

CHAPTER 21

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

The LORD is sovereign over all men's hearts, even kings' hearts. As easily as He directs rivers back and forth as they rush to the sea, so He turns the hearts of kings any direction He desires to accomplish His holy purposes. "O bless our God, ye people!"

With this knowledge in mind, we pray confidently for kings and all those in authority, knowing God can and does direct their hearts and decisions (***1Timothy 2:1-2; Jeremiah 29:4-7***).

Nehemiah did not hesitate to pray in the presence of the King of Persia for great mercy (***Nehemiah 2:1-6***).

We submit to authorities laws, knowing they and their decisions, are orchestrated by the LORD for His glory and our benefit (***Romans 13:1-7; Isaiah 49:23***).

We easily understand God, is sovereign over lesser men and simple circumstances, so we trust Him completely and wait for His mercy (***Proverbs 16:9; Ruth 2:3; James 4:13-15***). See the comments on ***Proverbs 16:33***.

When the Roman Empire collapsed in 476 AD and ten nations rose from its ruins (***Daniel 7:24; Revelation 17:12-13***).

God put in their hearts to fulfill His will and allow their kingdoms to support the Popes and the revived form of that empire (***Revelation 17:17***).

It did not matter for what personal, selfish, or fearful purposes they supported papal ambitions, they did it because God allowed the idea to be put in their hearts by Satan and his forces.

And when they fulfilled and served God's grand purpose, He changed their hearts again. They fell. The same as prophesied by the LORD! There will be more kingdoms and nations falling (***Revelation 17:16***).

Such sovereign rule over kings' hearts is nothing new, for God has done it from the beginning of creation. He allowed Pharaoh, to harden his heart, in order to demonstrate His glory over him and Egypt (***Exodus 4:21; 14:4, 17***).

Why else would a man take his chariot down into the Red Sea after ten plagues in the land of Egypt! What a fool!

**Be Not High-Minded But Fear!
A Hardened Heart Leads To A Reprobate Mind.**

God allowed the hardened heart of Sihon, king of the Amorites, so He too would be destroy in battle (***Deuteronomy 2:30***).

God allowed the hardened heart of David, to number Israel, by turning him over to Satan for a season (***2Samuel 24:1; 1Chronicles 21:1***).

God exposed Hezekiah's heart, by leaving it to its own pride (***2Chronicles 32:31***).

He allowed a lying spirit to influence the false prophets of Ahab (***1Kings 22:15, 22***).

The King of Assyria was no more than an axe or saw in the LORD's hand, though he knew it not (***Isaiah 10:5-15***).

God removed the conquering lusts of Canaanite kings for the land of Israel three times a year, when all the men attended the three annual feasts (***Exodus 34:24***).

God also allowed the hardened hearts of those same kings to be destroyed in battle against Israel (***Joshua 11:20***).

God gave a new heart to Saul and great largeness of heart to Solomon to prepare them to be kings (***1Samuel 10:9; 1Kings 4:29***).

And God gave Nebuchadnezzar a beast's heart for seven years to humble him, and He did not even ask the poor king's permission, to do it (***Daniel 4:16-17***)!

Whether Adolph Hitler, an American President, or Saddam Hussein, it does not matter, the LORD controls their hearts. We can and should pray for them.

If under their rule, we should submit to their laws (unless they go against God's laws). And we can rest in our Heavenly Father's loving but mighty arms. For they cannot touch us without His permission (***Psalms 105:14-15***).

Be thankful the LORD is sovereign over the human heart, because if he had not changed your heart, you would be slobbering to a idol stump somewhere (***Isaiah 44:9-20***).

Give God the glory, and ask Him to continue to change your heart (***1Kings 8:58; Psalms 51:10; 119:32, 36; 141:4; Isaiah 63:17; Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 13:21***).

Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

**A Great Curse On Humanity
Is Man's Confidence In His Own Opinions!**

Only a few men learn to distrust their own ideas, and they are great and wise men in the earth. It is a horrible handicap for a man to allow his opinions and thoughts to remain unchecked in his mind. He will make disastrous blunders in his life and ultimately be destroyed.

The LORD, sees and considers every human heart as to: their motives, their humility, and their fear for Him, their reverence of His Word, and their use of counselors and teachers.

The LORD has no regard for any man or his opinions, for He knows that all the thoughts of all men are foolish and vain (*1Corinthians 3:18-20*).

From a foolish teenager driving faster than the speed limit, to a promiscuous sodomite, each person thinks he is right and will not suffer for his actions.

The foolish rush blindly forward in conceited folly to their own destruction. This is a very evil aspect of man's inherent depravity, and only the grace of God can check it from consuming each man.

The man, with cruel or vain thoughts justifies, himself and condemns others, because he presumes he is right! What a perverse and profane error! What horrible self-deceit!

The woman with an obnoxious mouth cannot stop talking, she arrogantly presumes others should appreciate her odious belches. The evildoer presumes as well that he is right.

Men approach the Bible with the same arrogance. Though barely removed from their mother's breasts, they pontificate on God's settled matters.

Humanity decides, capital punishment is cruel, sprinkling babies is as good as immersing believers, and orders of the Pope honors Jesus. But the LORD ponders their wicked hearts.

Do they think God doesn't see? God fills heaven and earth (*Jeremiah 23:23-24*)!

God knows the thoughts and intents of every heart, and all things are naked and opened before His holy eyes (*Hebrews 4:12-13*).

Your most intimate and secret fantasies are exposed (*Proverbs 5:20-21*).

The Jews, found our Lord's perception, to be supernatural more than once (*Matthew 9:3-4*)!

Cure your disease! End your curse! Humble yourself, and worship your Creator (*Proverbs 9:10*)!

Hate vain thoughts, even your own (*Psalms 119:113; 101:2*)!

Ask God to search your heart for them (*Psalms 139:23-24*).

Esteem Scripture above all other knowledge, and hate every contrary idea (*Psalms 119:128*).

For major decisions, use a multitude of counselors. "*Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil*" (*Proverbs 3:7; 15:22*).

Proverbs 21:3 To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Christian reader, do you want the wisdom of pure gold? Learn this Proverb, and don't forget it. You will have easy answers for situations that others think are impossibly hard. You will find mercy and liberty for your own soul and those of others.

Pharisees cannot grasp this principle, so Jesus used it to close their mouths more than once (*Matthew 9:13; 12:7*).

Though the Pharisees had read it, memorized it, counted its letters, strapped it to their foreheads, and kissed its ink marks on scrolls, they never came close to learning the spirit of this rule from the heart of God. (*Matthew 23:5; John 5:39; Romans 2:17*)

"Justice and judgment" are doing what is right toward God and men. Toward God, it is a pure heart without hypocrisy or sin (*1Samuel 15:22-23; Psalm 51:16-17*).

Toward men, it is being fair, merciful, equitable, and kind (*Exodus 18:21-22; Deuteronomy 1:16-17; 16:18-19; 2Samuel 8:15; 15:4; Psalm 82:1-4; Ecclesiastes 5:8; Isaiah 59:4,14; Jeremiah 22:15-16; Ezekiel 45:9; John 7:24*).

"Justice and judgment" is keeping the two great commandments, which are greater than any sacrifice (*Mark 12:33*).

"Sacrifice" is personally having a, check the box, ceremonial religion, even if God gave the ceremonies.

"Sacrifice" is obeying the letter of God's worship while ignoring its spirit of worship.

This outward religion is easier than doing *"justice and judgment"* with a pure heart.

And Here Is The Wisdom: doing what is merciful, good, and right to others, that pleases God more perfectly, than keeping His external worship and commandments.

A pure heart and sincere love and duty to others is more important than details of formal worship. We reject the heresy that attending Mass will cover your soul regardless of how you live.

We do not minimize formal worship by this rule, as Solomon was the grandest example in all the Bible of sacrifice (*1Kings 3:4; 8:64-66; 2Chronicles 7:5*).

But when we face a conflict, we choose the morally right thing to do by mercy and compassion; true worshippers will do both. (*Matthew 23:23*).

We never exalt ceremony or letter over mercy and spirit. We never make these choices by presumption or whim, but only when facing a contradiction.

Our Proverb is not the only voice for this rule in the Old Testament. It is found in other places as well (*Isaiah 1:10-17; Micah 6:6-8*).

The one quoted by our Lord is from *Hosea 6:6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.*

Let us illustrate the rule with Bible examples. Jesus blasted the Jews for thinking more highly of circumcision and the Sabbath than healing a man (*John 7:21-24; 5:1-16*).

It is true "*justice and judgment*" to heal a man, even if the Jews thought it broke the Sabbath law!

To leave the man impotent, even for one more day, to keep the Sabbath, was wicked "*sacrifice.*" These unmerciful Pharisees would cut a man (circumcision) on the Sabbath, but they would not allow Jesus to heal a man on the Sabbath after lying impotent on a bed for 38 years!

If you think such wicked and hateful men no longer exist, you are wrong. They still exist. They have little minds, and even smaller hearts. You would rather meet a bear robbed of her whelps than one of these self-righteous men.

Ugly hearts are revealed when repentant sinners are celebrated or mercy is sought for anyone but themselves. We can rejoice in the way in which our Lord defeated them.

When David was hungry, he ate shewbread that was lawful only for priests to eat (*1Samuel 21:1-6*).

And Jesus absolutely justified him for doing so (*Matthew 12:3-4*).

How did David have the confidence to eat the priests' bread? Surely he remembered what happened to Nadab and Abihu (*Leviticus 10:1-2*), Moses and Saul (*Numbers 20:7-13; 1Samuel 13:8-14*).

How did David know God accepted his breaking of the law for hunger? By this Proverb!

So when our Lord's disciples picked some corn and ate it on the Sabbath Day, the Pharisees condemned them for breaking the law (*Matthew 12:1-2*).

But Jesus reminded these religious legalists about David's case and the priests (*Matthew 12:3-5*).

Then He wisely applied this principle of mercy to totally exonerate His disciples, and He rebuked the Pharisees for being so ignorant of their own Scriptures (*Matthew 12:3, 5, 7*).

They made "*sacrifice*" more important than doing "*justice and judgment*" to their very own parents! Pharisees would easily exalt Corban: Their faith-promise gift of assets to the temple, over taking care of their parents in need (*Matthew 15:3-6; Mark 7:9-13*).

Jesus healed a woman on the Sabbath, who had been bowed together with a infirmity 18 years.

The ruler of the synagogue rebuked Him before the people and said healing should take place on the other days of the week!

Jesus called him a hypocrite, told everyone present he would help his ox on the Sabbath, and then justified breaking the Sabbath for the woman's sake (*Luke 13:10-17*).

The result? His enemies were ashamed, and the people rejoiced at His glorious works of mercy!

When Naaman returned to Syria after being cleansed of leprosy, his duties included escorting the king to pagan worship. The custom required him to bow with his master before the pagan idol Rimmon.

What advice did Elisha give to this conscientious believer in God, who would have to engage in pagan idolatry as part of his job (*2Kings 5:18-19*)?

Go in peace! Don't worry about it! Pharisees would have turned blue and choked to death on such merciful wisdom, because they never learned our Proverb.

How can we apply it? Divorce and remarriage is likely the hardest issue facing Christians today.

If Scripture expressly allows only "fornication and desertion" as grounds for divorce and remarriage, then we have an opportunity to practice our principle. (*Matthew 5:32; 19:9; 1Corinthians 7:12-16, 27-28*)

There will be cases short of adultery or desertion, but similar or worse in effect, where divorce is justified by this rule alone. Are you too timid to apply this rule by faith? Not if you are like the man after God's own heart! Shake free from the unmerciful bondage of Pharisaism and find the liberty of Jesus Christ!

If you are weak in faith and need extra courage, our Lord gave further support to such applications of mercy, when He said in the very same context as David's example, "*The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*" (*Mark 2:23-28*).

Can we apply it further? If a man's business, health, or vacation calls him away from assemblies, we accept this priority of mercy by our Proverb, even though we emphasize attendance more than most (*Hebrews 10:25*).

We do not condemn him for being less of a Christian; we encourage him for being a merciful wise man! And we do not object to this principle being applied personally to one's self (*Proverbs 11:17*).

We do not use this Proverb to flagrantly break God's commandments. We know what happened to the man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath (*Numbers 15:30-36*).

We esteem all God's precepts to be right (*Psalms 119:128*).

We know what Jesus taught about those breaking the least commandments of the law (*Matthew 5:19*).

We are not timid to override ceremony and external laws to show love and personal mercy in painful situations.

Jesus taught mercy as never before seen in Israel. He taught love of enemies (*Matthew 5:43-48*), joy over repenting sinners (*Luke 15:1-32*), and the superabundant blessing of mercy to those who show it (*Luke 6:37-38*).

But the rule had been all ready given in our Proverb.

Proverbs 21:4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

A wicked man is always sinning, no matter what he does. His heart, looks, and actions are all unacceptable to God.

A wicked man heaps up wrath against the day of wrath. Even his innocent activities are defiled (*Romans 2:5; Titus 1:15-16*).

God once drowned the whole world, because He saw man's every thought was only evil continually (*Genesis 6:5*)!

Righteousness, in a regenerated heart, keeps its thoughts and motives humble and pure (*Proverbs 4:23; 14:14; 22:11*).

Righteousness continues in the looks of a man's countenance. Which then leads to actions, that honor and please the Lord (*Proverbs 30:13; 11:20; 21:27; Psalm 11:7; Isaiah 2:11*).

If you are unsaved, your heart is not right with God!

If you are unsaved, your heart is not fully obedient to God, all of your actions are all sinful in His sight! What a horrible and damning thing is sin!

The most innocent, noble, or religious activities become further condemnation when done without a pure heart! Read how the prophet rebuked Judah for spiritual slothfulness corrupting all they did (*Haggai 2:10-14*).

The High Look; God Hates Pride!

God condemns pride often. Pride is trusting and glorying in yourself; and God hates any competition for His glory and praise, especially man.

God knows you are nothing, and you should know it too (*Psalms 39:5; 62:9*).

God expressly hates a proud look! "*An high look*" is when thoughts of pride leak from your heart and affect your face, speech, and manner before Him and others. (*Proverbs 6:16-17*).

"*An high look*" is most despicable on the face or in the eyes of a woman, for she is further removed by her position from God. Let every woman lower her eyes! (*Isaiah 3:16-17; 1Corinthians 11:3; 1Timothy 2:9*).

Consider, *charity vaunteth ^{boast one's self} not itself*, which condemns outward airs of superiority toward others. But neither is charity puffed up, which condemns even the thoughts (*1Corinthians 13:4*).

A Proud Heart Is Wicked Keep Your Heart Humble Before God And Others

We should smite our breasts and confess, that without God's mercy we are lost (*Luke 18:13*).

We must reject, our own conceits, and humbly condescend to others (*Romans 12:16*).

We must esteem others better than ourselves with a lowly heart (*Philippians 2:3-5*).

David, the man after God's own heart, gives us a great example. He prayed that he would not be guilty of either sin, an high look or a proud heart (*Psalms 131:1*).

Then David resolved to cut off any person in his house that had either of these abominations (*Psalms 101:5*).

Reader, all you have to do is look around to realize that there are few with zeal for the Lord like David. Most

parents idolize their children and cannot imagine such holy resolutions.

The plowing of the wicked is sin! Even our normal activities that are duties of God and nature become sin when done by a man with wickedness in his heart.

Every activity of man must be done to the glory of God, which the wicked person never considers (***1Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 10:4***).

Every activity must be done in faith, which the wicked persons do not possess. So even their breathing becomes a breath of damnation! (***Romans 14:23; 2Thessalonians 3:2***).

And such is just as true of religious activities. When wicked man prays, he commits an abomination (***Proverbs 28:9***)!

When wicked man sacrifices, he commits an abomination in God's sight (***Proverbs 15:8***)!

What A Horrible Life Sins Brings For The Day Of Judgment!

Why? Because: wicked men trust in themselves, are unthankful, and labor for their own greed and pride, rather than the glory of God! God is not in all their thoughts!

Wicked men use His creation for their own selfish ends.

Wicked men have no regard for God's Person or God's Precepts.

Before plowing, the righteous man thanks God for his health and his ox's health, sunshine, last night's rain, the acres he owns, the opportunity to work, God's mercy to sinners, and the hope of eternal life.

While plowing, he meditates on the ox's strength, the smell of the soil, the miracle of plant growth, the Lord's goodness, and begs Divine mercy for more rain and greater grace.

He wipes sweat away and thanks Heaven for the body's cooling system.

At the day's end, he gives seed to a neighbor, takes a chicken to the preacher, thanks the Lord for a blessed day, reads his Bible, confesses his sins, and loves his wife and family.

Before plowing, the wicked man complains about the fact he has only one ox, the lack of sunshine last month, the mud from last night's rain, the farm next door he wishes he owned, the death of his father last winter, the burden of taxes, and how life is hard.

While plowing, he dreams, of making more money than his brother, beating his neighbor for local councilman, and of how strong and successful he has become.

The wicked man swears, at the sun for making the day so hot. At the day's end, he sends the borrowing neighbor away empty, kills two chickens to glut himself, complains about how hard he worked, reads the Police Gazette, and goes to sleep thinking of his neighbor's wife. Are there any more questions about the plowing of the wicked?

Reader, it is your sober duty to keep your heart pure from sin. Examine your soul to walk with God without distraction.

If you allow compromise to remain, your actions and prayers become sin. And you will bring upon yourself God's severe chastisement.

So reader, from the heart, and your facial expressions, and through your actions, let all be done to the glory of God!

Born again believer, there is no dread here for you. With faith in Jesus Christ and confession of your sins, God will forgive and cleanse you from all unrighteousness (***1John 1:7-9***).

Born again believer, with your heart purified by faith and zeal in the Son of God, even overlooked and missed matters will not spoil your standing before Him (***1Kings 15:14***).

Richly enjoy the life God has given you! The lawful liberty of the righteous is a great glory (***Titus 1:15; Romans 14:22***)!

Proverbs 21:5 The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.

Business And Financial Success Start In The Head!

A diligent man plans his career, training, life, efforts, savings, time, schedule, and other factors to accomplish wise goals, and he obtains success.

A lazy man, too impatient to pursue success the ordinary way, by hard and intelligent effort, can only think about shortcuts, and they end up cutting him short!

Our Proverb compares business thinking. Follow its parallel clauses. The Holy Spirit's Proverbs often have two clauses to be compared and contrasted to get the full lesson. The first clause describes a diligent man getting rich. The second clause describes a hasty man becoming poor.

The Lord taught that a diligent man is patient in his thoughts and efforts, and he will succeed. A lazy man is

impatient in his thoughts and efforts, and he is tending toward destruction.

A diligent man knows that plowing his field day after day will yield results. Planting one kernel of corn will yield 800 six months later! (*Proverbs 12:11; 28:19*).

A diligent man knows it is a boring, hard, and thankless job, one not featured in infomercials.

A diligent man knows farmers do not drive sports cars or wear Rolex watches. Their capital is tied up in something a little more important, land and income-producing equipment.

A diligent man knows that savings is precious capital, the seed corn for next spring, or the funds, to buy a bigger tractor (*Proverbs 14:4*).

If a man will dedicate himself to a basic and necessary job, or business, like farming (it can just as easily be a white collar profession), he has the foundation in place for success.

If a man will faithfully outwork others at this job with the wisdom of Proverbs, looking for ways to work smarter than others, saving part of every paycheck, and investing it conservatively, he will get ahead (*Proverbs 10:4; 13:4; 22:29; 27:18; Ecclesiastes 10:10*)! Guaranteed!

If this sounds too boring or slow, be assured that the last Word in this Proverb "*want*" describes you!

A lazy man has a better idea! He is so sure of his thoughts, that he does not care, how good your reasons against them might be (*Proverbs 26:16*).

A lazy man does not like boring or hard work, and he expects a sports car and Rolex! Perseverance is a curse word!

A lazy man loves to watch the lifestyles of the rich and famous on television. He wants a glamorous job that pays lots of money, without hard work, where he will not get dirty!

A lazy man would never be a grunt like the farmer! He wants a shortcut to bring him the big bucks! He will retire in 10 years!

The World Has Options For Daydreaming - Sluggards!

A daydreaming sluggard attends a network marketing rally, where he sings, "God Bless America," and listens to a flashy couple describe their yacht; but he cannot see the 10,000 poor souls, in their down-line, that buy over-priced soap every month to pay for that yacht!

A daydreaming sluggard sees a man win the lottery, but he cannot see the 10,000,000 poor folks that paid for the winnings and a new school!

A daydreaming sluggard cannot grasp that a lottery is the only way to tax the poor, who do not earn enough for income taxes!

A daydreaming sluggard moves along the magazine counter to find something better than network marketing or the lottery. Of course!

A wannabee investor has published a shiny magazine about daytraders. He opens an account with borrowed money, and before he can read the third chapter, the broker has swallowed his account!

A daydreaming sluggard then finds a sure thing, a guaranteed investment paying 50% every quarter with lots of testimonials about big fat checks. He borrows from his other grandmother this time; but shortly after "investing" his funds, he reads that his money has been stolen by a Ponzi scheme set up for smart guys like him!

If this lazy daydreamer does not get his thoughts corrected, his covetousness and greed may tempt him to consider bribes, stealing, false business practices, altering family wills, or other foolish and wicked efforts to catch up to the faithful farmer (*Proverbs 20:21; 28:20, 22*).

A daydreaming sluggard should visit the farmer and ask for a job. Maybe he could drive a tractor for a few years, saving his money, until he can buy his own tractor and rent out his services!

King Solomon observed and analyzed both rich and poor (*Proverbs 24:30-34; 27:23-27*).

Solomon even watched ants at work (*Proverbs 6:6-11; 30:25*).

With God's wisdom and divine inspiration, he put his conclusions, about economic success, in Proverbs to benefit his son and the citizens of his kingdom (*Proverbs 1:1-9; Ecclesiastes 12:8-14*).

Are you willing to give up your foolish thoughts and begin to think like a wise man? The choice is yours, plenteousness or poverty!

Proverbs 21:6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

Honesty In Business And Finances Is Wisdom!

The apparent advantage of deceit is only an illusion. It is a vanity, that is worthless. It will not work. The perceived gain will be lost, and the LORD will judge those who lie for monetary advantage.

To choose this approach, is the same as desiring death and destruction (*Proverbs 8:36; 17:19*).

Our Proverb is sandwiched between two others that deal indirectly with the same subject.

Patient diligence, is God's means for financial success, haste for wealth, will lead to sinful actions and poverty (*Proverbs 21:5*).

Wicked men rely on wicked means, to enhance their gain and thus, will be destroyed by God, for rejecting equity and fair dealings (*Proverbs 21:7*).

Consider the many Proverbs demanding just weights and balances (*Proverbs 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23*).

Solomon here teaches his son, business ethics, so every young man must be taught to be impeccable in business. There is no room for fudging any aspect of economic exchange.

The LORD sees every infraction, and The LORD will judge every one. The LORD protects every customer and oversees every deal from heaven. Be sure your sin will find you out!

Listen as God warns: *"As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool"* (*Jeremiah 17:11*).

Also read this: *"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work"* (*Jeremiah 22:13*).

And there are many more sober warnings like these: *Proverbs 10:2; 11:26; 13:11; 20:14, 21; 28:8; Leviticus 19:13, 35-36; Deuteronomy 24:14-15; 25:13-16; Job 24:10-11; Ezekiel 45:10-12; Hosea 12:7; Amos 8:4-6; Micah 6:10-11; Malachi 3:5; James 5:1-7*.

Ahab and Jezebel lied to seize the rightful property of Naboth, and Ahab went down to enjoy his treasure. But it was a vanity, for there Elijah told him how he and Jezebel would die (*1Kings 21:1-24*).

Did Achan enjoy his treasure, while the stones crushed his body and the fire burned his bones (*Joshua 7:20-26*)?

Did Gehazi enjoy his treasure, while he slowly rotted as an outcast with terminal leprosy (*2Kings 5:20-27*)?

How about Judas Iscariot (*Matthew 27:3-10*)? How about Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts 5:1-11*)?

Consider these questions:

Do you pay the full price? On time? Or do you seize the grace period for yourself?

Do you disclose all the problems with the used car you sell? Is the product you sell legitimate in the sight of God?

Do you cut any corners in your service to maximize the profit margin? Do you treat rental property better than if it were your own?

Do you tip the poor generously who serve you in menial tasks? Have you always worked diligently while you were on the clock?

Do you misrepresent the realistic potential of your business or product? Are all employees paid on time, every time?

Do you disclose any problems with the house you sell? Have you kept your financial commitments? On time? Have you properly paid every person who has served you? Have you honestly completed your income tax return?

Do you give the Lord His first cut of your income? Or have you lied by saying you love Christ and kept His part for yourself?

Do you ever call in sick without being sick, to take advantage of the privilege of sick pay? Have you taken small things from your employer that would be classified as pilfering or pilfering?

Do you try to get refunds for your mistakes in a purchase or order? Have you expected the impossible from a merchant or service man, and then not paid because they were human?

Do you try to haggle down the asking prices of things you are buying? Do you ever rejoice and boast to others about getting a great deal? See the comments on *Proverbs 20:14*.

Let this Proverb cause you to carefully weigh every financial transaction, employment duty, and business deal, so that you are not found tossing vanity to and fro and asking for God's judgment.

God sees and hears all you do, and He only accepts total fairness, righteousness, and generosity. Cheaters and cheapskates will neither prosper nor survive.

If you pay and perform generously beyond fair, you will be blessed (*Proverbs 11:18, 24-26*).

If you truly want a treasure, that is the real thing, then seek first the kingdom of God (*Matthew 6:33*).

For it is *"like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field"* (*Matthew 13:44*).

Any treasure on earth is truly vanity, vexation of spirit, and will not help in the day of death. But godliness with contentment is precious now and then (*1 Timothy 4:8; 6:6*).

Proverbs 21:7 The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.

**Every Time You Cheat Financially
You Put Another Nail In Your Own Coffin!**

What you call rounding, God calls robbery. What you call immaterial, God calls purloining. What you call borrowing, God calls stealing. What you call exaggerating, God calls lying. What you call bargaining, God calls extortion.

The wicked cheat in their profane ambition and greed to get ahead. But God will work against the wicked for rejecting equity, fairness, and justice.

The context here is helpful. Solomon had just warned about treasures obtained by lying as a vanity that will eventually bring death (*Proverbs 21:6*).

Before that, he commended diligence and condemned haste in financial and professional pursuits (*Proverbs 21:5*).

Financial cheating, whether due to haste in business matters or falsifying information, is robbery. Such crooks do not fool God; He will judge them; they should have learned righteousness.

Are You A Robber? Do you purloin at work (*Titus 2:9-10*)?

Did studying evolution, keep you from learning English words? Purloin is a verb meaning to pilfer, to filch, to peculate to snitch.

Are you still in the dark? It means to misappropriate or steal by small amounts, especially by violating trust placed in you. It is a forgotten sin today.

Do you milk the time clock? Make personal calls at work? Take home office supplies? Surf the Internet on your office computer? Email friends? Take home magazines? Arrive late? Leave early?

Do you like to buy low and sell high? Is buying low so important that you point out every flaw in things you buy to get the price lower and then boast to others about the "steal of a deal" you got? God hates it (*Proverbs 20:14*)!

Do you think that selling high so important that you believe you have the right to charge whatever price the

market can bear, like in cornering a market? God hates it also (*Proverbs 11:24-27*)!

God will bless the man that buys and sells at market prices, especially with orphans, widows, or the poor involved. Learn judgment!

Are You A Robber? Do you always use grace periods when paying? It is called grace because your creditor will not prosecute you for stealing from him!

Do you cheat on income taxes? Do you give a full measure in every situation calling for one?

Do you hold back payments without due dates? Do you return overpayments? Is your resume perfectly accurate?

Do you defend others as carefully as yourself? Do you return borrowed items?

Are You A Robber? **If** so, confess your sin to God, repay any thefts you can, and resolve to be perfectly honest in all business dealings.

We all need to learn judgment, which is knowing and doing what is just and right in every situation.

The Word of God and especially this book of wisdom were sent from God to teach you righteous judgment.

Proverbs 21:8 The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right.

Humanity is perverse! God created man upright and good, but he has corrupted his way on the earth by many inventions (*Genesis 1:31; 6:12; Ecclesiastes 7:29*).

Since Adam and Eve's debacle in Eden, man has had a twisted heart that opposes what is truly good (*Psalms 14:1-3*).

Only those born again, with a pure heart from God, have a chance at doing what is right (*Ephesians 4:24*).

Not all men are froward and strange, as proven by the second clause, which indicates a category of men called "the pure." The contrast between the two clauses implies that it is impure and wicked men who are perverse and twisted.

But let it be known: **If** it were not for the regenerating power of God in some, all men would fail. All men are froward and strange by nature.

"**Froward**" is an older English word meaning perverse, corrupt, unreasonable, or unruly. It describes the wicked motives and actions of a natural man apart from the

grace of God, which Paul explained in detail (**Romans 1:18-32; 3:9-18**).

"**Strange**" describes the abnormal, unexplainable, and surprising contrariness of sinful man's choices and actions.

Froward men are born like a wild ass's colt, they go astray and lie from birth (**Job 11:12; Psalm 58:3**).

Foolishness, is also bound in their heart from youth (**Proverbs 22:15**).

Froward men remain foolish and deceived, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another (**Titus 3:3**).

Froward men, watch wise men, and fools die, but they presume they will live forever (**Psalm 49:10-13**).

However, many believe this is the wisest generation ever! They say, "Mankind is naturally and basically good, and getting better every year." But Solomon presupposed their arrogant thoughts and wrote, "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (**Proverbs 14:12; 16:25**).

Men are still froward and strange. In fact, these people ridicule those who follow God's ways as being strange (**1Peter 4:1-4**)!

Is Humanity Perverse? Cain killed his brother for being good, and murder has not stopped since.

Tamar seduced her father-in-law, and Amnon raped his sister; incest continues today.

Athaliah killed all the seed royal (her grandchildren), and political killings were perfected in the last century.

Judas, Pilate, Herod, and Jews betrayed Jesus; and judges and rulers still do it.

But men today outdo their ancestors in perversity. They abort babies by most inhumane means, when conception used to be celebrated.

Men today subsidize debt and penalize savings by tax law. They condemn apartheid while keeping reservations. They call Picasso an artist and rap is music.

They condemn polygamy but endorse sodomy. They search for "Roots" but claim monkeys as ancestors. They outlaw child discipline but approve "Friday the 13th."

The 20th Century was the bloodiest century in the history of the world. Researchers claim 170 million innocents were slaughtered, not counting war deaths or bad government policies. That is nearly 5,000 every day for 100 years!

The world eulogizes Hitler's six million but ignores Stalin's fifty million or so and Mao's twenty million or so. The way of man is froward and strange! And he is not getting better or brighter!

What about America? Same-sex marriages are the rage! Opposite-sex divorces are also hot! Parents abort children, and children divorce parents! Teenagers are interviewed for political opinions!

Actors and athletes earn more than many CEOs! Separation of church and state, is defined as outlawing Christian's religion.

Church, the house of God for perfecting saints, has evolved into a nightclub to pamper sinners.

The Word of God is rewritten every three months. The way of man is froward and strange. He has no light (**Isaiah 8:20**).

The saved are those born again by the Holy Spirit and given a new nature created in righteousness and true holiness (**John 3:6; Ephesians 4:24**).

These are the sons of God by legal adoption and creation of their souls (**John 1:12-13; Galatians 4:4-6**).

The sons of God, choose to keep the commandments of God, regardless of penalty or persecution (**Revelation 6:9; 12:17; 14:12; 20:4**).

The sons of God, are perfectly different and perpetually antagonistic to natural men (**Proverbs 29:27**).

Reader, what is your case? Is your conduct and reputation froward and strange, or is it pure and right? Are you measuring by sociologists' definitions, or the precious Word of God and inspired wisdom?

Does your life, reflect truth in a dark place (**Philippians 2:14-16**)?

Reject the arrogance of this generation and humble yourself before your Lord. He will soon expose this great difference in men (**Malachi 3:13-18; Matthew 25:31-46; 2Thessalonians 1:3-10**).

Proverbs 21:9 It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.

Why are some men always away from home? They hunt, work extra hours, golf, live in their workshop, manicure the lawn, stay in the basement, or listen to music with headphones. Why? They are avoiding the dreadful creature they foolishly married.

God created Eve to be the perfect companion for Adam (**Genesis 2:18**).

Marriage gives a man his own wife for pleasant company, mutual help, and sexual pleasure. But sin corrupted God's design, and selfish women became yapping, nagging irritants at home.

How did we corrupt God's creation? A man's greatest pleasure becomes his greatest pain! His greatest treasure his greatest loss! His best friend his worst enemy! His source of peace and comfort his endless misery (*Proverbs 12:4; Ecclesiastes 7:29*)! See the comments on *Proverbs 19:13*.

When the victim realizes his grave error, his spirit is stricken, and he is forced to surrender and withdraw to find his only comfort in the quiet solitude of other pursuits.

A brawling woman is a noisily quarrelsome, wrangling, clamorous, and noisy. You have heard her, she is usually talking, correcting, debating, scolding, suggesting, reminding, and otherwise making herself an unbearable nuisance. Attempts to correct her meet with failure, for her unruly pride cannot submit or shut up.

How widespread is the problem? Solomon warns us five other times with Proverbs similar to this one (*Proverbs 12:4; 19:13; 21:19; 25:24; 27:15-16*).

A brawling woman is a common problem, especially in our rebellious age, when women no longer, know their God-ordained place.

It is better, do you understand the Proverb? Solomon gives one of the wise priorities of life. It is better to live on the roof than in a large house with such a woman.

It is better to be single, alone and lonely, than to cohabit with this onerous wretch in a joyless marriage.

God, who created the woman for the man, declared that a meek and quiet spirit is of great price, far more valuable than improvement in appearance (*1Peter 3:3-4*).

God promised such a woman will be praised by husband and children (*Proverbs 31:28*).

External decorating, can never cover the inward blemish of a woman's contentious spirit (*Proverbs 11:22; 27:15-16*).

Young man, reject her! A thoughtless impulse, a desperate need, or a foolish infatuation will torment you fifty years.

Let married men meet and test your prospect and her mother; let them check for a whiff of that odious spirit. Any character flaw you find before marriage will be ten times worse later. And this deformity does not improve with age! (*Proverbs 30:21-23*)

Henpecked husband, have you already married poorly? **If** she fears the LORD, take her to the Scripture and let her read her Creator's orders. Find a church where the man of God will rebuke and instruct her for you. **If** she does not fear the Lord, pick the corner of the roof with the least exposure!

Christian girl or woman, hate this repulsive creature as much as the strange woman. Listen for her constant chatter, whining complaints, negative observations, rude interruptions, overbearing corrections, nagging reminders, selfish suggestions, or haughty questions.

Vow before the LORD you will never live one day of her life. Submission is your role and duty; rejecting it destroys your true beauty (*Ephesians 5:22-24*).

Graciousness will secure you perpetual respect (*Proverbs 11:16*).

Reverence will earn you everlasting esteem (*Ephesians 5:33; 1Peter 3:5-6*).

Quiet reserve will exalt your spirit (*Proverbs 17:27*).

Proverbs 21:10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.

Consider a wicked man. Consider his mind, heart, and actions. Know his soul, and despise his ways. Avoid him at all costs, for he is dangerous and troublesome.

The wicked man's soul enjoys sin like men drink water (*Job 15:16*).

The wicked man's selfish heart has no pity for others, even family, neighbors, or friends.

The wicked man despises any man that hinders his pursuit of sinful pleasure.

A wicked man thinks wickedly day and night. He does not rest and sleep like good men, in peace and righteousness. His soul is troubled, unless he can think about something sinful and evil (*Proverbs 4:16; 6:14; Psalm 36:1-4; Micah 2:1*).

A wicked man envies his neighbor; he stirs up hatred and revenge for wrongs he has suffered; He blames everyone else for his troubles.

The wicked men not only do evil; they desire it! They do not hunger or thirst for righteousness or the living God, as do good men (*Psalm 42:1-5; Matthew 5:6*).

The wicked let nothing constrain their imagination. They fantasize of lascivious excess. (*Isaiah 32:6-7*)

The believer may sin; but the wicked desire it! The believer may do what they hate; but the wicked do what they love!

Wicked men love to hate. They surmise evil of others; they slander and whisper; they justify themselves. They despise others, for they never see good in anyone else.

The wicked follow the devil, enjoying hatred and lies (*John 8:44*).

The wicked worship self, sacrificing even friends for self-gratification.

The wicked have killed their conscience and ordinary compassion.

The most visible measure of a soul is how he treats others. It proves eternal life or death. It is the evidence of knowing God (*1John 3:10-15, 4:20; 5:1*).

Love Is The Greatest Grace Of A Redeemed Soul!

The apostles wrote against bitterness, hatred, and strife; they wrote for kindness, forgiveness, love, and peace. The former is devilish and from hell; the latter is the greatest measure of believers.

"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:14-18).

No Change In Wicked Men: Without The Grace Of God Giving Them A New Heart!

There is no change of environment or gripping presentation of truth that can move the wicked's cold and depraved heart (*Isaiah 26:10; Luke 16:31*).

The wicked cannot deliver themselves, for their hateful, negative, and selfish thoughts are both by nature and established habits.

Let the righteous despise and forsake the wicked and their ways. Let them seek God's commands (*Psalms 15:4; 101:4, 119:115*).

God will surely judge the wicked, and He will expose them for the righteous to judge them (*Proverbs 26:24-26*).

Make your calling and election sure and prove you are not like them by loving neighbor and enemy (*Matthew 5:43-48*).

Proverbs 21:11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

Different Strokes For Different Folks!

A Word To The Wise Is Sufficient!

You Cannot Argue With Dumb!

These and similar adages and idiomatic phrases are taken from this Proverb, which was written 3000 years before modern English! There are three kinds of men here, and there are only two actions that result in the proper treatment for all three (*Proverbs 19:25*)!

A scorner: He is arrogant, he is profane, and he is a rebellious person that ridicules and shows extreme contempt for: authority, correction, and instruction.

A scorner is so conceited in his opinions that he cannot be taught (*Proverbs 9:7-8; 13:1; 15:12; 21:24*).

A scorner must be punished and rejected (*Proverbs 22:10*).

Solomon said a scorner was worse than a fool, whose sins of folly, ignorance, and sloth are less than the scorner's vicious despising of reproofs (*Proverbs 12:1; 24:9; 26:12*).

A simple man, he is an ignorant man, without abundant intelligence or character.

A simple man, has little knowledge or wisdom, he reacts to what he sees and feels more than what he can understand by prudent analysis and reflection (*Proverbs 14:15, 18; 22:3*).

Simple men can be taught, but it is a laborious process (*Proverbs 1:4; Psalm 119:130*).

Because they lack in discretion and understanding, they often learn better from object lessons and experience.

A wise man: He fears God and keeps His commandments (*Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; Psalm 111:10*).

A wise man loves correction, instruction, reproofs, and warnings; he knows that such inputs are the only way to gain understanding (*Proverbs 1:5; 12:1*).

These wise men receive teaching with a ready mind, search the Scriptures to prove what they have heard is truth, and then believe and obey it (*Acts 17:11*).

Though wise, they always seek counsel for major decisions (*Proverbs 24:6*).

When dealing with people, especially those under your authority, there are two basic actions taught here.

The two actions will effectively and wisely deal with the three kinds of men. You must identify the kind of person you are dealing with and apply the correct remedy. Here is the lesson:

The **Scorning man**, cannot be taught but must be dealt with in some negative way, which will deliver you from their strife and also give, the **Simple man** an object lesson for their learning; and **Wise men** can be directed and taught with simple reproofs or instruction (*Proverbs 19:25*).

Consider an office or home. You save yourself from contention and strife by punishing and rejecting the scorner (*Proverbs 22:10*).

By punishing him before rejecting him, you give an object lesson to the simple to fear authority and avoid the scorner's attitude and actions. Wise employees or children only need instruction or reproofs, for they will submissively learn from both.

Your life has just been simplified: the scorner is gone, the simple is sobered and warned, and the wise loves you for making him wiser (*Proverbs 9:8-9; 28:23*).

Proverbs 21:12 The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.

The house of the wicked, though it may appear flourishing, is not secure. God will eventually overthrow it.

So the righteous man does well to wisely consider that riches, honor and fame matter little if one's house is to be destroyed because of wickedness.

Though God suffers long with evil, but He must sooner or later deal with it in judgment. Sin must be punished.

This is wisdom through observation. *Proverbs 21:11-12* deals with one main issue: the fact that wise men become even wiser by observing the ungodly.

Wisdom Obtained by: Observing the Scorer when he is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.

A Scorer defined: to be inflated, to scoff, to mock, arrogant boaster.

A Scorer speaks words which show no respect for the object of his ridicule.

A Scorer expresses utter contempt. Solomon is describing the loud mouth, the clown, the arrogant boaster, the immature wise guy who makes fun of everything and everyone (usually behind their backs).

The Scorer is also spoken of in Proverbs as the one who refuses to listen to counsel and advice. He scorns it, ridicules it because he arrogantly thinks himself above such counsel. (Who are you to tell me what I ought to do?)!

A Scorer refuses counsel. He doesn't respond well to rebuke.

In *Proverbs 14:6*, after having refused counsel and rebuke for heading down the wrong pathway, the scorner continues to seek for wisdom and never finds it. This is not a contradiction to what Solomon wrote in chapter two "*those who seek wisdom shall find it.*"

It is not a contradiction because Solomon qualified his previous statement: those who seek wisdom "*with their whole heart*" as a man seeks after gold will find wisdom.

A Scorer doesn't find it, because he refuses to listen to wisdom when he is confronted with it.

Thus, the Scorer arrogantly seeks his own brand of wisdom, which is in reality folly! Too often we seek after the counsel that is what we want to hear, rather than what we need to hear.

The Scorer mocks lady wisdom when she says what he needs to hear, and he continues seeking after wisdom, and never finds it. See (*Proverbs 1:20-25*).

He is a Scorer. Instead of taking the wise counsel, he makes fun at the one giving it; he ridicules the advice; he shows no respect for the one trying to help him. He is a scorner and a fool.

If he later decides he needs wisdom and seeks after it, Lady Wisdom has nothing more to say to him (*Proverbs 28-29*).

There is a penalty for scorning wisdom; there is a price to pay for being a scorner. Scorners are punished for their folly. Fear, destruction, desolation, distress and calamity are right around the corner from a scorner. (*Proverbs 1:25-27*)

The Scorer's punishment is the result of being caught in his sin or crime and suffering under the law.

The Scorer's calamity is simply the result of reaping what he has sown.

The Scorer is condemned to live with the mess that he has made of his life.

Proverbs 21:13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

So reader, you do not like to get involved? You did not bother to listen? You are sure others will take care of it? You are too busy? Your routine of selfish activities has no time to help? You are saving for the future and have no money for the poor? You did not know the need was great? You will help next time?

Just remember, God will not hear when you cry unto Him, for He sees your selfish covetousness and hateful greed.

When you are in need, He may laugh at you (*Proverbs 1:26-31; 28:27*)!

God will hear their cry against you (*Exodus 22:21-24*)!

A Jewish priest and Levite ignored their own wounded countryman lying helpless in the ditch. They did not want to get involved. They were too busy. They had plans for the day. They had no spare cash. (*Luke 10:30-32*).

But a Samaritan, who had no affection for Jews by nature or custom, had mercy on the wounded man and cared for him (*Luke 10:33-35; John 4:9*).

This Samaritan, loved his neighbor, and he was blessed. You may be assured that God ignored the priest and Levite later in their hour of need!

God watches out for the poor. Do not forget that (*Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Psalm 68:5*).

God sees when you ignore the poor; He also sees when you help them.

God will curse the one action and bless the other (*Proverbs 11:26; 19:17; 22:9; 24:11-12; 28:27; 29:7; Psalm 41:1-3*).

And so will men! They will return your lack of mercy back on you in your hour of need.

So reader, it is your choice, but the consequences are not good. Do not ignore a need, when you become aware of it.

Only the legitimate poor, matter in the sight of God. Foolish or lazy men should starve; they deserve nothing (*Proverbs 20:4; 2Thessalonians 3:10*).

However, you are first bound to care for your own family (*1Timothy 5:8*). Then for the poor in your church (*Acts 2:44-45*). Then for the poor in other churches (*Acts 11:27-30*). Then for those of any kind that God puts in your path in the ordinary course of life (*Luke 10:25-37; Job 31:16-22*).

The Bible does not obligate you to feel burdened for the poor of the world, for your four obligations will be enough.

When you plan a dinner and wonder whom to invite, you should invite those who are needy and cannot repay. God will repay. This is the law of Jesus Christ (*Luke 14:12-14*).

Do not think only of your friends, for God will see this selfishness and ignore you in the day of your need. There are reasons why some men are blessed and others are cursed.

How Attentive How Compassionate Are You Toward The Poor?

A rich man who denied crumbs to a beggar in this life was denied a drop of water in the hellfire of the next life (*Luke 16:19-26*).

Jesus Christ became poor to make you rich, and you should be most willing to do the same for your brethren (*2Corinthians 8:9; 1John 3:16-19*).

Proverbs 21:14 A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.

Gifts are powerful tools to calm violent emotions. Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but gifts can overpower them both. (*Proverbs 27:4*)

Gift exchanges are not the lesson here, but rather a private and personal gift from one person to another.

A wise man uses them in self-defense or to restore damaged or threatened relationships.

A wicked man uses them to overthrow justice and judgment by buying off a judge or other offended authority.

Here is wisdom! Prudence, to behave yourself wisely, like David with his friends and enemies (*1Samuel 18:5, 14, 30*)!

Do you have an enemy? Is a friend angry at you? You can pacify him or her and create peace by giving a gift! But give it in private, where you cannot benefit yourself by public knowledge of the gift.

If the offended party were to think you are giving it to make a show, you would aggravate the situation rather than improve it.

Fighting to defend yourself is usually stupid. A soft answer and gentle approach turns away wrath, but arguing throws fuel on the fire (*Proverbs 15:1, 18; 17:14; 26:21; 30:33*).

If you want to be wise, speak gently and give a gift to the offended party. A gift helped Jacob pacify Esau (*Genesis 32:3 - 33:9*).

A gift helped Abigail pacify David (*1Samuel 25:2-35*).

And a gift helped David who used gifts to appease Judah for missing a battle against the Philistines (*1Samuel 29:1-11; 30:26-31*).

God gives gifts, open and secret, to His enemies every day (*Matthew 5:43-48; Acts 14:17*).

And Christians are to be perfect like our Lord, by doing good to their enemies, for it is such good actions that overcome evil, your gift giving overcomes your thoughts of vengeance (*Romans 12:17-21*).

Rather than allow another's anger or wrath to provoke malice or revenge, take the high road of returning kindness to overcome their evil and your evil!

Gifts Should Be Done In Secret Lest You Spoil Your Good Intentions

A reward "*in the bosom*" is a gift slipped to a person out of the notice of others. By giving it secretly, you avoid fanfare, and you avoid exposing the receiver to the appearance of covetousness. Public flattery is just the opposite of the lesson here!

Here is a warning! Though the offer of a bribe in secret or in the bosom may be accepted and may reduce your punishment or sentence, it is only a wicked man that gives gifts to subvert justice, and God will judge one day. (*Proverbs 17:23; Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19; 1Samuel 8:3; Micah 7:3*)

The lesson here applies as well to the Lord. Your Father in heaven seeks your private and secret prayers and gifts, not public ones to be seen by others (*Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18*).

If You Give In Secret God Will Bless Openly!

Proverbs 21:15 It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Judgment in this context, a term that can have a wide range of meaning. Doing what is right in daily life... (treating people fairly).

Receiving justice in a court of law. Justice legislated nationally, (just and fair laws).

Equitable treatment in the workplace. Doing justice before God, (walking in obedience to His righteous character).

Judgment And Justice Qualities That Should Be Demonstrated In All Areas Of Our Life!

Who are the Just? A righteous man; a justified man; This is an expression that speaks of those who are born again; those who have been justified by faith, like their father Abraham.

People were saved in the Old Testament. They were called the "*just*." They were saved exactly as we are today: by grace through faith.

The term "*just*" could also refer to a person's character in a secular sense: a righteous, law abiding citizen who is just before the Law. The term could also refer to a person's salvation.

People who are "*just*" and righteous live that way. They do judgment. They practice judgment. In their daily lives they go through a process of making right or righteous decisions. They do what is right.

"*Just*" people obey the laws of the land. They delight in seeing the laws of the land upheld and obeyed.

"*Just*" people are dismayed to see people trampling over the rule of law in the land, and openly disobeying the laws of the land.

Those who are "*just*" also do what is just and right according to the legal system of the land. They do not put themselves above the law, they abide by the law. They do judgment.

Those who are "*just*" also do judgment in the workplace. They treat everyone fairly and justly. There are no backroom shenanigans wherein those who are on the "inside" get treated one way, and those who are on the "outside" of their little club are treated differently. Everyone gets a fair shake. There is no respect of persons.

Those spiritually minded born again believers, obey the Law of the Lord. They delight in righteousness, they read and obey justice found in God's Word.

Those who are "*just*" practice judgment and justice.

The main point of this first part of the Proverb is that the "just" love doing justice! It is a joy to them. Nobody has to force them to do what is right.

"Just" people don't need their arms twisted to do the right thing. They practice justice because they love justice.

Doing what is right brings joy to their hearts. ***Psalms 112:1*** Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

In the second part (*But destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity*) of this antithetical Proverb, Solomon speaks about those who are not just and who do not do righteousness.

Those who work (practice) iniquity are contrasted to those who do judgment (justice; righteousness). Thus, Solomon divides men up into two distinct groups: those who practice justice and those who practice iniquity.

Iniquity equates easily to trouble, sorrow, evil, mischief, and calamity. This term is quite broad in its meaning. Evil comes in innumerable sizes, shapes, and forms.

**All Men Are Sinners.
All Men Commit Iniquity.**

Solomon is speaking "character" here. Some men's lives are characterized by working iniquity. The lives of all unsaved men are characterized by iniquity. But those who are born again should not habitually practice, committing sin. (***1John 3:9***)

Those who work iniquity are contrasted with those who do judgment in another sense as well.

Consequences of their character. Those who practice justice have joy. Those who practice iniquity have destruction.

The contrast between their characters couldn't be clearer. (righteous; iniquitous)

The contrast between the consequences of their lifestyles couldn't be clearer as well. (joy or destruction)

What is destruction? Destruction is to be broken; it is, undoing, hardship, ruin, terror, "God overthrows the wicked" (***Proverbs 21:12***).

Thus, wicked men do not like to see justice and judgment in the land... for it means their soon destruction. Justice is their undoing. They get their joy from evil things, (***Proverbs 21:10***).

Proverbs 21:16 *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.*

There Is Only One Way To Live.

If you wander from that way of understanding, you give up a life of joy and peace, for a living death of misery and trouble. You can die more than once and more than one way. There is only one way to serve and worship the true God.

If you wander from that strait way, you give up a church with spiritual life for one that is a mere form. You, as the dog and sow, have returned to the vomit and mire of human opinion (***2Peter 2:21-22***).

The only way to live is the strait and narrow way that leads to life (***Matthew 7:13-14***).

The strait and narrow way, is not exciting to the depraved lusts of the flesh; but it is right, and the strait and narrow way, rejoices the holy desires of the spirit.

The strait and narrow way is the way appraised positively by the wisdom of Scripture and paved with the solid rock of God's sayings. Any other way, is a slippery slope to hell.

If you build the house of your life on the Bible's teachings, you will have a life that easily stands amid the storms that batter others. The strait and narrow way is the way of understanding.

If you build on the sands of human opinion, the storms will wash your house away (***Matthew 7:24-27***).

Heresies will come and show you never had a godly foundation (***1Corinthians 11:19***).

Of course, no man chooses to wander into the swamp named Death. He changes the name of the swamp to Right Way or My Way.

The man presumes his directions are better. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes (***Proverbs 16:2, 25; 21:2***)!

To stay in the way of understanding, you must hate your opinions and love God's precepts instead (***Psalms 119:128; 2Corinthians 10:5***).

Abram took his nephew Lot from pagan Chaldea to the land of Canaan. Lot saw firsthand the wonderful relationship between God and his uncle. But he moved his family toward wicked Sodom, and he ended up in a cave with his two daughters pregnant with his children. They were the congregation of the dead! (***Genesis 13:12-13; 19:30-38***)

The only way to serve and worship God is by the Word of God. Men have tried everything from burning their children alive to worshipping crows, dogs, and bugs (*2Kings 17:17; Romans 1:23*).

**All Of It Is Repulsive And Disgusting Dung
No Matter How Sincere The Pagan Doing It!**

If it is not according to Scripture, it is not good enough, no matter the character or conduct of the worshipper (*Genesis 4:3-5; Numbers 20:7-13; 1Chronicles 15:13*).

Of course, no church chooses to wander into a swamp named Death. They change the name of the swamp to Right Way, Our Way, or New Way.

They presume they are more pleasing to God than the old way of doing things. They call it contemporary and casual worship.

They want to improve on the Bible and help the Lord. Their thoughts and motives stink. God demands they seek for the old paths (*Jeremiah 6:16; Jude 1:3*).

The church at Corinth thought emphasizing spiritual gifts would cover their many errors (*1Corinthians 1:4-9*)!

The church at Corinth allowed internal strife, preacher cliques, self-glorification, fornication, lawsuits, easy divorces, abuses of liberty, no tithing, association with pagans, short hair on women, long hair on men, contentions, casual use of communion, pride in gifts, little genuine love, speaking in tongues, women preachers, confusion about the resurrection, and little care of the poor.

These are popular errors in many churches today! But God judged this apostolic church by striking members weak, sick, and dead. And Paul unloaded on them with his first epistle! (*1Corinthians 11:30*)

The church at Rome that Paul commended, became the Great Whore of the Revelation, filled with every foul spirit and unclean and hateful bird (*Romans 1:8; Revelation 17:3-6; 18:1-8*).

It astonished John greatly! How did it happen? How could an apostolic church become the bloodthirsty, fornicating antichrist church of Rome? By leaving the precepts of Scripture!

The Roman church started down a road to the swamp that now includes every abomination known to man. What does God say to any saints left in her or her daughter churches? "Come out of her, my people" (*Revelation 18:4*)!

What happened? How did it get started? Did the pastor seek prestige because his church was in the empire's capital city? Did calling himself a priest comfort

pagans? Did the title Pontifex Maximus make Caesar-worshipping Romans happy?

Did a trial, of infant baptism, comfort some mothers? Did pretending, the bread was the literal body and blood of Christ increase attendance at communion?

Did praying to Mary one Sunday morning bring tears to a few mothers' eyes? Did a new statute bring craftsmen as members?

Did asking the women to confess to their priest bring voyeuristic pleasure? Did keeping the pagan holidays of Rome with Christian names bring in even more pagans? Did sprinkling for baptism save some embarrassment when he forgot to fill the baptistery?

The wanderer ends up in the swamp of Death by a single, wrong, first step! All sin starts with just one wrong thought. All heresy is by incremental compromise. All cults begin with one lie. All false arguments begin with one lying premise.

**Where Have You Taken
One Or More Steps From
The Right Way? Repent!**

Where has your church compromised one precept of Scripture? Repent! For it is the only way back on the right way. If you do not correct it, you are lost to dysfunction.

Only Scripture can make the man of God, a pastor, perfect in every good work (*2Timothy 3:16-17*).

All the learning and innovations today are without truth (*2Timothy 3:7*).

Men have left sound doctrine for fables (*2Timothy 4:3-4*).

Men have left off loving God to love the pleasures of life (*2Timothy 3:4*).

Men have a form of godliness, by meeting on Sundays, but they have no clue of God's jealous authority (*2Timothy 3:5*).

These churches are congregations of the dead, no matter how many fill their complexes, to foam out their shame with Christian rap!

The church at Ephesus had many things to commend it, but they had lost their first love and were about to lose the Spirit, which would leave them a dead carcass (*Revelation 2:1-5; 3:1; James 2:26*).

These modern mega-churches never had the good things Ephesus did; they have been dead a long time. The new way they have found is the way to dead religion, no matter how lively it appears.

The high they obtain from their ear crushing rock-n-roll, jump-up-and-shout services does not last. They are joyless shells chasing carnal pleasures; they do not even know the God of the Bible.

God measures by doctrine, practice, and purity; they measure by decibels, popularity, and pleasure. They went out from apostolic Christianity, because they were never truly with us (*1John 2:19*).

If a man leaves the way of Christ's wholesome sayings at all, he does not know what he is talking about. He knows nothing at all (*1Timothy 6:3-5; Isaiah 8:20*).

What are all wise persons to do with either a wandering man or a wandering church? Get away from them!

Read *2Timothy 3:5* for the Words, "from such turn away." Read *1Timothy 6:5* for the Words, "from such withdraw thyself." They are living among the tombs! Get away!

They have good words and fair speeches to deceive the simple, but they are mere belly worshippers (*Romans 16:18*)!

How can you know? **If** they do anything contrary to the teaching of the New Testament (*Romans 16:17*).

What should you do about them? Mark and avoid them (*Romans 16:17*)!

God's few true saints must stand fast and hold the traditions taught by the apostles. This is the way of understanding. (*2Thessalonians 2:15*)

Ah, faithful reader, should we gloat pompously that we have the truth and are secure in the way of understanding? God forbid. Our brother Paul would tell us not to be high-minded, but rather to fear (*Romans 11:20*).

A wise man would tell us to fear lest we should come short of God's promises as well (*Hebrews 4:1*).

A wise man would tell us that too much confidence in ourselves will bring a fall (*1Corinthians 10:12*).

The whole world has wandered out of the way of understanding since Eden! They shall congregate with the hordes in hell for an eternal death.

Many who wandered out of the way of understanding will appeal to all their religious activity, but the Lord Jesus Christ will declare that He never knew them (*Matthew 7:21-23*).

Our nation has wandered out of the way of godliness, righteousness, and justice into the fatal swamp of abortion, child rebellion, divorce for any cause, euthanasia, evolution, labor unions, prohibition of

prayer, prohibition of the Ten Commandments, sodomy, wicked entertainment, and witchcraft.

The Death Knell Is Sounding Unless Our Nation Repents!

God Has Enough Mercy To Forgive Our Many Heinous Sins!

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, is the only way back to the Father. Cast yourself upon His mercy today!

There is another congregation, in heaven. It is the congregation of the living. It is made up of all those blessed souls who have had part in the first resurrection (*Revelation 20:6; John 5:25*).

They keep the commandments of God and stay in the way of understanding (*Revelation 12:17; 14:12*).

Proverbs 21:17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

An Easy Way To Get Rich Is To Stop Spending (*Proverbs 21:20*)! It's Not High Cost Of Living That Hurts It's The Cost Of High Living!

The typical American is addicted to an extravagant lifestyle that keeps him poor and stressed. The pleasure, wine, and oil of Solomon's day are the entertainment, toys, and eating out of today.

Individuals, businesses, and the nation are financially sick and dying due to excessive spending.

Most spend more than they need to spend. But some men crave pleasure and luxury, and they spend themselves into poverty.

These people are always in financial trouble, but they never stop wasteful spending. They are convinced they deserve and need the things they buy. They will always be poor.

Though many of these people have adequate or better income, they spend it all and then some! Bankruptcies of all kinds are on the rise!

Ben Franklin, a founding father of America, summarized Solomon instructions by saying, "A penny saved is a penny earned."

Reducing Your Spending Is The Same As Raising Your Income!

If Ben were writing today, with the average marginal tax rate at 28%, he would say, "A penny saved is 1.4 pennies earned," reflecting income taxes.

Reducing expenses by \$1000 is the same as increasing income \$1400 for the average taxpayer. Some men live within their means, but most do not.

In economic theory, the desire, to increase spending as income rises, is the inclination to consume.

In America, it is often greater than 100%. Spending increases faster than income, and they cover the difference with credit card, installment, and mortgage debt. They never pay off a house, for when they get close, they buy a bigger house, whether they need it or not.

The love of pleasure and luxury crushes them, for they have created "needs" they cannot justify or afford.

But some men can live modestly, even though very rich. They do not love pleasure, wine, or oil.

Sam Walton, the richest and most successful American when he was alive, continued to drive a pickup truck accompanied by bird dogs!

Warren Buffet, the greatest investor and one of the richest men in the world, still lives in the same little house he bought over 40 years ago and is content with burgers and Coke for his meal!

Eating out is not a right. It is an extravagant and luxurious privilege.

Your grandparents likely never considered it. Eating out hurts the budget more than most any other expense. In one generation, our nation expects to eat out almost daily.

Many women no longer cook at all. Brown bagging is considered an insult to the dignity of most Americans. They are in love with Solomon's wine and oil, restaurants, and debt and poverty!

Rejecting economy, most restaurants pander to gluttony. In a nation craving convenience and extravagance, they are the popular places to be. You must continually spend more to obtain the original pleasure (*Proverbs 27:7*).

For \$200, a couple is enticed to eat 5000 calories each with drinks, appetizers, soup, salad, entrée, dessert, taxes, tip, babysitting, and gas.

For \$20, they could have had a carpet picnic of grape juice, Italian bread, and cheese with candles in the bedroom! And they would not have been bloated and tired when they went to bed!

The poor man who likes to spend money will always be poor, for he has no savings, to take advantage of investment and business opportunities (*Proverbs 14:4*).

It is only by reserve capital, that a man can profit from those few situations in life that offer unusual profits. So again we see the law of nature and of God, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

The cure for poverty, is the same virtue necessary for most success: Temperance, or self-denial and Self-discipline. You make rules to curb spending, no matter how much you "want" or think you "need" something.

All you truly need is food, clothing, and shelter. Anything else is luxury and pleasure.

If you are wasteful, you are brother to the slothful man (*Proverbs 18:9*).

If you are wasteful, you are brother to drunkards and gluttons (*Proverbs 23:20-21*).

You may need to be drastic! Throw your television out! You will save your soul and avoid aggressive advertising!

Get rid of your credit cards! You will hinder impulse buying and avoid the highest interest rates in the market!

Vacations are not rights! They are privileges of those who have their financial houses in order!

Reject the pride that says you cannot buy used cars, homes, furniture, appliances, or even clothing. You live among spendthrifts. You face high advertising and peer pressure all day.

Federal and state governments go deeply into debt to cover wasteful spending. Businesses and consumers follow, all greedily gorging on comfort, extravagance, luxury, and pleasure. God calls you, to be financially temperate and to teach this virtue, to your children.

A good family practice, unheard of in this wasteful generation, is to see how cheaply you can live for one month.

Cancel the newspaper. No eating out. No video rentals. No entertainment away from home. No unnecessary driving. Stick to a basic menu. Turn off lights, and set the thermostat back a few degrees. You can teach your children to appreciate what they are used to, and you can show how to economize when necessary.

Loving the pleasures of this world, will also make a man spiritually poor, for you cannot love this world and Jesus Christ.

Jesus demands your total devotion to Him (*Matthew 6:24; James 4:4*).

Lot chose the well-watered plain of Jordan and the city of Sodom, to the loss of his family and perpetual shame in the church of God.

Moses gave up the pleasures and riches of Egypt for the reproach and poverty of the people of God (*Hebrews 11:24-26*).

If you mind earthly things; the lusts and pleasures of this world, you are a belly worshipper (*Philippians 3:18-19*).

You have backslidden into soul poverty and spiritual prison. You do not love God, for you cannot do both (*1John 2:15-17*).

It is the love of money and the things it can buy that steal and destroy the souls of men (*1Timothy 6:6-10*).

If you instead choose to lose your life for Jesus Christ, only then will you find it (*Matthew 16:25*).

Proverbs 21:18 The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.

The LORD loves the righteous, and He is angry with the wicked for them. In this life, He will save the righteous by returning their mischief upon the wicked, and if the wicked will not turn, He will return their wicked designs against the righteous upon their own heads. Try *Psalms 7:10-17*!

Reader, are you envious at the prosperity of the wicked? Are you troubled by their hatred for the righteous? Are you afraid of their proud waves?

They shall foam out their shame in everlasting darkness! But before they get to that dark place, they shall be sold to trouble.

The best example to illustrate this lesson is the ransom of Egypt for Israel.

The LORD loved His people Israel, and He heard their cry by reason of the hard bondage the Egyptians put upon them. He had respect for them. Egypt was about to pay a price for their wickedness if they would not turn. And we know they did not and paid horrible price. (*Exodus 1:13-14; 2:23-25*)

He sent ten plagues and horribly destroyed their nation before drowning Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea. Pharaoh's counselors admitted the plagues had destroyed the nation (*Exodus 10:7*).

The firstborn were dead in every home, the Egyptians begged for Israel to leave, so Israel "borrowed" the wealth of the whole nation! And the Lord allowed Israel to spoil the Egyptians this way (*Exodus 12:35-36*)!

The LORD declares of this transaction, "For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life" (*Isaiah 43:3-4*). This is the lesson.

God directed Joshua to stone Achan and his family to save Israel (*Joshua 7:1-26*).

Saul's seven sons were hanged to ransom Israel from a famine from the LORD (*2Samuel 21:1-14*).

And Haman was hanged on the very gallows he had built for Mordecai (*Esther 7:10*).

Consider the Words in another Proverb, "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead" (*Proverbs 11:8*).

The Lord will pluck the righteous out of trouble and put the wicked in his place! The Lord will punish the wicked instead of the righteous.

God used Assyria as his tool to chasten Israel; then He turned and crushed Assyria for their pride filled actions, and attitude (*Isaiah 10:5-19*).

And God did the same to Babylon, whom He used to punish Israel and other nations for seventy years, before punishing them (*Jeremiah 25:8-14*).

The servant that did not earn a return on his single talent was punished severely, and his talent was taken and given to the man with ten. The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer in this spiritual parable (*Matthew 25:14-30*).

Reader, If you fear the Lord and seek to live righteously, the Lord loves you and will support you. There is no need to fear the wicked at all. The Lord is in His holy temple, and He will never let the wicked have their way with you.

Our lesson in this Proverb is about the providence of our God disposing of events in this life for the benefit of His people. He will sacrifice wicked doers for the benefit of His children.

The day is coming when we shall judge the world and angels (*1Corinthians 6:2-3*).

The devils and wicked have persecuted the saints for thousands of years, but the day of vengeance is coming, when the martyrs under the altar of God shall have their great desire fulfilled. Both wicked men and angels shall be repaid for wicked actions against His saints (*Revelation 6:9-11*).

Let our lesson drive away any fear or intimidation of the wicked, and then replace that fear with a humble

desire to be the honorable and beloved people of the most High. For "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (*Isaiah 54:11-17*).

And "he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye" (*Zechariah 2:8-9*). Thank you, Lord, for being our defense and saving the upright in heart. Try *Psalms 7:10-17*!

Proverbs 21:19 It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Young man! Being single is horrible, abandoned, empty, forlorn, frustrating, lonely, painful, pitiful, purposeless, sad, and troublesome!

But it is worse to be married to an opinionated woman that gets upset with you! Learn this lesson well! Believe it! Save yourself! Marrying the wrong woman is hell, compared to the heaven of being single!

Young man! Solomon knew what he wrote, being inspired by the Holy Spirit! He had 700 wives and 300 concubines (unofficial wives). The soul pain of a contentious and angry wife for one day can cure a man of desiring marriage! Solomon had 1000.

God inspired him to give you a warning: do not marry an opinionated woman. Marriage can be more painful that you can imagine.

Young man! Do you like camping, far out in the woods, all by yourself? **If** you do not, that is fine! Most men would dread such a lonely thing. Just remember, such camping is better than living in a fine home with all the creature comforts, **If** the woman in that house with you is a critical, negative, overbearing, tense, or easily irritated woman.

What is a contentious woman? One with a disposition to contend, who argues, criticizes, disagrees, opposes, quarrels, or questions you.

A contentious woman is full of questions, reminders, and suggestions, all to help you, of course!

A contentious woman, who rather than doting on you, she will be nagging you;

A contentious woman, who rather than sweetly agreeing, she will be questioning and suggesting alternatives.

What is an angry woman? One who cannot rule her spirit, and is easily angered, dissatisfied, irritated, negative, resentful, or upset.

An angry woman is one who can find something negative about the best event, and she frets and talks most about that.

An angry woman is one who is never satisfied. One who is never content, seldom your sweet lover, but always irritated and stressed about something.

Young man! These odious, hateful and despicable, women will deceive you. They will lure you into marriage, and then it is too late. (*Proverbs 30:21-23*)

Remember the rule of ten! Any hint of overbearing before marriage will be ten times worse afterward. Guaranteed! Test her! Ask her to do something she dislikes. **If** you even smell irritation or detect one fallen facial muscle, run for the woods! Be single for life rather than married to her!

There are many agreeable, cheerful, gracious, submissive, sweet, and reverent women. They can make you feel like a king in seconds, and marriage to them is royal bliss.

God fearing women are warm, kind, charming, and pleasant. They have no harsh or rough edges. Reject any woman that is even slightly critical, moody, opinionated, or questioning. She does not deserve a husband, ever! You do not deserve such pain! You deserve a real woman!

The odious woman cannot smell her own stench. She thinks she is helpful by prodding, asking questions, stressing over details, giving reminders, expecting perfection, or showing dislike of a choice.

If you were to ask her, she would say she is a good woman and wife.

If you were to ask her mother, she would praise her as well (*Ezekiel 16:44*).

But all others must hold their noses at the smell neither husband can hide (*Proverbs 27:15-16*).

Young man! Your future is at stake! Learn the warnings in these Proverbs about odious women. Believe them! Fear the pain of marriage to such a creature! Be prudent! Test a prospect, and watch her reaction closely.

Is her mother a charming, desirable, and gracious woman, or not? Ask married men their opinions, for their sense of smell is finely tuned. Do not rush to marriage! Never take a chance with a fifty-year fate!

Christian woman! Get rid of your opinions, for your desires are to be your husbands (*Genesis 3:16*).

Christian woman! Learn and maximize graciousness, and you will always be loved (*Proverbs 11:16*).

Godly women do not contend with their husbands; they submit, and reverence them (*Ephesians 5:22-24, 33; Titus 2:3-5*).

Godly women are not irritable or negative (*Proverbs 31:26; 1Peter 3:3-4*).

Proverbs 21:20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

Why Are Wise Men Rich And Fools Poor?

Do you want to get ahead financially? Then read and believe this simple Proverb. Fools spend money as fast as they get it, wise men are disciplined and slow about spending and always save some of their income.

Your spending habits are very important for your financial success. How much you make is not as important, because you can waste a high income as easily as you can waste a low income. In fact, a high income allows you to waste your money on big-ticket items.

It is not the high cost of living, but the cost of high living, that ruins men (*Proverbs 21:17*).

Wise men have foresight and self-discipline to avoid bad habits and impulse buying and to save some of their income. They make saving a pleasure, and they are reluctant to spend.

There are two kinds of financial losers: ¹Lazy men who will not work hard and earn a living, and hard workers who waste what they do earn (*Proverbs 18:9*). ²Foolish men that have both problems, they dislike hard work, and they waste their money.

What is the best way to limit spending wisely? Simple!

1. First, pay God a minimum of 10% off the top, this is firstfruits giving (*Proverbs 3:9-10*).
2. Pay yourself at least 10% into savings, this is following the ant (*Proverbs 6:6-8; 30:25*).
3. Live reasonably and pay all your bills next.

You are then free to spend whatever is left in any way you wish! You are headed for financial success, and you did not use a budget or accounting program!

Credit cards allow you to spend money you do not have, leaving you worse than this Proverb's fool. They foster impulse buying without paying, but which later bites you financially.

Living sacrificially now means living better later, because savers earn interest and spenders pay interest, and savers are also liquid for investment opportunities.

It is a shame the U.S. government spends without regard to income. It spent more than it took in for 40 of

the last 42 years. Following its example, most U.S. companies and citizens do the same.

Corporate and individual debt reflects the government's policies and deficits, which leaves America a debtor nation of spendthrifts from top to bottom.

Instead of having money at the end of the week, most have too much week at the end of the money. And the same occurs at the end of life.

What about you? A wise man will make giving and saving a habit and delight, for he knows that saving is a commandment, not just a suggestion (*Proverbs 6:6-8; 12:27; 13:22; 30:25*).

Proverbs 21:21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

The Keys To Your Future And Life Is Righteousness And Mercy!

If you love simple goals and instructions, then here is a two-step approach to prosperity and success.

Do you want to find fulfillment and honor for your life, with both based in righteousness? Then humble yourself before the Word of God and learn the wisdom. The rewards are great, just as stated, but they are paid both now and in the world to come!

Most cannot define or reconcile these terms, let alone live them.

Some think being right is more important than mercy; some think being merciful is more important than being right. But true wisdom balances the two to please God in every situation.

Though striving to do what is right in God's sight at all times, you should be eager to show mercy to those hurting you or needing you. Let righteousness and mercy combine to make you perfect!

What is your life? On average you will live 73 years, and then you will die. If you are 24, you are one-third the way there; if 48, two-thirds; if 75, then living on borrowed time!

A successful life is one that is fulfilling and satisfying, consistently doing what is right, and receiving honor from God and good men.

A successful death is one that obtains eternal life, a crown of righteousness, and honor from God the instant after leaving your body. These are fantastic rewards for the effort of following after righteousness and mercy!

Assess your life! Have you found your purpose? Is your life fulfilling, rewarding, and satisfying?

Has your life been a success? Has righteousness been the cornerstone of all your dealings? Do all that know you profess your integrity? Have you been honored by God and men?

If not, which of three errors have you made in your life? Either you have ¹not sought righteousness, ²not sought mercy, or ³not sought both of them.

What Is Righteousness? Righteousness is thinking, speaking, and acting in agreement with God's standards of right and wrong.

Righteousness is doing what is just, right, and virtuous, as defined by God. The boundaries and definitions of righteousness are clearly revealed in the Word of God (*Proverbs 8:8; Psalms 119:40, 128, 172; 2Timothy 3:16-17*).

How do you seek righteousness? All you have to do is totally humble yourself before God's Word and do it (*James 1:19-27; 3:17-18*)!

What Is Mercy? Mercy is compassion and forgiveness toward those in your power, with no right to your help or kindness.

Mercy ignores the offences of others and does not press claims against them.

Mercy sees those in need and provides for them.

Mercy is clearly defined and illustrated in the Word of God (*Proverbs 11:17; 14:21; Deuteronomy 22:6-7; Psalm 37:21; Matthew 18:21-22; James 2:13*).

How do you seek mercy? All you have to do is show it (*Luke 10:25-37*)!

Do you follow after righteousness and mercy? Aggressively? Consistently? Fervently? Patiently? The reward is only for diligent seekers, so do not rest on feeble efforts you have made (*Hebrews 11:6*).

Jesus said, **If** you will lose your life for my sake, you will find it; but **If** you seek to save your life, you will lose it (*Matthew 16:25*).

Sacrificing your desires to please God will bring the greatest peace and pleasure in life. Godliness with contentment is great gain (*1Timothy 6:6*).

Give up your thoughts this very day and pursue righteousness and mercy. You will find God's favor in this life, but you will receive much more in the world to come.

Proverbs 21:22 A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.

Might Does Not Make Right Neither Does It Guarantee Success.

In fact, it is not very important at all when compared to wisdom. A wise man is superior to a foolish man, no matter how strong, and no matter how confident in that strength, the foolish man might be.

The lesson here is that wisdom is better than superior strength (*Ecclesiastes 7:19; 9:13-18*).

The city of Babylon in 456 B.C. was impregnable and a wonder of the world. King Nebuchadnezzar had ruled with absolute power during his life, and now his capital city was under siege by the Medes and Persians.

His grandson Belshazzar was so confident in the city's strength that he feasted with his lords late into the night (*Daniel 5:1-4*).

How strong was Babylon? Ten miles a side, it covered 100 square miles. The Euphrates flowed through the city for water, and the Hanging Gardens supplied food.

Massive brass gates with iron bars protected the city from assault from the river. There were double walls surrounding the city, which were 75 feet high and 30 feet wide, with space between them. Outside the outer wall was a deep and broad moat supplied by the Euphrates.

The city and its enemies considered it impregnable to traditional siege or assault. Inside the walls were gardens and orchards to provide the city with its own food. With water from the Euphrates River, they could withstand a siege for twenty years.

The Babylonians inside the city had no regard for the Medes and Persians outside. Belshazzar and his lords feasted into the night in great confidence of the strength of their city.

But the Persians had a king named Cyrus, whom God had chosen and blessed with wisdom (*Isaiah 45:1-4*).

Cyrus' engineers diverted the Euphrates into an area used for water runoff during times of flooding. Cyrus then marched his army into the city by way of the riverbed. Due to arrogant confidence in their city, the Babylonians had left the gates from the river into the city open. Belshazzar was killed that night and the city taken easily.

What are the lessons?

Wisdom is better than strength, and those who are confident in strength are fools!

Wisdom is the power of right judgment, and God gave Cyrus special wisdom to discern and execute a perfect plan for taking the mighty city of Babylon.

God called Cyrus by name and foretold the means of taking Babylon 150 years before Cyrus was even born (*Isaiah 13:1-22; 44:21-28; 45:1-4; 47:7-9; Jeremiah 51:30*).

Though problems, in your life might seem great, and your enemies might be arrogant with confidence, the wisdom of God in the Bible can overthrow them (*Proverbs 22:17-21; Psalm 19:7-11; 2Timothy 3:16-17*)!

So you see, wise men study the Word of God for valuable insight and instruction, wisdom, knowledge and discernment!

Proverbs 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

Here is truth and wisdom! **If** you rule your speech, you will save yourself from trouble. Your mouth and tongue are two of your greatest enemies.

If you will keep them under control and only speak the right words at the right time, your life will be blessed.

It is ungoverned speech that gets men into all sorts of trouble. Here is wisdom for a good life.

You can get into trouble by filthy talking, foolish talking, and jesting.

You can damage your reputation, hurt others' feelings, and waste time with such talking.

God despises such speech, though they are very popular with the present generation; and He is coming soon to judge the world for these very sins (*Proverbs 14:9; 26:18-19; Ecclesiastes 7:6; Ephesians 4:29; 5:3-7*).

You can get into trouble talking negatively about others. Men will know you are wicked, and you will create enmity and strife. Though easy to commit, God hates backbiting, slander, talebearing, and whispering. They are much like murder, in that they destroy another's reputation (*Proverbs 10:18; 11:13; 16:28; 18:8; 20:19; 25:23; 26:20-22*).

You can get into trouble by complaining. Who likes a complainer? The LORD hates complaining, and He judges it severely (*Numbers 11:1; Psalm 106:24-27*).

Jesus Christ is coming soon with angels to judge complainers (*Jude 1:14-16*).

It is God's will for your mouth and tongue to give thanks (*Philippians 2:14; Colossians 3:17; 1Thessalonians 5:18*).

Our generation is unthankful, so God has judged our nation with darkness and sodomy (*Romans 1:20-27; 2Timothy 3:2*).

You can get into trouble by over committing. Solomon warned his son about taking on the obligations of others as a surety, such as cosigning loans hastily or extensively (*Proverbs 6:1-5; 22:26-27*).

It is so easy and thrilling to offer your guarantee for the performance of another, because it gives you an important role. But wisdom should guard your mouth from creating unnecessary and excessive obligations (*Proverbs 22:3; 1Corinthians 7:32*).

You can get into trouble by vows to God. In the difficulties of a painful situation, it is easy to promise things to God to move Him to deliver you. But the Lord warns against such oaths (*Ecclesiastes 5:1-3*).

It is better not to vow at all, than to vow and not pay (*Ecclesiastes 5:4-7*).

You can get into trouble by name calling. Jesus Christ taught that name calling, without a holy cause was a violation of the sixth commandment, the law against murder (*Matthew 5:21-22*).

Railing and reviling, which are name calling and abusive language, are condemned by Scripture (*Exodus 22:28; 1Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; 1Peter 3:9*).

A child that cursed his parents died under Moses' law. So, Hollywood what do you think of that! (*Proverbs 20:20; Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 27:16*).

**Troubled By Lying
Everyone Hates A Liar
No One Can Trust A Liar.**

Severe punishments are reserved for liars and perjurers. And all liars shall spend eternity in the lake of fire (*Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15*).

Honesty in all situations is not only the best policy; it is the holy requirement of the God of truth (*Proverbs 12:22; Exodus 20:16; Leviticus 19:11; Ephesians 4:25*).

You can get into trouble by disrespecting authority. Do not curse the king even in your thoughts or bedroom (*Ecclesiastes 10:20*).

A little bird will carry the wicked words, and you will be in trouble. God despises those who speak evil of rulers (*2Peter 2:10-12; Jude 1:8-10*).

Children must honor parents, wives their husbands, employees their employers, and church members their pastors (*Ephesians 5:33; 6:1-3; 1Thessalonians 5:12-13; Titus 2:9-10; 1Peter 3:5-6*).

You can get into trouble by arguing and debating. Wise men listen rather than talk (*Proverbs 17:27-28; Ecclesiastes 7:5*).

A woman should avoid contention and emphasize kindness (*Proverbs 19:13; 21:19; 27:15; 31:26*).

God's ministers reject foolish and unlearned questions, for they are the marks of fools and scorners (*1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:14, 16, 23; Titus 3:9*).

Wise men study before talking (*Proverbs 15:28*), especially God's ministers (*2 Timothy 2:15*).

You Get In Trouble Hurting Those Around You!

Spouses, children, and friends can easily be hurt by cutting words (*Proverbs 12:18; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:19*).

Harsh words stir up anger and cause fights to escalate (*Proverbs 15:1*).

Relationships are destroyed, bitterness is created, and your future dulled by hard words. It is the man and woman with gracious speech that will be held in high esteem (*Proverbs 11:16; 22:11*).

It is a command to use gracious words (*Colossians 4:6*).

How can you avoid trouble with your mouth and tongue?

Cut your words in half, for many words always contain sin (*Proverbs 10:19*).

Slow down and emphasize listening before speaking (*Proverbs 29:20; James 1:19*).

Remember that you will give an account for every idle word and be judged for your words (*Matthew 12:34-37*).

Pray like David, "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (*Psalms 141:3*).

Rather than trouble, the man who guards his mouth and tongue will enjoy the good life, guaranteed by the infallible Word of God. "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile" (*Psalms 34:12-13*).

Peter also quoted these wonderful Words of promise (*1 Peter 3:10*).

There was never trouble for the Lord Jesus Christ by His mouth and tongue. He spoke like no other man in the world's history (*Psalms 45:2; Luke 4:22; John 7:46*).

There was nothing to charge Him for at His trial, so the Jews falsely accused Him by perverting His pure Words (*Matthew 26:59-61*).

Our Lord's pure Words will soon judge their sins (*Matthew 7:21-23*).

Proverbs 21:24 Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

The man who deals in proud wrath is one that has an inflated view of oneself! He is self-willed and not humble, he is a moral failure; scornful, he demonstrates a lack of respect. This man is haughty having or showing arrogant superiority to and disdain of those he views as unworthy.

Pride Often Associated With Presumption

The two concepts are related. Because of a man's pride, he presumes too much in his own favor. *Obadiah 1:3 The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?*

The pride of the Edomites who wrongly presumed that they had a safe place in the cliffs. This was due to an inflated view of themselves and the security they provided for themselves.

Prophets also, *Deuteronomy 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.* A false prophet is one who speaks presumptuously because of pride.

This proud presumption is also associated with rebellion. *Deuteronomy 1:43 So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill.*

The proud are seen opposing God and God's people. *Deuteronomy 1:43 So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill.*

Solomon is describing a proud man, who because of his pride, is given to outbursts of rage and anger. This man would be a good candidate for a series of classes in anger management.

Proud men blow up easily. At the slightest insult or rebuke and they let off steam. They are volcanoes just waiting to explode at the slightest tremor.

Solomon describes this lifestyle: he fashions, makes, prepares, and maintains this behavior.

This lifestyle speaks of a daily practice; a way of life.

This lifestyle is more than just an occasional failure, it is a lifestyle!

The man he describes here has a real problem with anger, and with proud wrath. He deals with proud anger. He conducts his life this way. It is part of his lifestyle. It is how he deals with anyone or anything that crosses him.

If you do something he doesn't like, you will experience his proud wrath.

This kind of proud wrath continually leads to contention. **Proverbs 13:10** *Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.*

This man lives in the midst of contention because he brings it with him everywhere he goes.

After Describing This "Syndrome", Solomon Gives It Three "Names."

1. Proud
2. Haughty
3. Scorner

Psychologists may refer to this as disorder, making it a medical issue that often requires medication.

The Bible describes it differently, with three terms describing three different sins:

1. Pride: It means: arrogant, proud, insolent, presumptuous. It is repeated to emphasize the point: behind these outbursts of wrath and anger is deep-seated, entrenched PRIDE.

When this kind of pride comes, it is inevitably followed by shame. (**Proverbs 11:2**).

The man with no control of his spirit blows up easily. Initially, it feels good to blow up and let others have it, to get it off your chest. It only takes a few seconds to blow up. But the ripples of that outburst go on. And living with the ripples brings shame:

- He may be ashamed of his uncontrolled spirit.
- He may be ashamed of treating others so cruelly.
- He may be ashamed of making such a fool of himself.
- He may be ashamed of burning all his bridges.
- He may be ashamed of losing so many friends.
- He may be ashamed of causing so much contention.
- He may be ashamed of all the messes he's left behind.

2. Haughty: Pertains to being proud and high-minded, as a moral failure. A haughty person believes he is the greatest and that the world revolves around him, or at least that it should, if it were functioning properly.

This man believes, life is about me, myself, and I. Those are his three best friends. (Usually his only friends!)

Haughty is what John describes as the "*pride of life*." (**1John 2:16**). It does not originate from the Father, but rather finds its source in the fallen, sinful, proud heart of man.

3. Scorner: It means, (to make mouths at, talk arrogantly, mock), he is big talker.

A scorner speaks words which show no respect for the object or person.

Mocking is related to pride and arrogance. It indicates that the person mocking feels superior to those he mocks. This is not an innocent disorder that the man caught, as one might catch a cold.

This Is Sin Which God Hates:

Proverbs 16:5 *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*

Proverbs 3:34 *Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.*

Proverbs 9:8 *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.*

Proverbs 9:12 *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.*

Proverbs 19:29 *Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.*

Proverbs 22:10 *Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.*

The way of victory is the filling of the Holy Spirit which results in the fruit of the Spirit, namely, *Temperance*: self control.

Proverbs 21:25-26 *The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.*

26 *He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not.*

In this passage, the verse numbering breaks it up into two separate Proverbs, which is unfortunate, because it is really one.

It is one antithetical ^{sharply contrasted} Proverb in which two things are contrasted: The slothful man who covets and the righteous who gives.

Dividing the Proverb up into two separate Proverbs obscures the contrast Solomon intended here.

The Slothful Man defined as: slow to take any action, suggesting a lack of discipline or initiative, as a moral failure.

Solomon has mentioned the slothful man several times in this book. Solomon is describing a person whose life is characterized by laziness.

However, this stands as a good warning to all of us, because we can all be lazy at one time or another.

While we may be diligent in most things, there may be one area of our life where diligence is lacking.

We may be diligent in the upkeep of our home, but we don't take care of the car.

We may be diligent in keeping the inside of the house clean, but let the outside go to weeds... or vice versa.

We may be diligent about paying our bills on time, but not so diligent about setting money aside for taxes.

We may be diligent about reading the Word of God, but are slothful when it comes to prayer, or witnessing, or vice versa.

This Proverb (and others like it) can be like a "goad" to stir us to, diligence in a particular area concerning which, the Holy Spirit may be convicting us.

The slothful man Refuses to Labor. The particular area, that the Holy Spirit seems to focus on, is being lazy concerning that four letter word: w-o-r-k!

Solomon is not describing a man who is not working, but the man who refuses to work.

Often men are unemployed because they cannot find a job, or they were laid off.

Others are unemployed because of an injury. They would love to work, but due to circumstances beyond their control, they are not presently working.

That is not the situation described here. Solomon speaks of a man who is able to work, but he refuses.

Refuse: resist, i.e., be in a state of defiance or rebellion; the rejection of an offer to work; to utterly refuse to work. It is a strong term.

This is not the person who is lacking energy one day and is having a hard time kicking into gear.

This is a person described by Paul, that if "a man would not work, neither should he eat." (He was able, but unwilling). (*2Thessalonians 3:10*).

This is a committed, dedicated, defiant sluggard.

Labour: this is kind of a broad term which means to do, to make, to accomplish, to complete. It speaks of the man who refuses to do virtually anything. A man who doesn't like action. A man who thinks work is too tiring. He prefers to sleep.

It speaks of a man, at the widget factory, who refuses to make widgets. This is the carpenter who refuses to make the tables he's supposed to make.

The term speaks of the man who refuses to accomplish anything. He refuses to complete anything. He may start a few projects, but never brings them to completion. He refuses to labor, to work, to do or finish almost anything.

While Solomon probably had in mind laboring with his hands at the farm or at the factory, application can easily be made to other areas life as and to our spiritual lives.

Slothfulness Isn't Restricted To Our 9-5 Jobs!

Laziness is a blight that can settle in on any area of life; especially our spiritual life.

The Slothful Man's Desires Kill Him.

Desire: either in a good or evil sense; a good desire, wish, longings of one's heart, or an evil desire in the sense of lust, appetite, covetousness. The term is a bit ambiguous, since it can be used of both good and evil desires.

The Holy Spirit may well have intended for its use to be a bit ambiguous, to cause us to stop and think.

The slothful man would have a natural desire for good things like food; shelter; clothing; good health.

He may have a desire for a nice family with well trained, well groomed, well educated children. He may have a good desire for friends and a social life. "*He coveteth greedily all the day long*" (vs.26)

In verse 26 Solomon implies that the lazy man also has a desire for that is not good and wholesome, but this is pure covetousness.

He covets: this is not the same term as is translated "desire" in verse 25. This term means: desire, covet, wait longingly, wish, sigh, want, be greedy, to crave, too long for, lust after (of bodily appetites)

This is the term used in the 10th commandment "*Thou shalt not covet.*" (*Exodus 20:17*). This term is used in an evil sense in verse 26.

The slothful man covets what other hard working people have. He sees the nice family they have; the well trained and well groomed kids.

The slothful man sees their well maintained homes and yards.

The slothful man sees their large herd of camels, and their bounteous harvests.

The slothful man sees it all, and covets it. He wishes that he had all that for which they labored.

His hands refuse to labor, but his heart continues to desire the fruit of such labor.

Greedily: this is a form of the same term in verse 25 translated “*desire.*” In other words, he covets their goods and things with a great longing desire of his heart.

The concepts are a bit redundant, but is added for emphasis. The slothful man longs for what they have. He wishes he had it too. He lusts after it. He sighs because he does not have it. All the day long.

Solomon notes that the slothful man does not have just a passing thought every once in a while that it would be nice to have what his neighbor has. But all the day long.

We have all seen beautiful, stately homes, or mountain chalets and thought that it must be nice to own such things.

We have all had such passing thoughts, but then the Lord convicts us and we return to being content with such things as we have.

Not so with the slothful man. These are not just rare, occasional, passing thoughts.

This is the covetous desire of his heart all day long! Day after day! He is never content. He is never happy. What a miserable life. All day long he greedily covets and is never satisfied.

Hell must be like that. A burning in desire for that which others have, for that which could have been obtained, but is now beyond reach. That is a life of torment! It kills him... (vs.25)

"killeth him" is the normal term for kill, murder, cause to die. Again, this term is also a bit ambiguous.

"killeth him" could refer to a literal death. The lazy man may starve to death.

"killeth him" may also refer to a figurative death, in a sense similar to our expression today, “The price of gas is killing me,” or “It’s killing me to see what’s happening to my country.”

What we mean is that: It is torture, it is agonizing, it is painful...”

The laziness of the sluggard could literally kill him. He could starve to death, or freeze to death.

The laziness of the sluggard, could also (in a figurative sense) condemn him, to a life of inward agony and emotional torture, as he watches what others have and he cannot have them.

Apply This To Our Spiritual Lives. There are men who long to have self control. They see others who manifest temperance and covet it long for it for themselves.

Their lives are miserable because they don’t have it. (***Proverbs 25:28***)

Men too lazy to read the Scriptures! Men too lazy to come to Sunday School! Men too lazy to study the Bible on his own! Men too lazy to become a “*doer*” of the Word and not a hearer only!

Believers who long for a happy home life, but are too lazy to do what the Bible says is necessary to obtain it: love your wife as Christ loved the church, obey and reverence your husband in everything, etc.

There are many believers who want to win a crown, but they are too lazy to give their all in running the race. They want a crown, but are not willing to give up anything in this life in order to obtain it.

Now about “*the righteous man.*” A righteous man is one who does that which is right. Here we have an interesting contrast.

Normally the righteous man is contrasted to the wicked man in Proverbs. We would normally expect that Solomon would contrast the slothful man with the diligent man. However, here the contrast is between the slothful man with the righteous man.

The implication is clear: the slothful man is the doing the opposite of that which is right. Laziness is not only the opposite of diligent; it is also the opposite of righteous.

It is wrong and unrighteous to be slothful. This is not just an innocent difference in personalities. This is a moral failure. The lazy man is morally wrong.

Of course, this also implies that a righteous man will not be lazy, but will be diligent. Because the Bible commands us to be diligent and hard working, being lazy is a moral issue.

Being lazy is outright disobedience! It is outright defiance against God!

Being lazy is outright disobedience against His Word! It is outright defiance (rebellion)!

Interestingly, Solomon doesn't even mention the fact that the righteous man is hard working. It is however implied in the passage.

The Righteous Man Does That Which Is Right.

A righteous man obeys God's command to be diligent and hard working. He Gives and He Spares Not

The righteous man bears the fruit of his labor. He is righteous not only because he works and earns money and provides well for himself and his family.

He is righteous also because of what he does with his goods. He is generous. He gives and spares not.

Proverbs 21:27 The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

Man's Religion Does Not Impress God!

You may comfort your foolish soul, but hypocrisy offends God.

God despises man's hypocritical religion of church attendance, giving, words, and service, when you have any sin in your life (***Proverbs 15:8; 28:9***).

God hates it! He thinks it stinks! He cannot stand it! And **If** you have evil intentions in your religious service, He hates it that much more!

Men love religion, because they want to honor God, justify themselves to Him, please other men, and soothe their souls.

Men love religion, because it is easy. Attending church, carrying a Bible, talking the talk, giving some money, and doing noble deeds are easy.

Men may even think they love God. But searching their heart and life, to rip out pleasurable things that are contrary to the Bible, is too hard. So most live as hypocrites. But God hates hypocrisy!

Men Love Religion Because It Is Useful!

They attend church for personal glory, fleecing victims, or preying on women (***1Samuel 2:12-17, 22; Matthew 6:1-6; 23:14***).

They may volunteer for church offices. Every city has a few churches of society darlings stroking one another. These people are often agnostics or even atheists; they have no desire for God.

They use religion for evil ambitions. And God hates this more than hypocrites!

Men Love Religion Because It Hides Their Wicked Intentions!

Consider: Balaam's pretence at religion (***Numbers 23:1-3***),

Absalom covering his treason (***2Samuel 15:7-13***),

Jezebel's fast to murder Naboth (***1Kings 21:9-13***),

The adulteress showing piety to her victim (***Proverbs 7:13-14***),

The false teachers in Christian churches (***2Peter 2:12-19***).

These all use religion to cover their love of sin, and God hates that more than hypocrites!

All men lie to themselves. They imagine God overlooks some or all of their sins because of their religious worship. (***Jeremiah 17:9***)

Men are horribly wrong! God hates hypocrisy, God despises all of their worship. God considers such worship to be sin (***Isaiah 1:13***)!

God hates it, and He promises to reject their prayers (***Isaiah 1:14-15***)!

God blasted Israel repeatedly for religious hypocrisy (***Psalms 50:7-23; Isaiah 1:10-20; 58:1-7; 66:1-4; Jeremiah 6:20; 7:1-15; Hosea 8:11-14; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8; Malachi 2:1-9***).

God considered and valued their sacrifice of an ox as murdering a man, a lamb as a dog's neck, and a gift as swine's blood (***Isaiah 66:3***)!

It is no different in the New Testament. Jesus Christ promised, to spew the Laodiceans, out of His mouth for their lukewarm religion (***Revelation 3:14-19***).

How much hypocrisy do you think you can get away with? A little? You are wrong!

All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do (***Hebrews 4:12-14***).

God demands your whole heart and a holy life (***Matthew 6:24; 22:27***).

So anything less than that, God counts as spiritual adultery and will judge it severely (***James 4:1-10; Revelation 2:1-5***).

Jesus Christ requires, a pure heart and holy life (***John 4:24; Romans 12:1-2; James 1:27***).

Jesus mocked, outward religion, without internal holiness (***Matthew 5:17-20; 6:1-6; 23:23-28***).

Jesus warned, to perfect relationships, before bringing a gift (*Matthew 5:21-26*).

Disobedience turns religious worship into idolatry and witchcraft (*1Samuel 15:22-23*)!

Proverbs 21:28 A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.

Thousands testify in court and other settings every day. Parents question children. A false witness may lie for a while, but he will be discovered and punished by God and men.

Godly men, when put under oath, tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

A Proverb Is A Short Dark Saying (Proverbs 1:6)

It is our duty to identify the lesson: ¹The first half is obvious, a man who lies under questioning will be judged. ²The second half, like many Proverbs, teaches the opposite, a good man under oath speaks the truth constantly.

We know it is a good man in the second half, because he is contrasted to the false witness of the first half.

Consider, "*Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing*" (*Proverbs 18:22*).

Only good wives are good things, as Solomon proved (*Proverbs 12:4; 21:9, 21:19; 30:21-23*).

Only a good wife is a blessing, and that is clearly understood elliptically by the context of the phrase.

What does the honest man hear? He hears the magistrate swearing him to tell the truth. Moses warned, "*And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity*" (*Leviticus 5:1*).

Jesus finally answered Caiaphas, after He was sworn to speak (*Matthew 26:63-64*).

How does the good man respond to hearing the oath? He speaks constantly, meaning he speaks with mental constancy or with steadfastness; confidently, faithfully, assuredly.

He tells the truth firmly without equivocation or variation. His testimony is consistent with itself. He is a faithful and true witness, upon which the integrity of every court depends.

Solomon gave this lesson elsewhere. He wrote, "*Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not*" (*Proverbs 29:24*).

The accomplice of the thief heard the curse of the judge to tell the truth, but he did not divulge or expose the thief.

Moses commanded early, "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*" (*Exodus 20:16*).

God is a God of truth, and He expects His children to be men of truth (*Deuteronomy 32:4; Exodus 18:21; Ephesians 4:25*).

Parents must enforce absolute truth at all times, by punishing exaggeration, deception, and lying as most serious offences.

God hates lying (*Proverbs 6:16-19*).

The devil is the father of all lies (*John 8:44*).

All liars will be in the lake of fire (*Revelation 21:8*).

But the gracious God has punished the lies of His children in Christ, and He has given them Christ's truthfulness as their own in justification!

Proverbs 21:29 A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.

You Show Your Heart By How You Accept Instruction!

Wicked men rebel and purpose to continue in an evil course. Righteous men receive correction and alter their lives. Your response to instruction may tell more than anything else about your character and future.

A wicked man hardens his face. Here is a metaphor for a rebel who has purposed to reject teaching.

A wicked man chooses rebellion rather than submission. He is setting his jaw, he is steeling his eyes, his frowning, or looking away are only symptoms of his wicked heart.

A wicked man has resolved to ignore correction or instruction and stay put. See the comments on *Proverbs 28:9*.

The Lord knows faces and how they reveal rebellion, so He warns about them (*Isaiah 48:4; Jeremiah 3:3; 5:3*).

Rebellious hardening is also used of the neck and heart (*Proverbs 28:14; 29:1; Acts 7:51*).

God tells His ministers to ignore such faces and preach the unvarnished truth without apology or compromise anyway (*Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17; 23:28-29; Ezekiel 2:6-7; 3:7-9*).

Ministers learn faces. There is a huge difference between the hungry, submissive, cheerful, and godly face of the righteous and the bored, stubborn, unhappy, and carnal face of the wicked.

Some faces crave and devour instruction; others resent and reject it. Both are in every church.

They cannot hide from men or God. Sometimes a minister will see by the faces that his instruction is "*out of season*." The people do not want to hear what he has from the Lord. Sometimes it will be "*in season*." But in either case he has only one duty: preach the Word insistently (*2Timothy 4:2*)!

A true man of God wages war against those faces, smashes through their walls, pulls down their strongholds, casts down their haughty imaginations, brings every thought into obedience to Christ, and sets himself to revenge any disobedience (*2Corinthians 10:3-6*).

Reader, do you understand this warfare? Do you appreciate this kind of servant? It is a far cry from the effeminate, refined, cultured, and mannered man sought by most.

God hates stubbornness and rebellion. He considers them comparable to idolatry and witchcraft (*1Samuel 15:22-23*).

God judges these sins severely. Think King Saul rejected from the throne! Think Judah in Babylon! Think women eating their children in 70 A.D.!

Righteous Men Hear And Change.

The Thessalonians heard Paul and turned from their idols to serve the living and true God (*1Thessalonians 1:9-10*).

Cornelius heard and begged Peter to tell him and his family all of God's commandments (*Acts 10:33*).

Harlots heard and wept at Jesus feet!
The Lord Jesus warned you about your hearing (*Luke 8:18; Mark 4:24*).

Do you receive instruction and rebuke meekly and thankfully (*Nehemiah 8:1-18; Acts 17:11*)?

Do you stop up your ears and wish you could stone the preacher (*Acts 7:57*)?

Why do some people never learn or grow? Because the Lord is judging them for how they hear (*Luke 8:18; Mark 4:24*)!

You can stay in your wicked rut received from childhood, the devil, your parents, tradition, religious training, or worldly education. Or you can eagerly desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby (*1Peter 2:1-3*).

Wise men and great men say, "*I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies*" (*Psalms 119:59*).

Do you delight in understanding? Do you delight in discovering your own heart? See the comments on *Proverbs 18:2*.

If you think, your heart has even an ounce of light and wisdom, you will harden your face against godly instruction.

God doesn't grant your heart even one ounce (*Isaiah 8:20; Jeremiah 17:9*).

Wise men will hear and change (*Proverbs 4:26; 8:33; 11:5; 23:19*).

Some hearers do not harden their faces; they nod up-and-down in agreement; they tell the pastor it was a good sermon. They lie with their lips and their handshakes (*Psalms 144:8, 11*).

Their hearts are hard and far away during the teaching and when they get home. How are they detected? Their lives are fruitless shells of hypocrisy. Their joy is gray death.

Jesus told of a father who told his two sons to work in the vineyard (*Matthew 21:28-32*).

One son said he would not, but later repented and went and worked anyway. The other son respectfully said he would, but he did not.

Which one pleased his father? Consider it. **If** a wicked man will hear and turn from his wickedness, he shall live (*Ezekiel 18:27-28*).

Jesus Christ kindly offers, "*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*" (*John 14:23*).

But He also warns, "*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (*John 12:48*).

Humble Yourself Today!

Proverbs 21:30 There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.

Let all who love the LORD say, "Amen!" He is our God, and none in heaven or in earth can resist Him or question Him!

He does according to His own will, in heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth!

Confess your rebellion! Humble yourself at His feet! Believe His Word! Praise and worship Him forever!

He reduced the greatest monarch in the history of the world to a grass-eating ox, until that man blessed and praised the King of heaven (***Daniel 4:1-37***)!

It is recorded in the chronicles of the Babylonian Empire! It was published throughout the earth in every known language to every known nation! That monarch wrote:

*"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever; whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? ... Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (***Daniel 4:34-37***).*

Here is the beginning of wisdom (***Proverbs 1:7***), the fountain of understanding (***Proverbs 9:10***), and the source of knowledge (***Proverbs 1:29***).

Fully believing the sovereignty of the LORD is the essential basis for right thinking and right living. Let every reader take careful heed!

Mighty Pharaoh, absolute king and god of Egypt, said to God's preacher, *"Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go"* (***Exodus 5:2***).

After ravaging his nation with ten plagues and killing the nation's firstborn, the LORD took the wheels off Pharaoh's royal chariot and let him think about drowning for a few minutes, before suffocating him under the waters of the Red Sea!

Benhadad, king of Syria, thought the God and Israel were limited to fighting on hills, but God destroyed his army in the plain and with a falling wall (***1Kings 20:22-30***)!

King Ahab thought he could disguise himself in battle and overthrow the LORD's prophecy of his death, but God sent a random arrow through a joint of his armor (***1Kings 22:30-40***)!

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, blasphemed Jehovah profanely. He lost his army in a single night to the angel of the LORD, and his own sons murdered him, while he was asking his pagan god why he had lost the battle so horribly (***2Chronicles 32:21***)!

Herod the Great thought, he could stop God by killing the children of Bethlehem, but he died miserably a few months later, with Jesus safe in Egypt (***Matthew 2:1-20***)!

The Jews thought they could kill Jesus and eliminate this righteous Man from their nation, but He returned with armies to miserably destroy those murderers and burn up their city (***Matthew 22:1-7***)!

They cried, *"We will not have this man to reign over us"* (***Luke 19:14***); they said, *"His blood be on us, and on our children"* (***Matthew 27:25***)!

And so it was! Jesus reigned over them anyway and avenged His blood on them in 70 AD with Roman armies.

The LORD is King of kings! He is Lord of lords! The President, Congress, Supreme Court, and all other elected and appointed officials of our nation should humble themselves before Him.

Any legislation, interpretation, or action contrary to His expressed will in the Holy Scriptures will soon receive frightful and horrific destruction.

Korah and his cronies thought they could bark against Moses, so the LORD opened the earth and swallowed them and their families alive (***Numbers 16:1-34***)!

Ananias and Sapphira thought they could lie a little regarding their real estate proceeds, but the LORD killed them (***Acts 5:1-11***).

Reader, do you hear and obey the messenger God has sent you?

God is the Potter; humanity is mere clay (***Romans 9:21***)!

Men do not have the right to even question Him (***Romans 9:20***)!

Some human clay, become objects of His wrath by rebellion and He has mercy on other human clay, become objects of His glory because of their belief and repentance (***Romans 9:22-24***)!

Evolutionists reject a Creator, but they cannot evolve away death and their appointment, to meet Him at the horrifying bar of divine Justice (*Hebrews 9:27*)!

Suicidal fools think they can end their guilt-producing conscience by self-murder, only to wake up facing God, the Dread Sovereign of Heaven declaring that murder deserves an eternal, consciousness in the Lake of Fire, the second death!

Adam and Eve thought they could cover their guilt and shame with fig leaves and hide among the trees of the Garden from God, just as men try to cover their sins and hide to this day. But they were discovered and condemned!

Jonah thought he could escape his call to the ministry by fleeing to Tarshish, but the LORD sent a whale to correct Him!

There is no wisdom against the LORD's wisdom, so reader, choose His wisdom (*Psalms 119:128; Isaiah 8:20*).

There is no wisdom against the LORD's providence, so reader humbly, accept your circumstances with composure and contentment (*Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:6*).

There is no wisdom against the LORD's judgment, so reader, obey Him with a cheerful heart (*Numbers 32:23*).

Do not imagine or think for a minute that you can sin and escape, God knowing and judging your sin. Do not deceive yourself, that you can compromise His rules of wisdom and succeed.

Reader do not think, you can take precautionary measures, to deliver yourself from God's judgment. Do not imagine, that you have discovered better wisdom, than the Word of God.

**Rather Than Resist, Repent And Reform!
God Will Have Mercy!**

How will you escape the LORD? Will your hypocrisy deceive Him? Will you weigh out your good works before Him? Will you move God with emotion in the Day of Judgment?

You are a great fool, **If** you trust any of these delusions. Beg Him for mercy! Now!

Neither horses (*Psalms 33:17*), nor chariots (*Psalms 20:7*), nor princes or men (*Psalms 146:3-4*) can deliver you.

Reader, humble yourself before God today, believe His Word, confess your sins, and trust His providence. Stand in awe, and sin not (*Psalms 4:4*).

It is clear, that mankind needs to "*prepare to meet thy God*" (*Amos 4:12*).

Proverbs 21:31 The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.

Do you lock your doors at night? Do you have a security system? Do you have protection in your nightstand? Have you registered your phone number and address with the police? Are you a light sleeper? Your safety is still dependent on the LORD.

If God does not protect you, there are no means you can take, to truly preserve your safety and security.

Do you know how to trust the LORD for safety? Read on, and cast yourself on the LORD. He will deliver those who put their trust in Him.

Learn to balance human means and the LORD's help on the side of faith! Learn it today!

The previous Proverb teaches there is no success against God (*Proverbs 21:30*).

This Proverb teaches there is no success without God! David wrote, "*Except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep*" (*Psalms 127:1-2*).

Unreasonable efforts to protect yourself are vain. Trust the LORD, and go to sleep! How did David go to sleep? "*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety*" (*Psalms 4:8*).

The LORD expects you to use reasonable means to protect yourself, but He will do the rest. **If** you go beyond reasonable means, then you are trusting yourself and your means, rather than trusting Him. Your degree of safety has dropped! Look out, lest a thief and robber, this very night to prove that you need to trust Him!

You should take ordinary precautions, cast your worries upon Him, and go to sleep peacefully and safely!

Kings prepared horses for battle, for God created the horse to be a magnificent weapon in war (*Job 39:19-25*).

Their great speed, strength, and courage added greatly to an army's ability in the field, prior to the invention of planes, tanks, and other mechanized weapons. Chariots drawn by horses were also used often (*1 Kings 4:26; 10:26*).

An army with a cavalry and/or chariot division was considered to be far superior to mere infantry.

But the LORD wants all men to know that regardless of your efforts to protect yourself or your family, you are utterly dependent on Him for your safety. Trust in the LORD is more important than anything else, even though God expects you to take ordinary precautions in this matter and all other matters.

The wicked king Ahab, having been told the LORD would kill him that day, went into battle disguised to prove the LORD wrong. But a chance arrow, shot with no particular target in mind, found the very seam in his armor and killed him (**1Kings 22:30-38**)! Trust the Lord!

Oliver Cromwell, who led one of the most successful armies in the history of England, is said to have exhorted his troops with these words, just prior to a battle against a numerically superior foe: "Put your trust in the Lord, and keep your powder dry!" Exactly! In his words, faith and prudence are rightly combined!

To the degree you trust the horse (or other natural means), you lose the Lord's blessing on your effort. Put your trust in the LORD, and minimize your confidence in natural means as far as you dare.

Many are the Scriptures demeaning the horses and chariots of those not trusting the LORD (**Deuteronomy 17:16; 2Chronicles 16:7-12; Psalm 147:10; Ecclesiastes 9:11; Isaiah 30:1-7,15-17; 31:1; 36:6-10; Jeremiah 17:5; Ezekiel 17:15-19; Amos 5:4-8**).

Then David, who wrote, "*Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God*" (**Psalm 20:7**).

And, "*There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy*" (**Psalm 33:16-18**).

The great day of battle is coming!

The day comes in which you will be stripped naked of all human supports before the devouring eyes and holy justice of the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

In that day, make sure your confidence is only in the Lord Jesus Christ! Look not to your own way of faith or believing! Make no claim of your good works done for Him! Don't offer mere words about Him! SALVATION IS OF THE LORD (**Jonah 2:9**)!