super nutrition and the best exercise program. He makes resolutions, plans his schedule, and orders a year's worth of pita bread and lettuce and two treadmills.

But after three months of no angina, he is again a couch potato inhaling pounds of cheese nachos and candy! Did he forget the crushing pain of his heart attack? Or does he crave the poison that almost killed him? Or both?

Consider a drunkard (*Proverbs 23:29-35*). He has woe, sorrow, contentions, babbling, and wounds from his binges.

A drunkard loses his job, his driving license, his wife, his children, and his reputation.

A drunkard gets sick and feels as if he spent the night lying on the top of a ship's mast! Yet he says, "*When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.*" Fool! Dog!

Ahab repented and walked humbly before the Lord, for a few minutes. Then he rushed back to his vomit and was killed (*1Kings 21:27-29; 22:8*).

Pharaoh begged Moses for respite and promised to let Israel go. But as soon as he felt relief, he hardened his heart and returned to his stubborn folly (*Exodus 8:15*).

How many times did God forgive and deliver Israel, and then watch them rush back to pagan vomit (*Psalms 78:33-42*)?

Reader, what filth have you vomited up and cast away by the grace of God and the conviction of His Spirit?

Reader, what folly have you rejected? You will be tempted to return to it.

Reader, which vomit tempts you? Complaining? Pornography? Ungodly music? Drunkenness? Lustful fantasies? Gluttony? Television? Bitterness? Fornication? Disobedience to parents? Marital defrauding? An unscriptural church? Lack of submission? Backbiting?

There can be no partial turnings from sin. It never works! It never will work! You can still smell the vomit, and you will turn to it again.

You must flee your temptations and sins with all your might and speed! You must eliminate the sources of the temptation!

You must completely satisfy your appetite with spiritual things, so you have no hunger for vomit. There are no shortcuts.

If You Hang Around With Filth You Will Take It Up Again.

If a dog had a conscience, it would be ashamed of its vile nature. But what of human sinners! Their return to defiling sin is worse! Where is their shame?

They will soon have everlasting shame and contempt, unless saved by the Lord Jesus Christ (*Daniel 12:2*).

Only by the grace of God and the gift of repentance can a man be saved from his folly and the snare of Satan (*2Timothy 2:24-26*).

If you have the least degree of conviction about any sin at this moment, repent immediately and take drastic measures to rid your life of that folly. Flee to Jesus Christ. Perhaps the grace of God will save you today.

Let us say with the psalmist, *"I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly" (Psalm 85:8).*

Hear the warning of our Saviour, *"Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14).*

Proverbs 26:12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

Is there anything worse than a fool? Yes, a conceited person who thinks he is right! A fool is merely stupid, and you can hope he will recognize his stupidity and receive instruction.

There is little hope for a scornful man, one too proud to take correction. How will you help him? He has fully convinced himself he has no deficiencies!

The Fools Hindrance To Wisdom - Ignorance!

The conceited fool has two, ignorance and self-delusion.

The fool must first learn that he knows nothing, which is the hardest lesson in the school of wisdom, and is usually only learned by severe punishment.

The more confident a man is in error, the more ignorant and dangerous his condition.

The LORD wants you to see and consider such people. You may learn by watching these wretches. They imagine they are wise, and therefore they never will be.

They do not even know what wisdom is, let alone the spirit and means to obtain it.

Conceit is a high and haughty opinion of yourself and your abilities. It is pride and arrogance.

Conceit is the New Testament sin, of being high-minded (***2Timothy 3:4***).

Conceit is the curse of the devil, who thought so highly of himself he chose to compete with God. (***1Timothy 3:6***)

Here, conceit is of your own thoughts. Once you believe you are a great thinker and always right; who or what will persuade you otherwise?

You go to bed and rise with the same thought, your opinions are better than anyone else's! You are hopelessly deceived!

The Only Absolute Truth In Our World Is The True KJV Bible!

Conceited persons cannot give ground even to the Bible.

Conceited persons have convinced themselves the Bible is foolish, hopelessly outdated, or written by religious fanatics.

Conceited persons will argue that everyone else misinterprets it: only they truly understand the mind of God.

Conceited persons so love their own thoughts they will not accept correction from God or His ministers!

Consider our nation today: educators, media, and entertainers all fulfill this Proverb.

Their bloated conceit from learning, power to influence public opinion, and social status cause them to blaspheme against Heaven. So God has blinded them to any light or wisdom (***1Corinthians 1:19-20; 3:18-20***).

These hallucinators in their proud minds that men came from monkeys, which came from amoebas, which came from an accidental explosion of cosmic gases! What wisdom! What glory! What an accomplishment!

The God of heaven ridicules this thinking as *"profane and vain babblings"* and *"science falsely so called"* (***1Timothy 6:20***).

They make science their conceit, and conceit their science! Fools!

But the Most High is not amused by their arrogant stupidity. He has taken them below brute beasts to sexually defile each other (***Romans 1:18-27***).

And we heartily agree with our brother Paul that their base sexual perversion is an appropriate reward! Are they ashamed? No way! They glorify it, promote it, and protect it (***Proverbs 5:23; 26:11; Psalm 49:13***).

These hallucinators, cannot even see that they have been found out and cursed, by their glorious Creator.

The first lesson of our Proverb is to identify such people. When we meet fools, we must rebuke their folly, in order to keep them from conceit (***Proverbs 26:5***).

When we realize, they are the haughty scorners of our Proverb, we leave them to their wicked fantasies (***Proverbs 26:4; 9:7-8***).

Further attention with haughty scorers, giving them honor, or debating with them, is unproductive and dangerous (*Matthew 7:6*).

Let the blind lead the blind into the ditch, as our loving Savior would say (*Matthew 15:14*)!

Children must be taught early that they know nothing, and teenagers know less.

Do not worry about their self-esteem, for at birth they were all given a double portion of it from hell (*2Timothy 3:2*).

They came into this world messing on themselves, and they have not advanced, much beyond that at any minority age.

Teach them, that a humble attitude of ignorance, is necessary for true learning and wisdom.

Knowledge is just around the corner for the man who learns he knows nothing! This man can be taught, and quickly!

Children must be taught, that only Holy Scripture has absolute truth and wisdom, and only parents and older godly persons, have wisdom worth hearing.

Children must be taught that the rock and movie stars, athletes, and pseudo-intellectuals of our day are worse than idiots, Idiots do not have an agenda of hatred for God, authority, and righteousness.

The second lesson of our Proverb is to avoid being such a fool ourselves.

Paul warned, "*Be not wise in your own conceits*" (*Romans 12:16*).

We want to follow Solomon, who told the Lord, "*I am but a little child, I know not how to go out or come in*" (*1Kings 3:7*).

We want to be like David, who said, "*LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me*" (*Psalms 131:1*).

Please reader, crave such humility and a low opinion of your own thoughts! It will save you from much trouble!

Tremble before the Word of God with a poor, humble, and contrite spirit (*Isaiah 57:15; 66:2; James 4:10*).

Do not trust yourself or your thoughts. Suspect your every motive. Question your every opinion. Subject your every idea to Holy Scripture!

Hate vain thoughts, even **If** they are your own (*Psalms 119:13; Jeremiah 17:9*)!

He that thinks he knows something doesn't know it yet as he should (*1Corinthians 8:2*).

If you want to be wise, you must start as a fool (*1Corinthians 3:18*).

A little knowledge is dangerous, for it puffs up the human mind (*1Corinthians 8:1*).

True knowledge is recognizing and admitting that you know nothing at all! With such a premise, wisdom can and will be easily found.

The temptation is great to violate this proverb, for "*every way of a man is right in his own eyes*" (*Proverbs 21:2; 16:2, 25*).

The only safety, is allowing the infallible Word of God, to arrest and condemn our foolish thoughts. Turn the searchlight of God's inspired Scriptures upon your ideas and learn, to categorically reject any folly. (*Psalms 119:128; Isaiah 8:20*)

How do you know, vain man, that you do not hold a lie in your right hand (*Isaiah 44:20*)?

Only then do we esteem the safety, that is in a multitude of good counselors (*Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 24:6*).

But the scorer will not be moved even by seven good men giving solid reasons. No matter what arguments are given, he will invent all sort of excuses to justify himself. (*Proverbs 26:16*)!

A man hasty in speech is also worse than a fool (*Proverbs 29:20*).

His only desire, is to continue to spout his sewer like a gushing. He would rather hear himself talk than learn anything from anyone. (*Proverbs 15:28*)

Rich men tend to be wise in their own conceit, because they have achieved some measure of success, and can buy themselves out of most trouble, and find themselves above the poor in most stations of life. (*Proverbs 28:11*)

Now, we must consider spiritual folly. Jesus severely rebuked the church at Laodicea for their haughty opinions of themselves, and He warned them how much they needed Him and the danger of imminent judgment (*Revelation 3:17-22*).

Let us carefully heed what the Spirit said to this church and throw off any ideas of spiritual self-sufficiency.

God Considers Self-Righteousness As Smoke In His Nostrils!

What is self-righteousness? It is saying, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou" (*Isaiah 65:5*).

Self-righteousness is the older brother resenting a celebration for the prodigal's return (*Luke 15:25-32*).

Self-righteousness is any thought you are not the chief of sinners (*1 Timothy 1:15*).

Our Lord ridiculed the arrogant Pharisee who prayed conceitedly in self-righteousness about his superiority to the publican (*Luke 18:9-14*).

Our Lord sliced and diced, those haughty religious pretenders, by announcing, that harlots went into the kingdom of heaven before them (*Matthew 21:31*).

Dear reader, there is nothing more dangerous to the salvation of your soul than conceited self-righteousness. Hate it with a fervent and perfect hatred!

He who comes to the Savior helpless, naked, and poor will be received into everlasting habitations above! "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling." Amen.

Proverbs 26:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.

Is There A Lion In Your Way?

What excuse do you use to justify not doing your duty? Solomon used this Proverb, to mock and ridicule the excuses, slothful men make to avoid working hard and completing projects (*Proverbs 22:13*).

Lazy men always have a reason as to why they do not get jobs done on time, but their reasons are as foolish as blaming their situation on a lion in the streets (*Proverbs 26:16*)!

There is no doubt the lion is a fearful animal. He is called the king of beasts for good reason!

God inspired Agur to write that a male lion turns away from no other creature (*Proverbs 30:30*).

The lion's beauty is the great strength and fearlessness with which he carries himself. And we are considering the male lion for his much greater size and regal appearance. His head and mane are glorious! He is a beautiful and frightening sight!

A male lion is fearful! They may grow to 8 feet in length (not counting the tail), 4 feet in height (at the shoulder), and weigh 600 pounds! An average lion has a vertical jump of 12 feet and can run over 40 mph for short distances!

His fore body is so strong that he can knock a zebra off its feet and break its back with a swipe of his paw!

His roar is so powerful and loud it can be heard six miles away! You would not want one in your street!

The Proverb has no real lion. It is only the sluggard's excuse to justify laziness, procrastination, and lack of completed projects. If he did not use a lion for his excuse, he will use cold weather (*Proverbs 20:4; 22:13*).

The slothful man, will use any reason he can invent to excuse his laziness. He prefers the warmth of his bed, where he can sleep (*Proverbs 20:13; 24:30-34; 26:14*).

Slothfulness, a negative attitude about work, is self-fulfilling. The slothful man meets many difficulties in his feeble attempts to work. His attitude turns mere challenges into disasters (*Proverbs 15:19; 19:15*).

And God blows against Him, for He cannot tolerate laziness. Life is difficult for him. He deceives himself that successful men had it easy. (*Proverbs 6:6-11*)

Great men do not fear lions or obstacles in their way; and they surely do not invent them! They trust the living God, Who will help them accomplish anything they set their minds to do.

Caleb, who watched Israel turn back toward Egypt due to giants in Canaan, waited 45 long years until he could take on those intimidating giants himself (*Joshua 14:6-15*)!

The cure for sluggards is starvation (*Proverbs 20:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:10*)!

Any man will work hard when his belly is empty (*Proverbs 16:26*)!

Lions disappear when a man is hungry enough! What should you be doing that you are not doing? Where are the lions in your life? Get up and get out in the street!

Proverbs 26:14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.

How does a door turn on its hinges? It moves back and forth, but it never goes anywhere! It turns from side to side, but it cannot get loose from its place! It moves back and forth, but it does not leave the doorway!

So are lazy people, who will lie in bed, rolling back and forth, but dreading the thought of getting up to go to school or work (*Proverbs 26:13-16*)!

Here is a wonderful Proverb with a great simile to condemn lazy persons that like to sleep too much.

A simile is a comparison between two things that is clearly stated by the use of "as" or "like." As a door

turns back and forth, and from side to side, without going anywhere, so are lazy people who stay in bed, though they are through sleeping soundly.

What is the slothful? He is a lazy man that is slow, resentful of action or exertion, sluggish, idle, and indolent.

He is named appropriately, for there is a mammal in the forests of Central and South America that is also called the sloth, which moves very slowly and often stays in the same position for extended periods of time.

Solomon wrote to young men, specifically his son (*Proverbs 1:4, 8*).

Solomon knew by inspiration from God and observations of life that young men can sleep too much, so he wrote several Proverbs against it (*Proverbs 6:6-11; 19:15; 20:13; 23:21; 24:30-34*).

Too much sleep will bring a man to poverty, so he ridiculed excess sleep by comparing it to a door turning on hinges.

What cures the love of sleep? Starvation! Depriving a young man of food will always work! His appetite and metabolism are at the highest levels of his whole life. (*Proverbs 20:4; 2Thessalonians 3:10*)

So parents can easily teach sons to get up in the morning, though most parents pamper and feed their sloth, teaching him that laziness, is acceptable and without painful consequences.

Lazy people are headed for poverty, unless they drastically change their habits. The more a man sleeps, the more he thinks he needs to sleep, his metabolism slows, and he quickly experiences catabolism of muscular strength. (*Proverbs 6:11; 19:15; 20:13; 23:21; 24:34*)

The military knows how to turn soft boys into hard men, and it is not by sleeping in! While the first days of getting up early might be painful, good habits can quickly be formed.

There is more to this Proverb than just a condemnation of excess sleep. Solomon also condemned the attitude, actions, and character of lazy persons by picking on their sleep habits.

A sluggard will do anything but work! He will talk, take a break, pace himself, take a long time eating, get distracted easily, be unnecessarily concerned about details, and do easy things very slowly, lest he be forced to face a task that will take exertion!

If you are slothful spiritually, you will also suffer spiritual poverty just as surely.

It is the man who hunts for wisdom, as for hidden treasure, with intense and persistent efforts, until he finds it (*Proverbs 2:4; 18:1*).

You must hear preaching with great care, and you must make diligent efforts to confirm and understand what you hear to be noble (*Luke 8:18; Acts 17:11; 1Thessalonians 5:21*).

Are you able, to get up and seek the Lord early, to find Him (*Proverbs 8:17*)?

Proverbs 26:15 The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.

It is good to ridicule lazy men! And Solomon was good at it!

Forget what is politically correct, seminary-trained, and purpose-driven ladies have to say! In this Proverb, the Holy Spirit describes a man so lazy he will not unfold his arms and raise a fork to his mouth to eat!

Do you value the wisdom of God enough to despise sluggards and their foolish slothfulness? God gave this enjoyable and wise Proverb a fraternal twin (*Proverbs 19:24*).

Fold your arms across your chest in the position of rest. Where are your hands? They are hidden against your chest by the opposite arm! This, along with his pockets, is where a slothful man keeps his hands!

Since he will not work hard to secure food, Solomon ridiculed him as grieving about even the exertion of eating. His hands are motionless, but his lips are in constant motion, justifying himself to any fool who will listen (*Proverbs 26:13-16*).

Hard work is godly, necessary, and required. God put Adam in Eden to dress the Garden, even before sin was in the world (*Genesis 2:15*).

Of course, after he sinned, work was much more a part of man's life (*Genesis 3:17-19, 23*).

Without hard, consistent, and persistent labor, a man, will hardly amount to anything in life (*Proverbs 10:4; 13:4; 19:15*).

God has commanded that lazy men should be excommunicated and starved (*Proverbs 20:4; 2Thessalonians 3:6-14*).

God gave you hands for more than rings! Your two sets of five fingers are the most productive tools ever designed on this planet! With desire, effort, and a little training, you can sew on 1 button a minute, assemble 10 simple parts a minute, type 100 words a minute, or sort fruit by size at 1000 pieces a minute.

Your hands are amazing! They can wrestle with jackhammers or caress a piano! Give God the glory! Put them to work!

Since your hands are your most active workers, Solomon often referred to them. A slack hand will make you poor; a diligent hand will make you rich (*Proverbs 10:4*).

The hand of the diligent will bear rule (*Proverbs 12:24*).

The virtuous woman has tireless hands (*Proverbs 31:13, 16, 19-20, 31*).

And whatever job you have; use your hands with all your might (*Ecclesiastes 9:10*).

Desire kills the lazy man, because his hands refuse to work hard enough, to get what he wants (*Proverbs 21:25-26*)!

Lazy men fold their hands and stay in bed, for a few more minutes, to their own destruction (*Proverbs 24:33*).

The fool folds his hands together and ruins his life (*Ecclesiastes 4:6*).

And a woman can destroy the family estate by lazy hands (*Proverbs 14:1; Ecclesiastes 10:18*).

What do you need to do today? Do it now! Diligence in business is a mark of true Christians (*Romans 12:11; 1Thessalonians 4:11-12*).

**Show The World
A Godly Work Ethic Today!**

Proverbs 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

Slothful men always have excuses. Sluggards never admit they are lazy losers. Their arrogance rejects correction and instruction, which is a horrible curse (*Proverbs 26:12*).

Sluggards make up haughty excuses for being underemployed, and always behind their peers. If seven noble and successful men say slothfulness is the reason, the sluggard scornfully rejects it.

A sluggard is a naturally or habitually slow and lazy person. He does not like work or exertion; he prefers idleness and rest.

A sluggard is slothful in duties. He moves slowly, loves to talk, and paces himself through jobs. He thinks sweat is a hazard to him;

A sluggard thinks speed is dangerous; he thinks a focused application is something he has never tried. He would rather talk, play, or sleep.

Sluggards can be amazingly arrogant. They refuse to admit their faults. They devise excuses to justify their inferior work habits compared to diligent and successful men.

Sluggards scornfully think they are superior to these prosperous men; they blame other forces beyond their control for keeping them from the same success. They are fools (*Proverbs 12:15*).

Sluggards can be seen early. Even a child is known by his doings (*Proverbs 20:11*).

Hard working young men do not become lazy old men, and young sluggards do not become diligent old men. Habits of youth become habits of old age.

The inferior character and training of the sluggard will punish him with poverty and trouble throughout life (*Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:4; 13:4; 19:15; 20:13*).

Parents must eliminate this fault and teach good work attitudes and habits. Sluggards with inferior schooling will blame their lack of education, though there are many rich men with less!

Sluggards of a different color will blame their race, though there are rich men of various colors in their city!

Sluggards from the poor side of town will blame their upbringing, though other men have moved across town by diligent labor!

Discrimination is just an excuse for sluggards! A man of any educational or racial background, or from an inferior family, will find success if he is diligent on the job.

Employers do not care about color, ethnic groups, or grade point averages in school, if a man is the most punctual, dedicated, and energetic employee in the office or plant!

**Sluggards Always Blame
Some Conspiracy Or Discrimination
For Their Poverty!**

What is the cure for a sluggard? Let him starve (*Proverbs 20:4; 2Thessalonians 3:10*)!

Feeding a sluggard encourages him to be slothful. Sluggards do not deserve charity.

Our society perpetuates slothfulness by providing, welfare safety nets for lazy persons.

There is no better teacher than hunger, for a man's belly will quickly force him to do something (*Proverbs 16:26; Ecclesiastes 6:7*)!

Proverbs 26:17 He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

Even a friendly dog will bite, if you grab and pull its ears!

And here is the busybody, stopping to get involved in the strife of others, who will soon be bitten by both parties! The Preacher teaches us the wisdom of not getting involved in the conflicts of others.

Peacemakers are wonderful. But the great work of making peace involves your own strife! (*Matthew 5:9*)

If you have offended another, you are to make peace with him (*Matthew 5:23-26*).

If another has offended you, you are to make peace with him (*Matthew 18:15-22*).

By great care, and only after careful reflection, should we get involved, in others' conflicts and try to make peace for them.

Even our own strife, which we know well, is to be handled with caution, let alone those issues of which we are quite ignorant (*Proverbs 25:8*)!

After wise deliberation, make sure your words are the good ones spoken in due season (*Proverbs 15:23*).

Spiritual and wise men should try to help others with their problems (*Romans 15:1-3; Galatians 6:1-3*).

We are our brothers' keepers in problems (*Leviticus 19:17; 1Thessalonians 5:14*).

Those in authority, as parents and pastors, have the right and obligation to search out matters (*Proverbs 25:2*). See the comments on *Proverbs 25:2*.

But some people are busybodies. They love to be busy in other men's matters (*1Peter 4:15*).

Being a busybody is a sin, and it is to be strictly avoided by wise men and women. Consider the warning by association in this text, which compares murderers, thieves, and evildoers!

Meddlers love to get involved in disputes between others.

Meddlers love digging up evil between others and spreading it. It makes them feel important to be

involved in others' problems, though they are always the worst at solving their own problems!

Meddlers love the inside information of private controversies. It gives them a perverse sense of worth.

Some at Thessalonica were so eager for this sin they even stopped working. Paul wrote, "*For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread*" (*2Thessalonians 3:11-12*).

He had written in the first epistle, "*And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you*" (*1Thessalonians 4:11*).

Women have a great temptation to be meddlers, or busybodies, in strife not belonging to them. So Paul recommended marriage and children for young widows, to keep them from idleness and the temptation of such folly (*1Timothy 5:12-15*).

Idle women are a curse on any people, as they were in Sodom of old (*Ezekiel 16:49*).

Our blessed Lord was perfectly virtuous in this matter. "*And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you*" (*Luke 12:13-14*)?

Reader, follow this holy example of Jesus today. The difference is great between suffering as a busybody and suffering as a Christian (*1Peter 4:14-16*).

Proverbs 26:18 As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death,

A Wild Man Is A Dangerous Man!

Lock him up! Put him away! Sedate him! We have a simile here, indicated by "as."

What kind of person resembles this crazy mad man? A man wildly throwing firebrands, arrows, and death? Anyone who, deceives his neighbor and uses a jesting cover up of ambitions and intentions, is just like this mad man (*Proverbs 26:19*)!

Imagine an insane man, like the devil-possessed Gadarene. He is naked, powerful, savagely wild, masochistically violent, untamed, and living among the dead! (*Mark 5:1-13*)

Now imagine him on your property! Imagine him in your house! In your business! Solomon created this

picture, of a neighbor who deceives you and lightly excuses it.

Wicked men think their actions are not very harmful. So Solomon described them in terms to get our attention and rightly classify their actions.

Neighbors, due to close proximity to one another, must trust one another. Neighbors, should be able to trust each other at all times. A deceitful and ambitious neighbor is comparable to this wild enemy.

What can we learn? Deceiving those who trust you is a horrible sin and crime. Neighbors, employers, and others trust your integrity.

You live close enough to take advantage of them, so they must trust your integrity, not to use that nearness against them.

It is our duty as Christians to live honestly with all men, but especially those nearest to us.

What else can we learn? Covering and excusing sin by lightly claiming it was just a joke, reveals an extremely profane character.

Such persons have no conscience, they laugh at sin, they do not comprehend the pain their deception causes others. We should always oppose this folly by keeping a sober and serious approach to all relationships, especially neighbors.

What else can we learn? Only fools make a mock at sin (**Proverbs 10:23; 14:9; 15:21**). See the comments on **Proverbs 14:9**.

Sin is a horrible thing, it defies your God, hurts your fellow man, is inconvenient for profitable relationships, and leads to eternal punishment.

Only hopeless scorners laugh and jest about sin. Sin is to be avoided, hated, and repented of!

What else can we learn? God hates foolish talking and jesting! God lists foolish talking and jesting with fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness, three other abominable sins (**Ephesians 5:3-7**).

God describes foolish talking and jesting as He does sodomy, both are not convenient (**Ephesians 5:4 Romans 1:28**).

These wicked men, like an insane man hurling fire, arrows, and death, can show up even in Jesus Christ's Churches (**2Peter 2:13**).

Proverbs 26:19 So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?

Jesting is not convenient, appropriate, proper, or suitable. It causes confusion, pain, and trouble.

Jesting destroys confidence and security. This is especially true when you jest with those who trust you.

The man who deceives his neighbor either for advantage or foolish joking is like a mad man throwing firebrands, arrows, and death (**Proverbs 26:18**).

Truth is a wonderful thing, and it should not be mocked. Your neighbor trusts you, be worthy of it.

This verse is the second half of a Proverb against jesting. The analogy and simile require the first half of the warning to make sense; "*As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?*" (**Proverbs 26:18-19**).

King Solomon had no use, for profane individuals, who play tricks on others, for profit or pleasure and excuse their wickedness, by calling it a game or a joke.

This foolish generation jests for entertainment! Prime time sitcoms are one continuous stream of deceptions and jests, at which a studio audience laughs on cue to sell the insanity to mindless and heartless viewers.

It is hard to grasp Solomon's sober and severe warning, since modern man is numb to such foolishness and ignorant of sobriety. Reader, would your grandparents sit around and cackle with such profane hyenas every night?

Jesting is not convenient. It has no noble or useful purpose. It is contrary to nature and true religion.

How can a man be esteemed, who takes serious matters of life and turns them into jokes and games?

Lovemaking is a holy and noble pleasure for husbands and wives. But sitcoms and comedians depend heavily on innuendo about sexual wickedness and outright jests about body parts and activities. It is an accomplice to sexual sins!

What is the lesson? Deceiving those who trust you is a horrible crime.

Neighbors, employers, and others trust your integrity. You are close enough to take advantage of them, so they must trust you to not use that nearness against them. It is your duty as a Christian to live honestly with all men, but especially those nearest to you.

Is there another lesson? God hates foolish talking and jesting! He will destroy the world for these heinous sins.

God lists foolish talking and jesting with fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness, three abominable sins (*Ephesians 5:3-7*).

God describes foolish talking and jesting as He does sodomy, they are not convenient (*Ephesians 5:4* compare with *Romans 1:28*).

Is there another lesson? Covering and excusing sin by lightly claiming it was just a joke reveals a very profane character.

Such jesters have no conscience; they laugh at sin; they do not comprehend the pain their deception causes others. We should always oppose this folly by keeping and requiring a sober and serious approach to all relationships.

Is there another lesson? Only fools make a mock at sin (*Proverbs 10:23; 14:9; 15:21*).

Sin is a horrible thing, it defies God, hurts your fellow man, is inconvenient for profitable relationships, and leads to eternal punishment.

God once drowned the world because of sin, and He will burn the world up soon for the same reason. Only hopeless scorners laugh and jest about sin. Sin is to be avoided, hated, and repented of!

These wicked men, like an insane man hurling fire, arrows, and death, can show up even in Jesus Christ's churches, counting it a pleasure to riot and sporting themselves with their deceiving (*2Peter 2:13*).

Beware of frivolity in the pulpit or church! Of all places on earth, gravity and sobriety should reign in the house of God (*1Timothy 3:2, 4, 8, 11; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 4, 6, 7*).

Lord, save your saints from such sins and sinners!

Proverbs 26:20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

Disputes, fights, and bad blood end quickly, when wicked men stop spreading innuendos, rumors, and negative information.

A fire goes out as soon as there is nothing more to burn, and conflicts end as soon as there is no more irritation sown. Good men have two solemn duties: ¹To never bear tales about others. ²To aggressively stop those who do it!

Talebearing Is Sin Not Understood Nor Condemned

Talebearing is spreading injurious or malicious reports about another person. A talebearer is one who

officially spreads reports of private matters to gratify malice or idle curiosity. It is commonly called gossip. (*Proverbs 20:19*)

Bible synonyms are backbiting, tattling, and whispering, which are condemned often (*Proverbs 16:28; 25:23; Romans 1:29-30; 2Corinthians 12:20; 1Timothy 5:13*).

Talebearing is telling negative information about someone to either hurt him or impress a hearer with the news.

It does not matter that the information is true. Slander is spreading false information about another person.

Backbiting, talebearing, tattling, and whispering are spreading true information about another person, that does harm to their reputations.

Malicious talkers: Keep resurrecting and spreading news about enemies, and keep conflict alive, when it would otherwise die.

These evil persons have no love for peace; they love to stir up trouble (*Proverbs 15:18; 16:27-28; 26:21; 29:22*).

Good men cover sins and bury them. They seek to make peace at all times (*Proverbs 10:12; 17:9; 1Peter 4:8; James 3:17-18*).

God hates talebearing, which is secretly raping another's character and reputation (*Proverbs 6:12-19; Psalm 15:3*).

Comparable to being angry with your brother without a cause, talebearing is a violation of the sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill (*Matthew 5:21-26*).

Talebearing causes severe pain deep in the soul and relationships of men (*Proverbs 16:28; 17:9; 18:8; 26:22*).

Do you hate this sin? Do you guard your lips, lest anything negative, about another person slips out in the heat of passion or during light chitchat?

Do you love others enough to keep from saying something about them that would be derogatory or damaging?

If you talk a lot, you likely commit this sin often. Cut your words in half. Make a solemn choice to only say good things that are gracious and edifying about others (*Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29*).

Do you hate those that commit this sin? They should see and feel your righteous indignation, when they begin to spill private matters in your presence (*Proverbs 25:23*).

If you have position and authority to do so, cast such contentious and scornful people out (*Proverbs 22:10*).

David would not allow them to be near him (*Psalms 101:4-5*). Let all your speech be gracious.

Proverbs 26:21 *As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.*

Trouble Always Follows Some People.

Some people are always having conflicts, debates, fights, grudges, and strife with others.

Of course, they blame others. But this Proverb declares it to be their fault. Disagreements and quarrels would either not occur or would end quickly, but these contentious troublemakers stir up fights with most everybody (*Proverbs 15:18; 29:22; 30:33*).

The man or woman that always has difficulties with others wants to blame them.

It is impossible for strife to consistently follow good people. They must be at fault, because no one can get along with them for very long. Once you identify such persons, they are always the ones at fault.

Consider some lives. They are divorced or have troubled marriages, because they cannot relate to a spouse. Their children despise them, because they were harsh as parents.

They have a terrible work history, because they could not get along on the job. They bounce from church to church, because they quickly wear out their welcome.

They have few devoted friends, because they argue and fight. No one wants to be around these people.

But at the same time, there are others who get along with everyone, all the time! What makes the difference? It is the difference between a gracious peacemaker and a contentious scorner. The one is approved by God and men; the other is resented by both.

There are two similes in the Proverb, as shown by the use of "as." Coals added to burning coals cause a fire to increase. Wood added to a fire makes it hotter and larger. In the same way, men with proud and fighting spirits cause strife and increase fighting wherever they go. They start arguments, conflicts, and quarrels with most everyone. (*Proverbs 13:10*)

Reader examine yourself! Are you esteemed and loved by all as a gracious peacemaker? Or Are you avoided and marked as a belligerent and critical person that causes problems most places you go?

Are you expert at praising others, cooperating, forgiving offences, overlooking faults, and being submissive? Or is your reputation one of dogmatic arguing, resentful attitudes, vengeful conflicts, and an overall lack of mercy? Examine yourself!

God has called His children to be peacemakers. You are to use all your spiritual power to live peaceably with all men (*Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:3; 1Thessalonians 5:13; James 3:17-18*).

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, and peace (*Galatians 5:22*).

Godly and wise men will hate a contentious spirit in themselves or anyone else.

Godly and wise men will recognize this terrible evil for what it is and avoid such men with all their might.

Godly and wise men will promote peace at all times.

Proverbs 26:22 *The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.*

Parents and teachers used to punish tattlers. God still does!

Tattling is now a forgotten sin. But God remembers it!

Tattling is talebearing, the spreading of injurious or malicious reports about another person. Talebearing causes deep wounds in the souls of men, which makes those spreading these reports, guilty of a form of murder, because the sin is based in hatred.

This Proverb's wisdom was important enough to have a twin (*Proverbs 18:8*).

Repeating the rule today will be valuable, for backbiting, gossiping, slandering, talebearing, or whispering are not condemned anymore.

For mainstream media reporters today, talebearing is falsely called journalistic liberty, or even duty. For fools, it is "letting you know the truth about so-and-so."

God does not care **If** what you tell about another person is true or not, both are sins.

If you tell something false about another person, you have slandered them.

If you tell something true, you are a backbiter, talebearer, and whisperer. God hates all three.

Talebearing is telling secret facts about another person to defame or hurt them (*Proverbs 20:19*).

Of course, you have not heard or read anything against talebearing in a long time. This generation is addicted to it, because there is little restraint on wickedness or wicked men.

Tabloids, newspapers, news programs, and news websites all race to discover whatever secrets they can find about anyone and spread them as far as possible. It is a journalistic objective, to make money from the salacious lusts, of a hateful and wicked generation.

Every man has secrets, private matters, such as sins, failures, losses, a firing, a criminal record, a bankruptcy, salary, divorce, a disease, or even a birthmark.

They are his secrets, and they are no one else's business. To tell even one person, that does not absolutely need to know for God-given reasons, is talebearing. It is violent raping of another's reputation.

Telling secrets about another deeply wounds their heart and soul, which is shown by the metonym "belly" (*Proverbs 20:27*).

There are truly two wounded, the one having his reputation marred by the report and the listener having his opinions unjustly altered (*Proverbs 16:28; 26:20*).

God will severely punish these verbal murderers (*Proverbs 26:20-26; Psalm 55:21-23*).

Since the saints of God do not include such men, you know they are going to hell (*Psalm 15:3; Revelation 21:8, 27*).

Reader, you have two duties. ¹You must avoid and reject any talebearing yourself.

How? Regard the reputations of others with Christian charity, and protect them with holy zeal.

²You must reject talebearers from your friendship or church, for they are poison to the souls of men and destructive to the unity of a church (*Proverbs 25:23; Psalm 101:4-5*).

Proverbs 26:23 Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.

Are you guilty of one or both of these terrible sins: Burning lips that say negative things about others or a wicked heart that thinks such things.

If you are guilty of both, you are like a broken piece of pottery covered with the scum from silver refining! What an ugly and worthless person!

If you cannot say kind things about others, then say nothing at all!

Here is a simple simile, a stated comparison, by the word "like," of a man to a clay vessel.

An evil man, with a malicious heart and cruel speech, is like a broken fragment of pottery painted over with scum.

A good man, with a noble heart and kind words, is like a beautiful work of pottery covered with fine silver, a delightful and valuable object.

What are *burning lips*? This phrase describes the person who cannot say good things about others. He has a fire in his mouth, and he is regularly burning others with critical and hateful speech.

This person cannot stay silent for long, he must say something derogatory about someone else. He has lips set on fire from hell (*Proverbs 4:24; 10:18; 16:27; James 3:5-9*).

What is a *wicked heart*? This phrase describes the person whose heart is filled with arrogant contempt and malicious hatred of others, as the context shows (*Proverbs 26:18-28*).

A man with a wicked heart does not know God, and has no affection for others, except to use them for his own selfish ends.

A man with a wicked heart is a murderer at heart, though he may not have committed the crime yet.

Do you have either burning lips or a wicked heart, or do you have both? It is easy to find out! How easily do you argue, backbite, flatter, lie, slander, bear tales, or whisper?

If you sin in these ways easily, you surely have burning lips.

If you do not grieve after such sins of your lips, then you also have a wicked heart. Reader, examine yourself and repent!

While your lips and heart, are not perfectly connected, but they are very closely connected!

A man may sin once in a while, with his lips and have a pure heart, but he will be grieved for it.

If a man sins often by attacking others with his words, he shows a violent and wicked heart. Jesus taught that the mouth clearly reveals the heart (*Matthew 12:34-37; Mark 7:21-23*).

Many beautiful works of art and household vessels were once made from pottery. A well-formed clay

object covered with fine silver could be exquisite in appearance and use.

But a potsherd is a broken piece of pottery, and silver dross is the refuse scum from refining.

A wise man will examine his heart and guard his lips, he will fear a selfishly critical heart and loose lips that easily harm others (*Proverbs 6:12-15; 17:20*).

Reader, examine yourself!

Proverbs 26:24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him;

Not every friend loves you. Some who say they love you, are hiding hatred in wicked hearts. They dissemble (pretend), to be your friend, and they lie to cover their evil thoughts and ambitions.

But wise men learn this terrible deceitfulness and wickedness of human nature, and they protect themselves from believing fair words too deeply. The larger context here is a 12-verse description of how wicked men destroy people and relationships (*Proverbs 26:16-28*).

Solomon inspired by the Holy Spirit condemned:

- Meddling,
- Deceitful jesting,
- Talebearing,
- Evil speaking,
- Ensnaring men,
- Lying, and
- Flattering.

Because their deeds are so cruel, these wicked men generally hide their intentions, under gestures of friendship and kind words.

The smaller context describes lying hypocrites, who pretend to be friends, but they have seven abominations in their hearts.

The lesson is to not believe all you hear, especially flattery or words of affection (*Proverbs 26:25; 14:15; Jeremiah 9:8; 12:6; Micah 7:1-6*).

For those who trust God and follow the Proverb's wisdom, know He will expose these liars and their hatred (*Proverbs 26:26*).

Only ignorant fools think men and women have good and honest hearts by nature. God has plainly declared that human hearts are desperately wicked (*Jeremiah 17:9*).

Their throats, tongues, lips, and mouths are all cruel and deadly (*Romans 3:13-14*). This is typical of ungodly men: *"The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords"* (*Psalms 55:21*).

Consider Bible examples:

Cain talked kindly to Abel, before killing him (*Genesis 4:8*)!

Simeon and Levi arranged a marriage, but only to slaughter a city (*Genesis 34:6-31*)!

Joseph's brothers comforted their father about Joseph, after selling him as a slave (*Genesis 37:31-36*)!

King Saul flattered David and offered his daughters, but sought to destroy him (*1Samuel 18:17-29*)!

Joab feigned kindness to Abner, but only to murder him (*2Samuel 3:27*)!

Absalom appeared content with Amnon, but only to kill him (*2Samuel 13:22-29*)!

Absalom flattered Israel, but only for sedition (*2Samuel 15:1-6*)!

Joab asked Amasa of his health, but only to kill him (*2Samuel 20:9-10*)!

Herod spoke of worshipping Jesus, but had murder in his heart (*Matthew 2:1-18*)!

Judas kissed the Lord, but only to betray Him (*Matthew 26:47-50*)!

Wise men learn to be deaf to flattery and praise and attentive and appreciative to rebuke (*Proverbs 2:16; 6:24; 7:5; 20:19; 29:5*).

Wise men know open rebuke is better than secret love (*Proverbs 27:5; 28:23*).

Wise men prefer the wounds of a friend than the kisses of an enemy (*Proverbs 27:6; Psalm 141:5*).

Wise men know there is little profit in receiving praise, and it can lead to much harm (*Proverbs 26:28*).

Measure all men by the fear of the Lord! Where there is little or no fear of God visible, you should not fully trust that person.

The rule is easy to grasp and to apply. Nehemiah wisely rejected Sanballat's invitation to a meeting (*Nehemiah 6:1-4*).

But foolish Gedaliah and other saints believed the lies and tears of Ishmael to their ruin (*Jeremiah 40:7-16; 41:1-7*).

Solomon inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote this Proverb to warn about the hidden dangers of flattery and hypocrisy in relationships. God will expose deceitful and vicious thoughts and intentions (**Proverbs 26:25-26**).

God alone knows the heart, and He knows all the heart (**Jeremiah 17:10; Hebrews 4:13**).

Patiently practice wisdom, and leave discovery and vengeance to Him!

Not only will He expose such duplicity and dissimulation. God will also cast the wicked persons, into the trouble, they had planned for others (**Proverbs 26:27**).

Absalom was killed cruelly by darts while hanging in a tree by his hair (**2Samuel 18:9-15**)!

Haman's gallows were used to stretch the necks of him and his ten sons (**Esther 7:10; 9:13-14**).

Daniel's adversaries were eaten by lions, which had slept peacefully with Daniel the night before (**Daniel 6:21-24**)!

The most subtle deceit and cover for hatred is that used by whores, who use flattery to disarm and seduce their victims (**Proverbs 2:16; 5:3; 6:24; 7:5, 21; 22:14**).

The Church of Rome is called a great whore, for she uses religious lies and pretensions to ensnare her victims (**Revelation 17:1-6; 1Timothy 4:1-3; Matthew 23:14**).

Do not believe the carefully worded lies that, Rome wants to be at peace, with other denominations and religions. She does not!

Proverbs 26:25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart.

Hateful people cannot be trusted. Kind words from their mouths are meant to deceive, and only fools will believe them.

Hateful people will slice and dice you badly, when it is helpful to their cause. Their hearts are full of abominable thoughts, even while they piously use gentle words and pretend to be friendly and virtuous.

We have a context for this Proverb, an immediate one and a larger one. The immediate context describes hateful persons (**Proverbs 26:24**).

These wicked murderers use words to pretend to be something they are not. They plan and plot how to conceal their wicked malice, even while they are lying to you about their intentions. They will not get away

with it for long, for they will be exposed before all good men (**Proverbs 26:26**).

The larger context is a collection of Proverbs dealing with hateful talebearers and other deceivers (**Proverbs 26:17-28**).

In twelve verses, Solomon lists the various ways in which hatred, lying, talebearing, and contentions lead to strife, trouble, and judgment.

The world would be a better place if all such persons were thrown on the dunghill, but God will surely judge them in ways similar to what they planned for others (**Proverbs 26:23; 26:27**).

Good words and fair speeches may deceive the simple and the sentimental, but all good men will reject words, they measure by actions.

Even a child's character is known by his actions, whether he is pure and right. You can know a murderer by his fruits, not by his words (**Proverbs 20:1; Matthew 5:21-22; 7:16; James 3:12**).

Seven is the perfect number in Scripture and means a complete amount. A hateful person has a full array of abominations in his or her heart, no matter what they say in public. And you will give them extra advantage to harm you, if you believe their lying words.

Cain was such a person. He talked to Abel; but a knife was in his hand, and hatred in his heart (**Genesis 4:8**).

Joseph's brethren comforted their father, though they were the very cause of his grief (**Genesis 37:35**).

Saul offered David his daughter, only for the purpose of killing him (**1Samuel 18:17**).

Absalom waited two whole years and begged for his brothers to come to a party, so that he might kill Amnon (**2Samuel 13:22-29**).

Judas promised undying loyalty to our Lord, but betrayed him with a kiss that very night (**Matthew 26:35**).

Our lessons? ¹Be vigilant around a hateful person. Reject his words, for he is a liar. His heart is full of malicious abominations.

²Be faithful in all your relations, even in your heart, lest you even appear like this despicable and damned creature.

Proverbs 26:26 Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.

Wicked men can get into most churches. It is a terrible evil, but it happens.

Though filled with arrogance, hatred, and selfishness, they creep into churches with false professions of religion.

Even the world knows this fact, for many reject Christianity for its hypocrisy. But though they cover their hatred by lies, their evil souls will be revealed to the church.

This Proverb has a rare context to help its interpretation. Solomon has been describing the dangerous evil of talebearers (*Proverbs 26:20-23*).

These wicked persons love to spread harmful facts, rumors, tales, and insinuations about others.

These wicked persons damage others deeply, and they cause contention and strife among the members of a church.

These wicked persons do not know the way of peace themselves, and they keep a church from finding full peace and rest.

These wicked persons play the hypocrite with their mouths by claiming to be Christians, while their hearts plan games of pretence and revenge (*Proverbs 26:24*).

Wise men do not believe their fair words, for they know many abominations are in their hearts (*Proverbs 26:25*).

Wisdom is the power of right judgment, the ability to discern and know things that deceive most other people.

What identifies these wicked imposters that creep into churches? They speak derogatorily about others and spread either harmful facts or slanderous innuendos (*Proverbs 26:20-25*).

All you have to do is listen to their speech about others, and you can discover these wicked men. They cannot keep from criticizing others and sowing discord by spreading negative information. They are backbiters, slanderers, talebearers, and whisperers.

The Bible is very plain that hatred toward others proves a man to be a child of the devil, not of God (*1John 2:9, 11; 3:10, 15; 4:8, 20*).

When you detect the critical, hateful, and snide spirit of some toward others, you have likely found a child of the devil.

But though they lie and pretend to be loving Christians, God promised to expose them in His churches to save His true saints from their evil influence and painful effects.

David begged God to save his kingdom from strange children, hypocrites that he knew were using vain

speech and false handshakes to pretend they were religious (*Psalms 144:7-11*).

The benefits are great, that fall to a church getting rid of such men (*Psalms 144:12-15*)!

Paul told the Corinthian church that God would send heresies into His churches, to discover these lying frauds and confirm the identity of His true children (*1Corinthians 11:19*).

So while heresies are a painful matter to deal with in a church, they are often used to expose the lying hypocrites that cause dissension and strife. The end result is well worth the pain.

What can you do to help your church? Never speak negatively about anyone! If you cannot say something kind or commending, say nothing at all. Make it your goal to promote the reputations of all men, even your personal enemies. This is true Christianity.

What can you do to help your church? When you hear anyone else criticizing, backbiting, gossiping, or slandering others, crush them with an angry face or warning rebuke (*Proverbs 25:23; Psalm 101:5; 1Thessalonians 5:14*).

This duty includes a wife toward a profane and wicked husband, as long as she is respectful. God hates this sin, and so should you (*Proverbs 6:16-19*).

Proverbs 26:27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.

Wicked men devise traps and trouble for the righteous, and the righteous are to love them in return.

Who Will Defend Them?

There is a God in heaven, and He will avenge His saints. His vengeance is often to turn their own devices on their own heads.

"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

Evil men will not get away with conspiracies against the upright.

The righteous God takes the wise in their own craftiness (*Job 5:13*).

The righteous God takes the wicked in their own cruelty (*Proverbs 11:6; Psalm 10:2*).

Let the righteous not seek revenge, for the Lord is against it and will do better Himself!

The context of the lesson is how the wicked use their mouths to persecute the righteous with deceit and talebearing (*Proverbs 18-28*).

The wicked cover their hatred and evil designs ever so cleverly, our omniscient God will expose their deceit and judge them openly.

Hunters once caught wild animals by digging a pit and covering it with a thin layer of dirt. The animal, not seeing the pit beneath the leaves and grass, would fall into it. The wicked dig metaphorical pits for saints, but the Lord leads them to fall in their own traps.

In war, men would roll great stones, too heavy to lift, from walls or cliffs to crush their enemies.

The Lord promises such figurative stones will roll back on the wicked! God's revenge is best. We must restrain our own and wait for it, for His will surely come!

Christian saint, if you have enemies, fear not! The Lord of glory neither slumbers nor sleeps. When the wicked conspire against you, He will turn their devices on their own heads (*Proverbs 28:10; Psalm 7:15-16; Ecclesiastes 10:8-9*).

The Lord wants to be known by this divine judgment (*Psalm 9:15-16; 57:5-7*)! Give God the glory!

Abimelech died by a stone, after slaying 70 men on a stone (*Judges 9:18, 53*).

Moab was cursed by the very man they hired to curse Israel (*Numbers 24:17*).

Haman died on the gallows he had built for Mordecai (*Esther 7:10*).

Ahab's blood was licked by dogs in the very place they licked Naboth's (*1Kings 21:19*).

Israel burned their children at Tophet, so God filled the same place with their bodies (*Jeremiah 7:31-32*).

The conspirators against Daniel were destroyed horribly by the very lions they planned for him (*Daniel 6:24*).

The Jews crucified Jesus to save their nation, but it brought utter destruction by Rome (*John 11:50*).

Do you know a hypocrite? Do you have an enemy? Is someone causing you strife? His wickedness will be exposed, and God will turn his cruelty on his head (*Proverbs 18-28*).

Proverbs 26:28 A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

Good Words Do Not Prove Good Intentions.

Liars and flatterers are out to destroy you, no matter how good their words sound, no matter their excuses (*Proverbs 26:24-25*).

A wise man rejects both kinds of men, just as David did (*Psalms 101:3-8*).

If you tolerate these deceitful people in your life, they will take you down. They are hiding hatred and destruction behind their lying words, and noble and prudent men will stay far from them. (*Proverbs 20:19; 29:5*)

A man lies for advantage or to protect himself. He is selfish and wicked, so he feels no guilt about deceiving you in order to advance himself. It does not matter what his relationship is to you or how kindly he speaks at other times. **If** he has lied to you, then you should run far from him, whether it is a slander about you or a lie to your face. His deceit proves that he hates you. He is out to hurt you or use you. True friends never lie.

Flattery - is praise designed to deceive you into doing what the flatterer wants you to do. It is a form of lying, but it is harder to detect and resist. Men love praise, so they are easily lulled to sleep by flattery. It is poison in a spoonful of honey.

A flatterer is more dangerous than a slanderer, for he is crafty, friendly, and subtle in working his deceit, while liars are more easily detected by their open malice and wickedness.

Are you vigilant and intolerant against deceivers? Aggressive salesmen may lie or flatter to sell an inferior product.

Many girls have lost their virginity or women their marital fidelity to lying flattery of whoremongers (*2Samuel 13:1-13*).

Many men have been led to hell by flattering lies of whorish women (*Proverbs 2:16-18; 5:3; 6:24-26; 7:5, 21-23*).

Many citizens have voted for corrupt politicians due to flattery and false promises, for the election process in most nations is based on words rather than character or performance. Parent, you must severely punish lying and flattery, and you must teach children to reject liars and flatterers (*Job 32:21-22*).

Teach them that God hates liars, He will judge them, and liars are going to hell (*Proverbs 6:16-19; Job 17:5; Psalm 12:2-3; Revelation 21:8*).

Teach them that friends who tell the truth even when it hurts are better than kisses from an enemy (*Proverbs 27:5-6*).

Teach them that men should be judged by their actions and lives, not words (***Proverbs 20:11***).

Religion has many lies and flattery, for the devil has used it since Eden. The false teachers use good words and fair speeches to deceive simple hearers (***Genesis 3:1-13; John 8:44; Romans 16:17-18***).

The Jews flattered and lied to Jesus to trap him (***Luke 20:20-21***).

But God's faithful pastors and teachers never use flattering speech or lies (***2Corinthians 2:17; 4:2; 1Thessalonians 2:3-6***).

Jehovah is a God of truth, and so is His Son Jesus Christ, Who is Faithful and True (***Revelations 19:11***).

All who take His name must make sure their every word is honest, sincere, and true, and obviously, in the eyes of all others (***Deuteronomy 32:4; Romans 12:17; 1Peter 2:12***).