

CHAPTER 17

Proverbs 17:1 Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.

What could the wisest man on earth charge per hour for specific advice for your life? \$500 an hour? \$5,000 an hour?

Here is God's inspired wisdom from Solomon free of charge! What a blessing, **If** we will consider and learn from this Proverb.

As in many Proverbs, the parallelism contrasts two things, the right against the wrong.

A dry morsel, could be saltine crackers, and a house full of sacrifices a filet mignon dinner with all the trappings.

Some sacrifices, the best of their flocks and herds, were eaten by the people, we are describing the very best food in great and free abundance.

Quietness is not noise level, but rather lack of trouble, fighting, travail, and vexation.

Quietness is contrasted with strife. It is a state of calm, peace, rest, and security (***Proverbs 1:33; Judges 18:7; 2Chronicles 20:30; Job 3:13; 21:23; 34:9; Psalm 107:28-30; Ecclesiastes 4:6; Ezekiel 16:42.***)

In a sister Proverb, the contrast is between love and hatred, which helps our understanding (***Proverbs 15:17.***)

The Word of God tells us that saltine crackers in a calm and peaceful home are superior to a filet mignon dinner with a tense and unhappy family. Here is wisdom to direct our priorities.

More emphasis, time, effort, money, and value should be placed on peace and love in a family than the securing of food and things for the family. But this choice runs totally contrary to our carnal, covetous, greedy, and materialistic generation.

Profane Americans say, "He who dies with the most toys wins." But our Lord tells us, "He who lives a godly life content with what he has wins" (***1Timothy 6:6; Hebrews 13:5.***)

Here is a choice: do we follow the profane to hell or God to heaven? Do we live the life of vanity and vexation of spirit our society promotes? Do we choose the wise man's priority, knowing he had already tested both ways by divine providence?

Two people in love can be happy, peaceful, and contented sharing peanut butter crackers, as dating couples know; and two people can be miserable in the middle of luxury when differences and bitterness have been allowed to creep in.

What Causes Tension, Stress, And Trouble In A Home?

An overbearing woman is one of the greatest culprits (***Proverbs 7:11; 9:13; 12:4; 19:13; 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15-16; 30:21-23.***)

She talks too much, criticizes too much, corrects too much, argues too much, suggests too much, and all in all turns life into hell. Every godly woman must hate these tendencies in herself and others; and every husband must lead his wife and family in a godly manner to be free of them of wicked tendencies.

Also, scorners will ruin a home's peace (***Proverbs 16:19,28; 22:10; 26:20-21.***)

What is a scorner? A haughty fool who arrogantly despises correction and disrespects authority. They should be corrected with the rod and reproof or removed from the home (***Proverbs 26:3; 22:10; 24:9.***)

Also a fool in a home will ruin its peace, because that filet mignon meal will only fuel his foolish thinking and talking (***Proverbs 31:21-23; Ecclesiastes 10:12-15.***)

How many parents have had their peace stolen by foolish children (***Proverbs 10:1; 17:25?***)

Foolishness is bound in the heart of every child, but the rod and reproof will always correct it (***Proverbs 22:15; 29:15, 17.***)

Also an angry person who presses issues will ruin the peace of a home (***Proverbs 15:18; 26:21; 29:22; 30:33.***)

So the rule of ending all wrath before sunset must be followed and enforced (***Ephesians 4:26.***)

Let every man and woman be slow to anger (***Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; James 1:19.***)

Also, bitterness will ruin a home's tranquility, for it is from hell and the source of confusion and every evil work (***James 3:14-16.***)

The commandment is clear, put away all bitterness, especially husbands (***Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:19.***)

The wisdom from heaven is peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, and loves to make peace (***James 3:17-18.***)

Discontentment creates perpetual frustration, so that even a filet mignon dinner cannot bring peace and calm.

The covetous and greedy man is always looking for more, and he is in a constant state of agitation thinking about it. And even if he were to get more, he would still wish and grieve for yet more in just minutes! (*Ecclesiastes 5:10; 2Samuel 13:1-2*).

A family with a moody parent (or worse yet, two of them) is doomed; for such weak and wicked people set the tone in the house and at dinner by whatever foolish mood they have allowed to overwhelm their soul (*Proverbs 25:28*).

Joy is a commandment (*Philippians 4:4; 1Thessalonians 5:16*)!

A good man can destroy all these enemies of a peaceful home; for he will be a godly example of peace and joy, and he will enforce them on the rest of the family.

What a blessing for a wife and children to have such a man ruling their home!

May the Lord raise up such men in this effeminate and frustrated generation!

Paul gave an excellent summary of the love and peace that ought to characterize the lives of saints, and he gives the means to obtain them (*Colossians 3:12-15*).

With such peace and joy as the basis, life can be a perpetual feast, regardless of what is on the table (*Proverbs 15:15*).

Remember success is not more things, but contentment with the things we have (*1Timothy 6:6*).

Reader, save yourself from a generation deceived by the lie that gain is godliness and happiness. We can learn to be content regardless of the fare at dinner (*Philippians 4:11-12*).

Where will you put your emphasis, time, effort, money, and value? On things? Or on godliness and contentment regardless of things? Now train your children to do the same!

Reader, our Proverb applies as well to the Church of our Lord. For a Church at peace, regardless of circumstances, is superior to a Church with strife, though basking in luxury. It is our duty as saints to endeavor to maintain our unity in the bond of peace (*Ephesians 4:3*).

Proverbs 17:2 A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

Foolish and lazy men, must blame something, for slow career progress, so they often use discrimination.

Foolish and lazy men, cannot get ahead because they are black, old, Hispanic, white, young, male, pierced, purple, or Muslim. **If** you have not heard it, they will invent it. They love to blame the great enemy discrimination.

Solomon knew better. Servants, and even sons, are held back for being lazy, stupid, disrespectful, or slow. Color, age, sex, creed, or nationality has nothing to do with it.

So reader, how important is wisdom to you? Wisdom brings promotion and honor. Foolishness brings demotion and shame (*Proverbs 3:35; 4:8; 12:8*).

Diligence brings advancement; slothfulness starvation (*Proverbs 12:24; 20:4; 22:29*).

A man not progressing in his profession is foolish, slothful, disrespectful, or slow. Mark it down!

A Wise Servant Will Be Promoted Over A Foolish Son.

Consider this seriously: the son has the inside track and his father's heart. But an employer cares for one thing, performance! They do not care about age, color, sex, creed, or nationality. They care about productivity, punctuality, integrity, obedience. They resent foolish and lazy sons.

And not only will a wise servant be promoted over a son, he will be given an inheritance with the man's own sons, maybe an ownership interest in the family business!

A hard working servant will blow right past a lazy son (*Proverbs 10:5*).

Even kings will promote such men (*Proverbs 14:35*).

Discrimination Is Just The Excuse Of The Foolish And Lazy!

Wise men resent bellyaching, who blame their circumstances, rather than their foolishness and poor performance. They are looking for men who will get the job done!

When Solomon saw Jeroboam's industry, he promoted him highly and a few years later he was the king of Israel's ten tribes, and Solomon's son had only two tribes! (*1Kings 11:28*)

Success in our prosperous, generous, and slothful age is easy for a Christian. It hangs like a ripe plum from a tree. With a ladder named wisdom, it is within easy reach of all! Reader, climb and take it. Don't make excuses; don't blame others; use the ladder!

Oriental often come to America with hardly anything and make prosperous lives. They don't complain, riot, sue, or talk of discrimination.

They work diligently, live frugally, save faithfully, adapt wisely, and exist peacefully. But others with greater advantages go nowhere. What is the difference? Without knowing God, they practice natural wisdom.

Joseph was a young foreign slave with the resume of a shepherd, which the Egyptians despised. But the Lord blessed his faithfulness with great authority in Potiphar's house (**Genesis 46:34; Genesis 39:1-6**).

Daniel was a captive eunuch, but look where he went!

David conducted himself wisely and the nation loved him (**1Samuel 18:30**).

What was David's background? He was a shepherd from the lowly town of Bethlehem, ignored by his own family when they were considering sons for honor.

Reader, what is the source of success in our Proverb? Wisdom!

Wisdom is the quality that embodies all the instruction of this book. A black, female, Hispanic Muslim from Sri Lanka with a lisp and a limp can get ahead easily, **if** she were to practice the wisdom of Proverbs.

Without wisdom, the fool will always be serving a wise man (**Proverbs 11:29**)! Which will you be?

A poor child can be promoted past an old king for one reason, wisdom (**Ecclesiastes 4:13**).

The king resents being admonished, so he resents correction. The poor child has no problem being told what to do. That young man is going somewhere! The king nowhere!

What is diligence? Diligence is working hard and fast without let up; simple enough, isn't it?

Diligence looks for the next job, attacks it, and finishes it without complaining or resting.

Diligence doesn't think about lunch all morning and quitting time all afternoon.

Diligence seeks to do the best job it can, as quickly as it can, until the whole job is finished perfectly.

Jesus taught this doctrine Himself regarding spiritual things for His disciples (**Luke 12:35-48**).

Servants being diligent during a master's absence would be promoted to rule over all that he owned! But those who slacked off would be fired and thrown out with the liars!

Let every saint and servant consider well the high standard to which we are called. Labor is not in vain in the Lord!

Multiply your privileges in the kingdom of heaven and receive His blessing, rather than complaining that He is too hard and discriminates (**Matthew 25:14-30**).

Jesus condemned that wicked and slothful servant, stripped him of his single talent, and cast him into outer darkness where he could gnash his teeth and wail about his misery! And He gave the talent to the man with ten. The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer, by wisdom!

Christian employees should be the very best in the workplace (**Romans 12:11; Colossians 3:22-25; 1Thessalonians 4:11-12; 1Timothy 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10**).

Outstanding Conduct On The Job Adorns The Doctrines Of God More Than Words.

Our Lord Jesus was made a little lower than the angels. He rules today over all.

Proverbs 17:3 The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.

Silver And Gold Are Prepared For Use By Purifying In Hot Fires.

The heat burns away impurities and base metals to leave pure silver or gold, fit for the craftsman to make a beautiful piece of jewelry or decorative objects (**Proverbs 25:4**).

The LORD only, can prove and purify our hearts in a similar way, through the fiery furnace of afflictions and trials.

Men prove, assay, or refine the precious metals silver and gold.

Men cannot prove, assay, or refine the heart of man. They use a fining pot for proving silver, and they use a furnace for refining gold, but the heart of man is neither accessible nor improvable.

Man's Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things And Desperately Wicked!

No man can truly know the impurities in his own heart (**Jeremiah 17:9-10**).

So the LORD tries the hearts to reveal what is there, and He rewards accordingly (**1Kings 8:39**).

No man can escape Him, with Whom we have to do (*Hebrews 4:12-14; Revelation 1:14; 2:18; 19:12*).

The Bible speaks often of God refining His saints (*Job 23:10; Isaiah 1:25*).

Jesus came as a Refiner; His fire burned up His enemies and purified new priests for offering acceptable sacrifices (*Malachi 3:1-5*).

Reader, the fiery trials God sends, may make our hearts heavy, but they make our faith stronger (*1Peter 1:6-7*).

God brings His people through the fire to perfect them (*Zechariah 13:9*).

And from these fires, He chooses His jewels (*Malachi 3:16-18*).

Reader, the LORD can quickly find what is in your heart. He knows your worst fears, your strongest temptations, your secret fantasies, your weakest moments, your trigger points, and the sins that easily beset you.

**God Can
Prove, Assay, Refine
You Easily!**

Reader, worship the Lord! Humble yourself, before He humbles you!

The Lord uses the furnace of affliction to try our faith by adversity (*Isaiah 48:10*).

The Lord uses the furnace of infirmity to build our reliance on His grace (*2Corinthians 12:9-10*).

The Lord uses the furnace of temptation to measure our obedience (*Genesis 22:1-2; Hebrews 11:17-19*).

With wisdom, we should rejoice in fiery trials, knowing they are perfecting us (*James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5*).

With wisdom, we can recognize fiery trials great profit, and not consider them strange, and even pray for God to examine and prove us (*Psalms 26:2; 119:67, 71, 75; 1Peter 4:12*).

How can gold be found without fire? How can it be purified without heat?

So reader, only by the Lord's fiery furnace are we purged of secret sins, fear of man, attraction to the world, pride, trust in others, love of others, self-righteousness, and other human dross.

Reader, only by the furnace is our faith, love, and hope purified. The process is painful; the results are glorious. Submit your heart to His fire (*Psalms 139:23-24*).

The LORD is the most skilled of refiners; He will not lose one ounce, one dram, or one grain of His gold in the furnace. Trust Him!

The LORD's trials will end in mercy (*Psalms 66:8-17*);

The LORD's chastening is in tender affection (*Hebrews 12:10-11; Revelation 3:19*).

Proverbs 17:4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

Read our Proverb carefully; for it is easy to miss the lesson of these Words.

The Holy Spirit often condemns false lips, naughty tongues, and an evil mouth (*Proverbs 6:17; 10:18, 31-32; 12:13, 22; 18:6-7, 22; 21:6; 24:2, 28; 26:24, 28*).

And Holy Spirit praises godly and gracious speech throughout Proverbs (*Proverbs 13:2; 15:23; 16:13; 18:20-21; 22:11; 24:26; 25:11*).

The valuable lesson of this Proverb is this: a person who cannot control their speech and speak righteously and wisely is a wicked person and a fool (*Luke 6:45*).

But notice also, this Proverb does not condemn false lips or a naughty tongue. It condemns the person who listens to such speech, and here we learn much wisdom. To be truly holy and wise, you must avoid, reject, and eliminate the foolish speech of others.

You might agree certain speech is horrible; but **If** you listen to it, it will affect you, and you can become as evil as the speaker. The only reason for listening is to satisfy a profane heart that it enjoys.

So it is your wisdom, to cut off all foolish talking and wicked speech, and to avoid it as much as possible (*Proverbs 20:19; Ephesians 5:3-4*).

True holiness rejects evil talkers themselves (*Titus 1:10-11*).

This rule of wisdom, even condemns an entire government as wicked, when the ruler listens to lies (*Proverbs 29:12*)!

What does this say of parents, who allow the words of a whisperer in their home? The jokes of a jester? The witness of one? The disrespect of authority?

When we are in the presence of a backbiter, we should stop them cold with an angry countenance (*Proverbs 25:23*).

David, in his great desire for a holy life, purposed to cut off all slanderers and liars from his household (*Psalm 101:5-7*). This should also be our goal.

The whisperer would be unemployed, if he were told to shut up and go away.

The backbiter would have clean teeth from the absence of biting, if they were told to stop the sinning.

The jester would stop telling jokes, if hearers soberly stared at him like they were crazy.

The slanderer would be alone, if their evil surmising and false accusations were ridiculed.

The talebearer would be talking to himself, if he were always rejected.

Men Continue In Their Wicked Speech Because They Have An Audience!

But woe unto that man who listens to ungodly conversation, for he is revealing the same evil heart as the one speaking. Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ refuse to hear evil! Cross-reference meditation: *Proverbs 19:27*

Proverbs 17:5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

Reader, a rich girl makes fun of a poor girl in class. An athletic boy ridicules a retarded boy. A man laughs when his competitor dies in an auto wreck.

You should be greatly dismayed by such insensitive and wicked cruelty! God is!

You should train your children to never think this way!

God leaves some men poor. Laughing at them offends God, for He made men to differ, not you!

The blessings you have in life are due to His merciful kindness and grace (*1Corinthians 4:7*).

You cannot boast of your blessing as your accomplishments, and you cannot gloat over others who do not have them. God made the differences between you and others; humbly understand and give Him the honor and glory!

So God judges men by holy and perfect justice. His secret decrees are far out of your sight. He has His infinitely wise purposes in all judgments in this world.

If you are glad when your personal enemy is struck down, you are taking on a vicarious revenge (*Proverbs 24:17-18*)!

You presume God did it out of some honor to you! You have a wicked heart!

There are acts of God, and there are acts of fools. Do you know the difference? When a man is born blind, that is an act of God for His own glory (*John 9:1-3*).

We should care for such persons with deep humility and tender compassion. But when the men of Sodom were struck blind at Lot's door, we should understand the difference (*Genesis 19:11*)!

There are enemies of God and truth, and you have personal enemies. Do you know the difference? When your personal enemy smites you on a cheek, you should turn to him the other cheek (*Matthew 5:38-48*). Wise men know these differences.

God ultimately laughs at fools when they get in trouble after rejecting His wisdom time and time again (*Proverbs 1:26; Psalm 52:6-7*).

God loves all men but hates His enemies sin, because He knows where it leads them. We should hate the results as well (*Psalm 139:21-22*).

Understanding the foolishness of men is wise and good (*1Kings 18:27; Ecclesiastes 10:12-15*);

Understanding the foolishness of lazy men is wise and good (*Proverbs 6:6-11; 19:24*);

Understanding the odious women is wise and good (*Proverbs 11:22; 27:15-16; 30:21-23*).

If you are blessed, and you truly are, thank God for His mercy. But do not despise those who are not so blessed. The difference is by God's grace.

If your enemy suffers, pray for him and help him (*Psalm 35:11-14; Luke 10:33-35*).

If you presume to despise the poor or rejoice when your enemy falls, God will revenge your arrogant and profane wickedness!

Proverbs 17:6 Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

There are four family roles, three generations, and two reciprocal relationships in this Proverb. Can you find them?

In sixteen Words, the Lord gives us a broad and precious Proverb.

Implied in these wonderful Words is a noble and loving family, a lofty goal for all to see.

Implied are wise parents with prudent foresight, and obedient children appreciating them.

Our concise Proverb has wide wisdom. Grandchild, grandfather, child, and father are the four family roles. There is a minimum of three generations represented. Grandfathers and their grandchildren and fathers and their children are the two reciprocal relationships.

Granddaughters, grandmothers, mothers, and daughters are included by implication. Let each of us consider his/her multiple roles in realizing the blessing of this Proverb.

Only wise and good families are considered here.

Not all grandchildren are the crown of their grandfathers, a jeweled symbol of honor and reward. Many grandchildren are a disgrace and shame to their grandfathers.

Not all fathers are the glory of their children, an object of great delight and adoring respect. Many children do not respect their fathers this way: many fathers do not deserve such respect.

Son, does the Proverb fit your family? Only virtuous grandchildren bring grandparents joy. Only wise grandfathers consider virtuous grandchildren a blessing.

Reader, grasp the implications. Solomon is exalting large and extended, functional and happy, families. He is describing exceptional families. Grasp some more implications.

Solomon in few words is also laying out many family responsibilities.

America's families are under attack.

- Children? Abort them.
- Marriage? Two men will do.
- Parents? Defy them or divorce them.
- Grandparents? Euthanasia will ease them out.
- Fathers? Unnecessary.
- Grandchildren? They only want my assets.
- Children? A pain. Let's have as few as possible.
- Marriage? We can have sex without it.
- A family? Not with my career.
- A big family? We can't do that today.
- Mothers? The daycare is better.

God invented the family (*Genesis 1:27*).

God started with marriage, between one man and one woman for life (*Genesis 2:18, 21-25; Matthew 19:1-6*).

God added children, many of them, as a great blessing (*Psalms 107:41; 127:3-5; 128:1-6*).

God told grandfathers and great grandfathers to have a role in their families (*Job 42:16; Psalm 78:1-8; Joel 1:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:3-5*).

God curses and rejects people with bad family relationships (*Malachi 4:5-6*).

God blesses and walks with those with good family relationships (*Luke 1:17*).

Blessed are a people prepared for the Lord. Righteous relationships are essential for His blessings (*Malachi 2:10-16; 1 Peter 3:7*).

What are you? Parent? Child? Grandparent? Grandchild? All four? Have you fulfilled your God-given role to promote a great and glorious family?

Is your family a glory to God and a living testimony of the truth? Or do you consider your family a burden? You have a wonderful opportunity to both crown yourself and be glorious!

Fathers are to train their children, for the glory of God (*Ephesians 6:4*).

Children are to obey and honor their parents, for the glory of God (*Ephesians 6:1-3*).

Fathers are to secure an inheritance for their children, for the glory of God (*Proverbs 13:22; 19:14; 2 Corinthians 12:14*).

Grandchildren are to rise up and honor their grandparents, for the glory of God (*Proverbs 16:31; Leviticus 19:32*).

Grandfathers should oversee all of this to fulfill their great calling and leave a heritage, for the glory of God.

Is there bitterness in any family relationships? Have you fulfilled your duties toward all members? Have you forgiven all offences of those before and after you?

Are you making daily efforts to promote a large, happy, godly family? Is your family lacking of virtue and godliness? Is it growing in size and glory? Are you a family peacemaker?

Old man or old woman, what investment will you make today in your children's children? They will only crown you now and after you are gone, **If** you guide, train, and warn them regularly in matters of godliness and character, for the glory of God. At this stage in life you should have more time and wisdom to impart to them than at any other.

**Father Or Mother, Are You
The Glory Of Your Children?**

If not, why not? You only deserve such esteem **If** you are earning it daily, which is done by holy example and compassionate care of their whole lives, with an obvious eye to their future.

If you are too busy or above such mundane tasks, you are a ridiculous fool. You are squandering God's gift of souls to you, which you brought into this world, and you will pay heavily.

Child or grandchild, do you crown your grandparents well? You should be living a noble life to honor and reward them. You should learn more about them before they are gone, and hear the wisdom you will not acquire for many years.

Child do you honor in your parents? It is the first commandment with promise, and what precious promises they are, for you to obey and honor your parents, Soon you will want this very treatment (*Ephesians 6:1-3*).

By combining a high birth rate, faithful lives, loving care, and wise training, the family is our greatest opportunity to leave a godly influence in the earth.

And the pleasure and comfort of a large, happy family far exceeds any other aspect of old age. The wise will have and promote large families. (*Proverbs 23:15-16, 24; Psalm 127:3-5; 128:1-6; Ruth 4:13-22*)

True believers are the children of God by His gracious adoption and God, is truly our glory, and well deserving of it (*Romans 11:33-36; 1John 3:1*).

What a glorious family relationship we have with our God! Live like a son of God! God the Father, sent His Son Jesus Christ to redeem us, and He calls us His children (*Hebrews 2:13*).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is our brother, and we are part of the family of God. We have many more parents, siblings, and children than our family trees show.

After we have fulfilled our duties toward those in our homes, let us fulfill them as well in our churches.

Proverbs 17:7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.

Are Your Words Compatible With Character, Conduct, Position?

You do yourself a disservice when speaking well, If your life does not back up your words. And you do much worse to yourself, If you have a leadership role and are not scrupulously honest.

The lesson is simple: make both your words and works good, so as to be compatible.

Excellent speech is only attractive when spoken by a wise man (*Ecclesiastes 10:12*).

Fools, known by their general folly, seeking to sound noble or wise only irritate others by their conceit and hypocrisy. But far worse, as indicated by the comparative "*much less*", is a person in authority who does not have the highest regard for honesty and truth (*Proverbs 16:12*).

Speech A Good Measure Of A Person Which Makes Incompatible Speech Disgusting!

But character and conduct say much more. The worst of men can sound noble and virtuous for a minute, and the most reputable can ultimately reveal an evil heart by fraud or lying. Even a child is known by his doing, not his talking (*Proverbs 20:11*).

Good Words or fair speeches from ignorant or wicked men are revolting to the senses, for these two things are entirely incompatible.

Fools and evil men, do not have the heart or conduct, to justify counsel or leadership, so they should be ignored and rejected by all wise men (*Proverbs 17:16; 26:1-9*).

Fools and evil men's efforts, to join in discussion with wise and prudent men is profanely rude.

How much more repulsive are lies from a person in authority! A leader or ruler is in office for the comfort, guidance, prosperity, and security of those under his authority. But dishonesty destroys confidence in those in power, leaves men vulnerable, and perverts justice.

The assignment of authority is from God, and brings with it a high call for personal integrity.

Noble men and rulers must never lie, because it is an ugly blot on their character, reputation, and office, which should be known by all, for the necessity of faithful and sober honesty.

The privilege of authority and leadership brings the responsibility of truth. Deceit or lying of any sort is very unbecoming to any person in a position of power or influence.

The world's wise man, Plato, taught that princes have a right to lie due to privilege of office, the opposite of Solomon's warning.

From whom do you want to learn? A pagan philosopher or an Holy Spirit inspired man (*Ecclesiastes 12:9-11; 1Corinthians 1:19-20*)!

Governments have often said or implied, "*Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*", (he who knows not how to dissemble knows not how to reign). They are the blind leading the blind, and they and their followers shall fall into the ditch of trouble and destruction (*Matthew 15:12-14*).

Thankfully, there have been wise rulers who knew the value of truthfulness in office. Louis IX of France

(1214-1270) said, "If truth be banished from all the rest of the world, it ought to be found in the breast of princes."

King Alphonsus of Arragon, who read the Bible through fourteen times, declared, "One word of a prince should be a greater security than a private man's oath." A king's divine sentence cannot contain lies (**Proverbs 16:10**).

Faithfulness, honesty, and truth uphold thrones and leaders, for those under authority find comfort, peace, and security in the certainty of their ruler's words.

Great kings delight in righteousness and right speaking, which flows from a pure heart (**Proverbs 16:13; 22:11**).

Great kings know that truth will preserve their reign and lies will corrupt their court (**Proverbs 12:19; Proverbs 29:12**).

There has been only one king whose lips never came close to lying, Jesus Christ, the Faithful and True Witness (**Revelation 1:5; 3:14; 19:11**).

Jesus Christ is the Truth (**John 14:6**).

Jesus Christ is the Word of Truth (**James 1:18**).

Jesus Christ brought grace and truth, and He bore witness to the truth (**John 1:14, 17; 18:37; Romans 15:8**).

David and family paled in comparison (**2Samuel 23:1-5**).

Let everyone that claims the name of Jesus Christ despise and reject all exaggeration, dishonesty, and lying, especially **If** they have any position of authority from parent to president.

Let them go out of their way to make things openly and visibly honest to all men. Parents must be impeccably honest to keep the hearts and minds of their children. Pastors must also be so to keep their hearers (**2Corinthians 8:20-21; Titus 2:8**).

Let everyone that claims the name of Jesus Christ depart from folly and sin, lest he pollute and stain the Christianity with his hypocrisy. Why should the precious truth of the Gospel of Christ be polluted through the lips of a fool (**Ezekiel 20:39; 2Timothy 2:19**)?

Hypocrisy is the greatest blight, on the only true religion, by those who profess with their lips and deny with their lives (**Isaiah 29:13; Ezekiel 33:31; Matthew 15:7-9**).

Proverbs 17:8 A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.

Gifts are wonderful things. They can accomplish much, for good or evil.

Having received a gift, and looking upon it to appreciate its value, a man will do whatever was sought from him. Like a jewel, it dazzles the eyes and warms the heart to a desired task. A jewel is beautiful from most any angle, and a gift will work in most any situation.

Here is a general observation of Solomon about the power of gifts. They work! The Proverb does not condemn gifts, but rather indicates their powerful potential, for good or evil.

If gifts are used with good motives for good purposes, the noble end will be accomplished. **If** gifts are used with evil motives for evil ends, the sin will be done.

Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great, said, "There is no fortress so strong, but it might be taken, if an ass laden with gold was brought to the gate!"

Who has the gift here in the Proverb? The giver or receiver? Why not both? The owner of a gift believes his present will move any stubborn will to prosper his purposes.

The receiver of a gift, viewing it as a sweet blessing, is willing to quickly do what was desired of him. The choice does not alter the interpretation. The lesson is the same, gifts work!

Well, does Solomon teach more about gifts? Yes, Wicked men use gifts as bribes to corrupt justice (**Proverbs 17:23**).

Gifts are effective to get you an audience with important people (**Proverbs 18:16**).

Gifts can win friends (**Proverbs 19:6**).

Gifts can pacify the anger of an adversary (**Proverbs 21:14**).

Boasting about giving without the performance is empty and disappointing (**Proverbs 25:14**).

God elsewhere strictly condemns gifts for wicked purposes. Gifts blind the eyes and overthrow wisdom and righteousness (**Exodus 23:8**).

Gifts wrest judgment and pervert the words of the righteous (**Deuteronomy 16:19**).

Gifts can buy the death of innocent men (**Deuteronomy 27:25**).

Samuel's sons took bribes, but he would not (**1Samuel 8:3; 12:3**).

A wicked nation has bribes occurring frequently (*Micah 7:3*).

Godly men refuse bribes (*Isaiah 33:15*).

No wonder Lady Justice is a blindfolded woman with a sword in one hand and scales in the other. She will not look at the persons before her, or for any gifts they might offer, in order to justly weigh, the circumstances of each case and rightly execute any punishments. Gifts work! They can win friends and influence others for good, and they can be used as bribes or payments for wickedness.

The lesson is that gifts work. The wisdom is to use gifts only for good purposes and to recognize that many men will do evil to obtain gifts.

Can you recall any gifts for good purposes?

Jacob softened Esau's heart with well-spaced gifts (*Genesis 32:13-21*).

Jacob sent a gift to the harsh ruler in Egypt (*Genesis 43:11-14*).

Abigail soothed David with one (*1Samuel 25:18-20,35*).

David pacified Judah for missing a battle against the Philistines (*1Samuel 29:1-11; 30:26-31*).

The Philistine priests wisely suggested golden hemorrhoids and mice to appease the dreadful God of Israel (*1Samuel 6:5*)!

Can you recall any gifts for evil purposes?

Covetous Balaam could not rule his lust for the rewards of Moab (*Numbers 22:7-8, 21; 2Peter 2:15-16*).

Wicked Simon tried to buy the apostolic gift of the Holy Spirit, but Peter would have none of it (*Acts 8:17-24*).

Of course, the Jews paid Judas thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus Christ. They also bribed the guards who had been at His resurrection (*Matthew 26:14-16; Matthew 28:11-15*).

Reader, are you free from the allure of a gift? Many men have been snared by the favors of a woman, when he should have demanded the fear of the Lord (*Proverbs 31:30*).

Have you ever compromised truth for a gift, a sale, a bonus, or a promotion? Many women have fallen for merely the kind words of a seducing man (*Genesis 34:1-3*).

God's ministers must hate filthy lucre, lest it sway his interpretation or application of Scripture (*Isaiah 56:11*;

Jeremiah 6:13; 8:10; Micah 3:11; Malachi 1:10; 1Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7, 11; 1Peter 5:2).

Woe to the minister who worries about the size of his membership or his income rather than the truth of God's Word and the holy application of it.

Is there a place in your life for giving a gift today? Could you honor your parents with a gift? Or better yet, your in-laws? Could you reconcile an estranged friend by a gift in secret (*Proverbs 21:14*)? Could you comfort and cheer a discouraged person with one today? Do it!

The best gift is God's gift of His only Son for man's sins. Pagan gods required the death of your son to be pacified (*2Kings 17:17*).

The true God gave His only Son for His enemies! Consider that gift! Did it prosper whithersoever it turned? Indeed! It satisfied divine justice and it obtained everlasting righteousness for every one of them (*Isaiah 53:10-12*).

The gift of Jesus Christ to the world, is called the unspeakable gift (*2Corinthians 9:15; Romans 5:15-19; 6:23*)!

Proverbs 17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

Love And Friendship Disciplines By Wisdom Are Learned Behaviors!

All men are naturally arrogant, envious, hateful, malicious, selfish, and vengeful (*Romans 1:29-31; 2Timothy 3:2-3; Titus 3:3*).

Only God's grace can keep a man from these evil tendencies. Then love and friendship are easily learned by wisdom (*Proverbs 8:9; 14:6; Titus 3:4-7*).

Dale Carnegie's ideas on winning friends and influencing people are very inferior to Solomon's wisdom!

Have you learned love and friendship? Are you a loving friend? Do others rejoice in your friendship? Do you have many friends?

True love and friendship overlook and forget personal offences against you; but foolish men will bring them up and destroy peaceful relationships.

True love and friendship never repeat a person's failures or sins to others, but foolish men will be backbiting, talebearing, and whispering (*Proverbs 10:12; 11:13; 16:28*).

Covering a transgression is how you show love and win friends. It is forgiving and forgetting personal wrongs others do to you.

A certainty of human relations is that others will regularly irritate and offend you. What you do with these personal transgressions is the key.

When ignoring the provocations and slights of others, you esteem them to be more important than yourself. Which is true love and friendliness (**Philippians 2:3; 1Corinthians 13:4-7**).

Wise men glory in the opportunity to pass over the personal transgressions of others; their discreet wisdom defers their anger. Nothing ruffles them, especially the minor irritations that commonly occur among men. (**Proverbs 19:11**). See the comments on **Proverbs 19:11**.

Wise men know they have been forgiven much, so it is easy for them to forgive others.

Wise men know they have beams in their own eyes, so they do not worry about the specks in others' eyes.

Covering a transgression is how you show love and win friends.

Covering a transgression silences every backbiting tongue and drives away every talebearer and whisperer (**Proverbs 11:13; 16:28; 18:8; 20:19; 25:23; 26:20-22; Psalm 101:5**).

Covering a transgression refuses to repeat rumors or facts that degrade a person's reputation. True love thinks no evil of others and does not rejoice when it hears of failures or sins in others' lives (**1Corinthians 13:4-7**).

Covering a transgression is burying news that reflects poorly on another's character. Love protects the reputations of others.

Covering transgressions is not compromising with sin. **If** a man sins against the LORD, it must be dealt with differently than offences between men (**1Samuel 2:25; 1Corinthians 5:1-5; 6:7**).

God's Rules Greater Matters Dealt With In The Word Of God!

We never cover or overlook sin against God in order to win or keep friends. The topic at hand, is personal offences we may cover or the failures and sins of others that are not our business or responsibility (**Proverbs 19:11; Matthew 5:38-48; 18:15-22**).

If a man has repented of a sin, no matter how heinous, there is no love or profit in repeating it to others.

Arrogant and rebellious men, will not learn the wisdom of covering personal offences, and ignorant and foolish men, cannot learn it. Both assume they must protect themselves, by bringing others' faults to their attention.

Arrogant and rebellious men believe they must avenge any slight they feel from others. They cannot let offences pass.

Arrogant and rebellious men must remind others of their faults. They burn inside, sometimes for years, for slight offences. They must get revenge.

In order to justify themselves and demote others, arrogant and rebellious men repeat any failure they hear about others. They have a burning heart that loves to get scuttlebutt about others and spread it widely.

Arrogant and rebellious men receive perverse pleasure by being able to insinuate and whisper about the sins of others. They do not know love and thus seldom have any friends.

Love and friendship begin in the heart. When others offend you, ignore it! Even in your heart! When others slight you, ignore it! Even in your heart!

When others provoke you, think kind and merciful thoughts about them! Do not think of reprisal! Forget the matter!

Never plan an opportunity to bring it up. When others fail or have sinned, do not gloat or think about it! Be known only for repeating blessings and successes of others.

Love and friendship are best practiced at home. **If** you can be charitable, gracious, and merciful with siblings or a spouse, you can be so to any man!

Children must be taught to overlook sibling offences rather than tattle or needle about them.

Children must be taught to never repeat sibling failures.

Children must learn to cover offences and seek love.

Reader, this Proverb can enhance your marriage. Because marriage is a familiar and intimate relationship with another, you will know more of their faults and failures than any other person.

Can you cover, forgive, and overlook without saying anything? Or do you think that mentioning the matter, again, and again, is helping you or them? **If** you think so, you know nothing about love. This issue will destroy your marriage by building walls between friends.

So reader, ignore and overlook personal offences against you by others. Do not repeat rumors, scuttlebutt, or facts about others, that put them in a bad light. Both

of these are sins against Christian charity and love that destroy friendliness and friends.

Let every man show the same forgiveness to others that God has shown to him (*Ephesians 4:31-32*).

Proverbs 17:10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.

**We All Need A WQ Test
Forget Your IQ It Has An Inverse
Relationship To WQ!**

Solomon, the wisest man ever, was also immeasurably off every IQ scale. He could sit and talk for hours about any subject to the world's smartest men. But he had no regard for intelligence in comparison to wisdom. (*1Kings 4:29-34*)

Wisdom is far more important. By the Holy Spirit he wrote this simple comparison to measure your wisdom: how well do you take reproof?

Intelligence is the ability to put the yellow blocks in the yellow buckets without too many mistakes, before it is time for graham crackers and milk.

Wisdom is the ability to please both God and men, in the daily unique moral situations, you have never faced before.

Wisdom excels intelligence as light excels darkness. Wise men are great men.

Are you ready? This is a timed test. In just ten minutes your wisdom quotient will be revealed!

God has no respect for human intelligence. He has chosen men of low intelligence to be His children, so He can crush the pride of the intelligent (*1Corinthians 1:26-29*).

God laughs and mocks man's, so-called intelligence (*1Corinthians 1:19-20; 3:18-20*).

God knows, it was the most intelligent men in Israel who crucified His Son.

God knows, it is the most intelligent men in this nation, that think our ancestors were monkeys and the NEA is a WMD.

What do you do when you are rebuked?

Men with intelligence get irritated and justify themselves with scores from past games with yellow blocks.

Men without intelligence just stare with a glassy look in their eyes, wondering when they can get back to the sports section of the newspaper.

Wise men, regardless of intelligence, take it to heart, meekly submit to the correction, purpose to change immediately, and love the one rebuking them.

So reader, since all men arrive in this world totally helpless and ignorant, and their lives only span 73 years on average, here is the factor, that indicates the greatest potential for greatness.

Development and progress of a man in his short lifetime requires frequent and significant change.

Change requires correction and rebuke. The men marked for greatness, love to be told they are wrong and quickly grasp the opportunity for advancement and refinement.

How Well Do You Take Reproof?

Do you only have to be told once you are doing something wrong to change your conduct? Or

Do you need to be told repeatedly? Or

Do a hundred stripes of punishment from men and God only harden you?

**This Is The Acid Test Of Wisdom.
How Well Do You Take Reproof!**

A wise man is improved by a single reproof, but a fool does not change, even with devastating punishment.

A fool's arrogance and stubbornness are so great, he cannot and will not learn. Reader, where are you on the WQ scale?

"A word to the wise" is a weak American expression similar to this Proverb.

A wise man only needs a single correction or reproof to learn and change his behavior. A fool resists, rebels, and rejects correction and reproof.

A fool bristles defensively when you tell him he is wrong, either in heart, face, body language, or words. He has no heart for wisdom. The fool daydreams of sports scores he read that morning.

Of course, the fool never has a wise answer for his errors; he just doesn't like being told he is wrong. That is why he is a fool.

Though God sends him a 100 corrective trials and issues into his life, he continues on in stubborn rebellion. Wise men, give him a hundred stripes, but still he is too smart to be wise, he is a fool. Nobody is

going to correct him. He is beyond help or hope (*Proverbs 27:22*).

Children, agreeing and obeying when your parents tell you something that you are willing to do only proves selfishness.

Children it is when your parents say you are wrong and need to change something dear to you, that you can prove your wisdom. How much do you have?

Reader, saying "Amen" when a pastor preaches something you already believe proves nothing. Sending a tape or outline of an agreeable sermon to others proves nothing.

It is submitting to a reproof, a censure, rebuke, or reprimand, that proves wisdom. God sent His pastors for the work of reproof and correction (*2Timothy 3:16-17*).

Wise men will love both the reproof and the reprover (*Proverbs 9:8; 19:25; Psalm 141:5*).

**What A Perfect WQ Test!
Only A Wise Man Can Pass It!
Fools Are Discovered Every Time!**

Reader, every family has them; every church has them! No matter how much the man of God belabors the point, the intelligent fool smugly sits and counts himself wise, proving himself a loser (*Proverbs 26:12*).

As is common in these Proverbs of Solomon, the single greatest measure of a fool or wise man is his ability to receive and follow instruction.

You must ask yourself soberly in the sight of God, How well do I receive rebukes from parents, pastors, and counselors?

It is imperative for you to find your WQ and improve it today by taking reproofs well. God perfected wisdom in His children, regardless of age or intelligence.

The childlike faith commended by our Lord is the simple confidence that God's Word and God's representatives, whether parent, pastor, or other, are to be obeyed.

This wise propensity to greatness summarizes learning simply, God said it; I believe it; that settles it!

Wisdom is available to any who want it. All you have to do is come in out of the cold and take it (*Proverbs 9:1-6*)!

Wisdom is received by rejecting your own thoughts, and those of other fools, to humbly be corrected, rebuked, and reproved by God and His Word.

Rebellion is like witchcraft, and stubbornness is like idolatry, in the holy view of God. And the consequences are incalculable (*1Samuel 15:23*).

The final measure of wisdom or folly is how you receive the Person and reproofs of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ recognized, that His Father had hid true wisdom, from the intelligent men of this world in order to reveal it to His chosen babes (*Matthew 11:25-27*).

It is your wisdom, to humble yourself before the Lord Jesus Christ, own Him as your Lord and King, which is proven by your eagerness to receive His reproofs (*Revelation 3:19*).

Proverbs 17:11 An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

Reader, rebellion is a terrible sin. It shows how arrogant, contrary, malicious, and willful man can be. God compares it to witchcraft (*1Samuel 15:23*).

When you see it, you have found an evil man. These fools cannot submit to correction or government, so they must rebel.

But God, the originator of all authority and rule, will have the last laugh. He will send just retribution against such rebels, punishment and potentially then eternal misery.

So reader, have you felt your soul bristle when others correct you? Do you find it necessary to question most things you are told to do?

Which is more important to you, your rights or your duties? It is part of a foolish nature that does not want to be governed.

Though a young man arrives utterly helpless and ignorant in this world, in just a few months, he expects to be able to do as he wishes without regard, for the authority or wisdom of others.

Rebellion brought sin into the universe. The devil rebelled against his role in heaven, he wanted more (*Jude 1:6*).

Adam condemned humanity to death, physically and eternally, by rebelling against God's Word in Eden (*Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12-14*).

God turned Sodom into ashes for rebelling against Him and nature's laws for man-woman sex (*Jude 1:7*).

God opened up the earth, to swallow Korah, for rebellion against Moses, God ordained leadership. And

by the way reader, he lost his family too (*Numbers 16:1-34*).

Rebellion Is Promoted From The Top And Bottom!

At the top: A false concept of God, as a begging weakling, allows men to think they can reject Him and the Bible.

At the bottom: The permissive parents and flattering school programs, teaching children to rebel, against any threat to their freedom.

At the middle: Authorities legislate, privilege and protection for rebellion and sedition, like labor unions and free speech, that keep the evil in motion (*Ecclesiastes 10:5-7*).

This evil conspiracy creates widespread dysfunction.

Women revolt against submission to husbands, wrecking marriages, families and homes.

Students defy teachers, causing classroom chaos.

So-called patriots despise civil laws, promoting anarchy.

Deacons overrule pastors, neutering their leadership.

Reader, God will punish rebellion against His Word or His authorities.

God kept Moses from Canaan for rebelling against His command (*Numbers 20:24*).

God describes civil rebels as comparable to rabid dogs needing to be put down (*2Peter 2:10-12*).

It is wisdom to learn obedience and submission!

The Word of God clearly states your duties to God and men. Learn them, do them, and teach them to your children.

Proverbs 17:12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.

Fools Are Dangerous! Wise Men Will Avoid Them!

It is a universal fact that a mother bear robbed of her cubs is very dangerous. But such a ferocious animal is less trouble than a fool pursuing his perverse ideas.

Solomon condemned, fools and their brute lusts, by his knowledge of bears. The wisdom is to spot dangerous fools and avoid them.

Some fools are merely lazy and stupid, so they are not very dangerous (*Proverbs 17:16; 21:20; Ecclesiastes 10:15*).

While irritating and troublesome, some fools are not a great threat to a righteous man. Their folly will do them, more harm than anyone else.

For example, the folly of children and saints can be corrected (*Proverbs 22:15; Luke 24:25-26; 1Corinthians 15:36; Galatians 3:1*).

But other fools are malicious and scornful; they are very dangerous (*Proverbs 21:24; 26:12; 27:3; 29:20, 22*).

The wickedness of incorrigible fools cannot be corrected, no matter what you do (*Proverbs 17:10; 27:22; 29:9*).

The Word of God calls these profane fools, "*sons of Belial*," or evil personified (*1Samuel 25:3, 17; 2Samuel 23:6-7; 1Kings 21:10, 13*).

These fools are brute beasts to be destroyed (*2Peter 2:10-12*).

Wise men stay far away from these wicked fools (*Proverbs 9:6-8; 14:7*).

A fool is in his folly, is out of control and acting by base and profane passions. Rage: is the anger of a fool (*Proverbs 14:29; 29:22; Ecclesiastes 7:9*).

Consider: Cain killing Abel (*Genesis 4:1-12*)!

Simeon and Levi destroying a city against their father's word (*Genesis 49:5-7*).

Doeg killing God's priests (*1Samuel 22:9-19*)!

Nebuchadnezzar heating a furnace sevenfold for good men (*Daniel 3:14-22*)!

Herod slaughtering Bethlehem's little children (*Matthew 2:16*)!

What bear was ever as merciless and violent as these examples? Angry bears are brutishly stupid and vicious, but such profane fools are far worse!

It is your duty, to learn to identify them, and take pains to avoid them.

It is your duty, to rule your lusts and passions to avoid being a fool yourself!

Consider how close the sweet psalmist of Israel, came to destroying a household, for one scorner's ignorant remarks (*1Samuel 25*).

There are three American brown bears, the grizzly, the Alaskan, and the Kodiak. A male Kodiak bear can

weigh 1500 pounds or more. It is 10 feet tall when standing on its back legs.

If you try to run, it can reach 35-40 mph, which you cannot!

If you put up a fence, remember it can bite through 1/2" steel bolts! Will you climb a tree? It can also climb trees.

If you think you can you hide underground? It can dig much faster than you can shovel!

The Holy Spirit did not use just any bear in this Proverb. Most bears retreat at the presence of a man, **If** they are not disturbed or provoked. He compared a fool in his folly to a female bear robbed of her cubs!

This creature, though smaller than the males, is much more aggressive and dangerous. She will ferociously and fearlessly attack any threat to her cubs. The Proverb is frightening! Such bears and such fools are dangerous!

David's friend Hushai kept Absalom from pursuing his father by comparing David and his chafed mind to a bear robbed of her whelps (**2Samuel 17:8**).

And the Word of God, tells of two such bears that tore 42 children that mocked Elisha (**2Kings 2:23-24**).

A wicked ruler over poor people is like a ranging bear, a hungry bear leaving its territory to find food (**Proverbs 28:15**).

And God, compared His judgment of Israel, to a female bear robbed of her cubs (**Hosea 13:8**).

You know what bears look like and where they live. You easily avoid them! But can you spot dangerous fools as well?

- They show no fear of God.
- They are not holy; they are profane in speech and action.
- They are arrogant and selfish.
- They despise authority and scorn correction.
- They justify anything they wish.
- They are earthly minded; They are unmerciful.
- They are without natural affection.
- They have a violent temper.

Can so-called Christians, engage in angry yelling and temper tantrums in the privacy of their automobile or home? While also being called to follow Jesus Christ? They show themselves the children of the devil (**1Peter 2:21-25; John 8:44**).

If they say, "That is just the way I am," you know you have found a son of Belial! A fool! Get away!

While separating may be painful at times, it is an order from the Lord to avoid fools, especially the angry,

scornful, and vicious kind (**Proverbs 9:6-8; 14:7; 22:24-25; 23:9; 29:9; Matthew 7:6; 1Corinthians 15:33; 2Thessalonians 3:2**).

They do not deserve delight or honor (**Proverbs 19:10; 26:1, 8; 2Kings 3:14; Psalm 15:4**)!

Great men cut them off, and even **If** they are family or friends (**Psalm 101:4-8**).

These wicked men that cause so much grief to parents, wives, children, neighbors, and saints, have their day coming, when the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, to eternally correct all the inequities (**2Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 1:14-15**)!

Proverbs 17:13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

Reader, it is a sin to repay evil for evil, for vengeance belongs to God (**Romans 12:17; 1Thessalonians 5:15; 1Peter 3:9**).

But it is even worse to repay evil for good, for that shows a brutish and devilish heart. The consequences for such vile conduct are certain, God will severely judge those with perpetual trouble. It is your duty reader and privilege to return goodness for goodness.

There Are Two Lessons Here:

¹The first lesson: you should soberly consider all those that have treated you well in your life. Have you honored them? Have you kindly rewarded their goodness?

²The second lesson: You should consider those that have despised your goodness, and ever contemplate personal vengeance against them. God will deal with them, and the Lord does it best!

Noah, a godly father, saved his son Ham and Ham's wife from the Flood by his personal righteousness (**Genesis 6:8-10; 7:1**).

But when Ham sinned against his father, Ham's family tree was perpetually cursed (**Genesis 9:18-27**). Beware; the Lord will deal with such men!

David killed Goliath for timid Saul, and David served Saul well (**1Samuel 17:50-53; 18:5**).

But Saul was jealous of this godly man and tried to kill him. So God dealt with Saul's family and gave the ruling power to the tribe of Judah (**1Samuel 19:1; 25:28-31; 2Samuel 6:21**).

Much of His reign, was ruined by the envy, that consumed his soul and left him hopeless in the end.

David justly protected Nabal's sheep and shepherds. When Nabal ridiculed David's honorable request, God set him up for ten days before killing him and giving his beautiful widow to David (*1Samuel 25:4-17; 1Samuel 25:36-42*).

The Lord Jesus befriended and honored Judas Iscariot as one of His twelve apostles. But Judas chose to betray Jesus for a few pieces of silver, so God dashed his bowels and blood across the potter's field (*Acts 1:18-19; Psalm 109:1-20*).

Both David and Jesus encountered many such traitors in their lives (*Psalms 35:12; 38:20; 55:12-15*).

Jesus Christ was Israel's Messiah. He preached truth and healed all that came to Him for three years. But the Jews wickedly crucified Him, so God set up and allowed the Roman armies in 70 A.D. to demolish their nation (*Matthew 21:44; 22:7; Luke 19:42-44*).

Reader, is this warning too harsh you? Have you not rightly considered the crime. To repay evil for good is profanely selfish; it is beastly and despicable; it reveals a heart black with ungratefulness; it deserves severe judgment.

Consider Jeremiah's hard prayer for God's vengeance on the Jews persecuting him for preaching the truth (*Jeremiah 18:18-23*).

Jesus told His apostles to judge every house and city they entered. **If** the city rejected the gospel, they were to shake off the dust of their shoes against that city. In the Day of Judgment, Jesus would be more merciful on Sodom and Gomorrah than on that city (*Matthew 10:12-15*)!

Reader, Do you reward evil for good to those who have treated you kindly and well? Every time someone does something good for you, there is a debt created for your kindness in return. Do you pay your debts of care and kindness?

Don't get unduly angry against Saul, Nabal, Judas, and the Jews. Try some self-examination! Have you rewarded your parents for the love, time, effort, and expense they invested in you, while you were demanding food, dirtying yourself, and then giving them teenage nightmares?

When was the last time you took them out to eat? Wrote them and thanked them for being great parents? Bought them a gift? Spent a little on them in some way?

Have you matched your spouse in affection and companionship? Have you honored your employer for hiring you? Have you compensated your pastor for teaching you the truth?

Do you praise policemen for protecting you at night?

Do you reward good neighbors for making life pleasant?

Do you thank your children for spending their time to visit you?

Teenager! One of the vilest criminals in the world is a child who disrespects and rebels against his parents! After all they have done for you, how can you possibly mistreat them in the slightest way?

You should be honoring them like a king and queen! In the Old Testament Law, you would deserve to die (*Exodus 21:15, 17; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18-21; 27:16; Proverbs 20:20; 30:17*)!

God showed the greatest goodness in the universe by giving His only begotten Son to save the world. (*Romans 5:8-10*).

The Lord rewarded good for evil to the praise of God's glory and grace (*Ephesians 1:3-12*).

If you want to act like a child of God, reward good for evil yourself (*Romans 12:21*).

Proverbs 17:14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.

It takes two to fight. Either party can avoid or end a fight by letting the matter go. Once a fight has two combatants, it will get much worse.

If an opening is made in an earthen dam or dike. Water does not settle for a small stream, but quickly eats away the opening and violently escapes in a flood. In the same way, strife will grow quickly.

Wisdom Demands We Withdraw At The First Sign Of Conflict!

If we stay and trade facial expressions, words, or blows, a small confrontation can quickly escalate into a major fight. One foolish retort is followed by an angry demand, which generates spiteful contradictions, leading to hasty accusations; and soon both parties are foolishly flailing at each other with words or blows.

Such Conduct Is Neither Wise Nor Christian!

It is easy to see the beginning of strife. But who can see and calculate the damage in the end?

In Solomon's day, water was held and directed by the use of levees, dikes, dams, ditches, and aqueducts (*2Chronicles 32:1-4, 30; Isaiah 22:9-11*).

Much of Israel was dry; being an agrarian society, they depended on water. It was common knowledge that a slight opening in a dam or levee would quickly open wider by the power of the water flow itself. This flow would quickly and violently become a flood, very difficult to reduce or stop.

A dam is much more easily preserved than repaired! To keep them intact, even minor breaches must be avoided and fixed.

Strife and contention grow the very same way, quickly and violently, into major battles. As soon as you sense anger rising or a conflict developing, get away and do not meddle any further with the person or the matter!

As some say, "Just let it go." Do not let the fight even get started! Do not answer "fighting words" with other strong words. Do not reply to strife, unless you respond with a soft and conciliatory answer to appease the party and end the contention.

If spouses would learn this rule, there would be no marital quarrels.

If church members learned this rule, divisions in the congregation would end.

If siblings learned it, we might rightly see the phenomenon the Bible calls "*brotherly love*" and "*brotherly kindness*"!

Peace could reign with just a little wise consideration of water escaping an earthen dam!

Here is the wisdom for each man to be a peacemaker, whom Jesus blessed (*Matthew 5:9*).

Wise men, defer anger and pass over offences, fools will stay around meddling (*Proverbs 19:11; Proverbs 20:3*).

Righteous men know pride keeps strife going, they know wisdom does not let anger grow (*Proverbs 13:10; 14:29; 16:32; 21:24; 25:8; 28:25; Ecclesiastes 7:8-9*).

Contentious men are like adding gasoline to a fire, so scorners should be cast out (*Proverbs 15:18; 22:10; 26:21; 29:22; Genesis 21:9-10*).

Peace lovers will use soft answers and turn away wrath before it escalates (*Proverbs 15:1*).

Christian charity demands slow provocation (*1 Corinthians 13:4-7*).

David said, "*They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that*

heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs" (*Psalms 38:12-14*). Perfect, holy wisdom!

Abraham graciously, solved a dispute over land with Lot by letting him choose (*Genesis 13:8-9*).

Gideon solved another difficult situation, by gloriously appeasing the men of Ephraim (*Judges 8:1-3*).

Jephthah's lack of wisdom cost many lives (*Judges 12:1-6*).

In the New Testament, two occasions for strife were peacefully ended by the appointment of deacons and the council at Jerusalem (*Acts 6:1-7; 15:1-31*).

But Paul and Barnabas separated company because they could not settle the sharp contention between them (*Acts 15:36-41*).

Though weak brethren are allowed in churches, they are not allowed to bring their doubtful disputations ^{contentious} _{speech} with them (*Romans 14:1*).

Our Lord taught us to turn the other cheek when hit by another, which perfectly fulfills and expands, the wisdom of our Proverb (*Matthew 5:38-42*).

And Paul applied His lesson by teaching us to live peaceably with all men (*Romans 12:18*).

Even ministers are to reject foolish and unlearned questions to avoid strife (*1 Timothy 1:4; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:14-16, 23; Titus 3:9*).

Envy and strife are from hell and have no part in a Christian's life (*James 3:14-18*).

Proverbs 17:15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

**Our World Has Created
The Age Of Compromise.**

**Human Society Has Made Every Effort
To Get Rid Of All Absolutes.**

Wicked men are excused and exonerated, and even protected, and just men are criticized and condemned. But the LORD hates both kinds of compromising's (those who justify the wicked, and those who condemn the just).

God has absolutes, and He expects men to abide by them and enforce them. When He commanded judges to be appointed in Israel, God ordered, "*If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they*

shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (Deuteronomy 25:1).

The Word Of God Is A Collection Of God's Absolutes!

However reader, it does require proper interpretation and application of those absolutes (*2Chronicles 19:10; Nehemiah 8:8; 2Timothy 2:15*).

Jesus declared, that violating even the Word of God's least commandment, was unacceptable (*Matthew 5:19*).

Breaking one commandment is tantamount to breaking them all in God's sight (*James 2:10*).

In matters of judgment and relationships, the wicked are to be despised and rejected, and the righteous are to be loved and received.

David hated wickedness (*Psalms 5:5; 11:5; 139:21-22*).

David loved righteousness (*Psalms 119:163; 146:8*).

The animosity and conflict between the righteous and wicked will never be appeased (*Proverbs 29:10*).

Judgment, is a vindication of good and condemnation of evil. Judgment takes place in courts, of course.

Judgment also takes place in the home, children's conduct is judged.

Judgment takes place in the workplace, in churches, in schools, and even among friends. In these and other situations, just men are to be honored, and wicked men are to be condemned.

America's legal system is no longer the paragon of justice it once was. From low to high courts, the wicked are excused and the just punished. Judges are chosen and approved, not for their perfect integrity but for political ties.

For example, abortion was legalized to justify cruel and wicked women and to condemn their innocent unborn children to death. The profane murderers are given rights, the murdered pure are given none.

Criminals now have more rights than do victims. Employers have fewer rights than do employees.

Landlords must submit to renters; husbands must bow to wives; and magistrates must jump through hoops before prosecuting obvious malefactors.

Lawsuits are filed and upheld for the most inane reasons, brought by the most insane consumers.

Sodomites are protected; but authoritative husbands are despised and undermined.

Murderers pleading insanity are excused for taking a life. How absurd! **If** a man commits murder by reason of insanity, he has an aggravated reason to die, he is not only a murderer, he is an insane murderer! Why not keep and protect rabid dogs?

Many say, "Let's agree to disagree." But the fact is that God does not have such a loose and licentious approach to truth.

Right is right, and wrong is wrong; and every moral issue has one right and many wrong positions. David said, *"Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:128)*.

Eli rebuked his sons, but did not condemn them; he lost everything for the compromise.

Corinth was puffed up about fornication in their church, instead of mourning and judging the wicked man.

David on his deathbed told Solomon to kill his nephew and long-term chief of staff, Joab, for his wickedness.

John the Baptist let King Herod have it!

Many say, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," missing the Lord's order in context to judge some men as dogs and swine, unworthy of truth, and to judge righteous judgment (*Matthew 7:1; 7:6; John 7:24*).

Many value peace over purity, even though God put purity over peace (*James 3:17*).

Many have rebelled against Bible judgment (*Romans 16:17-18*).

Carnal Christians of today fulfill the abominable sins of this Proverb. Paul described the rise of an effeminate brand of Christianity that would despise those that are good and flatter lustful and sinful women (*2Timothy 3:1-7*).

Carnal Christians desire a form of godliness, a religious ritual, but they want no authority or judgment in their gospel or lifestyle.

The political and religious situation today is the same as in first century Palestine. The conservative religious leaders and the political appointee of the greatest nation on earth cooperated to justify, the seditious murderer Barabbas and condemn the innocent and just, Jesus of Nazareth.

Live and speak like Jesus Christ today, and they will crucify you as well, while they excuse evildoers in court and promote them via the entertainment media. The day is coming in which all judgment will be according to truth in the most absolute sense.

The books will be opened, and there will be no mistrials, plea-bargaining, hung juries, pardons, or acquittals.

The righteous will be given eternal life in heaven, and the wicked will be cast into Lake of fire forever (*Matthew 13:41-43; John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:11-15*).

How will any be judged righteous, since all are sinners (*Romans 3:23*)?

How can the Bible say God justifies the ungodly (*Romans 4:5*)? By Jesus Christ (*Romans 3:26*)!

Jesus died for the lost (*Romans 5:8*) and died in their place (*Romans 4:25*)!

It is the punishment, God poured out on Jesus Christ that clearly shows His condemnation of sinners (*Isaiah 53:5-11*).

Proverbs 17:16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?

Fools pretend to want wisdom! They attend church, carry a Bible, drop a few bucks in the offering, ask questions, compliment the preacher, and buy a religious book now and then. But they have no heart for real learning, for correction and instruction. They are totally content in their little fantasy world, trusting their own imaginations and doing their own things.

Can You Prove You Are Any Different? Do You Have A Heart For Wisdom?

Knowledge and truth are not rights! God owes them to no man, and He only gives wisdom to some!

God will not give wisdom to fools! In fact, He will take from them the little knowledge they think they have (*Luke 8:18; 19:24*).

The visible creation proves God's existence. But when men reject it, He turns them over to insanity (*Romans 1:18-32*).

God may even allow, lying spirits to deceive them, for their arrogant ignorance (*1Kings 22:15-23*).

Fools desire to extrapolate their own opinions (*Proverbs 18:2*). They have no pleasure in learning; they want to teach. They want to prove, that reasoning in a circle from nothing leads to something, their own preconceived thoughts!

Of course, fools make a show of wanting knowledge, truth, and wisdom. The greatest collection ever of such fools occurred in Athens, with the development of Greek philosophy, where Paul tried to warn them

against their superstitious babblings (*Acts 17:16-31; 1Corinthians 1:19-24; 1Timothy 6:20*).

But God, sees the deepest motives and thoughts of the human heart, and cuts them off completely. Though they may attend public preaching or teaching, He knows their intentions are false. God may even allow a deceiving teacher to lead them into greater error (*Ezekiel 14:6-11; 33:30-32; Matthew 13:10-16*).

Wisdom is only for those who sell-out for it, buy it at any price, and will not sell it (*Proverbs 2:1-5; 4:7; 18:1; 23:23; Matthew 13:44-46*).

Fools and scorners, called dogs and swine by Jesus, are to be cut off from knowledge and truth (*Proverbs 14:6-7; 26:4, 12; Matthew 7:6*).

Ministers are to avoid and reject them and their questions (*1Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 6:4-5; 2Timothy 2:14, 16, 23; Titus 3:9*).

Paul prayed to be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men without faith (*2Thessalonians 3:1-2*).

Paul praised the noble Bereans for their zeal for the truth (*Acts 17:11*).

Paul warned men not to despise prophesying, for they should love preaching (*1Thessalonians 5:20*).

The Jews before Ezra are the best example of coming with a sincere heart (*Nehemiah 8:1-18*).

Reader, we are in the perilous times of the last days. Men have a form of godliness, but no authority in it (*2Timothy 3:1- 4:5*).

Men attend assemblies and listen to teachers, but they will not endure sound doctrine (*2Timothy 4:3-4*).

They may pay a small price, but their heart is not in it. Men are ever learning, but they never find truth (*2Timothy 3:6-7*).

Reader, how eager are you for wisdom and truth? God's wisdom and God's truth! Not speculation about political conspiracies. Do you crave knowing more about Christ Jesus the Lord? **If** yes, what sincere efforts will you make for it today?

Can you endure sound doctrine easily, because you crave the fear of the LORD and the knowledge of God? Have you responded to Lady Wisdom's invitation and met her requirements (*Proverbs 8:34*)?

Many more claim to seek the truth than actually seek it! And you need to learn this distinction. Which one are you? Which one will you be this very day?

Proverbs 17:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

**A True Friend Never Fails
No Matter What!**

A true brother is always ready to help in time of need or trouble. The wise man, described excellent friends and brothers in a very few Words.

You should ask yourself, **If** you are such a friend, and you must ask yourself, **If** you have such friends.

Two are better than one! The solitary life is lonely and vain! Good friends help in four ways:

1. They share in successes
2. They help when you fall
3. They provide encouragement and synergy
4. They help oppose enemies (*Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*)

**Successful Men
Have Great Friends.**

Such friends are not found easily; they are a blessing from God. And such friends must be carefully preserved by very conscious choices and sincere friendliness (*Proverbs 27:10; 18:24; John 15:15*).

If you deeply offend a friend, it may be very hard to recover them (*Proverbs 18:19*).

Look for friends among zealous saints (*Psalms 101:4-8; 119:63; Titus 1:8*).

They are won by a pure heart and gracious speech (*Proverbs 22:11; 1Samuel 18:1*). Holy living brings holy friends.

Jonathan and David were friends. Jonathan loved David as his own soul (*1Samuel 18:1-4*).

David described Jonathan's love as greater than that of women (*2Samuel 1:26*).

There was no competition or envy between them. Back to back with swords, no enemy could touch them! Face to face, no lovers could match their affection! Their covenant of friendship, in life and death, was glorious! They strengthened each other in the Lord (*1Samuel 23:16*).

Men say, "Blood is thicker than water," meaning family ties are stronger than friendship or marriage.

But the sons of God know better. They say, "Blood is thicker than blood," meaning the bond in Christ, by His blood, is stronger than the bond of family.

The best marriages are when a man marries his sister, his friend in the Lord (*1Corinthians 9:5*)!

No man has forsaken family for Christ that did not find a better, larger family (*Luke 18:28-30*).

Saints make the best friends, for God forms their souls identically. They fear the LORD, believe the truth, adore Jesus Christ, follow Bible wisdom in life, have true love in their hearts, and know they will spend eternity together.

The world cannot know such unity! They exhort and rebuke each other to perfection, which is sweeter than kisses (*Proverbs 27:5-6, 9*).

It did not matter, that Paul was on trial for his life, his friend Luke was there (*2Timothy 4:11*).

It did not matter Jesus was crucified by rabid Jews; John was there (*John 19:26-27*).

Fair weather friends, as they are called, are never there when you need them (*Proverbs 14:20; 19:4*).

Jesus of Nazareth, reigning as King on David's throne, is the greatest Friend. Reader, He gave His life for you; He lives to make intercession for you; He will never leave or forsake you.

Proverbs 17:18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.

Impulsive risk takers are fools. Without thinking, they make financial commitments, they should not make. Puffed up by pride, they want to appear wealthier than they are.

Impulsive risk takers are shortsighted, they cannot see that promises made today may be more than they can pay tomorrow.

Impulsive risk takers in order to impress friends, co-sign loans or guarantee performance in other ways. Wise men seek to reduce risk, but these fools do not understand.

"Striking hands" was the custom of shaking hands to confirm a man's commitment, though often it was simply clasping or gripping another's hand.

The striking or shaking verbs, are extraneous to the act, a hand of one person is touched solidly to the hand of another person to establish a transaction or promise an intention. In the context of this Proverb, the hands are clasped to guarantee financial backing for a friend with poor credit.

A surety is a guarantor. The fool guaranteed his friend's debts by shaking the creditor's hand and promising to pay if the friend does not. Though the lender would not accept the friend's assets or character, the financial fool

boldly flaunted his economic power to complete the deal.

Many wives and children have learned too late that their assets and future income were promised to another, in just such a hasty moment of financial folly.

Helping a friend in need with a little financial backing is one thing. Over-committing yourself by taking on excessive contingent liabilities is another.

An appeal from a lazy friend and proud thoughts, of closing a deal can form a powerful temptation. Solomon warned his son about losing his bed from such deals (*Proverbs 22:26-27*)!

He told his son to get out of such commitments with the desperation of a deer trying to escape from a hunter or a bird from a fowler (*Proverbs 6:1-5*).

Co-signing is a great financial danger (*Proverbs 11:15; 20:16; 27:13*).

Many politicians and governments violate this simple rule. Wise men reduce financial risk and minimize contingent liabilities.

Men running for office are sorely tempted to promise great things. How else can they buy votes? Since they cannot bribe each voter, they instead promise future benefits to each voter, even though the total cost of such benefits is financially and politically impossible!

They are either run out of office for not keeping their promises, or they resort to deficit spending to fulfill their obligations.

The lesson is simple. Do not co-sign loans, unless the amount is small, the situation desperate, and it is for a real need. Other lessons are evident.

- Hate debt.
- Reduce risk.
- Stay insured.
- Avoid contracts.
- Fear leases.
- Limit promises.
- Love cash.
- Hate credit.
- Exalt savings.
- Maximize your credit rating.
- Warn your friends against borrowing.

Consider the greatest story of a surety (guarantor) in the universe. God was the creditor. Sinners were the debtors, and they could not pay or buy their freedom. God's holy nature required they each die and spend eternity in the debtor's prison of the lake of fire!

But a Prince stepped forward and promised to pay for them. Did He mean it? Yes! How? By dying for them! "*By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament*" (*Hebrews 7:22*)!

Proverbs 17:19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.

Real Men Love To Fight Is A Lie! Fighting Is Sin That Leads To Other Sins.

Men that love to fight love sin, because that is what they do by their contention and vicious and vindictive spirits. Godly men are peacemakers (*Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18; James 3:17-18*)!

The only fighting you can justify is the holy contending for the truth (*Nehemiah 13:23-28; Jude 1:3*).

Real Men Look Out For Number One Is Also A Lie!

Looking out for yourself and exalting yourself is arrogance, conceit, and pride.

Men that like to promote themselves are looking to be destroyed, because that is what is coming (*Proverbs 16:18; 18:12; 29:23*).

Godly men are humble and meek and avoid publicity as far as possible (*Proverbs 15:33; 18:12; 29:23*).

The two clauses in the Proverb are strongly connected. The first clause condemns fighting as sin.

The second clause promises destruction to the proud. What is the connection? It is pride that causes fighting (*Proverbs 28:25*)!

All fighting would end without human pride. "*Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom*" (*Proverbs 13:10*).

Consider the first clause. What a sober warning! **If** you like to argue, debate, fight, quarrel, or wrangle, you must love sin, because that is what you are doing.

God said, "*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*" (*Ephesians 4:31-32*).

If you smell a fight starting; Stop It! Fighting will always escalate, unless one party ends it (*Proverbs 17:14; 26:21*)!

Reject angry men, because they foolishly love to fight (*Proverbs 15:18; 22:24-25; 29:22*).

Reject hateful men, because it is love that ends fights (*Proverbs 10:12; 17:9; 1Peter 4:8*).

Reject talebearers, because they cause fights (*Proverbs 16:28; 26:20*).

If you see a scorner, one who despises correction, get away from him, because he also causes fights (*Proverbs 22:10*).

Fighting comes from the lustful desire of your sinful flesh, which must be rejected (*Galatians 5:19-21; James 4:1*).

Consider the second clause. Another sober warning! If you promote yourself, you will be destroyed. Your "gate" is your estate, reputation, or influence.

You are not to exalt these things, because pride brings destruction (*Proverbs 16:18*).

Humility is far better (*Proverbs 16:19; Psalm 138:6*).

Let other men praise you, but do not do it yourself (*Proverbs 27:2*).

Take a reserved approach to public gatherings (*Proverbs 25:6-7*).

Learn God's way to be exalted, by abasing yourself (*Luke 14:11*).

Be like John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (*John 3:30*).

Proverbs 17:20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.

A Bad Heart And Bad Speech Brings Trouble!

Either one is enough. Both will double the trouble!

If you allow evil in your heart, you will not find good coming your way in life.

If you allow your tongue to say evil things, you will fall into mischief because of it.

Sober Warning Of Certain Consequences For Not Ruling Your Spirit And Speech!

A froward heart is bad, contrary, difficult, hard to please, obnoxious, perverse, proud, rebellious, unreasonable, and wicked.

Now, consider its opposite, a good heart is agreeable, easy to please, cooperative, gracious, humble, polite, proper, submissive, reasonable, and righteous. Froward

persons are evil, rebellious, troublesome, and wicked. They are fools.

A man with a froward heart is rebellious: He despises obeying his father, pastors, employers, or the government.

A man with a froward heart is arrogant and will excuse his sins every time. He can hurt those around him without any remorse.

A man with a froward heart cannot be happy and content, no matter the efforts taken to please him.

A man with a froward heart despises the poor and envies the rich. He is perverse.

A man with a froward heart does not find good. He is not blessed. He will not know the favor of God or men in his life.

A man with a froward heart is doomed to trouble, no matter how hard he seeks good, because his heart is despicable to God and men (*Proverbs 11:20*).

Though men say, "You do not know my heart," it is easily visible by the conduct it produces (*Proverbs 20:11; Mark 7:21-23; Luke 6:43-45*).

Ananias and Saphirra were Christians. Peter baptized them, and they were members at Jerusalem. They were landowners and showed charity to saints.

Because they loved money, their froward hearts chose to lie about their giving, which cost them their lives. But they envied the attention given Barnabas for his giving (*Acts 4:34-37; Acts 5:1-11*).

A perverse tongue is corrupt, froward, obstinate, unreasonable, wicked, and wrong. Consider its opposite, a wholesome tongue is pure, gentle, gracious, correct, reasonable, kind, righteous, and right.

A perverse tongue says the wrong things at the wrong time in the wrong way. Such speech is hurtful, irritating, disruptive, and destructive.

A man with a perverse tongue cuts those near him, especially family. He criticizes anyone he wishes, whenever he pleases. He ridicules authority.

A man with a perverse tongue prays in church and curses on the way home.

A man with a perverse tongue flatters difficult customers and yet rips his tender wife within the hour.

A man with a perverse tongue can sing, "Oh, how I love Jesus," and then scream at a motorist.

A man with a perverse tongue slanders, backbites, and whispers about others without thought. He is negative

and complaining. His tongue is perverse. He cannot say holy and kind things except in hypocrisy.

God hates a bitter fountain, which sprays venom from a poisoned well. Such a man will fall into mischief. He will be troubled, for both God and men will oppose him (*Proverbs 18:6-7*).

Any friends he has are not true friends, for they are only there for what they can get. They are certainly not there for the pleasure and peace of his corrupt and cutting tongue. He wonders why bad things keep happening, but he cannot admit his speech is corrupt.

Aaron and Miriam criticized Moses for his Ethiopian wife, so God made Miriam white with leprosy (*Numbers 12:1-15*).

Korah and princes of Israel disrespectfully said to Moses, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy." Meek Moses was furious, and God opened the earth and swallowed them and their families alive (*Numbers 16:1-34*)!

**The Truth Of The Matter
Is That A Froward Heart
Produces A Perverse Tongue!**

It is nigh impossible to have one without the other, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (*Matthew 12:33-37*).

Therefore, an evil heart will bring corrupt speech, which brings the double curse of this Proverb. *Keep thy heart with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23)*!

Are you not finding much good in life? Are you experiencing much mischief? There is a good reason! You are not guarding the thoughts of your heart or the words of your tongue as you should.

Your sins of the heart and evil speech have brought God's judgment and man's disapproval upon your life. Repent! Turn your heart to righteousness!

Proverbs 17:21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy.

Do you want to mess up your life? Forfeit your joy, and face sorrow and shame? Then have a child that is a fool! A shameful and troublesome child can suck the life out of your soul. It will be a calamity that will crush you and your spouse (*Proverbs 10:1; 17:25; 19:13*).

**If You Neglect Your Parental Duties
You May Birth A Fool.**

All children are born foolish with a heart that defaults to selfishness, slothfulness, and sin (*Proverbs 22:15; Psalms 14:1-3; 51:5; 58:3*).

However, this foolishness may generally be driven out of a child by reproof and the rod of correction (*Proverbs 22:15; 19:13; 20:30; 23:13-14; 26:3; 29:15*).

But some children are born compulsive and incorrigible fools. There is no cure, for you cannot drive the foolishness out of him by any means (*Proverbs 27:22*).

**Neglectful Parents Especially Lazy Fathers
Turn Children Into Fools!**

These men do not train their children, and the results are terrible: the children are hardened, in the folly with which they were born. There is hope when a child is young (*Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 15*).

If you squander the opportunity, shame and trouble are your future (*Proverbs 29:15*).

What are the lessons? A foolish son or daughter is a terrible calamity. It is your wisdom to live as holy and virtuous a life as possible, if God will peradventure save you from such a disaster.

Child training can teach wisdom and eliminate foolishness. Therefore, there is every good reason to be diligent and faithful in consistently training each of your children (*Proverbs 19:18; 20:30; 22:6, 15; 29:15, 17*).

The pain of a foolish child is great! Reader, be a great parent! Each day you take off parenting, brings greater sorrow!

Are you an example by living wisely? Authoritative by enforcing godliness? Pitiful? Knowledgeable? Teaching? Realistic? Friendly? Consistent? Spiritual? Leading? Each point is important. But most of all, do you pray for them?

Have you already failed as a parent? Do you have one or more fools with your last name? Confess your great sin to God, beg Him for mercy.

Confess to your children, and make every godly effort to teach and train them with the options you have left. The Lord is able to restore the years lost due to your foolishness and His chastening (*Joel 2:25-27*).

Proverbs 17:22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

You affect your health by more than diet, nutrition, exercise, exposure, and sleep.

You affect your health by your attitude and spirit. A happy and cheerful spirit will improve your health, but a wounded and negative spirit can ruin it.

How is your attitude today? Do yourself a favor! Consider the wisdom here and choose to be cheerful in the Lord! And do it now!

Our Proverb's simile ("*like a medicine*") and metaphor ("*drieth the bones*") should not be dissected to endorse antibiotics or explain marrow drying in your bones. They are rather teaching the general health value of a happy outlook and attitude toward life.

Recent medical studies have confirmed this fact taught by Solomon 3000 years ago! Those who laugh and enjoy life will live longer.

And we have a whole category of sicknesses and body maladies called psychosomatic (psycho = mind; somatic = body) illnesses, where the mind negatively affects physical health.

A merry heart or broken spirit is a choice! They are not results of Fate, temperament, genetics, or health. They are not the result of circumstances, for a cheerful person can choose to be happy in horrible difficulties, and a sullen person can ruin a wonderful time. You can have a continual feast through life.

If you have a joyful heart; but a person with a negative attitude can find something wrong with every day (*Proverbs 15:15*!)

Reader, Christian joy is a command. But the laughter of fools is sin (*Ecclesiastes 7:6; Philipians 4:4; 1Thessalonians 5:16; Ephesians 5:4*).

Folly is no medicine: jesting is no balm. Both are perverse and destructive. Solomon called them madness (*Ecclesiastes 2:2; 10:13*).

Our Proverb is not teaching a foolish or naïve approach to life. It promises, natural blessings, spiritual fruit, and a commandment of joy. It also condemns a negative, critical, and unthankful heart.

Sin destroys a merry heart, for a child of God cannot be happy out of fellowship with His Father. David often described a broken spirit caused by sin (*Psalms 6:1-6; 38:1-11; 51:8-11*).

Sin dried him up, broke his bones, and miserably tormented him from the inside out. He spent his time crying and grieving, rather than rejoicing and living! The simple first step to a merry heart and good health is to live a holy, blameless life.

Discontentment will ruin health, for all you can think about is what you do not have, even if you have much.

Ahab's life was ruined because he could not have Naboth's vineyard (*1Kings 21:1-4*).

Amnon fell sick, out of lust for his half sister (*2Samuel 13:1-4*).

No wonder the Holy Spirit teaches true success is godliness with contentment (*1Timothy 6:6*)!

If you allow envy, bitterness, lust, resentment, or anger in your life, you are begging for the judgment of God and serious health problems.

If you do not forgive others, God will not forgive you; and you will dry up your health by such an evil disposition.

If you are joyful, loving, thankful, peaceful, forgiving, and full of praise, you will find the blessing of God and a therapeutic balm for your body.

If you make the Lord the joy of your life, you will have a constant reason to be merry, regardless of circumstances.

Through the Holy Spirit, Solomon tells you to enjoy life today (*Ecclesiastes 9:7-10*).

Will you heed His inspired advice, or will you allow sin and sinful attitudes to corrupt soul and body?

The Lord Jesus came to bind up the broken-hearted (*Isaiah 61:1-3*).

What more must the Lord do to bring joy to your heart, a bounce to your step, a glow to your face, and health to your bones? He is a glorious Savior and Friend, and those who know Him are forever happy.

There is nothing more refreshing and healthful than to examine yourself, confess your sins in private prayer, offer the Lord, the sacrifices of praise and singing either alone or in the assembly!

You will never dance with all your might until you learn these things. David had learned this well (*Psalms 32:11; 68:3; Habakkuk 3:17-19*).

Proverbs 17:23 A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.

Rulers, judges, and witnesses must have great character. They will face many attempts to buy their favor in order to pervert justice.

Righteous men are never moved by such offers. But wicked men will take secret gifts from others, and they will overthrow true judgment to earn their abominable wages of unrighteousness.

Gifts here are bribes, a payment to corrupt a person and induce him to act in the interest of the giver by perverting judgment. By their nature, bribes are very secretive, for their discovery leads to severe punishment for both giver and receiver.

So they were hidden in the bosom, under the clothing, for a very private transfer (**Proverbs 21:14**).

The wicked man taking the gift is the receiver of the bribe. He takes the gift produced from the payer's bosom. He is the ruler, judge, or witness that is willing to pervert the ways of judgment for reward.

In bribery, the great offence is by the receiver. The one in authority is held to a much higher standard of integrity than the one under authority.

Fear of fines, imprisonment, or even death is a strong motive for men to offer money for their deliverance. But the wickedness condemned here, and throughout the Bible, is the evil character of the man who would consider taking such payments.

Taking gifts is an easy way to enhance your living. Men slip you money, motivated by fear or greed, because of your position of influence. You have to do nothing but look the other way or slightly alter your judgment to provide the giver his desire.

Done regularly, such transactions make men rich, with hardly any effort. After all, it is called a gift, because it did not come by labor. And such easy income attracts and affects men (**Proverbs 17:8; 18:16; 19:6**).

To A Wicked And Depraved Man This Is Very Easy Money!

God condemned bribes. The Holy Spirit wrote, "*And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous*" (**Exodus 23:8**).

And again, "*Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous*" (**Deuteronomy 16:19**).

And the law included, the incomprehensible situation, of taking money to execute men, in a capital offense (**Deuteronomy 27:25**).

The essential character of rulers and judges must include a hatred of covetousness.

Jethro told Moses, "*Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens*" (**Exodus 18:21**).

It Would Be Wonderful If Our Elected Officials And Their Staffs Had To Meet This Standard!

Even New Testament elders, must not have any inclination toward money, for they will be tempted, to modify their preaching or judgment, to maintain or increase their income (**1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7**).

Ministers without experience or success in business, will be especially tempted to compromise, doctrine or judgment to preserve the favor of the major contributors and their livelihood. Many pastors have modified the message to maintain or increase a Church's attendance, in order to enhance their position and income.

Samuel was a man of great character and faith. He anointed Solomon's father king of Israel.

This noble man served the nation all his life. But here is what the sacred historian wrote of Samuel's sons, "*And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment*" (**1 Samuel 8:1-3**).

The language is a perfect inference to our Proverb. So when he was near death, Samuel asked the nation to swear to him that he had never taken a single bribe in the discharge of his office (**1 Samuel 12:3-5**).

It is a wicked nation that has corrupt officials taking bribes. God condemned Israel for it on more than once occasion (**Isaiah 1:23; Ezekiel 22:12**).

The prophet Micah described a level of corruption that included a general conspiracy for rampant bribery. But the prophet ended his description with a warning of God's judgment that was coming. (**Micah 7:2-4**).

From the partitioning of Europe after World War II to the local sheriff's deputy being offered cash to not write a traffic ticket, the warning of this Proverb still rings loud and clear.

And the bigger the government bureaucracy and more extensive their involvement in private enterprise, the greater the efforts made to buy government favors.

Our elected officials are dependent on private campaign contributions, and the temptation is great to pervert judgment for the contribution and the vote.

Our capitals seethe with lobbyists and others, whose purpose of existence is to push and pull legislators to do them favors. The temptation to compromise is great.

An executive job for a grandson would be a real family coup, if the senator would merely cast his vote in favor of sugar tariffs.

What would a defense contractor offer to obtain the next contract for his company? What would a doctor be

willing to pay to have charges of manslaughter dropped?

What might the educational establishment offer a senator's staffers, if he would vote for a significant increase in their budget?

What would a family or friend be willing to pay to have a president or governor pardon a relative in prison?

The temptation for rulers is very great. And in our immoral and amoral society, the gifts are offered often.

Corruption exists at every level. There are many righteous men in high places, and for them we must pray. They face temptations we do not encounter, and we should beseech the LORD to protect them and give them righteous strength.

The story of Balaam is a miserable account of a covetous prophet being offered money to curse Israel. Peter called the prophet mad, labeled his choice as iniquity, and called his bribe the wages of unrighteousness (**2Peter 2:15-16**).

Judas Iscariot followed his evil way by agreeing to betray our Lord for the mere payment of thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave (**Matthew 26:14-16**).

The day is coming in which the Lord will make known every secret bribe, for what they hid from men has never been hid from Him (**Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:16**).

They hid their bribes, for they feared the criticism of men more than the terror of the Holy God, but the punishment that is coming will far exceed anything man could have done to them.

God will bless the man greatly *"that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes"* (**Isaiah 33:15-16**)!

The man who will not take *"reward against the innocent"* shall not be moved! He shall dwell in God's holy hill (**Psalms 15:1-5**)!

Let us hear the call God gave to Abraham, *"I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect"* (**Genesis 17:1**).

So righteous was Paul, he would not put up the money Felix sought to release him, which would have broken both divine and Roman law (**Acts 24:25-27**).

Given Paul's many friends, the money could easily have been obtained! But though the object would have been renewed preaching of the gospel, the apostle would not do evil that good might come, and he abstained from all appearance of evil (**Romans 3:8; 1Thessalonians 5:22**).

Is The Lord Jesus Christ!

The love Psalm, which Paul quotes in glorifying the Son of God, says this of our King: *"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows"* (**Psalms 45:6-7; Hebrews 1:8-9**).

Proverbs 17:24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

Reader, you have seen fools. They bounce from one thing to another. They are excited with this and then that.

Fools are always seeking happiness and success, which they never find. They love new things. They cannot focus on important matters.

Fools are easily distracted from their duties like children. They look in strange places for answers. Fools dream. They talk a lot. They are not content. They are fickle, unsettled, and easily confused.

A Wise Man Is Very Different! He has understanding as the guide and rule of his conduct.

A Wise Man is focused on all aspects of life with the resolute purpose of keeping God's commandments.

A Wise Man has not forgotten what he was taught, nor is he ignorant of the Scriptures.

A Wise Man searches the Bible for wisdom, knowledge, understanding, discernment, and instruction, and he proves all things by them (**Acts 17:11; 1Thessalonians 5:21**).

A Wise Man is content with life and confident in most any dilemma.

Fools are often scorners, resenting correction and instruction, so they learn very little (**Proverbs 14:6**).

A fool is so thrilled with foolishness, that he avoids wisdom and understanding (**Proverbs 15:14**).

A fool is so lazy, that he never applies the diligence it takes to acquire wisdom, for he would rather enjoy and tell his own thoughts (**Proverbs 18:1-2**).

And fools are often arrogant, which makes it impossible for them to identify and learn wisdom (**Proverbs 26:12**).

The Most Righteous Example Of All

Wise men do not appreciate daydreaming or speculation. They would rather muse than be amused (*Psalm 143:5*).

Wise men prefer meditation over imagination, instruction over recreation, and self-examination over self-actualization.

Wise men want truth, and they define it as God's certain Words in the Bible (*Proverbs 22:17-21*).

Wise men have no regard for the opinions of men (*Psalm 119:98-100*).

Wise men do not have to look for wisdom, because it is right before them (*Proverbs 14:6*).

Wise men have it hid in their hearts and they meditate on it day and night (*Psalm 1:3; Psalm 119:11, 128*).

Reader, you arrived on earth knowing nothing. You are here a short time, and your whole duty is to fear God and keep His commandments (*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14*).

Your flesh, the sinfully depraved part of your being, sees with the lust of the eyes (*1John 2:15-17*).

The fool gives in to these lusts and wastes his life chasing illusions. And satan and the world offer many things to see (*Luke 4:5-7*).

David prayed to be saved from looking at vanity (*Psalm 119:37*)!

It is foolish to spend your life craving something better, while you race toward something bitter! Death! *Godliness with contentment is great gain (1Timothy 6:6)*.

You cannot beat this simple rule for a successful life. Godliness is living prudently with wisdom as your great pursuit (*Proverbs 4:5-9; 8:17*).

Contentment is appreciation for God being your friend and trusting Him for the things, He has given, as being best (*Hebrews 13:5-6*).

But Fools Must Dream!

The fool is always seeking greener pastures near and far!

The fool's mind is an open sieve, receiving much froth from vain ideas and retaining nothing of value. The Holy Spirit warned of the vanity and vexation of a wandering desire (*Ecclesiastes 6:9*).

The fool would rather study U.N. politics, Ben Spock child training hallucinations, practice yoga, or watch lifestyles of the rich and famous on television than to apply God's Word to the salvation of his family.

The fool's mantra is, "I live life with an open mind." His mind is so open that anything can fly in and nothing of value will stay!

The world sends a steady stream of advertising, fads, public opinion, peer pressure, questions, and other forms of manipulation to bend his mind to the will of Satan, who grins with wicked glee at his foolish mantra that gives the father of lies entrance to his soul.

Seal your mind with God's Word (*Psalm 119:128*)!

There Are Important Goals For Life And There Are Foolish Wastes Of Life!

Knowledge is better than ignorance, wisdom is better than folly, righteousness is better than wickedness, Heaven is better than hell, God is better than man.

While Martha was worried about distracting details, Mary knew the one thing needful for her life was hearing instruction from the Lord Jesus Christ (*Luke 10:38-42*).

Where would the Savior classify you? Like Martha? Or Mary?

In order to save you from yourself and your wandering desire, the Lord has called, prepared, and sent men to be pastors and teachers (*Psalm 68:18; Ecclesiastes 12:8-14; Jeremiah 3:15; Malachi 2:7; Ephesians 4:8-12; 2Timothy 3:16-17*).

What is their job? Not social work! Not administration! Not weddings and funerals! Not monasteries! Not stuffy theological work! Their job is to keep your eyes in your head and your heart in the truth: that will perfect you from being tossed to and fro like the fool (*Ephesians 4:13-14; Colossians 1:28-29*).

Have you searched for one of these God prepared men? Can you submit to his instruction, about the true priorities of life? **If** you can, you are full of understanding, and wisdom is directly before you.

A God prepared man will reject foolish and unlearned questions, for he wants you settled in the faith once delivered to the saints.

A God prepared man will work with the Spirit of God to conform your imagination and thought to the inspired and infallible Words of God (*2Corinthians 10:4-6*).

But can you stay focused for the one or two hours a week of his instruction? Most cannot.

Jesus Christ described them as wayside hearers. The preaching finds no lodging place in their unprepared minds and hearts, and the devil quickly takes it away.

Wayside hearers leave every church assembly more ignorant than before. Literally! Read it (*Luke 8:12, 18*)!

Because they dislike insistence on correction, instruction, reproofs, and warnings, they look for kinder teachers.

Wayside hearers want teachers to entertain them with fables and help them explore the cesspools of human imagination and education (*Isaiah 30:8-11; 1Timothy 6:3-5, 20-21; 2Timothy 4:3-4*).

Oh, how they love to learn! Teach me more, they cry! But God has promised to send them strong delusion to believe a lie (*2Thessalonians 2:9-12; 2Timothy 3:6-7*)!

Reader, you have a choice! It is a serious choice! You are reading one of many offers of wisdom. It is before you.

If you have an understanding heart. It is disgusting, If your eyes prefer the ends of the earth. Eliminate any satanic distractions and seek wisdom (*Proverbs 4:7; 18:1*).

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

Every godly parent with children knows the truth of this statement. Fathers grieve when their children are foolish, and mothers feel the bitter pain of seeing them choose folly instead of wisdom.

Of course, worldly parents are not as grieved or pained, because they do not understand wisdom or godliness, nor do they recognize their children are fools.

Mothers endure pain bringing their children into the world and they work hard and long, bringing those children to maturity (*Genesis 3:16; John 16:21; 1Timothy 5:8*).

But **If** they neglect training them in the way of the Lord, those children can bring far greater grief and bitterness in the future than childbirth or thankless years doing laundry (*Proverbs 29:15*)!

What should you learn from this Proverb? Child training, though requiring sacrifice and investment, has a fabulous return.

It will save you from the grief and bitterness described here, and it will bring great joy and pleasure to see your children living in wisdom before God and men (*Proverbs 10:1; 15:20; 17:21; 19:13, 26; 23:15-16, 23:24-25; 27:11; 29:3, 17*). So, you have been warned!

If you train up your children when they are young, they will give you pleasure when they are old, by walking in the ways you know are good (*Proverbs 22:6*).

God has loaned them to you, with foolishness abounding in them, but He has told you how to drive it far away (*Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14*)!

Fathers, training is not an option (*Ephesians 6:4*).

Mothers, you must participate as well (*Proverbs 1:8; 6:20*).

Parent, do you have a godly goal and approach to child training? Or is life just happening in your home? The choice is up to you, but the consequences are certain!

If your children are growing up without daily correction and instruction from you? The pastor cannot do it for you; and the public school system will certainly not. God chose to have wisdom communicated by parents to children (*Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 29:29*).

Children, obey your parents. When you disobey, you cause disappointment and pain. **If** you do not honor your parents, you will reap what you have sown, future pain from your own children (*Galatians 6:7*).

There is nothing weak about remembering how your mother will feel when she learns of your sins. Such thoughts have held some men back from crimes.

Do you consider the grief you cause your heavenly Father by foolishness and carnality (*Psalms 95:10*)?

God is independent of actual harm by your sins (*Job 35:5-8*).

The Spirit of God is grieved and quenched by your life of sin (*Ephesians 4:30; 1Thessalonians 5:19*).

You can please or displease your heavenly Father (*2Samuel 11:27; 1Kings 3:10*).

Feel the meaning of these Words: "*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children*" (*Ephesians 5:1*).

Proverbs 17:26 Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.

Child rebellion is a horrible evil, ruining the parent-child relationship, as the previous Proverb declares (*Proverbs 17:25*).

There are two related evils involving civil government that are also horrible. It is a travesty when a nation's rulers punish just and righteous citizens.

And it is wickedness when citizens rise up against leaders for doing their rightful job of enforcing justice and righteousness and equity.

**Both Rulers And The Ruled
Are Obligated To God!**

The opening adverb "*Also*" indicates a comparison to the preceding Proverb (***Proverbs 17:25***).

As disobedient children disrupt the home and destroy parents, so a breakdown in civil authority disrupts and destroys cities and nations.

The adverb teaches wisdom. The first authority met in life is that of parents. **If** the parents are unjust or their God-given power is not enforced, children enter into life with perverted values and rebellion in their hearts.

It Is Not Good "To Punish The Just."

When a government legislates or executes laws that hurt upright citizens, it is not good. The expression "*not good*" is the figure of speech "meiosis," a deliberate understatement that is clearly understood by the context and the nature of the matter (***Proverbs 16:29; 18:5; 20:23; Psalm 51:17; Ezekiel 36:31***).

Rulers punishing just citizens is far worse than merely "*not good*"; it is an abomination to the LORD (***Proverbs 17:15***).

What is equity? It is fair, just, and righteous judgment (***Proverbs 1:3; 2:9; Psalms 98:9; 99:4***).

But when rulers make equitable judgments, one party to a controversy is commended and the other is condemned. It is an abomination for those under authority to strike back at their rulers for doing the job God gave them to do.

The Proverb condemns two perversions of authority, rulers punishing good citizens, and the ruled rebelling against good rulers.

God made rulers a terror to evil men, not good men (***Romans 13:1-6; 1Peter 2:13-17***).

Abraham appealed to this virtue of God (***Genesis 18:25***).

Rulers who abuse their authority and will be punished by God, when they are a terror to good men (***Proverbs 17:15; 24:23-26; Exodus 23:7; Deuteronomy 27:25***).

God took Egypt's wealth, for their violent oppression of the Israelites.

God sent dogs to eat Queen Jezebel, because she had Naboth killed for his vineyard.

What will He do to America for murdering unborn children for the convenience of whore mothers?

God ordained civil government. It has nothing to do with any conspiracy anywhere.

If you speak or fight against political rulers without a divine mandate, you are opposing God Himself (***Romans 13:1-6; 1Peter 2:13-17; Job 34:16-19***).

The Lord considers you a brute beast needing to be destroyed (***2Peter 2:10-12; Jude 1:8-10***).

If you even associate with such men, your ruin is coming soon (***Proverbs 24:21-22***).

Jesus and Paul showed honor to those abusing their authority (***Matthew 26:62-64; John 18:22-23; Acts 23:1-5***).

Every ruler and government had better examine their laws and practices as to how they affect the righteous, because God will not endorse any unjust treatment of them: God aggressively defends the poor, helpless, and godly (***Ecclesiastes 5:8; Psalms 2:10-12; 12:5; 68:5; 82:1; 105:13-15; Isaiah 10:5-19***).

Though others may tremble, God is unmoved in the slightest by any king! Just ask Sennacherib, Belshazzar, Alexander, Hitler, Stalin, or others!

Every citizen in every nation should humble himself under the authorities God has appointed. No matter how much you may dislike them,

God put them in their office over you. You expect your children to obey and honor you, even when you are a bad example or do a terrible job of parenting; and God expects you to obey your princes, even if they are privately wicked or enact and enforce laws that make little sense and cost you.

God even condemns the cursing of a king in your private and personal thoughts (***Ecclesiastes 10:20***)!

Disobedience to parents is a mark of a reprobate society and of carnal Christianity (***Romans 1:30; 2Timothy 3:2***).

Ben Spock has done all he can to pervert child training in America, but godly parents will follow the only inspired child training manual (***Psalm 119:128; Isaiah 8:20; 1Timothy 6:3-5, 20-21***).

Parents must vigorously enforce the authority God has given them, lest their children rise up in rebellion against God's other appointed spheres of authority and overthrow the foundations of society (***Proverbs 22:15; 29:15; Psalm 82:1-8***).

There is no perfect authority among men. But imperfect authority, in the five spheres, where God ordained authority is necessary, can lead to happy and prosperous homes, marriages, businesses, churches, and nations.

The only perfect authority is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon to destroy in flaming fire all those who have rebelled against Him (*2Thessalonians 1:7-11; 1Timothy 6:13-16*).

Proverbs 17:27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.

How do you find a fool? Listen! If you hear a person talking loudly, quickly, critically, or a lot, you have found a fool.

A man with knowledge uses few words and only talks when necessary.

A man with understanding is calm, careful, gracious, and helpful. If you are a fool, close your mouth, you may be able to deceive others into appreciating you (*Proverbs 17:28*)!

Could a blind man find you in a crowd? Are you usually talking? Are you more interested in telling about yourself than asking about others? Are you more interested in winning a discussion than hearing other views? Is your volume on the high side, your tone a little arrogant and cutting, or your comments somewhat critical and negative? You are a fool!

You have met men and women with an excellent spirit. They are very rare in the world. They make you totally at ease with them, they make you honored by their presence, they make you secure in your person, they make you charmed by their gentleness and kindness.

You loved being around them, and you wished you could be like them. What was their distinctive trait?

It was gracious speech! Think about it! It is that simple!

Kings love those who talk graciously (*Proverbs 22:11*).

Wise men use gracious words (*Ecclesiastes 10:12*).

Gracious women are always adored (*Proverbs 11:16*).

Our Lord astounded men with his gracious Words (*Psalms 45:2; Luke 4:22*).

Paul taught it as the basis of acceptable speech for all (*Colossians 4:6*).

But fools are odious! And they are rightfully despised. They must always be talking (*Ecclesiastes 5:3*).

Fools always have an opinion, a retort, an idea, or a suggestion.

A fire burns in fools mouths. They relieve it by babbling. Their talk is mischievous madness (*Proverbs 13:16; Ecclesiastes 10:12-14*).

Fools talk without thinking (*Proverbs 15:28*).

Fools are so irritating, you want to beat them (*Proverbs 18:6-7*)!

Do you want an excellent spirit, winning delight and favor with God and men?

Shut up (*Proverbs 17:28; 10:19*)!

Listen to others (*Proverbs 18:13; 29:11; James 1:19*)!

Study before answering (*Proverbs 15:28*)!

Learn something of value to share (*Proverbs 15:2; 16:23*)!

Be slow to speak (*Proverbs 29:20; James 1:19*)!

Hate your opinions and thoughts (*Proverbs 26:12*)!

Confess your idiocy (*Proverbs 30:2-3*)!

Measure yourself strictly by the number of noble men craving your presence (*Proverbs 10:21; 18:24; 22:1*)!

Will you learn more about speech? The words of your tongue reveal your heart (*Matthew 12:35*).

Critical, harsh, negative words reveal a black heart.

Gracious speech begins in a pure heart (*Proverbs 22:11*).

Saying something kind and wise (*Proverbs 31:26*).

Many words will always include sin (*Proverbs 10:19*).

Pray about your speech (*Psalms 19:14*).

Ruling your speech to the praise of (*James 3:2*).

Proverbs 17:28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

The Easiest Way To Enhance Your Reputation Is To Cut Your Words In Half.

Hasty speech and much speech are the marks of a fool. Closing your mouth and reducing your words will cause others to believe you are wise and understanding, even if you are a fool.

Careful, deliberate, profitable, and appropriate speech marks a wise man. Speech reveals character (*Proverbs 15:2; 29:11; Ecclesiastes 5:3; 10:12-14*).

Hasty, impulsive, vain, and froward words mark a foolish and wicked man. A fool may never say anything profitable or appropriate, but reducing his words will make others think him careful and deliberate (*Ecclesiastes 10:3*)!

It is wisdom to see and hear well, but say little. Other men presume the silence, indicates careful observation and deep consideration of a subject, and a disciplined search for the appropriate thoughts and their words before speaking! Has wisdom ever been so cheap?

The tongue is dangerous and easily hurts others (*Proverbs 10:19; 18:21; James 3:2-12*).

Wise men limit words to avoid sin (*Proverbs 17:27; Job 13:5*).

Wise men study before speaking (*Proverbs 15:28*).

Be swift at hearing, not swift in speaking (*James 1:19-20*).

Reader, the fire to speak burns in foolish men. They cannot quench this fire; they cannot shut off the flow; they cannot rule the impulse; they must talk, now! (*Psalms 39:1-3*).

What a curse to have an unruly mouth and tell everyone within hearing distance that you are a fool. Close your mouth, and even though you are a fool, no one else will know it!

This Proverb does not apply to all, as some do not speak enough. Wise men learn the balance, not too much to be foolish, enough to be a tree of life (*Proverbs 10:21; 12:18; 15:4, 23*).

If this rule is true for men, it is truer for women, whose adorning feature is a meek and quiet spirit (*1 Peter 3:3-4*).

A talkative woman should cut her words in half to make sure she is not despised as the odious and clamorous woman (*Proverbs 9:13; 11:16; 27:15; 30:23*).

Abraham Lincoln, long after Solomon, confirmed wisdom by his well-known words, "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak out and remove all doubt."

If you don't have anything necessary, profitable, or good to say, why talk?

We do not need constant noise to be happy or content. Silence is golden. Making conversation to fill a void is disturbing the peace and foolish talking, for which you will be judged (*Ephesians 5:3-5*).

You are the fulfillment, of crackling thorns, that Solomon so despised (*Ecclesiastes 7:4-6*).

Our Lord Jesus warned that we shall give an account for every idle word (*Matthew 12:36*).

So let us provide wisely for our future at His judgment seat and protect our present reputations by holding our peace and shutting our lips. So help us, Lord.

Though men may think you wise for your silence in conversation, God is not deceived at all.

All things are naked and opened before His eyes; He discerns the very thoughts and intents of your heart (*Hebrews 4:12-14*).

So it is better to forsake your foolishness altogether and seek true wisdom in your heart. You cannot mislead God.