

## CHAPTER 12

***Proverbs 12:1 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.***

Do you love to be taught? Do you love to be corrected? Do you love to be told you are wrong? Do you appreciate those who tell you how it ought to be done?

Are you thankful for reminders to change? Wise and noble men and women will strongly say, "Yes!"

### **To Grow In Knowledge Someone Must Teach You!**

You must submit your mind and will to those who instruct you, for good, bad or indifferent.

If you desire good truth instruction, you grant them superiority. You admit inferiority. This requires humility, which most do not have. Only noble souls can willingly submit and be taught by another.

To grow in knowledge: You must admit ignorance or error. For either you did not know the matter, or you held a false position. You may even have taught others. You will have to admit you taught them an error. Only noble souls can admit ignorance or error.

To grown in knowledge: You must change. Progress requires change; but change is humbling and difficult.

Change means admitting you were wrong; change means altering long established habits; change means explaining your new actions.

### **Only Noble Souls Change! Being Noble Means Being Dignified!**

**Noble:** "high or elevated character"

If you do not like to be taught, you are like an animal.

If you chafe under correction, you are like a beast.

If you resent being told you are wrong, you are an irrational brute.

**Brutish:** "of or pertaining to the brutes, or lower animals, as opposed to man." Pertaining to, resembling, or characteristic of the brutes: in want of intelligence or in failure to use reason: dull, irrational, uncultured, stupid.

Thank you, Holy Spirit for not being politically correct. For telling us plainly that resisting instruction is foolish. Thank you for commanding us to love instruction and reproof by this Proverb.

Let us not be animals (*Psalm 32:9*)! See the comments on *Proverbs 26:3*.

Parents teach children, and only brutish children resist or resent it. Parents know more than their children, and have a long-term perspective, and care about the right things. It is a stupid child that ignores or hates instruction and reproof from their parents.

The masters teach unlearned servants, and only non-sensible brutes resist or resent being told how to do a job.

The employer is more gifted, has much more at stake, sees the big picture better, has done the job longer, and has the right to do things his way.

Employees are just laborers; and they should be satisfied to listen, learn, and do it the master's way, especially Christian servants.

Pastors teach church members, and only foolish church members ignore, resist, or resent it. The pastor is the messenger of the LORD, and he brings inspired wisdom and truth from Scripture.

The Bereans were noble for having ready minds (*Acts 17:11*).

Paul commanded, "*Despise not prophesyings*" (*1Thessalonians 5:20*).

### **The Greatest Key To Progress And Success, In Any Area Of Life, Is Your Appreciation And Acceptance Of Instruction And Reproof.**

Did you read it? Do you believe it? Will you show it in your life? If you do not, receive teaching and change, in your life when you are reproofed, you are like an animal in the sight of God.

The Lord Jesus has much to teach us to bring us to perfection. And it will only happen **If** we are ready to receive instruction and **If** we love reproof.

Lord, help us do both. Amen. Cross-references: *Proverbs 15:32*

***Proverbs 12:2 A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.***

The LORD can raise beggars up out of the dunghill and put them on the throne of glory, and He can put the greatest monarch in world history out to pasture, literally (*2Samuel 7:8; Daniel 4:27-33*).

God rewards our conduct in this life. David and Nebuchadnezzar are good examples. He rewards in the

next life as well. Read about Lazarus and the rich man (*Luke 16:19-31*).

It would do you good to read Hannah's prayer of praise (*1Samuel 2:1-10*).

Hannah knew the LORD was a God of knowledge and that He weighed the actions of men.

Hannah praised the LORD for His great work of putting one person up and putting another down. The LORD made a great difference between her and her adversary (*1Samuel 1:4-8, 17-20; 2:18-21, 26*).

### **The LORD's Favor Is A Great Blessing.**

The Lord's favor is better than the mythical touch of Midas, better than friendship with Bill Gates, and better than the Presidential Medal of Freedom with Distinction. There is nothing like it in this world or the next (*Psalms 4:6-8; 16:11*).

How can you measure having the Lord as your Friend, Comforter, Benefactor, and Protector?

The Lord's favor can make all the difference in the world in a man's life. Can we comprehend it? Can we describe it?

**If** God blesses your soul, your body, your marriage, your children, the work of your hands, and your eternal destination, what else is there (*Psalms 1:1-6; 73:23-27; 128:1-6; 144:11-15*)? Thank you, Lord.

### **The LORD's Condemnation Is A Horrible Thing.**

The Lord's condemnation far exceeds any personal or natural disaster, for God becomes your enemy and can make this life miserable and in the next. He can torment your soul with fear and trembling that is indescribable (*Deuteronomy 28:65-68*)!

Terminal cancer and annihilation would be a relief from what God can do to you. How can you measure the difficulties of the Lord's dealing with you in eternity (*Psalms 35:5-6*)?

Jesus told His disciples that pain and death were nothing at all. Why fear men? They cannot do anything of serious or lasting harm!

Jesus taught them the only true Person to fear was His Father, Who was able to kill the body in this life and send both body and soul to hell for eternity. Fear Him! Jesus warned (*Luke 12:4-5*).

What makes this difference, the great difference between God's rewards and your choices today! That is right! Your choices today will either be good in His sight, or they will be wicked.

You think you can do what you want? You think you can protect yourself from God's fallout? You think you can avoid the consequences of your sin? You think God doesn't see? Doesn't care? Guess again!

A good man is favored by God by His grace (*Psalms 14:1-3; Galatians 5:22-23*).

But grace must also be used to be the good man here (*1Corinthians 15:10; 2Corinthians 12:11*).

A good man finds the favor of God by laying hold of wisdom (*Proverbs 8:35*).

The foolish man rejects wisdom and chooses death instead (*Proverbs 8:36*).

The defining difference between our two subjects is how they treat the instruction of the Word of God.

Do you tremble before God's Word? Will you even take enough time to read and consider this warning? Will you do anything about it today?

Reader, reject God's Word to your own peril and there will be no one to save you (*Psalms 50:22; Hosea 5:14; 13:8*)!

God will turn your life upside down and inside out (*Psalms 146:9*). Read these verses (*Psalms 3:7; 58:6*).

**If** you think for one second God has changed, try (*Hebrews 10:26-31; 12:28-29; 13:8*).

When God show up in anger, men beg for the mountains to fall on them and hide them (*Revelation 6:16-17*). Reader, don't be a fool!

Beware, lest you think it is your idea and measure of what makes a good man. Do not let anyone, even your dear mother, flatter you into thinking you are a good man.

A Holy God has no regard for such foolish thoughts.

God will only, favor the man, who trembles before His Word and keeps His commandments, with a humble heart (*Psalms 112:1-4; Isaiah 66:2*).

The difference in God's rewards are enormous. His rewards are immeasurable. Reader, can you see this truth? God can bless so abundantly and so kindly, and He can also destroy so quickly and painfully.

Did the LORD's favor make a difference in Joseph's life? An incredible difference! How about Abraham? Ruth? Esther? Job? David? Daniel? Mary Magdalene?

Did the LORD's condemnation make a difference in Saul's life? What tormenting misery! How about Cain? Lot? Eli? Nabal? Jehoram? Uzziah? Judas? Herod?

Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up (*James 4:10*).

### **Precious Favor Is Obtained From The LORD!**

Some men walked with the Lord as their Friend, others walked straight into heaven without dying, and yet others had His benevolent care and protection around and upon them wherever they went and whatever they did. Do good, and you will love life and see good days (*1Peter 3:10-12*)!

***Proverbs 12:3 A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.***

Reader, every man, woman, and family wants to be settled and successful. They want to be securely planted and prosperous into the future. They want to increase and improve over time.

But wickedness, of any sort, will cause a person or family to decay and disappear. Only righteousness can preserve and establish a man or family permanently (*Proverbs 10:25*).

What is the outlook for you and your family? **If** there is sin in either, the Lord will root one or both out and destroy it.

The Lord blesses and honors righteousness, but He will be froward to the froward (*Psalms 18:20-26*).

The choice is yours, and it is a choice you make each day. What is your future? Your choices today will help determine your future!

Abraham and Lot made choices. Lot chose financial advantage over holiness by pitching his tent toward Sodom.

Abraham chose peace and the leftovers. But what happened? Lot lost everything and ended up in a cave, with two profane and pregnant daughters.

Abraham ended up the rich, father of Israel, and Jesus Christ in his lineage! What a difference!

Eli was Israel's high priest. His family could have been priests forever. But he would not stop his perverse sons.

What did the Lord say? *"For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (1Samuel 3:13)*. See also *1Samuel 2:27-36 and 3:1-18*.

David was the neglected eighth son, but the Lord rooted Saul out and established David and his sons as the

dynasty in Israel. His Son sits on the throne of the universe today!

God said to David, *"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2Samuel 7:16)*. Read *2Samuel 7*.

David wrote, *"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found" (Psalm 37:35-36)*.

Alexander the Great thought he was invincible, but died at 32; and in a few years every relative and descendant were dead. God rooted him out of the earth!

No matter how the wicked do estate planning, God can and will destroy him and his seed.

No matter how weak the righteous may appear, God will preserve his house and seed forever.

Do you believe this about the righteous, reader?

*"Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies" (Psalm 112:6-8)*.

***Proverbs 12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.***

A virtuous woman is a noble, gracious, diligent, and loving woman. She faithfully honors and pleases her husband. He is thankful and rejoices in God's goodness to him through her.

An odious woman shames her husband and slowly kills him from the inside out by selfishness, stubbornness, and/or unfaithfulness.

Crown is a simple metaphor. A crown honors a person. Kings are given crowns for the honor of their office, and athletes are crowned to honor sporting achievements.

A great wife honors her husband by the pleasure and esteem she brings him, and she also crowns his authority by her own submission and that which she requires of her children. A crown is a grand piece of jewelry, and a virtuous woman is such to her husband!

However, *"rottenness in his bones"* is a simple simile, a comparison that gives itself away by using the word *"as."*

Bones are the support of the anatomy, and rottenness there is fatal trouble for your body. Ask anyone with advanced leukemia.

An odious wife causes horrible grief to a man's mind and distress to his soul. In public he is ashamed he is married to her, and in private he is deeply wounded in his heart.

It is a painful affliction, woman cannot truly understand it, for she was made for him, not he for her (*1Corinthians 11:9*).

Christian woman, humble yourself before this Proverb. Forget what you think about yourself. Forget what your mother tells you. Even forget what your husband tells you.

His praise is not the measure. That is not nearly good enough. A man who feels he is in a marital trap without a crown of gold may think or say a crown of thorns is good! Especially in a weak moment, when he needs something, or the approval is expected!

Your husband has likely not told you the truth. **If** you ask him, he still won't. Consider it. It is hard to deeply criticize a wife, especially in matters as intimate and personal as marriage and your womanhood.

Men also fear the consequences of interrupted domestic tranquility.

Men resent having to explain the obvious.

Men may not believe it will do any good anyway. He is likely not as pleased as you think.

Stop kidding yourself that you are a virtuous. Others know better. Virtue is very objective and visible.

### **Self-Righteous Opinions Are Very Deceitful.**

**If** you think the criticism too harsh, think about three things.

1. An odious wife is one of the great curses of life (*Proverbs 30:21-23*).
2. Saving a man's life takes desperate measures, especially stopping a murderer!
3. A bad wife is more bitter than death, according to (*Ecclesiastes 7:26*)!

### **Character Conduct Make Women Virtuous Are Visible To Others As Your Appearance.**

A truly gracious woman is highly respected by all others at all times (*Proverbs 11:16*).

The stench of the odious woman cannot be hid, no matter what she thinks of herself (*Proverbs 27:15-16*).

Most people only see the a nose ring of 24k gold (*Proverbs 11:22*)!

Humble yourself! Let the Word of God teach you something!

Your children also know. They know **If** their father is rejoicing and content in his wonderful wife, or if he is rotting in his bones for neglect and loneliness.

A woman like this will cost herself both sons and daughters, for they will resent her for hurting their father and being so much less, than what they want to be, or to have in a marriage.

What exactly shames a man and rots him from the inside out?

A dirty or cluttered house, too much talking, children neglected physically or emotionally, laziness.

A negative and complaining attitude, nagging, poor manners in public.

A critical spirit, a lack of reverence, an out of shape body, insubordination, a prudish approach to sex, not enough talking, self-righteousness.

A lack of smiling cheerfulness, correcting details, excessive doting on the children, remembering his faults, excitement at getting away by herself, bristling at correction, that she is disliked by others, and a "I'm just fine" attitude.

All these things are clearly condemned and corrected in the Word of God.

### **A Virtuous Woman Fears The Lord Above All.**

She seeks to exceed everything the Bible teaches as the standard for great women. See the comments on *Proverbs 31:30*.

She knows the parts of the Bible sent from God for her. She esteems them, and she does them. A few of these places are *Genesis 3:16; 1Corinthians 7:1-5; 11:9; Ephesians 5:22-24,33; Titus 2:3-5; 1Peter 3:1-6*.

A virtuous wife knows the Holy Spirit wrote *Proverbs 31:10-31* and the *Song of Solomon* for her.

She wants to be her husband's cheerful and loving companion, the world's greatest lover, a domestic goddess in household duties, a queen of hospitality and social graces, and the perfect mother of his children, as these two comprehensive passages detail.

There is only one way to be such a woman. Confess your sins to God. Eliminate all bitterness and self-righteousness. Repudiate your own ideas and habits. Trust the Word of God without question. Cheerfully do

everything written in the Bible for women, without any compromise.

You and your husband will be far happier for it; your children will be happier; and the LORD will reward you.

Christian man, there is hope. The Word of God can cure the rottenness in your bones. **If** you can help your wife believe and obey it. God created the woman for you, and He has written the perfect marriage manual for you to have a crown of pure gold.

Your wife needs to be in a church that preaches the whole counsel of God practically and powerfully.

And you need to do what you can to lead, encourage, and direct her toward obeying the Bible.

**If** you are married to a virtuous woman, as measured by the Word of God, then you are greatly blessed, for such a woman is divine blessing from God (*Proverbs 14:1; 18:22; 19:14; 1Corinthians 11:7, 11*).

Give thanks to the LORD!

Young man, think about rotting bones. It is what you will suffer, if you marry hastily or foolishly. See the comments on *Proverbs 31:30*.

Being single is heavenly compared to marriage to the average woman in our society (*Proverbs 19:13; 21:9, 19; 27:15-16*).

Virtuous women are rare, very rare. You will need to trust the Lord, hunt far and wide, be critical, and trust wise men to help prove her.

The virtuous woman is also a crown to her Lord. She keeps the adversaries of the Gospel from making reproach or blaspheming the Word of God (*1Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:5*).

But her love of Christ is empty hypocrisy, **If** she does not love her husband the way Jesus Christ taught her in His Word.

**Let Every Reader  
Be A Bride That Glorifies  
The Lord Jesus Christ!**

***Proverbs 12:5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.***

The difference between the righteous and wicked is enormous, with great consequences in this world and the next (*Proverbs 3:33; 10:7; 11:31; 12:21; 14:11; 15:8,29; 24:19-20; Psalms 58:1-11; 112:1-10; Matthew 25:31-46*).

You are either righteous or wicked, you make the choice each day, what you will be!

**Where Does This Difference Originate?  
In The Thoughts And The Counsels Of The Heart!**

Solomon in this Proverb makes a simple observation, but it is our duty to extract the lesson. Righteousness or wickedness begins in the thoughts, and these must be ruled.

You must keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life (*Proverbs 4:23*).

*"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil" (Luke 6:45).*

The heart may be the seat of the emotions, but it is certainly the source of our motives and choices, for we choose what we desire and love.

Therefore, we must rule and teach our hearts to love things that are right and to hate things that are evil (*Proverbs 8:13; Psalm 119:128*).

But there is a problem, a terrible problem! Because of inherited wickedness from Adam, the father of all men, our hearts are corrupt and perverse (*Proverbs 20:9*).

It is written, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).*

Also consider these thirteen defilements resident in the heart of all men: *Mark 7:20-23 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.*

*21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,  
22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:*

*23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

The only hope you have is the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, who gives new hearts to His born again children and writes His laws in them (*Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10; 10:26*).

Without this new creation, your heart is at enmity against God (*Proverbs 28:26; Genesis 6:5*).

The thought of foolishness is also sin and it leads to more sin (*Proverbs 24:9; James 1:13-16*).

The wicked think about sin day and night, without thoughts of God (*Psalms 10:4; 36:4; Micah 2:1*).

The wicked fantasize about adultery they scorn correction (*Proverbs 6:25; 26:16*).

The wicked devise evil (*Proverbs 6:18*).

The righteous meditate on the law of God and right things (*Psalms 1:1-3; 119:97*).

The righteous are committed to doing what is right in the sight of God. When they fall and sin, they confess their folly, repent of their wickedness, and pursue God yet again (*Romans 7:14-23*).

### **What must you do?**

Confess sinful thoughts (*Psalms 51:10*)!

Choose God and beg Him to search your thoughts (*Psalms 19:14; 139:23-24*).

Ask God to incline your heart to good things (*Psalms 86:11; 119:36; 141:4*).

Choose to fill your mind with His Words, good preaching, and good music (*Luke 4:4; Acts 17:11; Colossians 3:16*).

Choose to transform all your thinking (*Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24*).

Commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established, *Proverbs 16:3*.

***Proverbs 12:6 The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.***

It's been said that, "Wisdom has two sides." Nowhere is this more evident than the study of Proverbs.

Note the two-sided Proverb for today: On one side, the tongue is poised, waiting to strike; on the other side, the tongue sets back, waiting to respond.

In which way do you use your tongue? Do you look for opportunity to attack, to strike, to damage? Or, do you wait in silence, properly prepared to defend if necessary?

Wicked men, out of the abundance of their heart, speak mischief to their neighbors; and the wicked, those are whose words are to lie in wait for blood (*Proverbs 1:13-18*).

Wicked men's tongues are swords to those that stand in their way (*Luke 20:20-21*).

Good men speak helpfully to their neighbors (*Proverbs 11:11*).

The mouth of the upright is ready to be opened in the cause of those that are oppressed (*Proverbs 31:8*).

To plead for oppressed, to witness for oppressed, and so to deliver oppressed, particularly those whom the wicked lie in wait for.

### **Man May Sometimes Do A Very Good Work With One Good Word!**

The tongue is the hardest body part to contain, according to James. One thing that will help us train our tongues is "purpose."

**If** we will purpose our tongues heavenward, to commission, through prayer. Then the tongue, will speak to God, the tongue will praise him, the tongue will glorify His name.

Only then have we defined the tongue's proper role in a proactive sense.

### **Speech Between Men Is Fraught With Danger.**

Jesus went to the extreme and recommended that we keep our words to "Yes" and "No" (*Matthew 5:37*). Good advice.

**If** we will purpose our tongues to man ward, as a tool to respond good words to men and not to attack; then we've defined the tongue's role.

As a child of God you are commissioned to speak. But you must go carefully, as a teacher, a preacher, an evangelist, and the disciple maker.

James, the one who reminded us about the evils of the tongue, also spoke about how teachers will be judged more strictly than the rest of us.

Do not take this charge lightly. Guard your words carefully and make sure that you speak in defense of the Gospel and not yourself.

***Proverbs 12:7 The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.***

Your preservation and prosperity, and that of your family, depend on righteousness.

The wicked last only a short time. They are deceived by superficial and temporal pleasures, before they are overthrown. Then you cannot find them; they are gone!

The righteous and his family will endure, in this world and the next, because God, is on his side. The choice is yours! How long will your family last? What will you do for your family today?

**You/Your Family  
Are At Risk!  
Sin Will Destroy Both!**

Violating God's laws and wisdom ruin the lives and estates of men. Sin brings God's angry judgment.

You are in deep trouble when God is your enemy (*Psalm 34:16; Isaiah 63:10*).

God can drown all men in a flood where none remain.

God can drop rebels alive into their graves and hell (*Numbers 16:29-33*).

God can turn she bears on children (*2Kings 2:23-24*).

Sin brings man's judgment. God who by conscience and duty, has formal and informal laws to punish the wicked.

Adulterers, drunkards, liars, murderers, scorners, slanderers, sluggards, sorcerers, spendthrifts, and other sinners are despised and punished in various ways.

**If** civil rulers do not correct them, then parents, bosses, spouses, or neighbors will! They are soon reduced to poverty, die a miserable death, and their memories rot (*Proverbs 10:7*).

Sin also has natural consequences, which destroy the wicked. Foolish spending reduces rich men to rags. Pride costs kings battles or even wars.

Sexual indulgence brings terrible consequences.

Drunkenness causes accidents and destroys families.

Murder can bring capital punishment.

Disrespectful speech, excessive sleep, or purloining can cost a man his job.

On the other hand, God gives a righteous man peace, protection, and prosperity.

Men will respect and reward a righteous man, even selfishly, to receive potential indirect benefits from him.

By living moderately without the vices of the wicked, a righteous man generally has better health and lives a longer life. The laws that work against the wicked work for him!

Compare and contrast, Mordecai and Haman in the Persian Empire, Kings Saul and David of Israel, John and Judas of the apostles, the family trees of Jonathan Edwards and Joseph Kennedy.

Where is Alexander the Great, his family, or his estate today? What happened to the Rothschilds and

Vanderbilts? What is left of Howard Hughes or Marilyn Monroe?

Invest in your future now! Repent of your sins. Beg God for forgiveness. Make restitution for wrongs. Learn righteousness from the Bible. Pray for it. Live it.

Claim *Psalm 112* as your personal promise from God. There is a reward for the righteous (*Isaiah 58:1-11*).

***Proverbs 12:8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.***

Praise by good men is good, and it should be sought (*Proverbs 3:3-4; 22:1; 27:2*).

The sure way to earn the praise of good men is through wisdom: the power of right judgment and action.

But the perverse person, who thinks, speaks, and acts wrongly, will be despised. The choice is yours! Which are you? Which will you be? Commended or despised?

You don't care what others think? Not even good men? Then you are a fool!

God's Word strictly teaches that good men will identify and praise wise persons, and they will identify and despise persons with perverse hearts.

You cannot be wise and hide it from good men, and you cannot be perverse and hide it either (*Proverbs 14:7; 27:15-16; Ecclesiastes 10:3*).

**The Reputation Rank Of A Man  
Is Dependent On Wisdom!**

Godly popularity and success depend on wisdom!

Jesus grew in favor with God and men, and we are told it resulted from his growth in wisdom (*Luke 2:52*).

Godly men will make this difference in other men for they are known and identified by both reputation and position (*Psalm 37:37; Romans 16:17; Philippians 3:17*).

What is wisdom? It is the power of right judgment and action.

A man with wisdom, can assess a situation and respond in the godly way demanded by Scripture.

A man with wisdom has knowledge and understanding.

A man with wisdom is discreet and prudent.

A man with wisdom is fair and kind.

A man with wisdom exalts mercy and truth.

A man with wisdom has a discerning heart.

**What is a perverse heart?** A person not motivated by God and holiness, but by selfish interests that cause him to choose contrary, unreasonable, and wrong courses of action.

He is ignorant of wisdom, obstinate, foolish and impulsive, and irritating and offensive.

Men either commend or despise him.

You are either perceived as wise or perverse. There is little middle ground. Your reputation is either in the direction of wisdom or perversity.

Good men do have opinions, and they do reveal them.

Good men will honor, promote, and seek persons with wise speech and conduct.

Good men will avoid, neglect, and reject fools.

Do not deceive yourself! Do good men seek you, praise you, and promote you? Or do good men avoid you, neglect you, and reject you?

The difference is obvious, though it may be painful. Forget your family, they cannot tell you the truth. And most of all forget your own thoughts, for your deceitful heart wants to lie to you against the ugly truth.

Do godly and sober men enjoy you, or endure you? Seek you, or avoid you?

If so, there is a simple solution! Take hope! You need wisdom, and it is freely offered in Proverbs. Your thoughts have none. Grasp the opportunity! See the comments on *Proverbs 10:7; 12:4; and 22:1*.

***Proverbs 12:9 He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.***

These strange Words teach wisdom, your public image is worth little. In a world crazy about image over substance, pretense over character, and words over performance, this Proverb is very relevant.

### **Concern What Others Think Is The Pride Of Life!**

Living godly and comfortably with your family is wisdom and success (*Ecclesiastes 9:8-10; 1Timothy 6:6*).

Here are two men: The first man is despised by the world, for he does not make the splashy show the world values. He is a simple, hardworking man, who prefers

peace and quiet at home to any worldly party or popularity.

By hard work he has achieved a modest measure of comfort and success, he has a servant for companionship and labor.

The second man is popular and flashy, always seeking the approval and limelight of the world. He moves in the popular circles in town and presents himself as charming and successful wherever he can.

But his image is all show, for he is basically broke, especially **If** his debts were paid by someone else! Thinking work beneath him, he lives for image alone!

### **A Simple Honest Man Is Better Than The Pretentious Fool!**

Solomon saw men living for public image rather than working for the rewards of pleasure and security at home.

Solomon saw successful men humbled by God unable to quit their former lifestyle and get a job.

Solomon warned against image and encouraged contentment with life's modest successes.

More people live for image today than ever before. The media constantly exalts a self image.

Peer pressure is powerful!

Easy credit makes it possible to live above your means.

Corrupt bankruptcy laws allow image pretenders to start over when debtors claim their assets.

Living above your means, is a powerful temptation that parents and pastors must teach and warn against.

True success is working hard.

True success is enjoying simple domestic pleasures.

True success is living a contented and godly life (*Ecclesiastes 9:8-10; 1Thessalonians 4:11-12; 1Timothy 6:6-10*).

True success is having modest possessions with love, peace, and righteousness. Which are better than even wealth with trouble (*Proverbs 15:16-17; 17:1*).

Wise men ignore what the world thinks.

Wise men will not use foolish debt to buy clothes, cars, or houses beyond their means. They choose the lower seat in public life (*Proverbs 25:6-7*).



Frequent divorces, substance dependency, and dysfunctional lives, show the vanity of the "rich and famous." The lie of image does not pay; it destroys men (*1John 2:15-17*).

What God thinks of you is far more important than what the world thinks.

Jesus, despised and rejected of men, sits at God's right hand in eternal joy and pleasure (*Psalm 16:11*).

***Proverbs 12:10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.***

A good man is merciful; he is gentle and kind.

A good man is ruled by pity and compassion; he cannot be mean or hard.

The wicked are cruel. Even their kindness is harsh, for they lack the tender, gentle spirit of the righteous, who is concerned even for animals.

The wicked cannot be kind and merciful; they are like their master, a murderer from the beginning.

This Proverb is not for PETA. The lesson is not the care of animals, but the illustration of compassion. While the LORD ordained merciful care of animals from the working ox to birds in the nest (*Deuteronomy 25:4; 22:6-7*).

God gave man dominion over animals to work them, wear their skins, sacrifice them, and eat them (*Genesis 1:26-28; 3:21; 4:4; 9:1-4*).

A man may hunt honorably even today, but boyish torture of insects or animals is profane.

There are many, Amish horse-and-buggies, in northwestern Pennsylvania and in Michigan.

The difference in men's character is obvious, by this Proverb. Some horses are well fed and groomed; others are undernourished and neglected.

On hot days, some men walk their horses up the area's steepest and longest hills; others whip them on, ignoring the temperature, grade, or speed. And these are the less cared for horses!

The lesson is this: righteous men are tender, gentle, compassionate, and merciful. The wicked are hard, harsh, inconsiderate, and cruel.

A righteous man will bear the fruit of the Spirit, which includes tenderhearted gentleness (*Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:32; James 3:17*).

Reader, are you compassionate in the sight of God and men?

Here is how we show our Father's character, who sends warming sunshine and nourishing rain, even on His enemies (*Matthew 5:43-48*).

The LORD, though great and dreadful in judgment, is a God full of compassion and tender mercies (*Psalm 36:7; 103:4; 145:9; Lamentations 3:22*).

His ordinance of the Sabbath included rest for working animals (*Exodus 23:12; Deuteronomy 5:14*). How merciful!

A righteous man is merciful to himself (*Proverbs 11:17*), his animals (*Genesis 24:19,32; 33:13-14*), his wife (*1Peter 3:7; Colossians 3:19*), his children (*Psalm 103:13; Colossians 3:21*), and his enemies (*Psalm 35:11-16*).

A righteous man, will not foolishly afflict, punish, or trouble them (*Lamentations 3:32-33; Galatians 6:10*).

A righteous man, will rather pamper himself and his animals, wife, children, and enemies with kindness.

But the wicked are perverse; their tender mercies are cruel and harsh.

The wicked trouble their own souls (*Proverbs 11:17*).

The wicked neglect their own flesh and blood (*1Timothy 5:8*).

Balaam cruelly beat his donkey (*Numbers 22:22-32*).

Judah's tender mercy to Joseph was to sell him (*Genesis 37:26-28*);

Adonibezek had seventy kings without thumbs or big toes under his table (*Judges 1:7*);

Nahash accepted surrender on terms of putting out all right eyes (*1Samuel 11:1-2*);

Joab murdered Abner and Absalom in cold blood (*2Samuel 3:39; 18:5*);

Rehoboam scorned his own willing nation (*2Chronicles 10:1-19*).

Jezebel murdered Naboth for a mere vineyard (*1Kings 21:1-16*);

Pilate offered to chastise our innocent Lord before letting Him go (*Luke 23:13-16*).

The Romans broke legs to end crucifixions (*John 19:31-32*)!

Job tenderly cared for his servants and the poor (*Job 31:13-22*). But his wife cruelly stabbed him in his darkest hour of need (*Job 2:9*).

David mercifully spared Saul's life (*1Samuel 24:1-22*), but his daughter Michael scorned David's finest worship of God (*2Samuel 6:20-23*).

Joseph mercifully protected Mary, though horribly hurt (*Matthew 1:19*), but

Judah forgot his promise to the lonely and needy Tamar (*Genesis 38:11-26*).

A wicked man will treat his wife harshly, work too many hours, yell at the children, stay at cheap hotels on vacation, forget to feed the fish, slander his enemy, think romance is effeminate, neglect to train his children, expect the family to appreciate his personal preferences, criticize his wife to others, not take his mother out to eat, repeat stories about a co-worker, treat his daughters like sons, or clam up and avoid talking to the family.

A wicked woman will think herself equal to her husband, gossip about the neighbor, criticize her mother-in-law, defraud her husband of daily sex, over-protect her sons from boy activities, fret over millions of things to get done, nag rather than punish the children, correct her husband frequently, worry too much about details, or order a veggie pizza.

Let every melancholy, introverted masochist read these words: *"The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh"* (*Proverbs 11:17*).

### **Self-Reflection Negative Thoughts Are Wrong And Destructive!**

Self-reflection negative thoughts, destroy you and those around you by your sullenness, withdrawal, bad attitude, critical outlook, or harsh words.

How merciful is: the "quiet man" who clams up? The "strong leader" who yells frequently at home? The "thoughtful man" who remembers offences and harbors bitterness? The "funny man" who laughs all the time and only thinks about himself? The "zealous man" who cannot forgive quickly and completely?

These persons are not merciful at all. Mercy is not compromising God's standards (*1Kings 20:31-34*).

They include infinite mercy, and we do not have the wisdom or right to modify them. Mercy compromises, our opinions, our feelings, our habits, and our conveniences for others.

**We Receive  
Mercy And Compassion  
When We Give.**

So it is important we show kindness and gentleness toward ourselves and others (*James 2:13*).

Tender words are not enough: we need bowels of compassion (*Colossians 3:12-13; 1John 3:17*) and their actions (*James 2:16*).

Our Lord showed His tender mercies, to hungry crowds, to a single grieving widow, to an untouchable leper, to a despairing Mary Magdalene (*Mark 8:1-2; Luke 7:11-15; Mark 1:40-44; John 20:11-18*).

Our Lord is compassionate and merciful to you every day.

**If** we are children of the King, let us practice tender mercy to all, as does our gracious King. Let us show His grace in our lives by reflecting it to all others.

***Proverbs 12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.***

Farming is a real job. It is boring, hard, hot, dirty. It requires patience, waiting for crops to grow, and it has no glamour of fancy titles, fine suits, and big meetings.

Farming involves long hours, manual labor, much practical wisdom, risk, no paid vacations, and only modest financial reward.

Farming requires self-discipline and self-motivation. It provides food to sustain human life and provides eating pleasure. Farming is a real job.

Farming is a good job. In a perfect world without sin, God gave Adam the work of dressing the Garden of Eden; and in a sinful world, his first son was a tiller of the ground (*Genesis 2:15; 4:2*).

The LORD gave man the internal knowledge of agricultural wisdom thousands of years before our witty inventions (*Isaiah 28:23-29*).

God blessed men with great returns from tilling the ground and sowing seeds (*Genesis 26:12*). But it is a hard job.

Sound too much like work? Don't want to be a dumb farmer? Can't imagine getting dirty every day and never becoming someone important? Vain persons are just waiting for you, they want to help and guide you.

Call a number in the "Business Opportunities" section of your newspaper, and you can learn hard work is for idiots and how you can start getting rich this afternoon.

These vain persons have a "business opportunity" for you to be "financially independent." They have a "little

known investment" that yields ten times what working peons like farmers get.

Instead of working hard and getting dirty, you can drive a sports car and use a cell phone to arrange your next "sales meeting"! After all, **If** you can get a thousand people working for you, trying to become you by buying your overpriced product, then you won't have to work at all! Sounds great, doesn't it? Help yourself to the American dream!

But what does the Holy Spirit say? What does Solomon, who knew more about economic success than any ten men living today, say? They say that the farmer will have plenty to eat, he will be successful; and the greedy fellow looking for "Easy Street" is an empty-headed fool and a loser. He's ending up in poverty (**Proverbs 28:19**)!

This rule of economic wisdom applies to every honest and useful profession. So get up, go do your boring job, and do it well; forget foolish ideas of easy money or "business opportunities." Plowing your field will put you far ahead of men chasing dreams of easy riches and high-return investments. This is the secret to success from this Proverb?

Consider tilling: which is plowing and preparing land for raising crops. It is done in the spring along with a major investment in seed and fertilizer, when there is no evidence of fall's success. It is boring, hard, hot, and dirty; and you must live on credit or savings for six months, getting financially poorer every day, while your back grows sorer every day.

But there always comes a day when you come home sweaty and filthy to discover an escape. A vain person in a fine suit and driving a new BMW is there to charm you and your wife about his exciting life with a "business opportunity." He says, "Join us, surely you don't want to be a loser all your life! Sign up to be a 'distributor,' buy my overpriced products, and get rich!"

So you attend a "sales meeting." After a prayer, the pledge to the flag, and singing "God Bless America," a beautiful couple claiming to be millionaires prance across the stage flashing Rolexes and photos of fancy houses. Beaming with happiness, they tell about quitting farming and spending half the year sailing their custom yacht in the Caribbean.

What is vain about this "success"? They don't show fifty thousand poor "distributors" down the line, who were extorted into buying overpriced products to pay for the yacht through high-pressure tactics, product misrepresentation, and promises of quick riches. Grow up!

Overpriced soap doesn't make anyone rich, unless someone lies somewhere about something. **If** you believe their story, to become a billionaire like Bill

Gates! Or better yet, play the lottery. You have more chance winning a lottery than owning a yacht.

What made Bill Gates a billionaire? Time and chance of God's providence (**Ecclesiastes 9:11**)!

But for every Bill Gates, there are ten million men who make an average income and one million losers who hurt their families chasing his illusionary "success." But you can reduce chance and time for plenty of bread by working your farm each day and trusting the Lord to apply His rain and sunshine for a harvest.

**In All Labor  
Like Working A Farm  
There Is Profit**

Put the talk of the lips, like rah-rah stories of get-rich-quick schemes, that tend only to poverty (**Proverbs 14:23** *In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury* <sup>need and poverty</sup>).

Repeat again, only to poverty! Many lose money, peace, and reputations chasing "success" (**Proverbs 13:23**).

News stories are daily revealing more boom-and-bust businesses and investments, the only reason more schemes have not yet gone bust, is due to God's judgment of deceptive prosperity (**Proverbs 1:32**).

Skepticism is wisdom! Only fools believe stories of easy money and super investments (**Proverbs 14:15; 4:26; 22:3; 27:12**).

Things sounding "too good to be true" are just that, too good to be true! Only fools believe them. Wise men prove all things (**1Thessalonians 5:21**).

Vain persons will resent your sober objections, for their conceit is too great (**Proverbs 26:16, 12; 21:2**).

They have seen success! They are copying their mentors, who rent Rolexes and lease sports cars; and they expect you to foolishly believe their story like they did others'.

There are no secrets to success. SUCCESS is only by hard work, self-denial, patience, time, and God's mercy! Consider this carefully (**Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 127:1**).

There is no free lunch, or even a cheap lunch. Lunch is getting wheat from the ground and meat from the herd.

Vain persons hate skeptics, for they need you to join quickly and easily to make their next house payment. Dreams hate questions!

Avoid vain persons who are always looking and talking about "business opportunities" (**Proverbs 9:6; 13:20**).

What is a vain person? Simple, someone trying to tell you there is an easy way to make a living. Following vain persons requires reading their materials, listening to their ideas, and thinking about their investments. Go plow another acre instead!

Starting as a trash collector and working hard with basic principles of godly wisdom will always bring more success than following another bright idea for easy riches.

Compare: hard work + savings + safe investments + patience = prosperity. This is tilling your land.

"Business opportunity" + "super investment" + rah-rah stories = poverty. This is vanity.

There are Ponzi schemes (**If** you don't know what one is, you better learn), stock tips, buying real estate with nothing down, insider information, "business opportunities," sure-thing commodities trading, swamp land in Florida, "ground floor" opportunities, miracle products, multi-level marketing programs of all kinds, and other lies to relieve fools of their money, especially in a greedy and excessive generation like the present.

Love your job! Thank the LORD for it! Work hard and faithfully at it! You will be satisfied with plenty of bread, and you will live to see the vain persons in bleak poverty.

Our Lord Jesus had Easy Street offered to Him by the devil (**Luke 4:5-7**) and the Jews (**John 6:15**); but He remained totally committed to the hard work of the cross, for He saw the true riches that were set before Him for patiently enduring (**Hebrews 12:2-4; Psalm 16:8-11**).

Itching-ears seek for a shiny new form of godliness, but continuing in the old paths will fill our souls with bread (**2Timothy 3:5, 14-17; 4: 1-24; Jude 1:3; Jeremiah 6:16**).

Cross-references: **Proverbs 13:4, 11; 20:21; 27:23-27**

***Proverbs 12:12 The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.***

What are your desires toward others? How do you affect them? A wicked man will harm others for his own malicious ambition; and he envies those who are skilled in doing so.

A righteous man has an internal rule of love, which bears good fruit in the lives of others. As the wicked seek to destroy and kill, so the righteous seek to help and nurture.

The greatest evidence and measure of a child of God is love of others, not faith.

Devils have much faith (**James 2:19**); love is greater than faith (**1Corinthians 13:13**); and only faith that works by love is worth anything (**Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26**).

Loving others proves your love of God and your eternal life (**John 13:35; 1John 2:7-11; 3:14-19; 4:7-8, 12, 16, 20-21; 5:1-3**).

Love is the second commandment and includes all the law of God (**Matthew 22:40; Galatians 5:14**).

All men are born wicked, filled with envy, malice, and hatred (**Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 3:3**).

But God has His children and has given them a new heart that loves the brethren, the neighbor, and his enemy (**Colossians 3:8-15; 1Thessalonians 4:9-10**).

God's children when walking in the Spirit and fulfilling their purpose, serve others with fervent love (**Acts 20:35; Galatians 5:22-26**).

A wicked man is greedy and selfish, intent on using other people for his own ambitions (**Proverbs 1:10-16; Psalm 10:2-11**).

A wicked man enjoys watching other reprobates catch and abuse their victims, and he wants to learn and perfect their techniques (**Proverbs 4:14-17; 24:1-2**).

A wicked man is continually thinking up new ways to harm the righteous and take away what they have (**Psalm 140:1-5**).

**Amnon** greedily desired the net of evil Jonadab to molest his virgin sister (**2Samuel 13:1-5**).

**Rehoboam** listened to young evil, foolish friends, who suggested an intimidation net as a means of power (**1Kings 12:1-14**).

**Demetrius** the silversmith used the net of financial gain from evil false religion to inspire his previous competitors (**Acts 19:23-28**).

Factions of the Jews desired the nets of their evil peers to be used against the Lord Jesus Christ (**Matthew 12:14; 22:34**).

The wicked have not changed. From whoremongers to whisperers, and anything between, sinners still desire the methods of other sinners. Adultery, financial scams, and rumor mongering are now passionately pursued online.

The entertainment industry has glamorized wickedness, so the whole nation can desire the nets of evil men (**Romans 1:32**).

And neither have the religious wicked made changes. They still compromise truth to catch and destroy men (*Matthew 23:15; Romans 16:17-18; 2Corinthians 2:17; 2Timothy 2:15-18; 3:13*).

Many pastors and churches crave the nets of the evil seeker sensitive gurus to ensnare as many as possible with contemporary Christianity and growth at any cost (*1Timothy 6:3-5; 2Timothy 3:1-9; 4:1-4*).

Righteous men are totally different! They bear the fruit of peace and righteousness in the lives of others (*Proverbs 10:21; 11:30; James 3:17-18*).

This ambition and result of their lives comes from the holy root in their inward parts (*1John 3:9*).

Righteous men understand the purpose of a local church is for members to help one another spiritually (*Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:23-25*).

If they use nets, they use them to become fishers of men for Christ's sake (*Matthew 4:19*)!

What is your fruit, reader? Are you a tree of life to others? Do they benefit by your loving help? Will you be sorely missed at your funeral for spiritual reasons? Or will you be barely missed due to your lack of fruit?

What will you do today to show God and all good men that you have the root of the righteous? Let Phebe be your guide (*Romans 16:1-2*)!

When all is said and done, there is only one man that truly bore the fruit of the righteous, from a perfect root, the man Christ Jesus.

Those that came before and after Him were hirelings: they came to steal, kill, and destroy (*John 10:1-10; Jeremiah 23:1-40*).

But Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd that cares for His sheep, even unto death (*John 10:11-16*).

***Proverbs 12:13 The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble.***

**Your Mouth Can Get You  
Into Trouble And Out Of Trouble!**

A fool seldom thinks before he speaks, or he thinks with a cruel or profane heart, so his words trap him in difficulties and bring punishment (*Proverbs 18:6-7*).

A righteous man, choosing good speech by the rules of wisdom, saves himself from the wrath of God and man.

How many times have you said to yourself, "Why did I say that?" The beauty of discretion and wisdom is to consider your words before they come out, so you do not have to regret them!

The Holy Spirit used numerous Proverbs to show that wise speech: begins in the heart (*Proverbs 16:23; 22:11*).

So cut your words in half (*Proverbs 17:27-28*) and rule your spirit better (*Proverbs 14:29; 16:32*) and speak slowly (*Proverbs 29:11, 20*), and speak deliberately and carefully (*Proverbs 10:31-32; 15:28*).

Consider the cosigning of loans. Hasty agreements to guarantee the financial performance of others are dangerous endeavor (*Proverbs 22:26-27*).

Cosigning should be avoided with great care, and you should spare no pain getting out of ones you are in (*Proverbs 6:1-5*).

How does this originate? You hear a plea for cosigning, and your lips make the foolish commitment!

Consider vows. God warns against and condemns foolish vows (*Ecclesiastes 5:1-7*).

Profane men without due caution are quick to say most anything in church or prayer, thus binding their souls before God.

They err greatly in thinking that words are no big problem and they can get out of their oaths easily. Wise men speak with fear and trembling before God. (*Proverbs 20:25*)

Consider conflict. A wicked man facing the wrath of an adversary must respond in kind, because his heart is proud and stubborn. He cannot and will not learn the lesson that a soft answer turns away wrath but harsh words stir up conflict further (*Proverbs 15:1; 17:14*).

Wicked men seek to win every controversy, for they have no sincere ability or desire for peace (*Proverbs 11:12*).

Consider private cursing. A fool has no discretion. His heart must verbally project its most depraved thoughts. So he curses the king or the rich in his own home, and he cannot understand how the words make their way to the offended party (*Ecclesiastes 10:20*)!

A wise man learns to think good thoughts and not let evil words escape his lips in any setting (*Proverbs 16:23; Matthew 5:21-22*)!

**Your Success Or Failure  
Depends On Your Ability  
To Rule Your Tongue!**

**If** you do not learn to control and guard your speech, you will get yourself into much trouble.

It is much better to think pure thoughts, reduce your words, slow your speech, and speak very carefully to the reduce conflicting consequences (*James 3:2*).

A wise man works diligently to form godly words.

A wise man speaks only after deliberation and careful examination of his thoughts (*Psalms 19:14; 141:1-4*).

***Proverbs 12:14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.***

### **Speaking Right And Doing Right Bring Rewards.**

The world may no longer exalt virtue, but this true Proverb gives wonderful advice.

**If** you use your mouth for kind, spiritual, and wise words, God and men will reward you with satisfying honors. And both God and men will also surely compensate you for works of charity, godliness, and truth.

The only speech that brings good and satisfying rewards is pure and wise speech, which the Proverb implies.

**If** you use your mouth for folly, lies, or boasting, it will bring trouble (*Proverbs 10:6, 14, 31; 12:18; 13:3; 18:6-7, 21; 20:17*).

The same is true of actions: things done with your hands. Only noble deeds bring good rewards (*Proverbs 6:17; 10:4; 26:6; Isaiah 3:10-11*).

This wicked generation says, "Only the good die young." But their idea of good is what God calls wicked. It is dangerous times, when it becomes popular to despise those who are truly good, especially by today's carnal Christians (*2Timothy 3:3*).

### **Good Is Out Cool Is In Good Is Evil Sin Is Hip!**

This is all a lie from hell, for it is the wicked that die young (*Proverbs 10:27; Ecclesiastes 7:17*).

**If** you want to have a happy and long life, it is by speaking and doing good (*Psalms 34:12-16; 1Peter 3:10-13*).

Instead of despising good men, you should love them (*Psalms 119:63; Titus 1:8*).

Good speech blesses others (*Proverbs 24:26*).

The reward in this Proverb is to the speaker (*Proverbs 13:2; 15:23; 18:20*).

Kings will befriend a man with gracious speech (*Proverbs 22:11*).

How could Pharaoh resist promoting Joseph (*Genesis 41:39-45*)?

How could Jonathan resist loving David (*1Samuel 18:1-4*)?

How could Nebuchadnezzar resist promoting Daniel (*Daniel 2:46-49*)?

So, what will the King of kings do for those who speak to others about Him (*Malachi 3:16-18*)?

Gracious speech brings reward (*Colossians 4:6*). As well as a wise and kind virtuous woman (*Proverbs 31:26*).

Gracious speech is helpful for those in trouble (*Proverbs 31:8-9*).

Gracious speech is honest (*Proverbs 12:22*).

Gracious speech is always thankful (*1Thessalonians 5:18*).

Gracious speech does not include corrupt words (*Ephesians 4:29*).

Gracious speech does not speak evil of dignities (*Jude 1:8*).

Gracious speech is not foolish talking or jesting (*Ephesians 5:3-5*), or backbiting (*Proverbs 25:23*).

Gracious speech blesses enemies (*Matthew 5:44*), warns friends (*Leviticus 19:17*), comforts the feeble-minded (*1Thessalonians 5:14*), and honors parents (*Deuteronomy 27:16*).

Good speech comes from a good heart (*Proverbs 22:11; Matthew 12:33-37*).

A good heart also does good things. Your body is the Lord's; He created it, and He bought it; your body is twice His (*1Corinthians 6:13-20*)!

### **No One Serves God "For Nought" (Job 1:9-10)!**

Diligence will bring you before kings (*Proverbs 22:29*).

Visiting widows in their affliction is a sign of pure religion (*James 1:27*).

Following Christ brings reward now and later (*Mark 10:28-30*). And so does a cup of water (*Matthew 10:42*)!

Good deeds are the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, righteousness, and truth (*Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9*).

Bad deeds are signs of carnal Christians, coveting, boasting, pride, blasphemy, disobedience to parents, unthankful, unholy, perverted love, trucebreakers, false accusers, unruly, fierce, despisers of good people, traitors, heady, haughty, lovers of pleasures more than God and having only a hypocritical form of religion (*2Timothy 3:1-5*).

Your goal is to be like Jesus Christ. He grew in favor with God and men (*Luke 2:52*).

Jesus Christ's speech was gracious beyond belief (*Psalms 45:2; Luke 4:22*).

Jesus Christ went about doing good to all (*Acts 10:38*).

But did He not die young, you say? He laid down His life, forgiving the soldiers, in the ultimate act and Words of goodness for His elect. What was His reward? Promoted to the pinnacle of the universe (*Philippians 2:5-11; Ephesians 1:19-23; Hebrews 12:1-3*)!

***Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.***

Every fool thinks he is right. He cannot think otherwise. He sees everyone else as wrong!

A wise man learns to resent his own thoughts.

A wise man knows they are selfish, biased, and deceitful.

A wise man chooses to listen attentively and submissively to the counsel of others, for he knows they are speaking with less selfishness, bias, and deceit than his heart speaks.

Man is corrupt from the inside out. His heart, the internal place of affections, motives, and choices, is the most corrupt part of all. His heart seats 13 defilements (*Mark 7:20-23*).

The Word of God declares the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, which indicts it horribly! Who can truly know the perverse nature of their heart? Not you! Not me! Only God! (*Jeremiah 17:9*)

By nature, we hate God, wisdom, correction, and those who correct us.

By nature, we love ourselves, presume we are right, and believe we do everything better than others. The only reason we ever fail is someone else's fault or bad circumstances. We have every base covered to continue believing we were and are always right.

To crawl out of this cesspool of human pride and rebellion, you must learn to mistrust, criticize, and resent your own thoughts.

This is one of the toughest challenges of wisdom, for with powerful instincts and lusts we want to protect and follow our thoughts. It is the ultimate exercise in humility to admit an error and accept another opinion.

The single best measure of wisdom is your ability to set aside your own thoughts and receive instruction. This is the most common point made by Solomon throughout the book of Proverbs.

Solomon constantly appeals to his hearers to receive instruction, knowing that their hearts are rebelling against any advice contrary to their own.

Each wise man must come to God and Scripture in total trust and submission. A holy esteem must be formed for every precept; a holy hatred must be cultivated for every contrary thought (*Psalms 119:128*).

The Holy Spirit wrote: ***Proverbs 3:5-7 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.***

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

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

We must silence our screaming hearts! Crave wisdom, and admit it is not in you by nature. Prove all things by the Word of God (*1Thessalonians 5:21; Acts 17:11*).

Use a multitude of counselors for decisions (***Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 24:6***).

Keep your heart diligently (***Proverbs 4:23; Isaiah 8:20***).

Daily choices bring your heart into play continuously. Fools listen; wise men consult God's Word. Fools rebel against instruction and warnings; wise men seek it.

***Proverbs 12:16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.***

Shame on you! What are you angry about? Why are you upset? What is all that bad? Why are you so bent out of shape?

Did you know: there is nothing for you to strive over? That there are benefits by functioning properly as a servant of the Lord? **2Timothy 2:24-26** *And the servant of the Lord <sup>1</sup>must not strive; but be <sup>2</sup>gentle unto all men, <sup>3</sup>apt to teach, <sup>4</sup>patient,*  
**25** *<sup>5</sup>In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*  
**26** *And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

The goodness of God endureth continually (**Psalm 52:1**)!

A quick temper, marks a fool, prudent men avoid the shame of wrath by ruling their spirits. Be quick to hear, be quick to forgive, and be quick to serve; but be slow to speak and develop wrath (**James 1:19**)!

### Where Is Your Prudence?

Wrath is vehement or violent anger; intense exasperation or resentment; deep indignation.

Wise men, following the Word of God, rule their spirits to control angry feelings toward others, unless the cause is great and justifiable (**Proverbs 14:17, 29**).

*"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city"* (**Proverbs 16:32**).

### Anger And Wrath Powerful Passions!

Anger and wrath, make men say and do things they would not otherwise do. Therefore, they must be ruled, and ruled tightly. Moses angrily smote the rock instead of speaking to it, and the Lord kept him from entering Canaan (**Numbers 20:7-13**).

Anger moved Saul to try to kill his own faithful son Jonathan (**1Samuel 20:30-34**).

However, not all anger is wrong, as Jesus only condemned anger without a cause (**Matthew 5:21-22**).

Of course, in the modern perversions of the Bible, promoting an effeminate brand of Christianity, they have omitted these Words in order to condemn all anger. By so doing they have implicated God, our Lord, and all the holy prophets, apostles, and saints as sinners!

Paul further clarifies this important point, as he explains, *"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath"* (**Ephesians 4:26**).

Anger when does occur, you should never let lead to sin!

Anger should not fester and turn into bitterness. The issue of the provocation should be dealt with righteously and brought to a quick end.

Fools are quick to get angry, for no right reason.

Fools prove they are fools by not ruling their spirits. Wise men rule their spirits and control their reactions to any situation.

Fools react without thinking; wise men think before reacting.

Fools are ruled by their anger; wise men rule their anger.

Here is the lesson of the Proverb: A prudent man will think first and avoid the shame of hasty anger causing him to act foolishly (**Ecclesiastes 7:9**).

A prudent man will avoid angry men, lest he get a snare to his soul (**Proverbs 22:24-25**).

So reader, rule your spirit, rather than letting it rule you. *"For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God"* (**James 1:20**).

It is impossible, to be the child of God, you should be, **If** you allow anger to burst from your heart and bring you to shame. There is no glory in anger and strife, regardless of how your flesh or Satan lies to you (**James 3:14-16**).

**Proverbs 12:17** *He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.*

Truth can prove a man righteous. A righteous man impacts matters of controversy in righteousness! Therefore, a man who speaks the truth is valuable in court and friendship.

A witness that misrepresents the truth shows a deceitful spirit, and he impacts controversies by confusing justice and righteousness. He is despised and should be avoided. (**Proverbs 14:5, 25; 19:28; 21:28**).

### Truth And Righteousness Are Inseparable!

There can be no justice without truth, and there can be no truth without justice.

Equitable relationships among men, whether private or public, require honesty and truth.

**If** these are compromised, then righteousness is also compromised.



If less than the truth is presented, then deceit has entered to that degree.

From economic transactions to religious declarations, righteousness depends upon truth.

God, Creator of heaven and earth, is a God of truth (**Deuteronomy 32:4**).

So much is He a God of truth, He cannot lie (**Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2**).

Jesus Christ is called the Faithful and True Witness (**Revelation 3:14; 19:11**).

His written revelation, the Bible, is very sure and true in every Word and all of it declares truth (**Proverbs 30:5; Psalms 19:9; 93:5; 119:138**).

God hates lying. Liars confound and overthrow righteousness in the earth, whether private or public.

Liars misrepresentations, deceive men into believing things that are not true, which perverts decision-making, misleads people into trouble, condemns the innocent, frees the guilty and the wicked, hides the Lord's Gospel, and promotes frauds and scams.

Therefore, all liars shall spend an eternity after this life in the lake of fire (**Revelation 21:8**).

God hates all lying. *"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him ... a lying tongue ... a false witness that speaketh lies"* (**Proverbs 6:16-19**).

Good and honest men reject liars! David said, *"He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight"* (**Psalms 101:7**).

God hates lying. One of the Ten Commandments condemns false witnesses (**Exodus 20:16**).

The LORD warned men to stay far away from any falsehood in trials (**Exodus 23:1-7**).

In the Old Testament, if a man perjured himself in court, he received the punishment that was being deliberated, even if it was capital punishment (**Deuteronomy 19:16-21**)! What a great way to enhance the memory!

God hates lying. And He will expose liars. *Be sure your sin will find you out.*

Achan lied about stealing from Jericho, but he was discovered and stoned and burned with his family (**Joshua 7:1-26**).

Ananias and Sapphira lied about their large gift to the church, and members of the youth group buried them that day (**Acts 5:1-11**). What an object lesson!

God hates lying. The first liar in the universe was Lucifer, who lied to Eve and damned the human race to eternal death. He is the father of all lies, and there is no truth in him (**John 8:44**).

Anyone telling a lie is following his wicked influence and showing that their heart is under his control, even if they are ministers of the gospel (**2Corinthians 11:1-4, 13-15; Ephesians 2:1-3**).

God hates lying. When men prefer lies over truth, the God of truth will send them lies to believe, as their just punishment (**1Kings 22:1-40; Ezekiel 14:6-11; 2Thessalonians 2:9-12**).

When men reject the obvious truth that is revealed in the created universe, he blinds their minds and leaves them to disgusting same sex perversions (**Psalms 19:1-6; Isaiah 44:9-20; Romans 1:18-27**).

### **Let All Men Tremble Before The God Of Truth!**

Let everyone hate lying, exaggerating, slandering, perjuring, misrepresenting, fudging, or any other form of deceit.

Let everyone, prove and show his righteousness, by always exalting honesty and truth, no matter the circumstances or situation. Let him be honest and open at all times.

Let every parent, teach and enforce truth in the home, so that children grow up hating and avoiding lies and liars.

Parents should require sufficient research before opinions are declared. They should punish exaggeration. And on a hierarchical scale of offences, children should know clearly that lying is the worst of them all.

The God of truth sent His Son to save some liars from their sins, which He did by paying the eternal debt of punishment for them, and then creating in them a new heart that loves truth and hates lies (**Ephesians 1:3-12; 2:1-10; 4:24**).

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, is found in the Word of God.

The Gospel is the only source of truth in the world that can save a person from the devil's deceit and destruction that is on every side (**1Timothy 6:3-5, 20-21; 2Timothy 3:13**).

**Proverbs 12:18** *There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*

When you end a conversation, is the other person bleeding or growing?

Do others love talking with you, because they know they will enjoy it and profit by it? Or do they avoid your painful words? Do some leave you bleeding? Do some leave you growing?

Death and life are in the power of the tongue (*Proverbs 18:21*).

We can cut a person with our words, like the piercings of a sword; or we can heal and nurture them with our words.

Which are you best at: speaking slicing sword or a healthy tongue? Which are you known for? Which do you want for your speech?

The tongue is an unruly evil; it is a world of iniquity; it defiles the whole body; it sets on fire the course of nature; it is a fire from hell; and it is full of deadly poison.

Wild animals can be tamed, but the tongue can never be tamed. **If** it could be tamed, we would be perfect. God ignores our self-esteem and damns our tongues (*James 3:1-12*)!

There are two kinds of persons and speech.

1. Some people only know cutting words; and
2. Some are generally or always gracious.

### **Speech Can Be Destructive Speech Can Be Healthful!**

Christians should always speak graciously, with only a pinch of salt (biting criticism) seasoning it (*Colossians 4:6*).

This balance (98% graciousness) is how we speak to please God. Biting criticism and sarcasm outside this balance is wrong (*Ephesians 4:31-32*).

Our speech should be a tree of life to others, and it should be appreciated, for its sweetness and health and beauty (*Proverbs 15:4; Proverbs 16:24; Proverbs 25:11*).

**If** you have few friends and family members who seek you out for conversation, then you need to examine your speech.

Backbiting, slandering, whispering, and tale-bearing, which create deep piercing wounds, should never be part of your speech, as they prove an unfaithful spirit (*Proverbs 18:8; 26:22*).

Jesus said evil speech is murder (*Matthew 5:21-22*).

Foolish and unlearned questions, debate, railing, are all sins (*2Timothy 2:23; Romans 1:29; 1Peter 3:9; Titus 2:9*).

Good speech is at the right time, with graciousness and acceptable words (*Proverbs 15:23; Proverbs 22:11; Proverbs 10:32*).

So, be slow to speak and search out good words (*James 1:29; Proverbs 15:28*).

Our Lord Jesus easily, could verbally destroy, the Pharisees and other fools of His day (*Matthew 22:46*).

Our Lord Jesus generally, chose gracious speech that amazed hearers (*Psalms 45:2; Luke 4:22; Titus 2:8*).

***Proverbs 12:19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.***

### **Lying Will Save For A Short Time Then Judgment Comes!**

One lie will require more lies to cover it, and then you will be discovered as a liar and fraud.

The man who always tells the truth will live securely and prosper by God and men.

We have two metonyms here, lip and tongue, which stand for the words they produce. Both serve the same purpose.

Lip and tongue are used to represent the speaking ability of a man and the words he utters.

The lip of truth describes a man who always uses his lips to speak the truth.

A lying tongue describes a man who often uses his tongue to form lies.

The LORD is God of truth (*Deuteronomy 32:4*).

The LORD hates lies (*Proverbs 6:16-19*).

All liars shall have their part in the lake of fire (*Revelation 21:8, 27*).

The Lord Jesus is the Faithful and True Witness, because He loved truth and always spoke the truth (*Revelation 3:14; 19:11*).

A great man worthy of honor and promotion is a man of truth (*Exodus 18:21; Jeremiah 5:1; Zechariah 8:16*).

The devil is the father of lies; he told the first lie we know of in Eden. And things have not changed since. (*Genesis 3:4-5*).

The devil's whole existence is based on a lie, and his rebellion against the LORD.

The devil is a deceiver, and so are all his ministers. They transform themselves to appear as something very different than reality in order to seduce men and cause them to sin (*2Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15*).

An honest man always tells the truth. He does not exaggerate or embellish facts.

An honest man is careful that his claims can be proven. **If** he cannot prove a matter, then he does not speak it but offers only an opinion.

Because an honest man's word can be trusted, men put more and more confidence in him. He is established with an honorable reputation for integrity.

So reader, it is your solemn duty to tell the truth regardless of cost to yourself or others.

Rather than looking at faces and considering their thoughts to determine **If** you should tell the truth, look at the face of a Holy God and consider His thoughts about telling a lie!

A liar is always using words to cover his sins and pretend to have knowledge greater than he actually has.

Once he has told one lie, he usually must tell another one to cover the first, and so his hypocrisy gets worse and worse. When he is finally discovered as a cheat and liar, he is avoided by men, punished by the magistrate, and judged by the Lord.

So reader, it is your solemn duty to hate lies, regardless of the advantage or benefit, the devil tells you might come by lying.

Reader, don't be gullible like Eve! The consequences of that lie were horrible! **If** you lie, you will be discovered and punished for it!

***Proverbs 12:20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.***

What a classic Proverb! **If** you love unlocking dark sayings, here is your chance (*Proverbs 1:6*)!

The key to understanding this lesson, is in the contrast, between the two clauses.

Those who imagine evil against others are liars and will be punished for it.

Righteous men pursue peace and advise, with their words and God will bless them with joy.

While context, is often of little value in Proverbs, because many of the verses stand alone, there is some direction for this Proverb.

The Holy Spirit exalted truth and condemned lying in the context (*Proverbs 12:17-19, 21-22*).

Therefore, the "deceit" in our text is not self-deception of those that imagine evil, but the deceit that evil men plan and use against others.

Men with evil ambitions or envy against their neighbors will use lies to take advantage of them.

### **Contrast In Many Proverbs Is Helpful Finding The Ellipses.**

Those that imagine evil against others are contrasted to those that counsel peace.

Some men have evil ambitions against their neighbors, but other men only desire their health and peace.

The one uses deceit to corrupt, steal, or hurt, the other uses truth to heal and strengthen.

The reward to the former is sorrow and trouble, but the blessing to the righteous is joy.

Is there a lesson? The origin of our lying, is in the human heart, where it begins with evil thoughts about other people.

**If** you have hateful envy or resentment toward others, it will corrupt your dealings with them. Instead of dealing honestly and truthfully with their best interests in mind, you will lie to them or about them to pursue your wicked agenda.

The cure for lying is to "*keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*" (*Proverbs 4:23*).

Jesus warned very clearly that all sins begin in the heart (*Matthew 12:34-37; 15:18-20; James 1:13-16*).

**If** you harbor envy or strife in your heart, it makes you completely vulnerable to confusion and every evil work of the devil (*James 3:14-16*).

Is there another lesson? God loves and blesses peacemakers (*Matthew 5:9*)!

**If** your words and advice to others are truth and peace, God will bless you with joy (*Proverbs 15:23; 1Peter 3:10-13*).

The opposite, deception, a hellish confusion and the evil of strife and envy, is at odds with the peace and righteousness of heavenly wisdom. The difference is enormous! So, counsel peace today! (*James 3:17-18*)

Differences between men are common. How will you deal with them? Will you forgive those who trespass against you (*Proverbs 19:11; Matthew 18:21-22*)?

If you have offended others, will you go quickly to be reconciled? If you know of trouble between others, will you counsel them to peace and unity (*Matthew 5:23-26; Romans 14:17-19*)?

### **Counsel Peace Today!**

***Proverbs 12:21 There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.***

### **Some People Have Constant Pain And Trouble!**

Here is a general rule from Solomon's observations of human existence: the wicked are often troubled by the natural and supernatural consequences of their folly and sins; the righteous have peaceful and protected lives.

### **The Reward Of The Just Is Shelter From Troubles.**

A general rule allows for exceptions, but exceptions do not alter the fact, of the general rule.

For example, Job was a just and righteous man, but he suffered enormously for a short while under God's testing of his faith and patience (*Job 1:1*). But Job cannot excuse the constant trouble for sin in many lives, for truth must say, "There is only one Job!"

Sin does not pay. If you choose sin, natural forces will punish you. Civil rulers prosecute criminals; employers fire bad workers; children despise derelict dads; parents punish foolish children; friends desert evil men; wives divorce adulterous men; banks deny poor credit; sexual flings bring disease; drunkenness causes hangovers; felonies hinder employment; financial folly brings poverty; and so forth.

But there is another force at work: God will not be mocked. If God allowed sinners to get away with sin, it would be a blot on His Holy Character. So reader, be sure your sin will find you out (*Numbers 32:23*).

When men defy God's laws taught in the Bible, He will punish them (*Psalms 11:6; 18:26; 83:1-18; 145:20; 146:9; Haggai 1:3-12*).

In fact, God may send His angels to chase and persecute them (*Psalms 35:5-6; Isaiah 37:36; Acts 12:23*).

The LORD controls all evil events and circumstances from single individuals to nations (*Job 2:10; 34:29; Ecclesiastes 7:13-14; Isaiah 45:7; Jeremiah 18:7-10; Lamentations 3:37-38; Amos 3:6*).

Just ask Nebuchadnezzar! The greatest king in history would not end his sins to preserve his tranquility, so God brought on him a horrible judgment, that he might learn pride and sin do not pay (*Daniel 4:27-37*)!

The way of transgressors is hard (*Proverbs 13:15*)! They know not at what they stumble (*Proverbs 4:19*)! Their path is like a hedge of thorns (*Proverbs 15:19*)! Thorns and snares are in their way (*Proverbs 22:5*)!

But a man keeping his soul by holy living avoids all these problems (*Proverbs 16:17; 19:16; 22:5*).

What is wickedness? It is any choice or lifestyle that is short of God's pure righteousness.

There is a reward for the righteous. The wicked seem to get away with sin, but the wicked will be crushed one day; and the righteous will rejoice in victory (*Psalms 37:34-40; 50:16-22; 58:1-11*).

### **Choose This Day To Serve The Lord With Your Whole Heart!**

***Proverbs 12:22 Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.***

God hates lying (*Proverbs 6:16-19*). Don't ever think otherwise.

All unrepentant liars shall have their part in the Lake of Fire (*Revelation 21:8*).

God loves men of truth, and He delights in them. God will judge all liars, but He will bless men who deal truly.

The LORD, the only living and true God, is a God of truth. Moses wrote of Him, "*He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he*" (*Deuteronomy 32:4*).

While nothing is too hard for the LORD, He cannot lie; it is impossible for Him to lie (*Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18*).

Lying originated with Satan, the devil himself. God made him a rational creature, a very high-ranking angel. Lucifer, used his volition, (will), to rebel in pride against God.

For this profane sin, he was thrown out of his office in heaven; and he came and lied to our first parents, deceiving Eve into eating the forbidden fruit. His sentence has been given and the Lake of fire will be his eternal abode along with those angels and humankind that followed him!

Satan is a liar and the father of it; when you tell a lie, you are submitting to him as your father (*John 8:44*).

### **An Abomination Is Something Disgusting And Hateful!**

When you abominate something, you abhor, detest, and loathe it. God abominates lying, He finds it abhorrent, detestable, and loathsome.

God considers lying very disgusting, and He hates it with holy hatred. God loves truth, honesty, integrity, sincerity, and the men who love these things. Ananias and his wife Sapphira were members in the church at Jerusalem. They sold some property and gave a large offering to the apostles. But they lied by saying they gave it all but really kept back some for themselves.

What did God do about this fudging of the facts? He killed them both on the spot, in the church (*Acts 5:1-11*). Do not even think about compromising truth!

God expects more than just telling the truth; He demands our dealings to be in truth. This is honesty in word and action. All conduct should be governed by integrity and sincerity.

A family can only be blessed, when lying and liars are rejected (*Psalms 101:1-8*).

A church can only be blessed when hypocrites and liars are exposed (*Psalms 144:11-15*).

When God delights in either a truthful family or church, He will bless them graciously.

Children must learn, to hate lying; they must be punished for lying.

All conversations must be checked and confirmed for truth without exaggeration. Let no man speak who has not verified his facts with absolute certainty and limits his words accordingly.

***Proverbs 12:23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.***

A wise man can keep his mouth shut, even when he knows more on a subject than anyone in the group.

A fool cannot keep his mouth shut, even when he basically knows nothing, for his heart demands that he keep belching foolishness.

The Holy Spirit will never end His rebuke of the tongue, nor His repetitive warnings against this profane bodily member?

The tongue, the bodily member we speak of, is a great source of evil and trouble. There are many verses in Proverbs and elsewhere to correct and instruct us regarding our speech.

There are several reasons: it is easy to form words, we can hurt others easily, we can destroy ourselves easily, and we discredit the Lord Jesus Christ by ungodly speech.

A Prudent Man Is Wise. He knows when, what, and how to do it! He has knowledge, but he keeps it from rushing out of his mouth.

**If** a prudent man knows a subject, humility keeps him from talking about it (*Proverbs 29:11*).

**If** a prudent man knows a person's failure, charity keeps him from spreading it (*Proverbs 11:13*).

**If** a prudent man sees a mote in an eye, he waits until he has removed the beam from his own (*Matthew 7:5*).

**If** a prudent man meets scorners, he does not waste his pearls (*Matthew 7:6*).

A prudent man is generally a reserved man (*Proverbs 17:27-28*).

A prudent man will speak when spoken to, but he will not be offering his opinion without others asking for it. He knows there is certain sin in a multitude of words, so he cuts his words (*Proverbs 10:19*).

A prudent man knows that it is better to listen, for many reasons, than to speak (*James 1:19-20*).

This prudent man is easy to spot in a crowd, for he will be listening more than talking.

A fool has a fire in his heart that sets his tongue ablaze! And this fire comes straight from hell (*James 3:1-12*)!

James spares nothing in his horrible indictment of a fool's tongue! It is a world of iniquity.

The fool loves to use it. He is also easy to spot in a crowd, for he cannot stop talking, and his words are a chattering of folly (*Ecclesiastes 10:3*).

The fool is always giving his opinion, though the hearers quickly realize he does not know what he is talking about (*Proverbs 15:28*).

The fool must talk, so he continues on to the confirmation of his great ignorance.

The fool will proclaim the failures of others. He has no power to restrain his words. He must tattle and whisper.

The fool is happy to tell anyone about the moles in their eyes and the eyes of others, even while the beams seriously clutter his own eyes!

Our Lord was very prudent (*Isaiah 52:13*).

Our Lord was not a self-promoter at all (*Matthew 8:4; 16:20; 11:29; 12:18-21*).

Our Lord knew when to speak, and when not to speak, though knowing all things (*Isaiah 50:4; John 2:24-25*).

**Follow Our Lord's Blessed Example, Today!**

***Proverbs 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.***

**Diligence Is The General Rule For Success  
It Does Not Require Ability Or Education!**

Of course, talent and training can leverage your diligence farther and higher, but they cannot replace it.

There is also a way to be oppressed in life, being used by others, and it can occur in spite of ability or education, it is slothfulness.

**Slothfulness Is A Choice.**

Help yourself up the business ladder by hard work! Or, be lazy, and carry the ladder for others to climb!

Diligence, is intense persistent effort, to accomplish something by hard labor!

The diligent man will bear rule, or be promoted over others, who do not work as hard.

"Hand" is synecdoche for the whole person, just as captains call to sailors, "All hands on deck." The use of "hand" has value, because it is man's chief tool of labor (*Proverbs 10:4*).

Even today, employers want men who roll up their sleeves and get jobs done! **If** a young man builds a reputation for great diligence, he will rise to the top as surely as cream!

The slothful man is a lazy man. He dislikes exertion, avoids hard work, paces himself in tasks, is slow and sluggish, resents pressure, is intimidated by challenges, cannot sustain strong efforts, is easily distracted, and has little drive.

The lazy man, has the same name, as a very slow and sleepy mammal of Central and South America: the Sloth!

Tribute is the tax that kings required of nations they defeated. It was a payment of submission to the winner of a war. (*Joshua 17:13; 1Kings 9:21*)

**Lazy Men Will Soon Be Working For Those  
Who Outwork Them.**

Through the Holy Spirit, Solomon wrote Proverbs for young men, especially his son, though all of human society can profit as well (*Proverbs 1:4, 8*).

Men are born with a default mechanism to laziness, because they are sinners by Adam and do not want to fulfill their end of the deal made in Eden (*Genesis 2:15; 3:17-19*).

Men deceive themselves, that taking it easy, results in an easier life, because they do not see, the pain, poverty, suffering, and trouble that laziness causes.

In seeking to help young men become successful, Solomon stressed the value of diligence.

Consider athletes (*1Corinthians 9:24-27*).

Athletes use this wisdom every day, by saying, "If I put in one more lap, or one more set of exercises, than anyone else, I will eventually win."

Athletes know hard work brings results, so they work harder than their competitors; and they are soon defeating them in contests! They cannot change their God-given abilities, but they can outwork the competition!

**Overachievers Can Defeat The Talented!**

You may not be gifted, but it does not take genius to be the hardest worker in your firm or any field of endeavor!

It may be too late to get better training, but you can still outwork the men relying on their degrees for the next promotion. You can pass these prima donnas by being more faithful than they are generally willing to be.

Are you gifted? Are you well trained? Then you can leverage either or both of these to great success by diligence!

Solomon analyzed more HR reports than you could haul in a truck. He said that diligence works. Go for it!

**What Is Diligence?  
The Basics Done Well Every Day!**

Be early to work. Never miss a day. Be first to volunteer for extra duties. Ask for more to do when things are slow. Shun breaks. Apply focused and intense output for the whole day.

Do not waste or steal time for personal matters. Stay until the job is done. Be more eager to punch in than punch out.

Outwork anyone else. Enjoy self-imposed stress. Work extra hard on difficult jobs. Cheerfully agree to every assignment. Set records for quantity and quality. Avoid meetings when possible.

Work as **If** the Lord were watching, because He is!

What is slothfulness? Arrive on time or late. Use all your personal or sick days. Get a cup of coffee to get going, after punching in!

Call or email on company time. Pace yourself to help a project fill up the day. Chat with others about social matters. Take full breaks. Leave on time or early.

Never volunteer for extra duties. Leave projects unfinished. Think about punching out. Balance your checkbook at work.

Deliberate at your desk more than you need to. Daydream. Fuss about details that sacrifice quantity of work. Think about your vacation. Work like those around you. Walk slowly. Relax. Doze.

Diligence is key to a successful life, no matter what aspect of life you are considering.

Diligence to your marriage, to your house, to your children to your soul, diligence is a main ingredient for success (*Proverbs 4:23; 5:19; 14:1; 29:15, 17*).

Look at Solomon's many references to it (*Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:4, 26; 12:11, 24, 27; 13:4; 14:4; 15:19; 18:9; 19:15, 24; 20:4,13; 21:5, 25; 22:13, 29; 23:21; 24:30-34; 26:13-16; 27:23-27; 28:19; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 9:10*)!

Young man, do you hear the Preacher? Labor now for rule and rest in the future!

Pharaoh sought men of activity for his cattle (*Genesis 47:6*);

Solomon applied this Proverb when he promoted Jeroboam for his industrious activity (*1Kings 11:28*);

Paul labored more abundantly than any other apostle (*1Corinthians 15:10; 2Corinthians 11:23*);

Jesus told the parable of the talents to encourage diligence in one's duties (*Matthew 25:14-30*).

God judged Sodom most severely in part for the idle women that lived there (*Ezekiel 16:49*).

**Your Future Is Now: Diligence Works!**

The rule of diligence in employment is part of the Christian religion, being taught directly and indirectly in the New Testament (*Romans 12:11; Ephesians 4:28; 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25; 1Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2Thessalonians 3:6-14; 1Timothy 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10*).

Faithful diligence in spiritual matters will bring the praise and promotion of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Matthew 24:45-51; 25:20-23*).

Diligent ministers are worthy of double honor (*1Timothy 5:17-18*).

A vain professor of religion, the carnal Christian, who pursues pleasure, shall soon be discovered (*Matthew 25:24-30*).

**If** any man has ears to hear, let him hear, the commendation of the unjust steward, for wisely planning for the future (*Luke 16:1-12*).

It is only by careful diligence that you can lay hold of the kingdom of God (*2Peter 1:5-11*).

***Proverbs 12:25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.***

Your mouth can do more than eat food. It can also cheer heavy hearts. But you must learn kind, encouraging, and faithful words to do so.

Do you know how to spot a heavy heart, a stooped heart?

Do you know what good and gladdening words a sad heart needs?

Do you use good words to comfort and encourage many?

Most men are too selfish and preoccupied with their own lives to notice others or their problems.

Most men do not have the affection or concern for others to say or write something kind and helpful. They are wrapped up in their own thoughts, and it does not cross their minds to serve others. The rest are simply too fearful and unlearned in the art of making good words.

This text does not justify heavy hearts in God's children: the saints should be the most contented and joyful people on earth (*Psalms 4:7; 63:5; 92:4; 1Peter 1:8*).

Though great men are cast down at times, they do not allow such feelings to overwhelm them (*Psalms 42:1-11; 2Corinthians 4:8-10*).

**An Un-Ruled Melancholy Spirit Is A Curse  
A Tool Of The Devil  
The Means Of Self-Destruction!**

**If** we consider those who are rightly heavy hearted, we should have the object of pity deserving our attention and affection.

A heavy heart carries weighty burdens that make it bend the heavy load; it is a soul pressed down by the cares, circumstances, and troubles of life.

It is cruel to dance joyfully around those cast down. It is like taking away a coat in cold weather. This cheap affection does more harm than good (*Proverbs 25:20*).

"Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine," are good words and work sometimes; but men with real burdens and an oppressed spirit need to hear more (*Proverbs 14:10; 15:13; 17:22; 18:14*).

It is better, according to Paul's wisdom, that we weep with them that weep (*Romans 12:15; 1Corinthians 12:26*).

Telling a person, with this burden that they look poorly, is a gift of the cruel. The real problem could have been an angry and bitter spouse that had temporarily broken the heart of their tender soul.

The Word of God describes Job's self-righteous friends, who did not have a single good Word, to gladden his heavily weighed down heart.

Instead of good words to comfort and strengthen him, they joined together in accusing him of great hypocrisy and secret sins. No wonder he called them miserable comforters.

No wonder God would not forgive them, unless Job himself would pray for them chapter 42. But others often follow their lead and blame evil circumstances on God's judgment, when it may be an affectionate trial.

When was the last time you complimented someone directly and sincerely? How often do you do it in a day? A good and kind thought about another not expressed, is worthless!

**If You Have A Good Thought  
About Someone Tell Them!**

How much better would the world be **If** we complimented those deserving it.

How much would the righteous be encouraged, in righteousness, **If** your word lifted the heart of the weary when they needed it (*Isaiah 50:4*).

We are to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (*Galatians 6:2*).

This is a good work, that falls upon every true saint. It includes comforting the feebleminded <sup>fainthearted</sup>, which may be the result of a heavy heart (*Psalms 38:1-22; 1Thessalonians 5:14*).

**If** you are strong in the Lord, it is your duty to look for those who are weak and help them (*Romans 15:1-3*).

Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and godly saints use it for health and life (*Proverbs 12:18; 15:23; 16:24; 18:21; 27:9*).

Only a pinch of salt (criticism and rebuke) should flavor a wise man's gracious words (*Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6*).

The goal is always to edify, or build up, one another, as Jonathan built up David, when he was hiding in the woods (*1Samuel 23:16*).

Angels comforted and strengthened our Lord Jesus several times, especially when His spirit was greatly troubled in Gethsemane (*Mark 14:33-34*).

The Lord sends His Spirit to comfort us, when we humble ourselves before Him and cry for help. Let us follow His good Word to make sad hearts glad!

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

All men are not equal, not even close. A righteous man is superior to his wicked neighbor in his condition, character, conduct, and expectation.

And this righteous man's superiority really does his neighbor and other wicked men no good.

The wicked are seduced by the world to continue in their wickedness. They cannot and will not choose the more excellent way of righteousness.

David and Saul, the first two kings of Israel, illustrate this Proverb perfectly. And Solomon would have known the comparison from childhood. So the Holy Spirit reduced the royal history preceding him to this pithy and precious statement of wisdom.

David was a righteous man after God's own heart (*1Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22*).

David conducted himself so perfectly his name was much revered in Israel (*1Samuel 18:30*).

Every king had to be compared to him (*1Kings 15:1-5*), and even our Lord is known as David and the Son of David (*Jeremiah 30:9; Matthew 22:42*).



The sweet psalmist of Israel was more excellent than his neighbor. He was a noble man, as all still admit to this day.

Saul was his neighbor. Saul was a profane man. He would not wait for Samuel, but offered a sacrifice himself (*1Samuel 13:10-14*).

Saul tried to kill his own son for eating a little honey, but the people stopped him (*1Samuel 14:43-45*).

God compared his rebellion and stubbornness to witchcraft and idolatry in the matter of the Amalekites (*1Samuel 15:22-23*).

Saul rather than waiting on the Lord, consulted the witch of Endor (*1Samuel 28:1-7*).

Understand the Proverb. God compared these two men. Samuel said, *"The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou"* (*1Samuel 15:28*).

Samuel also said, *"And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David"* (*1Samuel 28:17*).

Saul knew the superior excellence of David. He heard him play the harp skillfully; he watched him kill Goliath; he heard his modest response; he watched his son Jonathan prefer David; he saw the people accept David; and he knew that God was with David.

Saul said to David, *"Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil"* (*1Samuel 24:17*).

Saul also said to David, *"Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail"* (*1Samuel 26:25*).

But this knowledge about David's superiority did Saul no good, for the envy of his wicked heart found greater comfort and satisfaction in the way of the wicked.

Saul was seduced away from David's righteousness to his own folly!

Rather than begging God for forgiveness and befriending David, he sought repeatedly to kill him in jealous rages.

Saul degenerated in wickedness, until he was lying on the ground before the witch of Endor! Two days later his head was cut off and his body nailed to the wall of a Philistine village!

*"The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour."* Righteousness is our goal. We want to live like the sons of God (*Matthew 5:43-48; Ephesians 5:8; 1Thessalonians 5:5-11; 1Peter 2:9-11*).

If the world hates us, we should rejoice and be very glad, for they hated our Savior and all His saints. Though this wicked world was not worthy of even their presence (*Hebrews 11:38*).

*"But the way of the wicked seduceth them."* Worldly men may heap up riches and live extravagantly; they may give themselves over greedily to all sort of carnal pleasures.

The worldly may live ever so fine, with the groupies of this world singing their praise; but they are rushing through the wide gate and down the broad way to destruction.

The righteous and the wicked have "equality" in their nature from Adam, but they are totally different by other measures.

The condition of the righteous is more excellent: he is a child of God, he is a king and priest, he is the temple of the Holy Ghost, he is righteous by justification in Christ, he is a friend of God, and has heaven's angels for servants!

The character of the righteous is more excellent: for they have the Spirit of God within them, they are being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. For they are bearing the fruit against which there is no law (*Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24; 2Peter 1:3*).

The conduct of the righteous is more excellent: for they have intimate knowledge of coming judgment. For they have Christ's infinite love to motivate them (*2Corinthians 5:9-15*).

For the righteous have the glorious example of the Lord Jesus Christ to follow (*1Peter 2:18-25*).

For the righteous have the perfect rules of heaven's wisdom in the Scriptures that the world despises (*Isaiah 8:20*).

The expectation of the righteous is more excellent, because they shall be admitted to heaven's glory with great joy, while Jesus Christ shall repudiate the wicked and cast them into the lake of fire.

Which neighbor is more excellent, Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, or the rich man in hell?

Which inheritance is more excellent, heaven's mansions or hell's fires?

Wicked men cannot see the superiority of the righteous, for they are seduced by sin and Satan to follow the world to hell.

Balaam prophesied of Israel's excellence, but his love of money seduced him (*Numbers 23:10; 2Peter 2:15*).

Herod gladly heard John the Baptist, but his wicked wife seduced him to behead John (*Mark 6:17-29*).

Stephen's face glowed like an angel; they could not resist his wisdom; and he preached a great sermon; but the rabid Jews were seduced by their hatred of Jesus Christ to stone him (*Acts 6:8 - 7:60*).

**The Way Of The Righteous  
The Way Of The Wicked  
Are Totally Incompatible With Each Other!**

The righteous hate the wicked, and the wicked hate the righteous (*Proverbs 29:27*).

It has always been that way, and it will always be this way.

Righteous men seek out other good men to love (*Psalms 16:3; 119:63; Titus 1:8*).

Righteous men do all they can to avoid the wicked (*Psalms 101:1-8; Thessalonians 3:1-2*).

The wicked are happy in their large crowd rushing down the slippery slope into hell, and the righteous rejoice with a few saints seeking holiness.

Christian reader, what can we learn? What the world thinks of the righteous is irrelevant! The world may offer temporary pleasure, but it is only seduction to destruction!

Wise men reject this world and all its pleasures, philosophies, parties, and privileges! Our lives should be more excellent to raise questions from other righteous souls (*1 Peter 3:15*).

Let us choose to grow in favor with God and good men, by rejecting the ways of this wicked world (*Luke 2:52; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17*).

God forbid that any reader of this Proverb should be seduced by the insanity of our world!

The Lord Jesus Christ was more excellent than all men, yet this world despised and hated Him. They lied about Him, falsely accused Him, exchanged a murderer for Him, mocked Him, tortured Him, and nailed Him naked on a cruel cross in a public place.

The Jews' love of hypocrisy and ceremonial religion which seduced them to get rid of the most excellent neighbor the earth has ever seen!

They would do it over again today, if they had the chance. And they will do the same to His followers, who are also more excellent than they.

***Proverbs 12:27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.***

**Finishing A Job  
Is Diligence And Virtue.**

Slothful men start projects, but do not complete them.

They enjoy hunting, even if early and difficult; but they lose their energy and focus when they get home and face dressing and processing a kill.

A diligent man, on the other hand, salvages all the meat and does not rest until it is wrapped neatly in the freezer.

Hunters take pains to prepare for deer season. They site-in rifles, scout land, secure a tree stand, carefully select clothing and equipment, rise while it is still cold and dark, carry their stand deep into the woods, fix it in a tree, and wait for the deer.

Having shot one, they rejoice with friends, field dress it, and drag it to their truck, where they proudly drive through town to the praise of their friends.

The slothful man is "working" well so far. But when he gets home, his energy disappears! The carcass fills him with dread, there is so much work to do! So he gives it to his neighbor with great generosity.

Or he throws it in the dumpster, leaves it to his dogs, or lets it rot in the garage! Then he orders pizza to relax after his hard day with a well-deserved meal and nap! He doesn't even clean his guns! What a waste! He squanders the Lord's blessing on the little effort he did make.

The diligent man is different. He enjoys the hunt, but he knows it is for a purpose. He dresses, butchers, and processes every bit of meat for future use; he neatly labels and packages it for convenient use by his wife.

He carefully cleans his gun to preserve its value. He is thankful for the gift of the deer, and he labors to take full advantage of the Lord's blessing. He takes of the day's venison and shares it with his family for supper.

What a difference these two men! The slothful man cannot finish a project to realize the profit of labor, but the diligent man sees the precious value in finishing every job and properly caring for every asset and all income.

**Sloth Is Foolish Wasteful And Destructive!**

**Diligence Is Wise Resourceful And Productive!**

The diligent man shall rule (*Proverbs 10:4; 12:24*)!

The Holy Spirit said, "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster" (**Proverbs 18:9**).

But the man in our Proverb is both! His slothfulness caused him to waste God's good favor. He did not even have the noble work ethic of Esau (**Genesis 27:30-31**).

Every man, every woman, every child, every day, faces this issue on the job, at home, at school, with numerous aspects of life.

Necessary projects are started by the slothful, but they are seldom completed. Interruptions, difficulty, and procrastination keep them from being finished.

So reader, have you started any projects that you should finish today to be productive and to add value and the blessings of God in your life?

Or will you squander God's goodness by leaving a task unfinished, the cost of labor partly paid, but the full profit still waiting for the diligent man? There is joy in a job well done, when it is finished!

Test this wisdom! **If** you continue with partial efforts, the Lord will withdraw the blessing of giving a deer!

Parent, it is your duty to teach your children the self-discipline of finishing every project they start. This requires training, follow up, and possible punishment; but it will yield successful and noble children in the future.

Children will never be successful in any aspect of life, **If** you allow them to begin projects without finishing them.

Teach them this wisdom of Solomon, and wait for the training to bear precious fruit. Be sure parent, to finish this training project, as well as all others!

Here also is a picture of slothful, so called Christians. They hear the Word preached to others, but do not prepare to apply it. Therefore, it falls by the wayside; and the devil snatches it away.

Some receive it joyfully; but they allow it to go to waste. Having little root in themselves.

Some dread of even minor persecution that causes them to wither away (**Matthew 13:19-21**).

Some, those who continue and bear fruit, they are true disciples indeed (**John 8:31; 15:8; 1Peter 1:9**).

How many times have you been graciously given, or diligently took, conviction from a sermon, but later let it slip away? Lord, save us from such waste!

Grace in your soul that stirs conviction is precious indeed. Do not squander it! Run with it! Do not stop

pressing for the prize of God's high calling until you get to the end of the road!

God forbid we should make a profession of Christ, and then lose our full reward. Men, sin and Satan will seek to beguile us out of it, so we must earnestly contend for it (**Colossians 2:18; Jude 1:3; 3John 1:8**).

There is a war for our souls, which we must fight to the finish, lest we become castaways through spiritual slothfulness (**1Peter 2:11; 5:8; 1Corinthians 9:27; 2Timothy 4:7**).

For this purpose we assemble with others to provoked one another to finish our course (**Hebrews 10:23-25**).

Our Lord shall not lose one soul given to His charge (**John 6:39; 17:3; Hebrews 2:13**).

Christian reader, are you glad the Savior knew no sloth in His life and work? Are you glad He did not leave even one child unsaved?

**If** He had, it might have been you! He went to work; He finished His work (**John 4:34; 19:30**)! Hallelujah!

***Proverbs 12:28 In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.***

Is immortality possible? Is enjoying life while never dying possible? Ponce de Leon sought a fountain of youth.

Men try exercise, diet, vitamin supplements, and alternative medicine to enhance life and extend life, but they die as painfully, quickly, and surely as others.

Are immortality and eternal life possible? This Proverb teaches they are possible. Life without death is found in the way and pathway of righteousness (**Proverbs 10:2; 11:4, 19**)!

Man's greatest fear is death, and this fear enslaves him to religious lies and all sorts of deceptions and scams (**Hebrews 2:15**).

**If** evolution were true, it would have evolved death away long ago as the greatest weakness of each species. But evolution is a lie, it has not even altered life expectancy in the 4000 years of recorded history.

Men can only wish to be saved from death. They have no means to slow it down or stop it (**Ecclesiastes 8:8**).

### **What Is The Way Of Righteousness?**

It is the life of wisdom, fearing God and keeping His commandments (**Proverbs 8:12-21, 32-36; 13:14; 14:27; 16:17; Matthew 21:28-32**).

It is the highway of holiness and road of righteousness, it is the King's highway, the strait and narrow way of Jesus Christ that leads to life, which only a few ever find (*Matthew 7:12-14; 22:14*).

What is death? It is a physical body dying, and much more. It can also be death to fellowship and joy with God (*Luke 15:24; 1Timothy 5:6*).

Death includes the dead state of your soul by your first birth (*Genesis 2:17; Ephesians 2:1-3*).

Death is dying before your time by the judgment of God or men (*Psalms 55:23; Ecclesiastes 7:17*).

Death is ultimately the second death in the lake of fire for those rejecting Jesus Christ (*Revelation 20:14; 21:8*).

Fools face early death by men or God. **If** they commit capital crimes, the magistrate kills them. **If** the death penalty is neglected, the Lord kills them. They die from STD's, jealous spouses, other fools, violent accidents, drug overdoses, and suicide!

Parental discipline could save them from these untimely deaths (*Proverbs 23:13-14*).

And righteousness as simple as honoring their parents could add to their life expectancy (*Proverbs 20:20; 30:17; Ephesians 6:2-3*).

Foolish rebels reject righteousness and reap the grim consequences (*Proverbs 8:36*).

Do you remember Eli's sons, Jim Morrison, Amnon, Princess Diana, Ananias and Sapphira, Jimi Hendrix, Absalom, Marilyn Monroe, Adonijah, Adolph Hitler, Haman, Alexander, Judas, Eva Braun, Herod Agrippa I, James Dean, Nabal, Al Capone, Onan, JFK, Lot's wife, Pharaoh, Goliath, MLK, Belshazzar, many rock stars, many rap artists, etc.

Fools who do not die early die without hope and go to hell and then face the second death. Even while they lived, they were dead. However, when they are dead, they have yet to die and face judgment and the second death!

Fools hide their dead and dysfunctional lives with alcohol, plastic surgery, fake smiles, and drugs. The horrors of death and hell will take them down, down, down.

Fools will rue the day of their birth; they will grieve in anguish; they will beg for annihilation; there will be no relief, ever!

Reader, righteousness extends life! Wickedness shortens life! In this world and the next! Solomon had seen it among his own brothers and many others of his generation. He repeated the advice and warning many times (*Proverbs 3:2, 16; 8:35-36; 9:11; 10:16, 25, 27-28, 30; 11:4, 7-8, 19; 12:3, 7; 13:9, 14, 22; 14:11, 32; 15:24; 19:23; 21:12, 15, 21; 28:10, 18*).

Righteous men enjoy the good life now (*Proverbs 3:18; John 10:10*).

Righteous men are passed from death to life already and shall never be condemned (*John 5:24*).

At death, righteous men souls go to heaven; their bodies sleep in the grave, waiting for the resurrection (*John 11:25-26; Acts 7:60; 1Thessalonians 4:14*).

The second death has no power over them (*Revelation 20:6, 15*).

Where can you learn more about immortality? In the Gospel of Jesus Christ (*2Timothy 1:9-10; Titus 1:1-4*)!

The righteous shout in confident derision against their once fatal enemy, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ... But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*1Corinthians 15:55-57*).

Are you wise enough and courageous enough to leave the wide gate and broad way to join them (*Matthew 7:12-14*)?