



Studies in the Book of Proverbs by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

Studies in the Book of Proverbs

(#1) What are "Proverbs?"

"Proverbs" (Hebrew "*mashal*") which means "dominant meaning," but which may not be obvious unless it is pointed out. The New Testament word "parable" means "cast alongside" so that a fact of life helps illustrate a spiritual truth. The English word "proverb" (**John 10:6; 16:25**) carries the sense of "original, deeper meaning." The first time the word occurs (**Numbers 21:27**), the first proverb made (**I Samuel 10:12**), the first proverb of experience quoted (**1 Samuel 24:13**), all speak of observation(s) of life.

Jesus Christ is known for teaching in "parables" (**Matthew 13:3-53**), which are true statements of life that illustrate a spiritual truth from God. Parables needed an explanation "because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" (**Matthew 13:13**). In **Matthew 7:21-17**, Jesus divided the human race between those who hear and obey ("wise"), and those who do not ("fools"). "Proverbs" are true statements of human behavior that are explained by the God Who made us. Solomon divided the human race between those who hear and understand ("wise"), and those who do not ("fools").

Though Solomon "spoke three thousand proverbs" (**1 Kings 4:32**), those that have been written down are in **Proverbs 1:1-29:27; Ecclesiastes**; and **Song of Solomon**. Of about 915 proverbs, Solomon wrote about 800, many in the Book of Proverbs (**Proverbs 1:1; 10:1; 25:1**). In **1 Kings 3:5-15**, Solomon had asked God for "an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil" (**verse 9**), which God granted (**verse 12**), and that made Solomon the wisest man in the history of mankind, until Jesus Christ, "a greater than Solomon" (**Matthew 12:42**).

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## **(#2) Five Ways A Proverb Helps**

**Proverbs 1:1-4:** The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding, To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity; To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion

Just as Jesus explained why He spoke in parables (**Matthew 13:10-17**), Solomon begins in **Proverbs 1:1-4** by explaining why "proverbs" should be understood:

### **1. "To know wisdom and instruction"**

**God wants us "to know,"** that is, to have confidence in helpful information we gain. Certainty is a confidence ignored, minimized, or ridiculed by many in the "Education Profession," because if pupils are uncertain of what they learn, they'll keep hiring the "professionals." But, what makes the "professionals" *certain* of anything? Teachers of false things emphasize that pupils must be "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (**2 Timothy 3:6-7**). By contrast, however, there is certainty in God's Word, for He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (**1 Timothy 2:4**). "**Wisdom**" may be defined as "learned lessons" which are gained by experience and/or study, either or both of which are easier when God interprets it. "**Instruction**" refers to the "discipline of teaching" or the "how to" manual. All three of these mean someone whose life follows God's insight by obeying His instructions, will have certainty in the outcome!

### **2. "To perceive the words of understanding"**

Perception is a clear vision of the words of understanding. "Understanding" is horse sense or common sense. Though often missing, it is obvious when it is! Duh!

### **3. "To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity"**

These first three are how wisdom is obtained: "know," "perceive," "receive." When a teacher gives out proper information, good pupils accept it. Since no one can live long enough to experience everything, "wisdom" is learned either by one's own experiences, or someone else's. God's insight into human behavior cannot be excelled, for it is absolutely accurate. "Justice" is what is right; "judgment" is awareness of responsibility for action(s); "equity" is evenness or consistency.

### **4. "To give prudence to the simple"**

"Prudence" is the use of good judgment. "Simple," once a virtue meaning "honest, without complexity," in this Book, carries the idea of one who refuses to complicate life with any advice or instruction from God or man! "Simple," "scorner," "fool" are interchangeable in the **Book of Proverbs (1:22)**. The "simple" refuse to look ahead with foresight, or judgment based upon consequences.

### **5. "To the young man knowledge and discretion"**

"The young man" signifies inexperience, one subject to learning the hard way. "Knowledge" is beneficial information acquired by observation and study. "Discretion" is respect for what is appropriate, or the modesty of good judgment.

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(#3) The Goal of Wisdom and the Means to the Goal

Proverbs 1:5-7: A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

5 "A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel"

Any class of humanity that refuses to "hear" and "attain" to "increase learning" and "wise counsel" is a class of fools. Sad, indeed, that exploiting the "simplicity" and ignorance of children and teenagers has become an art form (government education, Rock and Rap music, VH1, MTV, Sesame Street, drug abuse, rebellion against marriage and family, abortion, *ad nauseum*). There will be proverbs to discuss these matters further, but for now, the warning should be heeded.

6 "To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles."

A "proverb" is a dominant meaning revealed, an "enigma" is a puzzle to be solved, a "riddle" was a dark saying, sometimes obscure. The queen of Sheba "came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions" (**2 Chronicles 9:1**). Samson proposed a "riddle," or dark saying (**Judges 14:12-18**), to which only he knew the solution. "Proverbs" give explanations to matters which might otherwise remain unknown or unnoticed.

7 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction."

This is the central theme throughout this Book, and all the rest of the Word of God! Since "fear" refers to respect and honor, ALL KNOWLEDGE comes from God, and without "the fear of the LORD" there will be no knowledge! All professors, teachers, schools, or subjects that exclude God are total failures at teaching "knowledge." All people who dishonor God will show their ignorance in many ways. There are some 17 passages in the Book of Proverbs that specifically attach advantages to "fear of the LORD," and the wise will notice, but fools will not!

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### **(#4) Listen to Your Parents, not a "Gang!"**

**Proverbs 1:8-19: My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck. My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent. If they say, "Come with us, Let us lie in wait to shed blood; Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause; Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, And whole, like those who go down to the Pit; We shall find all kinds of precious possessions, We shall fill our houses with spoil; Cast in your lot**

**among us, Let us all have one purse" - My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path; For their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed blood. Surely, in vain the net is spread In the sight of any bird; But they lie in wait for their own blood, They lurk secretly for their own lives. So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; It takes away the life of its owners.**

**Verses 8-9:** The father, whose work may occupy much time, gives "instruction," while the mother, whose work principally should be family, gives "law." The assumption here is that both have spiritually agreed to enforce God's law as best they might, therefore they are not in conflict with each other, nor undermine the other's authority with the children. This formula is clearly upheld in the Law of Christ (Ephesians 6:-4). "Human fathers" also chasten us (Hebrews 12:9) and enforce the discipline of teaching. Societies that encourage, sanction, or teach children to disrespect their parents or to rebel against them, will not long survive. "Single parenting" is not the best way to raise a child. God has planned for both a "father" and a "mother" to be required, and included, in a child's proper instruction. The highest percentage of poverty in America is found in single-parent homes, mostly where the mother is the single parent! Properly teaching a child is like fine jewelry.

**Verse 10:** No one may be misled into sin without consent. Children are "in the wrong crowd" when they haven't been shown how to recognize "the wrong crowd," or to refuse to go along with "the wrong crowd," or taught to conform and give consent to "the wrong crowd." Parents who let their children be led by peers instead of by rightful parental advice have abdicated their duty and will be held accountable for it. "Sinners" refers to the willfully disobedient, not an occasional sin.

**Verses 11-14:** "The wrong crowd" will propose:  
**(vss. 11-12)** anything up to the point of murder to gain their advantage;  
**(vs. 13)** stealing anything and everything;  
**(vs.14)** becoming an equal partner in all matters. There is no clearer description of "gangs," "brotherhoods," "mobs," "cliques," "unions," or any other group devoted to violence. It is truly foolish ignorance to join such power associations, and must surely be referred to by the Apostle Paul in **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**.

**Verses 15-19:** Such groups are to be avoided by not taking the first step with them **(v. 15)**; for they are always in a hurry to do their evil **(v. 16)** and ignore the open net of judgment awaiting them **(v. 17)**; the wicked openly seek blood with no prompting **(v. 18)**; those "greedy for gain" (covetous) are so involved in pursuing "gain" they lose their own lives, and others' lives, if necessary!

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(#5) Listen to Wisdom everywhere

Proverbs 1:20-33: Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words: "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorers delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge. Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, Because you disdained all my counsel, And would have none of my rebuke, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD, They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them; But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil."

Verses 20-21: The word "wisdom" is actually plural, "wisdoms," but is personified as if a single individual. The Creator, "God," is also in plural form, but with singular verbs, is spoken of as an individual with ignorance and ridicule ("scorners"), some refuse to be corrected ("fools"), throughout the Book of Proverbs. The only way for "sinners/scorners/fools" to be rescued is for them to "turn," or repent and accept God's wisdom. This is the theme of the entire Bible, for God "is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (**2 Peter 3:9**). Wisdom's "spirit" (influence or education) will be poured into the gaps of a person's knowledge by the "words" (revealed through miraculously-inspired writers in the Word of God, **Ephesians 3:1-7**) "known to you."

Verses 24-25: This is willful ignorance because: the call is refused, the offered hand is snubbed, the counsel ridiculed, the rebuke is rejected.

Verses 26-27: When the terrible consequences of ignorance, which produce fear and terror, occur, Wisdom will offer rejection in return!

Verses 28-31: Fools who answered Wisdom's cry with silence, then face consequences of their decisions, Wisdom will answer back with silence! In the absence of Wisdom, people will suffer consequences of their own decisions, and this is God's rule for life, for Jesus said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (**Matthew 15:13-14**). *Sinners, who are punished by their own actions, have no one to blame but themselves!* Those who survive their self-induced catastrophes, frequently learn to turn to Wisdom in their future.

Verses 32-33: The Rule of Wisdom is clearly stated in these verses. Jesus will apply this Rule on the Day of Judgment (**Matthew 7:21-27**).

Thought: In a crumbling society, "the complacency of fools" becomes a damning phrase to all who continue to vote, teach, approve, accept, or allow what has been done to continue to be done!

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## **(#6) God Gives Wisdom to Those Who Listen**

**Proverbs 2:1-9:** My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, And preserves the way of His saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path.

**Verses 1-5:** The word "if" often is connected by conditions that must be met in order for a "then" to state a blessing or benefit. Since "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (**Proverbs 1:7**), then it is absolutely essential to obtain knowledge. "Fear" here refers to "respect, awe, reverence" of the Lord. Without respect for the One who possesses the knowledge, the student will not learn! To "understand the fear of the Lord," and "find the knowledge of God" (**Proverbs 2:5**), a person must meet the following conditions:

**Verse 1** - "receive my words;"

"treasure my commands;"

**Verse 2** - listen to wisdom;

apply yourself to "understanding;"

**verse 3** - "cry out for discernment;"

speak out for "understanding."

**Verse 4** - to "seek" wisdom as one goes after "silver;"

or "search" for wisdom as one would dig for "buried treasure."

Learning is not automatic, nor by osmosis, but comes only by effort and application, just as the Apostle Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 2:15**. Knowledge requires the infusion of God's Truth, exercising of the mind, and diligent evaluation of action.

**Verses 6-9:** "God gives wisdom..." through the following means:

(1) "From His mouth," comes "every word" (**Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3**) which He has written for us to know (**1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:1-2**);

(2) "knowledge," or accumulation of data from all sources, including the Word of God (**Colossians 1:9-10**);

**(3) "understanding,"** is comprehension of what is learned (**Luke 24:44-47; 1 John 5:20**).

God "stores up sound wisdom" for the "upright" who will increase their faith;  
God "is a shield," or defense for those who "walk uprightly" in obeying the Truth;  
God "guards the paths of justice," by showing Divine balanced decisions;  
God "preserves the way of His saints," which is following Christ (**Acts 18:25-26; Acts 24:14**).

"Then," and only then, can a person "understand," or fully grasp:  
"righteousness," or the upright way; "justice," or honesty with God's Law; "equity," or evenness of application to all; "every good path," which always leads to the right thing to do or say. This list in **2:9** may be close to the "weightier matters" in God's Law, addressed by Jesus Christ (**Matthew 23:23**).

**Thought:** "A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel" **Proverbs 1:5**.

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(#7) God's Wisdom Delivers From Perverse Teachers and Immoral Women

Proverbs 2:10-22: When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant to your soul, Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you, To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things, From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness; Who rejoice in doing evil, And delight in the perversity of the wicked; Whose ways are crooked, And who are devious in their paths; To deliver you from the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words, Who forsakes the companion of her youth, And forgets the covenant of her God. For her house leads down to death, And her paths to the dead; None who go to her return, Nor do they regain the paths of life- So you may walk in the way of goodness, And keep to the paths of righteousness. For the upright will dwell in the land, And the blameless will remain in it; But the wicked will be cut off from the earth, And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.

Verses 10-15: Those who have accepted wisdom, are pleased with knowledge, preserved by discretion (good judgment), kept (protected) by understanding, are prepared to ward off "evil." "Evil" is described by the four phrases in **verses 12-15:**

- (1) "Perverse"** teaching. "Perverse" means "to turn or change a thing from its truthful meaning." This is designed to misdirect and confuse a right-thinking person.
- (2) "Leave the paths of righteousness."** These are determined to go their own way.
- (3) "Walk in the ways of darkness."** Those who hide their sinful deeds either in the dark of night, or in the darkness of ignorance, do not please God.
- (4) "Rejoice in doing evil."** Their pleasure is in what is wrong, not what is right.
- (5) "Delight in the perversity of the wicked."** Not only their own evil deeds, but

have pleasure in others who are like them morally.

(6) "Crooked," and "devious" describe them, not "upright" and "truthful."

What has been described is why youthful, inexperienced, ignorant, immature children have no business making their own decisions about life without parental guidance and The Word of God! **Proverbs 2:10-15** have just described "the wrong crowd" for any good person, and, unfortunately, this "crowd" has descended into "religion," as the Apostles of Jesus Christ described (**1 Timothy 6:3-5; Jude 3-21**), and has given it a bad reputation.

Verses 16-19: Since God created one woman for one man and brought her to that man to complete him, the terms for a married couple has been "the man and his wife" (**Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6, 9**). That said, every woman is "strange" who seeks a sexual relationship with any man who is not her own husband. Sex before or outside of marriage is "fornication," and sex with anyone already in a marriage relationship with another individual is "adultery" (**Hebrews 13:4**).

The "immoral woman" is one who:

(1) "Flatters with her words." This is "oily, slick" speech of a prostitute.

(2) "Forsakes the companion of her youth." She carries no learned convictions from her childhood, nor appreciation of men since that time.

(3) "Forgets the covenant of her God." She has irreverence for God and His pattern for marriage, and is willing to put this out of her mind altogether.

(4) "Her house leads down to death." Disease, affliction, pain and sorrow are inside, not a pleasant future.

(5) "Her paths to the dead." All roads lead to her "cemetery." How can anyone having sex with her say, "Man, that's living?"

(6) It's a one-way street, meaning once she seduces, it plants the seeds of discontent, desire, and destruction in a heart, that seldom can recover. "The paths of life" that are not recovered involve the life of health, happiness, honesty, and heaven. Fornicators and adulterers have violated their bodies and souls

(**1 Corinthians 6:15-19**), and while not impossible, repentance and recovery is very difficult.

Verses 20-22: Teach the prior judgment of God, and the wise will be warned and advised of conduct to be avoided. God's Wisdom shows the way of "goodness," "righteousness" which the "upright" and "blameless" will follow. Rejecting that Wisdom is for the "wicked" that shall be "cut off from the earth," and the "unfaithful" are to be "uprooted from it."

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### **(#8) The Wise Trust God And Improve Their Lives**

**Proverbs 3:1-12: My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, And so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man. Trust in the**



**LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones. Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine. My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.**

Following God's Wisdom brings out the best qualities in us, as we learn to have total confidence in God's guidance. Heeding Wisdom will give one:

**Verses 1-2: Longer Life.** "My son" is an expression used some 15 times in the first 7 chapters of Proverbs, for it is written as if Solomon is instructing his son. The way to "not forget" law is to "let your heart keep" the commands. This is explained in **James 1:21-25** and applied to Christian obedience. Obedience comes from the "heart," as do all our words (**Matthew 12:35-37**), sins (**Mark 7:21-23**), jobs (**Ephesians 6:5-8**). Blessings promised include "length of days" as in good health, "long life" as in living to old age, and "peace" as assistance to abundance or prosperity. Statistics show that those who regularly go to church live longer.

**Verses 3-4: Better Relations.** If "mercy" (feelings for the plight of our fellowmen) and "truth" (factual and accurate knowledge of our, and others', actions) are written on our heart, we will wear them like jewelry. These two qualities of character are appreciated ("favor and high esteem") among men and by God. All deep friendships are based upon understanding the friend, and honesty.

**Verses 5-6: Higher Direction.** Total trust in God in all our ways is possible because He made us (**Genesis 1:26-27**), greatly loved us (**Ephesians 2:4-7**), gave His Son for us (**Ephesians 5:1-2**). Why should we not believe He wants to help us make the best decisions in our lives? Trust "with all our heart" means we give up our "own understanding" and defer to His direction. It reduces tension to know what to do.

**Verses 7-8: Better Health.** To be "wise in your own eyes" is another way of describing "loftiness and arrogance and pride" (**Jeremiah 48:29-31**), but it takes "fear" (respect, awe) of the LORD, and the desire to "depart from evil" (or leave sinful practices, also known as repentance). By listening to God, we may keep our physical bodies from the dissipation and disease of sins, and live healthier and stronger lives, just as God promised His Israelites (**Deuteronomy 15:26**). Humility is the way of recognizing realistically our place in this vast world, without hypocrisy.

**Verses 9-10: Better Prosperity.** Thank God first with whatever we prosper, and He will think of us when we prosper. "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (**2 Corinthians 9:6-7**). God always has required that giving to Him come before any other consideration, and be freewill (**Leviticus 23:37-38**).

**Verses 11-12: Better Attitude.** A person who wants to be a spiritual "child of God" will accept some things that happen in life as God's "chastening" (teaching) or "correction" (sometimes hurtful reminders not to stray from the path of good). No parent loves his/her child who will not "correct" (discipline) the child, when needed. These two verses are used to show Christians not to become discouraged at God's correction, for it proves that God is dealing with them as a child whom He loves (**Hebrews 12:3-11**).

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(#9) God's Wisdom is Beneficial, Universal, Calming

Proverbs 3:13-26: Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days is in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who retain her. The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens; By His knowledge the depths were broken up, And clouds drop down the dew. My son, let them not depart from your eyes-Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul And grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, And your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; For the LORD will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.

Verses 13-18: Wisdom is described as a woman with benefits, who appears to have only good things to bring to a person's life. The contrast with the "immoral woman" (**Proverbs 2:16-22**) could not be greater, and should correct those who might think Solomon was against all women! An immoral woman can destroy a man, but Wisdom appearing as a woman can preserve a man. Wisdom makes a man "happy" (**verse 13**) because she is:

Profitable (verse 14) beyond possessing silver and gold. A wise life will make money to enjoy (**Ecclesiastes 5:19**), but a foolish one doesn't know how to enjoy wealth (**Ecclesiastes 6:2**).

Precious (verse 15) beyond rubies, and nothing else is as desirable.

Prolongs life (verse 16) with her "right hand," and the main rewards in life ("riches and honor") in her "left hand." This shows Wisdom has nothing in her hands but good.

Pleasant (verse 17) ways and paths of peace, instead of crooked ways and devious paths of the immoral woman. Could Wisdom be more appealing? Who does not look forward to a pleasant life, lived in peace?

Paradise (verse 18) is where the "tree of life" was when access was lost for all of us by Adam and Eve (**Genesis 2:9; 3:22-24; Revelation 2:7**). Wisdom will help us find the way back to that tree to live with God.

Verses 19-20: God's Creation was designed with such wisdom, that all scientific discoveries are simply the uncovering of the Wisdom of God! The expression, "scientific discoveries" does not include "what is falsely called knowledge" (**1 Timothy 6:20**), such as Evolution, Global Warming, Global Cooling, *ad nauseum*. God embedded "Wisdom" in Creating the earth, itself; God

showed "understanding" in making "the heavens" so precisely; God used "knowledge" in Noah's day when "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (**Genesis 7:11**). The terms, "wisdom," "understanding," "knowledge," are not mutually exclusive, but complement each other.

Verses 21-26: The Wisdom of God inside a heart means there is NO FEAR in life! If we keep focused on sound Wisdom and discretion (good judgment), our life will be with grace (**verses 21-22**). Instead of blindly falling into sin(s), we can be more sure footed in our way (**verse 23**). Knowing that God's Wisdom brings order to Creation, so His Wisdom brings order to our life (**verses 24-26**). Following God's Wisdom is better than Benedryl, Lunesta or Ambien! Since the most-prescribed class of drugs in the United States is anti-depressants, God's Wisdom is sorely needed! Jesus echoed this wise teaching about high anxiety in His Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 6:19-34**).

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### **(#10) Wisdom's 2 Simple Rules for Life**

**Proverbs 3:27-35:** Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you. Do not devise evil against your neighbor, For he dwells by you for safety's sake. Do not strive with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm. Do not envy the oppressor, And choose none of his ways; For the perverse person is an abomination to the LORD, But His secret counsel is with the upright. The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the home of the just. Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble. The wise shall inherit glory, But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

### **Verses 27-30: How to "Love Your Neighbor."**

**Verse 27:** "Due" is the operative word. This refers to what is owed, whether something purchased, work hired, or payment promised. Moses' Law required this: "You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning" (**Leviticus 19:13**;

**Deuteronomy 24:14-15**). The wisdom of Solomon required this: "When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For *He has* no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed- Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?" (**Ecclesiastes 5:4-6**).

First Century Jews had long since lost this practice: "Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (**James 5:4**). It is not wrong to buy on credit, but it is wrong to not pay when you can and should!

**Verse 28:** Delaying promised assistance to one's neighbor is an evil exercise that frustrates mercy. "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (**1 John 3:17**).

**Verse 29:** It's bad enough to frustrate mercy to a neighbor in need, but to "devise evil" takes this to a newer, lower level of indecency! The word "neighbor" literally describes the ones closer to us than the rest of the world, and they probably have chosen our "safety" for neighborhood. This is a main missing ingredient in "the hood," for neighbors should be able to rely upon each other for "safety" when police cannot always be there. "Neighborhood Watches" should be the order of the day everywhere.

**Verse 30:** In our litigious society, this must be re-instated! It is easy to ignore this rule of "neighborliness" when TV commercials are creating band wagon loads of people wanting to "sue" someone for something. Lawsuits should be limited to "harm done," not in order to establish some "harm done!"

**Verses 31-35: How to NOT Get "Suckered Into the Wrong Crowd!"**

**Verses 31-32: Don't envy them.** "The oppressor" who sues for no other reason than greed and who "devises evil" against neighbors shows a tyrant stripe wide enough to be seen! He/she/they should not be "envied" (desire what they obtain) because what they are doing is "perverse" and an "abomination to the LORD." This unyielding damnation on their "oppression" should show this as a wrong path for the righteous. We may not see that God meets with the righteous, not oppressors!

**Verses 33-35: Accept God's Awaiting Judgments.** God curses the "house of the wicked," but "blesses the home of the just," that is, He will not bless those whose will is to be wicked, and He will bless those who seek to do right. **Verse 34** is quoted in **James 4:6** and **1 Peter 5:5** as: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble" and in both passages this is a reason to "be humble." Do not count "the legacy of fools" by their money, influence, power, glory, murders, conquests, but by their standing before Almighty God!

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(#11) A Father's Wisdom: Get Wisdom!

Proverbs 4:1-9: Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law. When I was my father's son, Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, He also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live. Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you."

Verses 1-2: To "hear" a father's "instruction" places a responsibility upon the father to give "good doctrine," hopefully, because father knows better. Directing children's' attention "to know understanding" gives them a quest for knowledge, which should not be "forsaken."

Verses 3-4: A father would certainly want to rightly teach his son, especially when he is "the only one" held as special in his mother's eye. The father is responsible for setting his son on the right track by giving him information that, obeyed, cause him to "live."

Verses 5-9: Get after "Wisdom" and "understanding," these are the primary goal to be obtained. DO NOT forget by turning away, for we have short-term memories and must follow through our knowing Wisdom with action based upon that knowledge. The same application is made to "faith" in **James 1:22-25**. DO NOT forsake "her" in order to receive her blessing. Stated positively, "love her" in a close relationship. Wisdom is the "principal," or primary achievement in life, all else pales into nothingness. While getting wisdom, get "understanding," also, for lessons without application are useless. "Exalt her" is an admonition to keep her in her proper place. Wisdom should be the leading reason and predominant cause of all we do. Promotions and "honor" will accrue to those who "embrace her" because a wise person is of great value to every society. This was how Joseph was chosen by Pharaoh (**Genesis 41:33-41**); a city was delivered (**Ecclesiastes 9:13-16**); and Jesus was found (**Matthew 2:1-18**). A life governed by Wisdom will be honored by "a crown of glory." In New Testament terms we read: "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." (**James 1:12**) "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (**2 Timothy 4:6-8**) Clearly, a life lived in obedience to Jesus Christ is a wise life which will receive "the crown of life" and "of righteousness."

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## **(#12) A Father's Wisdom: Learn From Your Parents' Experiences**

**Proverbs 4:10-19:** Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, And the years of your life will be many. I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, And when you run, you will not stumble. Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; Keep her, for she is your life. Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on. For they do not sleep unless they have done evil; And their sleep is taken away unless they make someone fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, And drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know what makes them stumble.

**Verses 10-13:** Listen to your father and live longer (**Deuteronomy 5:16**; **Ephesians 6:1-3**). This, of course, assumes that a son knows who his father is, and

that his father has learned from his own experiences that God's Way is right. Now is the time for the father to teach "the way of wisdom," which only leads "in right paths." Wisdom's way is unhampered and unimpeded, so that it's perfectly safe to "walk" with no worry about difficulty, or "run" without tripping. God says it, human experience confirms it, and the wise are people who conform to it. Embrace Wisdom with the permanence of a marriage made in Heaven (**Matthew 19:4-6**), for "she *is* your life."

**Verses 14-17:** "The path" to avoid and the company not to keep! The morals which help a son make a decision should have already been taught by the father, so that this is an exhortation for the son to make the better decision. To avoid "the path of the wicked," one should "not enter" it. Don't start on the path, don't "walk," or progress, on that path. Stay off of it altogether. Don't "travel" on it. "Turn away from it" means simply, act like it's not even an alternate choice. The people who are taking that path are so devoted to evil, that they can't sleep "unless they have done evil," that could include making someone "fall," that is, not a day goes by without evil deeds. They eat and drink (live for) "wickedness" and "violence," which means they will resort to anything and everything to do evil and have no limits.

**Verses 18-19:** Dare to compare the difference between "the just" and "the wicked." Literally, this choice is the difference between day and night, it is so obvious. If more fathers would only see that their sons knew the difference, more sons would choose rightly. How's the idea that "kids should make up their own minds without parents telling them what's right or wrong" working for you? Sunshine cannot be missed, and a "perfect day" includes it, exactly the same as choosing "the path of the just" would make every day a "perfect day." Wandering throughout nighttime "darkness" means a person has no plan, learning experience, or goal in life, because they never find out "what makes them stumble." Too many fathers live their lives like this with alcohol and other drugs, sex, violence, gangs, irresponsibility, and they have experience but no wisdom. Not learning from our experiences that there is another, better way, is stupid.

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(#13) A Father's Wisdom: Focus on What Is Right

Proverbs 4:20-27: **My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.**

Verses 20-22: Son, pay "attention" to your father's "words." It is a heavy responsibility for a father to know something important enough to command total attention of his son. It is a grave responsibility for a son to know he needs to give his total attention to something his father has to say. This cannot be done while texting,

MP3-ing, phoning, gaming, face timing, etc...nor even if the son is doing these things! The way to a son's "heart" is through his "eyes" and "ears." Lean your ear toward your father; keep your eyes focused on these sayings; center your heart (mind) on these thoughts. In other words, let these guide your thoughts and actions in your future. These wise thoughts will provide "life" and "health," which means better living from now on. The healthiest sons are those who consume wisdom from their fathers.

Verses 23-27: Oh, Be Careful Little...

Verse 23: Heart - "Keep it" is a way of saying "guard, protect it," "all diligence" means this should be a constant, daily effort. "The issues of life" are everything we think, say, see, and do, and who we are. Heart disease is the #1 killer of physical bodies, but heart disease is the #1 killer of souls, too! Jesus said, "those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man" (**Matthew 15:18**), but we may also act "as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (**Ephesians 6:6**).

Verse 24: Mouth - The mouth is to the heart what Facebook is to the world: a detailed diary. We should be "slow to speak" (**James 1:19**) because "the tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body" (**James 3:6**), so "if anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body" (**James 3:2**). "Deceitful" describes words designed to avoid "truth," and "perverse" indicates words that are out of control and without restraint, thus "an unruly evil" (**James 3:8**). This prompted Wisdom to say: "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate" (**Proverbs 8:13**).

Verse 25: Eyes - The eyes must maintain their focus "straight ahead," meaning never take your eyes off of where you plan to go, or what you plan to do. Being distracted from God's Wise Way has been the ruin of humanity, from Adam Genesis 3:17) to Demas (2 Timothy 4:10). "Eyelids" must remain open to see, this of course, a figurative application to the awareness of where one is going.

Verse 26-27: Feet - "Ponder the path" means: "think, boy, think." Think where this path is leading, who has taken this path, who is waiting to waylay you, and what you'll be doing to yourself if you go this way. If we follow "established" ways, we will not spend our time and energies being rebellious, different, obstinate, or just plain "weird!" There are some wise things that have been proven wise for generations, and a wise son will learn them. Just because a father says them doesn't make them wrong! Keeping on the right path, watching out for our feet, and never wavering or straying off the path is a formula for guaranteed success. In Ghana, West Africa, their saying is, "No bend, no curve." Another quote on the subject is: *The greatest compliment you can pay truth is to accept and apply it.*

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## **(#14) A Father's Wisdom: Be Faithful In Marriage**

**Proverb 5:1-23:** My son, pay attention to my wisdom; Lend your ear to my understanding, That you may preserve discretion, And your lips may keep knowledge. For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil; But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell. Lest you ponder her path of life—Her ways are unstable; You do not know them. Therefore hear me now, my children, And do not depart from the words of my mouth. Remove your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her house, Lest you give your honor to others, And your years to the cruel one; Lest aliens be filled with your wealth, And your labors go to the house of a foreigner; And you mourn at last, When your flesh and your body are consumed, And say: "How I have hated instruction, And my heart despised correction! I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me! I was on the verge of total ruin, In the midst of the assembly and congregation." Drink water from your own cistern, And running water from your own well. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? Let them be only your own, And not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love. For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, And be embraced in the arms of a seductress? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths. His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin. He shall die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

### **Verses 1-2: The Thoughts**

If a son ever needed this admonition to focus on a father's "wisdom" heeded, "understanding" heard, "discretion" (good judgment) unharmed, "knowledge" kept, this is it.

### **Verses 3-6: The Temptation**

"An immoral woman" is the "strange" one in Proverbs, or one who doesn't respect the purity of marriage. Her loose "lips" sound sweet, "her mouth" slick as oil, but to listen to her and taste her is "bitter as wormwood," one of the bitterest substances known to man. That she slices like a "two-edged sword" shows what kind of wounds to expect, cutting both ways. Her "feet" lead to "death," both spiritual and the possibility of physical, as well. Her "steps" go to "hell." Listening and letting her lead will end in pain and punishment. To even think about her "path of life" can make a man become "unstable," and is an experience a married man should never "know."



**Verses 7-14: The Threat**

"Children" involves young men who must listen to reason. Go out of your way to avoid such women, and do not go "near" her door, for it is your "honor" you'll be giving up, your "years" of faithfulness in marriage "to the cruel one," and "aliens" and "foreigners" will receive all your "wealth" you have worked for. In other words, every married man who is enticed by a "strange woman" is gambling away his whole livelihood, and future.

**Verses 15-20: The Treasure**

Your own "cistern" (tank for collecting drinking water) and your own "well" are safe water supplies and become ways of saying: "Don't drink the water" of another woman. "Your fountains" would be your ability to make children who would not have Scriptural parentage, when your children should only be from you and your own wife. Satisfy "your fountain" only with your own "wife of your youth." Since most men marry early in life, the safest sexual relationship anyone can have is to remain faithful in your commitment to your first love! Safe sex and deep love are bonds God has based a monogamous, heterosexual marriage relationship upon (**Ephesians 5:22-33**). "Rejoice" (be happy) with your own wife; view her as lovely and graceful as deer and a doe; "at all times" be "satisfied" with her "breasts" and no one else's; "always be enraptured with her love," never thinking any other should be equal or better. Be satisfied with your decision to marry her, always! How could you possibly "be enraptured" by "an immoral woman" whose arms are of "a seductress," who leads to HELL? There is no good truth in an adulteress!

**Verses 21-23: The Terror**

There is nothing hidden from God, certainly not adultery (**Hebrews 4:13; 13:4**). A man's sins are his own trap. Adulterous men will die for their ignorance and in tremendous "folly" (worthlessness) "he shall go astray" (wander off like a drunkard). How wasted are men who dishonor their marriage vow!

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(#15) Six Hasty Misjudgments of Youth: 6:1-7-27 – ONE AT A TIME.

(1) Don't Co-sign Anything!

Proverbs 6:1-5: My son, if you become surety for your friend, If you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, You are snared by the words of your mouth; You are taken by the words of your mouth. So do this, my son, and deliver yourself; For you have come into the hand of your friend: Go and humble yourself; Plead with your friend. Give no sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids. Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, And like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

Verses 1-2: The Trap

Becoming "surety" meant "guaranty or collateral," and means putting your name, reputation, and finances on the line. "For your friend" means someone you know well

enough to be considered a "friend," but "for a stranger" is another case, altogether. In either case, the "surety" has become ensnared by becoming partner in debt or obligation that did not originate with him. The words of a contract, and/or a handshake, to *seal the deal*, places the credibility of the "surety" alongside the "friend" or "stranger." But that may not prove to be equal, as the original debtor would prove to not be honest and dedicated to pay. The "surety," however, will be held accountable after the original debtor doesn't follow through. Solomon will later judge: "He who is surety for a stranger will suffer, But one who hates being surety is secure" (**Proverbs 11:15**). The Apostle Paul warned Timothy about this in these words: "Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins, keep yourself pure" (**1 Timothy 5:22**). Obviously we're not just talking about co-signing papers, but being more responsible for one's own self than propping up a "friendship" by linking up with a "friend" or "stranger" who already is weakened by debt. Jesus avoids this problem by just making your assistance a "gift" without entering into a legal trap: "Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back" (**Luke 6:30**).

Verses 3-4: The Release

Realize your mistake, and with deep humility, "plead with your friend" to pay his debt before it is entirely yours! You now have "come into the hand of your friend" (become under his control), for he can ruin your good name if he doesn't pay and you may not be able to, yourself. The urgency is such that "sleep" or "slumber" should be less important than seeing that he pays what he owes. THIS IS WHY AN ADAGE SAYS: "MONEY SEPARATES FRIENDS." This is a hard lesson to learn for parents of a child on drugs; a husband or wife of an irresponsible spouse; neighbors; a roommate in school; a relative; or a "stranger" (con-man) with a profitable-sounding proposition by phone, email, or physical approach.

Verse 5: The Speed

The "surety" should act as quickly as a "gazelle" escapes from the "hunter," and a "bird" that realizes a "fowler" (trapper) is grabbing it! Speedy reaction to this legal trap the "surety" has entered is of the utmost.

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**(#16) Six Hasty Misjudgments of Youth: 6:1-7-27 – ONE AT A TIME.**

**(2) Don't Be Lazy!**

**Proverbs 6:6-11: Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest. How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep- So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.**

**Verses 6-8:** After pointing out the danger of being too hasty in co-signing and participating in agreements without proper thoughtfulness, Solomon now turns to those who make no plans at all! "Sluggard" is the term for a person who moves like a "slug," or shell-less snail. This is not meant to be complimentary! The "sluggard" doesn't like to move, so the verse urges "go to" and "consider" the "ant." This parallel is instructive to anyone who will put out effort to learn it. The "ant" is a very small, but effective teacher of God's Wisdom, which is seen in the Creation (**Proverbs 3:19-20**). The ant colony has no "captain" (leader), "Overseer" (superintendent), or "ruler" (authority figure). Who has given ants such knowledge, but God? Ants are industrious, organized, adventurous, and efficient. Ants show that an organized society is possible as long as its' members follow God's Wisdom. Ants are orderly and opportunistic, because they take advantage of the seasons, gaining "supplies" in the summertime when plentiful, and "gathering food" in "harvest" when ready.

**Verses 9-10:** "How long" is a question that puts emphasis upon ending the practice, in this case, of sleeping. "When" puts emphasis upon a time limit of "sleeping." The point is, that sluggards must make a choice to end their slothfulness. The lazy person's response to these questions is to plan more of what is already being done: "sleep," "slumber," "folding of the hands to sleep." A lazy person takes "little" steps, and thereby feels no twinge of conscience at being lazy. The sluggard rationalizes him/herself into further laziness, which is a by-product of being lazy!

**Verse 11:** Laziness overcomes a person subtly, as a "proowler," and creates "need" (steals) like "an armed man" (robber). Laziness robs one of opportunity, passion, determination, progress, individual strength, and family. God worked six days in creating the world and then rested (**Genesis 2:1-2**); God ordered Israelites to work six days and then rest (**Exodus 20:9-11**); the Apostle Paul worked to support himself so that the Thessalonians would not be burdened (**2 Thessalonians 3:7-9**). Then Paul said: "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (**2 Thessalonians 3:10**). God's solution in exterminating "sluggards" is to let them starve to death! Every society whose "takers" outnumber and outvotes the "earners" is doomed to crumble. Politicians who cater to "sluggards" and penalize the "workers" are in direct contradiction to the Wisdom of God. "Go to the ants" and see what we once were and could be again.

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(#17) Six Hasty Misjudgments of Youth: 6:1-7-27 – ONE AT A TIME.

(3) Watch Your Company!

Proverbs 6:12-15: A worthless person, a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth; He winks with his eyes, He shuffles his feet, He points with his fingers; Perversity is in his heart, He devises evil continually, He sows discord. Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy.

Verse 12: Listen

An old adage said, "An idle mind is the Devil's workshop," and may well have come from these Divine proverbs. Having described hastiness (6:1-5), fruitlessness (6:6-11), Solomon now shows someone who is useless. "A worthless person" is one of "no profit," either to God or man. The "worthless" are also "wicked" (perverse), that is, someone who is determined not to follow God's Wisdom. This is not a person who occasionally sins and repents (1 John 1:5-2:6), but evil runs deep in this person's heart. As Jesus taught, some people say the right things, but their heart believes differently (Mark 7:6-7). But here, Solomon also shows there are some with wicked hearts whose mouth is as "perverse" as their hearts. As Jesus also said, "'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). A perverse mouth reveals a perverse heart. Their language is filled with that which offends, abuses, profanes God and man!

Verses 13: Look

Body language is sometimes as important as voice, so Solomon alerts us to look while we listen. One who "winks with the eyes" is signaling deceit and lies, for truth calls for eye-to-eye contact. "He who winks with the eye causes trouble, But a prating fool will fall" (Proverbs 10:10). Repeated blinking can mean a person is momentarily blocking out the one to whom he/she is lying. This can also show hatred without a cause (Psalm 35:19-21). The "shuffling of the feet" also can mean the wicked person is not standing solid behind whatever he/she is saying. It can indicate an awkwardness and discomfort with the present situation that speaks of the dishonesty within. One who "points with his fingers" can be getting someone to think they will be told something off to one side that wouldn't come up in a public conversation. "Pointing" is not necessarily evil, but often is used by the wicked to distract from the lack of truth.

Verse 14: Learn

Don't be distracted from the source of these deceiving tactics: "perversity" in his "heart." This heart has been twisted away from God by choice and practice because "he devises evil continually." This removes all doubt that their track record should indicate what path he/she is following, both where it is from and where it will go! Not content with following other wicked people, to "devise" means this person invents, plans, applies, and seeks evil for victims. Sowing "discord" will be dealt with in the next section, but note that it is the exact opposite of the first Gospel preaching (Acts 1:26-2:1). Planting ideas, suspicions, doubts in people's minds that divide, separate, and discourage unity is completely ungodly and perverse!

Verse 15: Leave

Get away from such people immediately, for when they go down (as they certainly will), you don't want to be in their company to go down with them! "Without remedy" means they don't have a possibility of salvation without changing.

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## **(#18) Six Hasty Misjudgments of Youth: 6:1-7-27 – ONE AT A TIME.**

### **(4) Don't Jump Into The Deep End!**

**Proverbs 6:16-19:** These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.

"The world" God loved and gave His only begotten Son for (**John 3:16**) was humanity, not the globe, itself! But everybody in that "world" is lost unless, they, individually, accept and obey the offer to be saved through His Son (**Mark 16:15, 16**), for "the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one*" (**1 John 5:19**).

**Verse 16:** God wants no one to be lost (**2 Peter 3:9**), but here are seven sins that God "hates." An "abomination" to God is something that He judges horrible, shameful, immoral, disgusting, for which He has intense dislike, or hatred. There is no way anybody can consider him/herself safe, saved, loved, or forgiven who practices these sins. In fact, God hates those who decide to practice evil (**Psalms 5:4-6**).

#### **Verse 17:**

**"A proud look:"** Having an inflated opinion of oneself so that others are "beneath." This comes from a degraded opinion of others, for whatever reason. "The wicked" have this look (**Psalms 10:4**), the young can develop this (**1 Peter 5:5**), a "generation" can have this (**Proverbs 30:13**), and so can politicians (**Acts 12:20-24**). It fits into a whole list of sins from "the last days" of the Jews in the First Century (**2 Timothy 3:1-5**).

**"A lying tongue:"** Lying is "but for a moment" (**Proverbs 12:19**), therefore it is not eternal truth. Since the Devil fathers all lies (**John 8:44**), then all liars will be Hell-bound (**Revelation 21:8**). God opposes false prophets (**Ezekiel 33:8-9**), and those who change His commandments in His Word (**1 Timothy 4:1-5**), for He makes lies have consequences (**Hosea 10:13**). Lying is deliberate tampering with truth either by adding falsehoods to it or hiding some of the truth from honest inquiry. This is not the same as not knowing all the truth (**Acts 3:12-21**), which may end in sin.

**"Hands that shed innocent blood:"** Babies are purely "innocent," for unborn babies have done neither "good nor evil" (**Romans 9:11**). The "innocent" are listed with the "righteous" (**Exodus 23:7**), and it is an idolatrous society who "sheds innocent blood" (**Psalms 106:34-39**), as the Jews proved who crucified Jesus Christ (**Acts 13:26-30**). Those who "persecute" Christians "do not please God" (**1 Thessalonians 2:14-16**).

#### **Verse 18:**

**"A heart that devises wicked plans:"** God is ready to forgive those who are willing to repent and "be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:38**), but never to those whose hearts "devise wicked plans" (are set on finding wicked ways). This was the prevalent attitude that caused God to destroy the earth by flood in Noah's day (**Genesis 6:5**), and describes complete corruption.

**"Feet that are swift in running to evil:"** These are "ambulance-chasers" of sin, finding attraction to anyone and everyone who has committed evil offense against God and man. Solomon has already warned his son of these people (**Proverbs 1:15-16**).

**Verse 19:**

**"A false witness who speaks lies:"** Lies used against others show reckless disregard not only for one's own soul, but for others' reputation, character, goods, or person. This phrase includes gossip, slander, defamation, whispering, back-biting, and anything else designed to falsely place a stigma on someone else (**Proverbs 25:18; Romans 1:28-32**). Even the courts of the land are hostile to this, calling it "perjury." Sound Gospel Preachers will never stoop to such an abomination, or call it *keeping the church pure*.

**"And one who sows discord among brethren:"** The Word of God seeks to bring people together in Jesus Christ (**John 17:20-21; Ephesians 4:1-6**) because "how good and how pleasant *it is* For brethren to dwell together in unity!" (**Psalms 133:1**) The sowers of "discord" are working to directly destroy what God's Gospel can achieve. Division in the churches of Christ never happen because of what the Bible says, but because of those who magnify and exploit differences, slights, misunderstandings, ignorance, and feelings over Scriptures. Since love is the "bond of perfection" (**Colossians 3:14**), sowers of discord attack the very heart of churches of Christ, and must be marked and avoided (**Romans 16:17-18**).

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(#19) Six Hasty Misjudgments of Youth: 6:1-7-27 – ONE AT A TIME.

(5) Don't Jump Into The Wrong Bed!

Proverbs 6:20-35: My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life, To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids. For by means of a harlot A man is reduced to a crust of bread; And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent.

People do not despise a thief If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house. Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away. For jealousy is a husband's fury;

Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will accept no recompense, Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.

There was no sexual sin listed previously in what God hates, but Solomon's wisdom here and next clearly shows that God is adamantly against violation of His Marriage Law (**Genesis 2:24**), for "Marriage *is* honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (**Hebrews 13:4**).

Verses 20-23: Deliverance

The purpose of parental, Scriptural wisdom is so the "son" can make his own informed, right decision. Heed, don't rebel; make this your constant adornment; make this your own thoughts, for good judgments. To see the right way, the "son" needs lamp, light, and leading.

Verses 24-25: Damage

The woman who disregards the sacredness of sex only within marriage is "evil." Her enticing words should be rejected (**Proverbs 2:16; 5:3-4; 7:5, 21**) because "flattering lips" shows a "double heart" (**Psalms 12:2-3**). "Lust" is animal desire, not love! It is a serious mistake to think that it is (**2 Samuel 13:1-17**). One who follows lust alone abandons the human dignity which includes reason, and becomes an animal in heat or rut! Lust originates within the heart, rather than from external circumstances (**Mark 7:20-23**). "Her beauty" is not described, for the most alluring feature of a woman is not her physical, but her intentional design. The "allure" with painted eyes just calls attention to her interests. Focus on her evil intent, not her outer distractions.

Verses 26-33: Destruction

This type of woman is the predator, the man the prey who will pay dearly if he proceeds. How closely can a man be to fire without being burned; and how far can he walk across burning coals (NOT by the trick of walking fast, with calloused feet, or chemical protection!). Fire burns, and an "evil woman" damns to Hell! As certainly as fire burns, adultery condemns! A "thief" is still to be condemned (**Exodus 20:14; John 10:10; Romans 13:8-10**), yet if motivated by "starving" (self-preservation), it is understandable, not excusable. The thief must repay (**Exodus 22:1-15**), possibly up to 700%, all that he owns! The stupid adulterer, however, has NO self-preservation motive for his action, but only self-interest, and there is NO sympathy or pity for him, at all. He "destroys his own soul," wounds will come to his body (whether punishments or STDs), and he loses his reputation (**verses 32-33**). Emphasis has shifted from the stupid man going in to a prowling woman, to a prowling man who stupidly goes in to "his neighbor's wife." Marriage limits are ignored in either case!

Verses 34-35: Dissatisfaction

Her husband's "jealousy" is his rage without mercy "in the day of vengeance" (or day of reckoning). There is NO amount of repayment for this fouling of his marriage purity. He may never "be appeased" (or satisfied) though offered "many gifts." God demanded the death of both parties in the adultery (**Leviticus 20:10**), which law Jesus honored by not condemning the one party brought to Him (**John 8:1-11**).

A husband has been violated when adultery occurs and may never recover his trust in that wife again. This kind of loss of confidence caused God to condemn the southern kingdom of Judah (**Jeremiah 7:8-15**).

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**(#20) Six Hasty Misjudgments of Youth: 6:1-7-27 – ONE AT A TIME.**

**(6) Don't Become The Sacrificial Animal!**

**Proverbs 7:1-27:** My son, keep my words, And treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," And call understanding your nearest kin, That they may keep you from the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice, And saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, A young man devoid of understanding, Passing along the street near her corner; And he took the path to her house In the twilight, in the evening, In the black and dark night. And there a woman met him, With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart. She was loud and rebellious, Her feet would not stay at home. At times she was outside, at times in the open square, Lurking at every corner. So she caught him and kissed him; With an impudent face she said to him: "I have peace offerings with me; Today I have paid my vows. So I came out to meet you, Diligently to seek your face, And I have found you. I have spread my bed with tapestry, Colored coverings of Egyptian linen. I have perfumed my bed With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home; He has gone on a long journey; He has taken a bag of money with him, And will come home on the appointed day." With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, With her flattering lips she seduced him. Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, He did not know it would cost his life. Now therefore, listen to me, my children; Pay attention to the words of my mouth: Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths; For she has cast down many wounded, And all who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, Descending to the chambers of death.

**Verses 1-5: Family Tries**

A Father's appeal for the son to keep his "law as the apple of your eye" (the object focused upon), and have hope of knowledge. Writing a wise father's "commands" on "the tablet of your heart" makes them easy to refer to. Treating "wisdom" and "understanding" as relatives should bring them closer for advice. The total effect is to



“keep you from the immoral woman,” one of the greatest temptations for a “son” to overcome. God made man with a need for companionship only a woman could provide (**Genesis 2:18-25**), and only an immoral, evil woman would unfairly exploit that frailty.

**Verses 6-9: The Victim**

Peering through a “lattice” (a trellis), it’s easy to spot the next victim, a “simple... youth...devoid of understanding” (ignorant, inexperienced, untaught) going into a wrong neighborhood at the wrong time of night, and for the wrong purpose, entirely. Left to fend for himself, a young man is easy prey because he is completely at the mercy of the immoral woman’s desires. He has no ingrained teaching to warn him of the situation, the woman, or the problem with which he becomes entangled.

**Verses 10-23: The Vice**

**Verses 10-12:** She, as a restless and eager aggressor with a hidden agenda, met him. She was “loud and rebellious” against the thought of her marriage limitations, thus liberated in her mind from God’s Law. Christian women should be taught to appreciate their God-given responsibilities (**Titus 2:3-5**).

**Verses 13-15:** She boldly distracts him with kisses, shamelessly displays herself as though she had religious approval, disturbs him with her personal devotion to him. It doesn’t occur to him that she is not devoted to her own husband.

**Verses 16-17:** She pictures her lavishly-decorated bedroom as inviting to his senses: colorful, festive, and femininely perfumed. He doesn’t know to look beyond his immediate impression to the ultimate doom (**Proverbs 5:3-6; 7:27**).

**Verses 18-20:** She offers complete satisfaction and relieves his worry with reassurance that her husband planned to be gone long enough to not discover their adultery. It doesn’t occur to him that God is watching (**Proverbs 5:21**), as Joseph did (**Genesis 39:1-13**).

**Verses 21-23:** Her words win him over because he obviously has no inner voice of a father’s wisdom to stop him. She “seduces” (compelled, forced by words) him by giving an answer to all his concerns, “entices” (gives a one-sided argument) him with “flattery” (words he wants to hear). “Immediately he went after her” as: an ox to the slaughter; fool to the punishment stocks; till he is shot through like an arrow in a trapped bird; without learning his lesson by wisdom alone. He did not realize the serious consequences of his action because he did not think far enough ahead.

**Verses 24-27: The Voice**

The right way, the wise way, often begins with “do not,” but now the lesson that young man learned by experience is clarified for those who will observe: DO NOT entertain the thought of going her way; DO NOT allow yourself to “stray” that way, either, for she doesn’t care how many “strong *men*” she has slain. Entering her house opens the door to the grave and spiritual death beyond!

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(#21) Eight Reasons Why Listen To Reason: Lessons #1-3

Proverbs 8:1-11: Does not wisdom cry out, And understanding lift up her voice? She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, Beside the way, where the paths meet. She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, At the entrance of the doors: "To you, O men, I call, And my voice is to the sons of men. O you simple ones, understand prudence, And you fools, be of an understanding heart. Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, And from the opening of my lips will come right things; For my mouth will speak truth; Wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; Nothing crooked or perverse is in them. They are all plain to him who understands, And right to those who find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver, And knowledge rather than choice gold; For wisdom is better than rubies, And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.

Having shown the worst some women have to offer, and the wisdom to avoid it, Wisdom is now personified as a woman who has only good to give, and, accompanied by "understanding," represents the best advice for anyone to follow in life. This description certainly puts women in a better light, but also obligates them to follow it themselves, and provide God's Wisdom for the rest of humanity.

Lesson #1 Verses 1-5: She Speaks Publicly

Wisdom is not hard to find or recognize, for she is said to "cry out," and "stand on the top of the high hill," "where the paths meet," "by the gates," "by the entry of the city," "at the entrance of the doors." This means God intends His Wisdom to be easily seen, known, and followed, for it is in the best interests of all who will hear. There is no place people travel by, gather at, or look up to, where God's Wisdom cannot, and should not, be proclaimed to benefit mankind. Jesus Christ brought Heavenly Wisdom to mankind and said, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing" (**John 18:20**). Wisdom addresses "men," "sons of man (Adam)," just as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for "every creature" (**Mark 16:15**). Even the "simple" and "fools" are invited to listen, for they can change with the application of Wisdom.

Lesson #2 Verses 6-9: She Speaks Plainly

On the one hand, Wisdom offers to "plainly" speak only "excellent things," "right things," "truth," "righteousness;" and on the other hand, NOT offer "wickedness," nor anything "crooked or perverse." How difficult is this decision? Those who "understand," or "find knowledge" will catch on, but for those determined to follow their own ways and continue in sin, it will be too confining! There was a time when "Jesus answered and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes'" (**Matthew 11:25**). God's Wisdom appeals to minds ready to listen, so Jesus said further: "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 18:4**).

Lesson #3 Verses 10-11: She Speaks Preciously

"Silver," "gold," and "rubies," though considered precious and a sign of wealth, "cannot be compared with" God's Wisdom. Think about it: All precious wealth on earth cannot get one soul into Heaven forever, but Wisdom can! Christians are still offered this judgment: "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (**1 Timothy 6:17-19**).

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**(#22) Eight Reasons Why Listen To Reason: Lesson #4:**

**Proverbs 8:12-21:** "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, All the judges of the earth. I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me. Riches and honor are with me, Enduring riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, And my revenue than choice silver. I traverse the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, That I may fill their treasuries.

**Lesson #4 Verses 12-21: She Speaks Prudently**

**Verses 12-14:** One who accepts God's Wisdom, will also receive "prudence" (critical thinking), "knowledge" (factual insight), and "discretion" (ability to use, good judgment). One basic judgment underlies all: reverence for God means rejection of "evil" illustrated by "pride" (opposite of humility, **Proverbs 29:23**), "arrogance" (inflated opinion of personal power), "evil way" (determination to do wrong), and "perverse mouth" (advocating what is in their heart). No one can love God and love evil. Jesus said: "'No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (**Matthew 6:24**). Paul taught: "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (**Romans 12:9**). God offers "counsel" (good advice), "sound wisdom" (good thinking), "understanding" (awareness of choices), "strength" (ability to stand with decisions).

**Verses 15-16:** Since all authority is with God, then every human government should recognize God's Wisdom, for with it all layers of government would work: kings, rulers, princes, nobles, and judges. Jesus Christ reminded even the Roman Governor that he "would have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above" (**John 19:11**).

**Verses 17-21:** To love Wisdom is to be loved by Wisdom (**John 14:21**), and diligent searchers "will find me." Jesus Christ said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find, knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (**Matthew 7:7-8**). The value Wisdom brings to a person's life is not just "riches and honor," but riches that last because of "righteousness." Earth's "gold" and "silver" cannot mean more than Wisdom's "fruit" (benefits) and "revenue" (worth). Wisdom leads only in what is "right" and "just" which brings "wealth" and "treasures." This is illustrated in Daniel's life, for after he had taken his stand on his faith and used his miraculous gift to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he prospered. "Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. The king answered Daniel, and said, 'Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.' Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon" (**Daniel 2:46-48**). No empire, kingdom, country, or territory lasts long and prospers well that rejects God's Wisdom!

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(#23) Eight Reasons Why Listen To Reason: Lesson #5 - She Speaks Powerfully

Proverbs 8:22-36: The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primeval dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight was with the sons of men. "Now therefore, listen to me, my children, For blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, And do not disdain it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the LORD; But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death.

Verses 22-23: Before the Creation

Wisdom was not acquired by God, but was inherent in God, "before there was ever an earth." It was with His Word of Wisdom, He "created the heavens and the

earth" (**Genesis 1:1**). Christ was that Word, for "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (**John 1:1**). It is true of the Christ that: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (**Colossians 1:15-17**). This was never true of any other "prophet."

Verses 24-31: In the Creation

These verses follow the day-by-day account of the Creation, as recorded in **Genesis Chapter 1**. All scientific studies are simply efforts to discover, and reveal, the magnificent Wisdom of God in this Creation. For those who follow after the "god" of Chaos, a.k.a. "The Big Bang," "Evolution," "Darwinism," there is no Wisdom to discover, but only more words to keep adding Time and Chance to their unproven, unscientific Theory! Wisdom, including Intelligent Design, is found in all of God's Creation, and every time it is discovered, it makes sense!

Wisdom was used (**verse 24**) on Day 2, to balance between the "depths" and "fountains" of water. The undersea "fountains" feeding warm water have been found throughout the seas;

Wisdom was used (**verses 25-26**) on Day 3, to shape "mountains" and "hills," forming natural barriers and boundaries to regulate life on earth, and to plan the very dirt surface that would give life to vegetation;

Wisdom was used (**verses 27-28**) on Day 4, to set the stars, sun and moon in their places to give seasons, tides, and day and nights;

Wisdom was used (**verse 29**) on Day 5, to give the sea "its limit," that is, assign it its place and purpose;

Wisdom was used (**verses 30-31**) on Day 6, to make whatever was Created on each day "good." The making of man and woman "in His image" (**Genesis 1:26-27**) was of particular "delight," so "the sons of men" should feel a special attraction to Wisdom.

Verses 32-36: For the Creation

God's children, made with His Wisdom, should "hear instruction, and be wise," not rejecting any of it. "Blessed" (happy) is every person who "listens to" Wisdom, eagerly "watching daily" for the "gates" or "doors" (openings, either of the Word of God or scientific research). Wisdom is "life," and it is in Jesus Christ, "and the life was the light of men" (**John 1:4**). Jesus later prayed, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent" (**John 17:3**). To summarize this, John wrote, "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (**1 John 5:11**). Everyone living without Jesus Christ has failed to find God's Wisdom, either in Creation, or Recreation!

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## **(#24) Eight Reasons Why Listen To Reason: Lessons #6-8**

**Proverbs 9:1-18: Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars; She has slaughtered her meat, She has mixed her wine, She has also furnished her table. She has sent out her**

maidens, She cries out from the highest places of the city, "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, "Come, eat of my bread And drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, And go in the way of understanding. "He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, And he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied, And years of life will be added to you. If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, And if you scoff, you will bear it alone." A foolish woman is clamorous; She is simple, and knows nothing. For she sits at the door of her house, On a seat by the highest places of the city, To call to those who pass by, Who go straight on their way: "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here"; And as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, "Stolen water is sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant." But he does not know that the dead are there, That her guests are in the depths of hell.

#### **Lesson #6 Verses 1-6: She Speaks Protectively**

Wisdom is pictured as having completed a perfect house, offering hospitality to all the "simple" (those who are following whatever leader speaks, in Proverbs, is not someone using good judgment) who will come. **(1** "Seven pillars" show Divinely complete strength, **(2** a sumptuous feast, **(3** an invitation through trusted messengers, and **(4** an appeal to the public: for the "simple" to "turn in," and those "who lack understanding" to partake of the feast; that is, stop foolishness and follow understanding.

The New Testament teaches **(1** "that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church...according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (**Ephesians 3:10-11**). **(2** The church of Christ is built by God's Wisdom; offers a sumptuous feast: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (**John 6:51**); **(3** an invitation through trusted messengers: "Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute'" (**Luke 11:49**); **(4** an appeal to the public: "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light" (**Matthew 11:28-30**). Wisdom still invites from her house!

#### **Lesson #7 Verses 7-12: She Speaks Principally**

According to **verses 7-8**, "scorners" and a "wicked" person will only reject Wisdom and hate and hurt those who "correct." But, given Wisdom, the "wise" will "love you," for he will be "wiser," and a "just man" will "increase in learning." Jesus Christ said:

“Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (**John 15:20**). The “beginning of wisdom” is to develop “fear (awe, respect) of the LORD” and “understanding” is produced by “knowledge of the Holy One” (plural in the Hebrew, like Elohim, **Genesis 1:1, 26-27**). Following Wisdom potentially lengthens life, for it is a purely individual response to God.

### **Lesson #8 Verses 13-18: She Speaks Purely**

Wisdom is calling out, but at the same time, so, also is “a foolish woman.” Contrasted with Wisdom’s house which offers clean, long life, the “foolish woman” calls to all who “pass by” for “the simple” (those without discernment or wisdom) to “turn in here. Her appeal is the excitement of breaking law and comfort of secrecy. She appeals to those who don’t think ahead of their individual judgment from God.

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(#25) The Proverbs of Solomon: Wisdom Applied

Proverbs 10:1-12: The Proverbs of Solomon: A wise son makes a glad father, But a foolish son is the grief of his mother. Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, But righteousness delivers from death. The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to famish, But He casts away the desire of the wicked. He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame. Blessings are on the head of the righteous, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked. The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot. The wise in heart will receive commands, But a prating fool will fall. He who walks with integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will become known. He who winks with the eye causes trouble, But a prating fool will fall. The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked. Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.

While the first 9 chapters have been “the proverbs of Solomon” (**Proverbs 1:1**), they were stated as a father instructing his son. **Proverbs 10:1-24:34** are randomly written, as if they were Judgments Solomon made about individual cases brought to him for Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**), or simply God-given explanations about life. New Testament passages may help see the continuation of Wisdom offered through Jesus Christ.

10:1: Too many modern “fathers” don’t seem to care about their son’s “wisdom;” and too many modern “mothers” carry their burden of “grief” because of it.

10:2-3: “Treasures” gained by “wickedness” are empty of all that is meaningful (example, Judas Iscariot, **Matthew 27:1-5**); while a person may ride “righteousness”

into eternity (**1 Timothy 6:6-11**). Meanwhile, on earth, God looks after, provides for, the "righteous," and, at the same time, often overturns the wicked's advantage.

10:4-5: The "slack hand" wants shortcuts to prosperity, but the "diligent" hand prospers, or gets the work done. NO society lasts when there are more "slack hands" than "diligent" ones! Other Proverbs on this subject say: (**1** some are too lazy to get their own food, **Proverbs 12:27**; (**2** the lazy have desires without efforts (a lot of Lottery tickets, Vegas trips, frivolous lawsuits fall into this category)

Proverbs 13:4;21:25-26; (**3** fails to feed even him/herself (and should starve, 2 Thessalonians 3:10) **Proverbs 19:24; 26:15**; (**4** the lazy passes off plowing season because it's "too cold," and then begs for food during harvest (this is "living off the dole, or the goodness of other people") **Proverbs 19:15; 20:4**.

10:6-7: Just as God "blesses" the "righteous," "violence" stops the "wicked's" boasting (**Proverbs 10:11**). Just as it is pleasant to remember someone who was "righteous," it is disgusting to remember someone who was "wicked."

10:8,11: The "wise" will accept responsibility, but "a prating fool" (boastful words but no obedience to God) "will fall" (not amount to anything).

10:9-10: To "walk with integrity" is to be true to God's principles as one's core beliefs, regardless of circumstance, opportunity, or associations. Those who "perverts his ways" cannot be trusted to be honest, forthright, or true to his/her stated principles, which becomes obvious. To "wink with the eye" (would say something, "wink, wink") is someone who cannot be trusted to be telling the truth.

10:12: Only the "hateful" will "stir up strife." "He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends" (**Proverbs 17:9**). Everyone who exploits, spreads, campaigns against, creates demonstrations about, someone's weaknesses is motivated by "hatred," not "love!" Hatred is behind many racial, religious, social, and political campaigns of destruction. "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins'" (**1 Peter 4:8**). Sins are not to be ignored, covered over without repentance, or excused, but brought to God for forgiveness. "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins" (**James 5:19-20**). "Strife" is generated by: "pride" (**Proverbs 13:10**); hotheadedness (**Proverbs 15:18**); perversity (**Proverbs 16:28**); lovers of transgression (**Proverbs 17:19**). A society will not long stand when torn apart by "strife" which has been generated by the "hateful."

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## (#26) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Rich or Poor?

**Proverbs 10:13-15:** Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, But a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding. Wise people store up knowledge, But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction. The rich man's wealth is his strong city; The destruction of the poor is their poverty.

**10:13-14:** A word to the wise: Words of the wise always show understanding. A word to the unwise: Talk your head off, and you'll only show your lack of wisdom, and probably lose your argument and be given "a rod" (punishment). To "store up knowledge" (**verse 14**) means the wise will have a repository of wisdom to use whenever it is needed, while "near destruction" means the "foolish" always throw away wisdom in their words. This is a recurring contrast between the "lips" of the wise and unwise (foolish): **10:20** - "choice silver" versus "worth little;" **10:21** - "feeds many" versus "die for lack of wisdom;" **10:31** - "brings forth wisdom" versus "tongue cut out;" **10:32** - "know what is acceptable" versus "perverse mouth." The words of a fool cannot provide for anyone, while words of wisdom work!

**10:15:** The tendency for "rich people" is to think they are protected from problems as if they were in a "strong city," Solomon adds "like a high wall" (**Proverbs 18:11**). Paul warns Timothy to: "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy" (**1 Timothy 6:17**). No one is rich without blessing from God! And no one is rich without relying on many workers to produce and protect those riches! The arrogance of the rich, like the depression of the poor, says more about their mistaken attitudes than about their station in life! Likewise, the "poor" seem to think they live in "destruction" because they are "in poverty" (have not) as though it is a life's sentence. The "poor" should not become covetous of the rich, nor overlook the fact that the rich have to hire the poor, nor ignore the principle that the difference between the blessings of the rich and the poverty of the poor, oftentimes, is simply a matter of work! "The rich and the poor have this in common, The LORD is the maker of them all" (**Proverbs 22:2**). As far as God is concerned, wealth cannot buy salvation. "The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender" (**Proverbs 22:7**). The people with debt don't own their possessions, those who loaned them their money do! All creditors have title to the possession until it is paid back. THE NATION WITH THE GREATEST DEBT HAS BEEN SOLD OUT TO THOSE WILLING TO PUT UP THE MONEY FOR IT! Economic slavery is slavery! "He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, And he who gives to the rich, will surely come to poverty" (**Proverbs 22:16**). Becoming rich by oppressing the poor will surely fail. Whether the oppressing is done by cheap wages, excessive taxation, extortion, or inflated interest on loans, the system will fail. Giving to the rich is not for good motive, but involves bribery, social influence, political power, extravagance, or personal honor, and it is a false system of confidence in men, not God. "The rich man is wise in his own eyes, But the poor who has understanding searches him

out" (**Proverbs 28:11**). A poor person with God's Wisdom "has understanding" to know more than a "rich man" who is "wise in his own eyes," but not in God's eyes!

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(#27) The Proverbs of Solomon

From Righteous Living to Hidden Hatred

Proverbs 6:16-18: The labor of the righteous leads to life, The wages of the wicked to sin. He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, But he who refuses correction goes astray. Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, And whoever spreads slander is a fool.

10:16: Righteous labor gives life. Jesus said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him" (**John 6:26-27**). Thousands who ate of the miraculous loaves and fishes missed the "sign" that Jesus came to teach righteous labor for "everlasting life" rather than simply earthly food. How many today only follow Christ, or the church of Christ, because they want free handouts, but not take the effort to "labor" for the faith that saves? "Wages (or profit) of the wicked" lead "to sin." The life lived without God's Wisdom falls short, either now or after this life is over, for it is possible for anyone to "fall short of the grace of God" (**Hebrews 12:15**). Paul summarized this thought: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (**Galatians 6:7-8**).

10:17: The world is divided by God into two groups, those who: "keep instruction," or "refuse reproof." The first are those who obey what God teaches, the second are those who do not. Jesus Christ accepted this when He said: "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. (**Mark 16:15-16**). Regarding God's Instructions, the Jews, historically, "have ears and hear not" (**Jeremiah 5:21; Acts 28:23-28**), and all who believe Jews are still God's chosen people are prone to this same malady!

10:18: Hidden hatred causes "lying lips." "Fervent lips with a wicked heart Are *like* earthenware covered with silver dross. He who hates, disguises *it* with his lips, And lays up deceit within himself; When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, For *there are* seven abominations in his heart; *Though his* hatred is covered by deceit, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly" (**Proverbs 26:23-26**). The silver-covered clay pot is an obvious illustration, with "kind" words being like silver-coating, while his heart of "hate" is like dirt (clay), making the words worthless and only a "disguise." Read God's condemnation of this behavior in **Psalms 50:17-23**. Some misuse **Ephesians 4:26**, "Be angry and do not sin" to justify holding hatred in their heart, when that verse also says, "do not let the sun go down on your wrath." Racial hatred, hatred of capitalists, hatred of family members, or hatred of humanity

are never justifiable, and holding hatred produces wrath. God destroyed Edomites who carried "an ancient hatred" against the Jews (**Ezekiel 35:1-9**), when Jews were His Chosen People. Today, "hatred" is a work of the flesh, and the hater will be rejected by God (**Galatians 5:19-21**).

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## **(#28) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **A Fool And His Money**

**Proverbs 6:19-22:** In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise. The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; The heart of the wicked is worth little. The lips of the righteous feed many, But fools die for lack of wisdom. The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it.

**6:19-21:** It is truth that the mouth speaks what is in the heart, and the heart speaks through the mouth. The more words a person uses, generally, the easier it is to sin with the mouth, and, the greater effort is being put in to hide a sin. Not an earthen heart (dirty) but a "righteous" heart produces words as precious as "choice silver." On the other hand, if the "heart" is "wicked," the words it uses will be of "little" value. "Lips" speaking from a "righteous" heart "feed many" (produce much good), whereas, the heart that "lacks wisdom" speaks "foolishly" (has no worth). This is a theme carried out in other **Proverbs: 12:17** - words of "truth" from a heart of "righteousness," or a heart of "deceit" speaks "false witness;" **14:5** - a heart of "faithful witness" speaks "no lie," or the heart of "false witness" will speak "lies;" **14:25** - "true witness" in the heart "delivers (saves) souls," but a "deceitful" heart speaks "lies." Lying, falsifying information, comes from within. Those known for their lying are "liars," not just slips of the tongue. All liars are children of the Devil (**John 8:44**) and bound for hell (**Revelation 21:8**) unless they repent. Jesus absolutely taught this: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil of the treasure brings forth evil things" (**Matthew 12:34-35**). There are occupations that are notoriously associated with lying, such as, lawyers, used car salesmen, politicians, contractors, advertisers and journalists. One wonders why people keep putting so much trust in them without thoroughly checking out their statements! Why expect lawyers to establish truth in legal matters? Why re-elect politicians who are deceitful? Why buy papers/magazines that misrepresent information so? Why spend time and money on shopping trips when the merchandise is not "as advertised?" Why buy cars from those whose claims cannot be trusted without a "second opinion?" Why let contractors sell their agreements to build to others who aren't under the original contract? When lying is accepted as "the way everyone does business," then whom can anyone trust?

**6:22:** True wealth come from the LORD's "blessing," and He "adds no sorrow with it." When life is lived according to God's Wisdom, blessings abound, and there is no regret. But sorrow comes with those who obtain wealth by their standards, not God's.

Other proverbs that teach this are: **Proverbs 13:11**: "Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, But he who gathers by labor will increase;" **Proverbs 13:22**: "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous;" **Proverbs 20:21**: "An inheritance gained hastily at the beginning Will not be blessed at the end;" **Proverbs 28:22**: "A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, And does not consider that poverty will come upon him." Dishonest wealth "will be diminished," that is, easy come, easy go. The sinner's wealth "is stored up for the righteous," that is, it will not remain in the family's hands for long, since righteous principles are not passed along with the wealth. It is criminal for all who make it difficult, or impossible, for "a good man" to leave his "inheritance to his children's children." Inheritance taxes, "death taxes," are against God's Will!

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(#29) The Proverbs of Solomon

Are We Having Fun, Yet?

Proverbs 10:23: **To do evil is like sport to a fool, But a man of understanding has wisdom.**

10:23: Only a "fool" makes fun of doing "evil," whereas "a man of understanding" possesses "wisdom." **Proverbs 14:9**: "Fools mock at sin, But among the upright *there is favor.*" **Proverbs 15:21**: "Folly is joy to him who is destitute of discernment, But a man of understanding walks uprightly." Only an evil person enjoys sin. Moses chose to refuse "to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (**Hebrews 11:25**) offered to him in Egypt. **Proverbs 21:17**: "He who loves pleasure *will be* a poor man; He who loves wine and oil will not be rich." Pleasure derived from wickedness is a waste of time, effort, money, and souls. There is nothing at all wrong with real enjoyment and fun, but to "love" it means it has taken a place within the heart that crowds out the loves that should be greater: God, Jesus Christ, Word of God, husband or wife, children and family.

Even a 12-year-old Jesus understood that He "must be about My Father's business" (**Luke 2:49**), while today, 12-year-olds are so occupied with ball games, social activities, iPhones, iPads, parties, proms, texting, sexting, Facebook, Instagram, tweeting, and the like, they don't know which Father, or whose business they should be about! A young widow who has no home responsibility, but "lives in pleasure is dead while she lives" (**1 Timothy 5:6**). Male or female, "those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime" will "receive the wages of unrighteousness" (**2 Peter 2:13**). Truly, "the wages of sin is death" (**Romans 6:23**), and sinners will pay those wages, either with: bodily dissipation, destroyed lives, ruined families, isolation and loneliness, and/or eternal punishment. There is no joy, pleasure, fun, or folly associated with any of these, and nothing to "love."

The wise will listen to the experience of one wiser, Solomon, who's "been there, done that:"

"I said in my heart, 'Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure"; but surely, this also was vanity. I said of laughter-'Madness!;' and of mirth, 'What does it accomplish?' I searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives. I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, *and* musical instruments of all kinds. So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all *was* vanity and grasping for the wind. *There was* no profit under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11). The real "pleasure" in life costs less, is far more enjoyable, lasts longer, and helps more people see the better way: "fear God and keep His commandments" (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**).

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### **(#30) The Proverbs of Solomon**

#### **Why Are You Running Away?**

**Proverbs 10:24-25:** **The fear of the wicked will come upon him, And the desire of the righteous will be granted. 25 When the whirlwind passes by, the wicked is no more, But the righteous has an everlasting foundation.**

Wicked people have more reason to live in fear because they do not honor God's Wisdom in their lives; they naturally assume others also live as they do. Therefore they cannot assume anyone else lives honorably. Other Proverbs show this, as well: **Proverbs 28:1:** "The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion;" **Proverbs 29:25:** "The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe." A guilty conscience makes one afraid, but one who "trusts in the LORD" feels "safe" and "bold as a lion." Governments who fear their own citizens will govern badly and fail. Corporations who fear honest competition will resort to dishonorable methods and lose their appeal. The Word of God, and Book of Proverbs in particular, is full of references to "the fear of the LORD," using "fear" meaning "awe and respect" of God. "The fear of man," however, brings its own "snare." The Psalmist said in **Psalms 118:6:** "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" Jesus Christ taught: "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (**Matthew 10:28**). This was echoed in **Hebrews 13:6:** "So we may boldly say:

'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" Propaganda Merchants drum home the doctrine of "Fear" of nearly everything and everyone. Harlotwood spews this doctrine in its movies. People who live in *fear* have difficulty having *love*, because: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (**1 John 4:18**).

Then there are people whose conscience makes them flee for good reason: they have done something worthy of death. **Proverbs 28:17**: "A man burdened with bloodshed will flee into a pit; Let no one help him." This follows God's principle of *capital punishment* in **Genesis 9:6**: "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man." God's Law given through Moses continued this relationship in **Numbers 35:33**: "So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it." Those who are "burdened with bloodshed" would include abortionists, other murderers, inciters of riots, racial hatred propagators, and any other hateful person who prompts violent deaths. Their consciences should disturb them and make them run for cover and hide from right-thinking people, for murder victims must be vindicated by the death of their murderers.

Contrast this with the "desire of the righteous" who will be rewarded in this life and the life to come. After the "whirlwind" (tornado) of judgment has passed over the land, the "wicked" will have lost all they live for, while the "righteous" will have their honorable "everlasting foundation" upon which to rebuild their lives.

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(#31) The Proverbs of Solomon

Being Lazy or Wicked Ends Badly

Proverbs 10: As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy man to those who send him. The fear of the LORD prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened. The hope of the righteous will be gladness, But the expectation of the wicked will perish. The way of the LORD is strength for the upright, But destruction will come to the workers of iniquity. The righteous will never be removed, But the wicked will not inhabit the earth.

Proverbs 10:26:

"As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy man to those who send him."

Sending a "lazy man" on a mission is offensive like "vinegar to the teeth" and "smoke to the eyes." Vinegar is unpleasant to teeth and causes them to be "set on edge." Sins were never completely forgiven under Moses' Law, hence there was a sense in which the children paid for their parents' sins. The proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge" (**Ezekiel 18:2-3**) was no longer to

be used in Israel, once God chose a new people with a new covenant (**Jeremiah 31:29-34**), which He has chosen by the Gospel of Jesus Christ (**Hebrews 8:6-13; 1 Peter 2:1-5**). Anyone who has ever grilled over an open fire knows what smoke does to the eyes. That irritation causes watering, similar to crying. The "lazy man" offends in both ways because he/she cannot be depended upon for any useful work.

Proverbs 10:27-28:

"The fear of the LORD prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened. 28 The hope of the righteous will be gladness, But the expectation of the wicked will perish."

Honoring both "father and mother" was the first commandment in Moses' Law "with promise" (**Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16**) as pointed out in the New Testament (**Ephesians 6:1-3**). Learning from parental experience and instruction has beneficial physical effects on children. The stability of respect and reverence for parents never diminishes throughout one's life. On the other hand, those who disdain, disregard, or disparage their parents walk through life on a rocky road with many pitfalls. "The righteous" always have positive blessing to look forward to, but "the wicked" have nothing but a great destruction.

Proverbs 10:29-30:

"The way of the LORD is strength for the upright, But destruction will come to the workers of iniquity. 30 The righteous will never be removed, But the wicked will not inhabit the earth."

"Strength," stability, and boldness to approach God in prayers (**Hebrews 4:16**) and other worship (**Psalms 100:1-2**) is for "the upright" (those who obey the "Upright" God, **Deuteronomy 32:4**). "Workers of iniquity" (dedicated sinners) are always under God's condemnation (**Psalms 6:8; Luke 13:23-28; Matthew 7:21-23**).

Proverbs 21:15: "It is a joy for the just to do justice, But destruction will come to the workers of iniquity."

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**(#32) The Proverbs of Solomon**

**Hush Your Mouth!**

**Proverbs 10:31-32:** "The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, But the perverse tongue will be cut out. 32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, But the mouth of the wicked what is perverse."

It is certainly true that "I believed, and therefore I spoke" (**Psalms 116:10**), for the heart is expressed through the words of the mouth. David well said, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer" (**Psalms 19:14**). A heart full of God's Wisdom cannot help but speak with it. Jesus used the illustration of a tree to express what an effort it would be to control a "perverse tongue." "Either make the tree good and its fruit good,

or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (**Matthew 12:33-34**). Jesus had taught, "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (**Matthew 7:19**). "The lips of the righteous" speak "the truth in love" (**Ephesians 4:15**), and "always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (**Colossians 4:6**). Thus a Christian will "put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth" and will "not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds" (**Colossians 3:8-9**). A righteous heart will speak the truth appropriately to build up faithful conduct, but the wicked will cut the faithful down. "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (**Ephesians 4:29**). The God-given human ability to speak, not only separates us from animals, but is a tool for good or an instrument for evil. Those who abuse this ability will lose it, eventually. Freedom of speech should be protected by the laws of the land, but the morality of speech will be judged by God and His Word.

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(#33) The Proverbs of Solomon

Cheaters, Beware!

Proverbs 11:1: Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, But a just weight is His delight.

Whatever is "an abomination to the LORD" is as despicable as anything can be, for that places it along with: dabblers in the supernatural, **Deuteronomy 18:9-12**; prostitution, **Deuteronomy 23:18**; perverse heart, **Proverbs 11:20**; lying lips, **Proverbs 12:22**; everyone proud in heart, **Proverbs 16:5**. "Dishonest scales" certainly fit in that list. God's Law through Moses was very explicit about this matter: "You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God" (**Deuteronomy 25:13-16**). Anyone who carries "differing measures," or different weights, is planning to deal unfairly with someone, somewhere, sometime. The "all who do such things" means the practice is wrong, no matter if someone is poor, disadvantaged, under a "glass ceiling," prosperous, an official of a government, tax assessor, tax collector, manufacturer, or all such "excuses." When people plan to "buy and sell and make a profit" (**James 4:13**), it should never be as God condemned in **Amos 8:5**: "Making the ephah small and the shekel large, Falsifying the scales by deceit." The "ephah" would have measured the produce and the "shekel" the money to purchase it. Shortening the measurement and acting as if the money amount was larger within a transaction is abominable to God! That describes today's making the container look the same size but putting less inside; artificially inflating costs by printing more money without value; raising "minimum wage" for the same or less

work; shortchanging customers; raising prices while lowering benefits in contracts; or any of the myriad of ways the wicked will invent to "profit." God's "fair labor law" was that the "poor and needy" laborer should be paid when the work was done (**Deuteronomy 24:14-15**), not at the convenience of the employer, regardless of ethnicity! Other proverbs uphold this: **Proverbs 20:10**: "Diverse weights and diverse measures, They are both alike, an abomination to the LORD;" **Proverbs 20:23**: "Diverse weights are an abomination to the LORD, And dishonest scales are not good;" probably best summarized in **Proverbs 20:14**: "'It is good for nothing,' cries the buyer; But when he has gone his way, then he boasts." Minimizing the product's worth to get a good buy shows intent to deceive. Honest discounts, coupons, merchant sales, or actually factory defective products offered at low prices are not included in this proverb, however. Honest truly applies to economics as well as to words, deeds, relationships!

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### **(#34) The Proverbs of Solomon**

#### **The Shame of Pride**

**Proverbs 11:2: When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.**

Humility is not thinking less of oneself that is deserved, but simply the recognition that God is far greater than we'll ever be. The more of God's Wisdom we possess, the more we realize how humble we should be. Moses was the humblest man on earth (**Numbers 12:3**); who led the Israelites 40 years to humble them (**Deuteronomy 8:2, 16**); a lesson Solomon was called upon to repeat (**2 Chronicles 7:12-14**); and the Apostle Paul would show the church of God at Corinth (**2 Corinthians 12:20-21**). "Modest" also describes the "humble," as someone who does not need self-promotion. It is true today, that we should: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (**James 4:10**). The opposite of humility is "pride," which prompts the command: "Do not be wise in your own opinion" (**Romans 12:16**). Pride precedes: "shame" (**Proverbs 11:2**), "destruction" and "a fall" (**Proverbs 16:18**), being brought "low" (**Proverbs 29:23**). It is still true that: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble" (**James 4:6**). Jesus Christ scolded Pharisees with the statement: "'And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (**Matthew 23:12**). Children who are constantly told they are smarter, stronger, better than their own parents or grandparents, have been pumped up with the false attitude of "pride." The New Testament warns against this: "And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know" (**1 Corinthians 8:2**). Children who think they already "know it all" will never appreciate and learn God's Wisdom!

God brought down those who became "proud:" Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar learned this (**Daniel 4:28-32**), Jewish King Herod learned this (**Acts 12:18-24**), and Roman Governor Pilate learned this (**John 19:10-12**). Don't buy into the fictional

belief that we are equal to, or greater than, God! If we think our country is great and powerful because we are richer, smarter, stronger, or more productive through our efforts alone, we are as proud as Nebuchadnezzar, whom God brought down for a lesson in humility! If we think our politicians, courts, and legislators are "the voice of a god, and not of a man," we shall be brought down, as Herod, for not giving God the glory! If we think we are more powerful than Jesus Christ, we will be brought to ruin as Pilate and the Roman Empire! No "government" is greater than God, though many keep trying to be too great to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God (**1 Peter 5:6**).

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(#35) The Proverbs of Solomon

What Levels "Haves" with "Have-nots"

Proverbs 11:3-6: The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them. 4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, But righteousness delivers from death. 5 The righteousness of the blameless will direct his way aright, But the wicked will fall by his own wickedness. 6 The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, But the unfaithful will be caught by their lust.

"Integrity" is associated with "blamelessness" and "uprightness," all of which are combined in terms like "honesty," "consistency," "purity," "devoutness." God described David, "a man after My own heart, who will do all My will" (**Acts 13:22**), to Solomon: "Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel'" (**1 Kings 9:4-5**). In fact, David asked God to judge him on the basis of his "integrity" (**Psalms 7:8**); although Job had lost everything, he kept his "integrity" (**Job 2:9**); and Christian "young men" should show "integrity" in doctrine (**Titus 2:6-8**). Other proverbs stress that a poor person who walks with "integrity" is better than a "fool" (**Proverbs 19:1**) or the "rich" (**Proverbs 28:6**), and, "The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him" (**Proverbs 20:7**). Those who are "poor" and spend their time feeling sorry for themselves because others are "rich," need to learn that having "integrity" makes them far more acceptable to God than any other quality! To King David, walking "in integrity" gave him confidence (**Psalms 26:1**).

It is pitiful to see and hear the plethora of false prophets and deceitful speakers who fan the fires of victimization, emphasizing the difference between the "haves" and the "have-nots," when if they taught God's Wisdom, "integrity" would strengthen the hearts, confidence, and goodness of all who would walk in it. The contrast drawn in **Proverbs 11:3-6** shows that the "wicked" will fail and fall because of their own "perversity" (twistedness), "unfaithfulness" (failure to obey God), trust in the

purchasing power of "riches" (**1 Timothy 6:17**), "wickedness" (lack of Wisdom or goodness), "lust" (narrow-minded concerns about their own desires above others). All preachers, politicians, parents, and professors should be about educating and overseeing everyone with "integrity," and forget all about their quest for power and influence in any other way!

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## **(#36) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Why "Beg Trouble?"**

**Proverbs 11:7-8:** When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish, And the hope of the unjust perishes. 8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, And it comes to the wicked instead.

The "expectation," or "hope," of a "wicked man" is driven by worldly lust and greed. Death slams the door on those expectations. Jesus described it thusly: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully...[so he said to himself] 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry'" (**Luke 12:15-20**). Job asked the question: "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, Though he may gain *much*, If God takes away his life?" (**Job 27:8**) If life in this world is all there is to hope for, that is, "If *the* dead do not rise, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'" (**1 Corinthians 15:32**). The righteous, however, have hope beyond this life: "The house of the wicked will be overthrown, But the tent of the upright will flourish" (**Proverbs 14:11**).

**Proverbs 11:8:** "The righteous is delivered from trouble, And it comes to the wicked instead."

Often, people focus on bad things that happen to good people, and ignore the times when bad people end up being punished by the very things they intended to do to the good people! Another proverb says: "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him" (**Proverbs 26:27**). Some Bible examples of God sparing the righteous and punishing the wicked in their own snare are: the Egyptian Pharaoh's army vanquished in the Red Sea they thought trapped the Israelites (**Exodus 14**); Haman, the Agagite, was hanged on his own gallows instead of Mordecai, and Esther saved the Jews (**Esther 7-9**); government officials thrown in the lions' den Daniel had been spared from (**Daniel 6**); soldiers' lives taken after Peter released from prison (**Acts 12:1-19**). Truly "the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment" (**2 Peter 2:9**).

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(#37) The Proverbs of Solomon

Hypocrites Don't Help Cities

Proverbs 11:9-11: "The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered. 10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; And when the wicked perish, there is jubilation. 11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked."

The word "hypocrite" (pretender) may also carry the idea of "infidel" (denies the faith), in either case, his words seriously wound. Other proverbs also show the destructive power of the tongue: "He who guards his mouth preserves his life, *But* he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction" (**Proverbs 13:3**); "An evildoer gives heed to false lips; A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue" (**Proverbs 17:4**); "A fool's mouth *is* his destruction, And his lips *are* the snare of his soul" (**Proverbs 18:7**); "The north wind brings forth rain, And a backbiting tongue an angry countenance" (**Proverbs 25:23**); "A lying tongue hates *those who are* crushed by it, And a flattering mouth works ruin" (**Proverbs 26:28**). But no matter whether "hypocrite" or "infidel," it is a "fool" who destroys his neighbor's faith and trust. David described one who does "not fear God" from whom: "*The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, *But war was* in his heart; His words were softer than oil, *Yet they were* drawn swords" (**Psalms 55:19, 21**). No verse states it more vividly than **James 3:6**: "And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell." The rest of **Proverbs 11:9** shows that the "righteous" will not be misled, because they know better. "You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked (**2 Peter 3:17**).

Proverbs 11:10-11:

God's blessings for the "righteous" are good for everybody. Jesus teaches His disciples to do good even to enemies, "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (**Matthew 5:45**). Everyone has reason to enjoy God's blessing on the righteous, and give God the glory. However, the righteous are not rejoicing "when the wicked perish," for another proverb says: "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; Lest the LORD see *it*, and it displease Him, And He turn away His wrath from him" (**Proverbs 24:17-18**). It is to the advantage of all to let the righteous serve God, for whatever persecution, suffering, or hindrance placed upon them will be noticed, and repaid, by God! "Do not lie in wait, O wicked *man*, against the dwelling of the righteous; Do not plunder his resting place; For a righteous *man* may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity" (**Proverbs 24:15-16**). When people repented and were baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:38**), they were "praising God and having favor with all the people" (**Acts 2:47**). No country, state, county, or city that keeps that from happening within their boundaries will long prosper with the

blessing of God Almighty! America's Founders incorporated "Freedom of Worship" in the Constitution. To all who would ignore that Constitutional guarantee, God would say, "Let My people go."

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### **(#38) The Proverbs of Solomon**

#### **Table the Tabloid Talk!**

**Proverbs 11:12-13:** "He who is devoid of wisdom despises his neighbor, But a man of understanding holds his peace. 13 A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter."

It is thoughtless to "despise" (show contempt, consider beneath) one's "neighbor" (ones closest, associates), and everyone who understands this "holds his peace." No one wants to be around anyone who constantly puts down others by criticizing, complaining and nit-picking, especially behind their backs! This is called gossiping or "talebearing," and it has always been condemned by God, in the Old and New Testaments, as detrimental to friendships, family, or society, in general (**Leviticus 19:16; Romans 1:29-30; 1 Timothy 5:11-15**)! Whoever gossips about others to you, will gossip about you to others!

Other proverbs on this subject include: "The words of a talebearer *are* like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body" (**Proverbs 18:8; 26:22**); "He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips" (**Proverbs 20:19**); "Where *there is* no wood, the fire goes out; And where *there is* no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal *is* to burning coals, and wood to fire, So *is* a contentious man to kindle strife." (**Proverbs 26:20-21**). Gossip may sound like something we want to know ("tasty trifles"), but it should remain "secret." Most people don't need to know the deeds or details of the perversity of others. Christians are told that "it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret" (**Ephesians 5:12**). We should not "associate" with anyone who misuses listeners and abuses their subjects that way! To kill a fire, we remove the fuel; therefore to kill "strife," we should take a talebearer out of the communication equation. We should reject all race baiters, labor baiters, or profit baiters whose half-truths, or no truths, create and inflame divisions and hatred between segments of church or society. There is a "time to be silent" (**Ecclesiastes 3:7**) about such matters, and be "counted wise:" "He who has knowledge spares his words, *And* a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; *When* he shuts his lips, *he is considered* perceptive" (**Proverbs 17:27-28**). We must overcome our tendency to have a "tabloid mentality," and instead insist upon facts, repentance, and forgiveness, as Jesus Christ commands (**Matthew 18:15-17**).

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(#39) The Proverbs of Solomon

Advice on "Advice"

Proverbs 11:14: "Where *there is* no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors *there is* safety."

If by "counsel" one means advice, then more than one opinion is necessary for leadership to succeed. Government by only one opinion is destined to fail. The Israelites split their kingdom into North and South when Solomon died, and his son, Rehoboam, rejected the advice of the elders who had advised Solomon, and instead, heeded the advice by those who were his same age and inexperience (**1 Kings 12:1-17**). Even personally, decisions should be made with extra information involved from a proper source. Let's not forget this is a Book of Proverbs of Solomon to whom God's Wisdom had been given!

Other proverbs uphold this wisdom: "Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established" (**Proverbs 15:22**); "Plans are established by counsel; By wise counsel wage war" (**Proverbs 20:18**); "For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors *there is* safety. (**Proverbs 24:6**). Our plans fail "without counsel," and no one should "wage war" without "wise counsel." Some try to live completely free of "wise counsel," and their lives end in wreck and ruin. Some try to rule by war "without counsel," that is, impulsively, without considering from where the money or manpower will come, or having a strategy to win. The idea of a "multitude of counselors" simply emphasizes the need for considering all sources of knowledge possible before making the decision. A good way to lose a fight is to not observe and know your enemy!

There is a reason we need "second opinions:" when one doctor diagnoses a serious illness; or we are buying a vehicle; or choosing clothes; or making financial decisions; or choosing school classes. The reason is: they can give us information we may not know. This is the very reason we should turn to God's Word and use every principle or recommendation of His we can apply. Under Moses' Law, God decried the condition of His people when, as a nation, they became "void of counsel," "without understanding," who needed to be "wise" (**Deuteronomy 32:28-29**). Under Jesus Christ's Law, the Apostle Paul said to the Elders of the Ephesian church of Christ, "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God" (**Acts 20:27**). This is always needed, not just "in church," but throughout society, as well!

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## (#40) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Are You Sure, or "Surety?"

**Proverbs 11:15:** "He who is surety for a stranger will suffer, But one who hates being surety is secure."

In our Lesson #15, the explanation for why being "surety" was dangerous was explained in **Proverbs 6:1-5**. The person who becomes "surety" (guaranty or collateral) for a friend's (or a relative's!) debt, has "come into the hand of your friend." To obligate our self with another's debt shows that we are "devoid of understanding" as to how these things work.

Other proverbs that cover this subject are: "A man devoid of understanding shakes hands in a pledge, *And* becomes surety for his friend" (**Proverbs 17:18**); "Take the garment of one who is surety *for* a stranger, *And* hold it as a pledge *when it* is for a seductress" (**Proverbs 20:16**); "Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge, One of those who is surety for debts; 27 If you have nothing *with which* to pay, Why should he take away your bed from under you?" (**Proverbs 22:26-27**); "Take the garment of him who is surety for a stranger, *And* hold it in pledge when he is surety for a seductress" (**Proverbs 27:13**). If a stranger is faithless enough to go into "a seductress" (**Proverbs 5-7**), and you are left holding his "garment" as a "pledge," then how much will he have left when she is through with him and you have his necessary clothing? "For by means of a harlot *A man is reduced* to a crust of bread; *And* an adulteress will prey upon his precious life" (**Proverbs 6:26**). We can become so over-obligated, we could lose our "bed from under" us. In our credit-riddled, debt-ridden society, these are words to heed!

To assume the debt of "a stranger" is to step into a bond with someone we may not know as well as we thought. This appears to be behind the statement to Christians by Paul: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (**2 Corinthians 6:14**), which he explains in **2 Corinthians 6:15-18**. There must be a line maintained between caution and fellowship.

God prohibited taking a "neighbor's" garment for collateral in Moses' Law: "If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down" (**Exodus 22:26**). This was his necessary clothing pawned for a debt; it was a "neighbor" who lived close by; and even **Proverbs 17:18** warns of being surety "for his friend." Those who mismanage their own finances, but never learn God's Wisdom from their experiences, surely are disqualified at dealing with, or advising, everyone else!

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(#41) The Proverbs of Solomon

Honor or Riches?

Proverbs 11:16: "A gracious woman retains honor, But ruthless men retain riches."

"Graciousness" should be every bit as valuable to a woman as "riches" would be to "ruthless" (strong, violent) men! There is NO justification for ruthlessness in obtaining wealth, and a woman's reach to obtain graciousness should never approach the ruthless reach of a man for riches. Other proverbs point out dangers in a ruthless approach to obtaining riches: **Proverbs 13:7:** "There is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing; And one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches;" **Proverbs 23:4:** "Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease!;" **Proverbs 28:20:** "A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished." Such grasping will have "nothing," will make "himself poor," cause "overwork to be rich" and miss out the really good things in life (family, worship, contentment), and it "will not go unpunished" (by God). "Honor" to a "gracious woman" will be her goal, but not the "ruthlessness" to obtain it. The "virtuous wife" will have "strength and honor" as her "clothing" (**Proverbs 31:25**), that her virtuous character is more respected than anything from her closet! Christians wives who have "chaste conduct" are admonished to "not let your adornment be *merely* outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel-- rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (**1 Peter 3:3-4**). This echoes our proverb.

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## (#42) The Proverbs of Solomon

### What Helps: Goodness or Cruelty?

**Proverbs 11:17:** "The merciful man does good for his own soul, But he who is cruel troubles his own flesh."

The common sense appeal for "doing good" is that it will come back to you. The world uses the term, "pay it forward," referring to initiating good deeds for others. Good always deserves its "payback." But the best reason for "doing good" is that it is a quality of God that makes us all better. No clearer statements on this subject are found than Jesus Christ: "Blessed *are* the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy" (**Matthew 5:7**); "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to *those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most



High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful" (**Luke 6:31-36**).

This Christian goodness is contrasted with all others who "love those who love you," "do good to those who do good to you," "lend" hoping to "receive as much back." In other words, sinners will "do good" from the selfish motive that it'll come back to them, but Christians will "do good" to people before they do good to the Christians. Christians are those who initiate, instigate, and originate good deeds and good feelings in this world. Jesus stated the purpose for His disciples' actions: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (**Matthew 5:16**). There are many people who point to misdeeds and divisions among those who profess to be following Jesus Christ (most of these falsely claiming so!), when they totally ignore all the good deeds done because of this unique, startling, and exceptional teaching of Jesus, and the quiet multitudes who keep originating the good in this world (**Matthew 25:34-36**)!

The contrast with the other part of the proverb calls attention to the fact that there are people in the world who are "cruel," who will have that even come back on themselves! God delivered the Israelites in Egypt who were under "cruel bondage" (**Exodus 6:9**); David saw his enemies hate him with "cruel hatred" (**Psalms 25:19**); God returned Israelites to their land after their 70-year exile, and gave the cruel nations who had held them their own cruelty (**Jeremiah 30:10-17**). Other proverbs teach this principle: **Proverbs 17:11**: "An evil man seeks only rebellion; Therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him;" **Proverbs 28:10**: "Whoever causes the upright to go astray in an evil way, He himself will fall into his own pit; But the blameless will inherit good." Solomon repeated this in his later teaching in **Ecclesiastes 10:8**. Cruelty is its own "reward," and has its own "payback." Those who spread evil, wickedness, and cruelty in this life will have it "pay backward," both in this life and the one to come.

James stated God's principle of judgment for Christians who serve Jesus Christ, and sinners: "So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment" (**James 2:12-13**). Mercy is shown by "good works" and forgiveness, while mercilessness is shown by their lack! "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (**Acts 17:30-31**).

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(#43) The Proverbs of Solomon

Do Not Be Deceived

Proverbs 11:18-19: "The wicked man does deceptive work, But he who sows righteousness *will have a sure reward.* 19 As righteousness *leads to life,* So he who pursues evil *pursues it to his own death.*"

Who is the most deceived when he is "wicked," but the wicked? The wicked's "work" is for nothing, since all the thrills of thinking that one has beaten the system; or the rules don't apply to me; or God won't condemn anyone; or God will be merciful to me; have absolutely no support from the Word of God! Other proverbs that uphold this teaching are: **Proverbs 11:31:** "If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth, How much more the ungodly and the sinner;" **Proverbs 12:2-3:** "A good man obtains favor from the LORD, But a man of wicked intentions He will condemn. A man is not established by wickedness, But the root of the righteous cannot be moved;" **Proverbs 12:7:** "The wicked are overthrown and are no more, But the house of the righteous will stand;" **Proverbs 12:21:** "No grave trouble will overtake the righteous, But the wicked shall be filled with evil;" **Proverbs 13:6:** "Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless, But wickedness overthrows the sinner;" **Proverbs 13:9:** "The light of the righteous rejoices, But the lamp of the wicked will be put out;" **Proverbs 13:25:** "The righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul, But the stomach of the wicked shall be in want;" **Proverbs 14:14:** "The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, But a good man will be satisfied from above;" **Proverbs 14:32:** "The wicked is banished in his wickedness, But the righteous has a refuge in his death;" **Proverbs 21:12:** "The righteous God wisely considers the house of the wicked, Overthrowing the wicked for their wickedness." The warning "do not be deceived," meaning keep your eyes open to yourselves, or watch out, also occurs for Christians in the New Testament: sinners will not "inherit the kingdom of God" (**1 Corinthians 6:9-10**); Christians can be corrupted by "evil company" (**1 Corinthians 15:33**); none will escape their works on the day of Judgment (**Galatians 6:7-8**); and no one is tempted into sin by God (**James 1:13-16**)! Just as surely as the righteous will receive the blessings of being righteous, the wicked will receive the "death" they have earned and deserve. "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (**Acts 2:38**).

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## (#44) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Is Anything "Right or Wrong?"

**Proverbs 11:20-21:** "Those who are of a perverse heart are an abomination to the LORD, But the blameless in their ways are His delight. 21 *Though they join forces,* the wicked will not go unpunished; But the posterity of the righteous will be delivered."

The God-drawn line between right and wrong, good and bad, righteous and unrighteous, perverse and blameless remains clear to God, despite human efforts to cloud the issue. Other proverbs that teach this include: **Proverbs 15:9**: "The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves him who follows righteousness;" **Proverbs 15:26**: "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, But the words of the pure are pleasant." There are many who, in their arrogant wickedness, seem to be asking: "Who is the LORD, that He can tell me what's 'right' and 'wrong?'" When the most powerful king of his day, "Pharaoh said, 'Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go'" (**Exodus 5:2**), then 10 plagues later, and after the destruction of his kingdom, Pharaoh had found out! No matter who challenges God's "right" to rule, no one has been left standing who did!

God has been, and still is, always delighted with "the blameless." "Blameless" simply describes the condition of not being condemned by the rules. Under Moses' Law, priests in the temple were (**Matthew 12:5**); Zacharias and Elizabeth were (**Luke 1:5-6**); Saul of Tarsus was (**Philippians 3:4-7**). Jesus' Cross and Gospel are to let sinners who obey become "blameless" (**Philippians 2:14-16**; **Colossians 1:21-23**; **1 Thessalonians 3:12-13**; **5:23**). Note that "The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him" (**Nahum 1:7**), this last phrase is quoted by Paul in **2 Timothy 2:19** as still being true!

A union of sinners, expressed as to "join forces" (literally, hand to hand), cannot overpower God's line of "righteousness." This is repeated in **Proverbs 16:5**: "Everyone proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD; *Though they join* forces, none will go unpunished." God's line between "right and wrong" has never, and will never be, outvoted, overpowered, outlasted, or outdone! There is no strength of numbers great enough to change, alter, shrink, or erase God's dividing line of morals!

God finds abominable everyone who teaches otherwise! **Proverbs 17:15**: "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD." The prophet, Isaiah, was inspired to decry: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (**Isaiah 5:20**). Jesus Christ reflected this teaching in **Luke 16:15**: "And He said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.'"

The only hope for anyone is to recognize that there is a difference between "good and evil," admit it if you are found on the wrong side, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ "for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:38**).

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(#45) The Proverbs of Solomon

Cosmetics Without Character!

Proverbs 11:22: "As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, So is a lovely woman who lacks discretion."

God described His relationship with the Jews as one giving His wife finery, including "jewel in your nose" (**Ezekiel 13:10-16**). In His prediction of His punishment on His people, the Jews, God listed what they would lose, including "the nose jewels" (**Isaiah 3:18-23**). A "ring of gold" would have been intended for a sign of an intimate relationship between a husband and wife (**Genesis 24:45-48**). It was never intended for a "swine!" Under Moses' Law, "swine" were unclean, not to be eaten or touched when dead (**Deuteronomy 14:8**); Jesus taught pearls were not to be cast before them (**Matthew 7:6**); Jesus cast demons into a "herd of many swine" (**Matthew 8:30-32**); and Jesus taught a Jewish man had entered the depths of depravity who "would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate" (**Luke 15:15-16**). "A gold ring in a swine's snout" not only was useless, but wasted, as well!

"A lovely woman" has wasted her beauty who does not develop "discretion" (good judgment, sound reasoning). "Discretion" should also be found in "young men" (**Proverbs 1:4**), developing slow anger (**Proverbs 19:11**), and represents the planning God put into "the heavens" (**Jeremiah 10:12**). King Ahasuerus, whose heart "was merry with wine," commanded Queen Vashti to "show her beauty" for "she was beautiful to behold" (**Esther 1:10-12**), but she "refused." She showed "discretion" even though the word is not used in this passage! It is true that "beauty is passing" (**Proverbs 31:30**), and a tragedy of womanhood seems to be those who work on their outside to be seen as attractive, while having the character of a rotting corpse! The runway models, singers, actresses, and other entertainers who emphasize all their womanly charms, frequently show their ignorance of what God made a woman to be, by their actions! God made a woman to fill the deep need for close companionship in a man through marriage (**Genesis 2:18-25**), not to free herself to do every vile sin perverse men could do! Good looks are wasted on any woman who is equal to men in sin by: cursing, drinking, drugs, violence, fornication before marriage, adultery after marriage, without conscience, and without natural affection for her husband and children. Good looks are wasted on the kind of woman Solomon has already warned a "son" to completely avoid (**Proverbs 2:16-22; 5:1-20; 6:20-35; Proverbs 7:6-27**)!

"Discretion" is seen in Christian women who learn to "love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands" (**Titus 2:4-5**), and who learn how to dress appropriately at all times (**1 Timothy 2:9-10**). All women are truly beautiful who emphasize "the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (**1 Peter 3:1-6, verse 4**). There is no amount of make-up, perfume, sexy clothing, hairstyles, or aggressive behavior that can successfully hide the lack of "discretion!" Only by repenting and being baptized in the

name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**) can the real beauty treatments begin to develop the "new" beautiful person within (**Colossians 3:1-17**).

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### **(#46) The Proverbs of Solomon**

#### **Determining Determination**

**Proverbs 11:23:** "The desire of the righteous *is* only good, *But* the expectation of the wicked *is* wrath."

The thought is that the purpose of heart determines one's purpose in life. It is repeated in **verse 27** using "seeks" for "desire" of the righteous, and "seeks" for "expectation" of the wicked. What we go for is what we'll get; our goal determines our aim; we will be whatever we "dream" about becoming. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ said: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (**Matthew 7:7-8**). Good purpose will receive good result. In the Old Testament, "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel" (**Ezra 7:10**); Daniel "purposed in his heart" not to be defiled with his surroundings (**Daniel 1:8**); so in the New Testament, Christians were "encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" (**Acts 11:23**). It is this inner desire that keeps one's feet moving toward the goal. Obtaining our heavenly reward requires this very thing. Jesus Christ said: "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (**Luke 13:24**).

Other proverbs state this truth: **Proverbs 12:5-6:** "The thoughts of the righteous *are* right, *But* the counsels of the wicked *are* deceitful. 6 The words of the wicked *are*, 'Lie in wait for blood,' *But* the mouth of the upright will deliver them;" **Proverbs 12:20:** "Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, *But* counselors of peace have joy;" **Proverbs 14:22:** "Do they not go astray who devise evil? *But* mercy and truth belong to those who devise good;" **Proverbs 21:10:** "The soul of the wicked desires evil; His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes."

If ever a truth about humans is taught, here it is: no one rises above his/her goal.

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(#47) The Proverbs of Solomon

Banking on Giving

Proverbs 11:24-25: "There is one who scatters, yet increases more; *And* there is one who withholds more than is right, *But* it leads to poverty. 25 The generous soul will be made rich, *And* he who waters will also be watered himself."

The benefits of "generosity" are summarized here with: it comes back to you. The movie "It's A Wonderful Life" visualizes the principle of helping others in a way that helps them be able to help you back. The "one who scatters" in **verse 24** is the "generous soul" of **verse 25**. It is the "generous soul" who is "rich," and the one who "waters" (shares blessings) will "be watered himself." Moses' Law required a generous spirit to the "poor man of your brethren" (**Deuteronomy 15:7-11**). Solomon showed generosity to an enemy can act like punishment on his conscience: "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the LORD will reward you" (**Proverbs 25:21-22**), which the Apostle Paul bound on Christians (**Romans 12:20**). Jesus Christ had extended this spirit to our "enemies" (**Luke 6:27-31**) ending with the words, "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise."

Other proverbs which teach this thought are: **Proverbs 19:17**: "He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given;" **Proverbs 22:9**: "He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor." Isaiah prophesied of "a righteous king" who would see to it things were set straight (**Isaiah 32:5-7**), ending with, "a generous man devises generous things, And by generosity he shall stand." Whenever there are "hard times," whether caused by unemployment, marriage problems, short supply of goods, this principle of generosity will be sorely tested! Sometimes generosity is the only "line of credit" we are given that we must remember when our situation improves.

The other side is of the "one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty." This is the stingy, greedy, selfish person who sees no more than his/her own needs, and always lives lonely. The "poverty" is not only of goods, but of friendships, as well! One may become poor by holding onto whatever he possesses! Other proverbs call this oppression and mocking the poor: **Proverbs 14:31**: "He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy;" **Proverbs 17:5**: "He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished;" **Proverbs 22:22-23**: "Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; 23 For the LORD will plead their cause, And plunder the soul of those who plunder them;" **Proverbs 28:27**: "He who gives to the poor will not lack, But he who hides his eyes will have many curses;" **Proverbs 29:7**: "The righteous considers the cause of the poor, But the wicked does not understand such knowledge."

Jesus Christ established this generosity for the church: "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (**1 John 3:16**).

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## (#48) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Corrupt Commerce

**Proverbs 11:26:** "The people will curse him who withholds grain, But blessing will be on the head of him who sells it."

It is bad business to withhold products that are needed. "Buy low and sell high" may be popular in the Stock Market, but in the marketplace, it loses future business! Companies, or individuals, who buy up needed products in "bad" times, in order to sell them at higher prices during "harder" times, not only incur the wrath of customers, but also the curse of God, Himself. In condemning corrupted Israel, God gave Amos a vision for those "who swallow up the needy, And make the poor of the land fail, Saying: 'When will the New Moon be past, That we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, That we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, Falsifying the scales by deceit, That we may buy the poor for silver, And the needy for a pair of sandals-Even sell the bad wheat?'" (**Amos 8:4-6**). "Swallowing up the needy," and "making the poor fail" describe business and/or governmental practices that slant economics away from hard work being rewarded with honest pay and profit. Those evil practices included: cutting product sizes with short scales, while increasing the price of the goods sold; making the "poor" go into such debt they are bought for "silver;" reducing them down to such need their price is the same as shoes; and selling them damaged goods! Today, this would be called "re-packaging," "inflation," "over-extended credit buying," "depression economy," and "selling expired goods."

When the Israelites were returned to their Promised Land, fulfilling all prophecies on that subject, the "nobles' and rulers'" practices were listed as: "For there were those who said, 'We, our sons, and our daughters *are* many; therefore let us get grain, that we may eat and live.' There were also *some* who said, 'We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine.' There were also those who said, 'We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our lands and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and *some* of our daughters have been brought into slavery. It is not in our power to *redeem them*, for other men have our lands and vineyards'" (**Nehemiah 5:2-5**).

When the leaders of a people, whether business or government, adopt practices or legislation that take unfair advantage of the hard-working families under their care, God will hold them accountable. James wrote: "Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (**James 5:4**). Jesus Christ endorsed truth with: "the laborer is worthy of his wages" (**Luke 10:7**); "he who reaps receives wages" (**John 4:36**); and Paul added to this with: "to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt" (**Romans 4:4**). Wages are earned, not given, and everything that is done to keep honest work from being rewarded with honest wages is against God's Will!

Another proverb upholds this teaching: **Proverbs 30:14**: "There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, And whose fangs are like knives, To devour the poor from off the earth, And the needy from among men."

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(#49) The Proverbs of Solomon

A Solid Life Or Full Of Wind?

Proverbs 11:27-29: He who earnestly seeks good finds favor, But trouble will come to him who seeks evil. 28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like foliage. 29 He who troubles his own house will inherit the wind, And the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.

Proverbs 11:27:

This speaks of genuineness of heart. There is no hypocrisy in love. Jesus condemned the "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (**Matthew 23:27-28**). Giving only the appearance of genuine love and concern is the same as a lie. James teaches us that "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (**James 3:17**). Real love is never "taken back" (**1 Corinthians 13:8**). Love "finds favor," that is, seeks out the best (**1 Corinthians 13:6**).

Proverbs 11:28:

Trusting in "riches" rather than in God is not only guaranteed to fail, but misses out on the real product of life: righteousness! "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (**1 Timothy 6:17-19**). There is a big difference between trusting in riches, and using riches with trust in God!

Proverbs 11:29:

Anyone who causes a dark cloud throughout the house "will inherit the wind" (or will have nothing good to come from it). Later, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon will show the emptiness of "grasping for the wind" nine times (**Ecclesiastes 1:14, 17; Ecclesiastes 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 6, 16; 6:9**)! How empty and meaningless is the "house" (family) of anyone foul-tempered, stingy, or riddled with anxiety to stifle faith, hope, and love in all those around him!

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## (#50) The Proverbs of Solomon

### The Results of a Good Life

**Proverbs 11:30-31:** The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise. 31 If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth, How much more the ungodly and the sinner.

#### Proverbs 11:30:

The purpose of recognizing God's blessings, receiving those blessings, and rendering blessings to others is to have a positive, spiritual effect on our part of the world. The "wise" will win souls, the unwise will not! The "righteous" will bear fruit, the unrighteous will remain barren! The purpose of each life should be to leave behind more righteousness in the world than there was before being born! Of course, Jesus Christ is essential to this success: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" (**John 15:4-8**). To "win" a soul for Christ has made the ultimate conquest for good!

#### Proverbs 11:31:

The inspired commentary on this verse is from the Apostle Peter, who quoted this as a means of encouraging Christians who suffer affliction for the cause of Jesus Christ, and needed to know that the "ungodly and the sinner" have no comfort or strength to endure, by contrast. "For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear? Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator" (**1 Peter 4:17-19**). When we obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38) we trust our souls into the care of God, who will protect us eternally, as long as we remain in His care (**1 Peter 2:11-12; 3:13-18; 5:6-7**).

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(#51) The Proverbs of Solomon

How to Raise "Stupid"

Proverbs 12:1: "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid."

Instruction limits a person if followed, thus "instruction" is discipline, correction, or counsel. True "knowledge" comes to those who are willing to learn by "instruction."

A good student knows the thirst for "knowledge," and Jesus Christ emphasized this: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled" (**Matthew 5:6**). Every schoolteacher will tell you, there is no learning where there is no discipline. Parents who raise their children's egos above their desire for learning are making their children "stupid" (brutish, like an animal, with unused human ingenuity). Animal intelligence is content to be that animal, and, like an ox, may kick against the goad, or refuse any instruction to follow! "A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not find it, But knowledge is easy to him who understands. Go from the presence of a foolish man, When you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge" (**Proverbs 14:6-7**). Don't hang around those who are "stupid" because they "hate correction" (or despise the discipline of knowledge!), and "stupid" rubs off! "He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed" (**Proverbs 13:20**). Children who are taught disrespect for teachers, and disdain for knowledge, are raised to be nothing but a herd of slaves!

Other proverbs that teach this thought are: **Proverbs 12:15**: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise;" **Proverbs 13:1**: "A wise son heeds his father's instruction, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke;" **Proverbs 13:18**: "Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, But he who regards a rebuke will be honored;" **Proverbs 15:5**: "A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent;" **Proverbs 15:10**: "Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, And he who hates correction will die;" **Proverbs 15:12**: "A scoffer does not love one who corrects him, Nor will he go to the wise;" **Proverbs 15:31-32**: "The ear that hears the rebukes of life Will abide among the wise. **32** He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding." There is a saying in the Medical Profession: "There is no cure for stupid." Fighting against learning shows determination to remain ignorant, and nothing could be more ignorant!

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## **(#52) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **How To Crown A Husband**

**Proverbs 12:4**: "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who causes shame is like rotteness in his bones."

"Excellent" shows this word means more than simply "virtuous, pure," but also spirited, spiritual, conscientious, devoted to her husband and children, intelligent, ingenious. No clearer picture is drawn of such a woman than in **Proverbs 31:10-31**, which will be dealt with in detail in another study. When God made man, "the LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him'" (**Genesis 2:18**). The entire created world cannot satisfy the loneliness a man was designed to have. To meet this innate need, God made woman, and Solomon describes her as a crowning addition to the man. There is no question to believers in God's Word that: "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD" (**Proverbs 18:22**). Men should be looking to find "a wife," not

"women" in general! Men who disrespect the marriage commitment are men who disrespect women, and thus disrespect God! A "wife" (not any and every woman!) is "favor (grace) from the LORD," and a "good thing" for a husband! Men who reject marriage with a wife are rejecting the grace of God! It is no wonder, then, that "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (**Hebrews 13:4**). It is sin to have physically intimate relationships outside of marriage, and God will hold all accountable who engage in the practice without the purity of a marriage. Forbidding marriage (celibacy) or ignoring marriage (playboy) are both observed and condemned by God. There is no substitute for "an excellent wife," for she shows her husband is richly blessed by God more than any other inheritance a man could have. "Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD" (**Proverbs 19:14**).

"Rottenness in his bones" describes an untreatable condition, for it has sunk so deep into a man, it may never be cured. Spiritually speaking, "envy is rottenness to the bones" (**Proverbs 14:30**), which means it takes away strength to faithfully stand. If a "good wife" is a "good thing," then a "bad wife" is a "bad thing." Young men should not on the prowl for animal gratification, but should be searching for "an excellent wife" with strength of character and spiritual conviction.

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(#53) The Proverbs of Solomon

How to be Remembered

Proverbs 12:8: "A man will be commended according to his wisdom, But he who is of a perverse heart will be despised."

The real mark of accomplishment is to be recognized as someone who shows he is ordered by "wisdom" and not perverseness. Good character cannot be hidden, and is appreciated by all people, even someone's enemies! It is not for possessions, riches, wealth, honors from men or institutions, family ties or size, or fame that people "commend" for leadership, strength, honor, faith, principles, especially in times of crisis. Wisdom will be seen in his words, deeds, worship, faithfulness, and more importantly, recognized by Jesus Christ: "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock" (**Matthew 7:24-25**).

The person "of a perverse heart" is living life on the "dark side." This person may resort to trickery, deceit, lies, subterfuge, physical and social intimidation, to achieve the appearance of success, but such a person is following worldly wisdom, which is "earthly, sensual, demonic" and it produces "bitter envy and self-seeking," "confusion and every evil thing" (**James 3:14-16**). The perverse person sees nothing of God's Works as they purely are, but is perverse in words, deeds, worship, unfaithfulness, and will be judged by Jesus Christ: "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27

and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall" (**Matthew 7:26-27**). No one genuinely highly esteems such an individual. Solomon also said: "When the wicked comes, contempt comes also; And with dishonor comes reproach" (**Proverbs 18:3**).

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## **(#54) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Who Has Bragging Rights?**

**Proverbs 12:9:** "Better is the one who is slighted but has a servant, Than he who honors himself but lacks bread."

A loyal "servant" knows his master, and serves, regardless of circumstance or outside opinion. Being "slighted" by others should not discourage a person from being honorable and respected at home. However, acting like things are better than they actually are is an exercise in hypocrisy and self-deceit! Being proud when there is nothing of which to be proud is despicable. Putting up a front of self-honor when the facts are he "lacks bread" makes life look like a stage setting, all image and no substance. Self-praise is NO praise! "Have you found honey? Eat only as much as you need, Lest you be filled with it and vomit" (**Proverbs 25:16**). "*It is not good to eat much honey; So to seek one's own glory is not glory*" (**Proverbs 25:27**). Too much of a sweet thing is sickening, and so is it to be around those who praise themselves! It is one thing to receive the accolades of one's peers, but quite another to be acknowledged by those outside of our personal sphere. Another proverb teaches this: **Proverbs 27:2:** "Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips." We expect our parents and grandparents to "praise us," so the emphasis here is "a stranger," someone who is outside our family. It is even more pathetic to be around someone who cannot get recognition without self-promotion! An untreatable medical condition is caused by the sprained elbow of people patting themselves on their own backs! How pitiful is it for the best opinion about someone to be from that person! Even Jesus Christ had others who bore witness of Him (**John 5:31-47**) to show that "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true."

Jesus Christ said to His disciples concerning people in the world: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (**John 15:19**). "The world would love its own" is Jesus' way of saying the worldly-minded will always support each other by propping up everyone who thinks like they do, and verbally or physically attack all righteous people who will not conform to their standards! Christians should not expect former "friends" to be encouraging: "For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (**1 Peter 4:3-5**).

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(#55) The Proverbs of Solomon

Pets R People?

Proverbs 12:10: "A righteous man regards the life of his animal, But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

"A righteous man" listens to God's Wisdom, and appreciates the world as the product of God's mighty work: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (**Genesis 1:1**) and "God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good" (**Genesis 1:25**). Let us note, however, that God made humans to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (**Genesis 1:28**). Though a "righteous man" will "regard" his animal, he will also know the difference between a human and an animal! Animals are NOT human, too!

The best "the wicked" can offer (their "tender mercies") "are cruel." The cliché is true, that those who are cruel to animals as children are cruel to animals as adults, and cruel to humans, too. Those who disregard God's care for animals will disrespect God's care for humans, and *vice versa*. As one of God's creatures, "natural brute beasts [are] made to be caught and destroyed" (**2 Peter 2:12**), but human beings are NOT!

God provided for animals to reproduce "according to its kind" (**Genesis 1:25**); when humanity was saved from a corrupted world in Noah's ark, God included animals (**Genesis 8:15-19**); when God gave Israelites a "sabbath day," He included the animals (**Exodus 20:8-11**); and the animals who were used to raise food were allowed to eat of that food (**Deuteronomy 25:4**)! God's care for the animals He created will be reflected in a "righteous man" who is made in the image of God (**Genesis 1:26-30**). By-the-way, not muzzling the oxen but allowing them to be fed from their labors is applied to the support of Gospel Preachers (**1 Corinthians 9:3-11**). After quoting **Deuteronomy 25:4**, Paul asked, "Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things?" Some brethren take better care of their animals and pets than they do of their Gospel Preacher! Such is not only disgraceful but damnable, as well! Care for animals was never intended to be greater than consideration for humans, especially Gospel Preachers, but was intended by God's command to put "regard" into consideration for humans, hopefully to show them how to "regard" their fellow man!

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## (#56) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Don't Buy the Farm—Yet!

**Proverbs 12:11:** "He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread, But he who follows frivolity is devoid of understanding."

The association of agriculture and hard work goes back to the Garden of Eden. God "planted a garden" (**Genesis 2:8**), but when man was created, he was "put in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it" (**Genesis 2:15**). After sin entered the world, man was burdened with: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return" (**Genesis 3:19**). Hard working farmers should be able to share in their harvest, for "he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope" (**1 Corinthians 9:10**). Rulers must accept the fact that, without farmers, they have no kingdom! Solomon later would say: "Moreover the profit of the land is for all; even the king is served from the field" (**Ecclesiastes 5:9**). Eating "bread" is another way of saying farmers should be in the plowing and profiting business. The "hope" of hard work is profiting from it and providing for one's family. It is hypocrisy to curse the farmer with a mouthful of food! Whatever is done to discourage farming, or force farmers to sell their farms, is destroying the entire country.

Instead of working the land when needed, "frivolity" distracts from the real task at hand. The parallel proverb shows how wrong "frivolity" really is: **Proverbs 28:19:** "He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, But he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough!" Entertainment instead of agriculture reveals one as being "devoid of understanding," or worse, having "poverty enough!" It is senseless to neglect food production for fun and games! Other proverbs on this subject include:

**Proverbs 13:23:** "Much food is in the fallow ground of the poor, And for lack of justice there is waste;" **Proverbs 27:18:** "Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit; So he who waits on his master will be honored;" **Proverbs 27:23:** "Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, And attend to your herds." Hard work is always the answer for poor economy, and "the poor" are often that way because of a lack of effort! Only thieves and robbers would steal "bread" (from the profits) without engaging in the hard work it took to produce it! Over-emphasizing entertainment is simply spreading "poverty" instead of encouraging bread-winners!

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(#57) The Proverbs of Solomon

Deliver Me!

Proverbs 12:12-13: "The wicked covet the catch of evil men, But the root of the righteous yields fruit. 13 The wicked is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, But the righteous will come through trouble."

Wicked people think the more people they ensnare, the bigger the crowd for God and the righteous to deal with. They think there's safety in numbers, and this may be the thinking behind drinking and drug parties or gangs. Only "the wicked" seek the company of "the wicked" or influence others to join them in wickedness. "The wicked" are victims of their own stated wicked plans, untruths, and broken promises! Another proverb that deals with this is: **Proverbs 21:10: "The soul of the wicked desires evil; His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes."** A psalmist clearly described them: "He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the secret places he murders the innocent; His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless. He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; He lies in wait to catch the poor; He catches the poor when he draws him into his net. So he crouches, he lies low, That the helpless may fall by his strength" (**Psalm 10:8-10**). Only "the wicked" target the helpless. Only "the wicked" would gang up on and beat to death an 88-year old World War II veteran; or rob and kill a 99-year old woman; or blow up unarmed citizens and children in the name of a "justifiable war;" or involve innocent children in perverseness before they know right from wrong.

The righteous are a complete contrast, whose "root" (core values) is to produce goodness, and therefore "will come through trouble," a phrase meaning survive with good morals intact. This is a complete contrast to Apostles of Jesus Christ who healed a helpless lame man (**Acts 3:1-10; 4:8-10**).

Other proverbs that show this contrast are: "In the way of righteousness is life, And in *its pathway there is no death*" (**Proverbs 12:28**); "The LORD *is* far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous" (**Proverbs 15:29**). For Christians, Peter warned of the "judgment" of persecution upon both the righteous and sinners, then added: "For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now 'If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?' Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator" (**1 Peter 4:17-19**). Only Jesus Christ can deliver a soul from the ravages of tribulation (**John 16:33**).

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## **(#58) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **There Is NO Silent Satisfaction**

**Proverbs 12:14: "A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, And the recompense of a man's hands will be rendered to him."**

Satisfaction with "good" cannot be hidden in the heart, but expressed in words, for which God will "recompense" (payback). Each one who expresses satisfaction with the good they have, will have good come back. Other proverbs which express this include: "A man shall eat well by the fruit of *his* mouth, But the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence" (**Proverbs 13:2**); "A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his

mouth, *From the produce of his lips he shall be filled*" (**Proverbs 18:20**); "Do not be envious of evil men, Nor desire to be with them; For their heart devises violence, And their lips talk of troublemaking" (**Proverbs 24:1-2**). We say what we intend, and "the fruit of the mouth" that plans to do good, will provide, that is, follow through with action. Those who can only speak "violence" are telling everyone around them of their intentions. This is what gangsters, politicians, racists, demonstrators, and mass murderers do: they state what they intend, and then follow through with their acts of "violence."

If we appreciate the good God gives every one of us, we must not be silent with our thanksgiving to Him. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (**Philippians 4:6**); "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (**1 Thessalonians 5:18**); "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, *And* into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name" (**Psalms 100:4**). God will admit no one "into His gates" who cannot give thanks for all He does. Jesus Christ cleansed 10 lepers, but only one returned "giving thanks" (**Luke 17:12-19**), and Jesus noticed by asking, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" God notices all who do not give Him thanks for all of our blessings. People are "without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (**Romans 1:20-21**). But so, also, do the husbands, wives, children, relatives, preachers, brethren, partners, bosses, workers, waiters/waitresses, clerks, stockers, and everyone not now specified, deserve to expect to be "thanked" for the good they do for us. In "the last days" leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70, being "unthankful" is included in the list of sins committed, and "from such people turn away" is the warning (**2 Timothy 3:1-5**). If we are thankful, it may surprise us how often it will be returned!

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(#59) The Proverbs of Solomon

Keep A Lid On It!

Proverbs 12:16: "A fool's wrath is known at once, But a prudent man covers shame."

The contrast is with a "fool" who is quick to explode, and a "prudent man" who can control his temper. "Wrath" is the "shame" of the second phrase. Losing control of one's thoughts, words, and actions makes a person a "fool," and everything done or said in that condition shows total weakness, not strength! Policemen and Soldiers should show strength "under fire." Road rage or foot rage, it is all the same. All athletes that erupt or benches that empty, demonstrate what weaklings they are. Whether involving an "ex," a "former" spouse or friend, or provoked child, domestic disputes that end in violence are committed by a "fool." Wrathful explosions are always from wimps, never from winners! Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego were stronger than Nebuchadnezzar who was "full of fury" and cast them into the fiery

furnace (**Daniel 3:13, 19**). Saul of Tarsus was "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (**Acts 9:1**) until he ran up against Jesus Christ (**Acts 9:3-20**). Jesus Christ was the epitome of "prudent," "who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (**1 Peter 2:23**).

Other proverbs that express this include: "A quick-tempered *man* acts foolishly, And a man of wicked intentions is hated" (**Proverbs 14:17**); "*He who is slow to wrath* has great understanding, But *he who is impulsive exalts folly*" (**Proverbs 14:29**); "A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger" (**Proverbs 15:1**); "*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty*, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (**Proverbs 16:32**); "A *man of great wrath* will suffer punishment; For if you rescue *him*, you will have to do it again" (**Proverbs 19:19**); "Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul" (**Proverbs 22:24-25**); "Whoever *has no rule over his own spirit* Is like a city broken down, without walls" (**Proverbs 25:28**). Like an unprotected city, "an angry man" has no defense for what he says and does! Medals for Bravery should be given to each person who "rules his spirit," as Purple Hearts should be given to those who have to live with "a quick-tempered man." Don't learn the ways of an angry man by using "harsh words," rather master the art of "a soft answer."

This wisdom from above for Christians is summarized by James: "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (**James 1:19-20**).

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## **(#60) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Sword swallowing 101**

**Proverbs 12:18-19:** "There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise *promotes* health. 19 The truthful lip shall be established forever, But a lying tongue is but for a moment."

Whoever composed the children's rhyme, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me," never read this proverb. Words can penetrate, slash, slice, peel, and pare the very core of a person's heart. Verbal "bullying" can produce a defeat the same as physical "bullying." Another proverb says, "The words of a talebearer *are* like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body" (**Proverbs 18:8**). People are as eager to swallow talebearing as if it were "tasty trifles." The "lying tongue" is quickly proven to be "lying," thus the life of a lie is "but for a moment." No one should give a "talebearer" an ear to bear the tale to! Jesus Christ thought names and labels can be hurtful when He said: "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be

in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire" (**Matthew 5:21-22**). Propagandists specialize in using hurtful names and labels that intimidate the souls of good people.

"The tongue of the wise" can speak words that go deeply into another person's heart, but they do not hurt or injure, for they are "truth." "Truth" is eternal, because it originated with God, for: "He is a God of truth" (**Deuteronomy 32:3-4**); "For the word of the LORD is right, And all His work is done in truth" (**Psalms 33:4**); so that we may "know the certainty of the words of truth" (**Proverbs 22:21**); Jesus' enemies even said, "we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth" (**Matthew 22:16**); and Jesus declared, "For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth" (**John 18:37**). Truth will always prevail, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (**2 Corinthians 13:8**).

Let us never be victimized by the "lying tongue," but seek the "health" that only comes from the truth!

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(#61) The Proverbs of Solomon

A Fool is a Blabbermouth!

Proverbs 12:23: "A prudent man conceals knowledge, But the heart of fools proclaims foolishness."

"Knowledge" is based upon facts, certainty, and insight. When "knowledge" involves Bible truths, we must all be as David, who said, "I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness In the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know" (**Psalms 40:9**). Though Peter confessed Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (**Matthew 16:16**), Jesus was not ready for this to be widely known at that time, so "He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ" (**Matthew 16:20**). However, when this truth was fully revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul had "not shunned to declare...the whole counsel of God" in Ephesus (**Acts 20:17, 27**). In dealing with the judgments of our daily lives, the "prudent" (sensible, wise, judicious) don't need to tell everything at once! Since "Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins" (**Proverbs 10:12**), this principle is applicable to Christians (**1 Peter 4:8**). Solomon later would say, "There is a time to keep silence, And a time to speak" (**Ecclesiastes 3:7**). Those with good judgment will make timely conversation, hence, Christians must "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (**Colossians 4:6**).

When blabbing anything and everything one knows about others with the excuse that, "I'm just being honest," one becomes a fool who is without good judgment!

Other proverbs that add to this truth are: "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise" (**Proverbs 10:19**); "Every prudent man acts with knowledge, But a fool lays open his folly" (**Proverbs 13:16**); "The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness" (**Proverbs 15:2**); "He who has knowledge spares his words, *And* a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; *When* he shuts his lips, *he is considered* perceptive" (**Proverbs 17:27-28**). There is a common saying based upon this truth: "Better to be thought a fool, than open your mouth and remove all doubt." One who is "slow to speak" (**James 1:19**) is either "wise" or a fool who is mistaken as wise! Meanwhile, "a fool" will use a "multitude of words" to lay "open his folly" and pour forth "foolishness." Running off at the mouth is never good, while shutting up the mouth in good judgment can be "perceptive!" When our heart is in our mouth, truth may be lost in the moment! God gives us a mind with which to filter what we say: "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds learning to his lips" (**Proverbs 16:23**). Since God's people are now the Christians, Solomon's wisdom is timeless: "Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few" (**Ecclesiastes 5:2**).

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## **(#62) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Who Deserves Slavery?**

**Proverbs 12:24: "The hand of the diligent will rule, But the lazy man will be put to forced labor."**

"Diligence" means to never give up, or to be persistent. The "diligent" have an objective, work toward their objective, and achieve their objective, hence they "will rule," always! Solomon wisely appointed Jeroboam, who was "industrious," over his workers (**1 Kings 11:28**). Any government, society, or corporation populated by those who haven't worked their way up will fail, falter, and fall! Workers who are more concerned about their own benefits than benefitting the company are accomplishing little. While Karl Marx was writing his book of class conflict wherein workers coveted the profits of companies, Frederic Bastiat's writings were defending Libertarian principles of individual freedom and limited government, which included: "Everyone wants to live at the expense of the state. They forget that the state lives at the expense of everyone."

The grand fallacy that profits are created at the expense of workers has become a rallying cry of the increasingly lazy souls who desire more tyranny and dictatorship in order to share in profits they have done little or nothing to create! "He who is slothful in his work Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer" (**Proverbs 18:9**). The lazy destroy productivity by attaching themselves to those who are diligent!

Other proverbs describe characteristics of the "lazy" one:

- 1) "The lazy man says, 'There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!'" (**Proverbs 22:13**). The lazy imagine fear of failure to justify their lack of effort.
- 2) "I went by the field of the lazy man, And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; Its surface was covered with nettles; Its stone wall was broken down. When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction: A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest; So shall your poverty come like a prowler, And your need like an armed man" (**Proverbs 24:30-34**). Laziness spreads incrementally with "a little" sleep, slumber, folding of the hands. This creeping "poverty" attacks by stealth, very much like the creeping socialism which has very slowly consumed Constitutional protections of "rugged individualism." Every country, state, or city that has implemented Karl Marx's socialism ended in depression, dereliction, and destruction, because it gave to the lazy by taking from the productive.
- 3) "The lazy man says, 'There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!' As a door turns on its hinges, So does the lazy man on his bed. The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth. The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can answer sensibly" (**Proverbs 26:13-16**). The lazy man gives up personal independence because of "a lion;" has no personal progress, like a door; has no personal responsibility to even feed himself; and common sense is crowded out of his mind! The lazy support bigger government to provide all the things they are too lazy to do for themselves. And plantation politicians love to have it so! The lazy may think they have won their "free existence," when they actually have only produced "forced labor." There is nothing "free" for being lazy!

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(#63) The Proverbs of Solomon

Why Put In "A Good Word?"

Proverbs 12:25: "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad."

The preventative of "depression" is to not be anxious, and to listen to "a good word." Jesus made this clear when He said, "do not worry" (be anxious) about life's necessities (**Matthew 6:24-33**), or about the future (**Matthew 6:34**). Losing a job, a game, a loved one, failing a test, or any other tribulation that comes our way can make us react with "anxiety," and is a challenge to our faith. The father of a demon-possessed boy heard Jesus say, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!'" (**Mark 9:23-24**). Faith overcomes anxiety.

Being "anxious" burdens down a heart ("heaviness," KJV), and is also described as "bitterness," "sorrow of the heart," "afflicted," "broken spirit," "heavy heart." These terms come from other proverbs:

Proverbs 14:10: "The heart knows its own bitterness, And a stranger does not share its joy." No one but God knows our heart's "bitterness" or "joy" like we do, especially not a "stranger." Family and friends may have a difficult enough time counseling us through our problems, so why should we expect "a stranger" to share our times of "joy" more than they? Internet "strangers" cannot understand us better than those living around us.

Proverbs 14:13: "Even in laughter the heart may sorrow, And the end of mirth *may be grief.*" **Proverbs 15:13:** "A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken." "Laughter" is no remedy for a broken spirit, even though it make the face smile. Comedy is momentary relief, but not the solution to "sorrow of the heart."

Proverbs 15:15: "All the days of the afflicted *are* evil, But he who is of a merry heart *has* a continual feast." The truly "merry heart" has "a continual feast," that is, it has a hopeful attitude, an open spirit, and a lighthearted look at life.

Proverbs 17:22: "A merry heart does good, *like* medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones." Without the healing of a "merry heart," a person becomes of frail inner health, and brittle support.

Proverbs 18:14: "The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, But who can bear a broken spirit?" Healing begins from within our own spirits, and without that, "who can bear" sickness?

Proverbs 25:20: "*Like* one who takes away a garment in cold weather, *And like* vinegar on soda, Is one who sings songs to a heavy heart." Taking away "a garment in cold weather" obviously makes one colder. "Vinegar on soda" creates an immediate reaction with no lasting effect. Singing songs to a "heavy heart" doesn't help relieve the heaviness (cold) and has too quick a reaction for lasting relief.

It is "a *good* word," however, that does more for "anxiety" than nearly anything else. Words of encouragement, expressing sympathy, expressions of concern, are all showing "a *good* word" of being loved. The purpose is not to temporarily entertain with songs or comedy, but to support and strengthen the inner spirit of the patient. The best "good word" is about our soul, thus: "Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you'" (**Matthew 9:2**). Physical sickness is sometimes tied in with spiritual sickness as seen in **James 5:14-15**: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." To all adrift on the sea of trouble, may we give them "a good word."

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## (#64) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Which Way Are We Leaning?

**Proverbs 12:26:** "The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray."

The contrast is drawn between the "righteous" (those who obey God's commandments, **Ecclesiastes 12:13**; **1 John 3:3, 7**) and the "wicked" (described in **Genesis 13:13**: "the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD"). The "righteous" should be cautious lest the "wicked" have greater influence on them than they do on the "wicked!" In **Malachi 3:18**, in the last book in the Old Testament, God keeps the line drawn between the two when He said: "Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him." Anyone who is "wicked," however, may choose to become "righteous" by converting and obeying God. "Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 18:2-3**). God's invitation to the "wicked" to change is always open, for "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (**2 Peter 3:9**; **Luke 24:45-47**).

Because the Hebrew allows a spread of translation, the King James Version is also given: **Proverbs 12:26:** "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them. {excellent: or, abundant}"

The way of righteousness is through Jesus Christ (**John 14:6**); for those who receive Him as He is and come to Him (**John 1:11-13**); who repent and are baptized in His name "for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:38**); and are "registered in heaven" as a part of the "church of the firstborn" (**Hebrews 12:22-23**); and "enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" on "the new and living way" He "consecrated for us" (**Hebrews 10:19-20**). Truly this is "more excellent" than "the way of the wicked," which "seduces" them but produces no righteousness! And the wicked have seen this very point! King Saul said to David, after trying to kill him, but David spared Saul: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil" (**1 Samuel 24:17**). King Joash "did evil" but the Prophet "Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, 'O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!' (**2 Kings 13:14**). In the New Testament, King Herod was pressured to kill John the Baptist, but could not bring himself to do it, "for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly" (**Mark 6:20**). Even in the King James Version, the "righteous" should not leave the way that even the "wicked" admit is "more excellent."

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(#65) The Proverbs of Solomon

The Bread That Tastes Like Rocks

Proverbs 13:5: "A righteous man hates lying, But a wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame."

A "righteous man" rejects the stench of wickedness. In the final judgment, "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (**Revelation 21:8**) because the LORD hates "a false witness who speaks lies" (**Proverbs 6:16-19**). "A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies will not escape" (**Proverbs 19:5**). The righteousness of God hates and totally rejects "lying," and thus "a righteous man" will also hate "lying." "You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked" (**Psalms 97:10**).

A "wicked man" is living in that which is "loathsome and comes to shame," in other words, wickedness is disgusting and has no positive conclusion, if followed. Other ways to say this are: "Stolen water is sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (**Proverbs 9:17**); "Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, But afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel" (**Proverbs 20:17**). The excitement of theft is in the "getting away" with no consequences, but the Scriptures plainly show that God will enforce those consequences in His own time! "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (**2 Corinthians 5:10**).

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## (#66) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Too Rich To Be Saved?

**Proverbs 13:8:** "The ransom of a man's life is his riches, But the poor does not hear rebuke."

Riches may have their advantages, but they also present many problems. A rich person becomes a target for the stealth of thieves, strength of thugs, and socialism of tyrants. The rich are singled out by suspicion as racists, covetous, cold-hearted, or idle. The rich must, therefore, use their riches for added security, insurance, fees, staff, taxes, and assorted extortioners, just to keep the "hounds at bay" as it were! Truly, the rich often must use their wealth as a "ransom" to buy back their freedom and independence. Elihu asked a penetrating question: "Will your riches, Or all the mighty forces, Keep you from distress?" (**Job 36:14**). **Riches cannot buy:**

- 1) a **soul's redemption** or **prevent death** (**Psalms 49:6-9**);
- 2) "**A good name** is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold" (**Proverbs 22:1**);

- 3) **Permanence.** "Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle *toward* heaven" (**Proverbs 23:5**);
- 4) "For riches *are* not forever, Nor does a crown *endure* to all generations" (**Proverbs 27:24**). David had said: "If riches increase, Do not set *your heart on them*" (**Psalms 62:10**). Truly Jesus warned that it was possible for riches to kill faith before it can begin, for one "who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful" (**Matthew 13:22**).

An advantage of being "poor" is not to have these cares or concerns. The "poor" may think only of the advantages of being rich, and thereby become covetous, which is a sin (**Colossians 3:5**). "A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, And does not consider that poverty will come upon him" (**Proverbs 28:22**). Without wealth, it seems that: "All the brothers of the poor hate him; How much more do his friends go far from him! He may pursue *them with* words, *yet* they abandon *him*" (**Proverbs 19:7**). But remember that: "The rich and the poor have this in common, The LORD *is* the maker of them all" (**Proverbs 22:2**). Jesus' statement proves true: "'Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!" (**Mark 10:24**). Hard, but not impossible. Riches are oftentimes a stumbling-block to both the rich and poor!

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(#67) The Proverbs of Solomon

Sickening Disappointment

Proverbs 13:12: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life."

Eager anticipation, expectation, is what "hope" is, and the disappointment of delay can be sickening, as the Old Testament records. Abram had waited for God to "make him a great nation" (**Genesis 12:1-3**), and the disappointment showed when "Abram said, 'Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'" (**Genesis 15:2**). Abram "believed God," Who reassured him (**Genesis 15:3-6**). That promised child came, and was given a name meaning "laughter," "Isaac" (**Genesis 21:3-6**), because it showed God was still going to keep His promise. The ultimate, single fulfillment of God's long-term promise to Abraham was in Jesus Christ (**Galatians 3:13-18**). When Joseph and Mary came to offer her sacrifice of purification for birthing a male child under Moses' Law (**Leviticus 12:1-8; Luke 2:21-24**), Simeon saw "the Consolation of Israel" come in the form of the infant Jesus (**Luke 2:25-35**), much later than expected. Children of God today are because of their spiritual connection to God's promise to Abraham, NOT physical lineage to Abraham.

"But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, nor *are* they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In

Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this *is* the word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.'" (**Romans 9:6-9**). Many Israelites had become "sick" over the centuries because they thought this answer to God's promise to Abram had been forgotten. This lesson should not be lost on Christians today. Peter said in **2 Peter 3:1-13**, that it is only "scoffers" who think "all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation," and choose to "willfully forget" the world-wide flood of destruction in Noah's day (**Genesis 6-9**). And because "the Lord is not slack concerning *His* promises, as some count slackness" "the day of the Lord will come."

But look at "the tree of life," that is, the refreshing of blessings, that comes when that "desire" is fulfilled. To Corinthian Christians whose response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (**Mark 16:15-16**) was because of "hearing, believed, and were baptized" (**Acts 18:8**), Paul wrote: "For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life" (**2 Corinthians 5:1-4**).

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## **(#68) The Proverbs of Solomon**

**Pick one: Despise or Fear God's Word.**

**Proverbs 13:13: "He who despises the word will be destroyed, But he who fears the commandment will be rewarded."**

"Despises" is a verb meaning "having no regard or respect for." Another proverb applies this principle to prayer: "One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer *is* an abomination" (**Proverbs 28:9**). Without exception, either eternal or physical destruction or both, comes to those who reject God's Word. Jesus also said: "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (**John 5:45-47**). Though Jesus did not come to be the Judge the first time, He will, at His Second Coming (**Hebrews 9:27-28**), for He said: ""And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (**John 12:47-48**). "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;

for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber" (**2 Peter 2:1-3**).

There will be no scoffers, agnostics, atheists, immoral, wicked, or perverse people who "will be rewarded," for they, all, refuse to "fear the commandment" of God. Solomon said this, and then the Apostle Peter also: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil (**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**); "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him'" (**Acts 10:34-35**). God's reward is for those who accept His Word and treat it accordingly: "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe" (**1 Thessalonians 2:13**).

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(#69) The Proverbs of Solomon

Don't Say We Weren't Warned!

Proverbs 13:14: "The law of the wise *is* a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death."

"A fountain of life" expresses a constant supply of that which is essential to life. Municipal water supplies seem to have replaced cisterns and wells, nevertheless the point is that we all die without some source of drinking water. Spiritually-speaking, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled" (**Matthew 5:6**). Since all of God's "commandments *are* righteousness" (**Psalms 119:172**), then everyone striving to be righteous will receive "the word with all readiness" and search "the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things" are so (**Acts 17:11**). David said with God "is the fountain of life," and it is through His Word that spiritual life springs eternal. This is what Jesus meant to the woman at the well: "'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw'" (**John 4:13-15**).

An exact parallel to this proverb is in **Proverbs 14:27:** "The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death." "The fear of the LORD" is the same as "the law of the wise." Reverence and awe for God and His Word go hand-in-hand. Many have gone astray who think they "fear God" but ignore or violate His commandments; likewise, others think they have reverence for God's Word but profane and desecrate His Person and Name. No one "fears God" without keeping His commandments. Many have thought they had faith in God while rejecting: baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:38**); the churches of

Christ which Jesus established and "purchased with His own blood" (**Matthew 16:18**; **Romans 16:16**; **Acts 20:28**); clear Scripture on marriage (**Mark 10:2-12**); and repentance from sins (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**).

The purpose for "the fear of the LORD" and "the law of the wise" is "to turn *one* away from the snares of death." Nowhere does God promise to save anyone in their sins who do not repent. The common slogans, "God loves me just the way I am;" "I know I'm saved regardless of what you say the Bible says;" "you have no right to 'judge me' or my way of life;" have never been taught by God in His Word! In **2 Peter 3:9**, we are told, God is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." There is "absolutely" no justification for those who "continue in sin" (**Romans 6:1**), but only for those who die to sin and, by baptism, bury their dead body in Jesus' grave (**Romans 6:2-7**). Having listed the overwhelming "desire to be rich," and "the love of money" being "a root of all *kinds* of evil," Paul commanded, "But you, O man of God, flee these things" (**1 Timothy 6:9-11**). "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will" (**2 Timothy 2:24-26**).

If we are not saved, it is not because God hasn't given proper instruction or warning!

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## **(#70) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Why Do Sinners Live The Hard Life?**

**Proverbs 13:15:** "Good understanding gains favor, But the way of the unfaithful is hard."

There is nothing in the teaching of Jesus Christ that cannot appeal to the better nature in every person. "Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things *is* acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another" (**Romans 14:16-19**). By precisely following Jesus Christ, the Christian life would be peaceful to all. "For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (**1 Peter 2:15-17**).

"**The way of the unfaithful is hard**" is proven every day in every way. It is much more difficult to live in sin than to follow the way of righteousness. The life controlled by alcohol, or other drugs, is littered with domestic abuse, violent arguments, tragic accidents, and lost wages; STDs, HIV, and their accompanying afflictions are not usually associated with the purity of one male and one female devotion in marriage

(**Matthew 19:4-9**); finding purpose in life, holding to high principles, and facing threats and troubles from enemies in life is impossible without Christ (**1 Peter 2:13-17**); aging while looking back over a life of ruin is agonizing, and Solomon later said: "Though a sinner does evil a hundred *times*, and his *days* are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong *his days*, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God" (**Ecclesiastes 8:12-13**). If a sinner can see what a Christian does not have to endure, obeying Jesus Christ is clearly the better way. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled" (**2 Corinthians 10:4-6**). Other proverbs also teach this hardship of sinners: "Evil pursues sinners, But to the righteous, good shall be repaid" (**Proverbs 13:21**); "In the house of the righteous *there is* much treasure, But in the revenue of the wicked is trouble" (**Proverbs 15:6**); "Whoever walks blamelessly will be saved, But *he who is* perverse *in his ways* will suddenly fall" (**Proverbs 28:18**); "By transgression an evil man is snared, But the righteous sings and rejoices" (**Proverbs 29:6**). Given the difficulties in life, many sinners resort to even more sin! That's like finding ourselves in a hole, and we start digging! The solution is not to do more sin, but to be relieved from that burden. Jesus said "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. "For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light" (**Matthew 11:28-30**). "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38).

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**(#71) The Proverbs of Solomon**

**Only Use A Correct Courier**

**Proverbs 13:17: "A wicked messenger falls into trouble, But a faithful ambassador brings health."**

The credibility of a messenger is what this proverb is about. Messengers are the means of communication, but if they change the message, they become the communication, itself. Messengers may bring news of what they have seen (**Job 1:13-20**), or what they have been told to say (**Judges 7:23-25**). Gehazi was a wicked messenger. After Naaman obeyed the Prophet Elisha and was healed of his leprosy, Elisha refused to be paid (**2 Kings 5:1-19**). Elisha's servant, Gehazi, ran after Naaman and reported that Elisha changed his mind and would accept a gift. Gehazi was cursed with Naaman's leprosy beginning then (**2 Kings 5:20-27**). A wicked messenger will no longer be trusted, and should lose the job. When so-called "news" sources (networks, reporters, newspapers, magazines, web pages, wire services) are guilty of misrepresenting and perverting what they report, they should never be relied upon again!

God's Prophet, Haggai, was also God's Messenger who was inspired to speak (**Haggai 1:12-13**), but the Levitical priests under Moses' Law were messengers who had to accurately teach what was written by inspiration (**Malachi 2:7**). It is imperative that today, preachers and teachers of the Scriptures must not alter, add, remove, replace, or amend the inspired Word of God, or its intended message! Paul represented Jesus' true Apostles when he said: "But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (**2 Corinthians 4:2**).

The rest of this proverb is also taught later in the Book: "Like the cold of snow in time of harvest *Is a faithful messenger to those who send him, For he refreshes the soul of his masters*" (**Proverbs 25:13**). Though an actual snowfall would not be expected during a "harvest," yet a cold wind would certainly feel good and refreshing to those who would be harvesting in a dry climate! Just that refreshing is a faithful messenger who brings good news. Christians should freely share the good about their brethren in Christ. "For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers*" (**3 John 3-5**). Christians who refuse to bring a good report of their brethren should no longer be trusted when discussing the church. "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things" (**Philippians 4:8**).

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(#72) The Proverbs of Solomon

What's Your "Sweet" Spot?

Proverbs 13:19: "A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul, But *it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.*"

Waiting and anticipation heighten the satisfaction of any desire (**Proverbs 13:12**), and when hard work and persistence are finally rewarded, the human soul responds with that "sweet" feeling. Interesting, isn't it, how "sweet" is still the term for something pleasing? Whether it's personal victory over affliction or illness, national victory over oppressive enemies, spiritual victory over the Devil, that "sweetness" is better than any other moment. Moments connected with God's blessings like these are highlights in a person's life: marriage as God would have it (**Ephesians 5:33**), intimate love (**1 Corinthians 7:2-5**), a baby's birth (**John 16:21**), being born again in baptism (**1 Peter 3:21-22**), restoring a fallen brother to Christ (**James 5:19-20**). "By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward" (**Hebrews 11:24-26**).

No one in sin, or using sins as an *artificial sweetener*, can ever experience such sweetness of soul, hence, they consider it "abomination" "to depart from evil." They are driven further into sin by their bitterness and hatred of "the life of God." "This I

say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (**Ephesians 4:17-19**). Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (**Luke 9:23**). A sinner must "deny" that the way of righteousness is an "abomination," and ask "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (**Acts 9:6**), and hear Jesus' answer: ""He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**).

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### **(#73) The Proverbs of Solomon**

#### **It Doesn't Take A Village To Raise A Child Who Has Both Parents!**

**Proverbs 13:24:** "He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly."

The old "spare the rod, spoil the child" is truthful but not a quotation of Scripture. No amount of beatings can ever replace the effect of parental love, understanding, patience, and instruction. Children are to "obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (**Ephesians 6:1**), but fathers are specifically commanded "do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (**Ephesians 6:4**). Fathers must "bring them up," not beat them down! Discipline includes instruction and enforcement of what is "right," not dictatorial and tyrannical outbursts arbitrarily enforced with a "rod!" THIS PROVERB GIVES ABSOLUTELY NO PERMISSION TO ABUSE CHILDREN! Listen to the other proverbs on the subject: "Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction" (**Proverbs 19:18**); "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him" (**Proverbs 22:15**); "Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die" (**Proverbs 23:13**); "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (**Proverbs 29:15**); "Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul" (**Proverbs 29:17**).

"The rod" is the last line of discipline to be applied (not the first or only line), but children must be reminded that there is a limit placed on their actions, beyond which they must not go in respect for parental authority. There is a time limit on good parental guidance, and that is "while there is hope," or while the child is formative. It is "the rod and rebuke" that "give wisdom," not just "the rod" without explanation and corrective instruction, but not "rebuke" without "the rod." All the "rod of correction" is designed to do is sober up the child's attitude and focus on the seriousness of the parent's instruction, basically, "wipe that smile off your face!" Unfortunately, in this society filled with divorce and remarriage, custody battles, sexual relations without marriage commitment, a child is "left to himself." The mother or father who thinks the child can handle things all alone is self-deceived and has abdicated the greatest

authority on earth: nurturing a soul. They will give account on the Day of Judgment. Every child raised without proper discipline is a child raised without proper love, for discipline indicates loving care. The "father," specifically, should be the obedience school for a child.

*Every male who sires a child without a marriage commitment to its mother is:*

- (1) profaning god's sacredness of life;*
- (2) disrespecting the mother of a life;*
- (3) ignoring the God-given responsibility to properly instruct and guide the child's life;*
- (4) creating an illegitimate child without love (Hebrews 12:5-11); and*
- (5) will be held accountable on the day of judgment for each and every soul he has neglected!*

It still requires a married couple (male and female) to properly raise every child.

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(#74) The Proverbs of Solomon

Home-wreckers Need Not Apply!

Proverbs 14:1: "The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands."

"Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established" (**Proverbs 24:3**). It takes a wise woman to build her house (not talking about the building, but the life in it). Truly, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD" (**Proverbs 18:22**). Finding a good wife means knowing her family, and this cannot be done over the Internet! Jesus gave insight into home-life when He said a "house divided against itself will not stand" (**Matthew 12:25**).

The "foolish" woman destroys her own house by being:

1. *Foolish*, that is, ignoring or challenging God's rules for living right. Every good marriage involves 3: the husband, the wife, and God (**Colossians 3:16-21**)!
2. *Contentious* ("dissing," chiding, scolding, fussy, fretful), a tyrant by tantrums. "Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman" (**Proverbs 21:9**); "Better to dwell in the wilderness, Than with a contentious and angry woman" (**Proverbs 21:19**); "*It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman*" (**Proverbs 25:24**); "A continual dripping on a very rainy day And a contentious woman are alike; Whoever restrains her restrains the wind, And grasps oil with his right hand" (**Proverbs 27:15-16**). There is no relief from a leaky roof "on a very rainy day," and so a contentious woman can literally drive her family up the wall to the attic, or out the door into "the wilderness." She is as impossible to deal with as "the wind," or the fragrant odor of "oil" (perfume) once it's in the hand. She has turned against her mate who should be her support, and her

children who would unconditionally love her. The home should be a refuge, not a hunting ground!

3. *Selfishly Independent*, that is, she must be willing to uphold her place in the home. Too many, it seems, are like young widows, not ready to settle down into being a wife and mother. "But refuse *the* younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. And besides they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not" (**1 Timothy 5:11-13**). Some mothers dress and act like they are still in the "singles scene," looking for a mate, not like they have taken themselves "off the market" because of responsibilities at home (**1 Timothy 5:14**).

Some women disrespect God's Word by not marrying, not being a good wife, not being a proper mother, or by making her own home-life miserable!

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## **(#75) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Straighten Up And Fly Right!**

**Proverbs 14:2: "He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD, But he who is perverse in his ways despises Him."**

To "walk in uprightness" shows a person who is not just acting right, talking right, promising to be right, but someone who actually makes his conviction his lifestyle. "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered" (**Proverbs 28:26**). "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous" (**1 John 3:7**). One who truly "fears the LORD" will have an on-going practice of respectful obedience. Other proverbs that discuss this same theme include: "The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom, And before honor *is* humility" (**Proverbs 15:33**); "In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the LORD *one* departs from evil" (**Proverbs 16:6**); "The fear of the LORD *leads* to life, And *he who has it* will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil" (**Proverbs 19:23**); "By humility *and* the fear of the LORD *Are* riches and honor and life" (**Proverbs 22:4**). "The fear of the LORD" doesn't mean being scared of God, but rather to deeply respect and bow in awe before the LORD because of what He has done, does, and will do on our Earth. That "fear" causes one to walk uprightly, learn the "instruction of wisdom," depart from evil, and be blessed with "riches and honor and life." Both the "righteous" and "perverse" will be held accountable for their "walk," and Solomon will later say: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil" (**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**).

Conversely, one who is "perverse in his ways despises" (lightly regards, turns up the nose, profanes) God. Other proverbs show being "perverse" is the way of feeling



"guilty," and is more difficult because of "thorns *and* snares:" "The way of a guilty man *is* perverse; But *as for* the pure, his work *is* right" (**Proverbs 21:8**); "Thorns *and* snares *are* in the way of the perverse; He who guards his soul will be far from them" (**Proverbs 22:5**). The New Testament upholds the danger of remaining "perverse," that is, contrary to God's Will, for Paul said: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (**Galatians 6:7-9**). The choice for everyone is to "fear God," or fool our own self, but God will reward us accordingly.

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(#76) The Proverbs of Solomon

You Said Wh-a-a-t?

Proverbs 14:3: "In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride, But the lips of the wise will preserve them."

A fool's mouth speaks with the empty authority of "pride," but Wisdom had already declared fool's rejection with: "Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate" (**Proverbs 8:13**); so it should surprise no one that when pride speaks, God replies! "And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go'" (**Exodus 5:2**), to which God responded: "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, *and* all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained" (**Exodus 14:27-28**). It may have been because of Pharaoh's example that David depicted what a fool would say: "May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, *And* the tongue that speaks proud things, Who have said, 'With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips *are* our own; Who *is* lord over us?'" (**Psalms 12:3-4**). Other proverbs deal with a fool's mouth: "A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart" (**Proverbs 18:2**); "A fool's mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul" (**Proverbs 18:7**); "Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, For he will despise the wisdom of your words" (**Proverbs 23:9**). The reason a fool's mouth "is a rod of pride" is because he/she has no understanding in the heart (and out of it the mouth speaks, **Matthew 12:34**), despises words of wisdom, and it becomes his/her own destruction with no one else to blame! God offers His Wisdom to make life better now, and best in the time to come, but all who reject this better way are fools! All who think they are smarter than God are fools, and should be avoided like a skunk on the highway!

The "wise" are preserved by their speech, for they are showing by their language that they have accepted God's Wisdom into their hearts. This is repeated in **Proverbs 15:7**: "The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, But the heart of the fool

does not do so." The lips of the wise are also good for others to hear: "Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your heart to my knowledge; For *it is* a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; Let them all be fixed upon your lips, So that your trust may be in the LORD; I have instructed you today, even you" (**Proverbs 22:17-19**).

To whom are we listening?

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## **(#77) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Clean Trough, No Food!**

**Proverbs 14:4: "Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox."**

Oxen represent the best farming beast before mechanization, for they were strong, dependable, ate less than a horse but gave fertilizing manure, and were even useful for food (try eating a tractor!). Oxen are a great investment in many societies today. The strength of every society is its farmers and farmland. God-given wisdom helped Solomon to say: "Moreover the profit of the land is for all; even the king is served from the field" (**Ecclesiastes 5:9**). It used to be said that "an army moves on its stomach," but all empires and countries do, also! Agriculture should be foremost in consideration in any economy. City-folk may ridicule country bumpkins, but country people will survive economic down-turns much better! All the "giant" grocery stores have nothing if it doesn't come from the ground! Pre-cooked everything is nothing without farming! While greedy politicians are taxing businesses into the ground, workers of the ground feed the factory workers and supply the stores! Whatever must be done to depend upon local farming and eliminate imports, should be done!

**"Where no oxen are, the trough is clean"** shows a logical conclusion. Without oxen, there is no hay to feed them, without hay, there is no manure with which to fertilize, hence without oxen there is no food produced! Oxen have always been efficient farm equipment. To show them from where their blessings had come, and their need to repent, God cursed the northern kingdom of Israel with "'cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me,' Says the LORD" (**Amos 4:6**). You don't have to brush your teeth if there are no food particles on them! Without a family, a man can't complain about supporting them! Without children, a woman can't complain about cooking their meals and cleaning their clothes! The cleanest houses are without family life in them! "The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (**Genesis 2:8-9**). But even in the Garden of Eden where God had provided everything "good" (**Genesis 1:31**), "the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep

it" (**Genesis 2:15**). God-given agriculture is the "oldest profession" on Earth, not sin-driven prostitution, as the ungodly so frequently repeat!

Since God made the land, the seeds, and the farmers, let us thank God for providing natural food that keeps us alive!

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(#78) The Proverbs of Solomon

No "False Witness Protection Program"

Proverbs 14:5: "A faithful witness does not lie, But a false witness will utter lies."

A "witness" precisely tells what has been seen, heard, or experienced, so "a faithful witness" will be true to what is absolutely known and "does not lie." Jesus Christ was a "faithful witness" (**Revelation 1:5**). Whether facing persecution or death, Christians must be as the Apostles: "And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard'" (**Acts 4:18-20**); "Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!' But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men'" (**Acts 5:26-29**); "And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe" (**John 19:35**). No cross, terrorist bomb, or Islamic sword should make a Christian become one of "those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul" (**Hebrews 10:39**).

But a "false witness" who wrongly interprets, changes, or alters the actual facts, due not simply to a faulty memory, but through a deliberate effort to mislead, gives a "lie." "False witness" may be given because of prejudice, bribery, or fear, none of which justifies it. This is one of the 7 things God hates (**Proverbs 6:16-19**), and other proverbs seal their doom: "A true witness delivers souls, But a deceitful witness speaks lies" (**Proverbs 14:25**); "A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies will not escape" (**Proverbs 19:5**); "A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies shall perish" (**Proverbs 19:9**); "A disreputable witness scorns justice, And the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity" (**Proverbs 19:28**); "A false witness shall perish, But the man who hears him will speak endlessly" (**Proverbs 21:28**); "Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, For would you deceive with your lips?" (**Proverbs 24:28**); "A man who bears false witness against his neighbor Is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow" (**Proverbs 25:18**).

The "false witness:" is "deceitful," "will not go unpunished," "shall perish," "scorns justice," hurts "his neighbor" as though he was attacked with weapons! Also notice that "the man who hears him will speak endlessly," meaning the false testimony will continue to be spread to no end! Political correctness, business advertising, Internet (e-mails, tweets, Facebook, *et al.*), legal advice, political campaign, religious persecution, peer pressure, propaganda press, headline writers and magazine covers, educational textbooks, are some of the many "hotbeds" for false witness.

Christians must repent from doing such: "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds" (**Colossians 3:9**). Not bearing "false witness" is one of the commands included in "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (**Romans 13:9**). Jesus was silent in the faces of "false witnesses" (**Matthew 26:59-63**), and Stephen died because of them (**Acts 6:9-14**). Don't believe what enemies of the churches of Christ have to say, but make sure you have "searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so" (**Acts 17:11**).

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## **(#79) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **God's Word To The "Me" Generation**

**Proverbs 14:6: "A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not *find it*, But knowledge *is* easy to him who understands."**

The term "scoffer" describes an attitude toward truth: derision, scorn. Job expressed to his friends, "No doubt you *are* the people, And wisdom will die with you!" (**Job 12:2**) Everyone who thinks their opinion is superior to all sources of truth, will fail, now and forever: "Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility" (**Proverbs 18:12**); "A haughty look, a proud heart, And the plowing of the wicked are sin" (**Proverbs 21:4**). Against the haughtiness of Babylon, God decreed, "I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible" (**Isaiah 13:11**). An over-inflated ego: in a child, rejects parental correction ("disobedient to parents," "headstrong," "haughty," **2 Timothy 3:1-5**); in a "scientist," ignores evidence for Noah's Flood (**2 Peter 3:3-7**); in wealthy people, refuse to trust in God (**1 Timothy 6:17**); in researchers, reject evidence for God's existence (**Romans 1:18-21**); and in religious leaders, refuse to listen to Jesus Christ (**Luke 16:14**). "Scoffers" do not ask questions to learn truth, but to test the Teacher (**Matthew 16:1; 19:3; 22:35**)!

Other proverbs show how dangerous this attitude really is: "He who begets a scoffer *does so* to his sorrow, And the father of a fool has no joy" (**Proverbs 17:21**); "Strike a scoffer, and the simple will become wary; Rebuke one who has understanding, *and* he will discern knowledge" (**Proverbs 19:25**); "When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise; But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge" (**Proverbs 21:11**); "A proud *and* haughty *man* -'Scoffer' is his name; He acts with arrogant pride" (**Proverbs 21:24**); "Cast out the scoffer, and contention will

leave; Yes, strife and reproach will cease" (**Proverbs 22:10**); "The devising of foolishness *is* sin, And the scoffer *is* an abomination to men" (**Proverbs 24:9**). According to these: no father should be happy a child is a scoffer; hitting a scoffer only has a sobering, "wise up" effect on other sinners; scoffers only listen to that which inflates their pride, haughtiness, and arrogance; scoffers are the cause of contention, strife, and reproach; and scoffers are to be despised of men.

"Knowledge *is* easy" for anyone willing to learn. Jesus said: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (**Matthew 7:7-8**). Evidence for God is easily seen everywhere in His Creation, and the Identity of God is evident throughout His Scriptures. "For the LORD *is* great and greatly to be praised; He *is* to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples *are* idols, But the LORD made the heavens. Honor and majesty *are* before Him; Strength and beauty *are* in His sanctuary" (**Psalms 96:4-6**). Don't listen to "scoffers," who willfully reject all avenues of truth, but rather listen to God whose Truth is easily found. Even idolaters may "seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (**Acts 17:27**).

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(#80) The Proverbs of Solomon

Who's Fooling Whom?

Proverbs 14:8: "The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way, But the folly of fools *is* deceit."

A "prudent" person uses good, sound judgment, certainly based upon God's Wisdom. "Wisdom" and "understanding" go hand in hand: the Prophet Daniel and his 3 friends stood out because their wisdom and understanding was "ten times better" than all the other sages (**Daniel 1:19-20**); and the question for Christians is, "Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom" (**James 3:13**). Being wise and using good judgment ("prudent") shows, with proper actions, "understanding." Other proverbs that express these thoughts include: "The simple inherit folly, But the prudent are crowned with knowledge" (**Proverbs 14:18**); "Wisdom rests in the heart of him who has understanding, But *what is* in the heart of fools is made known" (**Proverbs 14:33**); "The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, But the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness" (**Proverbs 15:14**); "The wise in heart will be called prudent, And sweetness of the lips increases learning" (**Proverbs 16:21**); "The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge" (**Proverbs 18:15**). Notice there is a definite distinction drawn between the actions of the "wise," and the actions of the "fool!"

"The folly of fools is deceit" means fools are deceived if they think their folly is acceptable. John, to Christians, says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (**1 John 1:8**). No one is more deceived than he who is self-deceived, so even the Apostle Paul said, "I know nothing against myself,

yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord" (1 Corinthians 4:4). "The crown of the wise is their riches, But the foolishness of fools is folly" (Proverbs 14:24). How much more ridiculous, empty, or vain could fools be described? Of the 7 times Solomon refers to "folly" in the Book of Ecclesiastes, he shows how obvious the choice is that is placed before us: "Then I saw that wisdom excels folly As light excels darkness" (Ecclesiastes 2:13).

Wisdom is far better than folly. Don't any longer be among the fools following folly!

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## (#81) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Don't Drown In A Rainstorm!

**Proverbs 14:9:** "Fools mock at sin, But among the upright *there is favor.*"

To "mock" is to scoff at like a child, childish ridicule, or taunt someone else. Jesus showed a lack of planning ahead opens one to mocking (Luke 14:25-33), but this was falsely heaped upon Jesus, Himself, by the soldiers who crucified Him (Matthew 20:17-19), for Jesus had, indeed, planned ahead for His cross (Mark 8:31-33). Zophar, misrepresenting Job, asked, "when you mock, should no one rebuke you?" (Job 11:3) Job, defending God, retorted, "can you mock Him as one mocks a man?" (Job 13:9) Mocking men is childish, but mocking God is insane! The Apostle Paul used the word "mock," (turn up the nose) to press the issue: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7). An up-turned nose can only drown someone in a rainstorm! God cannot be "mocked" without punishment, and all who "mock at sin" will reap their due reward! God considered sin so serious, that:

- (1) men have no remedy by themselves (Colossians 1:12-23);
- (2) He gave His only begotten Son to atone for our sins (Hebrews 9:24-28);
- (3) it is only through immersion a sinner receives the saving benefits of Jesus' cross (Colossians 2:9-15).

All who "mock" at this plan must face God on that day (Mark 16:15-16). All the comedians, sitcoms, entertainers, and propaganda press who childishly turn up their noses at the seriousness of sin and its consequences, will reap their reward from God, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences" (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

Only "among the upright" (obedient to God's Will) is the "favor" of God found. "And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him "and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house (Acts 7:9-10; referring to Genesis 39-41). King David "found favor before God and

asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob" (**Acts 7:46**). Another proverb says, "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished" (**Proverbs 22:3**). A word to the wise is sufficient.

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(#82) The Proverbs of Solomon

What Were You Thinking?

Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death."

This is also repeated: "There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death" (**Proverbs 16:25**).

If ever there was a wise statement that warns everyone against following only their own instincts, judgment, conscience, or knowledge, this is it! No one is capable of deciding his/her own way, for if God is not allowed to influence every decision a person makes, the Devil will! "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?" (**Romans 6:16**). Our desire either "exalts itself against the knowledge of God, [*or we are*] bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (**2 Corinthians 10:5**).

There is no such thing as absolute "freedom" from all law or restraint, and those who "promise liberty" are often "themselves are slaves of corruption: for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage" (**2 Peter 2:19**). What "seems right" is not the only criteria for prudent judgment, for "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD." For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends" (**2 Corinthians 10:17-18**). The TV show, "Breaking Bad" surely illustrated this proverb, as has the history of mankind! To those "who trust in their wealth And boast in the multitude of their riches" [*whose*] "inner thought *is that* their houses *will last* forever, Their dwelling places to all generations" (**Psalms 49:6,11**), which is faulty thinking (**1 Timothy 6:9**). "Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately" (**Luke 19:11**), so Jesus corrected their wrong idea. When Simon converted to Christ, he "thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money" but he was commanded to "repent...and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven" (**Acts 8:20-22**). Jesus corrected the thinking of the Laodiceans when He said: "'Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (**Revelation 3:17**).

NO ONE can testify they have been saved by God unless they have "conformed to the image of His Son" (**Romans 8:29**), and know this because The "Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (**Romans 8:16**). The Holy Spirit would only "acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord" (**1 Corinthians 14:37**), in other words the Holy Spirit only "bears

witness" through His inspired Scriptures (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**)! Those who have not followed Scriptures do not have "witness" from God they are right!

There is no question as to where living one's own selfish life will lead. "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (**Matthew 7:13-14**). "Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later" (**1 Timothy 5:24**). "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" (**1 Corinthians 6:9**). "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**).

It's not what "seems right" but what is actually is right that should matter!

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### **(#83) The Proverbs of Solomon**

#### **Simply Lost**

**Proverbs 14:15-16:** "The simple believes every word, But the prudent considers well his steps. 16 A wise *man* fears and departs from evil, But a fool rages and is self-confident."

"The simple" is a term, in the Book of Proverbs, which describes someone who is not using their mind for good judgment. "Simple" is not a compliment, for it is a disgrace for a human being not to use reasoning before acting. When sinful actions are the result of hormones, others, anger or malice, opportunity, lusts, pride, envy, rebelliousness, or willful ignorance, then prudence has not been used. "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (**James 1:19-20**).

One of the purposes of a proverb, Solomon said, is to "give prudence to the simple" (**Proverbs 1:4**). When one honestly, sincerely, and lovingly "thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth" (**1 Corinthians 13:5-6**), that indicates a purity of heart desiring to believe the best in others. But when one is "simple," in the New Testament, it means to think innocently without always dwelling on wrongs, sins, or evil. One may therefore be easily deceived by slick speeches, designed to mislead. "For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen" (**Romans 16:18-20**). Being "wise in what is good" means using God's Word as a filter for discrimination or prudence. Being "simple concerning evil" means making judgments unmixed by seeing any possibilities of evil.



Every time sin is identified, "a fool rages" as if he is right and unjustly condemned! The indignant sinner makes mockery of God's Word. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (**1 Corinthians 6:9-10**). NONE of such sinners has any moral right to such behavior, and NO right to condemn God, Scripture, or Christians because their behavior is damned! The church of Christ in Corinth was made up of people who, having heard, "believed and were baptized" (**Acts 18:8**), but had left behind their immorality and ungodliness (**1 Corinthians 6:11**). NO indignant or raging sinner will be saved. Scribes and Pharisees watched Jesus for something with which to condemn Him, but, with a miracle, He healed a man, and challenged their false doctrine. "But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus" (**Luke 6:6-11**). It is sad when any sinner reacts with defensive rage but misses Jesus Christ.

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(#84) The Proverbs of Solomon

The Wicked Should Take A Bow!

Proverbs 14:19: "The evil will bow before the good, And the wicked at the gates of the righteous."

"Why does the way of the wicked prosper? *Why* are those happy who deal so treacherously?" (**Jeremiah 12:1**). These are not the questions discussed here. Rather, this proverb brings to our attention the fact that not all goes well with the "evil," and that we ought see, many other times, it is the other way around! Though Joseph's brothers had "meant evil against" him by selling him into slavery, but when famine forced them to go into Egypt, "Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with *their* faces to the earth" (**Genesis 42:6**).

Another such occasion was when wicked Haman sought to kill Mordecai, but his evil scheme was revealed by Queen Esther, and then King Ahasuerus ordered Haman, who was pleading for his own life, to be hanged on the 75-foot "gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai" (**Esther 7:1-10**). In Philippi, a slave girl was freed from her masters who profited by her "divination," Paul and Silas were mistreated as "the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods...they threw *them* into prison" (**Acts 16:22-23**). Later, however, those same magistrates "came and pleaded with them and brought *them* out, and asked *them* to depart from the city" (**Acts 16:39**)! The church of Christ in Philadelphia was promised by Jesus Christ: "Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you" (**Revelation 3:9**).

Other proverbs which teach this include: "The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, And the unfaithful for the upright" (**Proverbs 21:18**); "The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, But He overthrows the words of the faithless" (**Proverbs 22:12**). This humbling of the wicked is because of their own sins, but will not always be brought about in this life. Though "life isn't fair," God is just, and will see to it that evil fails and right prevails!

The ultimate bowing of the evil wicked will be on the final Judgment Day, for God decreed through Isaiah: "Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I *am* God, and *there is* no other. I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath" (**Isaiah 45:22-23**). The Apostle Paul used this very language to show what the future Judgment will be: "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: 'As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God'" (**Romans 14:10-11**). Jesus was seeking to prepare "every creature" when He said: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:15-16**). Bow before the good before it is too late!

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## **(#85) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **With Friends Like These...**

**Proverbs 14:20-21:** "The poor *man* is hated even by his own neighbor, But the rich *has* many friends. 21 He who despises his neighbor sins; But he who has mercy on the poor, happy *is* he."

**Verse 20:** The "poor" have less to offer than the "rich," and neighbors "hate" (detest, are impatient with) them! The "rich" may have "many friends" who have been attracted by the wealth, like flies to garbage. How sad for both! Such "fair-weather friends" should never be considered when evaluating a person's worth! Human value should not be based on either what a person has or doesn't have ("rich" or "poor").

**Verse 21:** Those who "despise" (think lightly of, disregard) a "neighbor" (nearest, closest), especially a "poor" one, will not show "mercy," and this lack of mercy will come back to them: "Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be heard" (**Proverbs 21:13**). Jesus thought of the poor when He said, "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil" (**Luke 6:35**); "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just" (**Luke 14:12-14**). God invests good in the "unthankful and evil," and so should His children (Christians), but it is up to the

“unthankful and evil” to pay it forward! Dinners or suppers, usually require a social obligation in return, but Jesus insists that the poor and downtrodden should be served “because they cannot repay you.” Good, done for good’s sake, does not have a price tag! And Jesus’ prophecy of the Day of Judgment will be a reckoning of deeds done, “for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me” (**Matthew 25:35-36**). No good deed will go unrewarded because only “do-gooders” will be saved!

Other proverbs which speak on this subject include: “The poor man uses entreaties, But the rich answers roughly” (**Proverbs 18:23**); “Wealth makes many friends, But the poor is separated from his friend” (**Proverbs 19:4**); “All the brothers of the poor hate him; How much more do his friends go far from him! He may pursue them with words, yet they abandon him” (**Proverbs 19:7**); “The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The LORD gives light to the eyes of both” (**Proverbs 29:13**).

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(#86) The Proverbs of Solomon

No “Communism” Here!

Proverbs 14:23: “In all labor there is profit, But idle chatter leads only to poverty.”

Since God established the “work ethic,” where there is no “labor,” there is no “profit” (capital, benefit, earnings). In the Garden of Eden, God gave man a job, “to tend and keep it” (**Genesis 2:15**). After Adam sinned, God expelled him with a job: “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread” (**Genesis 3:19**).

God’s endorsement of this principle, through Solomon, was: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with your might” (**Ecclesiastes 9:10**); “The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep” (**Ecclesiastes 5:12**). A communistic welfare state, which takes from the workers and re-distributes to non-workers, promotes slothfulness: “The desire of the lazy man kills him, For his hands refuse to labor. He covets greedily all day long, But the righteous gives and does not spare” (**Proverbs 21:25-26**). This proverb is added to Christ’s Law: “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need” (**Ephesians 4:28**). Another proverb of Solomon is taught in the New Testament: “The person who labors, labors for himself, For his *hungry* mouth drives him on” (**Proverbs 16:26**); “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat” (**2 Thessalonians 3:10**). God’s damnation is upon all efforts to by-pass His “work ethic” principle: covetousness, stealing, extortion, excessive or punitive taxes, scams, schemes, gambling and lotteries (**1 Corinthians 6:9-10**).

Solomon also showed the "vanity" of giving workers' profits to non-workers: "Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity. Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also is vanity and a great evil" (**Ecclesiastes 2:18-21**). Whatever "profit" that comes from honest "labor" belongs to the "laborer," and no one else! Losing control of what one has worked for kills any incentive for working. Since God charged men with "work," Marxism/socialism is a direct attack on manhood, and an enslaving of womanhood who must do man's work!

"Idle chatter" (empty talk) profits nothing, and destroys people who believe it. All who talk about work instead of working are leading to "poverty" and NOT "profit!" Marxism, and all who follow it, is rebellion against God that impoverishes nations. It has never been a success, and never will! Jesus shows a spiritual application when He said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Then they said to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent'" (**John 6:26-29**). Neither physical nor spiritual "profits" are for those who "will not work!" America was rich as long as it was not a "welfare state" that "re-distributed" the wealth of its workers! All economies bankrupt when workers' profits are used by non-workers!

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(#87) The Proverbs of Solomon

Are You Sure?

Proverbs 14:26: "In the fear of the LORD *there is strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge.*"

"**Fear of the LORD**" is the attitude of giving reverence and respect to God in everything we do, because there is no "strong confidence" in being afraid. The "fear of the LORD" is the beginning of "knowledge" (**Proverbs 1:7**) and "wisdom" (**Proverbs 9:10**). Other proverbs teach us that obeying God with admiration should be more important than amassing "great treasure" because "there is a hereafter:" "Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, Than great treasure with trouble" (**Proverbs 15:16**); "Do not let your heart envy sinners, But be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; For surely there is a hereafter, And your hope will not be cut off" (**Proverbs 23:17-18**).

"**Strong confidence**" shows no fear, insecurity or doubt, and can get us to Heaven: "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have

confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (**1 John 2:28**). When the Apostle Paul wrote to Philemon, he had "confidence in your obedience" (**Philemon 21**). This can only be said of those who "hearing, believed, and were baptized" (**Acts 18:8**), for baptism "now saves us" (**1 Peter 3:21**). No one should be confident of their own salvation unless and until they have followed exactly what the Scriptures teach! The central message of the Old Testament revolves around this thought: "It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man" (**Psalms 118:8**). It follows that: "Confidence in an unfaithful *man* in time of trouble *Is like* a bad tooth and a foot out of joint" (**Proverbs 25:19**).

It is tragic when "strong confidence" is placed in humans, rather than in God! The people who run and hide from God have trusted in themselves without learning the "strong confidence" that comes to one who "walked with God," like Enoch (**Genesis 5:22-24**) or Noah (**Genesis 6:9**). It is only in the church of Christ, that "we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him" (**Ephesians 3:10-12**).

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## **(#88) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **A Kingdom Divided Against Itself (Matthew 12:25)**

**Proverbs 14:28:** "In a multitude of people is a king's honor, But in the lack of people is the downfall of a prince."

While the Israelites were united under Solomon's God-blessed rule in their Promised Land, the queen of Sheba said: "Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on His throne *to be* king for the LORD your God! Because your God has loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness" (**2 Chronicles 9:8**). After Solomon died, their kingdom divided when Rehoboam "did not listen to the people" (**1 Kings 12:15**), then "all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them" (**1 Kings 12:16**), and they killed his tax collector (**1 Kings 12:17-18**). When people see their leaders do not listen to them, they try a different government leader, as Israel did with Jeroboam (**1 Kings 12:25-33**), often with worse consequences! Government leaders should follow the Word of God (**Deuteronomy 17:18-20**), because "If a ruler pays attention to lies, All his servants *become* wicked" (**Proverbs 29:12**). All rulers who believe in their own sovereignty and power have succumbed to their self-deceit, because, as Paul said, "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (**Romans 13:1**). Without acknowledging God's authority the government is corrupt. "Like a roaring lion and a charging bear *Is* a wicked ruler over poor people. A ruler who lacks understanding *is* a great oppressor, *But* he who hates covetousness will prolong *his* days" (**Proverbs 28:15-16**). Certainly, one should not accept nor be taken in by the rich delicacies offered by the king (**Proverbs 23:1-3**).

A few ways leaders keep their people in line include: **(1)** murdering their opponents, **(2)** constant propaganda of lies, **(3)** forced labor or **(4)** limiting the population.

Examples of each include:

- (1) Tyrannies and dictatorships always fear the masses, and often seek to annihilate their opposition within their own land: Egyptian Pharaoh and Israelites (**Exodus 1:7-12**); Mohammedans/Moslems against Jews, Catholics, and Bible-believers; Roman Catholic Inquisition for hundreds of years; Joseph Stalin in Russia; Benito Mussolini in Italy; Adolph Hitler in Europe; Mao Tse-tung in China; Khmer Rouge in Cambodia; their names are legion, and their victims number in the hundreds of millions.
- (2) This was done by **(1)**; and today includes the constant mantras of "Global Warming," "Evolution," "World Economy," "Carbon Footprints," "Bigger Government Necessity," "Broken Medical System," "Radical Right-wingers," "Crazy Bible-believers," *ad nauseum*.
- (3) Egyptian Pharaoh (**Exodus 1:13-15**); those mentioned in **(1)**; economic slaves (**Proverbs 22:7**).
- (4) Egyptian Pharaoh (**Exodus 1:16-22** - the God-fearing midwives refused to murder innocent born babies!); the genocide of abortion (including partial abortion); government-backed "euthanasia;" government-controlled medical care; *et al*.

Countries ruled by a minority, who do not listen to their majority population, will suffer "downfall."

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(#89) The Proverbs of Solomon

God's Burden Against America

Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people."

"Righteousness" is the state or condition of being "right," as **defined by God:** "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous" (**1 John 3:7**); **by His commandments:** "My tongue shall speak of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness" (**Psalms 119:172**); **by His example:** "And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (**1 John 2:1**).

Governments exist to protect the "righteous" within their citizenry: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake" (**Romans 13:3-5**). Every law; court-ruling; verbally-abusive, bullying, headlined propaganda piece; Harlotwood perversely slanted movie or TV program will

be considered in God's Judgment of this, or any other, nation! Speaking to Christians about the Jewish persecution of them, Paul wrote: "For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure* of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost" (**1 Thessalonians 2:14-16**).

God would not destroy the homosexually-corrupted cities of Sodom & Gomorrah (**Genesis 18:20; 19:1-11**) if there were as few as 10 righteous among them (**Genesis 18:23-33**), but there weren't. God had a "burden" of judgment against nations, countries, and cities where sin had prevailed: Babylon (**Isaiah 13:1**) and Nineveh (**Nahum 1:1**); Moab (**Isaiah 15:1**); Damascus in Syria (**Isaiah 17:1**); Egypt (**Isaiah 19:1**); and Arabia (**Isaiah 21:13**). Assyria (not covenant-keepers of Moses' Law!) was told by the prophet: "The LORD has given a command concerning you: 'Your name shall be perpetuated no longer. Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the molded image. I will dig your grave, For you are vile'" (**Nahum 1:14**). Since then, none of these have ever arisen again to their former prominence and power! Since Jesus Christ, no country is God's chosen People except the spiritual kingdom known as the churches of Christ (**Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 16:16**).

All God requires of every nation is to uphold and encourage right-thinking and right-doing: "Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin" (**Ezekiel 18:29-30**). God is "fair," for He accepts anyone who obeys Him: "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him'" (**Acts 10:34-35**).

Jesus Christ pronounced the principle that saves: "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned'" (**Mark 16:15-16**). This Gospel obeyed, exalts any nation.

"The further a society drifts from truth the more it will hate those who speak it."
— George Orwell

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## (#90) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Who Is Responsible For Good Government?

**Proverbs 14:35:** "The king's favor *is* toward a wise servant, But his wrath *is against* him who causes shame."

Any government leader is wise to desire the wisdom of God, even if it is through "a wise servant." "A wise *man* will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles" (**Proverbs 1:5-6**). Daniel was a "wise" choice: "Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm" (**Daniel 6:3**). Even counsel for war should be based upon wisdom: "Plans are established by counsel; By wise counsel wage war (**Proverbs 20:18**); "For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors *there is* safety" (**Proverbs 24:6**). Jesus reflected this in His teaching: "Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple" (**Luke 14:31-33**).

A "king" shows what kind of heart he has by his speech(es). "He who loves purity of heart *And has* grace on his lips, The king *will be* his friend" (**Proverbs 22:11**). It is up to the government leader to determine his direction: "A king who sits on the throne of judgment Scatters all evil with his eyes" (**Proverbs 20:8**); "It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, For a throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips *are* the delight of kings, And they love him who speaks *what is* right" (**Proverbs 16:12-13**); "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings *is* to search out a matter" (**Proverbs 25:2**). A "king" who is not diligently filtering the purity of those around him cannot be helping his people.

Many, however, seem to surround themselves with fools and liars! "Take away the wicked from before the king, And his throne will be established in righteousness" (**Proverbs 25:5**); "If a ruler pays attention to lies, All his servants become wicked" (**Proverbs 29:12**). It is impossible for government to be staffed with "the wicked" and rule rightly! Government is no better, or worse, than those who run it! Haman incurred the wrath of his king because he had abused the king's influence: "And Esther said, 'The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman!' So Haman was terrified before the king and queen. Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine *and went* into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king" (**Esther 7:6-7**). If a government is unjust, ungodly, willfully ignorant of God's Wisdom, then the leader(s) should be replaced!

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(#91) The Proverbs of Solomon

God Knows More Than "TSA" and "NSA"

Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good."

This is not saying God's "eyes" are everywhere, but they see "in every place" all the behaviors of mankind, both "the evil and the good." One thread throughout the Scriptures is that **God is Omniscient**, that is, He sees everything at all times. When "Big Brother's" TSA in airports and NSA in communications invade personal space as they do, how can anyone question God's complete knowledge of all that happens on the Earth? To say "God wound up the universe and then sat back and watched *From a Distance* (as a song used to teach, and Deists believe)" is a complete denial of the Word of God, which is a record of God's dealings with mankind since the Creation!

In the Garden of Eden, after **Adam and Eve** sinned, they "hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden" (**Genesis 3:8**), but God called them out (**Genesis 3:9-13**). When **Abraham** proved his faith, but was stopped before he actually offered his son, Isaac, on the altar, and offered "a ram caught in a thicket" for a burnt offering "instead of his son," he "called the name of the place, The-LORD-will-provide" (**Genesis 22:1-14**). **Israelites** sinned while Moses was in Mount Sinai receiving God's Law, "And the LORD said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!'" (**Exodus 32:9**). **King Hezekiah** was "sick and near death" and God told His prophet, Isaiah, to say, "Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you" (**2 Kings 20:5**).

God can also see all that is done that is good. Upon completion of His Creation, "God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was very good*" (**Genesis 1:31**). Upon Jonah's preaching "Repent or Perish," the King of Nineveh led his people in repentance, and, "Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it" (**Jonah 3:10**).

Other proverbs teach this: "For the ways of man *are* before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths" (**Proverbs 5:21**); "Hell and Destruction *are* before the LORD; So how much more the hearts of the sons of men" (**Proverbs 15:11**); "The hearing ear and the seeing eye, The LORD has made them both" (**Proverbs 20:12**). Since God created "the seeing eye" of humans, doesn't it follow that God is a "seeing" God? "He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see?" (**Psalms 94:9**)

"Am I a God near at hand,' says the LORD, 'And not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him? says the LORD; 'Do I not fill heaven and earth?' says the LORD" (**Jeremiah 23:23-24**).

This major doctrine about God is summarized in the New Testament, for Jesus taught that our charitable deeds, prayers, and fasting, that are done in "secret" before God,

and not for show "before men," would be seen by our "Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (**Matthew 6:4,6,18**). "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give account*" (**Hebrews 4:13**).

Since nothing is hidden from God, why hide our evils behind husband, wife, children, house, job, friends, nighttime, dim lights, doors, walls, or any other supposed barrier? God know these, our consciences know these, and more often than not, some other people know them as well. Truly, "Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later. Likewise, the good works of *some* are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden" (**1 Timothy 5:24-25**). Let God cleanse your soul from hidden sins, and "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:38**).

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## **(#92) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **You Listen to--What???**

**Proverbs 15:4:** "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, But perverseness in it breaks the spirit."

Words are vehicles for ideas, and they reveal the inner heart. Words cannot conceal the real person. "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless" (**James 1:26**). Just as the prophet Elisha used some salt to purify the water source (**2 Kings 2:19-22**), so "grace" can sweeten the source of a Christian's words. "Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (**Colossians 4:6**).

We should choose to have as much "wholesome" language entering our ears and mind as we possibly can. "Apply your heart to instruction, And your ears to words of knowledge" (**Proverbs 23:12**). In New Testament terms, we must: "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (**2 Timothy 1:13**).

Other proverbs that emphasis this truth include: "A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, And a word *spoken* in due season, how good *it is!*" (**Proverbs 15:23**); "The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil" (**Proverbs 15:28**); "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds learning to his lips. Pleasant words *are like* a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones" (**Proverbs 16:23-24**); "He who gives a right answer kisses the lips" (**Proverbs 24:26**); "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver" (**Proverbs 25:11**).

**"Perverseness"** is every deviation or destruction of the absolutes of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (**Galatians 5:22-23**). If our minds are flooded with "perverseness," it is by choice, becomes self-defeating, but can be overcome. God said Israelites "have corrupted themselves" and had become "A perverse and crooked generation" (**Deuteronomy 32:5**) who were "Children in whom is no faith" (**Deuteronomy 32:20**). The Gospel of Jesus Christ commanded "all the house of Israel" to "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:36, 38**), so that they would "Be saved from this perverse generation" (**Acts 2:40**). In the generation awash with "media communication," deliver yourself from Generation P(erverse), and "fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks" (**Ephesians 5:3-4**), and "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (**Ephesians 5:15-17**).

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(#93) The Proverbs of Solomon

Wasted Worship

Proverbs 15:8-10: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves him who follows righteousness. Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, And he who hates correction will die"

"Wicked" denotes evil intent, corrupted purpose, someone who feeds on sins. This is NOT referring to anyone who gives in to temptation and sins, or a good person who gets led astray, or one who tries to do right and fails! That said, this proverb shows God will not accept "sacrifice" (worship) from a "wicked" person, but rejects it as "an abomination." "The way" is wicked, "the sacrifice" is wicked, and to "forsake" God's Way is wicked. Before Noah's flood, Enoch had properly evaluated the world: "Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him'" (**Jude 14-15**). Truly "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (**Genesis 6:5**). Their corruption was complete and they were irretrievable!

Another proverb teaches this: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; How much more *when* he brings it with wicked intent! (**Proverbs 21:27**). God has followed this principle throughout Scripture, regardless of whether it involved His chosen people (Israelites) or aliens (Gentiles): "If I regard iniquity in my heart, The

Lord will not hear" (**Psalm 66:18**); "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies-I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting'" (**Isaiah 1:11-13**); "Therefore hear, you nations, And know, O congregation, what *is* among them. Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people-The fruit of their thoughts, Because they have not heeded My words, Nor My law, but rejected it. For what purpose to Me Comes frankincense from Sheba, And sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, Nor your sacrifices sweet to Me" (**Jeremiah 6:18-20**); "I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings" (**Amos 5:21-22**). God counts as vain, wasted, and completely useless, all sacrifices, worship, offerings, and assemblies by those who refuse to follow His rules.

It is little wonder, then, that God "now commands all men everywhere to repent" (**Acts 17:30**), because "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble" (**James 4:6**). Now we should understand why Jesus Christ said, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men'" (**Mark 7:6-7**).

If you want God to hear your prayers, accept your praises of Him, and regard your gifts, you must listen to what Jesus Christ said: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:15-16**). "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (**James 4:8**).

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## **(#94) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **You Can't Judge A Book By Its Covers**

**Proverbs 15:14:** "The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, But the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness."

Fools feed on foolishness, which is why they are "fools!" These are the people who read: headlines touting ungodly ways without reading the articles showing their failures; magazine covers showing beautiful pictures of perverse and ungodly people without seeing how vain and spiritless their lives prove to be; TV programs whose interviews with celebrity baby-makers completely ignore their ungodly rejection of God's marriage and home pattern for protective developing of a human life; social media expressions of freedom from rules, restrictions, and regulations, which have been developed from Biblical principles! Other proverbs have this teaching incorporated in them:

- (1) "Wisdom is in the sight of him who has understanding, But the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth" (**Proverbs 17:24**). It is foolish for everything to be done for "the world economy," or "for all of humanity," or "for history's sake," and to neglect the near, immediate, and personal concerns! Having one's head in the clouds, eyes on the horizon, or feet on the go often prevents meeting the needs of those closest to us.
- (2) "Evil men do not understand justice, But those who seek the LORD understand all" (**Proverbs 28:5**). It takes a studied effort to learn the LORD's way, and "evil men" are on a different path to knowledge of the wrong things. "Those who seek the LORD" learn more of the LORD and of themselves as their experience grows, but those who are "evil" never learn "justice" (fair play, good moral rules, good godly sense).

If you'd rather feed on foolishness, you've chosen your companions. But if you wish to change your mind, seek the wisdom that is from above and revealed in Scripture: "Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your heart to my knowledge; For *it is* a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; Let them all be fixed upon your lips, So that your trust may be in the LORD; I have instructed you today, even you. Have I not written to you excellent things Of counsels and knowledge, That I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth, That you may answer words of truth To those who send to you?" (**Proverbs 22:17-21**)

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(#95) The Proverbs of Solomon

One Ingredient Makes All Food Better

Proverbs 15:17: "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, Than a fatted calf with hatred."

Huge houses, heavily-laden tables, fancy cars, loads of recreation, none of these can take the place of "love" within the family! "Love" makes a little a lot! People who are raised in a loving home frequently comment, "We didn't know we were poor." Riches and poverty are states of mind, more than something in the hand! There is much more to life than working to have things, so "Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease!" (**Proverbs 23:4**). Solomon later will write there is, "A time to love" (**Ecclesiastes 3:8**), and we must love in this life, for when we die, our earthly "love" perishes with us, so we must "Go, eat your bread with joy, And drink your wine with a merry heart; For God has already accepted your works. Let your garments always be white, And let your head lack no oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun" (**Ecclesiastes 9:7-9**). Without a loving home, life is empty, shallow, and vain! With a loving home, it matters little what possessions we may not have. After life's experiences had tumbled in, Solomon wrote: "Better a handful with quietness Than both hands full, together with toil and grasping for the wind" (**Ecclesiastes 4:6**).

No proverb says it better than **Proverbs 15:17**, but other proverbs emphasize this truth: "Better is a little with righteousness, Than vast revenues without justice" (**Proverbs 16:8**); "He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends" (**Proverbs 17:9**); "Open rebuke is better Than love carefully concealed" (**Proverbs 27:5**); "A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished" (**Proverbs 28:20**).

Jesus clearly taught this Wisdom when He said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (**Luke 12:15**); and the Holy Spirit echoed it through Paul, "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (**1 Timothy 6:6-8**).

Job #1 is to make our homes full of love, designed to build up each member with truth, honesty, and forgiveness. Paul's commands surely apply within the home: "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth" (**Colossians 3:8**); "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (**Colossians 4:6**). No one who loves their child will say the horrible things we hear said in public. Truly "above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins" (**1 Peter 4:8**). How are your meal-times?

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(#96) The Proverbs of Solomon

A Thorny Issue

Proverbs 15:19: "The way of the lazy *man* is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright *is* a highway."

If this refers to real thorns, "the lazy" will refuse to struggle through difficulties and work. If this refers to imaginary thorns, "the lazy" will imagine too much difficulty to overcome and refuse to work. Either way, "the lazy" is an expression denoting those who are wasting their lives. Jesus Christ described a man giving three servants "talents" "each according to his own ability," five, two and one. After the others produced profit equal to their talents, the one-talent man returned his one with the sorry excuse: "Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what* is yours" (**Matthew 25:24-25**).

Jesus was hard on such a lazy person when he was condemned as a "wicked and lazy servant" (**Matthew 25:26**). "Wicked" for blaming someone else for expecting him to produce, "lazy" for producing nothing with what he had! God will save no lazy person from himself/herself, or from eternal punishment for such laziness! Jesus' invitation is for "all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (**Matthew 11:28**). After Jesus miraculously fed 5000 men not counting

the women and children with 5 loaves of bread and 2 small fish (**John 6:1-14**), they followed Him for another "free meal" the next day. Jesus told them: "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" (**John 6:26-29**).

Those who call the church only when their laziness has dug them a hole, need repentance, not repeated assistance! Helping those who are searching for the Truth of God's Word is benevolence, helping those who don't care about Truth but only "freebies" is malevolence. Gospel Truth includes the Holy Spirit-inspired rule: "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (**2 Thessalonians 3:10**). The "lazy" have not the "will" to work, and therefore crowd government lines for: commodities, food stamps, reduced-price school lunches and Internet, free cell phones, health insurance, and whatever else the government is willing to re-distribute among them. They are stealing from any who have a deserving need for such temporary aid; are empowering laziness in government who no longer has to work at meeting their constitutional obligations because of built-in votes; and are clogging up the "highway" of "the upright" by forcing them to support wastrels whom not even God will have without changing! Another proverb God has given says: "Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; Open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with bread" (**Proverbs 20:13**).

Becoming a Christian requires willful obedience (**Acts 2:38, 40-41**), and the souls of new Christians were to be strengthened when exhorted "to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God'" (**Acts 14:22**). Those who are sleeping through their lives, expecting to return to God their one-talent lives, will hear their Judgment: "Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (**Matthew 25:28-30**).

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## **(#97) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Home-grown Heartbreak**

**Proverbs 15:20: "A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother."**

"A wise son" has learned God's Wisdom and nothing is more satisfying than for a father to see that in his son! "A foolish man" has rejected God's Wisdom and nothing hurts a mother more than to see her son "despise" (lightly regard, disregard, disdain) her! Too often the son who is overindulged and overprotected by his mother is neither prepared to love and appreciate her, or any other woman, for that matter! Before

marrying any man, a woman should know, firsthand, his attitude toward his own mother! Reverse the proverb for the father and it reads: "A foolish son *is* a grief to his father, And bitterness to her who bore him" (**Proverbs 17:25**). Both parents share in the "grief" and "bitterness" when their "son" is "foolish." There is no joy, and only anguish, when parents see their son a "fool." Another proverb shows how it could be even worse: "A foolish son *is* the ruin of his father, And the contentions of a wife *are* a continual dripping" (**Proverbs 19:13**). The situation becomes intolerable for both the father and the son if the woman engages in "a continual dripping" (nagging, blaming, berating) for that condition!

Each soul has made free choices and is responsible for his, or her, own. "Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die" (**Ezekiel 18:4**). No son can justify his disrespect of his parents, disregard for others' safety, or disgraceful conduct by what his parents did, or didn't do, if he is trying to "be his own man!" Yet another proverb shows that the son who pushes away from his parents has nothing of which to be proud: "He who mistreats *his* father *and* chases away his mother *Is* a son who causes shame and brings reproach" (**Proverbs 19:26**). Still another proverb shows what parents can anticipate when home values work: "The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, And he who begets a wise *child* will delight in him. Let your father and your mother be glad, And let her who bore you rejoice" (**Proverbs 23:24-25**).

"Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice, But a companion of harlots wastes his wealth" (**Proverbs 29:3**). Jesus used such a "foolish son" who "wasted his possessions with prodigal living" to show how the father (like the Father in Heaven!) waited in hopes that his son would repent and return of his humbled choice, which happened (**Luke 15:11-24**)! Many treasures and family fortunes have been squandered in wasteful sins which helped no one in a beneficial way. God has waited for foolish sons to come to Him, for "The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (**2 Peter 3:9**). Isn't it about time you returned to God? "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (**Acts 2:38**).

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(#98) The Proverbs of Solomon

Where Do We Go From Here?

Proverbs 15:22: "Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established."

"Counsel" (advice, wisdom, guidance, good judgment) is what may be called "a second opinion." Since God "works all things according to the counsel of His will" (**Ephesians 1:11**), the best "counsel" anyone can give or receive comes from God's Word.

People who act hastily on their own, frequently do the wrong thing. The more we learn before we make a decision, usually the better is the decision. "Also it is not good *for* a soul *to be* without knowledge, And he sins who hastens with *his* feet" (**Proverbs 19:2**). A husband and wife can be more balanced in decisions than either one acting alone! A corporation is badly run by one person without regard for workers or customers. Government is ruinous when it refuses to consider the people's convictions. "Where *there is* no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors *there is* safety" (**Proverbs 11:14**). Wars waged with no thought for the safety of its soldiers, no planned outcome, no definition of victory, are foolish, indeed. "Plans are established by counsel; By wise counsel wage war" (**Proverbs 20:18**).

Plans are successfully carried out when "counsel" is deeply considered. "Counsel in the heart of man *is like* deep water, But a man of understanding will draw it out" (**Proverbs 20:5**). The older we get, the wiser we become, if, in our experiences, we have learned to "listen to counsel." "Listen to counsel and receive instruction, That you may be wise in your latter days" (**Proverbs 19:20**). Nothing anyone advises us to do that is against God's Will is right! "There is no wisdom or understanding Or counsel against the LORD" (**Proverbs 21:30**). Even the Jewish teacher, Gamaliel, told opponents of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, "And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to fight against God." And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go" (**Acts 5:38-40**). Sweet smells satisfy like good advice from a trusted friend. "Ointment and perfume delight the heart, And the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel" (**Proverbs 27:9**). It's not just "counsel" but the wise counsel that helps good "plans" accomplish their goal.

Who is advising you about clothes, hairstyle, tattoos, piercings, friends, music, recreation, education, drugs, job, marriage and family? The best "counsel" comes from God's Word and from those who have learned His Wisdom. Jesus Christ is called "Counselor, Mighty God" in **Isaiah 9:6**. He gives only the best advice. "Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (**1 Corinthians 1:20-24**).

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## **(#99) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Going Up, Or Going Down?**

**Proverbs 15:24:** "The way of life *winds* upward for the wise, That he may turn away from hell below."

"Upward" signifies away from the earth, and "below" describes the same, away from the earth, not down to its core! Many, it seems, wrongly think "Hell" is inside the earth. The "everlasting fire" is "prepared for the devil and his angels" (**Matthew 25:41**), but is in the opposite direction from Heaven where God is. Since "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (**1 John 1:5**), then for those who follow the Devil, God has "reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (**Jude 13**).

Regarding a human death, which is the separation of the spirit from the body, Solomon said: "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it" (**Ecclesiastes 12:7**). Solomon dealt with the difference between the death of a human and that of an animal by asking: "Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?" (**Ecclesiastes 3:21**). Physical bodies return to dust, but spirits have a different direction. Of those spirits who return to God, Jesus Christ stated the difference: "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (**Luke 16:22-23**).

Christians, like the Apostle Paul, should "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 3:14**). Jesus Christ said: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:15-16**). Are you going up, or going down?

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(#100) The Proverbs of Solomon

True Home Wreckers

Proverbs 15:25: "The LORD will destroy the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow."

"The proud" probably would bring down their own "house" even before God would "destroy" it. "Proud" is a sin listed along with "disobedient to parents" (**Romans 1:30; 2 Timothy 3:2**), and home and marriage require humility (**Ephesians 5:33-6:4**). Since "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall" (**Proverbs 16:18**), then "Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD" (**Proverbs 16:5**). God hates this destructive attitude (**Proverbs 6:16-19**), therefore "the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the

world" (**1 John 2:17**). "Being puffed up with pride," causes one to fall into the same "condemnation as the Devil" (**1 Timothy 3:6**). "God resists the proud" (**1 Peter 5:5**).

God has done as He said, whenever He has wanted to: "I will punish the world for *its* evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible" (**Isaiah 13:11**). This has been done many times: the world-wide flood in Noah's day (**Genesis 6:5-8**); the Babylonian Empire (**Isaiah 13:17-22**); the Roman Empire (**Luke 2:1; Acts 11:28**); the Jewish Nation (**Luke 21:20-24; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16**); and will be done for the end of all empires (**2 Peter 3:9-13**).

"The boundary of the widow" is provision for her support, so all those who submit to God in every age are aware of the provision(s) God has for "widows." He is Jehovah, "A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, *Is* God in His holy habitation. (**Psalms 68:5**). The hallmarks of "pure religion" for Christians are "to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (**James 1:27**). "The proud" overlook the welfare of widows, and greedily price, tax or devour widows out of existence! This proverb is still true!

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## **(#101) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Bribery Will Get You Nowhere—Good!**

**Proverbs 15:27: "He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live."**

Those who are "greedy for gain" will accept "bribes." The size of the bribe determines the "loyalty" of the perverse! The truth in this proverb is amplified in the teaching of the Apostle Paul: "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (**1 Timothy 6:9-11**).

A "bribe" is something paid behind the back, under the table, or in the open for influence, profits the one receiving the bribe, who then perverts judgment. "Bribes" destroy justice, fairness, honesty, and will overthrow "the land." "The king establishes the land by justice, But he who receives bribes overthrows it" (**Proverbs 29:4**). A government is overthrown when: back-door deals determine how a politician votes; lobbyists provide greedy politicians selfish gain for their votes; "civil service" no longer is the desire of "civil servants;" lawyers gain more from their cases than their clients; judges rule according to political power and personal advantage than "blind justice." What used to be called "bribery" in the retail world, is now "kickbacks," "sweeteners," "carrots." The practice of bribing officials, that used to imprison mobsters for "corruption," now is called "investments," "campaign funds," "foundations," "lobbying," "inducements."

Jay Leno once quipped: "Earlier this week the Senate voted 97-to-0 for tougher regulations. For example, when corporations buy a senator, they must now get a receipt." Denis Kearney has summed up government corruption with these words: "They have seized upon the government by bribery and corruption. They have made speculation and public robbery a science. They have loaded the nation, the state, the county, and the city with debt." American Founder George Washington said: "Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder." Solomon said: "A wicked *man* accepts a bribe behind the back To pervert the ways of justice" (**Proverbs 17:23**). God banned bribes in Moses' Law: "And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous" (**Exodus 23:8**). God knows human nature better than humans do, and that even "the righteous" can be changed from what's right by bribery. Church leaders like preachers, priests, bishops, and elders further their perversion of truth because of bribes.

"A gift in secret pacifies anger, And a bribe behind the back, strong wrath" (**Proverbs 21:14**). Bribery is but for a fleeting moment of relief from an immediate situation, but whoever takes the bribe has shown a conscience that has a price. Someone else's "price" will also be accepted!

"Surely oppression destroys a wise *man's* reason, And a bribe debases the heart" (**Ecclesiastes 7:7**). Because only corruption and compromised principles of righteousness are associated with "bribery," God cannot be bribed! "For the LORD your God *is* God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe" (**Deuteronomy 10:17**). "But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality" (**Colossians 3:25**). Bribery will get you nowhere with God, and nowhere for good!

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(#102) The Proverbs of Solomon

How Are Things Looking Today?

Proverbs 15:30: "The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, *And* a good report makes the bones healthy."

Like Job, life can make everything look dim: "My eye has also grown dim because of sorrow" (**Job 17:7**). But when youthful David was chosen by God to be king, he was described as having "bright eyes" (**1 Samuel 16:12**). The world looks to us as we see it! It's either a good day to be alive, or the next step to the grave! Before life's cataracts form, the world is beautiful, colorful, fascinating, lively, in short, spectacular! It is a wonderful blessing to keep that P.O.V. (point of view) throughout life. God gives everyone the ability to see His blessings: "The hearing ear and the seeing eye, The LORD has made them both" (**Proverbs 20:12**). Eyes are made to spark curiosity: "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor the ear filled with hearing" (**Ecclesiastes 1:8**). Our eyes give our hearts the opportunity to respond to needs: "He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor" (**Proverbs 22:9**); "A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, And does not consider that poverty will come upon him" (**Proverbs 28:22**).

What the heart “sees” is up to the individual. “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (**Galatians 6:9-10**).

Christians should “walk properly toward those who are outside” (**1 Thessalonians 4:12**), but unfortunately, those outside of the churches of Christ are taught to focus on the sins of some Christians, and overlook entirely their own need to obey the Gospel. It’s too bad that Christians, also, oftentimes dwell on the sins of some brethren and ignore the marvelous work the Lord has done with the majority in the churches of Christ. In spite of the “antichrists” from the church of Christ who had forsaken the Lord, and Diotrephes who had ruined one church, the Apostle John could still see the good in the churches of Christ, which is more than some brethren seem to be able to do today! “I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father” (**2 John 4**); “For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. *If* you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles” (**3 John 3-7**). What we see is determined by what we want to see, and the rejoicing of the heart is determined by what we see!

Our outlook on life is a key to good health. “A sound heart *is* life to the body, But envy *is* rottenness to the bones” (**Proverbs 14:30**). The best way to stay strong and healthy is to focus on the Word of God, let it be the “apple of your eye.” “Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye” (**Proverbs 7:2**). Jesus said, “The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness” (**Luke 11:34**). Do you see Jesus’ statement to the world as good or bad? “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (**Mark 16:16**).

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## **(#103) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **What’s Wrong With Me?**

**Proverbs 16:1-2:** “The preparations of the heart *belong* to man, But the answer of the tongue *is* from the LORD. 2 All the ways of a man *are* pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits.”

**Verse 1:** We all do what we plan to do, that is, we act according to the decisions of our heart. However, God reserves the right to oversee, overrule, or overtake our plans to let us see when our thinking is wrong. Other proverbs emphasize this fact: “A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps” (**Proverbs 16:9**); “There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the LORD'S counsel-that will

stand" (**Proverbs 19:21**). Long after our plans have failed, God's plan is still active and better. Saul of Tarsus (later the Apostle Paul) was persecuting Jesus' church, and Jesus commented to him: "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" (**Acts 26:15**). No spiritual salvation ever came by "the will of man" (**John 1:12-13**), nor has God's prophecy come from "the will of man" (**2 Peter 1:21**), so for a person's "will" to be right, there must be a dependence upon God's revealed Will, for "the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (**1 John 2:17**). "The answer of the tongue" means God will have the final say about all of our plans. Jesus said, "the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (**John 12:48**).

**Verse 2:** No one does what is right or can be saved by doing only what they think is right! In the days when "everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes" (**Judges 21:25**), sin abounded. The sad fact is, we are the worst judges of the morality of our own behavior! Another proverb says: "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts" (**Proverbs 21:2**). Hardly any human behavior begins without some "justification" in a person's heart. Jesus condemned Pharisees with: "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (**Luke 16:15**). Even the Apostle Paul recognized this when he said, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord" (**1 Corinthians 4:3-4**). The Bible stresses that righteousness only comes by doing right as defined by God, Himself! "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous" (**1 John 3:7**).

No one can "testify" to his or her own salvation and Christian character without heeding the Word of God on the subject. God's plan throughout the Bible was "the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (**Colossians 1:26-28**). Are you saved by Jesus Christ? "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**).

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(#104) The Proverbs of Solomon

How Committed Are You?

Proverbs 16:3-4: "Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established. 4 The LORD has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom."

Verse 3: Since God's Word is settled in Heaven ("Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven" **Psalms 119:89**), nothing "settles" us better than knowing we have

adopted God's Will as our own! When we do God's Will, Solomon said, "Go, eat your bread with joy, And drink your wine with a merry heart; For God has already accepted your works" (**Ecclesiastes 7:7**), and he was NOT saying "get drunk" (**Ephesians 5:18**), but to be "merry" before eating and drinking! We have reason to rejoice when we know our thoughts and plans please God. "Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus" (**1 Thessalonians 4:1-2**). "And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (**Colossians 3:17**).

Verse 4: An old salt (not in the Bible!) was: "Everything in its place, and a place for everything." This seems to state what this proverb holds: God has made everything "good" as it should be in the Creation (**Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31**), even providing a place for those who choose to be wicked (**Matthew 25:41**). As Peter points out in **2 Peter 2:4-9**, that from Genesis 3-19: the "angels who sinned" were "cast down to Tartarus and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;" the wicked were destroyed in Noah's Flood; and Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed when Lot was spared; "then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment." God does not make them wicked (**James 1:13-15**), but certainly has made them a place to be reserved away from those who choose to be righteous by following His Will. David's prayer was for the wicked to "be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous" (**Psalms 69:28**), for this has been God's Will: "For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears *are open* to their prayers; But the face of the LORD *is* against those who do evil" (**1 Peter 3:12**).

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## **(#105) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Real "Peace Accords"**

**Proverbs 16:7:** "When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Obedying God's Will toward our "enemies" is the straightest, simplest, most successful method for producing "peace" than any and every plan and method ever tried before in the history of mankind!

Under Moses' Law: "Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year" (**Exodus 34:23-24**). Israelite men had to journey three times a year to the place where God's sacrifices were to be offered, but God promised no one would "covet" (and therefore steal) their land while they were gone to do God's Will! After the Israelites had settled in the Promised Land, had kings, then divided, the king of the Southern Kingdom knew "the fear of the LORD fell on all

the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat" (**2 Chronicles 17:10**). Under the Law of Jesus Christ, though persecution had arisen against the church of Christ (**Acts 8:1-4**), there came a time when "the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied" (**Acts 9:31**). Truly, "peace" exists when God's people obey His Will, not when world rulers sign papers!

An "enemy" is defined in the last verse in the Bible where the term is used: "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (**James 4:4**). Anyone who is antagonist against God, God's Will, and God's People is an "enemy!" Surely one must not rely upon encouragement from an "enemy:" "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (**Proverbs 27:6**).

In complete contrast to everyone who follows the worldly way of human power, war, and control, all Christians who follow God's Will would respond with good for evil, which is never better stated than when Jesus Christ taught it in His Sermon on the Mount: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" (**Matthew 5:43-46**) The best way to get rid of an enemy is to show him/her a better way of behavior, like God, Who gives even the wicked some blessings!

What Solomon taught is applied to Christianity by the Apostle Paul: "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the LORD will reward you" (**Proverbs 25:21-22**); "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it *is* written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (**Romans 12:18-21**). The wisest way to dispose of enemies is by returning good for evil! Any enemy with conscience cannot ignore the Christian's response to his/her ugliness. However, it is prefaced with the understanding this may not work in every case when he said, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you." This hallmark of Christianity is easily distinguished from Islamic beheadings, Catholic tortures, or Socialist destruction.

Clearly, no one should rise up haughtily when something bad happens to an enemy: "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; Lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, And He turn away His wrath from him" (**Proverbs 24:17-18**). God can punish pride from His children today by misfortune passed from enemies.



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(#106) The Proverbs of Solomon

Governing the Government (#1)

Proverbs 16:10: "Divination is on the lips of the king; His mouth must not transgress in judgment."

"Divination," here, is a word signifying "Divine Judgment." Surely Solomon should know about this. God had predicted that the Israelites would demand a "king" in time, and that happened (**Deuteronomy 17:14-17; 1 Samuel 8:4-9**). Solomon was their third king, and he had been granted "Divine Wisdom" from God (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**). All their kings were commanded to get their "divination" from God's Word – the Old Testament. "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from *the one* before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment *to* the right hand or *to* the left, and that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel" (**Deuteronomy 17:18-20**).

GOD INTENDED FOR THE LEADER OF A GOVERNMENT TO BE INFLUENCED BY GOD'S WORD! The further away from that influence government gets, the more tyrannical and oppressive that government becomes! Leaders who do not "fear the LORD" will arrogantly "be lifted above his brethren," that is, they do not think the laws of the land apply to them. Obeying God's Word is the only way that works, and "the right" or "the left" describe disobedience. Interestingly, those who want to obey God's Word and the Constitution have been branded "right wingers," when they are actually the only ones who obey the laws! "Left wingers" are completely disobedient and rebellious against God and His Word!

The Apostle Paul showed that Christians should pray for government to submit to God and let Christians follow Jesus Christ: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (**1 Timothy 2:1-4**). No government is "Christian," and there is no physical "Christian Nation" on earth today, but "in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (**Acts 10:35**). AND, government that honors the LORD "must not transgress in judgment," that is, will know how to render judgments in accord with God's Wisdom.

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## **(#107) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Governing the Government (#2)**

**Proverbs 16:11:** "Honest weights and scales *are* the LORD'S; All the weights in the bag *are* His work."

God expects the principle of honesty to apply in business, especially when government has set the standard for measurements. "The bag" from which a weight would be placed on a scale should have diligently been measured with honesty, so that the transaction would be completely above board. Under Moses' Law, God commanded: "You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I *am* the LORD" (**Leviticus 19:35-37**); "You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, *are* an abomination to the LORD your God" (**Deuteronomy 25:13-16**). Honesty should be followed, whether in or out of the home. An entire society that honors God's Will could expect honest "weights and scales" as its standard. Customers should be able to pump gas, buy supplies, or wear clothes that are precisely measured by uniform standards. False labeling, deceptive packaging, short-weighted product, bait-and-switch tactics are some of the ways dishonesty is practiced. Other proverbs show God's displeasure for dishonesty: "Diverse weights *and* diverse measures, They *are* both alike, an abomination to the LORD" (**Proverbs 20:10**); "Diverse weights *are* an abomination to the LORD, And dishonest scales *are* not good" (**Proverbs 20:23**).

The Law of Christ continues to apply this principle in such verses as: "Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven" (**Colossians 4:1**). God's principle of "honesty" will be followed and encouraged throughout every godly society.

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(#108) The Proverbs of Solomon

Governing the Government (#3)

Proverbs 16:12-13: "It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, For a throne is established by righteousness. 13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And they love him who speaks what is right."

Verse 12: An "abomination" with God is as bad as anything can be: in **Proverbs** alone, it is used in some 19 verses. For "kings to commit wickedness" is the same with God as: a perverse person (**3:32**), The Big Seven (pride, lies, killing the

innocent, wicked planning, eager participation in evil, bearing false witness with lies, sowing discord among brethren, **6:16-19**), dishonesty in business (**11:1**), justifying the wicked and condemning the just (**17:15**), prayer from one refusing to listen to God (**28:9**), in short, "whatever is highly esteemed among men" (**Luke 16:15**).

What can government leaders do that is "wickedness?"

- (1) They are pleased that their people act wickedly, like Ephraimites who "make a king glad with their wickedness, And princes with their lies" (**Hosea 7:3**). Samuel had shown where this will end when he said, "if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king" (**1 Samuel 12:25**);
- (2) Manasseh encouraged: foreign religions, idolatry, child sacrifice, superstition, immorality, shedding innocent blood (**2 Chronicles 33:1-10**; **2 Kings 21:16**). Not all "laws of the land" are "righteous."

To establish a throne (or seat of power) requires "righteousness," or respect for God and His Principles, throughout the nation (top to bottom), for "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin *is* a reproach to *any* people. The king's favor *is* toward a wise servant, But his wrath *is against* him who causes shame" (**Proverbs 14:34-35**).

Verse 13: "Righteous lips" on government leaders are but a faint, distant memory for most people, but should remain a goal with every vote! Even wicked Israelite King Ahab, put pressure upon the prophet, Micaiah, by saying: "'How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?" (**1 Kings 22:16**) Speaking what is right is the only solid foundation of any nation or kingdom! The King of Kings has established His spiritual kingdom entirely upon truth, for He told the Roman, Pilate: "For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (**John 18:37**).

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## **(#109) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Governing the Government (#4)**

**Proverbs 16:14-15:** "As messengers of death *is* the king's wrath, But a wise man will appease it. 15 In the light of the king's face *is* life, And his favor *is* like a cloud of the latter rain."

**Verse 14:** When all authority in government is invested in one person, judgments and rulings are purely arbitrary, whimsical, and capricious. The purpose of having a constitutional "rule of law" is to avoid the abuse of power so easily entered into with only a king, or tsar, or fuhrer, or dictator. People who are subject to the whim of "the king's wrath" might expect the least provocation to "set him off." King Saul showed Ahimelech the priest, and those with him, the wrath of a king (**1 Samuel 22:11-19**). Other proverbs reflect danger in a too-powerful king: "The king's wrath *is* like the roaring of a lion, But his favor *is* like dew on the grass" (**Proverbs 19:12**);

"The wrath of a king *is* like the roaring of a lion; *Whoever* provokes him to anger sins *against* his own life" (**Proverbs 20:2**); "Like a roaring lion and a charging bear *Is* a wicked ruler over poor people" (**Proverbs 28:15**). Solomon, later, expressed this absolute power of a king: "Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him. Where the word of a king *is*, *there is* power; And who may say to him, 'What are you doing?'" (**Ecclesiastes 8:3-4**) A "wise man" will surely tread lightly around such a person. There is no better time to apply another proverb: "A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger" (**Proverbs 15:1**).

**Verse 15:** On the other hand, however, a happy king makes life last, and refreshes like "the latter rain" of a growing season, and which helps produce a good harvest. Under Moses' Law, kings were supposed to follow their own personal copy of God's Word (**Deuteronomy 17:18-20**), and that should have been their "constitution" to guide their rule. Even under Jesus' Law, obedience to government is predicated upon one's humility before God: "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (**Romans 13:1**).

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(#110) The Proverbs of Solomon

Coins or Christ?

Proverbs 16:16: "How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver."

Some things are worth more than "silver" or "gold." "Wisdom" and "understanding" are two of these. "**Wisdom**" is God's Intelligent Design that He placed in every detail of His Creation in the "heavens and the earth" (**Genesis 1:1**). This truth is at the foundation of faith in God, for: "He has made the earth by His power; He has established the world by His wisdom, And stretched out the heaven by His understanding" (**Jeremiah 51:15**); "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (**Hebrews 11:3**).

"**Understanding**" is recognition of this, and it is humbling to the human mind, for we cannot be in charge of our own destinies without God's help. Solomon, in **Chapter 8**, had already personified Wisdom, who explained how God placed it throughout the Creation, and shows it to be priceless: "Receive my instruction, and not silver, And knowledge rather than choice gold; For wisdom *is* better than rubies, And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her" (**Proverbs 8:10-11**); "My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, And my revenue than choice silver" (**Proverbs 8:19**).

The Apostle Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit to bring this to our attention who live under the Law of Jesus Christ: "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your

stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (1 Peter 1:17-21). Just as God's Creation shows His Wisdom, those who accept this fact can see His Wisdom in their Recreation. Jesus left us with the Gospel command to: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16).

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## **(#111) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **There Is Only One Highway To Heaven**

**Proverbs 16:17:** "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who keeps his way preserves his soul."

The way God has prepared for "the upright" to follow is a "highway." To stay on this way "preserves his soul," or is the way of salvation. A "highway" has: (1) a built-up roadbed for sturdiness, (2) a smoothed surface for easier travel, (3) signs to indicate progress, and (4) a destination to end the journey.

**Jesus Christ is "the way" (John 14:6); (1)** being rich in good works stores up for us a good foundation for the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life (1 Timothy 6:18-19); (2) "I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15); (3) "Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all" (1 Timothy 4:15); (4) "But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life" (Romans 6:22).

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. The prophecy of **Isaiah 40:3-5** was fulfilled in the First Century days of the Roman Empire "while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" (Luke 3:2-6; quoting **Isaiah 40:3-5**). The way of Jesus Christ goes straight toward Heaven; with valleys filled and mountains and hills lowered, it is level; with no curves; and with a smooth surface, God surely has made the way of salvation the best way to travel through life!

Jesus Christ has traveled this road, and shown us how we may go. "A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not

pass over it, But it *shall be* for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray" (**Isaiah 35:8**). Not traveling this better way, or leaving it once on it, is foolish, indeed. "For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (**1 Peter 2:25**).

Jesus' road is NOT a "broad way" (**Matthew 7:13-14**) so people could decide for themselves what is right or wrong; nor does it offer choices of how to be saved; nor does it leave it up to a person to choose a church, worship, morals, or Scriptures. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (**Matthew 7:21**).

Are you on a back road to nowhere good, or on the King's Highway?

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(#112) The Proverbs of Solomon

To The Victor Goes The Spoil

Proverbs 16:19: "Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud."

The way "up" is "down." No one will ever enter Heaven by self-elevation, but by lowliness of heart in serving the Lord. Jesus warned of seeking the best seats without earning the respect of others: "So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 'When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.'" Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (**Luke 14:7-11**).

"Dividing the spoil" is what is done by the proud, following a victory. Serving with the lowly means more than only counting the victories. Many World War II military veterans seem to recount more memories of their shared struggles with fellow-soldiers than they do the campaigns and victories.

Going to Heaven is not for the "proud," and there will be no "spoil" to share. We must serve God on Earth before we can enjoy the blessedness of Heaven. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (**1 John 5:4**). "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (**1 Corinthians 15:57**).

Being of "a humble spirit" will put one in the best company on Earth. The lowly Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem in the last week of His life on earth

(**Matthew 21:1-9**) in complete fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt,

the foal of a donkey" (**Zechariah 9:9**). **Jesus invites all who will become lowly in heart to follow Him:** "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light" (**Matthew 11:28-30**). **Christians are those who will follow the lowly Jesus:** "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" (**Philippians 3:20-21**). **As Christians, we must conduct ourselves with the attitude of our Master:** "Let nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (**Philippians 2:3**).

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### **(#113) The Proverbs of Solomon**

#### **Work With Faith**

**Proverbs 16:20:** "He who heeds the word wisely will find good, And whoever trusts in the LORD, happy *is* he."

A "people will be oppressed" when they remove the wise from leadership (**Isaiah 3:1-5**).

An internship, or a minimum-wage job, or some other entry-level work, is designed for someone to learn a work ethic, while receiving lower wages, because these are to help the worker gain experience and learn to progress from that point! "Heeding" in that job becomes a stepping-stone to further oneself beyond that job. Whatever we earn, we have in our possession; whatever we give to God, He has treasured for us in Heaven. Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (**Matthew 6:19-21**).

Trusting in the LORD, or "faith," is the theme of the Word of God, which shows that God is completely dependable and capable of guiding us in the best way to go, here and in the hereafter.

Christians with jobs are admonished: "Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ" (**Colossians 3:22-24**).

Applying "Wisdom" to all that we do produces "good," and to do it with "trust in the LORD" completes a soul's satisfaction. Paul wrote to Christians: "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more

in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

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(#114) The Proverbs of Solomon

Expanding the Mind

Proverbs 16:22: "Understanding *is* a wellspring of life to him who has it. But the correction of fools *is* folly."

Another proverb says, "The words of a man's mouth *are* deep waters; The wellspring of wisdom *is* a flowing brook" (Proverbs 18:4). "Understanding" is a constant "flowing brook" providing "deep waters" of knowledge. A person of "understanding" always has information to share that has been influenced by God's Wisdom, studied with an open mind, and reflected in conversation.

In the wilderness wandering, Moses was advised to get men to help him judge the people's problems: "Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens" (Exodus 18:21). Moses commanded the people to "Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you" (Deuteronomy 1:13). Only by carefully studying God's Wisdom can anyone accurately "understand" human behaviors and know how to guide them to a proper solution! Solomon, himself, asked God to "give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil" (1 Kings 3:9). Wisdom and understanding are closely associated, so it is not surprising, then, that wise Solomon's Book of Proverbs refers to "understanding" in more than 50 verses! Meeting His Apostles after His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ "opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). Christians know about life and the life to come! "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*" (Ephesians 5:15-17).

Since inspired Scriptures provide "correction" (2 Timothy 3:16-17), only "fools" will refuse to hear them. The Old Testament Prophet, Jeremiah, wrote: "O LORD, *are* not Your eyes on the truth? You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, But they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to return. Therefore I said, 'Surely these *are* poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the LORD, The judgment of their God'" (Jeremiah 5:3-4). Fools feed on "folly" and have nothing positive to add to "understanding." Until and unless they repent and turn to God's Word, a fool may refuse to be corrected by God's Word!

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## (#115) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Neighborhood Watch

**Proverbs 16:27-29:** "An ungodly man digs up evil, And it is on his lips like a burning fire. 28 A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends. 29 A violent man entices his neighbor, And leads him in a way that is not good."

The "world of the ungodly" perished in the Flood in Noah's day (**2 Peter 2:5**); the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah was "an example to those who afterward would live ungodly" (**2 Peter 2:6**); and this heaven and earth "are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (**2 Peter 3:7**). God never rewards the ungodly with good!

**The sins of the "ungodly" include: (1) digging up evil; (2) sowing strife; (3) whispering; (4) enticing neighbors in a way not good.**

- (1) Everyone has scars from sin and can be picked apart. It is the ungodly, however, whose lips are "burning" to tell what evil we have done! Other proverbs reveal backstabbers: "A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter" (**Proverbs 11:13**); "He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips" (**Proverbs 20:19**); "Where *there is* no wood, the fire goes out; And where *there is* no talebearer, strife ceases" (**Proverbs 26:20**); "The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body" (**Proverbs 26:22**). "Do not associate" with these.
- (2) Sowing strife will reap its own harvest. Other proverbs show its dangers: "The beginning of strife *is like* releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts" (**Proverbs 17:14**); "Where *there is* no wood, the fire goes out; And where *there is* no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So *is* a contentious man to kindle strife" (**Proverbs 26:20-21**); "He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered" (**Proverbs 28:25**).
- (3) Only enemies carry on a campaign of "whispering" against someone, and they are not friends (**Lamentations 3:62**)! "Whispering" is spreading dirt about someone to others, but being too cowardly to speak it out loud! "Whisperers" are "filled with all unrighteousness" (**Romans 1:29**), and are sneaky, slimy, slinky people who have the moral backbone of a maggot.
- (4) The "violent man" uses people to act out his violence with him. The recent racist "game" called "Knockout" is done by "violent" people who huddle in their groups, only to strike out at harmless, innocent by-standers. Their gang includes the ungodly, perverse, whisperers condemned by God's Wisdom.

It is indeed tragic when these sinners are Christians who have resurrected their "old man" of sin and smeared the royal name by which they are known (**Ephesians 4:17-32**)!

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(#116) The Proverbs of Solomon

Grow Old Along With Me

Proverbs 16:31: "The silver-haired head *is* a crown of glory, *If* it is found in the way of righteousness."

The aging process can be described in the color of one’s hair, either silver or gray. To live long enough that one is "silver-haired" signifies a life long enough to see children grow up and have their own children. Only those who live long enough to experience this can understand what this means. "Children's children *are* the crown of old men, And the glory of children *is* their father" (**Proverbs 17:6**). No one can enjoy life more than a grandparent! Imagine the thrill when Joseph’s brothers told their father of Joseph’s promise, "You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have" (**Genesis 45:10, verses 1-10**). How awful to learn how some squander the future of their offspring, as the first Samaritans did: "So these nations feared the LORD, yet served their carved images; also their children and their children's children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day" (**2 Kings 17:41, verses 1-41**). Grandparents who fail to exercise their wisdom of years (and of the Word of God!) can leave their children’s children in worse woe than they ever thought there was! To the Jews who abandoned God’s Way for their own, God decreed, "Therefore I will yet bring charges against you," says the LORD, 'And against your children's children I will bring charges'" (**Jeremiah 2:9**). People can ruin the future of grandchildren just by the way they fail or refuse to apply God’s Wisdom to their lives!

The key of our proverb is to age by following "the way of righteousness," which is a greater treasure in life than silver or gold (**Proverbs 8:19-21**). Today the only wise way is through Jesus Christ, who said, "whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man" (**Matthew 7:24**). As we age, we will lose the strength of youth, but we should replace that with strength of character, faith, hope, and love. "The glory of young men *is* their strength, And the splendor of old men *is* their gray head" (**Proverbs 20:29**). Children (and grandchildren!) should be taught to respect people of age, for both the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ make this rule: "You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I *am* the LORD" (**Leviticus 19:32**); "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity" (**1 Timothy 5:1-2**).

As certain of our own Poets has said: "**Old Years and New**" by Edgar Guest

Old years and new years, all blended into one,
The best of what there is to be, the best of what is gone--
Let's bury all the failures in the dim and dusty past
And keep the smiles of friendship and laughter to the last.

Old years and new years, life's in the making still;
We haven't come to glory yet, but there's the hope we will;
The dead old year was twelve months long, but now from it we're free,
And what's one year of good or bad to all the years to be?

Old years and new years, we need them one and all
To reach the dome of character and build its sheltering wall;
Past failures tried the souls of us, but if their tests we stood.
The sum of what we are to be may yet be counted good.

Old years and new years, with all their pain and strife,
Are but the bricks and steel and stone with which we fashion life;
So put the sin and shame away, and keep the fine and true,
And on the glory of the past let's build the better new.

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## **(#117) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **What God Has Done For Us, Lately**

**Proverbs 16:33:** "The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision *is* from the LORD."

This has nothing whatever to do with "gambling," or placing a decision before the blind, false god of Fate or Chance! The proverb is using "the lot" to represent a decision to be left in the hand of "the LORD." When Judas Iscariot hanged himself after betraying the Lord, the Apostle Peter stated God's prophesying of, and qualifications for, the selection of a replacement Apostle for Judas. Once God's authorization and requirements were known by the 120 disciples, "they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias" (**Acts 1:15-23**). Then they prayed for God to make His decision known, "And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles" (**Acts 1:24-26**). God guides decisions much more than many realize. God caused the sailors' "lots" to fall on Jonah (**Jonah 1:4-10**), just as He would choose Matthias as an Apostle! The notion that God doesn't interact with His Creation simply isn't true. "But our God *is* in heaven; He does whatever He pleases" (**Psalm 115:3**). Other proverbs repeat this: "A man's steps *are* of the LORD; How then can a man understand his own way?" (**Proverbs 20:24**); "The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *Like* the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes" (**Proverbs 21:1**). King Artaxerxes decreed that Ezra be given whatever he needed to rebuild the Jerusalem temple, which prompted this praise: "Blessed *be* the LORD God of our fathers, who has put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem" (**Ezra 7:27, verses 11-28**).

When the truth of God is known and obeyed, it is safe to leave a decision up to Him. It was God Who gave Abram "a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son" (**Genesis 22:11-13**). God knew ahead of time (**Psalm 22:18**) that the

soldiers who crucified Jesus would say "therefore among themselves, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Therefore the soldiers did these things" (**John 19:24**).

Did you just happen to read this article?

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(#118) The Proverbs of Solomon

Hurtful Holidays?

Proverbs 17:1: "Better is a dry morsel with quietness, Than a house full of feasting *with* strife."

Holidays seem to be built around family gatherings for a meal. Whether it is in the form of a cook-out, a banquet in, or a buffet of common dishes, families reunite for a meal, and there's the problem! Some speak of "blue" holidays and they dread those times of "togetherness." The problem is not the holiday itself, or the mealtime, but the family failure to gather in peace!

"**Strife**" is associated with "envy" (jealousy) from the very first time it is mentioned in Scripture: "Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. So Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we *are* brethren'" (**Genesis 13:5-8**). When possessions mean more than relationships, strife is the result. Solomon has said: "Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins" (**Proverbs 10:12**); "A wrathful man stirs up strife, But *he who is* slow to anger allays contention" (**Proverbs 15:18**); "A perverse man sows strife" (**Proverbs 16:28**); "He who loves transgression loves strife" (**Proverbs 17:19**); "Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; Yes, strife and reproach will cease" (**Proverbs 22:10**). Hatred, wrath, perverse thinking, loving transgression, scoffing, all produce "strife." There is NO love expressed in "strife," hence, when families or churches can't gather in love, it is because some hold onto old, past, unsettled differences. Living in the past, hurts the present, and jeopardizes the future. "Love covers all sins" doesn't mean sins are covered over, but that love extends mercy and forgiveness for all kinds of sins! To those who murdered Jesus on the cross, God extends the offer of repentance and forgiveness of sins (**Acts 5:31-32**). Families, friends, business associates, schoolmates, are some of the relationships we have that should mean more to us than being at odds with them and criticizing them! We, like Abram, should emphasize our closeness, rather than our problems!

"Strife" comes from people who do "not like to retain God in their knowledge" (**Romans 1:28-32, verse 29**); are not spiritually-minded

(**1 Corinthians 3:3**); do "not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness" (**1 Timothy 6:3-5**); or engage in "foolish and ignorant disputes" (**2 Timothy 2:23**).

"Strife," in a church or family or business, is a killer of love, understanding, peace, forgiveness, and devotion, and has ruined many a good meal!

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## **(#119) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **An "Heir-y" Proverb**

**Proverbs 17:2: "A wise servant will rule over a son who causes shame, And will share an inheritance among the brothers."**

#### **How can a "servant" become part of the family and a "son" lose his portion?**

**First**, the son, by birth, is related to his parents, but should learn to respect his family and his place in it. A son could sell his birthright for a bowl of soup (**Genesis 25:29-34; Hebrews 12:16**); squander his birthright (**Luke 15:11-32**); or obediently work for the family (**Matthew 21:28-32**). A son could cause "shame." "He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame" (**Proverbs 10:5**); "He who mistreats *his* father *and* chases away **his** mother *Is* a son who causes shame and brings reproach" (**Proverbs 19:26**). A lazy son who will not support himself or help his family "causes shame!" A son who resents and abuses his parents "causes shame and brings reproach!" Parents will feel ashamed to claim a son who refuses to be respectful and work. Or, like Abraham's son by the handmaid Hagar, Ishmael, he could show disrespect for his place and "scoff" and be rejected by his father, Abraham (**Genesis 21:9-14**). A son who doesn't appreciate his own home won't respect anyone else's either, even when he marries!

**Second**, "a wise servant" may obey and work as if he were a son like the parents want, and so ingratiate himself to the parents that they give him a son's inheritance. Of the servants born in Abram's house (**Genesis 14:14**), one had distinguished himself so that Abram considered him worthy of a son's inheritance: "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" (**Genesis 15:2-3**). However, God's Plan was not to be through Abram's actual son through Hagar, Ishmael, nor Eliezer the servant "adopted" by Abram, but rather, God's covenant was to be through Sarah's son, Isaac (**Genesis 17:18-22**).

Moses was God's "servant" in God's House in the Old Testament, Israelites; but Jesus Christ is the Son who is now over God's House since the New Testament, the church of Christ: "For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things *is* God. And Moses indeed *was* faithful in all His

house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken *afterward*, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end" (**Hebrews 3:3-6**). Though Moses was a "wise" servant, for he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (**Acts 7:22**), he never was accepted as the Son over the House of God as Jesus Christ has been! Moses' Law was never given for the Church of Christ to observe, but was only for the Israelites, and to lead to Jesus Christ (**Deuteronomy 5:1-3, 6; Galatians 3:21-29**).

JESUS CHRIST NEVER BROUGHT "SHAME" TO HIS FATHER!

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(#120) The Proverbs of Solomon

Christians Must Do "Hard Time"

Proverbs 17:3: "The refining pot *is* for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests the hearts."

"Silver" increases in value when "refined" by extreme heat, which drives off its dross (non-silver particles). "Gold," likewise, requires a fiery "furnace" to release its impurities. The point of the proverb begins with the stated, understood fact that passing through an extreme circumstance is part of the refining process that purifies our precious metals. "Take away the dross from silver, And it will go to the silversmith for jewelry" (**Proverbs 25:4**). Our experience in life is our "refining pot" or "furnace," which should be used for purifying our character. "You reject all those who stray from Your statutes, For their deceit *is* falsehood. You put away all the wicked of the earth like dross; Therefore I love Your testimonies" (**Psalms 119:118-119**). All who obey God's "statutes" can endure the process.

"The refining pot *is* for silver and the furnace for gold, And a man *is valued* by what others say of him" (**Proverbs 27:21**). We are tested by compliments, and no one should take credit for all of his accomplishments or blessings and ignore God's part in it, as King Herod did (**Acts 12:20-24**). Jesus warned against letting others' opinions direct our way: "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets" (**Luke 6:26**).

When Jerusalem "became a harlot," it was like their silver became dross, so God promised to turn His hand against them "And thoroughly purge away your dross, And take away all your alloy" (**Isaiah 1:21-25**). The process was detailed in **Ezekiel 22:17-22**: "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they *are* all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. *As men* gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt *it*; so I will gather *you* in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave *you there* and melt you. Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst. As silver is melted in the

midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have poured out My fury on you."

Evidence that God lives, cares, and interacts to help Christians' faith is that we are tested: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights" (**Proverbs 3:11-12**, quoted and applied to Christians in **Hebrews 12:3-11**). When things seem to go wrong for us, maybe we should examine ourselves to see if our faith needs refining. "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you are disqualified" (**2 Corinthians 13:5**).

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## **(#121) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **When the Wrong Speak Right**

**Proverbs 17:7: "Excellent speech is not becoming to a fool, Much less lying lips to a prince."**

Since "fools" can be anyone who don't obey God's Word, and are, therefore, wicked, then "excellent speech" (wise words, intelligent language, truthful talk) is out of place coming from them. "But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh. Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom" (**James 3:8-13**). Though "a fool" may say good things, perhaps even the truth, it is only by good works those words are confirmed. God challenges the right of wicked people to even speak God's Word: "But to the wicked God says: 'What right have you to declare My statutes, Or take My covenant in your mouth, Seeing you hate instruction And cast My words behind you?'" (**Psalm 50:16-17**) Jesus Christ spoke to the Jews of His day in the same way when He said: "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (**Matthew 12:34**). Jesus challenged "demons" in the same way: "Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him" (**Mark 1:34**). No one who is unwilling to obey God is qualified to teach, preach, or otherwise represent God's Word to anyone!

This proverb (**17:7**) more harshly judges a "prince" (ruler, government leader, or dominant figure), from whom everyone expects equity, fairness, and truth, who uses deceitfulness and lies! Politicians who cannot remember what they have promised (or don't care!) are worse than "fools" who at least try to say the right things! People look to their government for good guidance, hence, "Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit" (**Proverbs 18:21**). Certainly, the less

said, the easier it is to remember what has been said! "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue Keeps his soul from troubles" (**Proverbs 21:23**). Trickle-down corruption certainly takes its toll: "For the leaders of this people cause *them* to err, And *those who are* led by them are destroyed" (**Isaiah 9:16**). As long as people vote in liars, there can never be good government!

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## **(#122) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Why "Santa Claus" Is Popular**

**Proverbs 17:8:** "A present *is* a precious stone in the eyes of its possessor; Wherever he turns, he prospers."

"A present" is a voluntary expression of love or concern from a friend or family member. It was given in the past, but remains as a "present" reminder of those thoughts. Truly, "it is the thought that counts." The "present" should be received with the same appreciation with which it was chosen by the giver.

Jacob, fearful of his reunion with his brother Esau, "took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother" (**Genesis 32:13**), too much to wrap (**Genesis 32:14-15**)! Deep in famine and later in life, Jacob, now named Israel, thought he was dealing with a powerful man in Egypt (who was really his long-lost son!), told his other sons: "Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man-a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds" (**Genesis 43:11**). He believed in the proverbial truth about gifts: "A man's gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men" (**Proverbs 18:16**); "Many entreat the favor of the nobility, And every man *is* a friend to one who gives gifts" (**Proverbs 19:6**). Rarely does anyone go wrong by gift-giving. The make-believe "Santa Claus" was invented because everyone likes to receive a gift. The real Jesus Christ, however, taught that "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (**Acts 20:35**).

The "gift of God" is for everyone who lives by God's rule: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (**Genesis 3:19**). "As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor-this *is* the gift of God" (**Ecclesiastes 5:19**). If properly considered, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (**James 1:17**). Unlike the mythical "Santa Claus," God requires our obedience to enjoy His gifts! God blesses with "His indescribable gift" (**2 Corinthians 9:15**), but the ultimate "gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (**Romans 6:23**). Jesus Christ "became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (**Hebrews 5:9**), so Jesus requires of "every creature," "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (**Mark 16:15-16**).

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## (#123) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Experience Hurts – Wisdom Doesn't

**Proverbs 17:10:** "Rebuke is more effective for a wise *man* Than a hundred blows on a fool."

The "wise" will take the "rebuke" to heart, while "a hundred blows" only hurt the outside of "a fool." No one can beat some sense into one who doesn't want to learn! When David sinned, the Prophet said, "You *are* the man," and David said, "I have sinned against the LORD" (**2 Samuel 12:1-7, 13-14**). After Peter's denial of Jesus, "the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So Peter went out and wept bitterly" (**Luke 22:61-62**). The "wise" will need a word or a look to learn better, so discipline should be aimed at teaching how to focus on the lesson at hand.

In Egypt, by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> plague, "when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses" (**Exodus 9:34-35**). Pharaoh's "hundred blows" cost him his firstborn, his people, and his army! Many people, it seems, have to learn about sin the hard way, from painful failures with: relationships, jobs, drugs, perversion, money, or church. Other proverbs describe this school of hard knocks: "Judgments are prepared for scoffers, And beatings for the backs of fools" (**Proverbs 19:29**); "Blows that hurt cleanse away evil, As *do* stripes the inner depths of the heart" (**Proverbs 20:30**); "But those who rebuke *the wicked* will have delight, And a good blessing will come upon them" (**Proverbs 24:25**); "Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold *Is* a wise rebuker to an obedient ear" (**Proverbs 25:12**); "A whip for the horse, A bridle for the donkey, And a rod for the fool's back" (**Proverbs 26:3**); "Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, *Yet* his foolishness will not depart from him" (**Proverbs 27:22**); "He who is often rebuked, *and* hardens *his* neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (**Proverbs 29:1**). Solomon will later say, "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise Than for a man to hear the song of fools" (**Ecclesiastes 7:5**). Fools may not learn from "beatings," "blows that hurt," "a rod," "often rebuke," or being ground down like a blender. A wise person would not want to stay close to those who have to learn the hard way!

Don't go to the wrong school! "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*" (**Ephesians 5:15-17**).

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(#124) The Proverbs of Solomon

Which is Worse: A Savage Bear or A Stupid Fool?

Proverbs 17:12: "Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, Rather than a fool in his folly."

Never, ever, come between a mama bear and her cubs! Instant outrage, savage aggression, and violent attack is sure to be the swift, certain, and deadly outcome. The explosion of fury could not be more clearly illustrated than by this image. King David's friend, Hushai, described David's fierceness in war to David's son with this parallel: "you know your father and his men, that they *are* mighty men, and they *are* enraged in their minds, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field" (**2 Samuel 17:8**). When Israel forgot God, He promised, "I will meet them like a bear deprived of *her cubs*" (**Hosea 13:8**). With this simple depiction, there is no doubt about the ferocity being described.

Never, ever, expect normal attitude from "a fool in his folly," for all rules are off! First, "a fool" is anyone who doesn't follow God's Word; and, secondly, "folly" is any behavior that doesn't conform to God's Wisdom! "Every prudent *man* acts with knowledge, But a fool lays open *his* folly" (**Proverbs 13:16**). Folly is "the foolishness of fools" (**Proverbs 14:24**); and so "*he who is* impulsive exalts folly" (**Proverbs 14:29**). And a fool never learns better from his "folly," for "As a dog returns to his own vomit, So a fool repeats his folly" (**Proverbs 26:11**). Expect a "fool" to erupt in "folly" with passion associated with outbursts of anger! Because one man raped their sister, Simeon and Levi murdered and plundered a whole city (**Genesis 34:24-29, 30**); because the wise men did not return and tell him where the young child Jesus was, King Herod was "exceedingly angry" and murdered all boys in Bethlehem under the age of two (**Matthew 2:16**); while he was ignorant of Jesus Christ, Saul of Tarsus was "still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (**Acts 9:1**). Every mother who rips apart her son or daughter; every father who abruptly punishes his children; every husband or wife who verbally, or otherwise, abuses his/her spouse; every intoxicated user of drugs or alcohol; and every short-fused person is, or will be, acting the "fool." "An angry man stirs up strife, And a furious man abounds in transgression" (**Proverbs 29:22**).

Never, ever, stand between "a fool" and his/her "folly," lest we are torn apart by sin!

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## (#125) The Proverbs of Solomon

### Many Happy Returns

**Proverbs 17:13:** "Whoever rewards evil for good, Evil will not depart from his house."

There are only four ways to payback deeds: **1) Good for Good; 2) Evil for Evil; 3) Evil for Good; or 4) Good for Evil.**

- 1) While a good gratitude level, it is doing what would be expected from anyone: "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back" (**Luke 6:32-34**).
- 2) This human response may "feel good," but is totally contrary to God's example in Jesus Christ, "who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously" (**1 Peter 2:23**). Other proverbs repeat this principle: "Do not say, 'I will recompense evil;' Wait for the LORD, and He will save you" (**Proverbs 20:22**); "Do not say, 'I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work'" (**Proverbs 24:29**).
- 3) This is the way to curse one's own future, household, job, friendships, or eternal destiny. Everything God Created "was very good" (**Genesis 1:31**), but Adam and Eve repaid Him by violating His rule in sin ("through one man sin entered the world," **Romans 5:12**).  
 The southern kingdom, Judah, gave God evil for good: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: 'I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me; The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; *But* Israel does not know, My people do not consider.' Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward" (**Isaiah 1:2-4**).  
 The history of the Jews' dealings with God's Prophets justified His destruction of their Nation in A.D. 70. "For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost" (**1 Thessalonians 2:14-16**; also **Matthew 21:33-46**).
- 4) The superior method is: "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (**Romans 12:18-21**).

This not humanly possible without having the inner "Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus" (**1 Peter 5:14**), who will "be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (**Acts 22:16**).

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(#126) The Proverbs of Solomon

More Money Than Brains

Proverbs 17:16: "Why *is there in the hand of a fool the purchase price of wisdom, Since he has no heart for it?*"

Wisdom is affordable for anyone. "Buy the truth, and do not sell *it*, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding" (**Proverbs 23:23**). When there are so many who have either the experience or the knowledge of Scripture to pass along "wisdom," "the purchase price of wisdom" is not too high for anyone to gain! There are plenty of wise: parents, family members, teachers, preachers, or concerned neighbors who stand ready to impart lessons they have learned, some learned the hard way. God's Wisdom in the Bible may be found almost anywhere and in any language around the world!

A "fool" may be blessed with a job, pay, dwelling place, food, and clothes, but not have the desire to use any of it to gain "wisdom." The availability of wisdom highlights the absence of desire in a "fool" to obtain it! The "fool" doesn't ask the questions, study the Scriptures, or meditate on the examples it would take to learn from outside sources! The "fool" chooses to rely upon: neighborhood, family reputation, talents, chances, or religious traditions instead of the pursuit of real "wisdom." Sadly, the adage applies: "You can lead a horse to water, but cannot make it drink." Jesus spoke it first: "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is here*. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is here*" (**Matthew 12:41-42**). When the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia (**Acts 13:14, 44-45**) cast the Gospel of Jesus Christ from them, "Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles'" (**Acts 13:46**).

The memory of lost opportunities are a part of the eternal torment of a rich man, as Jesus described, who was told, "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented'" (**Luke 16:25**).

Please heed the admonition: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (**Hebrews 3:15**). "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**).

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## (#127) The Proverbs of Solomon

### How To Choose A Friend

**Proverbs 17:17:** "A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity."

Genuine friendship doesn't waver. "A friend" will always be there for you and will not abandon you when your money, fancy clothes, expensive gifts, or other "freebies" have run out! Anyone who leaves you when you are in hard times never was your friend to start with! Those who make a big show of being your friend are getting ready to renounce your friendship or to take unfair advantage of your friendship! "He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, It will be counted a curse to him" (**Proverbs 27:14**). A sage quote says: *Too many of the footprints on the sands of time were made by heels.* True, friends are made when we are friendly. "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (**Proverbs 18:24**). We must be "a friend" to expect to have friends! A true friend:

1. "Loves at all times," under all circumstances, regardless of our frailties;
2. NEVER will use our friendship for his/her own selfish purposes or advantages;
3. Always tells us what we need to know for our own good. Jesus made this clear when He described His friendship with His disciples: "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (**John 15:13-15**);
4. Sticks closer and is quicker to help than even blood relatives! Often "friends of the family" began with our parents, and we should respect and keep them, in addition to our own. "Ointment and perfume *delight* the heart, And the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel. Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, Nor go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; Better *is* a neighbor nearby than a brother far away" (**Proverbs 27:9-10**).
5. Will be shared with other friends, as John indicated: "Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name" (**3 John 14**).

Are you a "friend of God" as Abraham was by his faith and works (**James 2:21-24**), and by our obeying God's works today (**Mark 16:16**)?

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(#128) The Proverbs of Solomon

Co-signers, Beware!

Proverbs 17:18: "A man devoid of understanding shakes hands in a pledge, And becomes surety for his friend."

Contracts and deals are sealed with a "handshake," a visible sign of a word of agreement. Signatures on paperwork are simply confirmation in writing of the contract that was decided.

These are binding in God's sight. "Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool's voice *is known* by *his* many words. When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For *He* has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed- Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?" (**Ecclesiastes 5:2-6**) We all need to weigh heavily what we are getting ourselves into before we commit to it! The old adage is true, we should "look before we leap." Other inspired proverbs support this warning: "Take the garment of one who is surety for a stranger, And hold it as a pledge when it is for a seductress" (**Proverbs 20:16**); "Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge, One of those who is surety for debts; If you have nothing with which to pay, Why should he take away your bed from under you? (**Proverbs 22:26-27**); and again, "Take the garment of him who is surety for a stranger, And hold it in pledge when he is surety for a seductress" (**Proverbs 27:13**).

It was a seemingly insignificant thing for Esau to promise his birthright to his twin brother, Jacob, for a bowl of soup (**Genesis 25:19-34**), but it changed the course of the Middle East till today! Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ by conferring with "the chief priests and captains," who "agreed" to pay him when "he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude" (**Luke 22:1-6**): a decision he regretted but couldn't change (**Matthew 27:1-5**)! Jesus taught that when we decide to follow Him, we should be totally committed to that decision: "Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, 'Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' Then He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.' And another also said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God' (**Luke 9:57-62**).

Have you agreed to follow Jesus Christ? "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**).

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## **(#129) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Whom Do You Trust?**

**Proverbs 17:20: "He who has a deceitful heart finds no good, And he who has a perverse tongue falls into evil."**

The "deceitful heart" knows how easily "truth" can be ignored, manipulated, changed into a lie, or kept back to deceive. Then the "deceitful heart" concludes that everyone else is doing the same, thus, concludes no one is to be trusted! Only God and His Truth can judge the waywardness in a heart: "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? *I*, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings" (**Jeremiah 17:9-10**). Even in the New Testament, Paul taught this: "This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled" (**Titus 1:13-15**). People who are dishonest with the truth are quick to assume the worst in everyone else! It's difficult, or even impossible, for some people to believe that anyone can be truthful and pure in motive, but Christians are exactly that. "But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another" (**Ephesians 4:20-25**).

However, even Christians can be misled by: those who "pervert the gospel of Christ" (**Galatians 1:7**); "preach Christ even from envy and strife" (**Philippians 1:15**); "false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction" (**2 Peter 2:1**); "the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (**Ephesians 4:14**); "the deceitful lusts" (**Ephesians 4:22**). Deceitfulness is a reality, but so, also, is truthfulness! Jesus said: "For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (**John 18:37**). Pilate revealed his political dishonesty when he replied, "What is truth?" (**John 18:38**).

Conversion to Jesus Christ is the cure for the "deceitful heart." "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (**1 Peter 1:22-23**). "But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized" (**Acts 8:12**)

Do you believe this?

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(#130) The Proverbs of Solomon

Why Governments Fail

Proverbs 17:26: "Also, to punish the righteous *is* not good, *Nor* to strike princes for *their* uprightness."

Since all of God's commandments are what's right ("righteousness" **Psalm 119:172**), and all who practice them are "righteous" (**1 John 3:7**), then the last thing anyone with any moral sense should want to do is "punish the righteous!" It has already been established that, "Whoever rewards evil for good, Evil will not depart from his house" (**Proverbs 17:13**); and "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike *are* an abomination to the LORD" (**Proverbs 17:15**).

"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (**James 4:4**). According to the history of the world, you do NOT want to be "an enemy of God," for, "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble" (**James 4:6**)! Government is to be respected and obeyed by citizens (**Romans 13:1-2**), and Government is to respect and obey its God-given work!

"Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good" (**1 Peter 2:13-14**). AND "princes" (government leaders and servants of the people) should NOT be afflicted when they practice "uprightness." The authority of Government is mis-used and abused when it upholds wickedness or condemns righteousness! **Proverbs 18:5** also teaches this truth: "It is not good to show partiality to the wicked, Or to overthrow the righteous in judgment."

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## **(#131) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **For Generation Drop-outs**

**Proverbs 18:1-2:** "A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment. A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart."

Every generation seems to have a percentage who rebel against previous traditions, customs, and conventions. This proverb points out the weakness of those who think they don't need to listen to the preceding generation who has learned life's lessons. The irony of it all is that these who struggle for individualism lose it just as fast as they obtain it by becoming just another of their "movement!" Beginning in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, this attitude has been exploited with gurus, college professors, priests, church leaders, and, especially, the media and entertainment professionals. With each generation, from public schools to personal friendships, children are being taught to



reject: parents' morals, society's restrictions, religious faith, and personal integrity. There has been created a "generation gap" vacuum which the godless, indecent, immoral, perverse, and dictatorial have gladly filled with their damning ideas! **Karl Marx** wrote:

"There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience.

What does this accusation reduce itself to? The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms, antagonisms that assumed different forms at different epochs.

But whatever form they may have taken, one fact is common to all past ages, viz., the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common forms, or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

The communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional relations; no wonder that its development involved the most radical rupture with traditional ideas." — **The Communist Manifesto, 1848**

Long before Karl Marx, the Devil has filled young souls with promises of liberation from their parent's generation. The Kingdom of Israel was torn in two when Rehoboam refused the advice of his father, Solomon's, advisers (**1 Kings 12:1-15**).

**Proverbs 18:1** speaks to these misguided souls, whether Hipsters, Beatniks, Hippies, or New Agers. "He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good" (**Proverbs 19:8**). **Proverbs 18:2** calls the person "a fool" who speaks only what he/she thinks he/she knows without any counsel or advice from those who came before. In other words, much study of accurate history, not a re-interpreted "shortened form," is essential for any generation to make proper progress!

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(#132) The Proverbs of Solomon

I Dare You

Proverbs 18:6-7: "A fool's lips enter into contention, And his mouth calls for blows. 7 A fool's mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul."

Reckless challenges are foolish enough ("I dare you to..."), but to dare someone to increase punishment is also senseless! **A "fool's" words: [1] start with "contention;" [2] escalate to "blows;" [3] brings self-"destruction;" [4] jeopardizes his/her own "soul."**

- 1) Whether overcome by drugs or liquor, the heat of the moment, arrogance or ignorance, it is a "fool" who starts "contention." Contentions are the aggravations that light the fires of fury, NOT honest investigations resulting in understanding truth. Christians must "avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife" (**2 Timothy 2:23**). Scoffers deny truth and cause meaningless contentions. "Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; Yes, strife and reproach will cease" (**Proverbs 22:3**). "It is honorable for a man to stop striving, Since any fool can start a quarrel" (**Proverbs 20:3**).
- 2) The challenge to fight is usually accepted, and to what purpose? Violence never proved the truth of an argument! It is true that "the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (**James 1:20**). Elders in the churches of Christ must not "be quarrelsome," i.e. not quick to fight (**1 Timothy 3:2-3**)! Wisdom should rule in such situations: "A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger" (**Proverbs 15:1**).
- 3) The "fool" is just asking for more pain, heartache, and deprivation, and will probably get it!
- 4) Eternal damnation hangs in the balance, for Jesus Christ taught: "that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (**Matthew 12:36-37**).

The rest of us need to back away from every fool whose mouth is asking to be stopped!

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### **(#133) The Proverbs of Solomon**

#### **Do You Have Social or Spiritual Security?**

**Proverbs 18:10-11:** "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe. 11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city, And like a high wall in his own esteem."

Soon out of the Garden of Eden, "men began to call on the name of the LORD" (**Genesis 4:26**); Abraham "built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD" (**Genesis 12:8**); David offered sacrifices and "blessed the people in the name of the LORD" (**1 Chronicles 16:2**), who repeated his confidence: "Our help is in the name of the LORD, Who made heaven and earth" (**Psalms 124:8**); Jesus Christ was welcomed into Jerusalem with people saying: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" (**Mark 11:9**); and even today, Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (**Acts 10:48**). "The name of the LORD" has always been the authority figure for the Bible. David summarized its power when he sang: "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (**Psalms 18:2**). The Israelites generally refused to flee to God, however, as Jesus lamented: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!" (**Luke 13:34**). The

Gospel of Jesus Christ reveals that there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (**Acts 4:12**).

The tendency of mankind seems to be, when trouble arises, to hide behind "a high wall" of "wealth." This is forbidden in the New Testament. Jesus warned, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!" (**Mark 10:24**). "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy" (**1 Timothy 6:17**). It is sad, indeed, as an economy weakens, to see people flock to a "give-away government," Lottery chances to be rich, or crime, trying to become rich quickly. Why flee to the security of "wealth," when Wisdom has declared: "Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For *riches* certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven" (**Proverbs 23:5**). "The rich man's wealth is his strong city; The destruction of the poor is their poverty" (**Proverbs 10:15**).

With the uncertainty of money's value, and the haughtiness of those who think they are rich, and seeing how economies can be sucked dry by covetous leeches, why flee to "wealth" for security, when "the name of the LORD" is always dependable? "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (**Acts 22:16**).

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(#134) The Proverbs of Solomon 18:13

Opinion Polls or Truth?

Proverbs 18:13: "He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him."

Many seem to value their opinion above established truth. They are quick with their opinion about anything and everything, even though they know little or nothing factual about the subject. They form their opinions from headlines, magazine covers, Tweets, gossip, or others' opinions! In Moses' Law, God emphasized the rule of truth when forming a proper judgment: "Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness" (**Deuteronomy 17:6**), and this continued into Jesus' day: "Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, 'Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?'" (**John 7:50-51**) In His final day on the earth, the "chief priests and scribes" brought Jesus into their mock trial, and asked Him, "'Are You then the Son of God?' So He said to them, 'You *rightly* say that I am.' And they said, 'What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth'" (**Luke 22:66, 70-71**).

More than one witness is necessary to determine actual facts without the individual embellishments, and they crucified Jesus on His one statement to them! "Do not go hastily to court; For what will you do in the end, When your neighbor has put you to

shame? Debate your case with your neighbor, And do not disclose the secret to another; Lest he who hears *it* expose your shame, And your reputation be ruined" (**Proverbs 25:8-10**).

Speaking up before we know what the issue is all about is "folly and shame" (empty and disgraceful). "Also it is not good *for* a soul *to be* without knowledge, And he sins who hastens with *his* feet" (**Proverbs 19:2**). Brought over into Christianity, James said, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak" (**James 1:19**).

Jesus distinguished opinion from fact by asking: "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" The Apostles replied: "'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' Then Jesus asked for God's revealed fact: "He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven'" (**Matthew 16:13-17**).

Before anyone answers the question, "are you saved?" he/ she should study the Word of God on the subject (**Mark 16:16**), and ask the question, "have I done what God requires?" People's opinions matter little, "For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends" (**2 Corinthians 10:18**)!

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### **(#135) The Proverbs of Solomon 18:17**

#### **Who's On, First?**

**Proverbs 18:17: "The first one to plead his cause seems right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him."**

The sympathetic ear is what this Proverb is all about. In every dispute or trouble, there is always a "first side," that is, the one we hear first. The problem comes when we are prone to form an opinion before hearing the "other side." We need to remember that all forms of media are presenting their "first side:" movies, books, TV news, magazines, and papers.

The second part of the proverb shows that cross-examination, or further examination of the facts, can change the whole perspective. **Other corresponding proverbs** say: "A faithful witness does not lie, But a false witness will utter lies" (**Proverbs 14:5**); "Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, For would you deceive with your lips?" (**Proverbs 24:28**) Because there often is a mixture of faithful and false witnesses, we need to be most careful in our cross-examination. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (**1 John 4:1**).

This possibility of *wrong-sidedness* shows the peril of quick judgments. "He who passes by *and* meddles in a quarrel not his own *Is like* one who takes a dog by the

ears" (**Proverbs 26:17**). Getting involved in "a quarrel" before we understand "both sides," is like controlling a dog by holding its ears – it may work for a while, but sooner or later, we must let go, and then what?

We will get "bitten" by the arguments in the quarrel when we don't know what we're getting into. Why not wait until the "neighbor comes and examines" what we've been told?

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(#136) The Proverbs of Solomon 18:18

Cast Your Lot With Christ

Proverbs 18:18: "Casting lots causes contentions to cease, And keeps the mighty apart."

There would be fewer wars, arguments and conflicts if people would use something other than violence to settle their problems. Politicians who desire war probably need to learn to play the war/expansion games of Chess, or Risk, or Settlers of Catan; or just gamble for their fortunes!

"Casting lots" among unbelievers is leaving choice to chance. It was practiced by unbelieving: Chaldeans who conquered Israel (**Joel 3:1-9**), sailors who threw Jonah overboard (**Jonah 1:5-13**), and soldiers who crucified Jesus (**John 19:23-24**). By "casting lots," those who believe in a "god of chance" think all is fair and square when the "lots" determine their "fate."

However, God can, and has intervened anywhere He has so chosen: "The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision *is* from the LORD" (**Proverbs 16:33**). Instead of "casting lots," when the Promised Land was to be "apportioned" among the Israelites, God gave the rule by which their decision was to be based, the "lot" (or portion) by the size of the tribe (**Numbers 26:52-56**). After describing the qualifications for an Apostle (**Acts 1:15-26**), their "lot" (ballot, decision) "fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Arguments were avoided when God's guidelines for a decision were followed. The same procedure was followed by the Apostles when men were needed to oversee "the daily distribution" of benevolence (**Acts 6:1-7**), and to be used when appointing men as Elders in each local church (**Titus 1:5-9**).

There can, and should be, no argument on decisions that are based entirely upon God's Word. The resurrected Jesus Christ said: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**). Cast your "lot" (decision) with Jesus Christ.

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**(#137) The Proverbs of Solomon 18:19**

**Can You Forgive Your Brother?**

**Proverbs 18:19: "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle."**

Contentious statements that divide brethren are "like the bars of a castle," that is, they defensively fortify brothers from each other. Enemies can be converted and changed more easily than a relative, and it seems the nearer the relationship, the more difficult it is to effect that change! The first brothers, Cain and Abel, were separated by Cain's anger that his brother obeyed what was right (**Genesis 4:1-12; Hebrews 11:4**) but Cain was evil (**1 John 3:11-12**). Jacob and Esau were separated by Esau's profaning his birthright (inheritance, **Genesis 25:29-34**), Jacob's deception to receive that birthright (**Genesis 27:1-46**), and Esau's bitterness and hatred for his brother. They were separated for years before they could reconcile (**Genesis 33:1-15**), but reconcile they did! Since the Jews come from Jacob, and the so-called "Palestinians" come from Esau, the modern-day Middle East should read the Bible and reconcile their differences as their progenitors did! Brethren in the flesh can be meaner, more violent, and destructive to each other than their enemies who are not related!

Spiritual members in a church of Christ can become as bitter as Cain, and hateful as Esau, toward their brethren. The reason is the same, they have developed "an evil heart of unbelief" and departed from the living God (**Hebrews 3:12**). Their contentious words become "bars" to keep them inside their castle of ugliness. "Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (**1 John 3:13-15**). This brings eternal damnation upon the contentious brother. No amount of attendances, giving, singing, or prayers can disguise the real intent of wrong brethren. "We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also" (**1 John 4:19-21**).

The message of Jesus Christ, to His churches of Christ, is that of "reconciliation." "Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (**2 Corinthians 5:18-19**).

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(#138) The Proverbs of Solomon 19:3

Hey Ya'll, Wa' Chis

Proverbs 19:3: "The foolishness of a man twists his way, And his heart frets against the LORD."

In our day of Extreme "Sports," and irresponsible behavior, the Devil's Doctrine seems to be what a lot of people use to get themselves into terrible situations, only to blame God for their stupid decisions! When the Devil tempted Jesus Christ, he perverted a Scripture to make it seem to teach that whatever reckless decision one makes, God will send a "guardian angel" to save a person from their own choices! "Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge over you," and, "In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone"' (Matthew 4:5-6). In this, he quoted from Psalm 91:11-12, leaving out a crucial phrase, and teaching falsely that God has angels to "guard" us from our own recklessness! Jesus Christ replied by showing that the plain teaching of God's Word on that subject came from Deuteronomy 6:16: "Jesus said to him, 'It is written again, "You shall not tempt the LORD your God"' (Matthew 4:7). Jesus was emphasizing that humans should not put God in that situation by hurling ourselves into circumstances we should have avoided by obeying God!

Job's friends, and Job, had wrestled with the question: Why do bad things happen to good people? In God's response, He said to Job: "Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me: 'Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?'" (Job 40:7-8) God was saying, "Man up, and take responsibility for your own life, and quit blaming Me for your ignorance or weaknesses!" People seem to think they can live their lives without thinking of God or how His Word would bring Wisdom into their decisions, and then they want to curse God, blaming Him because their lives are in wreck and ruin. That's like a driver under the influence who kills people and destroys property, who would sue the car maker because he/she did it using a car! How useless (and ignorant!) is it to blame our Maker because we have thrown away what could have otherwise been a good life because we didn't listen to our Maker's instructions? Jesus' lament over the Israelites says it all: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37)

How reckless is it to continue to live without Jesus Christ? "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

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## (#139) The Proverbs of Solomon **19:9**

### To Tell The Truth About Lies

**Proverbs 19:9: "A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies shall perish."**

Bearing "false witness" is the same as a "lie." This is not the same as someone who misunderstands, isn't sure, or otherwise is innocently ignorant of the facts. A "false witness" (liar) is stating as fact that which is intended to avoid the truth about someone or something. Since it is "Satan who deceives the whole world" (**Revelation 12:9**), God hates "a false witness *who* speaks lies" (**Proverbs 6:19**), and so should every righteous person (**Psalms 119:104** - "Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way;" **Psalms 119:163** - "I hate and abhor lying, *But* I love Your law"). Since we cannot know everything, as God does, we must rely upon witnesses to give us facts upon which to make our decisions. As we sift through human statements, God's witness is always right, best, and objective. **Other proverbs** uphold this: "A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies will not escape" (**Proverbs 19:5**); "A disreputable witness scorns justice, And the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity" (**Proverbs 19:28**); "A man who bears false witness against his neighbor Is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow" (**Proverbs 25:18**).

"A false witness shall perish, But the man who hears him will speak endlessly" (**Proverbs 21:28**). And the tragedy is many will hear the man who speaks endlessly on a subject about which he has been sorely misinformed. "**Evolution**" is one of these subjects based entirely upon "false witness," as there is no scientific fact, no passage of Scripture, and no common sense known to mankind that establishes any, or all, of the "lie." "**Global Warming**" (now, "Climate Change") is another subject about which only "false witnesses" are sure, while weather scientists and observers demonstrate that, for many decades, there is no "global warming" directly caused by humans (or occurring at all!). And God's decree in Scripture (**Genesis 8:22**) continues to be obeyed throughout His Earth, regardless of media propaganda contrariwise. Since Satan is "the accuser of our brethren" (**Revelation 12:10**), then "**gossip**" about fellow humans is bearing "false witness" not based upon fact or our personal knowledge.

Jesus Christ was crucified by "false witnesses." "Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 'We heard Him say, "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" But not even then did their testimony agree" (**Mark 14:55-59**). Jesus never said that of the "temple made with hands" but spoke "of the temple of His body" (**John 2:19-22**).

There is so much "false witness" being passed around, established truth centers around Jesus Christ, Who said, "for this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the



truth hears My voice" (**John 18:37**). Everyone who follows Jesus Christ will be truthful with him/herself, and with others, because "no lie is of the truth" (**1 John 2:21**).

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(#140) The Proverbs of Solomon 19:10

Robbing Hoods

Proverbs 19:10: "Luxury is not fitting for a fool, Much less for a servant to rule over princes."

"Luxury" describes the pampered life one would expect in someone who has the power of office, but may have little regard for God. Jesus contrasted the Prophet John the Baptist who preached God's Word to "those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury [but] are in kings' courts" (**Luke 7:25**). "A fool" disregards God's Word and Way, for "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered" (**Proverbs 28:26**), thus "a fool" living in "luxury" is unexpected or unintended.

The same can be said for "a servant" to have "rule over princes," it upsets the natural order. Of the four things that are disturbing on earth, one is "a servant when he reigns" (**Proverbs 30:21-23**). Solomon later will say such a condition is "folly" (ridiculous): "I have seen servants on horses, While princes walk on the ground like servants" (**Ecclesiastes 10:7**). Revolution can overturn the order in society, and there are consequences that must be faced.

"Class Warfare" seems to always have existed, and is based upon false arguments: **(1) zero sum philosophy**= the amount of natural resources and wealth are fixed, so no one may become rich without taking away that wealth from someone else. This motivates the "poor" to resent the "rich" and feel they are being left out of a "fair and equal" distribution of wealth. Solomon said there is wealth for everyone blessed by God: "As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor-this is the gift of God" (**Ecclesiastes 5:19**). There is no limit as to whom or how much God will bless. **(2) envy and covetousness**= lusting for what the "haves" have without doing their work to achieve it. When those who "have not" train their eyes on what others "have," desiring to obtain it by evil means, we have an example of what God calls "covetousness," which is idolatry (**Colossians 3:5**). Jesus said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (**Luke 12:15**). Satisfaction with what we "have" comes from trusting God to be in charge: "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (**Hebrews 13:5**).

When the "poor" are encouraged to covet what the "rich" have, they become "robbing hoods," whether or not they are members of a political party, labor union, man-made religion, or underworld brotherhood!

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**(#141) The Proverbs of Solomon 19:16**

**Do or Die**

**Proverbs 19:16:** "He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of his ways will die."

The only way to keep (save) one's "soul" is to keep (obey) God's commandment. The only other choice one has is to lose one's soul by refusing to keep God's commandment!

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were given a charge with consequence: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'" (**Genesis 2:16-17**). When they ate what was forbidden, they "died," since death is a separation from life and they were separated from the "tree of life" (**Genesis 3:22-24**). When they left Eden, God gave them a way to worship Him acceptably (**Genesis 4:3-7**), and Abel did but Cain did not (**Hebrews 11:4**).

Those who lived under Moses' Law had the same decision placed before them. "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them" (**Deuteronomy 30:15-20**).

Jesus Christ summed it up in His first recorded sermon: "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (**Matthew 7:13-14**). The Apostle Peter pointed out the better of the two choices when he said: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (**Acts 4:12**). Saul of Tarsus was told: "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (**Acts 22:16**).

The Judgment Day will be simple, also: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (**2 Corinthians 5:10**).

Don't care-less, accept the invitation: Do or Die!

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(#142) The Proverbs of Solomon 19:22

Be A Man, Son

Proverbs 19:22: "What is desired in a man is kindness, And a poor man is better than a liar."

"Kindness" is evenness of temperament, constant return of goodness, consideration of others. It is a universally-recognized, timeless, and desirable, trait in humanity. "Love is kind" (**1 Corinthians 13:4**), and uninspired people see its wisdom: "It's nice to be important, it's more important to be nice" (*Anon*); "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted" (*Aesop*); "Forget injuries, never forget kindnesses" (*Confucius*); "Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see" (*Mark Twain*); "A kind word is like a Spring day" (Russian proverb); "Kindness, like a boomerang, always returns" (*Anon*).

It is a man-trait, especially, because it takes a real man to be strong enough to return good for evil. "See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all" (**1 Thessalonians 5:15**). Kindness is a show of strength, but often mistaken for weakness. Regardless of who persecuted Jesus Christ, or how, He was more of a man than they, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed" (**1 Peter 2:21-24**).

"A poor man is better than a liar" shows that poverty should not be used as an excuse for immorality. "Better is the poor who walks in his integrity Than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich" (**Proverbs 28:6**).

"The God of the Israelites was: "Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake them" (**Nehemiah 9:17**). Jesus Christ based one of His best-known commandments upon this characteristic of God: "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil" (**Luke 6:35**). Christians should develop the same characteristic: "Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one

another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*" (**Colossians 3:12-13**).

God's kindness extended through Jesus Christ should touch a sinner's heart (**Titus 3:3-4**), and the sinner should kindly return toward God (**Acts 16:22-34**). "Be a man, Son," obey the Gospel today (**Mark 16:16**), and make this a kinder world!

Cruel words can make us cry, but so can deeds of kindness.

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### **(#143) The Proverbs of Solomon 19:27**

#### **Don't Miss A Word!**

**Proverbs 19:27:** "Cease listening to instruction, my son, And you will stray from the words of knowledge."

The way to be lost is to not listen to directions. The way to forget "the words of knowledge" is to quit listening. There is discipline in listening, and there is no learning without it. This has already been stated: "Listen to counsel and receive instruction, That you may be wise in your latter days" (**Proverbs 19:20**).

Just because some people quit listening doesn't mean the sermon is over. "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest 'according to the order of Melchizedek,' of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (**Hebrews 5:9-14**). Bible truths need to be learned, and it is not the Bible or the sermon that needs shortening, but more often, there are some in the audience who need to grow in understanding!

Jesus Christ used parables, not to disguise spiritual truth, but to give "milk-drinkers" something to understand until they could handle "meat" of the Word of God. "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their ears*, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them'" (**Matthew 13:13-15**).

It is difficult enough to lead the disinterested to study the word of God (**2 Timothy 2:15**), but there many who make the path to faith even more difficult, even impossible. Jesus condemned such people in His day: "But woe to you, scribes

and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in" (**Matthew 23:13**); "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered" (**Luke 11:52**).

"Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word" (**John 8:43**). When people are children of the Devil (**John 8:44**), they hear him, but they don't want to know ("understand") the manner of Jesus' teaching, therefore, they "are not able to listen" to what He taught! No Holy Spirit intervention needed here, but the sinner must desire to know Jesus Christ, as Paul's first recorded sermon indicated: "Men *and* brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him*" (**Acts 13:26-27**). The people who crucified Jesus Christ were guilty of the same attitude toward truth as everyone today who has not obeyed the Gospel (**Mark 16:15-16**). Don't let this be your undoing!

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(#144) The Proverbs of Solomon 20:1

Make That "Toast" – Toast!

Proverbs 20:1: "Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise."

"Wine" that's "a mocker," capable of causing "drunkenness," is fermented. "New wine" expands by fermentation and could burst an "old wineskin" (**Luke 5:37-39**). Jesus Christ's first miracle changed water into "good wine," or "grape juice," because the "master of the feast" was not expecting the fresh juice Jesus had made, because the guests had "well drunk" (**John 2:1-11**), that is, the grape juice they began with had been fermenting while they had been drinking. The only description of the Passover juice Jesus used to represent the blood of His sacrifice is "fruit of the vine," depicting it as freshly squeezed as possible (**Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18**).

Knowing the risk of drunkenness (**Ephesians 5:18**), Paul advised "a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities" (**1 Timothy 5:23**). Timothy must have been an abstainer that he would have to be told "a little" could have medicinal use. "Strong drink" is that which is fermented to a greater degree, thus stronger in its effects, sometimes known as "liquor or spirits." The obvious impact is not just drunkenness, but violence.

"Drunk" is a term referring to a loss of moral judgment, therefore "wine mocks" its user. Noah became drunk, lost his sense of shame, and exposed his nakedness (**Genesis 9:20-28**); Lot lost his sense of sexual purity and committed incest with his daughters (**Genesis 19:30-38**); alcoholics who "linger long at the wine," and "go in search of mixed wine" lose control of their words, bodily injuries, and memory

(**Proverbs 23:29-35**); government officials lose control of their sense of duty, law, justice and pervert and ignore the laws of the land (**Proverbs 31:4-5**); religious leaders err in knowledge of God's Word, and vomit on their tables (**Isaiah 28:7-8**). In spite of the damage it causes, wine and spirits are freely sold and consumed—how unwise is that? One of the areas of the United States that consumes the most alcoholic beverages is Washington, D.C.! No wonder that government perverts Constitutional Law, because those drunk on power lose their inhibitions by being drunk on alcohol!

Alcohol is a drug, but other drugs that are abused for their power over a human being are certainly included in the term "sorcery or witchcraft" (the Greek word is "pharmakeia," a dispenser of drugs). All substances that chemically control a person are included in this discussion, and must be sparingly used, not for "social" purposes!

All "drunkenness" will be punished on the Judgment Day (**1 Peter 4:1-5**), because it is a "work of the flesh" that keeps a person from inheriting the "kingdom of God" (**Galatians 5:19-21**). "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (**Acts 2:38**). Clear your mind from the effects of drugs, and cleanse your soul by coming to Jesus Christ.

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#### **(#145) The Proverbs of Solomon 20:6**

##### **Don't Ask Me!**

**Proverbs 20:6: "Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, But who can find a faithful man?"**

People who boast of their own good deeds, usually are without the works to back it up! "Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?'" (**Proverbs 20:9**). Even the Apostle Paul, with humility before God, said, "I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord" (**1 Corinthians 4:4**).

The good way to prevent this creeping arrogance is to: "Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips" (**Proverbs 27:2**). Self-praise is no praise! Beware of those who are in the business of promoting themselves! "A man's pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor" (**Proverbs 29:23**). Under New Testament Law, Christians must: "Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion" (**Romans 12:16**). The reason is that "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God" (**James 4:6-7**).

Everyone else can see through such boasting, as other proverbs declare: "Even a child is known by his deeds, Whether what he does *is* pure and right" (**Proverbs 20:11**); "Whoever falsely boasts of giving *is* like clouds and wind without

rain" (Proverbs 25:14); "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Proverbs 26:12).

If you were to ask: How good am I? Don't ask yourself! Ask Jesus Christ: "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). "For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Galatians 6:3-4). "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

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(#146) The Proverbs of Solomon 20:15

What's It Worth To You?

Proverbs 20:15: "There is gold and a multitude of rubies, But the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel."

In the old song, "the best things in life are free," and it certainly seems that way. Even a credit card commercial contrasts the price of things bought with the card, with the human emotions that are generated but are "priceless." The thing that makes the "best things" "free" are what God provides and our God-given abilities to value them!

No one questions the universal value placed on "gold," or "a multitude of rubies," but this proverb places these "things" in a scale of values along with something that's "free" which should be considered as a valuable. **The Book of Proverbs** keeps this consideration before us, for: "wisdom" is "more precious than rubies" (Proverbs 3:15); "wisdom is better than rubies" (Proverbs 8:11); and "a virtuous wife's" "worth is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10). Wisdom's "gain" is better "than fine gold" (Proverbs 3:14); it is better to receive "knowledge rather than choice gold" (Proverbs 8:10); it is "much better to get wisdom than gold" (Proverbs 16:16); "loving favor" is to be chosen "rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1). All of these "free" things are either equal or superior to gold and rubies.

The most impressive appearance anyone should have is not the gold in the pocket or rubies on the body, but a mouth with knowledge, for "out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45).

Solomon had asked for "an understanding heart" and God gave him that plus "both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days" (1 Kings 3:11-13), and there was not, until "a greater than Solomon" came in the form of Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:42). Jesus' Wisdom helps millions of people long after gold and rubies would have been spent. Men who exude Wisdom remain appreciated and useful long after age and gravity have affected their outer appearance.

A Christian woman should make an impression on someone with her true, timeless, inner beauty, not with gold or rubies. "Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel-- rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (**1 Peter 3:3-4**). Worldly women, by their lack of clothing, draw attention to bodies, not their "hidden person of the heart." The Red Carpets of the Award Season are all about "who" they are wearing, and not "who" they are following.

What's it worth to you: gold and rubies worth money, or God's Wisdom in the Bible—priceless!

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### **(#147) The Proverbs of Solomon 20:20**

#### **The Damnable Generation**

**Proverbs 20:20: "Whoever curses his father or his mother, His lamp will be put out in deep darkness."**

Nothing on earth equals the depravity of a child who disrespects, abuses, or condemns his/her father and/or mother! A father and a mother are necessary to give each individual life. Something is seriously missing from the moral compass of anyone who has no regard for those who have given the most precious gift humanly possible: life! It is horrible to see it so widespread that it characterizes a generation. "There is a generation that curses its father, And does not bless its mother" (**Proverbs 30:11**). A generation who believes no matter whatever they want, they are entitled to, they can have it, they have no gratitude for it, will not "'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth'" (**Ephesians 6:2-3**). Instead of "The Greatest Generation," they will be known as "The Damnable Generation!"

Under Moses' Law, such people did not deserve to live, for disrespect of parents has created a child's heart of disrespect for all other authority, even God! "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death" (**Exodus 21:17**); "For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood *shall* be upon him" (**Leviticus 20:9**).

There is no death penalty in the Law of Christ, but there is an eternal condemnation for those who never repent of this attitude. "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord" (**Colossians 3:20**). "But we know that the law *is* good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust" (**1 Timothy 1:8-11**).



Some of the worst sins ever committed by humans are not only violations of God's Law, and "murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers" are listed with them, but this also is contrary to common sensibilities in every culture on earth! The Apostle John wrote that hatred in the heart can lead to murder (**1 John 3:15**), so a child's hatred of either or both parents produces cursing of them, or even murdering them! Many mass murders began with the slaughter of a parent or parents.

Repent, before your children do the same to you.

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(#148) The Proverbs of Solomon 20:25

Don't Break Out In A Rash!

Proverbs 20:25: "It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy, And afterward to reconsider his vows."

The mouth can promise things that the mind later regrets. Sexual passion is a powerful accelerator for senseless promises. "For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Because John had said to him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her.' And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, 'Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter.' And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded *it* to be given to *her*. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother" (**Matthew 14:3-11**). Even Herod, however, felt compelled to keep his oath. Many people in the hormonal heat of a moment promise marriage and fidelity, only to forget after they "cool down," but God doesn't forget!

Jephthah rashly vowed that if God would give him victory over the Ammonites, he would devote "whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me" to the LORD. His daughter, his only child, was that person, and "he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man" (**Judges 11:29-40**). Many people "bargain with God" in time of stress, only to forget their vow, but God doesn't forget it!

King Saul had forbidden his army to eat during the fighting against the Philistines, under the penalty of death. His son, Jonathan ate some honey, and that death penalty was suddenly forgotten by Saul (**1 Samuel 14:24-31**). Saul forgot his other obligations to God, too.

Solomon later will state that rash vows before God that are not kept make one a fool, and God has "no pleasure in fools." The time to avoid this sin is by thinking through the responsibility involved, before such vows are made. "Do not be rash with your

mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool's voice *is known* by *his* many words. When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For *He has* no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed- Better not to vow than to vow and not pay" (**Ecclesiastes 5:2-7**).

Repenting, and being "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:38**) is a commitment. Don't break out in a rash, but obey this Gospel "from the heart" (**Romans 6:17**).

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## **(#149) The Proverbs of Solomon 20:26**

### **True Political Correctness**

**Proverbs 20:26:** "A wise king sifts out the wicked, And brings the threshing wheel over them."

God sets the standard for what is "wicked" (**Exodus 23:7; Proverbs 6:12-19**), and this judgment is His. "The LORD tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Upon the wicked He will rain coals; Fire and brimstone and a burning wind *Shall be* the portion of their cup" (**Psalms 11:5-6**).

**Another proverb** also states this formula: "Take away the dross from silver, And it will go to the silversmith *for* jewelry. Take away the wicked from before the king, And his throne will be established in righteousness" (**Proverbs 25:4-5**). These proverbs call for a government purge of evil. What has happened is the government has been purged of good! Political Correctness ("P.C.") has lowered good morals to the level of evil, as Paul warned Christians: "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits'" (**1 Corinthians 15:33**). "P.C." is being used to silence the Truth of God and the righteous. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them" (**Romans 1:18-19**). Only the unrighteous would "suppress the truth in unrighteousness," and when this is done by those in government, it is called "political correctness" by them, "censorship" by their citizens, but brings down "the wrath of God" upon them!

True "political correctness" is for government leaders to realize it is "an abomination for kings to commit wickedness" (**Proverbs 16:12**), and a king should scatter "all evil with his eyes" (**Proverbs 20:8**). Every president, king, queen, prime minister, or other leading representative of government that overlooks and allows the wicked to have influence in government is not wise and is wicked!

A main job of a God-ordained government leader, is to be "not a terror to good works, but to evil" because "he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil" (**Romans 13:1-4**). Since "there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God," then citizen's obedience is required

(**Romans 13:1**). However, when the wicked rule, the people pay. **Other proverbs** state this plainly: "Like a roaring lion and a charging bear *Is* a wicked ruler over poor people" (**Proverbs 28:15**); "If a ruler pays attention to lies, All his servants *become* wicked" (**Proverbs 29:12**).

When people keep voting for "the lesser of two evils," they have supported the wicked who rule! Citizens who should have a say in their government, but accept the wicked in government, deserve what they get! The outcries of the Israelites let God know they were ready for deliverance: "Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*" (**Exodus 2:23-25**). A word to the wise is sufficient.

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(#150) The Proverbs of Solomon 20:27

Why God Makes Common Sense

Proverbs 20:27: "The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the inner depths of his heart."

The mythological Doctrine of Evolution, which is disseminated by the Government, cannot account for "the spirit of a man," since it is God Who "forms the spirit of man within him" (**Zechariah 12:1**), but "Evolution" is an atheistic belief. No "scientist" can ever disprove the existence of "the spirit of a man," for true science can only deal with what is physically observable, and, as the bodily resurrected Jesus Christ said: "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" (**Luke 24:39**).

Because God has given each human a spirit, what God has provided makes sense! God has:

- 1) **Created "the heavens and the earth"** (**Genesis 1:1**) and all scientific knowledge is centered upon learning facts about what it is, how it works, believing the evidence that points to God as Creator (**Hebrews 11:3**; **Romans 1:20-23**). God as Creator is what makes sense;
- 2) **Made heterosexual, monogamous marriage the basis of all civilized societies** (**Genesis 2:18-25**), and the plan for conception, birth, and proper instruction of each individual in the world (**Colossians 3:18-21**). God's Design of Marriage, always makes moral sense, and always works when followed;
- 3) **Readily inspired and controlled the writing of the Bible through men!** It is because of this, we know "that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit" (**2 Peter 1:20-21**). This is how we have the New Testament "which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (**Ephesians 3:5**). This is why Bible study makes sense;

- 4) **Given moral guidelines that are obvious, and fit with our "common sense!"**
 "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (**Galatians 5:19-21**);
- 5) **Given the Gospel of our salvation that makes sense!** "Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (**Galatians 3:24-29**).

With the Gospel of Christ, look into your heart, for "As in water face *reflects* face, So a man's heart *reveals* the man" (**Proverbs 27:19**).

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**(#151) The Proverbs of Solomon 20:28**

**How To Lose An Election**

**Proverbs 20:28: "Mercy and truth preserve the king, And by lovingkindness he upholds his throne."**

"Mercy" is "kindness, forgiveness, protection offered," and kingdoms, countries, or empires that incorporate "mercy" in its laws and leaders can survive. Jesus used such a king to make a powerful point about "forgiveness" (**Matthew 18:21-35**), for a servant is forgiven his debt but he will not forgive one who owes him. The king wanted his "compassion" to be passed along, and when it wasn't, the unforgiving servant was condemned, and Jesus said, "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses" (**Matthew 18:35**). Mercy shows a king's heart for his people. When people realize that "the king" (or leader of government, whether an individual or congress) doesn't care what pain, anguish, penalty, or price government policies impose upon them, they will seek a change of leadership.

"Truth" is "fact, reality, veracity, honesty," and laws of the land must have this at their core, or else there is no standard for conduct. The Israelites settled in their Promised Land, but failed to follow God's Law. "In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes" (**Judges 17:6; 21:25**). Governments without Biblical, Constitutional, or Legislative truth for a moral compass are destined to fail. "Truth" is the backbone of good law. All law that is based upon half-truths, lies, or deceit should be uncovered and removed.

Without "mercy and truth" for limits, no government will survive, and without personal "lovingkindness," elections are lost! "My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, *And* so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths" (**Proverbs 3:1-6**).

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(#152) The Proverbs of Solomon 21:3

Why There Are Hypocrites In Church

Proverbs 21:3: "To do righteousness and justice Is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice."

The worship gatherings of the churches of Christ are designed by God to bring the righteous together before the Lord to offer their sacrifices. "Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (**1 Peter 2:4-5**). The worship of the churches of Christ consists of offering sacrifices of: Lord's Supper and preaching the Bible (**Acts 20:7**), contributions (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**), prayers (**Acts 12:5**), and singing with the heart (**Ephesians 5:19**). Christians do not assemble because their lives are perfected, but because they need to remember that God forgives those who are "giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (**Colossians 1:12-14**).

There are, however, people who attend church to cover up their daily sins, but this proverb shows that church ("sacrifice") can never take the place of daily commitment to obey God. In other words, God is not honored with sacrifices from someone who disobeys daily! God's Prophet, Samuel, told King Saul: "Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from *being* king" (**1 Samuel 15:22-23**). God's Prophet, Hosea, told Israelites: "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (**Hosea 6:6**). In the New Testament, Christians are told: "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (**Hebrews 13:15-16**).

All who try to use church worship as a cover for their daily sinful lives are the definition of "hypocrite." Going through the motions of worship without devotion to

God's Law the rest of the time is rejected by God. "Sinners in the congregation of the righteous" (**Psalm 1:5**) will not be tolerated. Jesus Christ has said: "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men'" (**Mark 7:6-7**).

NO ONE is a hypocrite just because they attend church—hypocrites are life-long sinners who use church to mask their sins!

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### **(#153) The Proverbs of Solomon 21:5**

#### **Hurry Up And Lose**

**Proverbs 21:5:** "The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty."

Work, hard work, and plenty of it is the only way to true wealth. Though God could have Created "the heavens and the earth" instantaneously, He used 6 days to establish a work ethic for humankind (**Genesis 1:1-2:3**). His example established the principle of daily work, which He commanded in the Law of Moses: "'Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed" (**Exodus 23:12**); and in the Law of Christ: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (**1 Corinthians 15:58**). "Steadfast" and "immovable" are the characteristics of "steady" and "sure." The Apostle Paul obeyed God's work ethic to support his preaching of the Gospel: "For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God" (**1 Thessalonians 2:9**).

**Other proverbs** emphasize this principle: "Do you see a man *who* excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men" (**Proverbs 22:29**); "Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, *And* attend to your herds; For riches are not forever, Nor does a crown *endure* to all generations. *When* the hay is removed, and the tender grass shows itself, And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in, The lambs *will provide* your clothing, And the goats the price of a field; *You shall have* enough goats' milk for your food, For the food of your household, And the nourishment of your maidservants" (**Proverbs 27:23-27**).

The other side of this is found in the common phrase, "haste makes waste." ALL shortcuts, fast tracks, or quick remedies will fail. There is no gambling game, lottery, raffle, pool, sweepstakes, betting, or bookmaking that substitutes for diligent, daily, hard work, either in personal satisfaction or security. "An inheritance gained hastily at the beginning Will not be blessed at the end" (**Proverbs 20:21**). Second generation fortunes seldom survive; most lottery winners squander their monies; those on an

unearned government dole can lose it on a whim; gamblers are generally just contributing their bets to someone else's jackpot!

No one has ever thought of a scheme that betters God's principle of satisfying work! Solomon will later say: "The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep" (**Ecclesiastes 5:12**). He then explains: "Here is what I have seen: *It is* good and fitting *for one* to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor-this *is* the gift of God. For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps *him* busy with the joy of his heart" (**Ecclesiastes 5:18-20**).

Keeping busy is the work of God which He rewards, but hastening to be rich will fail. Do you want to hurry up and lose?

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(#154) The Proverbs of Solomon 21:6-7

Scram, Scam!

Proverbs 21:6-7: "Getting treasures by a lying tongue Is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death. The violence of the wicked will destroy them, Because they refuse to do justice."

To those who can't "be successful" by gambling (Lesson #154, **Proverbs 21:5**), this proverbial truth is against those who will steal by "a lying tongue!" Scam artists, politicians, swindlers, con-men are all ways to describe those who will say anything to trick, deceive, or extort someone else's "treasures" and who are opening themselves up to their victims' payback, which could create a violent end! **Other proverbs** give warnings about this conduct: "He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow, And the rod of his anger will fail" (**Proverbs 22:8**); "One who increases his possessions by usury and extortion Gathers it for him who will pity the poor" (**Proverbs 28:8**). When the victim(s) discover the lies, retaliation and retribution are the result.

The Capital of corruption, Jerusalem, was condemned by God because: "In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbors by extortion, and have forgotten Me," says the Lord GOD. 'Behold, therefore, I beat My fists at the dishonest profit which you have made, and at the bloodshed which has been in your midst'" (**Ezekiel 22:12-13**). Those who are "unjust" will "speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage" (**2 Peter 2:18-19**).

Don't believe empty promises by people: (1) you don't know (telephone solicitations, "junk mail" offers, campaigning politicians); (2) whose promises must be repeated because they haven't honored them the first time they offered; (3) whose promises contradict facts or Scripture; (4) who are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The Law of Jesus Christ, if obeyed, will stop predators: "For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'You shall not covet,' and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (**Romans 13:9-10**).

Should "the wicked" resort to "violence," then, as Jesus said, "all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (**Matthew 26:52**). "Bullying" is any intimidation by words or actions along with the threat of danger, whether by means of: Facebook, Internet, late-night knock on the door, taxation without representation, ridicule, gossip, whispering, *ad nauseum*. Solomon later will say, "He who digs a pit will fall into it, And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent" (**Ecclesiastes 10:8**). All bullies should expect to be brought down. The giant Goliath was an intimidater. "Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, 'Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.' And the Philistine said, 'I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together'" (**1 Samuel 17:8-10**). The lad, David, prevailed with a sling and a stone because his faith in God's help would bring down any bully (**1 Samuel 17:45-52**).

A properly informed citizenry, with faith in God, can stop bullying in its tracks.

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## **(#155) The Proverbs of Solomon 21:16**

### **A Rambling Wreck**

**Proverbs 21:16: "A man who wanders from the way of understanding Will rest in the assembly of the dead."**

The word "wanders" shows the lack of faith, purpose, and moral compass it takes to prepare a soul for Heaven. Jesus pointed this out in His Sermon on the Mount: "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (**Matthew 7:13-14**). "Understanding" the Will of God means applying God's Law to ourselves: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him'" (**Acts 10:34-35**); "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. (**1 John 2:29**); "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices



righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous" (**1 John 3:7**). It shows a definite lack of understanding to live a life without God's guidance. Breaking through God's Wall of Wisdom always leaves one unprotected and unable to withstand the ravages of life! **Another proverb** exposes the other side of God's Judgment: "He who follows righteousness and mercy Finds life, righteousness and honor" (**Proverbs 21:21**).

The "assembly of the dead" guaranteed to the sinner will include, according to **2 Peter 2:4-11**, "angels who sinned," "the ancient world," perverted cities of "Sodom and Gomorrah," "especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority." According to Jesus' Gospel, the world is divided into those who obey Him and those who refuse: "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned'" (**Mark 16:15-16**).

Is your life leading you to Heaven, or are you a rambling wreck? It's your choice!

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(#156) The Proverbs of Solomon 21:20

Where To Discover Oil

Proverbs 21:20: "There is desirable treasure, And oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man squanders it."

"Desirable treasure" and "oil" are signs of God's blessings, but are for "the dwelling of the wise." God blesses the "wise," or those who obey Him, as Solomon wrote: "Here is what I have seen: *It is* good and fitting *for one* to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it *is* his heritage. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor-this *is* the gift of God" (**Ecclesiastes 5:18-19**). "Oil" (pressed olives but not petroleum!) was among the plentiful bounties of the Promised Land for the Israelites (**Deuteronomy 8:7-10**), and was used for burning in lamps (**Exodus 27:20-21**), dedication of sacred items (**Exodus 40:9-11**), dedication of kings (**1 Samuel 16:11-13**), and was included in many sacrifices in Moses' Law (**Leviticus, Numbers**). God blesses those who are dedicated to Him.

It takes a "foolish man" to "squander it." Those who refuse to live by God's code of conduct will "waste" (literally, scatter, throw away) whatever possessions and life he or she owns (**Luke 15:13**)! Jesus Christ used "foolish virgins" to show what happens to those who make no provision to keep their lamps burning with oil (**Matthew 25:1-13**): they are unprepared to go in to the wedding, and once the door is closed, they are left outside. What good does it do for God to bless a fool, who will not learn from those blessings to love and worship the God who gave them?

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**(#157) The Proverbs of Solomon 21:22**

**Weak Shall Overcome**

**Proverbs 21:22:** "A wise man scales the city of the mighty, And brings down the trusted stronghold."

The worldly method of winning involves might, strength, power, force, violence. All strongholds can be overcome, for attacking armies can: build a surrounding fire and "burn 'em out" (**Judges 9:45-49**); build up earthen ramps and go over the wall (**Ezekiel 4:2; 17:17**); or cut off water and food supplies (**2 Chronicles 32:9-11**). There is no completely invincible location on earth that cannot be overcome! The mightiest strengths of mankind always have inherent weakness(es).

God's way, however, is the way of wisdom, as He has said: "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts'" (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). God's wisdom is also opposite to what humanism teaches: "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (**James 3:16-17**).

This is certainly true of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled" (**2 Corinthians 10:3-6**).

What God does to overcome the strength of mankind uses finesse and apparent "weakness." "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence" (**1 Corinthians 1:25-29**).

The love of God (**Romans 5:8**), the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (**John 10:17-18**), and the inspired written instruction of the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 12:13**) can conquer sinners all over the world with peace (**Galatians 6:16**). Jesus Christ said: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:15-16**).

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(#158) The Proverbs of Solomon 21:29

Choose One: A Statue’s Face Or An Obedient Heart?

Proverbs 21:29: “A wicked man hardens his face, But as for the upright, he establishes his way.”

Jesus Christ “steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (**Luke 9:51**) which indicated His purpose of heart was to complete the work of salvation by being crucified, buried, but resurrected the third day (**Luke 9:21-22**). To “harden” one’s face, however, describes a person who is determined to sin. It was Pharaoh’s decision, not God’s appeal through Moses, that caused him to “harden his heart” (**Exodus 4:21; 7:3; Exodus 14:4**); the same for the Canaanites Joshua defeated (**Joshua 11:1-4, Joshua 11:15-20**); and for the Israelites in their 40-year Wilderness wandering (**Psalms 95:7-11**; an example for Christians NOT to follow, **Hebrews 3:7-19**).

Other proverbs state this clearly: “Happy is the man who is always reverent, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity” (**Proverbs 28:14**); “He who *is* often rebuked, *and* hardens *his* neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (**Proverbs 29:1**). Those who are “always reverent” will listen and obey God’s Will written in the Scriptures, but those who refuse to be “often rebuked” will be more determined to keep sinning, therefore it could be said that God “has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens” (**Romans 9:18**).

“The upright” will make every exposure to Scripture have its effect, as David said: “*You are* my portion, O LORD; I have said that I would keep Your words. I entreated Your favor with *my* whole heart; Be merciful to me according to Your word. I thought about my ways, And turned my feet to Your testimonies. I made haste, and did not delay To keep Your commandments” (**Psalms 119:57-60**). Solomon later will emphasize this truth: “Words of the wise, *spoken* quietly, *should be* heard Rather than the shout of a ruler of fools” (**Ecclesiastes 9:17**); “The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd” (**Ecclesiastes 12:11**). In other words, Wisdom will be permanently attached to a wise person without having to be forced by “the shout of a ruler of fools,” but pushing one’s thoughts in the right direction, like “goads” (or prods). True “scholars” drive home their truths, not like false-scholarship today, always challenging truth with questions and doubt.

Flinty faces fail, truth- filled hearts set faces toward Heaven.



(#159) The Proverbs of Solomon 22:6

Well Begun, Half Done

Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Children are not computers or robots to be programmed with perfection. God created humans with free will to make choices about their life's activities, so when Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden had chosen to violate God's Rules for them He asked them: "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" (**Genesis 3:11**). They had obviously chosen a different decision which the serpent had offered.

Parents' duties are summarized thusly: "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (**Deuteronomy 6:7**). It is up to both parents, husband and wife, to keep God's Word before their child, and not leave it up to grandparents, video games, school teachers, neighbors, or TV! This training should start "from childhood" (literally, "as a baby," **2 Timothy 3:15**); from mother and grandmother (**2 Timothy 1:5**); under direct guidance of the father (**Ephesians 6:4**). The tragedy of single-parenting is that this burden often becomes too great for one to adequately, evenly achieve.

Parents' must individualize God's instructions to each child, and begin them on the right way ("he should go"). Teach the child what is expected, fill each child with a hungering and thirsting for God's Word. "Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul" (**Proverbs 29:17**). The joy of parenting is seeing God's Word being internalized by each child. The successful parent has placed their child's hand in God's Hand. God knows that even as adults, we should be like the Apostle Paul, who wrote: "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 3:12-14**). No child will mechanically make all the right decisions, but sin and forgiveness of sin is what life is about, and God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (**2 Peter 3:9**).

Parents' must realize that God does not hold them responsible for their children's adult decisions! Even in God's Law through Moses this was true: "Fathers shall not be put to death for *their* children, nor shall the children be put to death for *their* fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin" (**Deuteronomy 24:16**). David phrased it right in **Psalms 34:11**: "Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD."

Parents are only responsible for how they start their children in life, not for the end result of their lives!

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**(#160) The Proverbs of Solomon 22:14**

**Free Sex, Or Dumb Ox?**

**Proverbs 22:14: "The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit; He who is abhorred by the LORD will fall there."**

Solomon has already warned men not to listen to the overtures of "an immoral woman:" "For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth *is* smoother than oil; But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell. Lest you ponder *her* path of life-Her ways are unstable; You do not know *them*" (**Proverbs 5:3-6**); "With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, With her flattering lips she seduced him. Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks" (**Proverbs 7:21-22**). The words of Solomon, if heeded, would keep men far enough away from the "immoral woman" that he could not see nor hear her temptations: "Remove your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her house" (**Proverbs 5:8**). A woman who has no respect for a man's soul or God's rules for purity in marriage, misleads with her mouth, for she may be "loud and rebellious," free with her kisses, and full of false promises (**Proverbs 7:10-14**). She is a "deep pit" for she can take a man down in sin further than he may be able to recover. According to another proverb: "For a harlot *is* a deep pit, And a seductress *is* a narrow well. She also lies in wait as *for* a victim, And increases the unfaithful among men" (**Proverbs 23:27-28**). The depiction of a "seductress" being a "narrow well" shows the difficulty, or the impossibility, of a man climbing out of the darkness into which he has fallen.

That she is aggressive ("lies in wait") means that the man needs to be on the defensive, protecting himself against the Devil's temptation. Men can sin in their hearts just by looking (**Matthew 5:27-28**), so women who dress provocatively are responsible for leading men astray in their thoughts. God teaches Christian women to be selective, sensitive, and serene in their choice of clothing: "in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works" (**1 Timothy 2:9-10**). Men are seduced by an "immoral woman" who aggressively promises freedom from guilt, indiscriminately kisses, dresses seductively, and gives sexual favors sinfully! Though society seems to build sympathy for indecent, ungodly, and immoral women, the "immoral woman" in the proverb is no victim, instead she victimizes the man!

Those who please God will refuse such a temptation of the flesh, whether in person, screen, television, or magazine: "And I find more bitter than death The woman whose heart *is* snares and nets, Whose hands *are* fetters. He who pleases God shall escape from her, But the sinner shall be trapped by her" (**Ecclesiastes 7:26**).

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(#161) The Proverbs of Solomon 22:28

The Sin Of Revisionist History

Proverbs 22:28: "Do not remove the ancient landmark Which your fathers have set."

There is a good reason God lets older people come before younger ones: to pass along wisdom learned from experiences! The lesson from history is that we should learn from history! The term "landmark" refers to memorials, surveyor marks, or boundaries that define territory that has been established for a reason. Since the flood in Noah's day, God has established "the boundary" for water, so that a world-wide flood will never occur again (**Psalm 104:6-9**). When God sent the Israelites into their Promised Land, He specified its boundaries (**Numbers 34:1-15**). Moses' Law, therefore included the command to respect their "neighbor's landmark" (**Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17**), also called "the ancient landmark" (**Proverbs 23:10-11**). God's wrath was upon those who disregarded those landmarks (**Hosea 5:10**), and His appeal was for them to "set up signposts, make landmarks" (**Jeremiah 31:21**). People who tear down or disregard landmarks are destined to be confused and lost.

There is a concerted effort to tear down history's lessons and highlights in textbooks, and teach children to disregard where they have come from. It is an alienated and foreign nation that does not respect its roots. In the United States of America, the "ancient landmark" which our "fathers have set" is the Declaration of Independence and Constitution with its Bill of Rights. Tear this down and all the good governing of the past is for nothing. Historical signposts and landmarks tell a people where they have been and where they could go.

The history of the churches of Christ is told in the New Testament and can be traced throughout the centuries until now. All those who disregard the beginning history are confused and lost. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in *the likeness* of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (**Romans 6:3-6**).



(#162) The Proverbs of Solomon 23:6-8

Bar-B-Que Bait

Proverbs 23:6-8: "Do not eat the bread of a miser, Nor desire his delicacies; For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. 'Eat and drink!' he

says to you, But his heart is not with you. The morsel you have eaten, you will vomit up, And waste your pleasant words."

Excesses are dangerous at the dinner table (**Proverbs 23:19-21**). In **Proverbs 23:1-3**, we are warned to not let appetite overrule our good judgment, or in other words, don't let a politician buy our vote with bar-b-que! Then, in **Proverbs 23:4-5**, we are warned not to irresponsibly chase after "riches" as our only goal in life, for there is much more to a good life than that! Now, in **Proverbs 23:6-8**, we are again warned not to listen to a "miser" encourage us to "eat and drink" his food, because he begrudges every bit of what we would enjoy. His heart is not as open as his invitation! The guest's "pleasant words" (table talk) will be wasted because the "miser" is resenting the guest's enjoyment.

Contrast this hypocritical feast with the genuineness that Jesus teaches Christians to have: "Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite *the* poor, *the* maimed, *the* lame, *the* blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just" (**Luke 14:12-14**). Jesus taught that there should be no underlying political motive for giving an invitation for a meal! "Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely" (**Luke 14:1**). When it says "they watched Him closely" it describes their sidelong, judgmental observations just looking for a reason to condemn Him.

The honesty of a Christian invitation is seen that when a fellow-Christian is in willful, deliberate sin, for which he/she refuses to repent, faithful Christians would refuse to extend social opportunity around the dinner table (**1 Corinthians 5:9-13**).

As Proverbs points out, good judgment should always take precedence over appetite and social fellowship!

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### **(#163) The Proverbs of Solomon 23:15-16**

#### **Learning or Losing?**

**Proverbs 23:15-16: "My son, if your heart is wise, My heart will rejoice-indeed, I myself; Yes, my inmost being will rejoice When your lips speak right things."**

True success in education is seen when the pupil has learned to "speak right things," that is, by giving right answers (**Luke 10:27-28**), speaking truth in love (**Ephesians 4:14-15**), and "hungering and thirsting after righteousness" (**Matthew 5:6**). The teacher is rewarded, not by government salary set by union standards, but by personal, internal rejoicing, a feeling of accomplishment, being satisfied to see another soul determined to know what is best.

**Other Proverbs** say: "The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, *And* a good report makes the bones healthy" (**Proverbs 15:30**). This is the reward for parents of a child: "Listen to your father who begot you, *And* do not despise your mother when she is old" (**Proverbs 23:22**); especially when the parents have been good examples of their teaching: "My son, give me your heart, *And* let your eyes observe my ways" (**Proverbs 23:26**).

The "no child left behind" philosophy is a false standard purely designed to feed the egos of politicians! That idea has little to do with true education, but of keeping children within their own artificially-determined age group, herded along with "social promotions" as a group, for the sake of "body counts" in the classroom, so that tax monies may be distributed according to politically-established parameters! Education is a matter of sparking inquisitiveness, sharing knowledge, and exercising thought processes which help the mind distinguish limits, laws, and license. "Education" which does not ignite the fires of knowledge within the pupil is falsely so-called. "Education" which is designed to tell children what to think, rather than teaching them to think, is "propaganda." "Teachers" who are simply teaching to some politically-driven "standard test" not only are missing the real thrill of teaching, but are falsely advertising themselves as "educators."

This proverb (**23:15-16**) should remind us of why students have been eager to go to school, and why "home-schooling" numbers have burgeoned in recent decades.

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(#164) The Proverbs of Solomon 24:3-6

Wisdom Builds Houses and Lives

Proverbs 24:3-6: "Through wisdom a house is built, *And* by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong, *Yes*, a man of knowledge increases strength; For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, *And* in a multitude of counselors there is safety."

Building a house is an illustration of applied wisdom: the dream is expressed, detailed plans are made and then followed. Every house follows this procedure, therefore every house is an expression of wisdom. "For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (**Hebrews 3:4**). "Wisdom" shows the thoughtfulness of the plan; "understanding" shows the application to the materials; "knowledge" completes the details of the plan in building a house.

When wisdom is applied to life, itself, it's a strengthening exercise that makes one "strong." A truly "wise" person first "knows" what should be the right course of action; second, realizes his/her personal, individual responsibility in "war;" third, knows to gather various opinions from "counselors" (advisers) to see if there may be other factors to consider.

"Knowledge" gives "strength" to overcome many situations when "fools" don't know what to do: "They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed" (**1 Peter 2:8**).

"War" should not always just be associated with violent conflict between nations, but also with the spiritual "war" each one of us must fight: "Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation" (**1 Peter 2:11-12**).

It does no good to just follow the majority opinion, for the majority is not always right, as those who recommended sailing against the inspired prophetic advisory of Paul (**Acts 27:9-21**) found out!

Another proverb teaches this same principle: "If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small" (**Proverbs 24:10**).

A wise man/ woman will build a strong house, preparing for the storms of life by obeying the wisdom of Jesus Christ (**Matthew 7:24-27**).

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**(#165) The Proverbs of Solomon 24:7**

**If It's Over Your Head, Think Again**

**Proverbs 24:7: "Wisdom is too lofty for a fool; He does not open his mouth in the gate."**

Wisdom is available to all throughout the Bible: "Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children, For blessed *are those* who keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, And do not disdain *it*. Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the LORD; But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death" (**Proverbs 8:32-36**); "Wise *people* store up knowledge, But the mouth of the foolish *is* near destruction" (**Proverbs 10:14**); "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (**2 Timothy 3:14-15**).

"A fool" will not take advantage of wisdom's availability, but instead makes the excuse that is "too lofty" (over his/her head) to learn. Rather than exert effort to learn more of wisdom and become a stronger person, "a fool" would rather condemn the truth and those who teach the truth by saying it (and they) are: racist, smart aleck, self-righteous, hypocritical, judgmental, or know-it-alls. Those who use such lame and false labels to avoid learning God's Wisdom show who is "a fool."

"The gate" is a term used to describe the place of governing (**Deuteronomy 21:18-21**) and tribunal judgments (**Genesis 23:17-18; Hebrews 13:12**). "A fool" has nothing wise to say "in the gate," and his silence shows his uselessness in applying wisdom! If you think wisdom is over your head, think again! Jesus Christ said: "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own authority" (**John 7:17**).

Thought: Injustices are the product of fools and few wise men!

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(#166) The Proverbs of Solomon 24:8-9

The Road To Hell Is Paved With Bad Intentions

Proverbs 24:8-9: "He who plots to do evil Will be called a schemer. The devising of foolishness is sin, And the scoffer is an abomination to men."

Plotting "to do evil," and "devising of foolishness" describe one whose heart is captivated by wickedness. These were the people God destroyed in Noah's flood (**Genesis 6:5-8**), in Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 13:14; 19:4-5; Ezekiel 16:49-50**), in the wilderness wandering (**Joshua 5:6**), and will be destroyed on the Judgment Day to come (**Matthew 7:13-29**). This is the corrupted heart of worldly people from which Jesus Christ saves (**Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Peter 1:2-4**) by obedience to His Gospel (**Mark 16:15-16; Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11**). It is bad enough for one's heart to "scheme" (plan, plot, or devise) evil, but "the scoffer" is the wicked person who is willing to attack righteousness and the righteous with false charges, denials, and ridicule. "A proud *and* haughty *man* - 'Scoffer' is his name; He acts with arrogant pride" (**Proverbs 21:24**). Scoffers should be considered "an abomination to men" because they create confusion, wickedness, and distrust in those who would otherwise confidently follow God's Will (**Philippians 1:3-7; Hebrews 3:5-6; 10:35-39**).

This has NOTHING WHATEVER to do with honest, righteous, godly Christians who, though striving to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (**2 Peter 3:18**), may sin through temptation and weakness of the flesh (**Romans 8:26; Hebrews 4:15**). **Another proverb** says: "For a righteous *man* may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity" (**Proverbs 24:16**). The righteous person who stumbles and sins will "repent and pray" that God will forgive that sin (**Acts 8:12-13, 22; 1 John 1:7-10**), but the wicked person who has no intention of obeying Jesus Christ for forgiveness has absolutely no prospect of forgiveness (**Mark 16:16; Ezekiel 18:21-29**).

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## (#167) The Proverbs of Solomon **24:11-12**

### What Baby's Blood Is On Your Hands?

**Proverbs 24:11-12:** "Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, 'Surely we did not know this,' Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?"

This proverb does not contradict "capital punishment," for God has decreed to all mankind that murderers should die: "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man" (**Genesis 9:6**). Those who bear false witness in a court of law, once discovered, should receive the penalty they thought would go to the one they witnessed against (**Deuteronomy 19:16-20**), that "those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you." Today, since "the authorities that exist are appointed by God," then they "should not bear the sword in vain," rather "he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (**Romans 13:1-4**).

When this "sword" is used against those who are doing "good," the rest of us must "deliver" them! When government justifies the slaughter of innocent babies with "abortion," it is against God!

Thus, when someone is unjustly accused and condemned to death, our spirits should be stirred and actions aroused to "deliver" them from the hands of those who are about to kill the innocent. We cannot justify ourselves by saying "Surely, we did not know this," for God knows whether or not we knew, and He will hold everyone accountable for what they knew but did not do. We cannot pull the blanket of "ignorance" over our heart and hide from God, for "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings" (**Jeremiah 17:10; Revelation 2:23**).

No one knows about tomorrow, but God, so we must act today. "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit;' whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you *ought* to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.' But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin" (**James 4:13-17**).

God will hold accountable every Supreme Court Justice, President, Congressman/woman, and citizen who has mandated, supported, encouraged, advised, and consented to this slaughter of innocents. They, like King Herod (**Matthew 2:16-21**), will face their Maker with babies' blood on their souls, unless they turn to the blood of the baby of Bethlehem whom God spared (**Acts 2:38**)! Christians cannot let those who govern think "they did not know this," but by teaching, voting, discussing, and praying, try to bring moral sense back into their decision(s).

**(#168) The Proverbs of Solomon 24:13-14**

**How Sweet It Is**

**Proverbs 24:13-14:** "My son, eat honey because it is good, And the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste; So shall the knowledge of wisdom be to your soul; If you have found it, there is a prospect, And your hope will not be cut off."

"Honey" represents a fruitful land, for God promised Israel "a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey" (**Exodus 3:8; Deuteronomy 8:7-9**). It is the sweetest natural substance known to man (**Judges 14:18**), which brightens up the mind (**1 Samuel 14:24-29**), but too much at once can overload our body's system (**Proverbs 25:16**). Glorifying our own selves is, to our egos, as sickening as too much honey. **Proverbs 25:27:** "It is not good to eat much honey; So to seek one's own glory *is not* glory." Think about this when Harlotwood actors give themselves Academy Awards, the Music Industry gives itself Grammy Awards, and the Broadway Stage professionals give themselves Tony Awards!

Sweeter than honey (better for our souls than honey for our bodies!) are God's judgments (**Psalms 19:9-10**) and God's Word (**Ezekiel 3:1-4; Revelation 10:8-11**). It is possible, however, to try to understand and do too much at one time. Solomon later will teach: "I have seen everything in my days of vanity: There is a just *man* who perishes in his righteousness, And there is a wicked *man* who prolongs *life* in his wickedness. Do not be overly righteous, Nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself? Do not be overly wicked, Nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time? *It is* good that you grasp this, And also not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all" (**Ecclesiastes 7:15-18**). Righteousness is developed by processing the Word of God (**John 10:37-38**) and obeying it (**1 John 3:5-7**).

Don't try to do too much at once, because, as Jesus said, "Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble" (**Matthew 6:34**). Begin with: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**).



**(#169) The Proverbs of Solomon 24:19-20**

**Imitation of Life**

**Proverbs 24:19-20:** "Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the wicked; For there will be no prospect for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out."

This proverb echoes what David had said in a Psalm: "Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down

like the grass, And wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring *it* to pass" (**Psalm 37:1-5**).

Since "envy is rottenness to the bones" (**Proverbs 14:30**), and ends at death (**Ecclesiastes 9:5-6**), and was the motivation for the Jews' condemnation of Jesus (**Matthew 27:17-18**), and contradictions of the Gospel of Christ (**Acts 13:45**), then it is clearly coming from a carnal mindset and condemned as sin (**1 Corinthians 3:3; Galatians 5:19-21**). The person who envies has allowed someone else to become a standard to be reached, while ignoring the standards God has given. The Jews felt Jesus had become more popular and influential than they were, and were willing to ignore God's Law given through Moses and have Jesus unjustly condemned and killed!

According to **James 3:13-17**, envy is "earthly, sensual, demonic," and is accompanied by "confusion and every evil thing." To become "envious" of someone else's language, beauty, skills, situation, or possessions, kills the Christian's ability to, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (**Romans 12:15**). The person who is envied becomes an idol to be imitated, but those who follow Jesus Christ should be our model: "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ" (**1 Corinthians 11:1**); and never let evil be our goal: "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God" (**3 John 11**). If we pattern ourselves like the wicked, we will receive their reward!

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(#170) The Proverbs of Solomon 24:21-22

Can this be saved?

Proverbs 24:21-22: "My son, fear the LORD and the king; Do not associate with those given to change; For their calamity will rise suddenly, And who knows the ruin those two can bring?"

"Fear" here is used in the sense of "respect," and since "there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (**Romans 13:1**), then those who respect God's authority will never set about to overthrow or disrespect "the authorities that exist." This is clearly expressed in other passages, such as **Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17**. "The king" who was to govern over God's people, however, was commanded by God, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from *the one* before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment *to* the right hand or *to* the left, and that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel" (**Deuteronomy 17:18-20**). "The king" (representing the highest authority in government) should (1) read the God-given Scriptures; (2) respect their authority by

yielding to their commandments; **(3)** not consider himself above the law! In other words, if a "king" wants the respect of those who respect God, he must show respect to God!

Those "given to change," are the restless souls who feel the establishment cannot be right, any "new" way has to be better, and they, therefore, seek to "fundamentally change" whatever constitutional regulations that exist! Countries where this spark has been fanned into flames have burned their flags, ignored their constitutional laws, and been ruled by those who think themselves above the law! This is of the Devil, for this was the appeal: he made to Eve that caused the first sin (**Genesis 3:1-19**); in one of the temptations he made to Jesus Christ (**Luke 4:1-13**); behind the "cultural revolution" in the United States in the 1960's and political upheavals since.

Those who do not "fear the LORD" nor "fear the king" are both destroyers whose disrespect for God and His authority always produce disorder, destruction, and damnation! This is change without hope! King David said: "Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (**Psalms 40:4**). Asaph wrote: "Have respect to the covenant; For the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty" (**Psalms 74:20**). Jesus illustrated the disrespect the Jews had for God by the parable of "the owner of the vineyard" (God), and the "vinedressers" (Jews) in **Mark 12:1-12**.

God prophesied that Israelites would become so unfaithful in their Promised Land that God would let an outside people conquer them (**Deuteronomy 28**). That foreign nation was described very much like the "generation" that has arisen within the United States: "a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you" (**Deuteronomy 28:49-51**). Change the meanings of the words in language; make them intensely resentful of "the elderly" who have paved the way to a successful nation with sacrifices and blood; make them complete consumers with no ambition to work for profit to have to give to others; and who are so short-sighted and selfish they care not about the future "until they have destroyed you;" and you have an understanding of how a country can collapse! Though Deuteronomy was not a direct prophecy of our day and time, it surely paints a portrait of how any country can be destroyed!

"Who knows the ruin those two can bring?" This is a question some of us may be able to answer.

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**(#171) The Proverbs of Solomon 24:27**

**Comfort Is Not Job One!**

**Proverbs 24:27: "Prepare your outside work, Make it fit for yourself in the field; And afterward build your house."**

Work must come before convenience and comfort. The Garden of Eden came with a job (**Genesis 2:15**), having food requires work (**2 Thessalonians 3:10**), and this proverb emphasizes the comforts of a house depends upon how good of a job one does "outside" to earn that house! Many people have turned this completely around, for they are getting bigger and bolder houses, beyond what their parents have achieved, before establishing themselves in a career-type work. The order here taught by Wisdom should be to learn to work and earn while living with their parents so they are ready to embark upon working experiences that will help them toward their goal(s).

All Old Testament prophecies of the Israelites returning to their Promised Land were fulfilled in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, however not without urging. In **Ezra** chapter 4, the re-building of the temple in Jerusalem stalled out, but God sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to preach plainly (**Ezra 5:1**). The people should not have been building their own houses and neglecting God's House: "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.'" Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 'Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins? Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways!"'" (**Haggai 1:2-5**)

Jesus applied this very truth to spiritual matters when: "great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it -- lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple'" (**Luke 14:25-33**).

Jesus also said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (**Matthew 6:33**). Obey the Lord first (**Acts 2:38**), get a job second (**Ephesians 4:28**), then plan some comforts (**Proverbs 24:27**).

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(#172) The Proverbs of Solomon

What To Do When It's "Reigning"

This group of proverbs are good for understanding more about God-ordained government (**Romans 13:1-7**). The timelessness of these rules is seen in Christians who: "having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God" (**1 Peter 2:12-16**).

Proverbs 25:3: "As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, So the heart of kings is unsearchable."

Citizens outside of government circles may never fully comprehend its decisions, as "the heavens" and "the earth" may not completely be understood.

Proverbs 25:6-7: "Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of the great; 7 For it is better that he say to you, 'Come up here,' Than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen."

This is a good social rule to apply to almost any situation, as Jesus applied it spiritually in **Luke 14:7-11**.

Proverbs 25:15: "By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, And a gentle tongue breaks a bone."

It may take many appeals to be heard, but a ruler's quick response may come from irritation and anger. Patience is a virtue (**2 Peter 1:5-8**).

Proverbs 29:26: "Many seek the ruler's favor, But justice for man comes from the LORD."

Whatever government may decide, whether Supreme Court decision, Presidential Executive Order, or Congressional Legislation, the ultimate judgment of human behavior is in the hand of God only: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (**2 Corinthians 5:10**).

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## #173) The Proverbs of Solomon 24:23-25

### Judging With No Sympathy for Sin

**Proverbs 24:23-25:** "These things also belong to the wise: It is not good to show partiality in judgment. He who says to the wicked, 'You are righteous,' Him the people will curse; Nations will abhor him. But those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, And a good blessing will come upon them."

Not being objective in our moral judgments was condemned by God through Moses' Law:

- "You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor (**Leviticus 19:15**);
- "You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it" (**Deuteronomy 1:17**);
- "You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous" (**Deuteronomy 16:19**).

God's Wisdom was spoken through Solomon: "To show partiality is not good, Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress" (**Proverbs 28:21**). Then God, in the form of Jesus Christ, confirmed this truth: "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (**John 7:24**).

Moral judgment is NEVER condemned by God, but judging without God's morality ALWAYS IS! Christians must never judge behavior by a wrong standard, such as:

- 1) **Reversed Morals:** "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter...Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away justice from the righteous man!" (**Isaiah 5:20, 23**);
- 2) **Hypocritical Application:** "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (**Matthew 7:1-2**);
- 3) **Sympathetic Exception:** "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles--that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (**1 Corinthians 5:1-5**).

God will judge the world by His righteousness, not our accepted standard (**Psalms 9:8; Acts 17:30-31**), for "not he who commends himself is approved, but

whom the Lord commends" (**2 Corinthians 10:18**). We must do as He says, not as we feel: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned (**Mark 16:16**).

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(#174) The Proverbs of Solomon 25:17

Twitter This

Proverbs 25:17: "Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house, Lest he become weary of you and hate you."

If there ever was a cautionary warning about "social media," this is it! It is possible to "wear out our welcome." Facebook fans, beware. Not everyone wants to read about what your husband will have for supper, or how many messy diapers your baby has had, or how many trips you make to the store, or where you plan to grill food for company, or everything your children accomplish. The most tiresome invitation used to include, "and we have slides of our family," but now it seems to be "friend me on Facebook!" There are many who "unfriend" those who seem to "think" with Facebook, Twitter, or on other social media. Enough is enough.

Social media seems to have cultivated a climate that was condemned by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul: "And besides they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. Therefore I desire that the younger *widows* marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan" (**1 Timothy 5:13-15**). The responsibilities of home and family should be enough to keep one busy, and avoid being "gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not." With our constant, instant communication devices, people have forgotten the self-limiting barriers that should protect our privacy. It seems that "Generation N" (Narcissists) thinks everyone should be interested in everything going on in their lives without ever asking for that information!

The communication today is wonderful when used properly, but remember "too much familiarity breeds contempt." Try talking to God, He does not get tired: "pray without ceasing" (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**).

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**(#175) The Proverbs of Solomon 25:25**

**Drink Some Cold Water For A Change**

**Proverbs 25:25: "As cold water to a weary soul, So is good news from a far country."**

Nothing satisfies a tired, weary person, more than a drink of "cold water." Jesus preserved this thought when He emphasized that Christians should give "one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward" (**Matthew 10:42**). War is wearying, and the longer it is waged, the more desperate a country is for good news. When a propaganda press is a daily din of horrors and failures in that war, the public reacts by detesting any and all opposition to their enemies. Whether engaged in a war, or traveling overseas for business or family interests, those at home eagerly await good news about those they cannot see.

Getting good news from "a far country" may be done by:

**(1) Sending "spies" (or "reporters") to tell us what it is like**, although when Israelites sent 12 men to spy out the Promised Land before the people would enter, 10 of them "discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them" (**Numbers 32:9**), making God swear they would not enter that land (**Numbers 32:10-12**). Unfaithful reporters have misrepresented American interests in foreign lands for decades. Remember, looking through a camera lens limits the view of what actually happens. Learn the lesson of the Israelites in the wilderness – that God's Word always is right no matter who or how many say otherwise. Because of the false report of the 10 spies, "they despised the pleasant land; They did not believe His word, But complained in their tents, And did not heed the voice of the LORD. Therefore He raised up His hand *in an oath* against them, To overthrow them in the wilderness" (**Psalms 106:24-26**).

**(2) Seeing for ourselves:** "Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions" (**1 Kings 10:1**). When "the queen of Sheba" made her first-hand report, she said, "I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard" (**1 Kings 10:7**).

Jesus Christ repeatedly said, "I am going away and coming *back* to you" (**John 14:28**), and when He had gone into the "far country" of death, He came back with the good news that we could be with Him (**John 14:1-3**) by obeying Him (**Mark 16:15-16**). The Gospel of Jesus Christ is "good news" from "a far country," and is refreshing to every soul who drinks the water of life (**Revelation 22:17**).

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(#176) The Proverbs of Solomon 25:26

Picked Apart by Chickens

Proverbs 25:26: "A righteous man who falters before the wicked Is like a murky spring and a polluted well."

No one but Jesus Christ has been perfect but the ungodly Jews hurled every accusation against Him they could concoct. "And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him,

and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him" (**Luke 19:47-48**); "Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none" (**Matthew 26:59-60**); "And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, 'Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?' But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly" (**Matthew 27:12-14**).

Sinful people cannot wait to find "a righteous *man*" who sins, for then they may say, "Christians are hypocrites;" "I'm as good as anyone who goes to church;" "the Gospel of Christ hasn't helped all others be good," *ad nauseum*. And it is true as Solomon later said: "Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment, And cause it to give off a foul odor; So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor" (**Ecclesiastes 10:1**). No one is justifying sin in "a righteous man," "For a righteous *man* may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity" (**Proverbs 24:16**).

Sinners who point their finger at a Christian who "falters before the wicked" are:

- 1) hypocritical; arrogant; judgmental; unjust; and merciless, all of which are damned by the Word of God;
- 2) ignorant of the fact that they are "the wicked" and therefore damned by God;
- 3) expecting God to follow their standard of judgment (no sin can be condemned as long as a righteous person has sinned), instead of His standard of righteousness (**John 12:48-50; Acts 17:30-31**).

Knowing sinners seek to "justify themselves in the sight of men" (**Luke 16:15**), Christians must "Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time" (**Colossians 4:5**). But know this, no sinner's sins will be excused by any Christian's sin(s) because "those who are outside God judges" (**1 Corinthians 5:13**). If you are outside of Christ, you have no excuse and only one appeal. "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (**Acts 2:38**). Sinners, are you too "chicken" to see if you can do any better?

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### **(#177) The Proverbs of Solomon 26:1**

#### **Wasted R-E-S-P-E-C-T**

**Proverbs 26:1: "As snow in summer and rain in harvest, So honor is not fitting for a fool."**

**Some things don't even belong together in real life**, for God "gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season. He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest" (**Jeremiah 5:24**); and "snow" cannot fall in the hottest part of the year! **Another proverb** says "Like one who binds a stone in a sling Is he who gives honor to a fool" (**Proverbs 26:8**), for if a stone doesn't leave the sling, it is a completely wasted effort.

**"Honor" is "respect, esteem, admiration, reverence,"** and God's rule throughout the Bible is "those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (**1 Samuel 2:30**); "glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God" (**Romans 2:10-11**); "knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality" (**Colossians 3:24-25**).

**It is to be given selectively to people who show it toward God and His Word:** "And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen" (**Exodus 14:17-18**; **Psalms 66:1-7**); "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works *are* truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down" (**Daniel 4:37**); "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (**1 Timothy 1:17**).

**"Honor" should be given to:** "father and mother" (**Ephesians 6:2-3**), "the presence of an old man" (**Leviticus 19:32**), church "elders" (**1 Timothy 5:17**), "all" people (**1 Peter 2:17**), and "the king" (**1 Peter 2:17**).

**"Honor" should not go to people just because they are:** "mighty" (**Leviticus 19:15**), "receive honor from one another" (**John 5:44**), or a "fool" (**Proverbs 26:1**). It profanes our honor of God when we waste it upon people who "do not seek the honor that comes from the only God" (**John 5:44**). We should give "honor to whom honor" (**Romans 13:7**). Be careful whom you honor.

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(#178) The Proverbs of Solomon 26:2

Don't Fear Useless Cursing

Proverbs 26:2: "Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, So a curse without cause shall not alight."

The "flitting sparrow" and "flying swallow" hardly ever seem to use their feet because they are darting around. This illustration from real life shows the reason one should not worry when cursed "without cause" – "it shall not alight."

Useless curses include those made:

(1) using false gods: as Goliath did to David before the giant came down: "So the Philistine said to David, 'Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods" (**1 Samuel 17:43**). Those curses did nothing to David. So, also, are the "curses" made from voo-doo, sorcery, witchcraft, or any other false religion: "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had

executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time'" (**1 Kings 19:1-2**). This never happened to Elijah!

(2) falsely using Jehovah God, as with the expression, "Godd**n you." Only God can damn or condemn anyone, and He has stated who that is in His Bible: "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (**John 3:18-19**); "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**); "Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!" (**James 5:9**). People cannot command God's condemnation upon anyone God has not condemned!

(3) from a heart full of wickedness, for God can turn them back upon the wicked person who said them: "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity" (**Psalms 10:7**, read verses **2-11**); "As he loved cursing, so let it come to him; As he did not delight in blessing, so let it be far from him" (**Psalms 109:17**, read verses **6-20**); "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (**Romans 3:14**, read verses **10-18**).

The only condemnation anyone should fear is from God, and He has cleared the way for everyone to be saved by their obedience, for He: "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (**1 Timothy 2:4**); is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (**2 Peter 3:9**); sent Jesus, who said: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (**John 8:12**). Save yourself from the curse with cause!

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## **(#179) The Proverbs of Solomon 26:4-5**

### **The Contradiction of Fools**

**Proverbs 26:4-5: Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes."**

"Do not answer a fool" and "answer a fool" seem to be a contradiction of terms, but they are not! These commands are detached from each other by separate and different purposes. A "fool" is everyone who: rejects God's Wisdom and lives wickedly (**Psalms 53:1**); "spreads slander" (**Proverbs 10:18**); does evil for fun (**Proverbs 10:23**); "troubles his own house" (**Proverbs 11:29**); thinks he is right, regardless of the Bible (**Proverbs 12:15**); never listens to his father (**Proverbs 15:5**); can't have wisdom beaten into him (**Proverbs 17:10**)!

**“Do not answer a fool according to his folly”** put in other terms would be “don’t get down on his level.” We must not accept a fool’s method of reasoning in a lame attempt to reply “lest you also be like him,” that is, we also become foolish! Jesus Christ is, of course, our example, “who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously” (**1 Peter 2:23**), and therefore so should Christians do (**1 Peter 3:8-9**). Moses answered rebels rebelliously: “it went ill with Moses on account of them; Because they rebelled against His Spirit, So that he spoke rashly with his lips” (**Psalms 106:32-33**; read **Numbers 20:1-13**).

- a) It does no good to argue the “age of the earth” to Evolutionists who continually make up “millions and billions” of years with absolutely NO proof, whatsoever! The issue is *whether* God Created, not *when*! (And He did! **Genesis 1:1**; **Hebrews 11:3**)
- b) It is useless to argue the pain and suffering of women to those who cold-bloodedly murder babies by abortion. The weeping prophet, Elisha, predicted that the Syrians would “dash their children, and rip open their women with child” (**2 Kings 8:12**), which came true (**2 Kings 15:16**). The issue is respect for each human life because God made us (**Genesis 1:26-27**; **Psalms 139:13-18**).
- c) It is senseless to argue the bad effects of political policies to power-mad politicians who are determined to control every aspect of individual life! God delivered Israelites from slavery in Egypt (**Leviticus 26:13**), delivered them from oppression repeatedly (**Psalms 62:8-11**; **2 Kings 13:1-9**), and Christians should “not become slaves of men” (**1 Corinthians 7:21-23**).

**“Answer a fool according to his folly”** when silence would be mistaken for proof that he is right! Zophar thought Job was wrong and asked: “Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be vindicated?” (**Job 11:2**). Truly there is “A time to keep silence, And a time to speak” (**Ecclesiastes 3:7**). When a possessed “slave girl” proclaimed the truthfulness of Paul, he “greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And he came out that very hour” (**Acts 16:16-18**). When truth can be shown to be contradictory to error, Christians must speak! Jesus said that the world hates Him “because I testify of it that its works are evil” (**John 7:7**). Compromising with false teachers of the Bible lets them think they also are true (**1 Timothy 4:1-7**); bargaining with kidnappers lets them think they have some leverage; making a deal with terrorists lets them think they have won!

Jesus sent His disciples “out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (**Matthew 10:16**). No fool has a truthful answer against the Gospel of Jesus Christ which says: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (**Mark 16:16**).

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(#180) The Proverbs of Solomon 26:6-7, 9-10

Misplaced Trust

Proverbs 26:6-7, 9-10: "He who sends a message by the hand of a fool Cuts off his own feet and drinks violence. Like the legs of the lame that hang limp Is a proverb in the mouth of fools...Like a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard Is a proverb in the mouth of fools. The great God who formed all things Gives the fool his hire and the transgressor his wages.

"Fools" are people who live worldly lives and ignore God's Laws: "A wise *man* fears and departs from evil, But a fool rages and is self-confident" (**Proverbs 14:16**); "A stone *is* heavy and sand *is* weighty, But a fool's wrath *is* heavier than both of them" (**Proverbs 27:3**); "A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise *man* holds them back" (**Proverbs 29:11**); "A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand, But a fool's heart at his left" (**Ecclesiastes 10:2**). Therefore they cannot be trusted like someone who is obedient to God: "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (**Colossians 3:8-10**).

Verse 6: After reading about "fools" in the Book of Proverbs, knowing they do not respect God, truth, responsibility, or concern about others, depending upon "a fool" to accurately pass along "a message" makes the sender seem as lame as the message! Such is the stuff of gossip, slander, and libel: "He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips" (**Proverbs 20:19**). People who refuse to work are usually guilty of "gossip" (**2 Thessalonians 3:10-12**).

Verse 7: "A proverb" is designed to parallel an earthly truth with heavenly understanding. Solomon said: "And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out *and* set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and *what was* written was upright-words of truth" (**Ecclesiastes 12:9-10**). Jesus said: "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (**John 3:12**). "Lame legs" cannot bear their user, neither can a "proverb" convey truth to "a fool." Jesus used "parables" for that reason (**Matthew 13:10-13**).

Verse 9: "A drunkard" has lost sensitivity to pain (**Proverbs 23:35**), so would not consciously understand a parable that he/she taught!

Verse 10: ALL of this inequity, uncertainty, and lack of dependability will be paid back, for God will judge and punish "fools" by giving them their "hire" and pay them back what they have earned, for "he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality" (**Colossians 3:25**).

"Fools" can be saved, but only if they repent of being foolish. Christians were "once foolish," but saved by the "kindness and love of God our Savior" when they repented and were baptized "for the remission of sins" (**Titus 3:3-7; Acts 2:38, 41, 47**). Don't trust in foolishness!

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**(#181) The Proverbs of Solomon 26:18-19**

**Impractical Jokes**

**Proverbs 26:18-19: "Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, Is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, 'I was only joking!'"**

A "madman" is a person who is out of control because he/she isn't bothered by moral restraint, sympathetic feeling, or consideration for others. Anyone who indiscriminately "throws" around "firebrands" (or torches, bombs), "arrows" (or bullets, missiles), "death" (or ieds, drones, or other instruments of death) leaves a path of burned, wounded, or dead people! It does not excuse such behavior by simply saying, "I was only joking!" So-called "reality" TV shows that see "what people would do" set a standard of lies, deceit, and trickery that hardens the consciences of their audience against good judgment and sympathy. When angels of God warned Lot that Sodom would be destroyed for its perversions, "Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, 'Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!' But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking" (**Genesis 19:14**). When something is taken as a "joke," then the responses to it are not real, and in their case, they died because of it!

Christians are not to participate in such madness: "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (**Ephesians 5:3-6**). Such behavior doesn't become a Christian. What is condemned is: "filthiness" which is behavior without morals; "foolish talking" which is empty conversation that shows contempt or ridicule; "coarse jesting" which is the double-entendre, underhanded, turned meaning of words. All of these are what worldly comedy, practical jokes, and other types of madness are made of. Christians can have "fun," just not like "a madman." Do not be deceived by "empty words" that say otherwise, God will hold each individual responsible for his/her behavior on: "the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (**Romans 2:16**).

No joke!

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(#182) The Proverbs of Solomon 27:1

Who Knew?

Proverbs 27:1: "Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth."

Even the calendar is cause for humility! Who knew yesterday what would be today's final: weather result? Stock Market margins? Family sickness and death? Earthquake or storm damage? Job benefit or loss? Accident tally? Sports results?

Truly God proves to know much more than we do, for "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (**1 Corinthians 1:20**). All we can do is "number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom" (**Psalms 90:12**), that is, realize that every day we live brings us closer to death (**Hebrews 9:27**). "Boasting" is talk that has no substance, in other words, the person doesn't know what he/ she is talking about! "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit;' whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.' But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (**James 4:13-17**). It is not wrong to plan ahead, but it is wrong to think those plans are completely within our power to bring them about! Calendar humility is a reason to "Have faith in God" (**Mark 11:22**).

There is nothing in Scripture that gives prior warning to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, for He taught: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (**Matthew 24:6**); "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (**Matthew 24:42**); "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (**Matthew 24:44**); "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (**Matthew 25:13**). ALL who have set the day or times for Jesus to return have been TOTALLY FALSE, completely discredited in their Bible knowledge of this event, and proven to not be a Prophet of God (**Deuteronomy 18:21-22**)!

Because we are ignorant about "tomorrow," and the time of Jesus' Second Coming, why not obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ today and then plan "if the Lord wills?" "He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**).

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**(#183) The Proverbs of Solomon 27:4**

**Don't Cross Flooding Water**

**Proverbs 27:4: "Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, But who is able to stand before jealousy?"**

These are emotions that can get out of control, and therefore are dangerous for humans. "Anger, wrath, malice" are forbidden to Christians. "Anger" is irritation boiling up; "wrath" is anger carried over the next day(s); "malice" is the intent to harm the one who has provoked the anger (**Colossians 3:8**). We can get "angry" but must not lose control and "sin" (**Ephesians 4:26**); "the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (**James 1:20**); "jealousy" is wounded trust which may never be recovered, and is understandable in a husband whose wife commits adultery (**Proverbs 6:32-35**).

God is a "jealous God" (**Exodus 20:4-6; Deuteronomy 6:14-19**), because He expects those who agree to His covenant to be faithful in keeping their part of it. God is never out of control, but His "wrath" is against all who "do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (**1 Thessalonians 5:9-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**).

These are emotions in humans we should strive never to provoke, and "A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger" (**Proverbs 15:1**). Followers of Jesus Christ know He said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God" (**Matthew 5:9**). These are "emotions" of God that are avoided by our obedience to Him. "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned'" (**Mark 16:15-16**). Why cross a flooding water of emotions, now or forever?

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(#184) The Proverbs of Solomon 27:7

Are You Too Full To Eat?

Proverbs 27:7: "A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, But to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

When people are driven by hunger, it is surprising what they think is "sweet," or tasty and edible, even something "bitter!" But when people feel full and "satisfied," hardly anything would taste good, not even sweet "honeycomb!" Parents cannot make a child eat unless the child is hungry; food advertising is designed to create a sense of hunger; cultural dishes reflect how desperate the society was when the recipe was determined.

This has tremendous spiritual application. After delivering the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, and providing for them 40 years in the Wilderness, God warned them as they entered The Promised Land: "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not

forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest-when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied"...then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth... "Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish " (**Deuteronomy 8:10-20**). People who "have it good" don't think they need God, but they do!

The gravest danger to the church of Christ specifically, and America generally, is self-serving self-satisfaction and self-justification. People who have been convinced their own approval of religious practices is all that matters don't seem to care whether God approves or not! They think they are "full" and even God's blessings are not "sweet" enough to cause them to eat the Word of God! False preachers have convinced people they are saved before being baptized "into Christ Jesus" (**Romans 6:3**), and they think they are full with salvation and don't need the baptism that saves (**1 Peter 3:21**)!

Jesus' disciples, however, are those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (**Matthew 5:6**), but those who make Him sick, say "'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (**Revelation 3:17**). These sickening Christians don't see the need to attend Bible classes, hear sermons with an open heart (**Luke 24:27, 32**), or strive to learn more of God's Word through "diligence" (**2 Timothy 2:15**). Bible preachers, accurate worship services, faithful good deeds, Jesus Christ, Himself, cannot draw people who are "satisfied" without them! Jesus must be lifted above all "satisfied" people in order to "draw all peoples to Myself" (**John 12:32**).

Are you drawn to Jesus by the Word of God?

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### **(#185) The Proverbs of Solomon 27:8**

#### **Where Did You Find Greener Grass?**

**Proverbs 27:8: "Like a bird that wanders from its nest Is a man who wanders from his place."**

"A bird that wanders from its nest" has no protection from predators, no provisions for its babies, and no purpose in life. The "nest" is an important base of operation to which a bird may return that gives it reasonable security. The idea of the bird that "wanders" is one that leaves its purpose to chase after insecure and dangerous ways.

Through the Prophet Jeremiah, God asked His people: "Why do you gad about so much to change your way?" (**Jeremiah 2:26**). Surely this highlights a restlessness in humans that produces ruin.

Since everything God Created was "very good" (**Genesis 1:31**), why did Adam and Eve desire the only thing God didn't give to them (**Genesis 2:15-17**)?

Since God only made one woman to be married to one man (**Genesis 2:22-24**), why does an individual seek more than one spouse (**Genesis 4:19; 28:9; John 4:16-18**)?

Since God only created humans to be "male and female" (**Genesis 1:27**), why would either physical, birth-sex try to become the other one, either by a surgical operation or by practice (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**)?

Since obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ makes a person "a new creation" (**John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 5:17**), why would anyone want to use that as an excuse for leaving spouse and children (**1 Corinthians 7:16-24**)?

Since God specifies what spiritual sacrifices Christians must offer in worship (**Hebrews 13:15-16; Colossians 3:16; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2**), why would anyone think He would be pleased with anything else?

Wandering away from God's "nest" of rules never produces a better life. Jesus said He came "that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly" (**John 10:10**). There is no "other" gospel or variation of Jesus' Gospel that is better than what we have in the Bible: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (**Galatians 1:6-10**).

The grass is never greener outside God's commandments!

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(#186) The Proverbs of Solomon 27:11-12

Use Your Radar

Proverbs 27:11-12: "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, That I may answer him who reproaches me. A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself; The simple pass on and are punished."

Radar (an acronym for **radio detection and ranging** first used in 1941) is an application of radio waves that extends human "sight" far beyond the range of the normal eye. It has use in trains, planes, automobiles, weather forecasting, cooking, space exploration, *et. al.* It has come to be associated with "an awareness, sensitivity, or foreboding of things to come."

According to the Bible, humans have access to moral "radar" that should be very helpful:

1) The God Who Sees All. "The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works" (**Psalm 33:13-15**); "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good" (**Proverbs 15:3**); and even in the New Testament: "For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things" (**1 John 3:20**). Whatever God commands, advises, or explains about the future result of human behavior should alert each of us to "watch out" for what is ahead.

2) Our Consciences. Everyone has been given by God an inner "radar" to sense whether a thought or action is right or wrong. This is not, by itself, a moral standard, for we can ignorantly violate God's standard of righteousness while we have a "good conscience" (example, Saul of Tarsus killing Christians, **Acts 9:1**, with a "good conscience," **Acts 23:1**); a conscience can become "evil" (**Hebrews 10:22**); or even "seared" (**1 Timothy 4:1-3**). When educated by studying God's Word, however, a conscience can project ahead to sense whether a thought or action should be followed, for "the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith" (**1 Timothy 1:5**). A "good conscience" lets us know we have done God's Will even though others say we haven't (**1 Peter 3:16**), and it won't let us claim to be saved before we are baptized (**1 Peter 3:21**). Our Bible-oriented conscience should alert each of us to "watch out" for what is ahead.

3) Our Prudence (or good judgment). Christians must use their good judgment (be prudent) by heeding the warning signs (God's Word, consciences, experiences): "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (**Hebrews 5:14**). Regarding His Second Coming and destruction of the world, Jesus has said: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (**Matthew 25:13**). There is NO "radar" for the exact "day nor the hour," but the moral "radar" sweep should show us to be constantly prepared: "You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober" (**1 Thessalonians 5:5-6**).

"The simple" will "pass on and be punished." Which are you? Use your "radar."

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## **(#187) The Proverbs of Solomon 27:20**

### **Enough Is Enough**

**Proverbs 27:20: "Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied."**

The 19<sup>th</sup> James Bond movie title seems to express where this Proverb is going, "The World Is Not Enough" (1999). What the eye can see, the heart can covet, and covetousness is an always-open, never-filled hole which is easily dug in people's hearts. Jesus taught this when He said: "'Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.' Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: 'The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?" So he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. Then He said to His disciples, 'Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing'" (Luke 12:15-23). Life is wasted when it is devoted to "more, more, and more!" If profit is not shared, but only invested in self, there is little satisfaction in that business! The hope for change drives the industries of: politics, fashion, amusements, advertising, education.

Covetousness is being stirred up when: poorer people see what richer people have and want it for themselves without paying the price for it; when companies continue to raise profit levels for itself without an increase in quality, quantity, or service of their goods; government wants for itself more of what its citizens have earned; husbands and wives want other partners than God permits in a marriage; children are given things instead of love, and they want to start their independence with all the things their parents have worked for all their lives!

Insatiable, dissatisfied, discontented, unhappy, and voracious, are some of the words that describe this attitude of heart. "Hell" (a.k.a. "the grave") is never full, for there is always room for one more to die and be buried. "Destruction" (or the ruination of life) always claims another victim. "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:6-10). If "the love of money" is our driving force in life, there is nothing but sorrow ahead! Doing right is the satisfying reward God gives to all who obey Him (Proverbs 19:23).

**The Book of Proverbs** also says: "The leech has two daughters-Give and Give! There are three things that are never satisfied, Four never say, 'Enough!': The grave, The barren womb, The earth that is not satisfied with water-And the fire never says, 'Enough!'" (**Proverbs 30:15-16**). Each of these are fit pictures of the perpetual dissatisfaction in a covetous heart! Indeed "the proud man... does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as hell, And he *is* like death, and cannot be satisfied, He gathers to himself all nations And heaps up for himself all peoples" (**Habakkuk 2:5**).

"Let your conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (**Hebrews 13:5**). When will you think "enough is enough?"

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(#188) The Proverbs of Solomon 28:2

For Which Leader Do You Vote?

Proverbs 28:2: "Because of the transgression of a land, many are its princes; But by a man of understanding and knowledge Right will be prolonged."

A country, nation, and people who become corrupted by "transgression," has frequent, often violent, turnovers in leaders. Solomon later said: "When the righteous rejoice, there is great glory; But when the wicked arise, men hide themselves" (**Proverbs 28:12**). God spoke through Jeremiah and said, "'O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?' says the LORD. 'Look, as the clay *is* in the potter's hand, so *are* you in My hand, O house of Israel! The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it'" (**Jeremiah 18:6-10**). God's case against Israel was because they followed their wicked king, instead of obeying God: "When I would have healed Israel, Then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered, And the wickedness of Samaria. For they have committed fraud; A thief comes in; A band of robbers takes spoil outside. They do not consider in their hearts *That* I remember all their wickedness; Now their own deeds have surrounded them; They are before My face. They make a king glad with their wickedness, And princes with their lies" (**Hosea 7:1-3**). A nation that chooses corrupt leaders has chosen its own destruction!

The only remedy is to turn to God and choose "a man of understanding *and* knowledge" so that "right will be prolonged." Not all government leaders are to be followed if they abandon God: "Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*, 'Let us break Their bonds in

pieces And cast away Their cords from us.' He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 'Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion'" (**Psalm 2:1-6**). No concerted effort of "the kings of the earth" can overthrow God's "King," Jesus Christ, who now is on the throne of David in Heaven (**Acts 2:25-32**). Only a President and Congressional leaders who understand and know God's Will can and should lead a country in the right way! It is by God's Wisdom that "kings reign, And rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, All the judges of the earth" (**Proverbs 8:15-16**).

It is a wicked people who elect (and re-elect!) wicked leaders who justify their wickedness!

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### **(#189) The Proverbs of Solomon 28:3**

#### **Beware of the Merciless Poor**

**Proverbs 28:3: "A poor man who oppresses the poor Is like a driving rain which leaves no food."**

"A driving rain" can wash away planted seeds, top soil, and even the crops, themselves. "A poor man who oppresses" is merciless and unforgiving to those like himself. Power or authority in the hands of one who hasn't earned it is a weapon of mass destruction!

Jesus Christ, who was "greater than Solomon" (**Matthew 12:42**), best described this wisdom in **Matthew 18:23-35**: "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses" (**Matthew 18:23-35**).

People have a tendency to not show pity to those who have sinned like they have, though their sin may have been worse! A "poor man" is harder and more impatient

with other "poor" people because they are like he was. James warns us of this attitude: "So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment" (**James 2:12-13**).

Anyone who knows what it is like to have sins forgiven (**Mark 16:15-16**) should know how to forgive others: "He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy" (**Proverbs 28:13**). We who have admitted our own sins before God should have compassion on others.

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(#190) The Proverbs of Solomon 28:4

Beware of the Law of the Land

Proverbs 28:4: "Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, But such as keep the law contend with them."

The "lawless" (violators of God's Will), will band together, pass laws of the land, and have Judges in courts which encourage the "lawless" to continue in their "lawlessness!" Those who "praise the wicked" when they continue in their "wickedness" are in complete conflict with God, Who "will not justify the wicked" (**Exodus 23:7**). God said through His Prophet, Isaiah: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to *those who* are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight! Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink, Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away justice from the righteous man!" (**Isaiah 5:20-23**). People who call "evil" "good" don't change God's definitions of "evil" or "good!" People who "justify the wicked for a bribe" have their reward—the "bribe!" These are also those who "take away justice from the righteous man!" In other words, those who practice righteousness should not, and cannot, expect to receive praise, or justice, from the "wicked" who are justifying wickedness! When Jesus Christ walked the Earth: "the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God'" (**Luke 16:14-15**).

Those who "keep the law contend with them," that is, are obligated to: 1) make clear to all what God's Law says; **2)** refuse to compromise that Law; **3)** warn all men of the error of their ways. The Psalmist said: "You who love the LORD, hate evil!" (**Psalms 97:10**). Before the world-wide flood of destruction in Noah's day, God's prophet, "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him'" (**Jude 14-15**). When Lot lived among sexual perverts in Sodom, he was "oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man,

dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds" (**2 Peter 2:7-8**; **Jude 7**; **Genesis 19:1-29**). Christians must "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light" (**Ephesians 5:11-13**).

Christians cannot, must not: 1) just "get along" with those who disregard God's Bible; nor **2)** compromise their own righteousness so that the lawless people won't notice them; nor **3)** seek the accolades or approval of the lawless wicked! Jesus taught His Apostles: "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (**Matthew 10:27-28**). And the Apostles taught Christians that "since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believed and therefore I spoke,' we also believe and therefore speak" (**2 Corinthians 4:13**), and this without fear: "most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (**Philippians 1:14**). There never has been a better time for Christians speak, or forever hold their peace!

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**(#191) The Proverbs of Solomon 28:24**

**Robbing "The Greatest Generation"**

**Proverbs 28:24: "Whoever robs his father or his mother, And says, 'It is no transgression,' The same is companion to a destroyer."**

Respect for parents keeps civilization alive. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you" (**Exodus 20:12**) is repeated in the Law of Jesus Christ: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth'" (**Ephesians 6:1-3**). It is this endearing quality in humanity that is the backbone of an enduring society. In addition to our fathers passing along to us "life," they should have "corrected *us*," and we should have "paid *them* respect" (**Hebrews 12:9**). But the commandment honors both father "and mother!" A mother's womb is a person's first safe house where God develops it (**Psalms 139:13-16**), and while unborn, the baby has not done "any good or evil" (**Romans 9:11**). The "fruit of the womb" is our inheritance from God (**Psalms 127:3**), and only godless, vicious people would "have no pity on the fruit of the womb" (**Isaiah 13:17-18**).

It's too bad in our society, often it is honoring one or the other parent, or neither at all! Whether we break into their houses and rob their possessions, or stealing our time away from them, or letting greedy government take their earnings, *when and how do we honor our parents?* Because they have lived through deprivation and destruction, they have been termed "the greatest generation." But do they deserve our dereliction

of duty to “honor” them? Not just that generation, but each generation that includes our parents deserves our “honor” and “respect.”

The Israelite Nation rejected God’s Son (**John 1:11-12**), and their destruction also included what they had done at home: “Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death” (**Mark 13:12**). What have we done to either protect or rob our parents? No child should dishonor its parent(s) and pass it off by saying “it is no transgression”—because it is! No society can last that disrespects its parents!

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(#192) The Proverbs of Solomon 28:28

Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are

Proverbs 28:28: “When the wicked arise, men hide themselves; But when they perish, the righteous increase.”

It is a moral world turned upside-down when wickedness rules. It was when “the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually” (**Genesis 6:5**) that God destroyed the entire earth with a flood of water, preserving only the life in Noah’s ark (**Genesis 7:11-24; 1 Peter 3:18-22**).

God promised to drive out the wicked inhabitants of the land He Promised to the Israelites with this explanation: “Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD is driving them out from before you” (**Deuteronomy 9:4**). When the Israelites became wicked, He drove them out of that land and then returned them after 70 years. “Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation” (**Jeremiah 25:12**); “They shall be carried to Babylon, and there they shall be until the day that I visit them,' says the LORD. 'Then I will bring them up and restore them to this place'" (**Jeremiah 27:22**). This restoration to that land has already occurred (**2 Chronicles 36:15-23; Ezra 1:1-11; Nehemiah 8:1-18**)!

Jesus Christ’s Second Coming will see that wickedness is once again destroyed: “But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (**Matthew 24:37-39; Acts 17:30-31**).

Before Solomon, David had recognized this truth: “The wicked prowl on every side, When vileness is exalted among the sons of men” (**Psalms 12:8**).

Other proverbs state this, even from the other side: "When the righteous rejoice, there is great glory; But when the wicked arise, men hide themselves" (**Proverbs 28:12**); "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan" (**Proverbs 29:2**); "When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases; But the righteous will see their fall" (**Proverbs 29:16**).

When the wicked rule, the righteous want no part of that administration, and "hide." However, the righteous must let their voices continue to pray to God for relief, and continue to teach righteousness to all who will hear. Paul reminded the Thessalonians "that our coming to you was not in vain. But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. For our exhortation did not *come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit. But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts" (**1 Thessalonians 2:1-4**), and to "pray without ceasing" (**1 Thessalonians 5:7**).

"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so" (**Psalms 107:2**), and pray "that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ" (**Colossians 4:3**).

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## **(#193) The Proverbs of Solomon 29:5**

### **What Liberty?**

**Proverbs 29:5: "A man who flatters his neighbor Spreads a net for his feet."**

One "who flatters" is using words to cover up the truth, and therefore is not helpful. To keep repeating the mantra that America is the "Land of the Free" while becoming enslaved by government is nothing but "flattery." Peter's inspired word of warning to the church of Christ also applies to a country, for there are those who "speak great swelling *words* of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage" (**2 Peter 2:18-19**).

#### **"Flattery" will get us nowhere, because:**

- 1) *it is not the whole truth*, and Jesus said: "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (**John 8:32**);
- 2) *it gives a false sense of security to our "neighbor,"* God said: "They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace" (**Jeremiah 6:14**);
- 3) *we will give account for "idle words"* for Jesus said: "I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (**Matthew 12:36-37**).

David had understood that only enemies would flatter: "Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face. For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part *is* destruction; Their throat *is* an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue" (**Psalms 5:8-9**). Following God's Way of Righteousness makes enemies clearly identified, and they **are not** faithful, **are** full of destruction, speak deadly words, and use flattery and not truth!

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has no "flattery" in it, as Paul wrote: "But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness— God *is* witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ" (**1 Thessalonians 2:4-6**). Jesus Christ stated the truth when He declared: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:16**). We either have, or have not, obeyed it! We either are, or are not, free!

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(#194) The Proverbs of Solomon 29:8-10

We Didn't Start The Fire

Proverbs 29:8-10: "Scoffers set a city aflame, But wise men turn away wrath. 9 If a wise man contends with a foolish man, Whether the fool rages or laughs, there is no peace. 10 The bloodthirsty hate the blameless, But the upright seek his well-being."

Who burns down the town, keeps things stirred up, and promotes hatred? NOT those who follow God's Will, the "wise," and "upright," but the "scoffers," "fools," and "bloodthirsty." A "scoffer" "acts with arrogant pride" (**Proverbs 21:24**) and hates those who correct him (**Proverbs 9:8**). A "fool" "despises his father's instruction" (**Proverbs 15:5**); starts quarrels (**Proverbs 20:3**); "trusts in his own heart" (**Proverbs 28:26**); and "walks in darkness" (**Ecclesiastes 2:14**). Since "the devil" "was a murderer from the beginning" (**John 8:44**), then "The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man" (**Psalms 5:6**); who "shall not live out half their days" (**Psalms 55:23**); and "hate the blameless" (**Proverbs 29:10**).

Wars of retaliation in the Middle East, violence approved and conducted by a religion, or fighting by forces of interference in other countries' affairs, are all under the direction of the Devil! Only those who are in rebellion against God and His righteousness would "set a city aflame," that is, hurt and destroy someone's homeland. Arguing with "scoffers" and "fools" never settles the matter, which is why "Judgments are prepared for scoffers, And beatings for the backs of fools" (**Proverbs 19:29**).

The answer to all the violence in the world is NOT United States "police action," but the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Jesus left His disciples with these assurances: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let

not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (**John 14:27**); "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (**John 6:33**); and this was offered to the Gentiles "The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ--He is Lord of all-- that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (**Acts 10:36-38**).

Jesus Christ said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (**Mark 16:15-16**). "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity" (**Ephesians 2:14-16**). So we boldly say to the scoffers, fools, and bloodthirsty people in this world: "Tear down this wall" by obeying Jesus Christ as Lord.

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## **(#195) The Proverbs of Solomon 29:14**

### **How to be Re-elected**

**Proverbs 29:14: "The king who judges the poor with truth, His throne will be established forever."**

"The king" (or any government leader who thinks he/she is a "king") represents the administration and its governance;

**Judging the "poor with truth," means that:**

- 1) no law or court decision should favor the "poor" (**Exodus 23:3, 6**; **Leviticus 19:15**), either by taking more from the "rich" or artificially raising the minimum wage of the "poor;"
- 2) no law or court decision should seek to do away with the condition of being "poor," for Jesus Christ said "the poor you have with you always" (**John 12:8**), and Solomon said: "The rich and the poor have this in common, The LORD is the maker of them all" (**Proverbs 22:2**);
- 3) no law or court decision should make life harder for the "poor." Solomon had said: "Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; For the LORD will plead their cause, And plunder the soul of those who plunder them" (**Proverbs 22:22-23**);
- 4) no law or court decision should define or describe being "poor" so as to include more as being "poor" than there really is! "Poor" in Moses' Law, meant one was reduced to selling off his possessions or even himself (**Leviticus 25:25-48**)!

"Poverty" can be the result of: laziness (**Proverbs 6:9-11**); stinginess (**Proverbs 11:24**); refusal to be disciplined (**Proverbs 13:18**); empty talk (**Proverbs 14:23**); reckless planning (**Proverbs 21:5**); constant fun (**Proverbs 28:19**).

The truly wise will enjoy being a part of "the middle class:" "Two *things* I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches-Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny *You*, And say, 'Who *is* the LORD?' Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God" (**Proverbs 30:7-9**).

A country whose people received the condemnation of God "used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger" (**Ezekiel 22:29**).

"The king" who wants to be re-elected will take note and be wise.

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(#196) The Proverbs of Solomon 29:18

Be Happy

Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law."

"Revelation" ("vision" in the King James Version) refers to God's inspired Word. As God miraculously led His people, he spoke to them through a "prophet:" "So the LORD said to Moses: 'See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land'" (**Exodus 7:1-2**). Moses then became "the prophet" (**Numbers 12:6-8**) through whom God's Law was given (**Deuteronomy 34:9-12**), and by following that written Law, the nation of Israel would remain separate from other peoples (**Joshua 23:6-8**). After Moses, unless God inspired a prophet to call the people back to that written Law, they forgot God: "In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes" (**Judges 17:6**). "Then the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; *there was* no widespread revelation" (**1 Samuel 3:1**).

King Zedekiah is an example of what this proverb is saying: "He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, *who spoke* from the mouth of the LORD" (**2 Chronicles 36:12**). Even though Christ's Law has been given, people sin when they made to think there is no Law of God that applies to them: "To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled" (**Titus 1:15**).

The New Testament is the written Law of Christ and God has not had a prophet since it was written: "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him

acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord" (**1 Corinthians 14:37**). Whatever people say to demean, diminish, or destroy their confidence in God's Word does not change God's Word: "But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit" (**Jude 17-19**). Christians are admonished: "Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (**Romans 13:13-14**), because God's written Word is our Judge, for Jesus said: "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (**John 12:48**).

Where sin abounds is a fertile field for preaching and teaching the Word of God, for Jesus said: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (**Mark 2:17**).

"The revelation" from God is in our Bible – Be "happy!"

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## **(#197) The Proverbs of Solomon**

### **Are We Pampered Servants?**

**Proverbs 29:19-21: "A servant will not be corrected by mere words; For though he understands, he will not respond. Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him. He who pampers his servant from childhood Will have him as a son in the end."**

The term "servant" indicates someone who works for someone else, and though Moses was "a servant" **in** God's House, Jesus took "the form of a bondservant" (**Philippians 2:7**), He was "a Son **over** His own house, whose house we are" (**Hebrews 3:5-6**), that is, the church of Christ (**1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 1:22-23**). Jesus' obedience under Moses' Law (**Hebrews 5:8-9**) is our example for obeying Jesus' Law (**Matthew 28:18-20**).

It is a disobedient servant who will not follow carefully-worded instructions, so that "though he understands, he will not respond" with obedience. No one has become a servant of Christ by confessing to be saved before being baptized (buried) into the death of Jesus (**Romans 6:1-7**); no servant of Christ ever added mechanical instrumental music to the singing required in worship (**Ephesians 5:19-20**); no servants of Christ ever murdered to expand the church (**John 18:37; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6**); no servants of Christ enjoyed the recreation of fleshly appeals (**Romans 13:13-14**)!

There is no hope for "a fool" (one who disobeys God) unless he/she repents and obeys God's Will. One who is conceited must become humbled in order to learn obedience to God: "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise" (**1 Corinthians 3:18**). The person who is "hasty in his words" is trying to justify him- or herself, rather than listening to what must be changed to please God. "He who answers a matter before he hears *it*, It is folly and shame to him" (**Proverbs 18:13**). No one can "testify" their way to salvation without doing what God says!

A pampered servant will soon "think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (**Romans 12:3**). This is why all those who have been taught that once they're saved, they're always saved, and cannot lose their salvation become spiritually arrogant, thinking they are "bullet-proof!" "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (**1 Corinthians 10:12**). Paul addressed that attitude (and doctrine!) when he wrote: "You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt* to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (**Galatians 5:4**).

Jesus Christ said to His disciples: "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them" (**John 13:16-17**). Truly, as Paul wrote, "if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (**Galatians 1:10**).

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(#198) The Proverbs of Solomon 29:24

Wanna Abet?

Proverbs 29:24: "Whoever is a partner with a thief hates his own life; He swears to tell the truth, but reveals nothing."

Solomon has already judged against agreeing to uphold someone else's debt (**Proverbs 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26-27; 27:13**), now he warns against sharing in someone's sin! The gang members, driver of the get-away vehicle, owner/renter of a meth lab house, participants in the crime, are all as guilty as the one who actually commits the sin! This proverb shows that the one who shares in "thievery," for instance, will end up losing his/her honesty and integrity by swearing "to tell the truth, but reveal[ing] nothing."

The truth of this proverb remains unchanged in the New Testament Law of Jesus Christ: "Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure" (**1 Timothy 5:22**); "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds" (**2 John 9-11**); "And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness,

covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (**Romans 1:28-32**). Saul of Tarsus may not have stoned the first martyr for Jesus Christ, Stephen, but Saul protected the coats of those who did the stoning (**Acts 7:54-60**)! This still bothered him toward the end of his spiritually-productive life (**1 Timothy 1:12-16**)!

Choose your associates and friends carefully; be well aware of what they're up to; have the courage to avoid damning situations! They may actually "think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*" (**1 Peter 4:4**).

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### **(#199) The Proverbs of Solomon 29:27**

#### **Sticks and Stones and Intimidation**

**Proverbs 29:27: "An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, And he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked."**

There has always been bitter antagonism between those who practice evil and those who practice good. The explanation for the first murder in the world (**Genesis 4:1-15**) is clearly given in the New Testament: "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks" (**Hebrews 11:4**); "In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you" (**1 John 3:10-13**).

Which is exactly why it is useless and wrong for those who follow God's Way (the righteous) to seek the approval and acclaim from the worldly. Ungodly teachers refuse to let righteous students get good grades if they have written truthfully about the Bible, Jesus Christ, or moral goodness! Ungodly entertainers ridicule the righteous who speak out from their honest, godly convictions! Ungodly parents punish and discourage their righteous children from Bible classes or studying the Word of God! Ungodly propagandists who use overwhelming headlines to "beat back" any and every attempt of the righteous to uphold and defend the existence of God! Ungodly Evolutionists and Global Warming fanatics who falsely label as "unscientific" any and all who use scientific facts to debunk and discredit those attacks on Bible faith! Ungodly accrediting boards set materialistic standards which, when "Christian

Schools" accept and meet those standards, have made "Christian schools" nothing more than another worldly school!

Jesus offered His reward to the righteous: "Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets" (**Luke 6:22-23**).

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(#200) The Proverbs of Solomon 30:1-6

The Who

Proverbs 30:1-6: "1 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, his utterance. This man declared to Ithiel-to Ithiel and Ucal: 2 Surely I am more stupid than any man, And do not have the understanding of a man. 3 I neither learned wisdom Nor have knowledge of the Holy One. 4 Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, If you know? 5 Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. 6 Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar."

v.1: Agur is unknown, but was a teacher to "Ithiel and Ucal." His utterances, however, have been preserved as Holy Spirit-revealed truth (**2 Peter 1:20-21**) and as a Prophet with God's Wisdom, like Amos (**Amos 7:14-15**)!

v.2-3: This statement is a confession that these thoughts (**Proverbs 30:1-33**) are the revelation from God, like Paul later stated (**Galatians 1:11-12**). Humility is a hall-mark of all who submit to God: "The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground" (**Psalms 147:6**); "(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)" (**Numbers 12:3**); "Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (**1 Peter 5:5-7**).

v.4: The answer to all of these questions can only be: God, for He, alone, has power over the Created Earth (**Psalms 104**), and He, alone, can inspire the writing of His Word through men (**1 Corinthians 2:7-13**).

v.5-6: The Word that God has spoken and written proves to be "pure," without any taint of untruth. David had said this: "The words of the LORD are pure words, Like silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times" (**Psalms 12:6**). So, also, did Jesus define His spiritual family: "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it" (**Luke 8:21**). Paul said it is the source of faith: "So then faith

comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (**Romans 10:17**). Just because some choose not to believe in God's Word doesn't change a thing in God's Word: "For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: 'That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged'" (**Romans 3:3-4**).

Don't believe what others say the Bible says, but receive "the word with all readiness, and search "the Scriptures daily" to find out "whether these things" are so (**Acts 17:11**).

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## **(#201) The Proverbs of Solomon 30:10**

### **The Sin of Hate Speech**

**Proverbs 30:10: "Do not malign a servant to his master, Lest he curse you, and you be found guilty."**

David understood what this proverb is about: "Do not keep silent, O God of my praise! For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful Have opened against me; They have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They have also surrounded me with words of hatred, And fought against me without a cause. In return for my love they are my accusers, But I *give myself to prayer*. Thus they have rewarded me evil for good, And hatred for my love" (**Psalms 109:1-5**).

All Christians must put away all "evil speaking" (**Ephesians 4:31**). All non-Christians who blaspheme Christians are suddenly put on notice by this proverb.

False accusation is the stuff of gossip: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (**Exodus 20:16**); "A faithful witness does not lie, But a false witness will utter lies" (**Proverbs 14:5**); "A false witness shall perish, But the man who hears *him* will speak endlessly" (**Proverbs 21:28**); and it is canceled by the commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (**Romans 13:9**). No wonder, then, that "false witness" is one of the 7 things God "hates" (**Proverbs 6:16-19**). The unproven, unclaimed, thus false "accusation" placed on Jesus' cross was: "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (**Matthew 27:37**). Jesus Christ never was, nor will He ever be only "the King of the Jews," for He is "the King of kings and Lord of lords" (**1 Timothy 6:15**)!

A Christian is a "fellow servant in the Lord" along with Paul (**Colossians 1:7; 4:7**), Moses (**Hebrews 3:5**), John (**Revelation 1:1**), and angels (**Revelation 22:9**). What Christians believe and practice must come from the Word of God (**Romans 10:17**) and produce unity (**John 17:20-21; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13**). However, there are matters about which God has allowed for conscientiousness, where Christians must not falsely accuse one another (**Romans 14:1-10**). "Vegans" should not condemn those who can eat meats. No one is undermined if: a converted Catholic continued to eat fish on Fridays; a converted Jew may still do no work on Saturday; a converted

denominational member still raises hands during a prayer; a converted Muslim woman still covers her head with a scarf, etc. Since Christians are "servants of the Lord," Paul asks: "Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls" (**Romans 14:4**), then plainly declares: "For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself" (**Romans 14:7**). This does not excuse anyone from continuing immoral, worldly ways into their Christian life (**1 Corinthians 5:9-12; 6:9-11**), for "those who are outside God judges" (**1 Corinthians 5:13**).

Christians must "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (**Jude 3**). God has always kept the line clear between the righteous and the unrighteous (**Ezekiel 33:10-20**), lest His servant is falsely accused.

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(#202) The Proverbs of Solomon- 30:11-14

Generation D(estroyed)

Proverbs 30:11-14: "There is a generation that curses its father, And does not bless its mother. 12 There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, Yet is not washed from its filthiness. 13 There is a generation-oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. 14 There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, And whose fangs are like knives, To devour the poor from off the earth, And the needy from among men."

After Jacob had worked 14 years to "earn" his wife, his father-in-law, Laban, said, "I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake" (**Genesis 30:27**). "Experience" is a great teacher, and often, a hard teacher. It has been truly said, "Happiness will never come to those who do not appreciate what they already have."

"A generation" without the experiences of life becomes (**v.11**) Loveless; (**v.12**) Hypocritical; (**v.13**) Arrogant; and (**v.14**) Cruel, and will need few enemies, for it will self- destruct. Children whose world consists of a video screen, whose mind is filled with make-believe, and whose heart seldom connects with real people, have no experiences to help them grow, and become slaves who serve without conscience! It is a lost generation that never sees "the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied" (**Ecclesiastes 3:10**).

Verse 11: Those who disrespect the two who gave them life will not appreciate The God, His plan, and the life they have been given, "For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God" (**1 Corinthians 11:12**). Although the prevalence of divorce and single-parenthood has shattered the "DNA" of marriage, and taught successive generations this disrespect, those who turn to God's Way will start a new generation of parental respect. It is when sin abounds that "the love of many will grow cold" (**Matthew 24:12**).

Verse 12: It is difficult, almost impossible, for one to see one's own sins. To such a generation, God send Jeremiah to say: "For though you wash yourself with lye, and

use much soap, *Yet your iniquity is marked before Me,*' says the Lord God. How can you say, 'I am not polluted'" (**Jeremiah 2:22-23**). The Apostle Paul wrote: "For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord" (**1 Corinthians 4:4**). Any generation that is known for major problems with drunkenness, irresponsibility, sexually-transmitted diseases, drug abuses, recklessness, and hatefulness (**Titus 3:3**) has its hands full and should not be pointing fingers at the previous generation(s)! Jesus Christ condemned those who "outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (**Matthew 23:28**).

Verse 13: Jesus Christ described this attitude when He said: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' *guilt*. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?" (**Matthew 23:29-33**) While a generation may protest against their parents sins, it becomes guilty of its own sins, many of which are even worse than before (**1 Kings 16:25**)!

Verse 14: The cruelty is seen because they don't care about the "poor" and "needy." Selfishness is so narrow-minded that it cannot admit, nor allow, others to benefit who have greater needs. Jesus Christ said: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation" (**Matthew 23:14**)!

A generation may be changed if enough of them "are converted and become as little children...Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 18:3-4**). Obeying the command to "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" will let a soul "Be saved from this perverse generation" (**Acts 2:38, 40**).

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### **(#203) The Proverbs of Solomon 30:18-20**

#### **CSI for Sins**

**Proverbs 30:18-20:** "There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Yes, four which I do not understand: 19 The way of an eagle in the air, The way of a serpent on a rock, The way of a ship in the midst of the sea, And the way of a man with a virgin. 20 This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth, And says, "I have done no wickedness."

"Wonder" is the temporary suspension of "understanding" when something stunning has happened. "Wonderful" simply means "full of wonder," a name certainly describing Jesus Christ (**Isaiah 9:6**). "Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works *Which* You have done" (**Psalms 40:5**). The illustrations from God's Creation (eagle, serpent,

ocean) are "mind boggling," as is the marvel of a first-time sexual encounter, which should take place only in marriage (**1 Corinthians 7:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8**).

These four are amazing to see, because they leave no trail to follow back to their origin:

**"An eagle in the air"** leaves nothing that could warn its prey that it is coming;

**"A serpent on a rock"** maneuvers silently, incredibly over the smooth surface, not leaving a path to its victim as if on a softer surface;

**"A ship in the midst of the sea"** breaks the surface of the water but leaves no trace behind, and therefore if the ship is not detected through other means, cannot be followed;

**"The way of a man with a virgin"** refers to the sighting (like an eagle), maneuvering (like a serpent), and no apparent trail of sin (like a ship at sea) in persuading a "virgin" to give up her virginity.

The other side of the coin, however, is "the way of an adulterous woman" who seems to think there is no way to detect her unfaithfulness, as if, after eating, wiping the residue from her mouth voids all after-effects! After adultery, when she says, "I have done no wickedness," she claims there is no trace of her sin, but there is! There is her "prey" (**Proverbs 7:6-23**), and her own condemnation (**Galatians 5:19-21; Hebrews 4:13**). An "adulterous woman" has lost her conscience about marriage, purity, fidelity. The unfaithfulness of God's people is described like this: "Can a virgin forget her ornaments, Or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me days without number" (**Jeremiah 2:32**). The evil of the "adulterer" is described also: "The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, Saying, 'No eye will see me'; And he disguises his face" (**Job 24:15**), as if no one will know of his sin.

NO ONE can wipe clean their own souls from their path of sins, but Jesus Christ can! "In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (**Colossians 2:11-13**). Let Jesus Christ remove your "Crime Scene" by "Investigating" your heart! It's "wonderful" to start a new trail in life!

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(#204) The Proverbs of Solomon 30:21-23

The Earth Is Not Enough

Proverbs 30:21-23: "For three things the earth is perturbed, Yes, for four it cannot bear up: 22 For a servant when he reigns, A fool when he is filled with food, 23 A hateful woman when she is married, And a maidservant who succeeds her mistress."

These are trouble-makers in any society, for these demonstrate a lack of essential qualities of humanity.

1) "A servant when he reigns" will have too many scores to settle! Those souls who begin their journey at the bottom of the scale, and revolt themselves to the "ruling class," become the most merciless tyrants history has ever seen. Do the names Karl Marx, Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler, Mao tse-Tung, and *nauseum*, come to mind? People who believe their ancestors suffered slavery, but they must exact revenge for it, will justify their own looting, killing, and hatred because of this attitude. Learn a lesson from Zimri in **1 Kings 16:8-20**.

2) "A fool when he is filled with food" doesn't realize from where his food has come! A "fool" doesn't appreciate or obey God, and since God Almighty is the source of all blessings (**James 1:17**), humility and thanksgiving are left out of this person's character. Aptly-named "Nabal" illustrates this when we read **1 Samuel 25:2-42**.

3) "A hateful woman when she is married" will only use her marriage to accomplish her wicked ways. Jezebel comes to mind, for she married Ahab and used his power for her own purposes (**1 Kings 16:29-34; 18:4, 16-19, 20-40; 19:1-3; 1 Kings 21:1-16**). A woman with spiteful intent will be the same whether married or not!

4) "A maidservant who succeeds her mistress," whether by the mistress's death, divorce, or husband's adultery with the maid, the mistress has suddenly achieved "success" without following the proper channels! Hagar (**Genesis 16:1-6**) illustrates this attitude, and her son, Ishmael, has marked the people who claim to have sprung from his family (**Genesis 16:7-16**).

The general command of God that will change these people for good is: "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (**1 Peter 5:6**). "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (**Acts 17:30-31**).

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**(#205) The Proverbs of Solomon 30:24-28**

**Learn From The Little People**

**Proverbs 30:24-28:** "There are four things which are little on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise: The ants are a people not strong, Yet they prepare their food in the summer; The rock badgers are a feeble folk, Yet they make their homes in the crags; The locusts have no king, Yet they all advance in ranks; The spider skillfully grasps with its hands, And it is in kings' palaces."

It is a truly foolish person who fails or refuses to see that the living God has incorporated intelligence and wisdom into His Creation, and that there is NO TRUTH to the blind, unscientific, ungodly false doctrine of Evolution! What the willfully ignorant professors of Evolution attribute to blind chance, the Bible points out as yet another

example of the wisdom of God. "The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens; By His knowledge the depths were broken up, And clouds drop down the dew" (**Proverbs 3:19-20**). Even the least of His Creation shows us His brilliant planning. In a society bulked-up with athleticism, wisdom is often unnoticed!

"**The ants**" are not known for their strength (although for their size, it is tremendous!), but for **the wisdom of continual preparation for the future**. This intelligence shows us that we should be industriously preparing for the future with what we have at the present. "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, Provides her supplies in the summer, *And* gathers her food in the harvest" (**Proverbs 6:6-8**).

"**The rock badgers**" (possibly rabbits, conies, or hyraxes) build no houses for themselves, but use the solid rock "crag" for their protection. Under Moses' Law, an unclean animal (**Leviticus 11:5**), noted for living in the hills (**Psalms 104:18**), this is probably the "rock badger." **The wisdom of using what God provides for our protection** should be applied to our soul salvation, also. "Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,' and 'A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.' They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed" (**1 Peter 2:7-8**).

"**The locusts**" descend upon grain fields "in ranks" and can completely consume the crops. This is done without "a king," that is, orderliness is their "natural" disposition. They have been used by God as punishment upon a nation (**Exodus 10:12-14**; **Psalms 105:34-35**) only to be blown away by a wind (**Exodus 10:19**). They may also be useful for food (**Mark 1:6**). They **show the wisdom of being organized** and what that can accomplish. When people unite, they can overpower almost anything (**Judges 20:11**)! Voters need to realize their potential power!

"**The spider**" can build its webs anywhere, even "in kings' palaces." Artistically designed, devastatingly efficient, spiders' webs show **the wisdom of persistently applying design wherever we are for whatever we need to do, and hope for its success**. Though easily destroyed, spiders' webs will be immediately rebuilt showing us the persistence of hope, for once the web is built, the spider waits for its victim to be caught in it.

Jesus used "the birds of the air," "lilies of the field," and "the grass of the field" to teach us not to be anxious (**Matthew 6:25-30**). The wisdom in God's Creation can provide useful lessons, if we have not been blinded by the stubborn ignorance of those who make their money promoting Evolution. Jesus said, "if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (**Matthew 15:14**).

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(#206) The Proverbs of Solomon 30:29-31

Walk the Royal Walk

Proverbs 30:29-31: "There are three things which are majestic in pace, Yes, four which are stately in walk: A lion, which is mighty among beasts And does not turn away from any; A greyhound, A male goat also, And a king whose troops are with him."

Walking regally is an indication of inner confidence and fearlessness. Regality is born out of security, violence from hatred and fear. There is a reason for these four to illustrate "majestic pace" which Christians, especially, should add to their lives:

"A lion" because of strength and power. As our "adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (**1 Peter 5:8**), so the wicked "have closed up their fat *hearts*; With their mouths they speak proudly. They have now surrounded us in our steps; They have set their eyes, crouching down to the earth, As a lion is eager to tear his prey, And like a young lion lurking in secret places (**Psalm 17:10-12**). Those who follow God should have every reason to be secure. "In the fear of the LORD *there is* strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge" (**Proverbs 14:26**); "The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion" (**Proverbs 28:1**); "But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict (**1 Thessalonians 2:2**). Christians must realize that we are to "abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (**1 John 2:28**).

"A greyhound" because of speed and agility. God hates "feet that are swift in running to evil" (**Proverbs 6:18**), but faithful followers of God, who are "swift to hear" (**James 1:19**), often receive help from Him quickly. "In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, For You will answer me" (**Psalm 86:7**); Answer me speedily, O LORD; My spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, Lest I be like those who go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You" (**Psalm 143:7-8**); "For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil" (**1 Peter 3:12**).

"A male goat" because of place and leadership. A man was created first (**1 Timothy 2:13**), and should be the leader of righteousness in his home (**Ephesians 5:22-24**). Those who refuse this God-given responsibility are rejected by God. "For the perverse *person is* an abomination to the LORD, But His secret counsel *is* with the upright" (**Proverbs 3:32**).

"A king" because of trust and loyalty. "If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them" (**Ecclesiastes 5:8**). All government officials should take care to rule with righteousness, lest their enemies come from within.

These four illustrations give a "majestic" walk to the faithful. "You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He *is* their help and their shield" (**Psalm 115:11**). "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 4:6-7**).

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**(#207) The Proverbs of Solomon Proverbs 30:32-33**

**War-mongering Causes War**

**Proverbs 30:32-33: "If you have been foolish in exalting yourself, Or if you have devised evil, put your hand on your mouth. 33 For as the churning of milk produces butter, And wringing the nose produces blood, So the forcing of wrath produces strife."**

Actions always have consequences, and some actions are clearly illustrated: (1) "churning of milk produces butter;" (2) "wringing the nose produces blood." Similarly, "the forcing of wrath produces strife," or even a peaceable king can be forced into battle! Examples in Bible and History are almost too numerous to list. Think of how many lives, either in battles or in individual fights, that might have been spared if Solomon's God-given Wisdom had been followed: "Where *there is* no wood, the fire goes out; And where *there is* no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal *is* to burning coals, and wood to fire, So *is* a contentious man to kindle strife" (**Proverbs 26:20-21**). Many authors, newspapers, radio/TV reporters and demonstrators have sparked and fanned the flames of conflagration! If there is "a king *whose troops are with him*" (**Proverbs 30:31**), then to rise up with evil plans against him, thus, "forcing wrath" upon him, would surely have a serious consequence: "strife."

Leading a rebellion against a King who is beloved by his troops is begging for trouble! Three things ("exalting yourself," "devised evil," "forcing of wrath") can be avoided simply by covering your mouth! It's bad enough to think the "evil," but spoken words cannot be taken back, and may have sparked a "wrath"-ful outburst which causes "strife." "The wrath of a king *is* like the roaring of a lion; *Whoever* provokes him to anger sins *against* his own life. *It is* honorable for a man to stop striving, Since any fool can start a quarrel" (**Proverbs 20:2-3**).

Just criticism would be welcomed by a righteous king, that is, all words that would help him follow God's Wisdom: "*It is* an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, For a throne is established by righteousness" (**Proverbs 16:12**); "Take away the wicked from before the king, And his throne will be established in righteousness" (**Proverbs 25:5**).

Truly, it's better not to say so much, than to say so much that's not so!

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(#208) The Proverbs of Solomon Proverbs 31:1-3

Listen to Your Mama About Women

Proverbs 31:1-3: "The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him: 2 What, my son? And what, son of my womb? And what, son of my vows? 3 Do not give your strength to women, Nor your ways to that which destroys kings."

Verse 1: These have been the **Proverbs of Solomon**: for his son (**Chapters 1-9**); for his people (**Chapters 10-24**); for his legacy (**Chapters 25-29**); for his influence (**Chapters 30-31**). The **Book of Proverbs** began with a father instructing his son, and ends in this last chapter with the mother's wise words, or "hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother" (**Proverbs 1:8**).

Verse 2: Almost asking: "What can I say for the best benefit for my son, my flesh and blood?"

"**Son of my womb**" refers to the closeness of the mother-son bond, for she was his home before he was born.

"**Son of my vows**" can refer to the legitimate son born after marriage vows of his parents (**Malachi 2:14**), or to parental commitment to raise the child "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (**Ephesians 6:4**).

In any case, these words should be regarded as precious to a beloved son.

Verse 3: Two serious warnings against ways that destroy every man's life: disrespect for marriage and disregard for authority.

To not "**give your strength to women**" is a major theme in **Proverbs (2:16-22; Proverbs 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; 9:13-18)**. Examples of what *not* to do are found in Samson (**Judges 13-16**), David and Bathsheba (**2 Samuel 11-12**), and Solomon, himself (**1 Kings 11**). Sexual satisfaction ("strength") should be reserved only for one's own wife (**Proverbs 5:15-20**).

"**That which destroys kings**" refers to subversive and violent methods of destroying respect for civil authority, "For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (**Romans 13:1**). Moses recognized this danger (**Deuteronomy 31:26-27**); King Saul (**1 Samuel 15:22-24**); Barabbas (**Mark 15:7**). Solomon had said: "An evil *man* seeks only rebellion; Therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him" (**Proverbs 17:11**), and Jesus said: "all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (**Matthew 26:52**). It is never wrong to insist that rulers abide by God's rules (the Bible) and the laws of the land (Constitution) which restricts their "authority" (as Libertarians insist), but it is wrong to advocate no authority (as Libertines claim)!

Men, listen to a godly mother!

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**(#209) The Proverbs of Solomon 31:4-7**

**Listen to Your Mother About Wine**

**Proverbs 31:4-7:** "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Nor for princes intoxicating drink; 5 Lest they drink and forget the law, And pervert the justice of all the afflicted. 6 Give strong drink to him who is perishing, And wine to those who are bitter of heart. 7 Let him drink and forget his poverty, And remember his misery no more."

**Verses 4-5:** The difference between "wine" and "intoxicating drink" was often what was added to increase its chemical strength, or the process by which it had been made. There is little, if any, difference between the two as to its dangerous effect: "forget the law, And pervert the justice of all the afflicted." The regular practice of using alcoholic beverages dulls ones judgment and blurs both the lines created by "law," and fair and balanced judgment of "the afflicted." NOT ONLY ALCOHOL, but other things have the same effect, that is, being drunk with: authority; control; popularity; fame; beauty; pride; supremacy! Government officials and agents who refuse (or neglect) to obey the laws, and consider themselves above the justice they should provide (either by bribes or reputation) are openly showing they do not serve the public, but themselves, as though they were intoxicated by something.

**Verses 6-7:** Show proper, limited uses of alcohol: "strong drink" (more alcoholic than "wine") to a dying patient or "wine," (a milder level of alcohol than "strong drink") to a depressed person. There is nothing wrong with administering pain-relieving drugs to someone dying in pain! There IS everything wrong with administering death-causing drugs to hasten someone's death! Relieving pain leaves the door open for God to heal, causing the death is "playing God" by making that decision for Him!

Those who "are bitter of heart" have boxed themselves in with their emotions, and a mild form of alcohol ("wine") can bring an easing of tension, thus allowing patients to re-think their problem(s).

A spiritual alternative to alcohol is seen in Hannah, who "in bitterness of soul...prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish" (**1 Samuel 1:10**). The New Testament tells Christians to: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 4:6-7**). Opening the Holy Spirit's Bible is always better than opening the "spirits" in a long-necked bottle!

Truly, Wisdom still says, "do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit" (**Ephesians 5:18**).



**(#210) The Proverbs of Solomon 31:8-9**

**Listen to Your Mama About Words**

**Proverbs 31:8-9: "Open your mouth for the speechless, In the cause of all who are appointed to die. 9 Open your mouth, judge righteously, And plead the cause of the poor and needy."**

Step up and speak up for those who are less fortunate, specifically those who have: no voice, no parent, no justice, or no necessities of life. It is emphatic and an action of mercy to help the helpless. All leaders of government should admit that: "Mercy and truth preserve the king, And by lovingkindness he upholds his throne" (Proverbs 20:28). God has always required this of His people: "You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:15); "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:16-17); "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

The "speechless" are those who have no voice or ability to defend themselves. They are easily victimized by all who would misrepresent their case;

Those "appointed to die" are people without possessions or permanence. According to the Hebrew expression, these may be strangers just passing through or orphans who cannot support themselves. God is mindful of such and required this of Israelites (Deuteronomy 10:17-19). Solomon wisely ruled: "Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be heard" (Proverbs 21:13). Never was this clearer than when Israelites were taken from their Promised Land because: "The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger" (Ezekiel 22:29);

"Judge righteously" should be the outcry of all of God's people. All judges and legal personnel should hear this command. Jesus has said: "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24), for "in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5);

"Plead the cause of the poor and needy," for they cannot afford their own defense. The "poor and needy" are NOT those who demand their "right" to have the same possessions as those who have worked for what they have! The essentials of food and clothing are NOT in the same category as video games, big screen TV's, cable, Internet, cars, or brand-name clothes!

No nation or people will stand when citizens have little or no recourse for their grievances!

