

PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs is vastly different from the other books of the Bible. Nearly two-thirds of the 915 verses are devoted to short, pithy sayings rather than extended, connected material.

The first nine chapters are extended material on wisdom.

The first verse of Proverbs indicates its authorship is attributed to Solomon.

Chapters 25-29 contain proverbs that King Hezekiah's men inspired to add to Solomon's writings. Chapter 30 is said to be the words of one "Agur." Chapter 31 contains some words of "King Lemuel" which his mother taught him.

Solomon is speaking to his son throughout the first nine chapters. It is extended material on wisdom rather than short sayings. The material is in the "first person" grammatically, while the rest of the book is in the third "person." Proverbs 10:1 is where the actual "sayings" themselves begin.

Proverbs' value to us who live in the Christian Age is greatly enhanced by the fact that it is basically non-dispensational wisdom.

Chapter 1

Verse 1

A "proverb" is a wise saying. Solomon spoke 3000 of them.

Verse 2

"Wisdom" is the goal of this Divine book and "instruction" is the method of gaining it. The instruction to be given is that the listener himself will be able to discern the words of "understanding" by having this Divine "wisdom" laid up in his mind and heart.

Verse 3

The instruction to be given was to teach "wise dealing" (wisdom and prudence), "righteousness" (not show how to "beat somebody out of what was

rightfully his”) and “justice and equity” (what is fair and honest). Oh, that all our education were bent on making men right, honest, and upright.

Verse 5

In fact, it is the wise who are always seeking to advance their knowledge, and a wise man is a joy to teach. Teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

Verse 7

We might say that this verse contains the first actual proverb or saying in the book.

The fear of the Lord signifies that religious reverence which every intelligent being owes to his Creator. No man ever becomes truly wise who does not begin with God.

Verse 8

Though Solomon had many wives and concubines (700 of the first and 300 of the second), it is a surprising fact that we know the name of only one of his sons, Rehoboam.

Verse 9

A chaplet is a wreath that the victor wore on his head and they cried before him, “Bow the knee.” Following the sound teachings of the father would bring the son to great dignity as well as give a beauty to his life.

Verse 10

This verse breaks down into two parts: sinner’s attempt to mislead a young man, and what he should do about it. Be assured that the world (sinners) will put pressure on every person to join them. The only way a young person (or anybody else) can resist and overcome these pressures from the outside is by faith in God (reverential fear).

Verse 11

Often throughout the book Solomon warns against both evil men and evil women. The evil men are wicked oppressors out to get ill-gotten gain, and the evil women are immoral adulteresses.

Verse 12

“Sheol” is Hebrew, and “Hades” is Greek for the place of departed spirits.

Verse 13

This is the part that was luring them on, the hope of gain. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

Verse 14

“Throw in your lot with us” means that he would decide to go with them, he would trust his future and his outcome to their way of doing. “We shall all have one purse” meant that he would share equally with them.

Verse 15

The father is concerned at this point. He realizes it is a decision time for his son. Will he fall for their line, or will he go the way he has been taught from youth?

Verse 16

A good reason for Solomon not wanting his son to take up with such “toughs,” they “run” to evil, they make haste to shed blood.

Verse 17

The wicked are represented as lurking quietly for the innocent. It is in this way alone that they can hope to destroy them and take their substance before proper precautions could be taken against them. Son, can't you see what they are doing? Don't get caught.

Verse 18

Their intention would be to hurt others, and they do for a time, but in time justice catches up with them, and they pay with their lives. The father would

have his son view this final outcome from the beginning and the enticement to join up with the oppressors would not be so strong.

Verse 19

Other passages also teach the sorrows and losses to be reaped by those greedy of gain. “He that is guilty of gain troubles his own house.” (Proverbs 15:27)

Verse 20

From here to the end of the chapter wisdom is personified as talking, teaching, crying, watching, and turning a deaf ear to people’s cries when suffering from refusing her. Virtue itself is usually represented as a woman, so is wisdom here.

Verse 21

“The entrance of the gates” would be where people entered or left the city, and where legal transactions were conducted. “In the city” would be where the people lived. Wisdom spoke to the ancients from every place. Today wisdom also speaks to us from many places.

Verse 22

There are those who “love” simplicity (ignorance) some who “delight” in scoffing at the truth and at righteousness and at those who hold them, and some who “hate” knowledge.

Verse 23

The very question, “How long, will you love simplicity, delight in scoffing, and hate knowledge was itself a “reproof” to those addressed, this hope being to get them to “turn” or change.

Verse 24

Wisdom again speaks. The address passes into a new phase from that of invitation and promise to that of judgment and stern denunciation.

Verse 25

“Neglected my counsel” means to treat as nothing. Men who reject God’s counsel (His instructions, commandments, and prohibitions) usually do not listen to His “reproof” (correction of their ways) either.

Verse 26

That such a day of calamity is coming for the wicked is rightfully assumed. It is coming! Those who lack the fear of God and the wisdom that it brings will finally end up in a “fear” that they cannot escape. Wisdom is represented as laughing and mocking when such deserved calamity comes.

Verse 27

What can be more fearful than overpowering storms in nature? These are used to depict fear, distress, and anguish that will come upon those who have refused to follow wisdom’s counsel.

Verse 28

When men begin to reap the results of their own foolish choices, it does very little good to cry to God in the day of judgment.

Verse 29

The reasons for their calamities are here given. They “hated knowledge” and this helped bring the downfall of the Northern Kingdom. Hosea 4:6

Verse 30

The reason God sent the calamities is that they had refused God’s counsel and had despised all the “reproof.”

Verse 31

This verse says the wicked will eat what they have planted; in judgment God will laugh, God will mock. When we are punished, the blame lies not with God, but with us sinners.

Verse 32

The “simple” referred to in verse 22, are here pictured as “backsliding,” as fools they will return to their folly. 2 Peter 2:20-22 The beginning of sin is “confidence,” the end of sin is destruction.

Verse 33

In contrast to the wicked this verse sets forth the security of the righteous, those who have turned to wisdom. 1 John 2:17

Chapter 2

Verse 1

“Commandments” are stronger than “words,” and “hide” is stronger than “receive.” The Divine commands are to be hidden in safe custody in the memory, in the understanding, in the conscience, and in the heart.

Verse 2

This verse is a doublet, (1) Incline your ear towards wisdom and (2) apply your heart to understanding. Solomon wanted his son to develop an inclination for wisdom.

Verse 3

This verse is another doublet, (1) cry after discernment and (2) lift up your voice for understanding. The picture in this verse is even stronger than the “incline” in the next verse (3). Here the son is urged to lift up his voice for discernment (the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, truth and error, wisdom and foolishness.)

Verse 4

If you receive and lay up my commandments (as a child); if you develop an inclination toward wisdom and develop an understanding heart (in youth); and if you cry and seek for discernment and understanding (as an adult), verse (5) says it will be yours.

Verse 5

If the conditions of verses 1-4 are met, then this wonderful promise will apply, the son will understand the fear of God and will find the knowledge of God. The fear of God will then lead to even more wisdom and knowledge.

Verse 6

If one seeks for wisdom then God will give it to him. We must acknowledge God as the source of all wisdom and go to Him for it.

Verse 7

God gives wisdom as well as other blessings to the upright. "No good thing does God withhold from those who walk uprightly." (Psalm 84:11)

Verse 8

God guards the "paths of justice." Is it not remarkable that even though men themselves do not always do what is right that the old basics of what is right and wrong still survive (such as love, kindness, truth telling, the wrongness of killing, stealing, etc)?

He not only guards the paths of justice but particularly preserves the way of those who walk in those paths. 1 Peter 3:12

Verse 9

If one applies himself to get wisdom, God will bless him with it, and that will include an understanding of these basic things.

Verse 10

"Wisdom will enter" the heart in the sense of permanent residence. Colossians 3:15 says, "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." "Dwell" in this verse means to "make a home for."

Verse 11

When blessed with wisdom, "discretion" will be there to guard what we say, what we do, the policies we adopt, and "understanding" will be there to keep us from small embarrassments and costly mistakes.

Verse 12

Wisdom will keep one from taking up with evil men (this verse) and with evil women (verse 16). The word “deliver” suggests that evil men are out to snare such young men into their plots and ways. The “perverse” speech of evil men is pointed out. There is certain speech that goes with evil men, usually coarse words, vulgar words, and irreverent words.

Verse 13

Some of those now evil were once on the right road, for they forsook the “paths of righteousness.” Probably as children they were taught the right way. Oh, how many drift from their childhood teachings into the “ways of darkness” (sin). Those who walk in evil ways always try to get others to fall as they have, but how foolish to listen to them.

Verse 14

The wicked become perverted, instead of grieving over evil, they rejoice in doing it. “Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool.” (Proverbs 10:23)

Verse 15

Instead of walking a straight line and a right course, they are further described as “crooked,” and instead of staying on the right way, they are said to be “wayward” in their paths.

Verse 16

A “strange woman means one who is not his wife, she is a “foreigner” to him because she is not related to him in marriage. This is a warning against loose, lascivious living that ends in sexual misbehavior.

Verse 17

She was once married, but she has forsaken her husband. She is not only untrue to her husband, but she “forgets the covenant of her God.” (God’s covenant or law forbids her to leave her husband and live as she is living.) But her actions show that she does not care what God says.

Verse 18

Her “house” is referred to because this is where she “operates” her dirty business.

Verse 19

It is as difficult to bring back a lascivious person to chastity as a dead man to life.

Verse 20

The “good men” of this verse are to be contrasted with the evil men of verse 12 and their good lives with the evil men who indulge with evil women.

Verse 21

In contrast with “death” this verse speaks of the good men getting to live on.

Verse 22

The doom of the wicked is again mentioned.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

In this and succeeding verses the material divides itself into 2 verse thoughts, the first verse giving the commandment and the second verse the promise or explanation.

Verse 2

The long life promised to the righteous is contrasted with the shorter life of the wicked as set forth over and over in Psalm 37.

Verse 3

Being kind and always telling the truth would especially make for the life of peace promised in verse 2.

Verse 4

Both God and man will approve and appreciate one who follows kindness and truth. Man's greatest happiness is attained when he has the favor of God and the respect of his fellow men.

Verse 5

"Trust" means to rely upon, put confidence in. This we need to do toward God and not to suppose that we are self-contained and self-sufficient of ourselves. Man makes a grave mistake when he does not pray, does not commit his way to God, and does not depend upon God.

Verse 6

"In all your ways acknowledge Him." This expression covers the whole of life's action and guards against our acknowledging God in great crises and solemn acts of worship only. The great sin of the human race is their continual endeavor to live independently of God.

Verse 7

Man does not have to possess very much knowledge it seems, until it goes to his head. Instead of thinking how great we are, we should be thinking of how great God is and how small we are and as a result "fear" Him and "depart from evil" instead of proudly living in sin.

Verse 8

God will "direct" your paths, you will "depart" from evil. It will be "health" to you.

Verse 9

"Honor the Lord" is an injunction showing that the honoring of God does not consist simply of lip service, of humility and confidence in Him, but also of external worship without substance.

Verse 10

Man is concerned about his own things and often leaves God out of his life and concerns or subordinates Him to an inferior place. Here God promises to

give man what he wants (“barns be filled with plenty...vats overflow”) if he puts God first in his life. The “vats” were olive oil vats or grape juice vats.

Verse 11

After telling of all the joyous blessings that God sends, we have another blessing listed, a blessing in disguise, chastening. Unlike the other blessings, it comes not because of obedience but disobedience; nor is it like other blessings—joyous at the time, but grievous—proving to be a blessing in the peaceful fruit that it brings to those who are corrected by it.

Verse 12

Satan tempts us because he seeks our destruction and wicked people persecute us because they hate us, but God brings His hardship of chastening upon us because He loves us. Solomon has to tell us that it is God’s love that causes Him to chasten.

Verse 13

Verses 13-20, go together bidding the son to get wisdom and understanding. He who finds wisdom receives understanding and the finding is not likely by accident, but by searching.

Verse 14

Just as men seek earthly treasures, God would have men seek wisdom.

Verse 15

A similar passage consisting of rubies and the value of wisdom is that “wisdom is better than rubies.” All the things that may be desired are not to be compared with it. There is nothing be it silver, gold, precious stones, or anything precious, which is an equivalent to wisdom in value.

Verse 16

Both hands are full of great things and are stretched out to the person of true understanding. Wisdom claims to have “riches and honor to bestow.” Long life, then, can be a result of wisdom. Riches, then, can be a product of wisdom. Honor, then, comes to those with wisdom.

Verse 17

Here are two more great blessings of wisdom: “pleasantness” and “peace.” Add these to riches and honor and long life, and who could ask for more as far as this earthly life is concerned?

Verse 18

“Tree of Life” in the Bible days stood for something very desirable. The name was first used for one of the trees in the midst of Garden of Eden. God did not allow Adam and Eve to eat of this tree after they sinned. We should work to possess wisdom and we should be careful not to let it get away from us.

Verse 19

Always is man urged to be like God. Solomon now points out that God Himself is guided by wisdom. God employed wisdom in creating the universe and life upon it. Psalm 104:24

Verse 20

The watering of the earth, so necessary to its vegetation and its support of both human and animal life, is here under consideration. Only God would know how to lay out and operate such a vast, continual system. There may be illusion to the breaking up of the deep at the time of the flood; if so, it would still be saying that only God would know how to do such.

Verse 21

“Them” is identified as “sound wisdom and discretion,” and “let them not depart from thine eyes” is boiled down to the word “keep.”

Verse 22

The rewards of living by wisdom are “life” and “grace.” “Life” is used here in an all-inclusive sense of embracing more than lengthy existence, a blessed and spiritual life here.

Verse 23

The promised rewards continue in this verse; this being a promise of safety and security.

Verse 24

One's safety and the resulting peace of mind are again stressed.

Verse 25

Against the blessing of safety, peace and lack of fear is emphasized. "Sudden fear" would be that which strikes instantly, immediately, without advanced warning.

Verse 26

God will be the One in whom the believer places his confidence, he commits his way unto Him. All the great "heroes of faith" in Hebrews chapter 11 had this one thing in common: their faith, their confidence, was in God.

If one is wise at all, wisdom will teach him not to trust in his own wisdom, strength, or perfection but in the guidance, help, and mercy of God. He will "keep your foot from being caught" shows there are many traps and snares along the way that God will keep us from getting into.

Verse 27

Solomon says we should pay what we owe just as soon as we are able to do so. But this verse is not linking the subject to paying debts: it is talking about doing "good" to those about us, a subject set forth in several important places in the Bible. Galatians 6:10

Verse 28

How many times people in urgent need have gone to someone of means and ability for help only to be put off until "tomorrow" or "next week" when it was only the slightest matter that could have been taken care of easily that kept them from getting the help that very day.

Verse 29

At the bottom of every case of trouble, there is someone who got things mixed up or who purposely did wrong to begin with. Here is a commandment against purposely, knowingly, devising evil and trouble for someone else. This verse

appeals strictly to our feelings of responsibility for the other person: take care of your neighbor.

Verse 30

If everybody heeded this, there could be no strife except that which might arise from some misunderstanding. Remember that it takes somebody to start trouble before there can be trouble.

Verse 31

In this verse the father continues to warn his son about joining in with a life of violence.

Verse 32

One who “devises evil” against his neighbor, one who “strives” with a man who has done him no wrong, one who “envies” a man of violence is said in this verse to be “crooked,” he is doing what God never planned for a person to do. This verse tells of two contrasting classes of persons (the crooked and the upright) and of God’s contrasting attitudes toward them (“abomination” for the crooked and “intimate” with the upright).

Verse 33

This is another verse contrasting God’s treatment of the wicked and the righteous.

God can send blessings upon people, or He can bring curses upon them.

Deuteronomy 11:26-28

Verse 34

This verse contains a double contrast: “scoffs” and “gives” and “scoffers” and “afflicted.” Scoffers are those who act as if they “know it all”, the “afflicted” are those who recognize their deficiencies and who as a result, trust in God and do not lean on their “own understanding” but who “acknowledge Him” in all their ways.

Verse 35

This verse also contains a double contrast: “wise” and “fools” and “honor” and “dishonor.” The wise shall inherit honor—what an inheritance to come into! The Christian is the wise builder who builds his house upon the rock. The fool has nothing to look forward to but “dishonor.”

Chapter 4

Verse 1

“Hear” is used many times in Proverbs as are “instruction” and “understanding.”

Verse 2

The father is sure that his teaching is “sound teaching,” because what he was teaching was good, and he insists that they not forsake his law.

Verse 3

This verse reminds us that those who are now fathers were once sons, and those who now teach were once taught.

Verse 4

David took some time to teach and prepare Solomon for the great task that was before him in life.

Verse 5

“Acquire” is used many times in the book of Proverbs. “Acquire wisdom and understanding and forget not what I am teaching you.”

Verse 6

That which we “love” we do not “forsake.” Therefore, David called upon Solomon to love wisdom, “forsake” her not,” and his promise was that wisdom would “preserve” and “keep” him. Wisdom would keep him from evil, from evil men, from evil women, from mistakes, from sorrows and disappointments, and from a sad ending. And it will do the same for each of us today!

Verse 7

With all of your getting of various things in life, be sure to get wisdom, and Solomon did. The New Testament teaches that the salvation of one's soul is the principal thing in life, but Proverbs, preceding the Christian age, makes wisdom the principal thing.

But how does one go about getting wisdom? First of all it must be sought by prayer and then man must constantly sit at the feet of the three great "teachers."

1. Instruction (learning) by listening to what others would teach us.
2. Observation (learning by keeping one's eyes open, learning from the experience of others.)
3. Experience (learning from your own experiences.)

Verse 8

The son would "exalt" wisdom by making it his chief concern, and his love for wisdom is couched in the words "if you embrace her". If he would exalt wisdom, wisdom would exalt him just as if he turned his back on wisdom, wisdom would turn her back upon him. Knowledge is power; and it is truly astonishing to see what influence true learning has. Nothing is so universally respected.

Verse 9

Wisdom will, in time, give or deliver to one's head a wreath or garland of grace, a crown of beauty.

Verse 10

The direct quotation of David's words to Solomon ended with verse 9. While his son Rehoboam did not demonstrate wisdom he was probably wise as a rule. Wisdom itself can be the means of lengthening one's life just as folly can shorten it.

Verse 11

As a father he had "taught" with words and he had "led" with example, and unless the latter combines with the former, a father is wasting his words.

Verse 12

“Impeded” means “hindered.” “Run” would signify “going fast,” “stumble” would signify an “abrupt stopping of progress.”

Verse 13

Do not dilly-dally about the matter of learning. Be in earnest about it. The wording of this verse shows how important instruction is.

Verse 14

One will never walk the way of an evil man unless he enters his path; to do so is to prefer their way to God’s way.

Verse 15

How can one keep from entering the wrong path? Know that it is wrong and then “avoid” it—stay away from it, stay as far from it as you can.

Verse 16

Some are so wicked that they live just as this verse says. Instead of living as a Christian (for to me to live is Christ), to them to live as to “do evil” and to “cause some to fall” (others to join them in the sin-game.)

Verse 17

“Violence” is the only item in some people’s “diet” of life—this is what they “eat” and “drink” every day.

Verse 18

Besides the way the wicked live, there is also a “path” that the righteous follow. This good path is illuminated with the light of God. When we begin in that path, it is like beholding the first rays of dawn; as we follow, the day gets brighter and brighter, and we can see the righteousness of God’s way more and more; in time this path will bring us to the “perfect day” (eternity with God).

Verse 19

In this verse about the wicked we are back in “darkness.” Living in sin is like walking in darkness in which one can stumble and fall to his hurt because he could not see what there was to trip over.

Verse 20

Oh, the earnestness of the father’s instructions and entreaties as he thinks upon these matters!

Verse 21

That Rehoboam would keep what his father was teaching him ever before his eyes and ever in his heart was so important that Solomon mentions it so often in this section of the book.

Verse 22

The great physical blessings of “life” and “health” are promised if the son will follow the father’s good teachings throughout life.

Verse 23

Here is one of the best known, most memorized verses in all Proverbs. The reason is obvious: the outward words and deeds and course of life are but the manifestation of what is in one’s heart. Other passages: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”

Verse 24

A “wayward” person is one who has gone astray, so a “wayward” mouth is a mouth that speaks wrong things. “Perverse lips” and wrong speech is so detrimental and out of place that our verse says it should be “put away,” “put far away!”

Verse 25

After urging the son’s care of his “heart” in verse 23 and bidding him to put away “perverse lips” and in verse 24 he now calls upon him to direct his “eyes” and not let them wander upon sights that would be detrimental.

Verse 26

In everyday life we try to keep from falling. Every irregularity in the side walk and every object in the pathway is a potential stumbling block that could result in a fall. In life we should avoid everything that would cause us to stumble and fall; we should want our ways to be “established.”

Verse 27

Don't deviate from the right path in either way. We have to be careful of ditches on both sides of the road. One who is in the ditch is going nowhere.

Chapter 5

Verse 1

Life's experience and learning bring to a father a degree of wisdom and understanding that he passes on to his children.

Verse 2

“Discretion” is “good judgment in conduct and especially in speech. Great care should be exercised in our speech so that it always reflects discretion and knowledge.

Verse 3

Several lengthy sections of the first chapters of Proverbs are given to warning against immorality. Immorality has proven to be one of people's greatest pitfalls. The warning of our verse about this woman's “lips” and “mouth” may be relative to her flattering words or it may be relative to her kisses.

Verse 4

Sinners fall for the pleasure involved while wisdom sees the end.

Verse 5

A triple parallel: “her feet” and “her steps,” “go down” and “take hold on,” and “death” and “Sheol.” Before we go with somebody, it is part of wisdom to find where she is going. Sin always leads to death.

Verse 6

“Make level the path of your feet and let all your ways be established.”

Our verse says such a woman never knows this way: she is “unstable,” undependable, and has nothing that she can hold onto. Man likes level ways to travel (they are so much easier than to be going up and going down hills), but such a woman knows nothing of the good road of life. Yet her kind has never neared extinction!

Verse 7

“Depart” from her but not from the “words of my mouth.”

Verse 8

The best way to keep from getting caught is to stay away from the trap.

Verse 9

Fornication is seldom one-time (unless one repents). Usually (like with alcohol) one gets involved for “years” and his good name (honor) is sacrificed. Immorality is “cruel” in what it does to the guilty, to his mate, and to his family.

Verse 10

Others will have the substance earned through strength and labor.

Verse 11

God has seen fit to visit immorality with the plague of various social diseases. The father had foreseen the mourning sure to come, but a young man might not consider it because of the sinful pleasure that precedes it.

Verse 12

A man suffering his last would have learned, but it would be too late to profit him.

Verse 13

“Teachers” implies that others besides his father had tried to counsel him. He had had good teachers (like many), but he was “smarter” than his teachers—he followed his own ways!

Verse 14

“Such was my shamelessness that there was scarcely any wickedness which I did not commit, unrestrained even in the midst of the assembly and congregation.

Verse 15

Instead of carrying on immorally, he counsels his son to get married, have his own mate, and partake of his own well and cistern.

Verse 16

“The figurative language is still continued, and under the terms ‘drink water from your own cistern’ and ‘fresh water from your own well’ are to be understood children, the legitimate issue of lawful marriage.” (Psalm 127:3-5)

Verse 17

Do not consent to living with a wife who is unfaithful. “Don’t share your mate with anybody else.” Mate trading is not only forbidden by this, but it is inevitably the ruin of marriage.

Verse 18

This carries the same thought as verse 15 only in more explicit language. God has created you so you have all the possibilities of love and enjoyment at home.

Verse 19

The loving hind and pleasant roe are descriptive of the grace and fascinating charms of the young wife. She is to be the object of your love and devotion.

Verse 20

Two great thoughts are involved here.

1. Be ravished with your own wife, embrace your own sweet wife; who should be dearer to you than the one who is for you alone.
2. Don’t be ravished by and don’t embrace any other, it is wrong to do so, and the whole affair will let you down in time.

Verse 21

Many passages show that no man, though he may try to slip around behind the back of his wife and carry on with some other woman can conceal his deeds from God.

Verse 22

“Most people who follow unlawful pleasures think they can give up whenever they please, but sin repeated becomes customary, custom soon endangers habit and habit in the end assumes the form of necessity.

Verse 23

Not that he didn't have instruction but that he had instruction that he didn't heed. In verse 12 he admitted, “How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!” Sin is here called “folly” (a “great” folly) that takes one out of the path (“astray”) like a lost and wandering sheep and gets one off course (like a wandering star for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved forever—Jude 13.)

Chapter 6

Verse 1

This chapter embraces four distinct discourses, each of which is a warning.

1. Surety, verses 1-5
2. Laziness, verses 6-11
3. Malice, verses 12-19
4. Adultery, verses 20-35

Given a “pledge” (New American Standard Version), is the same as “striking a hand” in the (King James Version) and was like the signing of a contract in today's language.

Verse 2

Sometimes one later sees his mistake of going surety for a party.

Verse 3

“My son” shows the earnestness of the father’s entreaty. He was to go to the creditor and agree to some kind of settlement that would release him from any further or future obligation. “Do it now!” says the father, “Do it before you have to stand good for your friend’s debt.”

Verse 4

Don’t spend any time sleeping, not even one night, until you have cleared yourself in the matter.

Verse 5

Continuing the figure of a “snare” raised in verse 2, he urges his son to take a lesson from the hunted gazelle or bird.

Verse 6

Ants are well distributed and are everywhere known for ambitious activity. To speak of his sleep-loving son as a sluggard was not complimentary (it means lazy one).

Verse 7

The ant is a fitting representative of true ambition for an ant does not have to have a boss to make her work.

Verse 9

This verse is speaking of over-sleeping, sleeping all morning if not called and made to get up. This is a good way to waste one’s life and have little to show by way of accomplishment.

Verse 10

The emphasis in this verse is “on little,” a little sleep, a little slumber, and a little rest.

Verse 11

A little sleep, a little slumber, and a little rest leads to a lot of poverty. The expression “poverty” and “need” represents the destitution of the sluggard as flowing directly from his own habit of self-indulgence.

Verse 12

One with a “false mouth” is doubly described as a “wicked man” and a “worthless person.” His former perverse speech is sinful—he is the latter in that he does neither God nor man good with his speech.

Verse 13

One who gives you signals with his eyes, feet, and fingers to “speak” to some but to conceal what he is saying from others is a character to be aware of. He too is described as being a “wicked man” and a “worthless person.”

Verse 14

Such a “worthless,” man is further described as having a perverse heart, a heart that is continually devising some kind of evil, spreading strife.

Verse 15

He has plotted the downfall of others; he himself will meet his own destruction. The destruction is described in two ways, “suddenly” he will be broken and without healing.

Verse 16

God may love the world—the people ([John 3:16](#)), but there are things that He “hates.” There are seven things that are an abomination to Him.

Verse 17

This verse shows that the eyes, tongue, and hands can and do sin and that God hates and holds in abomination sinful things done by them. “Haughty eyes” are also condemned. A “lying tongue” is called a “deceitful tongue.” “Lying is the willful perversion of truth not only by speech but by any means whatever whereby a false impression is conveyed to the mind.”

Verse 18

Two more ways one can displease God to the fullest: to have a heart that thinks up wicked plans and feet that are quick to run to evil.

Verse 19

“A false witness” who utters lies and one who spreads strife among brethren are two more ways in which one can displease God.

Verse 20

“Observe the commandments of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother,” parallels the instruction given in Ephesians 6:1, “Children, obey your parents.”

Verse 21

“Bind” them “tie” them would be to secure them in your heart and mind; do not let them get away.

Verse 22

Such binding and tying would cause the understanding imparted to him to do three things for him;

1. Guide him when he walked;
2. Watch over him when he slept;
3. When awake they will talk to you.

One’s childhood teachings should accompany him at all times to instruct him constantly.

Verse 23

The three statements of this verse are progressive;

1. The commandment is a “lamp;”
2. The teaching is “light;”
3. Reproofs for discipline are the “way of life.”

Verse 24

The importance of a young man growing up and not being taken in by an “evil woman” and by her “smooth tongue,” is warned against several times in the book of Proverbs.

Verse 25

“Do not desire her beauty in your heart” is “lust,” the burning desire for intimacies with her. This admonition is a warning to repress the very first inclination to lustful desires. To harbor lustful thoughts and feelings in one’s heart is to be guilty of adultery in the heart before God. Matthew 5:28

Verse 26

“From this verse onward to the end of the chapter the discourse consists of a series of arguments exhibiting the evil consequences of such indulgence.” The evil consequences brought to mankind by a money-making harlot are of no concern to her, “an adulteress hunts for the precious life.”

Verse 27

Just as getting too close to a fire is inviting destruction by blaze, so getting involved with an immoral woman is a sure way to absolute ruin.

Verse 28

Can a man walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?

Verse 29

One can no more commit adultery with his neighbor’s wife and get away with it unpunished than one can “take fire” into his bosom and his clothes not be burned or walk upon hot coals and his feet not be scorched. Who will punish him?

1. Her husband. Jealousy is the rage of a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; nor will he rest content though you give many gifts.
2. Society. “Wounds and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.” (Proverbs 6:33)

3. God. “They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21)

Verse 30

Even though a thief will be punished upon being caught, yet men are somewhat understanding if he stole out of extreme hunger.

Verse 31

But even then, he will still be punished. The Law of Moses required a four-fold restitution of stolen sheep and five-fold restitution for stolen cattle.

Verse 32

Adultery is “an unwarrantable invasion of his neighbor’s rights. God’s displeasure with adultery is seen in His commanding the guilty parties to be put to death under the Old Testament (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22) and in His condemning the same to everlasting destruction today (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Revelation 22:15)

Verse 33

“Wounds” may be those inflicted by the enraged husband, they may be referring to the wounds received by being stoned to death according to the Law of Moses, or they may be associated with “dishonor.”

Verse 34

The worst feelings of anger are kindled in the man whose wife has been taken by someone else. Because of this there have been vicious fist fights, knife stabbings, and shootings.

Verse 35

Nothing that the guilty man can do to try to make amends or to appease the man whose wife he took will work. We must face the fact that there is something about adultery that is different from any other sin that man can commit, and it’s that way whether people like it or not.

Chapter 7

Verse 1

Before the father begins this lengthy warning against his son's getting involved with a wicked woman, he urges him to be obedient to what he is teaching him. The father goes over and over this warning because he is “training up” his son in the way that he should go, the promise for which is, “he will not depart from it.”

Verse 2

The “apple of the eye is the pupil of the eye.” To keep something “as the apple of your eye” was a proverbial expression for anything particularly precious and liable to be injured unless guarded with care.

Verse 3

“Bind” means to “tie.” The heart is spoken of as a “tablet,” a writing surface. The heart is indeed a place to lay up things precious and dear.

Verse 4

Claim a close relationship with those women “wisdom and understanding” and such a relationship will keep one from any relationship with the wicked, immoral woman.

Verse 5

“Keep my words,” says the father “that they may keep you from the strange woman.” “When the heart is filled with the love of what is good, it is armed against the seductions of evil pleasure or whatever entices the soul from God and duty.”

Verse 6

Latticework was used over windows and other areas by crossing laths over each other for privacy (so one could look out without being seen), to keep the welcome flow of breeze coming in while keeping the hot rays of the sun out.

Verse 7

“The simple are the inexperienced who are easily led astray.”

Verse 8

He was not aware of how dangerous it was to him to be found in her area.

Verse 9

Wickedness seems to “come to life” when darkness begins to set in. The devil’s dens of iniquity are all open at night.

Verse 10

“Her attire catches the eye and identifies her as a harlot. In Revelation 17:4, the harlot is dressed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls. She is “cunning of heart.” She cannot be believed; her “lures” are in reality all “lies.”

Verse 11

She is boisterous and rebellious something a good woman is not. 1 Peter 3:4

Verse 12

She knows no shame. She goes out where people are to snare men.

Verse 13

She seizes him and kisses him. “With a brazen face” means she assumed the most confident look she could and endeavored to appear friendly and sincere.

Verse 14

When one had made a peace offering to God, one was allowed to take a portion of the meat home. She was planning a delicious meal (a banquet for two) to which she invites the young man.

Verse 15

She uses “flattery” to entice the young man by saying, “I have come out to meet you, to seek your presence, and I have found you.”

Verse 16

Wicked women have employed every means involving beauty, fragrance, beautifying themselves, their clothing, and their living quarters to entice men.

Verse 17

And here comes the fragrance. “I have sprinkled my bed.”

Verse 18

All of this is to get him to “come” into her presence.

Verse 19

She takes care of any fear he might have of her “husband.” She assures him that her husband will know nothing about the matter, “He is not home; he has gone on a long journey.”

Verse 20

The assurance continues. “He has plenty of money with him for his long trip; he will not be home again until the full moon.”

Verse 21

Her flattery of him, her tapestried couch, her perfumed bed, her assurances that it was safe, all this caused him to yield. The young man evidently did not give in easily, knowing it was wrong. But how many times temptation wins over knowledge!

Verse 22

Once a person has given in inwardly, there is nothing to keep him from proceeding to the evil act itself. The pleasure, not the punishment of sin is uppermost in his mind at the moment. Our verse also indicates that he is in for a “beating” for he goes after her “as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool.”

Verse 23

Other figures of suffering and death continue: an arrow through the liver, a bird caught in a snare. With all the promises that sin makes and with what actually follows, the deceitfulness of sin and the devil (who is actually behind every temptation) is proven to be the lair that Jesus said he was in [John 8:44](#). He does not realize that it will actually cost him his life.

Verse 24

In this verse Solomon speaks to all his “sons” saying, “Pay attention to the words of my mouth.”

Verse 25

“Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways.” Keep this type of thinking out of your “heart,” and then you will not “go” after her. The words “turn” (down) and “stray” (lost); to go that way is to go down and to lose one’s way in life.

Verse 26

One woman, but she has cast down or ruined many men; and numerous are all her slain. “The harlot as a ruthless conqueror leaves a field of battle strewn with corpses.”

Verse 27

In deep shaft coal mines there is a house built over the elevator. When one enters that house and gets on the elevator, it goes only one direction—down. And that is the way it is when one goes to the harlot’s house.

Chapter 8

Verse 1

Wisdom is again personified and is again feminine.

Verse 2

“She takes her stand” in the most open and elevated parts of the city where she may be seen and heard by all who pass by, and where many paths converge, and where people meet from different living areas.

Verse 3

By lifting up her voice in the gates and doors of the city, she would be heard by all who were coming in and by all who are going out. It would be for the great who entered and for the lowly who entered. Nor does wisdom speak feebly, she cries out.

Verse 4

Wisdom and understanding were spoken about in verse 1-3 and now they begin to speak, and their direct quotations run through verse 10.

Verse 5

The “naive ones” are those not yet perverted but easily influenced for good or evil. This is where each person begins. If people do not acquire wisdom, later on, then they are considered “fools.” There is an urgency of being directed in the right way. “Prudence” is the ability to regulate and discipline oneself through the exercise of “reason.”

Verse 6

Wisdom also claims to have imparted “excellent” things. Wisdom is never wrong but always “right.” Those who would “excel” must always exalt wisdom.

Verse 7

And “truth” is tied in with wisdom and excellence and righteousness. Wisdom always speaks truth because wickedness (lying, deceit) is not only foreign to wisdom but is actually an abomination to it.

Verse 8

Righteousness goes along with or is a stronger expression of the “right things” (wisdom) and it is set in contrast to “wickedness.”

Verse 9

While wisdom may be “too high for a fool” it is certainly obtainable to one who wishes to see and understand. Our verse describes the type of person we should all be; one who understands because he has been looking for knowledge. To all such, wisdom is plain, clear, and not difficult.

Verse 10

The opportunity to learn through “instruction” might be said to be a “silver” opportunity while the actual acquisition of “knowledge” through that instruction may be said to be a “golden” possession. Knowledge of the true and the right is here said to be a higher goal and a greater possession than wealth.

Verse 11

This verse says that the possession of wisdom is greater than possessing “jewels” or anything else. “Wisdom” is the principal thing: therefore, get wisdom and with all your getting get understanding. As valuable as wisdom is, it is not something that can be acquired by money.

Verse 12

Personified wisdom is carried a step farther by speaking of her as “dwelling” in prudence. Her quest for “knowledge” and “discretion” are successful.

Verse 13

One hates evil and fears God because he views evil from God’s viewpoint; he knows how wrong it is, how contrary to God, and what it will result in. God hates “pride and arrogance.” There are six things which God hates; seven which are an abomination to him. (Proverbs 6:16-17)

The evil way must be the wicked things that grow out of pride and arrogance. A “perverse” mouth is a mouth that is perverted from its intended speech.

Verse 14

Wisdom’s “counsel” should be heard because wisdom is “sound knowledge.” With knowledge one is prepared, without it one is defeated.

Verse 15

By wisdom kings reign and rulers decree justice.

Verse 16

Parents will find out in time that unless their wisdom helps them, their decisions will not make sense, and their children will rebel and not submit to their rule.

Verse 17

Wisdom is good to those who love it. Wisdom is something to be sought and to be sought diligently.

Verse 18

Wisdom is more valuable than silver and gold and cannot be purchased with gold or silver and yet credit it with bringing both riches and honor to its possessor.

Verse 19

While “gold,” “pure gold” and “silver” are among the products of wisdom. They must be among the lesser valued “fruit” of wisdom. Other fruits of wisdom must be considered greater. Some of them are mentioned in verse 20.

Verse 20

One who walks with and by wisdom will walk in the way of “righteousness” and in the paths of “justice.”

Verse 21

Again, the acquisition of wealth can be one of the results of having wisdom. “Fools” and “money” do not go together, but wisdom and money do.

Verse 22

Wisdom is still speaking. Wisdom is not something new, something that only recently came along.

Verse 23

Wisdom is “from everlasting,” “from the beginning.”

Verse 24

The Bible often divides the creation of the universe into three parts: heaven, earth and sea. Beginning with this verse these three are considered with being of shorter duration than wisdom: sea, this verse, earth, (verses 25, 26) and heaven, (verse 27).

Verse 25

We use the mountains and hills as a gauge for comparing something that is old in our saying, “As old as the hills.” But wisdom existed even before there were any hills.

Verse 26

If wisdom had not been an attribute of God, earth would have been uninhabitable by man, there would have been nothing for him to eat or wear.

Verse 27

Isaiah 40:22 also speaks of the earth's "circle."

Verse 28

Ever hear a child ask, "What if the sky fell down upon us?" God made it "firm" over our heads. The "fountains of the deep" and the "springs of the sea" mentioned in Job 38:16. Their strength mentioned here was manifested in the days of Noah when they burst forth at the decree of God and joined the waters that poured down for forty days and nights.

Verse 29

Go to any beach or seacoast and you can observe the definite line where the ocean waters stop in their ebb and flow and in their swellings during great storms.

Verse 30

God had His wisdom "with" Him in all of His creative acts. This is what made everything "good" that He created.

Verse 31

God made the earth as a dwelling place. The climax of God's creation was the creation of man.

Verse 32

If wisdom is that ancient, if wisdom is an eternal attribute of God, if wisdom was back there with God when everything was being created, then people should listen when wisdom speaks. In this verse wisdom says, "For blessed are they who keep my ways," and a blessing is pronounced upon those who do.

Verse 33

This verse connects our being wise with hearing, and not refusing instruction.

Verse 34

One who seeks wisdom lives in a state of expectation and anticipation. He watches and waits. “Waiting” is often involved in “watching” as in the cat patiently watching for a mouse or as in Christians watching for their Lord’s return.

Verse 35

A double blessing ultimately comes to those who through watching and waiting find wisdom: “life” both here and hereafter, both spiritual and eternal, and the “favor of God” (the greatest possession that one can have).

Chapter 9

Verse 1

Consider the contrast between the lady “wisdom” in verses 1-12 and the “foolish woman” of verses 13-18. Wisdom “builds” (verse 1), but immorality tears down. Both are inviting guests to come in (verses 3-5) and (verses 14-17). The guests of the immoral woman end in death (verse 18) while wisdom leads to life (verse 6).

Verse 2

She prepared her feast and had set her table. By “mingled her wine” is probably meant mixing of the straight grape juice with the proper amount of water to make it a better tasting beverage (which the ancients among the Jews, Greeks, and the Romans did).

Verse 3

With everything ready she sends forth the maidens to call the guests to the feast.

Verse 4

The wicked woman of verse 16 uses the same words in her invitation. Wisdom is pleased to call those who lack it, calling them to begin a life of wisdom. In a sense we all start “simple.”

Verse 5

We are told to get wisdom and this verse compares the gaining of wisdom as desirable and not miserable by using the figure of dining, something that people enjoy.

Verse 6

Put an end to living without wisdom. Adopt a new way, the way of understanding.

Verse 7

A scoffer will neither appreciate your sincere intention to help him nor will he allow himself to see the correctness of what you are saying to him.

Verse 8

Reprove the wise man but not the scoffer. The one will love you for it, the other will hate you.

Verse 9

The same good qualities of the wise man who accepted rebuke in verse 8 show up in this verse and justify the time and effort that it takes to instruct him.

Verse 10

The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. No one can be a person of real understanding who does not know the Holy One in whom alone originally resided wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

Verse 11

It is from the wisdom that comes from the fear of God that the blessings now mentioned, spring.

Verse 12

There is a sense in which others let you be wise if it is your choice to be wise, and others let you scoff if that be your choice.

Verse 13

The “foolish woman” of this and the following verses is in contrast to the woman “wisdom” of verses 1-6. This verse says she is “boisterous,” “naive”, and “knows nothing.”

She is “naive,” for her trade does not necessitate her to develop her mind. She “knows nothing,” for she either doesn’t know or doesn’t care what she is doing, how she is looked upon, what harm she is bringing to the homes and bodies and souls of others.

Verse 14

She is forward, not bashful, in pushing her trade. She is bold and not ashamed.

Verse 15

She goes out in the passing crowd and tries to get customers. But thank God, most people have enough sense to keep going “right on their ways” instead of stopping and getting involved with her.

Verse 16

Anyone who will listen to her and go with her really isn’t any wiser than she. She employs the same words as wisdom uses, she is going to “educate” the “simple” who are void of understanding”.

Verse 17

Here is an invitation to commit adultery with her. She is referred to as “stolen waters,” for she does not really belong to those who accept her invitation, for she is married, she belongs to her husband or, she should save herself for the man whom she will marry.

Verse 18

The “sweetness” and the “pleasantness” that she promised in verse 17, ends in death, just like all sin.

Chapter 10

Verse 1

A “proverb” is a wise saying. The first nine chapters, while exalting and containing “wisdom are not “sayings” but are extended topical material.

The actual “sayings” begin here and will continue through Chapter 29. The message of the verse: how do we as sons, affect the happiness or the heaviness of our parents, while under their roof and after we leave it. For instance: the prodigal son surely brought heaviness upon his foolish departure and throughout his waywardness and indulgence, but he brought happiness upon his penitent return.

Verse 2

Treasures of wickedness are riches gotten by wrong means. Communities and families are usually prouder of their riches than they are of their righteousness.

Verse 3

God so blesses the righteous that they do not faint. But equally so is God’s face against those who do evil.

Verse 4

The proper result of shiftlessness is to have nothing. God has willed that if a person will not work, he should not have things to eat.

Verse 5

In our life our actions commend others or embarrass them.

Verse 6

The violence of the wicked shall cover their faces with, shame and confusion. Their own violent dealings shall be visited upon them.

Verse 7

This verse speaks of the deceased. “The righteous will be remembered forever” (Psalm 112:6). Their virtues are extolled (Acts 9:36-39). But the bad things that a wicked person did are remembered long after he is dead.

Verse 8

Jesus also likened the obedient to the wise (Matthew 7:24-27). (“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man.”) (“But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act upon them will be like a foolish man.”)

Some versions of the Bible use the words “a prating fool” meaning to talk, especially much and to little purpose; to chatter.

Verse 9

Walks in “integrity” is one who is walking in righteousness knowing what he is doing, has assurance, and is safe. Want to be known and noticed? Do wrong, and you will be. The righteous settle for “walks securely.”

Verse 10

Winking the eye “is a sign of craft, malice, and complicity with other wicked comrades.”

The first part of the verse shows that wrongdoing brings sorrow to others; the second part of the verse shows that it brings destruction to oneself.

Verse 11

The blessings brought by the mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life and is set in contrast to the sorrow and destruction brought by the mouth of the wicked which conceals violence, of verse 10.

Verse 12

Hatred does not desire the fellowship of the one hated, does not wish the peace and the welfare of the one hated. Hatred must show itself and the result is trouble and strife. The soft answer of love will turn away wrath but the grievous words of hatred will stir up strife.

Verse 13

One who is wise has “discerning lips;” that is he knows what to say and what not to say, when to say it and when not to say it, and how much to say, where to say it and where not to.

Verse 14

A wise man does more listening (taking in, “laying up”) than he does talking; the fool just the opposite.

Verse 15

The rich man’s fortress (“strong city”) means that in which he trusts. There are those who trust in riches and Jesus said such cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. (Mark 10:24) Job recognized that to make riches one’s “confidence” is to “deny” God. (Job 11:24-28)

Verse 16

The labor of the righteous is good for him; he enjoys his food, he sleeps well, he is healthy, and his mind is not troubled. The increase of the wicked is not good for him, for it but leads to sin and “punishment”.

Verse 17

In verse 16, labor led to “life;” in this verse heeding instruction “correction” does. There will always be those who forsake instruction, and they will not prosper.

Verse 18

“Conceals (hideth) hatred” and “spreads (uttereth) slander” are obvious contrasts. Those who seek to hide their true feelings will lie. When asked “What is the matter?” or “What have I done that’s wrong?” they will reply, “Nothing.” The word “devil” means “slanderer.” We must be careful not to be guilty of doing the same thing.

Verse 19

Those who speak incessantly will surely sometimes speak when they should be listening, will say some things that should not be said, and will sometimes speak before they think.

“Speak little, because for one sin which we may commit in keeping silence where it would be well to speak, we commit a hundred by speaking upon all occasions.” (Pinart)

Verse 20

The “worth little” of the wicked person’s heart is seen in that it contains no praise for God and no love for his fellowman.

Verse 21

In this verse “feed” is set over against “die.” The lips of the wise disperse knowledge. People need this knowledge, for they will die for lacking it or for disregarding it. (Hosea 4:6)

Verse 22

When Israel did right, God blessed them and enriched them. Those who gain riches without regard for God both err from the faith and pierce themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:9-10).

Verse 23

To do mischief is sport or fun to a fool. Godliness would be boredom to him until converted. The man of understanding enjoys the way of wisdom. Fools are not the only ones who enjoy themselves, godly people are happy too!

Verse 24

Many know that they are not right, but outwardly they seem to act as if there is nothing to worry about. Yet, within them are lurking fears that come to the surface when they think they are going to die. Their way of life finally catches up with them, but the righteous have hope as they look to the future of eternity with God in heaven.

Verse 25

Finally, God’s patience with the wicked comes to an end, and He sweeps them away with the suddenness of a whirlwind, while the righteous has an everlasting foundation. Psalm 37 is a psalm noting the sudden destruction of the wicked and the continuation and blessing of the righteous.

Verse 26

The teeth do not like vinegar, the eyes do not like smoke, and neither does an employer like a lazy one.

Verse 27

As a rule, a person or a people given to sin will not live as long as a godly person or people. Sin soon burns its victims out like a roaring fire does wood.

Verse 28

The righteous have much to hope for (gladness) and God does not disappoint them. The hope of the wicked will be dashed to the ground as they perish.

Verse 29

The way of God is followed by two statements: it is a stronghold (the utmost in protection) to the upright, but it is ruin (destruction) to the workers of iniquity. Psalm 91:1-12 tells us of God's special care of the righteous. It pays to do right.

Verse 30

And again, the same lesson is emphasized. "Never be shaken" (removed), is said of the righteous, but "not dwell" in the land for the wicked.

Verse 31

The good mouth brings forth good things like praise, edifying things, and truth. While the perverted (wicked) mouth brings forth just the opposite for which it will be destroyed.

Verse 32

The lips of the righteous know what to say, when, and where, bringing forth what is acceptable. But the mouth of the wicked speaks what is perverted (the wrong thing).

Chapter 11

Verse 1

A look at this chapter will show that its sayings deal principally with honesty, integrity, and uprightness in human relationships. A false balance was a set of

dishonest scales which was an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight.

Verse 2

Pride causes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom. Pride (self-assertion and self-confidence) shall meet with mortification and disgrace in the end.

Verse 3

Integrity will guide the upright while falseness will destroy them. The integrity of Joseph “guided” him with reference to Potiphar’s wife (Genesis 39:7-12); while the “falseness” of Absalom destroyed him. (2 Samuel 15-18)

Verse 4

Man cannot purchase the remission of sins, nor turn aside the wrath of God when it is poured out. If one could gain the whole world, he could not redeem his lost soul by offering it to God at judgment. Righteousness has a great bearing on one’s being delivered when God calls us all to judgment.

Verse 5

A person spends a lifetime developing his righteousness and all the while it is the directing force of his life smoothing his way. The wicked will fall by their wickedness.

Verse 6

One’s righteousness that has directed him also delivers him from destruction. A treacherous person is one bent on injuring another for his own sinful gain. But such are often caught by their own greed in the plot they laid for others.

Verse 7

There is nothing good beyond death for the wicked. Death dashes the unjust and his earthly hopes to the ground and eternity holds nothing good for him.

Verse 8

God’s providential leadership and His answer of the righteous people’s prayers bring about deliverance. The righteous were delivered out of trouble and the wicked took their place.

Verse 9

This verse well fits a court scene where the false witness can destroy his neighbor and where the knowledge of a righteous witness can deliver the innocent.

Verse 10

The “city” rejoices when all goes well with the righteous. But when the wicked perish there is joy.

Verse 11

The mouth of the wicked set a city in “flame” which often caused these cities to be burned (Joshua 6:24); but by the blessing of the upright the city could be exalted.

Verse 12

Despising one’s neighbor is a needles or selfish strife and is a work of the flesh and not of the Spirit. A man of understanding keeps silent.

Verse 13

A man of understanding conceals a matter while a tale bearer reveals secrets. Wisdom however dictates that some things should not be told.

Verse 14

Kings always had counselors and in time of war they depended much upon their counseling. But if there were no counselors there was no guidance and the people fell. This verse is just the opposite of a know it all.

Verse 15

Surety for a stranger is when one promises to stand good for the obligation of another if he cannot pay. Many people have been hurt co-signing notes of others. He who hates going surety is safe.

Verse 16

A gracious woman prefers honor to riches, but violent men sacrifice honor to gain riches.

Verse 17

The merciful man does himself good in that others will show mercy to him. On the other hand, the cruel man does himself harm and it will surely come to him.

Verse 18

Sometimes it looks like the wicked prosper in this world but they will be cut down. They have sown to the flesh and they will reap corruption.

Verse 19

As sinners pursue evil, godly people forsake evil and follow after righteousness and godliness. The results of their actions are seen in 1 John 2:17.

Verse 20

God delights as much in the righteous people as He deplores in the wicked people. Mark 14:3-9

Verse 21

Let the evil men support one another. Justice will take care that they do not escape judgment. The righteous ones will be delivered.

Verse 22

We might ask:

1. What is a ring of gold if it be on a swine's snout? Does it make the hog?
2. What is physical beauty if the woman has no discretion (good sense)?
Is physical beauty all that counts?

Verse 23

The passage means that the righteous desire only that which is good while the wicked desire that which is wrong.

Verse 24

"Scatters" here has reference to giving to the needy. Helping the poor does not impoverish us (God blesses us), but if we withhold from them, God will withhold from us. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

Verse 25

Those who are “generous” will prosper and those who “water” will be watered.

Verse 26

People will curse him who withholds grain but will bless those who sell it not waiting for higher prices.

Verse 27

One who seeks good will obtain the favor of both man and God. Those who traffic in evil will have evil (trouble) come upon them.

Verse 28

This man trusts his riches rather than God. The righteous are often compared to the flourishing tree or green leaf.

Verse 29

God is displeased with one who makes trouble for his parents and brothers and sisters. He will inherit the “wind” (get nothing) rather than be included in the family inheritance.

Verse 30

Mankind draws the good from the lives of the righteous. To partake of the good from their lives is like eating of the tree of life. The righteous wisely win souls from the wrong to the right.

This is a great Old Testament verse on the good influencing the bad over to the right way of life.

Verse 31

The New Testament mainly points to the final reaping of what we have sown yet there are earthly as well as eternal consequences of our sowing. Galatians 6:7-9 There are two yokes that one can wear in life: Christ’s and Satan’s.

Chapter 12

Verse 1

This is a chapter with two statements per verse, contrasting statements between the righteous and the wicked. Discipline (correction) here means rebuke. It is a sad fact: more people hate reproof than love discipline. John 3:19-21

Verse 2

A “good” man obtains God’s favor, so does a righteous man and a wise man. A man of evil devices is neither right nor good and will be condemned.

Verse 3

A tree is something that is “established,” it is there from year to year. So are the righteous, but the wicked are often cut off. Wickedness may prosper for the moment but not forever.

Verse 4

An excellent wife is a crown to her husband. She is an honor to him, adorns and beautifies his life. But there are wives who make their husbands ashamed.

Verse 5

Everyone has thoughts. The righteous person’s thoughts reflect righteous thinking and are just but wicked people’s thoughts are “deceitful” and not sincere.

Verse 6

This verse seems to be related to verse five. The “thoughts” of the people are put into “words” in which the wicked are out to overthrow (wait for blood), but the righteous are out to deliver them.

Verse 7

The wicked were out to overthrow others (verse 6); in this verse they themselves are overthrown. The righteous who were out to deliver others are in this verse established (will stand).

Verse 8

A wise person will be looked to for leadership among the relatives, in the community, at work, and in the church. While the righteous and the wise held in high respect, the wicked are despised.

Verse 9

It is wiser to look after one's own business and provide for one's own necessities, even if he meets with light esteem (contempt) than to be in want, all the time assuming the airs of a rich and prosperous man.

Verse 10

There seems to be an irony in speaking of the "compassion of the wicked" as it labels them as "cruel."

One principal characteristic of a holy man is mercy; cruelty is unknown to him, and his benevolence extends to the meanest of the brute creation. Pity rules the heart of a pious man; he can do nothing that is cruel. He considers what is best for the comfort, ease, health, and life of the beast that serves him.

Verse 11

"Plenty of bread" is the expected pay-off of work. One who joins "vain fellows" (non workers) lacks understanding and will come to poverty.

Verse 12

The wicked desire and try to obtain by evil ways, but they are usually caught and end up with nothing while the righteous (who honestly work for what they have) are fruitful in their honest labors.

Verse 13

A liar's memory is not always good enough to keep him from contradicting himself and thus getting himself into trouble, but the truthful upright speech of the righteous brings them out of difficulties.

Verse 14

One who has answered kindly is satisfied with the peace that results. The deeds of a man's "hands" will also bring him blessings.

Verse 15

A fool knows little, actually not enough to know that he might be wrong. A wise man can (and will) listen to counsel, but a fool will go on his own way, not seeing his error, and will suffer for it.

Verse 16

A foolish man, if he is vexed, insulted, or slighted, has no idea of controlling himself or checking the expression of his aroused feelings. The wise man keeps his cool head and copes with the problem rather than cursing.

Verse 17

One speaks truth, has an eye to righteousness, but one who is untrue utters deceit. We are commended before God by speaking right words but condemned before Him by speaking wrong words. (Matthew 12:37)

Verse 18

Rashness is always opposed to reason, for in rashness one speaks or acts before he thinks or beyond his thinking. Such a tongue can be like a destructive, cutting sword.

Speech can perk one up, actually build one up. “Edify” means to “build up.” The speech of the wise brings healing.

Verse 19

It is always right to speak the truth instead of lying. In the long run it is profitable to have told the truth, for most lies are ultimately found out.

Verse 20

Deceit in the hearts of those who devise evil is contrasted with the joy that is in the hearts of those who counsel toward peace.

Verse 21

The wicked are filled with trouble. “Trouble” here means calamity or difficulty.

Verse 22

God hates lying lips. God is for truth-telling and for sincerity.

Verse 23

A prudent man conceals knowledge waiting for the proper opportunity, either from humility or wise caution, so that he does not advise unadvisedly. A foolish man cannot help exposing the stupid ideas that arise in his mind.

Verse 24

The diligent will rule in the community, in business, and in the church. The “slack hand will be put to forced labor” means the lazy have to work hard to catch up.

Verse 25

While a person’s anxiety can make his heart heavy, a good word from someone can cheer it up.

Verse 26

Here we see two kinds of neighbors: a true neighbor (one who is a guide) and a bad neighbor (one who causes another to err.) The law of love is to help one another “bear their burdens” and to “serve one another.” (Galatians 6:2; 5:13)

Love will never work injury to a neighbor. (Romans 13:10)

Verse 27

The slothful man may kill game, bring it home, lay it down, and not bother to roast it so that it might be eaten. Not so with the diligent to whom everything is “precious.”

Some people will never get ahead because of not caring for what they have; others get ahead by taking care of everything they have.

Verse 28

The Hebrew poets often restate the same thought in different word, such as in this verse. This verse emphasizes the fact that righteousness leads to life, not to death—a fact often taught in the Bible.

Chapter 13

Verse 1

Wisdom is shown in respecting the age, learning, and office of the father; the scoffer respects nobody.

Verse 2

Ever hear of eating your own words? What people do and say will determine what they “eat” as a result.

Verse 3

Guarding one’s mouth suggests that a person should not say just anything that comes into his or her mind. If we keep our mouth, we keep ourselves from many troubles.

Verse 4

But while desiring is the basis of getting, it takes much work and application to make dreams and desires come true, and this becomes the downfall of the lazy.

Verse 5

The righteous hate all sin. The wicked are loathsome in the eye of others who deplore their conduct, and they come to no good end.

Verse 6

Righteousness keeps one from getting into trouble, but a sinner is overthrown in his wickedness.

Verse 7

This verse speaks of some who pretend to be rich but have nothing while others who pretend to be poor have great wealth. Some who would be rich and who do everything they can to become rich end in poverty while others are always giving away and yet end up rich.

Verse 8

In tyrannical countries a rich man is often accused of some capital crime and to save his life, though he may be quite innocent, is obliged to give up his riches; but the poor in such countries are put to no trouble.

Verse 9

The Scriptures often refer to the lamp or light of the wicked being put out. This figure was drawn from their household habit of no house, however poor, is left without a light burning in it all night; the housewife rising several times to fill the lamp with oil so it would not go out. If a lamp goes out, it is a fatal omen.

This verse could be translated: “the light of the righteous is everlasting, but the light of sinners is quenched.”

Verse 10

Presumption or contention grows out of pride, one who will not be advised and who will argue back. The reason: a proud person is self-centered. A self-centered person “knows it all,” and when anyone tries to advise him, he gets into an argument.

Verse 11

“Wealth obtained without labor and exertion, or by illegitimate and dishonest means is soon dissipated, and is not blessed by God and has no stability.” We have a saying: “Easy come, easy go.”

Those who have obtained through hard work don’t “blow” their money.

Verse 12

You look forward with anticipation to some day or event only to learn that it has been postponed, and what a letdown! To be put off, to be disappointed, is hard on the heart. When something does come about to which one has long anticipated, it is a “tree of life” (health to the heart).

Verse 13

This verse refers to God’s Word and commandment.

The same principal is in effect concerning any word of wisdom or just commandment.

King Saul did not obey God's commandment to destroy the Amalekites and all their possessions so God took the kingship away from his house.

Abraham was rewarded for fearing God's commandment enough to have proceeded to sacrifice his son Isaac until God intervened.

Verse 14

The rules and teaching of wise men are a source of life to those who follow them so that they depart from the snares of death. All who follow His teachings will have life and will escape the snares of the devil that bring death. How can one escape the traps that are set for him? By following the wisdom of one who knows where those traps are!

Verse 15

We honor the person who knows and uses his understanding aright whether he is a parent, a leader, or a neighbor. On the other hand, we see the unbearable outcome of sin in Cain's statement, "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

Verse 16

In this verse we see two different kinds of persons: one man works through knowledge; the other shows off his folly. The fool does this because wisdom is too high for him.

Verse 17

A "wicked messenger" is one who is not true to the one sending him. One who is a faithful representative brings joy to the one dispatching him.

Verse 18

Discipline is mentioned as a part of everyone's life. Sooner or later each of us, somehow or in some way, "pulls a boner" and gets rebuked for it. Are we exercised by God's discipline? If so, we will be honored: if not, "poverty and shame" results.

Verse 19

“Desire realized” (some worthy goal accomplished) is brought about because of diligence and is “sweet to the soul” (satisfying).

If there is a connection between the first and second statement of this verse, it is that while good men dedicate themselves to the accomplishing of their religious desires, the fool would consider it abominable to give up his sins in order to live that way.

Verse 20

A Dutch proverb: “He that lives with cripples learns to limp.” A Spanish saying: “He that lies down with dogs shall rise up with flees.”

The idea of apprenticeship is that we will be the wiser for having worked with those more advanced than we are. Younger men go to places of study and learning for this purpose. But others are content with being companions of “fools.”

One’s native wisdom and ideals are reflected in the companions that he chooses.

Verse 21

(Adversity), “evil or trouble” is on the trail of sinners; it follows them wherever they go. The righteous on the other hand, will be rewarded with prosperity.

Verse 22

A good man works hard, accomplishes much and takes care of what he has. He then has something to pass on to succeeding generations.

As for the wealth of the wicked man, there is an old saying: “The third generation shall not possess the good that has been unjustly acquired. Sometimes it ends up in the hands of the righteous.

Verse 23

The thought of this verse is that work normally produces an abundance. Much of the poverty of the poor arises from their own mismanagement. They

have little or no economy and no foresight. When they get something, they quickly spend it.

Verse 24

One is not really loving his child by sparing the rod (some claim they “love” their child too much to discipline him). It is better to (spare) the child from ruination than from the rod. A wise parent will not defer punishing, will not put it off and off and really do nothing about his child’s disobedience.

Verse 25

The righteous may not be wealthy, but they will have enough to satisfy their appetite, but the stomach of the “wicked” is never satisfied.

Chapter 14

Verse 1

People can either build or destroy. The wise woman builds, the foolish woman destroys. Owners usually build and take care of things, renters sometime lets everything run down.

Verse 2

This verse deals with two classes of men. What a wonderful life results to both and for their offspring when “he who walks in his uprightness marries the wise woman of verse 1.” When people properly fear God, they keep His commandments, when people don’t fear God, evil results.

Verse 3

The foolish man can have a cruel tongue (a rod of pride), while the tongue of the wise will preserve him.

Verse 4

The ox was used for agricultural purposes. A “clean manger” meant an “empty” manger.

Verse 5

The one difference between a “faithful witness” and a “false witness”—one will lie, the other one won’t. Some are “false witnesses” because it is not always easy to tell the truth. Others are “false witnesses” on purpose (for material gain, or to ruin others).

The apostles would neither lie nor suppress the truth about Jesus. Such conscientious souls are needed in every age.

Verse 6

A “scoffer” is strong in his own ideas and reluctant to take the word of others. Learning is not gullible, but there is still a strong element of trust, involving in learning, which the scoffer does not have. It is much easier for a humble man of understanding to increase his knowledge, for he has no barrier of pride.

Verse 7

Leave the presence of a fool if you want to discern words of knowledge. People would save themselves much disillusionment if they would regard this instruction.

Verse 8

The prudent wisely watch every aspect of their lives. They do not jump and then look for a place to land. The foolish suppose they can deceive others, but seldom are they successful in their attempt.

Verse 9

A trespass-offering was ordained of God if properly offered, but if one thought he could “pull the wool over” God’s eyes by such an offering when he intended to keep on in the trespass, he was mocked, not God. (Leviticus 6:1-7)

The “upright” gain the good will and favor of God by their honest dealings with themselves before Him.

Verse 10

There is a portion of each person's inner self that no one else can fully enter into. We cannot fully communicate our joys, nor can they fully enter into our joys.

Verse 11

The "whole way of life" of the wicked will be destroyed, while the "whole way of life" of the upright will flourish. The verse refers back to and blends with verses 1 and 2.

Verse 12

The importance of the truth may account for its double appearance in the book. Men are often talked into things that do not end as they expected. Sometimes people do the wrong thing when they think they are doing the wise and desirable.

False teachers may look like sheep even though they are ravening, devouring wolves. Counterfeits are made to resemble the genuine. So the devil pawns off religious organizations started by men for the church started by Christ.

Verse 13

"Laughter and grief" are found in both statements. Many who laugh may have inward sorrows they are either trying to suppress or cover up. Some who laugh easily cry just as easily.

Verse 14

A backslidden life is no longer filled with God's ways but with one's own ways. A backslider is one who has returned to selfish living.

Who is the backslider?

1. The man who once walked in the ways of religion but has withdrawn from them.
2. The man who once fought against the world, the devil, and the flesh but has retreated from the battle or joined the enemy.

3. The man who once belonged to the congregation of the saints but is now removed from them and has set down in the synagogue of Satan.

One backslides “in heart” before he does in his “ways;” people cease enjoying the assembly before they actually quit attending; they lose their touch with God in prayer before they drop the practice of prayer.

A “good man” will be satisfied with himself because he is actually filled with God’s good and holy ways which bring blessings and satisfaction.

Verse 15

Some people grow up and never doubt anything they hear. In contrast “the prudent man considers where the advice given will lead him; he always acts with deliverance.

Verse 16

A wise man is cautious and does not take dangerous chances, but a foolish man is arrogant and careless.

Verse 17

The Bible is against quick temperedness. Titus 1:7 An angry man will deal foolishly because anger momentarily blurs one’s judgment. Keep your temper, nobody wants it.

Verse 18

Those at the low end of wisdom, the naive, participate or know only folly, while those at the upper end, the prudent, are blessed with knowledge.

Verse 19

We can see the contrast as indicated in this verse in Jesus’ report of the rich man and Lazarus when the beggar is comforted and the rich man is tormented. When troubles hit the wicked and ungodly (those who never go to church), they often turn to the righteous for sympathetic help and comfort.

Verse 20

There is a certain shame and disgrace to extreme poverty that causes even neighbors not to be associated with such in people’s minds. People are often

ashamed of their poor relatives, their clothes, their car, their home, their ways. But people are usually glad to claim relationship and friendship with the financially successful.

Verse 21

We are not to despise our neighbor even if he is poor. We must have pity upon the poor. Those who do will be blessed of God. Acts 20:35 Luke 14:13-14

Verse 22

This verse speaks of two devises, (evil and good). Some are devising evil (the wicked), and some are devising good (the godly). Kindness and truth belong together.

Verse 23

There is often a difference between being a talker and a worker. It is not those who talk about what they are going to do but those who go out and get it done that counts.

Verse 24

Notice the folly in all of this triple contrast. Decorate folly as you want, deck it out in gaud and ornament, it is still nothing by folly and is discerned as such, and that all the more for being made conspicuous.

Verse 25

A true witness saves lives from their false accusers in court; a false witness on the other hand, will tell lies of deceit in order to bring about one's condemnation.

There is an application today to the true gospel preacher who delivers souls from the clutch of sin and the doom it would bring upon him and to the false teacher who utters falsehood deceitfully. Ephesians 4:14

The tongue of man is either a mighty instrument for good or a mighty monster for bad.

Verse 26

The fear of the Lord here is that reverence for Him that causes one to commit one's life to Him, and when this is done, both he and his children will have refuge.

Verse 27

One who fears God departs from evil that he may escape the "snares of death." Instead of death, he is drinking of the fountain of life.

Verse 28

To be too small in number was to invite invasion and the rule was that the lesser number lost to the greater in number. Happy and numerous people, dwelling securely and increasing in numbers, was a better honor for a king and more to be desired.

Verse 29

The quick-tempered man will exalt folly while the calm headed man is of great understanding. The man of understanding does not burst into a rage, for to do so is to exalt "folly," for an angry man will say and do things before he thinks.

Verse 30

There is nothing better for the health of one's body than a tranquil, calm, and peaceful heart. God wants us to live right that we might be at peace with Him, and He wants us to live at peace with our fellowmen.

Verse 31

One's action toward the poor and the needy is here judged in relation to God. In life there are some who help make people poor (like the thieves) in the Good Samaritan parable and others who help the needy (like the Good Samaritan himself) and then there are also many (like the priest and the Levite) of that parable who neither made the man poor nor help him get better. (Luke 10:31-32)

Verse 32

The wicked are thrust down or cut off by their wrong doing (because of their sins), sometimes right while they are committing the act. This verse causes us to ask, “Which is really important, to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season and be rejected and punished of God forever, or to live the way that is always right and that will end right.”

Verse 33

A wise, informed, and knowledgeable person is not always telling all he may know and he has no disposition to flaunt his knowledge, but with fools it is different, they are always talking and they will tell you everything.

Verse 34

This is an often quoted verse because its message is pertinent. God sees that righteousness does build up, bless, and make a great nation. History surely shows that sin deteriorates a nation (many nations have fallen from the inside through moral degradation). Israel was a great illustration of this verse.

Verse 35

Every leader that Joseph was under (Potiphar, the jailer, and Pharaoh) could see that he was wise, and they respected the wisdom and showed favor toward him.

Daniel too, though a part of a captured people, was in every king’s favor and service that he was under. Even heathen governments have punished those who did things contrary to its laws and things against its best interest.

In this age of softening punishments (in government, at work, at school, at home) there is a need to return to stricter trials and just punishments.

Chapter 15

Verse 1

If someone has spoken angrily to us what kind of answer should be given? We can return a “soft” (gentle) answer, which will tone down the other’s wrath,

or we can answer in the same tone in which he spoke to us and full-fledged trouble flares.

“Anger, however great is checked by answer sweet.” (A medieval rhyme)
This instruction is necessary for maintaining good human relations.

Verse 2

A “wise “person has the knowledge to utter; he also knows when, where, and how to speak; and he studies or thinks before he speaks.

Verse 3

God is everywhere and He knows everything. Such knowledge is necessary if God is to be our judge.

Verse 4

The perverse tongue is a “breaking of the spirit” to all involved: the speaker himself is often hurt; so are those who have been spoken to.

Verse 5

A fool is wrong twice; first, he disobeyed, and then he will not accept correction. Those who accept correction are wise. Those who do not accept correction are not wise.

Verse 6

This was especially true of Israel’s and Judah’s kings. Those who were good gained cities and amassed wealth through the blessing of God and those who were wicked often lost cities and had to pay off their enemies to keep from being destroyed.

Verse 7

Wise lips “disperse” (give out) knowledge, but the foolish heart has no inclination to do so.

Verse 8

Sometimes the wicked sacrifice and pray and keep up a “front” of religion, but it does them no good. God is pleased to hear the prayers of the godly.

Verse 9

Sinners often look down upon others who do not live as they live, go where they go, and indulge in what they indulge in. They seem to be very “sold” on themselves and their ways, even thinking it strange that others do not run with them to the same excess of riot and speaking evil of them but their ways are abominable to God.

Verse 10

Those who are in the “way of the wicked” are in for grievous correction, both by God and man (God’s chastening and man’s courts and personal dealings).

Verse 11

“Sheol” is the Hebrew word for the place of departed spirits (the same as “Hades” in Greek).

“Abaddon” is the Hebrew word for destruction (the same as “Apollyon” in Greek).

The omniscience of God, then, extends to those who have perished and so does it also to the hearts of men.

Verse 12

A scoffer is a proud, know-it-all person, self-willed, opinionated, and usually wrong. He will not go to the wise to ask or to learn, and he does not like people coming to him with their corrections of him.

Verse 13

A “glad heart” (on the inside) makes a “cheerful countenance” on the outside. The reverse is also true (a sad heart will show up in a sad countenance).

Verse 14

The person who has knowledge wants more, and he gets it. “The wise man is always seeking to learn more.” The fool is always gaping and devouring every silly, or slanderous, or wicked word that comes in his way, and in turn utters and disseminates it.”

Verse 15

To the person suffering, no day seems physically good; they are all “evil.” To the healthy and the happy every day is good (a continual feast).

Verse 16

Sometimes “treasure and trouble” go together, they are twins. It is really better and the part of wisdom to take a lesser-paying job with which God is pleased, than to take a higher-paying job with which God is not pleased.

Verse 17

A “dinner of herbs” represents a meatless meal (a poor man’s meal); “stalled ox” represents a luxurious meal. People can have a good fare of food and love at the same time just the same as people can have hatred with their dinner or herbs.

Verse 18

A wrathful man stirs up contention because he wants things stirred up. But men who are slow to anger try to keep things calm. And they are doing what they should. “A hot head” and “a cold heart” most often go together.

Verse 19

Try walking down an old road that has grown over with thorn bushes and you will find that progress is slow and difficult. Such is the way of the sluggard or the lazy person. In contrast the path of the upright is clear and open (like a highway).

Verse 20

Nothing makes a father happier than the good ways of his children.

“Despising” one’s mother is just the opposite of the Fifth Commandment. A child who is brought up to honor his parents will usually grow up and bring honor and gladness to them.

Verse 21

Many live in the same world, but the wise person lives so differently from the fool who is void of wisdom. The wise man makes his going “straight.”

Verse 22

“Counsel” at the time Proverbs was written had to do mostly with war.

Verse 23

A person does not have joy from just any answer from his mouth but by a right answer or a good answer or a timely answer. “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

Verse 24

The wise choose the way that leads to life rather than destruction. Wisdom makes the decision now that will end right later.

Verse 25

This is a great warning against arrogance, self-sufficiency, being independent in attitude. Concerning the “border” (or boundary) of the widow: “In a country where property was defined by landmarks, stones or some such objects, nothing was easier than to remove these altogether, or to alter their positions.

This was a common form of fraud and oppression we gather from the stringency of the enactments against the offense. (Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17)

Verse 26

“Evil devices” would include everything from the simplest plot to outsmart somebody to the most complex invention for the production of evil. God is against “evil” and everything and everybody multiplying it. Words that are “pleasant” (or pleasing) are “pure” and not evil.

Verse 27

Instead of building up one’s own house at the expense of others, sometimes one brings ruination to himself and to his house.

One who hates bribes is one who refuses to accept them (to enrich himself) or one who offers them (in hopes of profiting himself).

There is far more of this in government than we realize.

Verse 28

A wise person is “slow to speak” so as to tell the exact truth and to say what should be said.

The mouth of the wicked “pours out” evil things suggesting that they speak with ease, giving no forethought to what they are about to say. And, how, the wrong things that get said in this way.

Verse 29

Man’s wickedness puts “distance” between himself and God. God hears the prayer of the righteous, but His face is against the wicked.

The godly person finds joy in walking with God, and when he needs special help, he can call upon Him. The ungodly relinquish all this because of their sin.

Verse 30

The sunlight and other beautiful things that man sees bring joy to his heart, and the good news that he hears makes him feel good and results in good health. People who trust instead of fret, who pray instead of worry, who thank God rather than complain, are bound to have better health than those who do otherwise.

Verse 31

The person who regards reproof will receive wisdom. This verse says that such will abide among the wise. Praise may be pleasing, but reproof may be more profitable. All of us need both.

Verse 32

One refusing correction may appear to be despising the one reproving him, but in reality, he is despising his own best interests; he is hurting himself. Their purpose is to get us to accept it for our own betterment.

Verse 33

To learn true reverence for God is true wisdom. Wisdom would instruct us to this fear through parents, through the Scriptures, and through our religious

leaders and religious associates. Honor does precede humility. We must be converted, that is, (humbled) before we become Christians (honorable).

Chapter 16

Verse 1

These first seven verses are all “religious” maxims, for they all contain the name “LORD”. The “answer of the tongue” appears to be set over against the “plans of the heart.” There is a marvelous teaching here for those who believe in God’s providential leadership.

When we pray, “Thy will, not mine, be done.” God may alter our thoughts either in a minor or a major way.

Verse 2

The heart can be so deceptive that it often deceives the person himself into thinking he is right when he is wrong.

Verse 3

God does not always overrule our purposes. He would not unless they are wrong or unless He had some special plan for us, but it is His blessing that makes our plans and purposes come to pass.

Verse 4

God had something definite in mind for everything He created.

If men do not fulfill His loving will, He will use them in another sense as recipients of His just wrath because of their sins. God would much rather be glorified by showing mercy, but if man will not so glorify God, He will be glorified in His just wrath.

Verse 5

This verse shows God’s abomination for pride. What each of us has, we should not boast of, for we have received it from God.

No matter how many alliances proud men may make, God can overthrow them all. Nor is there safety in “numbers” when God arises to punish the multitude of the wicked.

Verse 6

God is in both parts of man’s salvation.

His fear causes man to depart from evil and His mercy and truth atone for the sin that has been committed. Mercy is that attribute of God that exhibits itself in our forgiveness.

Truth stands for the way that He has set up for us to come to Him for His forgiveness. Fear is a deterrent to sin, to crime, and to misbehavior.

Verse 7

It is not normal for enemies to be at peace with those whom they hate. There have been instances where God has so blessed individuals that His enemies respected Him or so feared Him that they caused Him no trouble.

Verse 8

This should be a great passage to keep in mind when one is tempted to take a high-paying job or to get into a lucrative business that is not right.

Remember that “righteousness” is to be sought before even the earthly necessities of food, drink, and clothing. (Matthew 6:33)

Verse 9

This is but one of several passages that bear out the thought that “man proposes, but God disposes.” These verses emphasize a most precious truth, the providence and leadership of God in our lives.

We should pray for this leadership, follow it, and thank God for it constantly. It is one of the Christian’s greatest treasures.

Verse 10

God has both instituted government and commanded that they rule justly. When a king does his duty properly, a man is being ruled governmentally as

God intends, and man should submit to his government's decrees as he would to God.

Verse 11

God commanded just measurements in business and declares that He is pleased with just weights and highly displeased with false ones. To be right with God one must be honest in business.

Verse 12

A ruler should desire the success of his nation, and he should lead it into righteousness. "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.

Verse 13

A ruler is concerned about how things are going in his kingdom. For much of this knowledge he is dependent upon the information of others. Inaccurate reporting on their part can be his undoing.

Every ruler knows though that he must sort out the information he hears into true, false, partly true, or partly false.

Verse 14

The king's wrath is compared to the rage of a roaring lion. Various men in Bible times found this to be true.

Verse 15

Proverbs 19:12 likens the king's favor to "dew upon the grass." The former rain in Palestine falls about the end of October or the beginning of November, when the seed is sown, the later rain comes in March or April, and is absolutely necessary for the due swelling and ripening of the grain.

Verse 16

Wisdom builds the man, gold his holdings. One who gets wisdom may get riches as a result. For those who take a deeper look into this passage, there seems to be an additional comparison, namely that "wisdom" is actually better than "understanding" as "gold" is greater than "silver."

An intimation of the superiority of wisdom over intelligence is that the former being the guide of life including the practice of religion. The latter denotes discernment, the ability to distinguish between one thing and another.

Verse 17

The path of the upright is a highway and not a place of thorns as is the way of the sluggard. A “highway” leads from one place to another place. The highway of the upright leaves or goes way from evil, making it a “way of holiness” and in this way preserves the soul.

Verse 18

Pride is when a person is puffed up, when one’s spirit is unduly lifted up within him, when one is conceited and thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think.

Verse 19

“Better” in two senses: One is more righteous to be lowly than proud. When destruction hits the proud and reduces him to nothing, it is surely ultimately better.

Verse 20

The “Word” is the word of God. To give heed is to pay attention to the Word, and to respond properly to the Word. This is to believe its facts, obey its commands, accept its promises, and heed its warnings. Heeding is what God says reflects a trust in God, which is the happy, blessed way to live.

Verse 21

One usually deserves the reputation he acquires: thus the wise are called “prudent.”

People look to those for leadership and advice whose wisdom they respect and admire.

Verse 22

The person who understands blesses others and also has it for his own blessing. Our understanding is like an ever-flowing spring from which we can drink.

But over and over again is the foolish person corrected by his own folly. He is going to “show them” only to be shown up. Oh, the usual conceit of an ignorant person.

Verse 23

The wise person thinks before he speaks, instructing himself as to what to say, how to say it, when to say it, to whom to say it, and even whether to say it. It is this thinking that adds “learning” to his lips that he would not otherwise have.

Verse 24

This is another proverb on speech. The ancient’s sweetening was from the honey. Pleasant words are “pure” words and “sweet” words.

Pleasant words come from a “sweet” soul and one who is blessed with a healthy outlook bringing sweetness to the soul of the hearer and health to him too.

Nothing can destroy this sweetness of soul and the consequent health of the body more than angry, hateful, and untrue words.

Verse 25

In life it is possible to think you are right when you are “dead-wrong.” Many errors occur this way both in religion and in the everyday things of life.

Verse 26

A laboring man has an appetite. But when people don’t work their food goes to fat, which hinders health.

Verse 27

Somebody is the originator or deviser of everything that comes to pass. Prompted and empowered by the devil, such a wicked deviser is here said to be

“worthless” and he is as worthless and as destructive with his “lips” as he can be to property.

Verse 28

This verse shows the person of verse 27 in action. He is “perverse” because he is perverting his time and powers to destructive from constructive possibilities. He is creating and scattering strife abroad, which is contrary to the will and desire of God. One of his chief ways of proceeding is to work secretly, a (“whisperer). And, oh, the power for evil that this approach has; it separates “chief friends.”

Verse 29

Another proverb on misusing one’s power for the harm of others is to invite his neighbor to join him, as if it is a good thing to do. If he joins him, he is being led into a way that is not good; actually he is “misled.”

Verse 30

As you behold one sitting with closed eyes and closed mouth, he does not look like the “factory of evil” that he is. While he looks like he is resting and “taking it easy,” he is actually devising “perverse things” and working to bring “evil to pass.”

Verse 31

The “hoary” head refers to the white hair of old age. It is said here to be a “crown of glory.” White hair, then, is not something to be ashamed of, for it should be a mark of distinction.

Verse 32

A person who is “slow to anger” is a person of good judgment, one who exhausts his ability to overlook and explain the possible “whys” and wherefores” of another’s displeasing action who finally faces the downright evil that the other person has done.

Verse 33

If we lack wisdom, we are not taught to “draw straws” or use some other method of casting lots but to pray and trust that God’s leadership will be had.

Chapter 17

Verse 1

Because their bread was “dry” they dipped it in water and other softening fluids. And having only a dry morsel to eat could be the sign of extreme poverty. So taken, the verse means that poverty and peace are to be preferred to prosperity and problems (such as “strife”). The rich have troubles and problems that the poor do not have.

Verse 2

Here is intimated the supremacy of wisdom over folly and vice. Slaves were often raised to high honor and might inherit their master’s possessions.

Verse 3

Just as men refine gold and silver, so does God refine men, through chastening, persecution, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Malachi 3:2-3

These verses say that the refining will take place during the Christian Age.

Verse 4

It is common for perverse people to believe the wrong thing about others. They want to. They get enjoyment from it. They derive satisfaction in thinking the righteous are not really righteous.

Verse 5

Chapter 14:31 talked of oppressing the poor, this verse of mocking the poor. People mock the poor when they make fun of them, laugh at them, mimic them, and make life harder for them. God is the “Maker” of the poor as well as the rich, so when we mock them, we mock God.

Verse 6

Grandchildren are the “crown” of one’s life near one's bowing-out years. Grand-parents brag about them (sometimes even exaggerate concerning what he or she can do, what he or she knows, how much money he or she has, etc.)

Verse 7

Excellent speech is speaking only the facts, speaking them at the right time, at the right place, to the right person, in the right spirit, and for the right purpose. As we don’t expect good speech from a fool neither should we expect bad speech from a ruler.

Verse 8

A bribe is a stone winning favor in the eyes of its grand owner. Everywhere that he turns he has success. A bribe works like magic. Whoever uses it will prosper. This is a fact, but the writer strictly forbids this perversion of justice in verse 23.

Verse 9

One’s sense of love will cause him not to repeat many things he has heard, even if true, if they are not in the best interests of the one involved.

Harping on a matter is just the opposite of concealing it, for it utilizes every opportunity to bring it up, to mention it, or to ramble on and on about it. This can be the end of a friendship.

Verse 10

A “rebuke” will do to a wise man more than a “hundred blows” into a fool. What a pity that there are some who neither words nor stripes will help! Peter was a man who was helped by rebuke, by both Jesus and Paul.

Verse 11

A “rebellious” man is one who will not be guided and governed by that which is right. He is a law-breaker, both in heart and in act. The “rebellion” here under consideration was anarchy against the existing government. With the

monarchical form of government of those days, this was common and accounted for many assassinations.

When any such rebellion was detected, the rebellion was immediately put down (“a cruel messenger shall be sent against him”).

Verse 12

If a man meets the fierceness of a bear robbed of her young, it is like one who is unfortunate enough to come along and become involved in some fool’s folly. He will suffer everything from embarrassment to being murdered.

Verse 13

It is contrary to nature (an extreme wrong) to reward evil for good. It is bad enough not to receive thanks from those helped, but it is even worse for the blessed to repay evil to the giver of good.

Verse 14

As soon as the smallest breach is made in the dike or dam, the water begins to press from all parts towards the beach; the resistance becomes too great to be successfully opposed, so the dikes and all are speedily swept away. Such is the beginning of contentions, quarrels, lawsuits, etc. Cut off strife before it gets started.

Verse 15

In God’s books the wicked are to be condemned and the righteous commended. “To punish the righteous is not good, nor to smite the noble for their righteousness.” Exodus 23:7

Verse 16

Why pay tuition fees to go to school when one does not really want to study and learn? “A fool thinks that there is a royal road to wisdom, and that it, like other things, is to be purchased with money. ” One who has a heart for learning will treasure and value every opportunity for learning.

Verse 17

A “friend” is “one who loves.” A true friend loves at all times, even in times of adversities and reverses and health-failures.

Verse 18

“Striking each other’s hands, or shaking hands, was anciently the form in concluding a contract.” “Surety” was when one obligated himself for the debts of others.

Verse 19

One who loves strife must “love transgression for strife produces many violations of God’s law.” A saying: “One who makes an unusual success in life makes many false friends and true enemies.”

Verse 20

A “wayward heart” and a “perverse tongue” are two liabilities. The wayward heart is one that wandered out of the pathway God has intended.

The perverse tongue is perverted; it is speaking contrary to God’s intentions for it. Such will get itself and others into much mischief and wrong-doing.

James 3:6,8

Verse 21

The behavior of one’s children can greatly affect his or her future happiness or sorrow. Think of the sorrow Cain brought to Adam and Eve by killing Abel.

Verse 22

Those who have cheerful hearts and bright outlooks upon life have a physical blessing of health that others do not know. Nothing has such a direct tendency to ruin health and waste our life as grief, anxiety, fretfulness, bad tempers, etc.

Verse 23

A wicked (not a righteous) man receives a bribe from the bosom and perverts justice as a result.

Verse 24

The contrast between the fool and the one with understanding in this verse is that the fool's eyes are a long way off (to the "ends of the earth"), but the wise man sees wisdom right where he is.

Verse 25

Verse 21 spoke of the sorrow that a fool brings to his father. This verse speaks of the grief and bitterness he brings to both his parents. But children must be reared and trained, not merely begotten and born.

Verse 26

This represents corruption in government, a perversion of justice. God has ordained government, and He says, "Do that which is good and you shall have praise from the same."

Verse 27

"He shows his common sense, not by rash talk or saying all he knows, but by restraining his tongue." We are to be "slow to speak." "Cool spirit" means not losing one's temper and is parallel to "slow to wrath."

This verse teaches us the wisdom of both not being too talkative and not losing one's temper.

Verse 28

This verse continues the thoughts began in verse 2 and connects a "fool's voice" with the multitude of words. An old saying: "Be silent and they will think you are a fool; speak, and they will know it."

Chapter 18

Verse 1

Selfish and self-centered people isolate themselves from others. And a self-centered person is conceited to the point that he goes into a rage against the sound words and advice of others.

Verse 2

A fool does not like to take in, to learn, but only to talk. Facts, figures, and business have no interest for the fool-only to talk and talk, and he really had nothing to say that is worth listening to.

Verse 3

The wicked loses a good name and turns despiser of all that is good and of all who are good. “When the wicked comes,” watch out! He injects into the association contempt and reproach.

Verse 4

This verse is not talking about just any mouth but the mouth of “wisdom.” A wise man’s mouth is likened to a “deep,” “flowing” spring.

Verse 5

“We must not, in judicial cases, pay any attention to a man’s riches, influence, friends, offices, etc., but judge the case according to its own merits.”

Verse 6

A fool’s lips show that he is a fool. He says the wrong thing or speaks at the wrong time, or he says what he does in the wrong place or to the wrong person.

Verse 7

“Soul” means “life” here, showing the serious destruction that his speech is capable of bringing.

Verse 8

A “whisperer” is one who goes behind people’s backs in talking about them, saying things that are not in the best interests of the one being spoken about. The verse brings out the sad fact that people are willing to listen to such cowardly, wrong, ruinous talk.

Verse 9

The slacker (one who doesn't work) doesn't produce, and the destroyer destroys what has been produced. The results are the same: there is nothing to show for one's time and efforts. Therefore, they are said to be "brothers."

Verse 10

Many passages teach that God is a refuge: sometimes a "tower," sometimes a "rock," sometimes "covering wings."

The ancients had their fortified cities with their walls, big gates, and towers. Sometimes the enemy was able to break through the gates and batter down the walls.

Verse 11

In contrast to the righteous person's God, the rich man makes "wealth" that in which he trusts.

"Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God."

Don't overlook the connection of "high wall," "strong city," and "tower."

Verse 12

The righteous, verse 10, find their "tower" (God) a place of safety.

The rich man, verse 11, finds his false-trust ("his wealth") did not save him from destruction.

Verse 13

Pre-judging (judging before the facts are known) gives us our word "prejudice." Many misjudgments are made because of re-judging: replacing investigation with rumor or making a judgment of a person on the sound of his or her name or where one is from.

Jesus said, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7:24)

Verse 14

One who maintains a cheery, hopeful, bright outlook will rebound from his sickness sooner. One who has a dark, pessimistic outlook does not recover so well. In fact, when one loses the will to live, he often dies.

Verse 15

The heart of the prudent desires knowledge and it uses the ear as a means of acquisition.

Verse 16

“The Oriental custom of offering suitable gifts to one in authority, when a favor or an audience is desired is here alluded to.

Verse 17

Leaders, be careful! The first person to come to you with his side of a story may not be true. An old axiom is so true: “One story is good till the other is told.”

Verse 18

The ancients sometimes resorted to this to settle important contentions. Moderns in our land sometimes draw straws and other means to settle minor matters.

Verse 19

When love is lost, bitterness sets in, and the bitterness is as strong and as intense as the love had previously been.

Those who love beyond measure also hate beyond measure. “When brothers fall out, it is with extreme difficulty that they can be reconciled.”

Verse 20

This verse likens what a man says to the food he eats. If what he says is good, it is like eating good food: there is no bad after-effect. The verse is speaking of good speech.

Verse 21

The tongue can edify (build up), or it can destroy the heart or the reputation of another. By our words we can bring either the best or the worse out of a person.

Verse 22

Marriage is God's plan for the human race. His displeasure is against the growing trend in society to by-pass marriage by illicitly living together.

What the verse really means is that when one marries he is entering into something good and is carrying out God's will for the human race in that regard.

Verse 23

The poor man who is behind on his loan payments begs for mercy and consideration, and the rich man who loaned him the money is afraid he is going to lose that money, talks roughly to him.

Verse 24

In the many friends that people make, often there is one or a small handful of them that he would have been better off not to have known: the one or the group that turned against him and ruined him.

Chapter 19

Verse 1

There is often a connection between being poorer and honest and being dishonest and getting rich. The "fool" in this verse is apparently a rich fool.

Verse 2

This verse contains a double contrast: "person without knowledge" and "makes haste with his feet" versus "not good" and "errs."

It is not good for one to be without knowledge when God has given us minds in which to store and use knowledge and many means by which to acquire it.

One without knowledge often acts hastily (no sense or caution) and errs as a result.

Verse 3

They get into straits and difficulties through the foolishness of their ways and they rage against God.

Mankind subverted its way; they began with a knowledge of God; there came a time when they did not glorify Him as they should; darkness set in upon their unspiritual hearts; in their conceit they began making idols; and the longer they went the worse representation of God they made; they came to be filled with all kinds of wickedness; God finally gave up on them until Gospel times.

Verse 4

People like to identify with someone who will be a credit to them in the eyes of men, not with someone who will discredit them.

The poorest of families don't have very many friends—those who will claim them and invite them over.

Verse 5

This verse is almost identical to verse 9.

Verse 6

They seek the favor of a generous man for what he can do for them. Do people love you or what you can do for them?

Verse 7

In verse 6, everybody wants to be a friend of the generous man, but in this verse a man's friends and relatives even go away from him, not wanting to have anything to do with him. Even the poor man's words of appeal fall on deaf ears.

Verse 8

He loves his soul because wisdom is good for the soul, verse 2. Proverbs pictures wisdom as something to “get,” verse 4:7. We are to “buy the truth” 23:23. We are to give wisdom an exalted place in our lives 4:8.

But this verse also talks about keeping understanding. “Get it” and then “forget it not” 4:5.

Verse 9

A false witness, in those instances of lying about others, would be forsaking the 9th Commandment. God says such must be punished, verse 5.

Verse 10

“Luxurious living” and “not fitting for a fool” show somebody out of place; a fool living luxuriously and a servant ruling over princes. Neither one is in order.

Verse 11

It takes both wisdom and self-control to remain calm and collected and Christian under fire and under pressure. It is this ability that enables him to “pass over a transgression of another,” which is said to be a “glory” to him. To lose one’s temper is not a “glory” to him but a “shame.” When one passes over a transgression, he is like God.

Verse 12

Numerous passages compare a king’s wrath to a roaring lion and a king’s favor to refreshing moisture. “Dew” seemed to the Israelites a mysterious gift of Heaven, as indeed it is. That the skies should be kept from yielding it was a sign of Divine wrath.

Verse 13

A man is in a bad way when he has a foolish son and a contentious wife who constantly nags. “Calamity” in the Hebrew is plural, as if to mark the many and continued sorrows.

The irritating altercations and bickering of a wife is compared to the continuous “dripping of water.” A Scotch saying: “A leaky house and a scolding wife are two bad companions.”

Verse 14

We get material inheritances from our parents but a wise wife is a gift from God. This verse is a bold contrast to verse 13: in this verse many blessings come to us because of our families.

Verse 15

Slothfulness, idleness, excessive sleep, and poverty are connected in this and other passages, 6:9-11. Two apt sayings: “laziness is a living man’s “tomb” and “idleness” is the mother of poverty.

Verse 16

One who is obedient to God is careful about his ways and God blesses him with the salvation of his soul, but one who is disobedient to God is careless about his ways and the wages of sin is and has always been death.

Verse 17

The wording implies “giving to the poor.” To “pity” is to feel for, to make their burdens your burdens, to be touched enough about their situation to stop what you are doing and help them. Give to the poor and God has promised to pick up the debt.

Verse 18

Corrections not administered, will let the child’s mischief become meanness and the character becomes set in wickedness. Non-chastening parents finally give up on their children and seem content to await the inevitable (whatever may result in life for them), which in Old Testament times would have been death by stoning. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

Verse 19

A man given to wrath always turns to it when things don’t go as he would have them. A man who loses his tempter is like a man who gets drunk: it will not be the last time.

Verse 20

One's wisdom consists of what one gains and of what others want to share. The more wisdom one has, the more apt he is to listen to what others impart to him, and the less wisdom one has, the less apt he is to regard the good advice of others.

Verse 21

It is not what man wants that always comes to pass but what God decrees (or allows).

Verse 22

This verse states that which we desire in people. Heading the list is "kindness." We like people who are kind; we like to be round them; their influence upon us is good. We appreciate their thoughtfulness; we appreciate their willingness to be helpful. We are comfortable and at home in their presence.

People go from and do not want to claim close connections with the extremely poor yet they prefer a poor man to a liar. A man who will lie to others will lie to you. He is one you cannot trust. He makes a poor friend.

Verse 23

The fear of the Lord shows the usual or general results of fearing God. It means, other things being equal, that one who fears God will live longer, not only longer, but he will reap more satisfaction from living than those who lack it.

The reason being that he will have fewer hardships because of not being untouched by evil.

Verse 24

Lazy people spend much time sleeping. This verse "out-lazies" the other verses, as it pictures a man putting his hand into the dish to get something to eat and then being too lazy to lift it to his mouth. When one is too lazy to feed himself, he is as lazy as he can get.

Verse 25

A scoffer is out of order whether he scoffs at God or is plagued with the spirit of scoffing at people. Reproving a wise person definitely aids him, for he wishes to increase his learning and he is wise enough to use the rightness of the rebuke.

Verse 26

The language suggests that the “son” is a grown son, not a child. It is speaking of gross mistreatment of aged parents.

Remember that parents are to be honored and not dishonored. Such conduct causes “shame” to his suffering parents and “reproach” against his own name in the community.

Verse 27

It does no good to be exposed to good instruction if it is not going to be followed. In time teachers will cease instructing people if they will not be obedient.

Verse 28

A rascally or worthless witness would include both a false witness (speaking lies) and one who refused to witness (would not tell what he knows). Justice dictates that the verdict be built upon the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Verse 29

“Judgments” and “blows” go together as do “scoffers” and “fools.” The verse is picturing an adult rather than a child, the “judgments” and “blows” being public punishments. A child may be “foolish” but he is not a full-fledged “fool,” but if one grows up and his foolishness continues and it is the recognized course of his life, then he is indeed a “fool.”

Chapter 20

Verse 1

Wine as used in the Bible is not always intoxicating, but in this instance it is.

Wine is a “mockery,” mocking and making a fool out of its drinker with ridiculous and senseless conduct.

Strong drink is a “brawler” leading to many quarrels and fights. One who drinks wine is not wise and is making a great mistake and sins.

Oh, the sorrows, griefs, hardships, miseries, and you-name-it that strong drink has brought to the drinker, to his family and to those who have been injured and killed just so that he could drink. The Germans have a saying: “More are drowned in the wine cup than in the ocean.”

Verse 2

Being a king, Solomon included numerous sayings involving kings. He especially liked those that showed the importance of having the king’s favor and avoiding his disfavor.

Verse 3

This verse shows that fools (not wise people) quarrel and engage in trouble while people of honor seek to avoid strife. This does not mean we are to compromise God’s Word in order to have peace.

Verse 4

The lazy, indolent person can always find an excuse for not working. It may be the cold weather (as in this verse) or it may be “too hot,” “rainy,” “it’s too hard.” “I don’t know how,” “I’m not feeling good,” “somebody else will do it,” “it’s not important,” “I’ll do it later.” This is why some people have nothing.

Verse 5

“Plan” or “counsel” in this verse stands for deep wisdom (like water of a deep well). People with little to offer us are generally free with their advice, but people who really have knowledge tend to be more conservative with giving unsolicited advice.

Verse 6

The tendency of humanity is to tell those things that are personally commendable and to forget those things that are derogatory.

Verse 7

Everybody is blessed when a man lives right, but especially himself and his family. “Integrity” is honesty, uprightness.

Verse 8

A good king is one who rules with righteous authority (scepter) and his government praises the good and punishes the evil.

Verse 9

The implied answer is “nobody.” We can make our hearts corrupt and our lives sinful, but we cannot dispel the guilt nor cleanse away our sin apart from God’s mercy. Man cannot direct his own way successfully. Nor can he cleanse himself from a single sin.

Verse 10

Man employs such means to gain advantage even though the disadvantage to his fellowman equals the advantage that it is to himself. It is plain and intentional dishonestly. And it is an abomination to God.

Verse 11

The Bible says we can know what a person really is by what he does. This verse shows that people begin to take notice of one’s behavior and to form an opinion concerning him even when he is a young child.

Verse 12

God has made our equipment for seeing and hearing.

When one studies the seeing and hearing of these valuable parts of our bodies, who else but God could have made them? The most wonderful camera in the world is the human eye. The most perfect phone is the human ear.

Verse 13

We know that a person can sleep too little for good health. But we can also sleep too much to get the necessary things done. Sleep is like food, a certain measure of it restores and invigorates exhausted nature, more than that oppresses and destroys life.

Verse 14

If there is something wrong with an object one is seeking to buy, it is not out of place for the buyer to take that into consideration with the seller when making the purchase and agreeing upon the price. If the purchase has been made at a small price, oh how the purchaser does brag to his friends about the deal he made. Beware traders and buyers!

Verse 15

This verse is not speaking of wisdom and knowledge held for oneself but shared with others. Speaking of wisdom, Job 28:16-19.

Verse 16

This is exactly what happens when one has made himself surety for another's debts who cannot pay.

Verse 17

The pleasures of sin seem great at the moment, but they can lead to very sorrowful consequences and in the end to Divine punishment in the lake of fire. Look beyond the momentary pleasure derived from sin to the fearful consequences to which it leads.

Verse 18

This saying was given for those days when God had an earthly nation (Israel) and when their war with the idolatrous was a part of God's plan. Just as they looked to "plans" in their warfare, even so should we seek out good advice in pursuing major plans.

Verse 19

A slanderer reveals secrets wherever he goes.

But be assured as he tells you the secrets of others he in turn will reveal your secrets to the next one to whom he talks. "Therefore, do not associate with a gossip." Proverbs has nothing good to say about the "slanderer" and the "gossiper" and what a poor way to live!

Verse 20

They always kept a small light burning in their houses at night for utter darkness was one of the things they feared the most. Their “lamp” of one’s life, one’s household, one’s future lineage, would be cut off if he cursed his parents.

Verse 21

Sometimes an inheritance immediately places into a person’s hand more money than he has ever had in his possessions at any one time. He didn’t work for it; he didn’t save it; but now all at once it is his.

If the person is wise, it can be a great blessing as he thankfully receives it, as he carefully invests or uses it, and as he realizes the value of it. But “come easy, go easy” is so often the rule, and a short time of luxurious living (while it lasts) can make it a curse to him as he gets himself into a standard of living that he cannot maintain by his own earnings after the inheritance money is blown.

Verse 22

Proverbs 24:29 also forbids one saying he will take vengeance. The New Testament also forbids vengeance taking and teaches us to render good for their evil. God will take care of executing vengeance on the wrongdoer, saving us the trouble, keeping us from making some mistakes, and being sure the wrongdoer will get just what he should receive.

Verse 23

God’s great displeasure with crooked dishonest dealings with one’s fellowman is again expressed.

Verse 24

Since we cannot successfully direct our own ways we should ask God to do it for us. At the time we may not see the hand of God at work but will see it later.

Verse 25

We should always think before acting and when vowing before God. This verse shows that one should be sure he is going to carry through before promising. We should work to get people to so make sacred decisions, but we

do not want to pressure them into saying something that they will not have the faith, reverence, and determination to carry out.

Verse 26

“Winnows” and “threshing-wheel” refer to their threshing the grain and by rough-handling they're separating the grain from the rest. Whippings (punishments) have often been referred to by the word “threshing.”

Verse 27

When one's conscience operates, his thoughts either “accuse” or “excuse” him for his actions depending upon whether he has violated or carried out what he understands to be right. The conscience is a “Siamese twin” of one's intellect; whatever one's intellect tells him is right or wrong. Then his conscience accepts the same position and works accordingly.

Verse 28

There have been many unkind kings; in fact, it has been common for man to abuse his place of power.

Verse 29

It is natural for young men to glory in their strength. Their bodies are young, healthy, working, nimble, capable, etc., and because of this competitive athletics are common for that age. They wrestle, lift weights, run, play the game of football and other types of ball.

And because of this strength sometimes they forget that life can be taken from them without a warning, and sometimes they abuse their bodies to the undoing of their comfort in older years. But in time that strength will naturally be replaced with the gray and then the white hair of old age, which is said by this verse to be beautiful. It symbolizes length of days, rich experiences, knowledge and wisdom, and many years of usefulness, all of which add up to a respect that normally is forthcoming.

Verse 30

“Stripes” and “strokes” have to do with correcting and punishing those who have done evil. Words of instruction should always precede the wounds of

discipline, but words are too weak to reach some people; the only language that some people can get anything out of at all is that of severe discipline.

When a congregation no longer deals with the evil committed within it; when a home does not discipline its disobedient children; and when a government does not punish the wrongdoer, it is bad for everybody; the individual himself, the church, the home, and society.

Chapter 21

Verse 1

There is an allusion here to the eastern method of watering their lands. Several canals are dug from one stream and by opening a particular sluice, the husbandman can direct a stream to whatever part he pleases. We should not conclude from this that everything any king does is of the Lord. Yet, when God gets ready to affect a king's heart, He is able to do so.

Verse 2

Most people are too quick to claim credit and are offended if they are given it and too slow to accept guilt. God accurately weighs each person (beginning with the heart).

Verse 3

There are all kinds of people in the world; some who are both righteous and religious (godly); some who seek to be righteous but not religious (the moralist); some who are not careful about righteousness but do try to be religious (the hypocrite); and some who are neither righteous nor religious (the hypocrite); and some who are neither righteous nor religious; (the out and out wicked).

This verse is dealing with the third listed group (the hypocrite). We all fall short of the perfection of God. But with our religion we are to be as righteous and as just as we can be, and if we aren't God is highly displeased with us.

Verse 4

This verse deals with pride and the prosperity of the proud. A “high look” is one of the outward expressions of a “proud heart.” “Lamp” is a metaphor for prosperity and happiness and are in themselves sinful and displeasing to God, being founded in self and not resting in virtue and godliness, they in themselves are sinful and displeasing to God.

Verse 5

This verse speaks of the “thoughts” of the diligent. “Diligent” (as it stands in contrast with “hasty”) evidently means the honest hardworking, patient, person who steadily builds up his holdings. “Hasty” evidently applies to the person who is a get rich quick any way type of person.

Verse 6

Getting treasures by “lying” would be parallel to “treasures of wickedness” and wealth gained by vanity.

Such people come to “the pursuit” of death and the suicide rate is exceedingly high among the wealthy.

Verse 7

Even this verse may be related to verses 5 and 6. The “violent” are those who injure others such refuse to think of “justice.”

Verse 8

“The way of the guilty man is crooked.” One fellow was said to be so crooked that when he died, they did not dig a grave for him—they just screwed him into the ground! “The way of the guilty man shows that guilt is a terrible load.” The “pure” present a welcome contrast.

Verse 9

Their housetops were flat. Gathering his few things together and living in the corner of the flat housetop, inconvenient as it might be, is proverbially said to be preferred to living down in the commodious house with a woman who is cantankerous.

Verse 10

The wicked man does not respect God's law, for he "desires evil" instead of good, nor does he respect his neighbor for "his neighbor finds no favor in his eyes."

Verse 11

Even if punishment doesn't help the scoffer himself (and sometimes it doesn't), it will help those looking on who might have gotten into the same trouble. When God smote Ananias and Sapphira, "Great fear came upon the whole church and upon all that heard these things." (Acts 5:11)

The last part of this verse shows that a wise man is easy to instruct and gains much from it.

Verse 12

This verse shows that the righteous person is also a wise person who learns not only from instruction but from observation also. Seeing what happens to the wicked is good reason not to choose their way.

Verse 13

Those who refuse to help others today may stand in need of help tomorrow, but no help will be forthcoming.

Verse 14

"A gift offered secretly to one incensed, whether personal enemy, judge, or prince, subdues anger." "In the bosom" refers to a gift kept handy in the bosom of the petitioner ready to be transferred at a fitting moment, causes strong wrath.

Verse 15

The righteous rejoice over justice (as God does) but not the workers of iniquity, justice is their destruction. Jesus loved righteousness and hated sin, and the Bible commands us to "abhor evil and cleave to what is good." (Romans 12:9)

Verse 16

“Wanders from the way of understanding” characterizes one who leaves, departs, goes astray from the established path.

“Will rest” in the assembly of the dead is used to show the one probably thought or boasted that he would find the good way, but it didn’t end as he had thought, for the “rest” to which such departures lead is the rest of death.

Men, like meteors that break off and go flying through space, soon come to their everlasting end.

Verse 17

To have a “good time” the world’s way has always involved a constant expenditure of money (one cause of becoming poor) and such life also diverts one from his work and business interests (another cause). Oh, the multitude of pleasures for people today to get involved in and sidetracked by!

Verse 18

God often in His judgments cuts off the wicked in order to prevent them from destroying the righteous. And in general, we find that the wicked fall into the traps they have dug for the righteous. By punishing the scorner, others are spared from falling into the same sin and suffering the same fate.

Verse 19

There are some kinds of women who will ruin a man’s life; a “contentious” woman, a “fretful” woman and an “odious” woman (Proverbs 30:23).

Since it is better to dwell in a “desert” than with such a woman, is not the proverb saying that it is better not to be married than to be married to such a person?

Verse 20

Wisdom knows the earthly value of precious treasure and oil (olive oil). The contrast within this verse shows that the “foolish” devours everything he gets his hands on. Is this not the way with many today? They draw big money per hour, blow it all, and the slightest emergency proves to be a major calamity financially.

The Bible says that we are to labor at honest occupations, so that we will have something left over above our own needs, to give to those who are in need.

Verse 21

“Pursues righteousness” suggests following after “righteousness and loyalty,” and finding life, righteousness and loyalty.

Verse 22

This verse shows that wisdom is really might. That wisdom is greater than might, consider the superior brute force of some of the ferocious animal world that man, who is inferior in strength, is able to subdue and handle through his superior wisdom.

Verse 23

A godly man will keep his heart, will keep himself in the love of God, will keep himself unspotted from the world and will keep his tongue. To guard your soul from many troubles, control your tongue.

Guard your mouth and your tongue, because most trouble springs from something that one says.

Verse 24

Notice three words that go together: “proud,” “haughty,” and “scoffer.” This verse speaks of how he acts; he scoffs, he laughs at religion, and makes fun of godly people. Peter predicted that such would show up in the last days. (2 Peter 3:3-4)

Verse 25

Proverbs 13:4 spoke of the desire of the sluggard saying, “He has nothing.” This verse explains why: “his hands refuse to work.”

Verse 26

This verse reflects two ways to live with reference to material things: (1) how can one get more for himself at other’s expense and (2) how can one help others who are in need? The first majors on selfishness, the second on service.

Verse 27

God does not want people to substitute religious rites for actual righteousness.

God deplores the sacrifice of people who are not trying to live right. To bring a sacrifice with a “evil mind” must be to bring it with some motive to deceive God or to “buy God off,” because of some sin being persisted in or because of some illegitimate gain from which he is bringing the sacrifice.

Verse 28

“A false witness shall not go unpunished.” “Will speak forever” in the second statement stands over and against, “will perish” in the first.

Verse 29

Another contrast between the “wicked man” and the “upright man” is that the wicked hardens his face instead of repenting and having his ways established like the upright.

Verse 30

God may allow many things that are wrong to happen (until judgment), but when there is a known showdown between God and the forces of unrighteousness, His opposition always comes out on the short end.

Verse 31

Horses were used in Bible days for war and not for agriculture purposes. This verse shows that even if horses were used (representing human military might), Israel’s victory really came from God.

Chapter 22

Verse 1

A good name is more desired than riches. Those who get rich through dishonest means choose riches rather than a good reputation.

Great possessions with no friends can be so cold and empty! An average living with many friends and the favor of God proves to be the happiest, most satisfying way to live.

Verse 2

Does God make them rich and poor, or is He the maker of them regardless of whether they are rich or poor? “The labor of the poor makes the wealth of the rich; the wealth of the rich enables him to employ and aid the poor.”

Verse 3

An old saying: “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” A discerning person can often see the danger ahead and his wisdom causes him to avoid it; but the simple, discerning person, comes along never realizing what is just ahead, and suffers the consequences.

Verse 4

“Humility” and the fear of the Lord are here equated, for those who truly fear the Lord are humble, submissive, and obedient to Him. The reward of such is threefold: riches, honor, and long life.

God “rewards” those who truly fear Him and do His will from humble hearts.

Verse 5

While the righteous reap riches, honor, and life, “thorns” and “snares” await the perverse. “The way of the sluggard is as a hedge of thorns; but the path of the upright is made a highway.”

The wicked are perverse, (perverted from what God has intended them to be.) The godly are those who keep their souls; they shall avoid the thorns and snares that come upon the ungodly.

Verse 6

The commandment: train up a child in the way he should go; the promise: even when he is old he will not depart from it. Such training requires many things: knowledge, wisdom, time, patience, determination and love.

Child training is something that is easy to neglect or to try shortcuts with, but what a shame when the future of one's entire posterity is at stake! 2 Timothy 3:14-15

Verse 7

This is the way it is in life: the rich who have made financial success are the ones who rule in government circles; they have power, influence, and reputation.

The borrower (the poor) is servant to the lender (the rich). The borrower is limited in the amount he can borrow by the wishes of the lender.

Verse 8

What a person sows in life that is what he will reap in consequences. If one sows good seeds, he will reap "good;" if he sows bad seeds, he will reap "trouble". The acts of sin may be pleasurable but the consequences are not. Galatians 6:7-8

Verse 9

One who is generous is the one who sees a person's needs, who sees what he can do to alleviate that person's needs, and who generously gives of what he has. God's promise to such a liberal giver: "He will be blessed."

Verse 10

Sometimes a circle of people is better off with one less person if that person is a scoffer, for one such person can keep a whole group in a continual state of contention, strife and dishonor. How terrible to be that warped person!

Verse 11

What a beautiful, wonderful person is portrayed by the words "purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious." This is a person with purity abiding in his heart and who has the ability to express himself in a courteous way.

Verse 12

The "eyes of the Lord" stand for knowledge of the affairs upon earth and of His providential workings resulting from what He sees. He preserves those who

have knowledge, who use their God created faculties to acquire the knowledge that He gives. Hosea 4:6

Verse 13

Since wisdom would include one's physical safety, it is doubtful if there was a lion outside. All lazy people are full of excuses for not working. Since they don't want to work they say "the lion may kill me if I go outside."

Verse 14

The father warns the son about the wicked, immoral woman who uses her mouth, (words and kisses) to break the young man down.

Her mouth is said to be a "deep pit" into which men "fall," and usually they do not get out! That God hates this sin in a terrible way, notice the strong language: "He who is cursed of the Lord shall fall into it." Ecclesiastes 7:26

Verse 15

A child's actions often reflect a lack of good judgment and his immaturity. Corinthians 13:11 Oh, the foolish, unwise, careless and thoughtless things children will do. What will drive it far from them? Proper punishment. Many parents do not do as God commands and that foolishness remains engrained in the nature and ways of their rebellious children.

Verse 16

Laziness and lack of industry can bring one to want but this verse shows that oppressing the poor to get gain and trying to bribe the rich for one's own advantage can do the same. The man described in this verse is a man that will come only to poverty.

Verse 17

The sayings in the next five verses urge the son to listen to the good instruction that he is receiving. God has given us ears with which to listen to what others say to us, they should be used when the wise are speaking.

He has given us hearts or minds to apply what we hear to our lives. The double commandment of this verse, then, is “incline your ear” and “apply your mind.”

Verse 18

What we hear and apply we keep within us as knowledge and they become proverbs or sayings upon our own lips.

Verse 19

True knowledge should cause us to trust God who is the “First” (the cause) and the “Last” (the Judge). The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. That his son might come to trust in God was the purpose of the father’s careful instruction.

Verse 20

The father here refers to the quality of his instructions, excellent things (counsels and knowledge).

Verse 21

As a young man grows up, he is going to be subjected to many ideas of people, some being diametrically opposed to others. It is easy for a youth in the state of immaturity to be “tossed to and fro” by such. Ephesians 4:14-15; 1 Peter 3:15

Verse 22

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament teach us to regard the poor and the afflicted. Yet they are often oppressed. “At the gate” was where legal matters were settled (their “courthouse.”)

Sometimes the poor have not gotten their proper treatment in courts because of the other side having the money to bribe those in charge.

Verse 23

In the absence of human defense God has promised to plead their case and rob the soul of those who rob them. Psalm 35:10

Verse 24

Of all the people in the world with which to make friends with and to learn his ways, what a poor companion is an angry, wrathful man! But some people are that way (hot tempered, no judgment) and some make friends with them, finding a snare for themselves.

Verse 25

Like all companions, the close ties leave their influence. Thus, one who has been blessed with a good spirit and a calm, cool disposition begins “flying off the handle” and going into a senseless rage when everything does not go just right. Why? Because he has been around just such a person.

Verse 26

Being a “co-signer” for another’s debt is warned against several times in the book of Proverbs.

Verse 27

How do you know at the time of obligating yourself whether you will be able at the time of need to put up the necessary money? You may have to get along without things that are necessary to your own life like a “bed.”

Verse 28

Deuteronomy 27:17 This would be like removing steel stakes or buried rocks of surveys today. It was even worse then, because the official description of a property line is recorded at the courthouse today, while in Bible days the landmark was all there was.

Verse 29

A person skilled in his work is one who is ambitious, industrious, and aggressive. He will stand before kings and not before obscure men. His lifetime will be spent in major, not minor concerns.

Chapter 23

Verse 1

Since the invitation was extended not only out of kingly politeness but with an ulterior motive our verses suggest that the guest should consider carefully (look into) the one who invited him rather than just the delicious food before him.

Verse 2

In the presence of such a bountiful delicious banquet, a man of appetite would be tempted to eat much more than he should. The ruler's ulterior motives in inviting him might be better fulfilled if the man ate and drank beyond wisdom, for in that condition the host may be able to extract information from the guest that he would not otherwise be able to obtain.

Verse 3

A further warning refers to the king's food as "delicacies." They are deceitful food in that they have insincerely set before the man and for him to eat to excess will somehow fulfill the ruler's purpose rather than the best interests of the man eating.

Verse 4

By thus associating with a ruler, the guest may have thought that this was his first step toward the life of the rich. Here he is warned of the many weary years and hardships accompanying getting and being rich.

Verse 5

Riches are here spoken of as "that which is gone." They are uncertain. They may be "here" today but "gone" tomorrow.

Verse 6

A "selfish man" here had to do with a covetous eye. Since this is a repetition of the warning in verse 3, the ruler's ulterior motive was his own personal gain to result from the man's being his guest.

Verse 7

He would be invited to eat and drink, but it was not of sheer hospitality. This is the deceitfulness, “eat and drink” mentioned in verse 3. This saying is a warning against this type of person.

Verse 8

The dainties were sweet and tasted good, but later he would be able to see through it all, and then he would vomit them up, so to speak. In other words, it was sweeter going down than coming up.

Wisdom always says to look to the end of a matter, to overcome before one participates invests.

Verse 9

Some people show they are fools by despising words of wisdom. We are obligated to share our understanding with those who do not understand, but when we find one who will not listen, will not learn, will not appreciate, but will only laugh at and make fun of that which we say, it is time to turn away and go on to someone who will listen. Matthew 7:6

“It is a mere casting of pearls before swine to speak to such a man of high aims, righteous motives, self-sacrifice.”

Verse 10

A “landmark” was usually a stone or pillar of stones to mark out the boundary of one’s land. This verse contains a prohibition against altering those. This verse contains a special warning if the land taken belonged to the fatherless.

Verse 11

God will look out for the right of the orphaned, and He will not be easy on one who has taken land away from such.

Verse 12

It is not merely hearing instruction but applying one’s heart to what is being said and that really adds learning and knowledge to one.

Verse 13

Every child needs correction at times. He or she will not be correct in life without correction. At times this correction will have to be administered with the rod (whippings), and the language of our verse indicates that sometimes such must be administered with great severity.

Verse 14

“Sheol” of the Old Testament was parallel with “Hades” of the New Testament.

When one dies, his spirit goes to “Sheol” (Hades”). Instead of causing a child to die through physical chastisements (verse 13), such punishments will actually keep a child from premature death through God’s wrath or through a child’s own foolishness or other ways.

Verse 15

Other passages show that good children bring joy to their parents. There is a play on words here: “IF YOUR HEART is wise, MY HEART will be glad.” Parents wait for and look for evidences of their children’s good qualities. Surely if children thought of this, how happy they could actually make their parents!

Verse 16

The wise “hearts” of verse 15 will reflect itself in “lips” that speak right things.

Verse 17

To “let your heart envy sinners” is that one is not obeying the Lord properly. Yet people at times do envy sinners. But if one truly fears God, he will have no temptation to envy His enemies (sinners) upon whom God’s wrath will ultimately fall.

Verse 18

Yes, a godly person’s reward is coming, and how great it will be! Such a hope will be fulfilled and not cut off.

Verse 19

Again, the father appeals for the son to be “wise.” Remember, it is a “wise” son that makes a glad father.

We note here that one is not to let his heart wander wherever society, trends, fads, or friends may lead it, but one is responsible to “guide” his heart in the way it should go.

Verse 20

The Bible sounds many warnings against taking up with wine and drunkenness. But gluttony is also noted here as wrong.

Verse 21

It costs money to eat like a glutton and drink like a drunkard. Many a man has devoured and destroyed a small fortune in this way. He is also brought to poverty by not showing up for work or by not being able to hold his job. The “drowsiness” has to do with his sleeping off his drunkenness, causing him to cloth himself in rags.

Verse 22

We are to listen to the wisdom and instruction of our fathers. How many sorrows and mistakes young men can avoid by hearkening to their fathers! Prodigals and know-it-alls don’t listen; in time they will see that they should have listened.

“When old age with consequent infirmities comes upon your mother, despise her not, but rather thank God for giving her long life, and profit by her love and long experience.”

Verse 23

“Truth” spoken of in this verse as “wisdom, and instruction, and understanding,” is something to obtain at all costs and something not to part with regardless of what earthly or monetary gains one may get by doing so.

Verse 24

Again, the subject of parental joy comes up. Jesus brought joy to His Father and so have good children down through the centuries.

Verse 25

This verse speaks of the joy of both father and the mother. Much of a mother's time and life is wrapped up in her children, and she is ever ready to rejoice over every success and attainment of her children.

Verse 26

This verse is a solemn warning against the wicked, harlot woman.

Verse 27

She is given a double description, both of which resemble: a "deep ditch: and a "narrow well." She represents a danger to avoid. There is nothing to gain by falling into a deep ditch and a narrow well.

Verse 28

She is out working her trade. Like a robber she does not lose an opportunity. One such person "increases" the sinners upon this earth here called "the faithless among men." Men who thus become unfaithful to wives might well be described as "treacherous"!

Malachi shows that men who turn from the wives of their youth deal "treacherously" with them. (Malachi 2:14-15)

Verse 29

Six questions are raised that are answered in the next verse.

From the consequences of drinking, the ancients suffered the same woes and sorrows as do moderns who imbibe. The drinker has "woe" in the physical problems brought on by his social relations, finances, and his slavery of the habit, and future punishment.

The drinker has "sorrow" upon "sorrow" as does his family as a result of his drinking as do others whom he injures while intoxicated. The drinker knows "contentions," for many fights take place at taverns. The drinker knows

“complaining,” for he often complains of the way people treat him. The drinker has “wounds without cause,” for if he stayed sober, he would not get into the trouble he does.

The drinker has “redness of eyes,” an outward commentary on the abuse that his body is inwardly suffering.

Verse 30

The six questions raised in verse 29 are quickly and bluntly answered here: those who drink intoxicants. Time and its meaning seem to mean nothing to a drunkard for he will spend hours drinking with others until they are drunk. Then he will sleep it off and seem not to care that he should be at his job instead of in bed.

Verse 31

The wine of Palestine is chiefly “red.” Drinkers like the color; they like the sparkle in the glass, they like the taste. Going down smoothly, “the wine pleases the palate, and passes over it without roughness or harshness.”

This verse is a commandment to keep away from wine, to avoid even the temptation to drink. To avoid drinking wine the verse says, “Not even to look upon it.”

Verse 32

No thinking person would ever start drinking if he considered the end of it. But godly people are known for seeing what something produces, where it leads, and where it ends before they do it. Indeed wine “bites like a serpent,” and “stings like a viper.” Yet the habit is far from dying out.

Verse 33

A drunkard cannot trust his eyesight. Ever hear of a drunkard seeing two bridges before him and wondering which to drive over? And, oh, the foolish, the coarse, the vulgar, the wicked things that men say when drunk, things that embarrass polite society, that make youngsters laugh but angels weep!

Verse 34

As a drunkard's whole system pitches and tosses and finally results in vomiting. His reeling, staggering, and uncertainty, referred to in Isaiah 28:7-8.

Verse 35

The drunken man has been beaten, but the blows did not pain him; his condition has rendered him insensible to pain. He will not be able to remember what happened to him while he was drunk. "When shall I awake?" refers to the prolonged sleep that his drunkenness has brought.

When he wakes up, he will seek another drink.

Chapter 24

Verse 1

This verse gives us two prohibitions: don't be envious of evil men and don't desire to be with them.

Verse 2

The expression "evil woman" usually is referring to an adulterous woman and an "evil man." These evil men have their "minds" involved in their sin, and how to devise trouble, and their "lips" talk of trouble, how to be successful in their wickedness.

Verse 3

After two verses on the destructive way of the wicked, it is refreshing to come to two verses on building a house through wisdom, honesty, and diligence. Notice that "wisdom" is with the builder, not the destroyer.

Verse 4

There is really a close relationship between wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. Verse 3 says the first two build and establish the house while this verse says the last mentioned fills its chambers with "riches."

Verse 5

The thought of wisdom is continued in this verse this time stating that its possession makes one a strong man.

Verse 6

The strength referred to in verse 5 was evidently military strength as this verse shows. Kings kept courts of wise men to counsel them in time of war.

Verse 7

A fool does not have wisdom, or he would not be a fool, for the two are considered opposites. The “gate” was the place of official and legal business where wise men presided.

Verse 8

The evil and wickedness that are in the world stem from the devil, but he works through human beings to bring them about.

He who plans to do evil: “men shall call him a schemer.”

Verse 9

We know that the act of foolishness is sin. By “thoughts” adultery is committed in the heart. By “thoughts” one who hates is guilty of murder before God. A “scoffer” is one who not only rejects that which he should believe but who laughs at, makes fun of, that which he should believe and at those who do believe.

He also is called a mocker. Such shall not only lose out with God, but they have already lost out with God’s people. A “scoffer” is an abomination to men.

Verse 10

“Adversity or distress” (opposition, trials, reverses) test one’s strength (faith, courage, emotional composure). Some can stand more adversity or distress than others. We should all strive to “Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might” (Ephesians 6:19).

No man should be content to remain weak, yet there are those who “faint” (lose heart, fall apart, give up) when hardships come. Determination and depth of character are important. One cannot overcome weaknesses without them.

Verse 11

There are people who need delivering and who are evidently worthy. Those addressed also have the power to deliver them. Ability with opportunity represents responsibility to do so. “Hold them back” are those who stray away from the truth, who would be lost. James 5:19-20

Sometimes people fail to save others for fear of getting themselves into troubles. But Christians will do their duty even if it involves laying down their lives.

Verse 12

People sometimes try to cover the reality of their failures by excusing themselves as if ignorant of the need.

This lie adds another sin to the great sin of irresponsibility already committed. God knows the truth, He knows (He weighs) the heart. God will someday punish a person for his neglect of duty.

Verse 13

The people of that day depended upon honey for their sweetening, and it is sweet to the taste. Its properties are still highly acclaimed by healthy people.

Verse 14

The father would urge his son to seek, find, and know wisdom with the same eagerness with which he enjoyed the sweetness of honey.

The last part of this verse shows the great reward and the hopeful life that wisdom brings to the possessor (“a future and your hope will not be cut off”).

Verse 15

The wicked are described as lying in wait for the righteous, seeking his ruination. Whoever does this, qualifies for the title “wicked man.”

Verse 16

The righteous will have many trials, but he will prevail through the special help of God. When the wicked stumble in time of calamity, he is not promised to come back, for he has no personal God to whom to look for restoration.

Verse 17

The natural man has a tendency to rejoice over his enemy's troubles. David prayed that his enemies would not be given the chance to rejoice over his calamities or stumbling. (Psalm 35:19).

Verse 18

God sees everything that takes place on earth. He saw Adam and Eve's sin in the beginning, and He has seen every sin since. Rejoicing over an enemy's troubles or fall is displeasing to God to the point that in some way He will deal mercifully with him in the future as a result.

Verse 19

Here we go again with the same instruction that must be more needful than we would realize. "I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

Verse 20

Really there is nothing about the prosperous wicked to envy when we consider their end (no reward and his lamp put out). Psalm 73:3, 16-17

Verse 21

Man is to respect both God's government and that government that is over him.

1 Peter 2:17 says, "Fear God, honor the king." We are to "fear God" because He possesses primary authority and we are to "honor the king" because he possesses delegated authority from God.

Verse 22

Whoever resists God and whoever resists the government will ultimately be brought face to face with those whom they are resisting. And, oh, the severity of the ruin that will come as punishments from God and from civil authority!

Verse 23

The Bible has much to say about conducting court. (Leviticus 19:15, Deut. 1:17)

Verses 24-26 are also talking of court cases.

Verse 24

Through bribes, through respect of persons, through friendships and alliances, justice sometimes gets perverted and the guilty are freed.

Verse 25

People can tell when a judge is “bought off” and when he deals straightforwardly with a guilty case. They want him to rebuke the wicked for he has it coming, and only by this means can crime be held in check in society.

Verse 26

A judge giving a proper sentence to the wicked is so “in line” with the thoughts and feelings of the people as one who kisses another.

Verse 27

The Scriptures show that there is preparatory work to be done before the actual construction begins: “For which one of you when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?” (Luke 14:28) (1 Kings 5:17-18)

Verse 28

“Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause.” To do this would make one a “false witness,” one who lies.

How wicked to use one’s lips purposely to deceive others. God did not give man the gift of speech for this purpose.

Verse 29

Far too many people when wronged respond with an immediate desire to “get even,” they think only of retaliation. But the Bible brings out that God, the Judge, will bring any retaliation that is to be brought; consequently, He commands us not to take vengeance ourselves. (Romans 12:17-19)

Verse 30

There has always been and there will probably always be, a certain percentage of lazy people. They are also said to be “void of understanding,” in other words, one with good understanding will not be a sluggard.

Verse 31

The sluggard did not plant a crop; thorns and nettles grew up and took over, and the stone wall around the vineyard to protect the vineyard was broken down here and there and had not been kept in a state of repair. This condition existed because of a man’s laziness.

Verse 32

Who could keep from noticing the sad condition of both field and wall? The writer says he looked on the situation, pondered over it, and learned from it. Observation is one of wise people’s greatest teachers!

Verse 33

What did the onlooker learn? A lazy person loves to sleep too much.

Verse 34

And he learned that such over-sleeping would result in man’s poverty.

“Robbers” (armed men) usually had nothing, for they did not work, and what they got from robbing did not last them too long.

Chapter 25

Verse 1

1 Kings 4:32, says that Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs. Since there are not 3,000 in the book of Proverbs, Hezekiah's scribes (under his direction and by the inspiration of God) transcribed the many good sayings found in chapters 25-29.

Verse 2

This is the first of several verses concerning "kings."

A king busies himself searching out a matter, looking into many things, finding out what there is to find out; he is a human being and must, if he is going to know, and he can because he has the men and the money of the kingdom at his disposal! But God doesn't have to search things out; He knows all about everything.

Verse 3

You can never rise to the height of the heavens, as you can never penetrate the depths of the earth, and the king's heart is unsearchable, so you can never find out what he really thinks.

Verse 4

Raw silver had to be refined to discard its alloy and impurities. When this dross was taken away, it was then ready to be made into a beautiful vessel.

Verse 5

This verse shows that the wicked men of a king's court are the "dross" that must be removed if that king's throne is to be established, "his throne is to be established by righteousness."

Verse 6

A king is not one to presume upon. To force oneself upon a king is like a girl throwing herself at some boy. Just as she is out of order and becomes obnoxious to the boy whose favor she seeks, so will one defeat that which he seeks by trying to make himself too noticeable to the king.

Verse 7

Once when Jesus was a guest in a Pharisee's house, He noticed how they clamored among themselves for the chief locations at the table, and he said precisely the same thing. (Luke 14:8-10)

Verse 8

Our saying, "Think before you speak," is here applied to our actions. This verse appears to be describing a man with more temper than judgment. Often fiery hearts lack cool heads to know what to do after the wheels of trouble have been set in motion. The time to control strife is before it begins.

Verse 9

Wisdom would dictate that if there is a serious matter to be taken up with a neighbor, you should discuss it with him alone instead of talking about it to everybody else. Two people can often settle a difference between them, but if you involve several people and he does too, the probability of getting the matter settled becomes more and more remote. (Matthew 18:15)

Verse 10

If you talk over with others things that should remain secret between you and your neighbor, you will no longer be trusted by people, you have destroyed their confidence in you, and they will tell what you have done. And confidence destroyed is hard to be regained.

Verse 11

"A word spoken in right circumstances" would be the right thing said at the right time, in the right place, to the right person, in the right way, and for the right purpose.

Research on "apples of gold in settings of silver" is in order. Many contend for a "silver basket" containing beautiful orange fruit. Most writers contend the "apples" from the Hebrew word "*tappuach*" was not our apple but possibly the orange, or more probably the apricot. Then a word rightly spoken is as perfect as a beautiful, delicious group of golden apricots in a basket made of silver.

Verse 12

Just as they bestowed attractiveness upon their faces by golden ornaments, so listening to parent's wise counsel and to reproofs would grace one's life.

Verse 13

Not a snow storm (which would occur at the season of harvest and which would be a calamity), but likely a snow-cooled drink for the harvest workers.

"In the East they had snow-houses, places dug in the ground, where they lay up snow for summer use." This snow was used to cool their summer drinks.

To have a faithful messenger who could be counted upon was as refreshing to those who would send him a cold drink in hot weather.

Verse 14

"A man who boasts of his gifts falsely" reminds us of clouds and winds in dry weather, but no rain results. Some people make a big show with their words, but they do not come through with what they have promised, and sometimes they were promising to give it to God! (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5)

Verse 15

One can defeat himself sometimes by being too "pushy." By being "hasty of spirit" we can sometimes "exalt folly" instead of success. But "a soft tongue" melts the opposition. (2 Timothy 2:24-25, 4:2)

Verse 16

Honey is good, actually great, for health, but one should not eat so much of it that he gets turned against it and vomit it.

Verse 17

Our common expressions, "don't wear your welcome out" and "familiarity breeds contempt," carry the same message, as the words in this verse. People have work to be done and business to be seen about. One who has nothing to do and keeps running over to the house of those who do soon makes his or her appearance an unwelcome sight. It is better to have the others say, "Come over," than to have them think, "I wish they would leave."

Verse 18

Telling lies about someone is as harmful as hitting him with a club, or wounding him with a sword, or shooting him with a sharp arrow. (Psalm 57:4)

Verse 19

Putting one's trust in an unreliable person lets him down in the day of trouble. Some people should not be trusted with important business. You cannot use a broken tooth nor count on a foot out of joint.

Each person should want to be reliable, responsible, and trustworthy. Each of us should be wise enough not to count upon the irresponsible.

Verse 20

In case of light sorrow or disappointments, we may sing with such a one to cheer him up and pep him up, but in the case of extreme sorrow (such as from death) we do not say to such a one, "Come on, let's all gather around the piano and sing and have a good time."

Festive singing would be as out of order under those conditions as taking away a needed garment in cold weather and would meet with emotional resistance similar to what happens when you pour vinegar upon soda, and the two boil up.

Verse 21

Both Old and New Testaments teach that we should treat one who has not been good to us as we would a friend.

If you, a godly person, after seeking to win an enemy through kindness, you may get nowhere by socially inviting him over for a meal. You may overcome his evil done to you by your good done to him. How worthwhile! How both of you will rejoice!

Verse 22

Counseling a woman about her difficult husband, a preacher asked her if she had tried "heaping coals of fire upon his head," she said. "No, but I have tried boiling water and that didn't work."

The woman missed the point of this verse: “You will heap burning coals on his head, not to consume, but to melt him with kindness.”

Verse 23

A tongue that “bites a person behind his back” arouses an angry countenance in the one so spoken of (against). Backbiting is serious: it is mentioned in Romans 1:30 among the awful sins of that chapter’s long list.

Verse 24

“It is better to live in a corner of a roof,” than with a contentious and fretful woman. If there is anything that will “get a man” or that is obnoxious to a man, it is the nagging and continual harpings of a woman.

Moral: Women, don’t do it! Girls, don’t develop it! Boys, don’t marry it! Married men, you have a problem!

Verse 25

The delight of a drink of cold water when thirsty and the refreshing relief it brings suggests that one’s heart is refreshed or relieved (or both) from good news from relatives afar off, or in the case of a king’s good news from his army fighting afar off.

Verse 26

A drinking fountain whose waters have been riled up or a spring that has had something dead or putrid fall into it to corrupt it are examples of something once good and usable now hindered and hurt and no longer good. So is a righteous man who gets corrupted by wicked people.

Verse 27

Anything good to eat (like honey) can be over indulged in. Gloating over one’s accomplishments is not good but grievous. Nobody likes to see another “stuck on himself.” Romans 12:16 says, “Be not wise in your own estimation (conceit).”

An old saying is: “self-brag stinks.”

Verse 28

This verse is a great verse on the need of self-control.

A city broken down by some greater power and left without walls is weakened to the point of being defenseless against attack, and when a person has lost his sense of personal restraint or self-control, he or she is open to temptation's attack. You are responsible for saying, "Yes," to God and "No" to Satan; God built this responsibility into you when He created you with the right choices.

Chapter 26

Verse 1

A fool receives no honor nor does he have a sense of honor. The two go together as poorly as snow and summer and as rain and harvest. Such a one is a poor one to marry for he will not bestow honor on his wife. 1 Peter 3:7

Verse 2

Do right and you have nothing to fear from people's cursing. At times it seems that some birds are aimlessly flying, just for the sake of flying, actually going nowhere. Even so a false curse will aimlessly go nowhere. In keeping with this verse are two eastern proverbs: "The jackal howls; will my old buffalo die?" "The dog barks—still the caravan passes; will the barking of the dog reach the skies."

Verse 3

Those who have worked around animals often use a whip because animals don't always do what they want them to do by other means. Psalms 32:9

Verse 4

Do not lower yourself to the fool's level by answering silly questions or arguing with him.

Verse 5

This verse shows that sometimes you answer a fool according to his folly, and verse 4 shows that sometimes you don't. In each instance you will have to be the judge when it is appropriate and wise to do so and when it isn't.

A preacher was asked a silly or useless or unanswerable question (like what were the names of Jesus' sisters) and he told the man he would find the answer in the second chapter of Jude!

Verse 6

This verse speaks of sending a message by a fool. Chances are something will happen; maybe he will never arrive with it; maybe he will get it all mixed up. He will bring "damage" to the one sending him. By so doing he will cut off his own feet (his business), prosperity or self in some way.

Verse 7

A lame man's legs are not sound and may be at least in part invalid and so is a parable or a wise saying in the mouth of a fool. He will misapply the parable or the point of the saying.

Verse 8

Most stones shot from a sling are more or less shot at random, actually wasted, reaching no vital destination. "It is entirely thrown away." Is not the same true of bestowing honor upon a fool? It is wasted upon one who does not appreciate it, does not know what to do with it, and will not be the better for it.

Verse 9

"There is here no idea of a drunkard's hand being pierced with a thorn, but rather of his being armed with it."

"When a drunkard carries and brandishes in his hand a sweet briar," would it be dangerous for a drunkard to get a branch of a thorn bush in his hand and begin hitting people with it?" Is a parable in the mouth of a fool not also dangerous in another way?

Verse 10

“A careless, random way of doing business, taking into one’s service fools, or entrusting matters of importance to any chance loiterer, is as dangerous as shooting arrows about recklessly without caring where they flew or whom they wounded?”

Verse 11

This verse and 2 Peter 2:20 (which quotes it) calls upon one of the most obnoxious sights in nature to teach us a lesson: that of a dog who has just given up (vomiting) what he had partaken of and then turning round and eating it again. This verse applies to a fool returning to his acts of foolishness while 2 Peter 2:20 applies it to a backslider returning to his former sins.

Verse 12

“Nothing so shuts the door against improvement as self-conceit.” Such persons professing themselves wise become fools.

Verse 13

Proverbs has much to say about laziness and contains more material on the subject than any other book in the Bible. The lazy person sees a lion in the road and in the open square and does nothing about it, warning no one.

Verse 14

Just as a gate turns upon its hinges, so does the sluggard when aroused turn over (roll over onto his other side) for more sleep.

Verse 15

It is hard for us to imagine people this lazy, but experience teaches one not to be too surprised at anything.

Verse 16

This verse sounds like what we call “park-bench authorities” and “sidewalk superintendents,” men who are doing nothing and who have no authority over a project, but who never question their judgment; they always know how it should have been done.

Many times, the uneducated who are lazy are cursed with the spirit of egotism. Those men with just enough ambition to get up town to spend the day on some benches talking, whittling, and arguing have all the answers.

Verse 17

Grabbing a dog by his ears is not recommended, for he will pull loose and turn on you. Neither is getting involved with people's strife a good thing. This verse is a warning about meddling in people's business.

Verse 18

The "madman" may be a man who has gone into a violent rage or an insane man who gets hold of dangerous weapons and begins throwing them around and endangering the lives of his fellowmen.

Verse 19

Some people whose mischievous conduct or wicked words which have brought serious damage to another try to excuse themselves by saying, "I didn't mean to, I was just joking."

Too many people try to joke their way through life and then if something happens that shouldn't they say, "I didn't mean it."

Verse 20

For a fire to continue it must have fuel. Even so whispering (gossip) will keep trouble brewing. Sometimes the whisperer moves away—woe to the people where he or she moves!

It too will begin experiencing trouble, unless the gossiper dies, or if the person gets converted, or is cornered, confronted, and quieted, then the contention ceases.

Verse 21

The "whisperer" of verse 20 is referred here as a "contentious" man in this verse, which he is.

He may say he loves everybody involved and is only doing his duty in trying to get things right, but he doesn't really love, he is not doing his duty, and he isn't

getting things right by making things wrong. The figure of the fire is continued in this verse: “charcoal,” “hot embers,” “wood to fire,” and “kindle.”

A church needs to be stirred up all right, but not by contention!

Verse 22

A "whisperer" is one who goes behind people's backs in talking about them, saying things that are not in the best interest of the ones being spoken about. The verse brings out the sad fact that people are willing to listen to such cowardly, wrong, ruinous talk (they are dainty morsels.)

Verse 23

The next proverbs are concerned with hypocrisy.

Lips that seem to burn with affection and give the kiss of glowing love may mask a heart filled with envy and hatred. Judas's kisses and words of friendship hide the bad feelings that lurk within.

Verse 24

The very word here used bears the meaning “to make one unknown, hence to make one's self unrecognizable.” The man disguises his hatred with his lips (with honeyed words) and lays up deceit in his heart.

Verse 25

Yes, there are some people just like this wicked man: their hearts are full of abominations. So, we are not to believe everything some people say.

Verse 26

Ultimately his sin will find him out. Somebody with influence, leadership, and wisdom will see through the “glaze” of deceit and will bring his actions out into the open, and the result is mentioned in [verse 27](#).

Verse 27

The pit or hole that such a one has been digging for someone else becomes the fate of the whispering, contentious deceiver himself.

Verse 28

In summary this verse affirms that this whispering tongue was actually a “lying” tongue, actually hating those it was wounding and that such a flattering tongue is calculated to work “ruin” to its victim.

Chapter 27

Verse 1

James 4:13-16 is an elaboration upon this verse. The rich fool in the parable was boasting himself of “tomorrow.”

Verse 2

There is that element of society that seems to think, “If I don’t toot my own horn, it won’t get tooted.” We reply in these words, “Praise of self is no commendation.”

Jesus recognized the general truthfulness of this statement when He said in John 5:31, “If I alone bear witness of Myself, My testimony is not true.”

Verse 3

Work with stone or sand very long, and your hands your legs and your back soon becomes weary. But to be around a fool when vexed is even more wearying and exhausting.

“The ill temper and anger of a headstrong fool, which he vents on those about him, are harder to endure than any material weight is to carry,”

Jewish literature contains this statement: “Sand and salt and a mass of iron are easier to bear than a man without understanding.”

Verse 4

Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood that may arise and subside, but not so with jealousy.

Verse 5

Jesus said, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline.” (Revelation 3:19) It is in such a consideration that our verse exalts the love that rebukes over the love that does not.

Thus, gospel preachers and godly people who rebuke people for their sins really and truly love people. Their pretended friends say nothing about their sins and let them die and be lost.

Verse 6

Therefore, this verse exalts the same love that administers correction over the deceitful kisses of an enemy. Judas’s kiss didn’t fool Jesus, but people have been fooled by the “nice treatment of people who really didn’t love them like the person who corrected them.”

Verse 7

People who complain about food would probably not do so if really hungry. When one is hungry, just plain bread or dry crackers taste good, but after one has eaten a big meal at a family get-together, just to mention eating will fulfill the fact of this verse. “The sated or full man loathes honey.”

In a sense this is why some are not hungry for the gospel: they feel no need, so they have no desire.

Verse 8

Though we do not think of it as normal, there are birds which abandon their nest, their natural surroundings and go elsewhere with sad results. In like manner do some men become wanderers and prodigals.

Time has proven that strength of character is more often developed in a family and in children if they settle down to one community and make it their home than to move from place to place.

Verse 9

They anointed their faces with olive oil and put on perfume to make them happy and light-hearted. Nothing is sweeter and more burden-lifting than the good advice and counsel of a trusted friend.

Verse 10

This verse is a great verse on friendship, even stating that we should value the long-time friendships of our family as well as those of friends we personally made.

Verse 11

Good children are one of man's best recommendations. A wise son not only makes a glad father, but fathers with good children "shall not be put to shame."

Many leaders, even in religion, have been put to shame by the bad behavior and reputation of their sons.

Verse 12

A prudent man is a man who has his eyes open and sees the evil coming and he acts in wisdom (he hides himself from the evil rather than walking right into it). But the naive man doesn't see the evil, doesn't pay any attention to it and suffers for it.

Picture evil as a trap that is set; there is as much difference between men who can and cannot be caught in the trap of evil as there is between animals.

Mink, foxes and a few other animals are difficult to get into a trap. It can sometimes be done by shrewd and careful means.

Verse 13

If one has become surety for a stranger or for a foreign woman, the creditor should and will hold his garment in pledge just as he would the stranger's or the foreign woman's. Exodus 22:26 shows that they took one's garment as security when loaning money.

Verse 14

Haven't you seen this character who talks louder than is appropriate seemingly with the idea of drawing non-related parties' attention to what he is saying or doing? And, oh, as he talks, how he casts his eyes here and there to get other people to listen to what he is saying!

Very similar to the hypocrite of Matthew 6:2 who was sounding a trumpet among the people just before giving alms to a poor person.

Jesus said not to do it and if one dies, whatever praise he might get from men will be the only reward he will get. To rise "early" to bless a friend was as much a part of the put-on righteousness as the blessing with a "loud voice."

Verse 15

The ill-constructed roofs of Eastern houses were very subject to leakage, being flat and formed of porous material. But even our own type of roof can spring a leak and "drip"! Drip! Drip! As long as there is water to drip. Such is unwelcome and wearying and so are the contentions of a contentious woman.

Verse 16

One has as much chance of stopping the wind as stopping the mouth of an angry, fretful and unreasonable woman.

What is meant by the statement about "oil" is not so clear, some thinking it refers to the impossibility of concealing the smell of the ointment one has put on his hand and some that it refers to her slipping through his hand if he tries to do anything to her.

Verse 17

"The proverb deals with the influence which men have upon one another."

The fact that they also use iron upon iron shows that things of the same material can also affect one another, just as men can affect men from sadness to gladness. The ability to cheer up a sorrowful human heart becomes a responsibility to do so.

Verse 18

One who carefully tends his fig tree will in time be rewarded for his patient effort, and one who faithfully serves his master will also find that he will be honored for it.

Jesus is our Master and to each who has faithfully served Him here on earth will hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things; enter into the joy of the Lord.” (Matthew 25:21)

Verse 19

See a man looking at himself in the water. It is almost as if he is talking to himself. Even so as people look at each other, it is almost as if a silent message in being sent between them.

Verse 20

“Sheol” is the Hebrew word for the place of departed spirits (the same as “Hades” in Greek.) “Abaddon” is the Hebrew word for destruction (the same as “Apollyon” in Greek.) Just as death is personified here as never satisfied but always wanting more souls, so man’s eyes are never satisfied. The more he has and sees, the more he wants.

Verse 21

“As silver and gold are tried by the art of the refiner, so is man’s heart by the praise he receives.” If he feels it not, he deserves it; if he be puffed up by it, he is worthless.”

Verse 22

“Pound, mortar, and pestle,” these are strange words to our modern way of living. Whenever you put something into a container and pound or mash it with something in your hand, you are “pounding” it, what you are pounding it with is the “pestle,” and the container is the “mortar.” This verse shows that no matter how you might beat on a confirmed fool, you cannot get rid of his foolishness.

Verse 23

From here to the end of the chapter the material has to do with shepherding and agriculture. This verse presents Hebrew parallelism in which the second statement is a restatement of the first.

Verse 24

Just as riches or the crown could not be taken for granted, neither could one's flock and herd. Today's ten wealthiest men in the world may not all be wealthy in a few years. Those who rule today may be overthrown tomorrow. So care and diligence must be watchwords even to a shepherd.

Verse 25

One can see the diligence of the shepherd in providing food for his flock at the different seasons.

Verse 26

This diligence pays off, for there is wool for the clothing, and from the sale of goats could the land be purchased for oneself.

Verse 27

An Additional reward for diligence was plenty of milk. In Palestine they milked goats whereas we milk cows.

The Palestine goat's milk was used in every form. They served it with eggs and bread, the main food of the people.

Chapter 28

Verse 1

Mischievous children and evil adults will often drop the wrong they are doing to run when they hear some sound even though it is not somebody pursuing them. House robbers seldom try to break into a home where there is a light on even though they recognize that probably nobody is there, there just might be.

The righteous have nothing to be ashamed of and their courage causes them to stand right where they are.

Verse 2

When a nation was wicked, God brought an unrest that produced many turnovers in leadership.

Nobody remained in power for long and in time the government collapsed and passed out of existence. The opposite was true where men of understanding and knowledge were in power.

Verse 3

The needy man of this verse picks on the man who is poorer than himself and when he takes the only thing of value that this poorer man has, there is nothing left.

On a “driving rain,” “these are frequent in the East; and sometimes carry flocks, crops, and houses away with them.”

Verse 4

They praise the wicked because they are their kind. “Birds of a feather flock together.” 1 Kings 18:21

We are told not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but to expose them. (Ephesians 5:11)

Verse 5

“An evil man’s moral conception is perverted; he cannot distinguish between right and wrong (justice). The light that was in him has become darkness.”

Verse 6

The comparison is between a poor man who is honest and a rich man who is perverting his way. Righteousness and justice are more important in the sight of God than riches.

Verse 7

This verse reflects that which is seen so often throughout the Bible; namely that though all people live in the same world and are more or less exposed to the same things, some live right, and some don't.

Verse 8

The wicked oppress the poor to increase their own substance. In time such ill-gotten gains will in time get back to where it belongs. Job 27:16-17

Verse 9

Of those who turn away their ears from hearing God's Word, the curse of God will be upon them. All religious acts by the disobedient are obnoxious to God. Proverbs 15:8 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord."

Verse 10

"He who strives to pervert one really converted to God in order that he may pour contempt on religion shall fall into that hell to which he has endeavored to lead the other." (Clark)

It is no wonder that those who are all out for Satan cause many to stumble if they can. 1 Peter 4:4

Verse 11

Because wealth and great earthly possessions often bring conceit to the rich, he is out to get more money by plotting new schemes and moves. In so doing he may not fool some of the poor people. 1 Timothy 6:17

Verse 12

Judah knew what it was to have both good and bad kings. When men like Hezekiah and Josiah were on the throne, it was a glorious time for the nation. But when wicked rulers like Ahaz and Manasseh came to power, there was fear, and the people hid themselves.

Verse 13

When one has done wrong he can go one of two ways: either try to cover or conceal his transgression or confess the transgression and forsake it. 1 John 1:9

When one tries to cover his sins when he should confess and forsake it, things are not going to go right. It is like keeping a thorn in one's hand that ought to be removed.

It is also like keeping a bad tooth in one's mouth that ought to be extracted, or like driving a car that is badly out of time.

Verse 14

One's attitude toward God is under consideration. He will either fear God, (the reverence and godly fear), and depart from evil or he will harden his heart so he won't fear, and he will continue in his sins.

Verse 15

This verse and verse 16 have to do with "kings." The Hebrew's own history contained a classic example of a "wicked ruler" (Pharaoh) over a "poor people" (when he had them in Egyptian bondage).

But that wasn't enough, so Pharaoh said to the Egyptian midwives "Kill the Israelites' sons at birth." This fear causes man to depart from evil, and His mercy and truth atone for the sin that has been dropped.

Mercy is that attitude of God that exhibits itself in our forgiveness. Truth stands for the way that God has set up for us to come to Him for His forgiveness. Fear is a deterrent to sin, to crime, and to misbehavior. His fear causes man to depart from evil, and His mercy is that attribute of God that exhibits itself in forgiveness. Truth stands for the way that He has set up for us to come to Him for His forgiveness. Fear is a deterrent to sin, to crime, and to misbehavior.

And when Pharaoh saw that that wasn't working, he issued an order to the Hebrew people, "Cast your newborn sons into the Nile River."

Wicked King Herod, who killed at will throughout his reign, was like a roaring lion and a raging bear when he ordered all male children born in Bethlehem killed, from two years old and under.

Verse 16

Greedy tyrants want more and more territory, and they become great oppressors.

This verse says such a ruler lacks understanding. He does not have the welfare of his people at heart as many of them fall in his battles, and he finally bites off more than he can handle and is defeated.

In contrast the ruler who is not greedy shall prolong his days.

Verse 17

He who kills the innocent, may flee to hide himself, but let no one give him protection. The law demands his life, because he is a murderer, and let none deprive justice of its claim.

Verse 18

He who walks blamelessly will be delivered, but he who is crooked shall fall all at once. The right way to live proves to be the best way to live!

Verse 19

The normal and expected reward of honest labor is to have “plenty of food.”

Getting in with the non-working bunch, with the play-around group, with the no-good element is a good way to have “poverty in plenty” instead of “plenty in bread.” One’s companionships will often affect his working outlook.

Verse 20

This is one of several verses dealing with getting rich quick. God will punish, not bless, one who hastens to be rich, for he has the wrong goal in mind, and he will likely sin in pursuing his goal. 1 Timothy 6:9-10

Verse 21

Wrong is wrong even if our best friend does it and right is right even if somebody does it who doesn’t like us personally. God will not save those who have not obeyed the gospel even if they are our relatives or friends.

The second statement of this verse is probably mentioning another thing that should not be done, namely transgressing for a piece of bread, a small thing.

Verse 22

An evil eye is craving something that we should not have: it might be to desire one who is not our mate or to desire earthly gain at the expense of one's spirituality.

We know that the eye feeds the heart, and the wicked heart prompts the eye to be evil, a vicious circle!

This verse is warning against getting-rich quick, saying that such a one will in time lose it (want shall come upon him.)

Verse 23

“Open rebuke is better than love that is hidden.”

Our verse says that one that rebukes a man will later find more favor than those who flattered the man when they should have been rebuking him. The “smooth talkers” who never say anything about the sins of the people will do the people no good.

In times to come people will look back and have more respect for the honest, outspoken, plain-spoken man than for the coward who was full of good words and fair speeches.

If one believes this, he will be more faithful to God's Word and will not let the people be lost without saying something about their sins.

Verse 24

Why would somebody rob his father and mother? First of all, it would be easy to do as compared to robbing anybody else, for he would know where everything was, he would be present in the house at times when they weren't.

He might think they would be more lenient upon him than upon somebody else, if what he did was ever found out. Or, he might salve his conscience by saying, “It's all going to belong to us children in time anyway.”

How perverse to rob the very ones who gave him life, provisions, and rearing! He is a “companion of a man who destroys” because he is destroying their financial holdings.

Verse 25

“He that is of a greedy spirit “stirs up strife” is put over against he that puts his trust in the Lord.”

Some have been able to content themselves with the bare necessities of life (food and covering), trusting the Lord will take care of them through the situation. They fret under their situation and will do anything to get their hands on more and their greediness usually results in trouble, for in order to get more, it usually means that somebody else has less.

But in the long run, who winds up better? The one who trusts in the Lord will prosper.

Verse 26

One should always trust God and what He says. When one’s heart says to do something but God says not to, we should do what God says. This is walking wisely, and we will end up blessed (“he will be delivered”).

Verse 27

There will always be some poor among us. As we have opportunity to give to the poor and needy, we are to do so.

This verse talks about shutting one’s eyes from the poor. This is what many do as they merrily go on their way or busily pursue their business interests.

Jesus made a helpful Samaritan the hero of His parable and the heartless Jewish priest and Levite the goats.

The ultimate blessing or curse to come upon us for our dealings with the poor will be at the Judgment. (Matthew 25:34-46)

Verse 28

“Rise to power is the thought of this verse.” How tragic that in the history of this world, there has been so many wicked rulers! The wicked are often grasping for power, covetous, and proud and they by nature seek such places of prominence.

Our verse shows that when the wicked leaders perish, righteousness increases. The overthrow of the ungodly increases the prosperity of the righteous, promotes their advancement in influence and numbers.

Chapter 29

Verse 1

God had tried to get Judah to do right, but they would not listen. He destroyed them without remedy. God then sent His messengers, rising up early and sending, but they mocked the messengers of God and despised His words and scoffed at His prophets until the wrath of God arose against His people, until there was no remedy. 2 Chronicles 36:15-17

Verse 2

The contrast is between a righteous and a wicked ruler and between the people's rejoicing under the righteous ruler and their sighing under the wicked.

Verse 3

This verse talks of two altogether different kinds of sons and the consequences. The conduct of a son will cause an effect upon his parents. Proverbs 10:1; 15:20

Verse 4

When a king rules according to the laws of justice, things go well with both him and the land for God blesses, and people are happy. The bribe-taking king overthrows it because such is not right, God is not pleased and the people do not approve it.

Verse 5

Flattery is insincere compliments. The flatteries of our verse are nothing more than something that will draw one's attention away from the net that is being spread in one's way.

Verse 6

The contrast within this verse shows that the “snare” ensnares the transgressor himself. Righteousness does not ensnare one; it leads to singing and rejoicing.

Verse 7

The righteous give to the poor because they first of all take knowledge of their situation and then care. Because the wicked do not care, they do not bother themselves to take knowledge of their condition, and if they know about it, they dismiss it from their thoughts.

Verse 8

The setting of this verse is an attacked or besieged city. Men may scoff at the enemy that is able to overthrow the city. Conquerors often spared the city destruction if it surrendered, but if it resisted it was conquered and then destroyed. Thus, it is destroyed by the mouth of the wicked.

The wise men that turned away wrath would be those who, seeing that they were hopelessly outnumbered and defeated, asked for terms or conditions of peace.

Verse 9

When a foolish man is encountered in a controversy, he may get angry (realizing he is getting the worst end of it), or he may laugh (not sensing that he is being defeated). After all that has been said, the fool only falls into a passion or laughs at the matter, argument is wasted upon him, and the controversy is never settled.

Verse 10

One must pause to analyze this verse. It is Hebrew parallelism in which the latter statement is a restatement of the first.

The bloodthirsty hate him that is perfect; they (the bloodthirsty) seek the life of the upright. Why do they do this? Some out of envy, some because they are rebuked by the upright, some because the upright are an abomination to them,

and some because they can more easily get what the perfect have than they can what others have.

Verse 11

A fool does not exercise self-control, because it is based upon wisdom which he does not have. Therefore, a wise person quiets his spirit when it could erupt, but a fool doesn't.

Verse 12

This verse pictures a wicked ruler of which there have been many. Both their advisors are wicked (he hearkens to their "falsehood"), and his servants are "wicked." A wicked ruler, wicked counselors, and wicked servants can only add up to a wicked reign.

Verse 13

Whether a man is poor or an oppressor, God has made him, he lives in God's world, and he is a recipient of God's good whether he makes good use of or not. Matthew 5:45 says: "God causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." That verse does not say that God is pleased with both (or with either).

Verse 14

There will be the poor in every king's realm, and the law of God is to care for them. Deuteronomy 15:11 This verse makes a special promise to the king who obeys God's will.

Verse 15

When children misbehave, they need correction. If you don't, if you let him keep on in his ways, he will bring "shame to his mother" and other heartaches to both parents.

"A child left to tend for himself" is one who is neglected, whose parents who have not taught him, have not overseen him, have not been with him, have not loved him, and have not corrected him.

“Left” means to wander free where it wills. No child is capable of self-rearing. Such neglected offspring “causes shame.” His parents who neglected him will be ashamed of him and his desire to get away from home will probably be matched by their relief to see him go!

Verse 16

The more wicked those people are the more sin there will be. Sin spreads like a mighty contagion: “And because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.” (Matthew 24:12) John tells us that there has been a big “take-over” of this world by sin; “The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” (1 John 5:19)

If you “follow the crowd” you will be lost. Knowing the tendency of mankind to do whatever the crowd does (Exodus 23:2) tells us not to follow a multitude to do evil. Thank God, there will always be some who will not give in to the ways of the world. They are “the righteous.”

Verse 17

Any godly parent is grieved at the wrongdoing of a child. An undisciplined child will go from bad to worse until his parent’s nerves can take no more. “Correct” him, and he will give you “rest” and more, he will actually grow into something good and bring “delight” to your heart.

Verse 18

The word “vision” here implies the inspired message of God. When there was no prophet to reveal God’s will to the people or no preacher to hinder their going into sin, people sinned without anything to restrain them.

Hosea 4:6 says, “God’s people were being destroyed for a lack of knowledge.” But even in those days there would still be some who would keep the law and those who did would be blessed of God. (James 1:25)

Verse 19

Servants or slaves were an uneducated group of persons. Personal gain and advancement held no motivation for them.

There were likely times when they would sulk. When they got into this mood, it took more than words to get them going again. Bodily punishment was the only “language” that would get through to them.

Such sullen, non-responding stubbornness might result in death or his sale. Such stubbornness is not limited to slaves of long ago. There are people who will not respond to words of wisdom, for even though they understand, they prefer the preservation of their ego rather than giving heed to the wisdom of another.

Verse 20

There are some who are hasty of speech. They may be nervous, fidgety people to whom a moment of silence is killing and who speak from the top of their heads instead of the bottom of their hearts. Such will have many an apology to make throughout life or suffer the loss of friends.

Or some are hasty of speech because of not being aware of the problems that can be caused by such utterances.

Verse 21

He who pampers or spoils his slave or gives out privileges and favors without expecting responsibilities and obligations in return, will likely find those people to be forgetful of their obligations.

They are likely to assume the rights and privileges of children and are seldom good for anything. This is true of most people who are pampered or spoiled. Such boys grow up to be men in name only, and such girls grow up to be poor wives.

Verse 22

One who is angry is stirred up, and this causes him to say things and to do things that stirs up strife in others. This “strife” is not usually a passing thing but it causes transgression to abound.

Ephesians 4:26 says, “Be angry and yet do not sin.” When angry take care you do no sin by what you do or say. “Do not let the sun go down on your anger.” Get yourself under control immediately.

Verse 23

Just as verse 22 shows that such can get out of control by way of anger this verse shows that such can get out of control by way of pride. Man's pride is when he is puffed up, but such actually leads down instead of up.

Verse 24

This is a court scene. The thief is brought in and the one wronged. The judge has pronounced a curse upon the thief and upon anyone who knows about the crime but refuses to divulge the information. He "hates his own life" in that he is bringing a curse upon himself by his action.

Verse 25

What "snare," "the snare of the devil" (2 Timothy 2:26). This is one of the greatest causes of preachers failing to preach the Word of God as they should.

Verse 26

The just and the unjust live in the same world, both eat to sustain physical life, live in houses, etc., but there the comparison ends, for they have adopted altogether different ways of living. The righteous deplore the ways of the wicked, (stealing, lying, cheating, drinking, fighting, hating, immorality, etc.) Jesus commended the church at Ephesus: "You found them to be false." (Revelation 2:2)

But the wicked deplore the upright just as much, for their ways are a rebuke to them. The wicked have often persecuted the righteous.

Chapter 30

Verse 1

Four names are here introduced unknown to us but probably well known in those days: "Agur" (the author), "Jakeh" (his father); and "Ithiel" and "Ucal" (the ones being addressed).

These last two chapters contain material that is not compiled by Solomon (this chapter by "Agur" and chapter 31 by "King Lemuel").

Verse 2

Whoever Agur was, he reveals the fact that it was not through natural endowment that he was about to write. “I do not have the understanding of a man” carries the idea of a low level of understanding.

Verse 3

This verse shows that it was not through education received from others that he was about to write.

Verse 4

This verse contains five questions dealing with the sublime and divine.

1. “Who has ascended into heaven?”
2. “Who has descended into the abyss?”
3. “What would be the purpose of such ascending and descending?”
4. Going up and going down (or out) was for the purpose of gaining Divine knowledge and bringing it back to mankind.

The answer to the first four questions is, “No man.” If somebody insisted that some man has done these things which we attribute to God, Agur wanted to know.

5. What is his name and his son’s name?

Verse 5

The message that Agur is bringing is the “Word of God,” and every word of it is true for it is “tried.”

Verse 6

Since God’s Word is pure (just like He wants it), true, and right, He does not want man tampering with it. Twice in Deuteronomy, God sounded the same warning. (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, “Do not add to or take away from God’s Word.”) The last warning in the Bible says in Revelation 22:18-19.

Verse 7

“Two things” were urgently desired or were asked of God and which he did not want to be denied. “Before I die” means while I am “in the flesh” or “while I live.”

Verse 8

First question: “Keep deception and lies far from me” and the second question: “Give me neither poverty nor riches.” Looking at these two questions he wished God to remove from him and the second is what he wished God to give him.

Verse 9

What was the danger of “riches”? What was the danger of “poverty”? “Lest I be poor and steal and use profanely the name of my God.” Stealing is wrong whether one is stealing out of want or otherwise.

Verse 10

“Slander” is not good. “Lest he curse you.” Who is the “he”? More likely the “servant” than the “master” the one slandered, rather than the one who hears the slander. Since the slanderer would be “guilty,” the “curse” would be effective.

Verse 11

The next four verses all begin with, “There is a kind.” Some versions translate it as, “There is a generation.” “There is a kind that curses his father and does not bless his mother.”

Likely what he says has fit various generations from time to time. For sure the four statements seem to fit our own generation and others who have lived before us have felt that it fit their generation also.

Our verse is picturing a generation openly violating the Fifth Commandment, “Honor your father and your mother” ([Exodus 20:12](#)) A child who does not honor and respect his parents is off to a bad start in life; the basis of good character is lacking. Imagine a whole generation of such and the society that would result!

Verse 12

“There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness.” It is natural for any people to have a concern over human guilt before God, not everybody comes to God for cleansing and forgiveness. But our verse pictures a time when men feel no need for such cleansing; they will feel right as they are.

Gospel preaching and evangelistic appeals are indeed foolish to such a people. Nor does our present generation miss being this generation by much!

Verse 13

“There is a kind—oh how lofty are his eyes, and his eyelids are raised in arrogance.”

This verse describes a proud, conceited age. This was the sin of King Nebuchadnezzar. Remember his pride when one day as he was walking in his palace, he said, “Is this not the great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30)

This spirit is not far from the present attitude: “See what we have done! Look at what man has accomplished!” The more the man is puffed up with his own knowledge, own attainments, and own importance, the less he bows before God, and seeks His will and walks by faith. This is a dangerous spirit to get into.

Verse 14

“There is a kind of man whose teeth are like swords and his jaw teeth like knives.” This verse tells of a greedy age, when the “big” eat up the “little,” when the “rich” devour the “poor.” Have we not come to this time when everything big drives everything small out of business. The small farmer with no capital can no longer farm. The man with his small store on the corner, can no longer compete.

The greedy mentioned in this verse has characterized many generations.
Amos 8:4

Verse 15

This verse and the following verse 16, will deal with things that seemingly cannot get enough, are never satisfied. To begin with, he compares his two daughters with the blood-sucking horse, teach that they can never get enough blood, (“Give,” “Give,” they cry.)

The number of things he has in mind are not two, but three; and finally he says there are “four that are not enough.”

Verse 16

Those four are:

1. “Sheol”—the abode of men’s departed spirits. Sheol is never satisfied; it keeps claiming new victims and never says, “Enough.”
2. “The barren womb”—the married woman who has not been able to bear children. It keeps crying out for conception. Recall that the barren Rachel said to her husband Jacob, “Give me children or else I die.”
3. “The earth”—oh how quickly it dries out after a heavy rain and is ready for more!
4. “The fire”—instead of being extinguished from fuel put upon it, the fire leaps higher and roars louder as if to say, “More, more.”

Verse 17

Mixed in with the groupings of this chapter are occasional single-proverbs. This verse returns to the subject of verse 11, showing disrespect to one’s parents. In this verse the author says that such an undutiful son shall die a violent death, his corpse shall lie unburied and the birds of prey shall feed upon it. Ravens, vultures and other birds that live on carrion first attack the eyes of their prey.

Verse 18

Agur begins another series, this time three which are too wonderful for me and four things he can but wonder about but not comprehend.

Verse 19

1. The way of an eagle in the sky, how marvelous his flight!
2. The way of a serpent on a rock, how man likes to conceal himself and study such!
3. The way of a ship in the middle of the sea, to see a large vessel take to the deep waters and to go with no land in sight was another marvel.
4. The way of a man with a maiden, it reins a marvel the way that love develops between two people and grows into the ultimate relationship of husband and wife.

Verse 20

And there is another thing to marvel at; how an adulterous woman can sin, knowing she has sinned and say, “I have done no wrong.” She would fit the “generation” spoken of in verse 12, “pure in their own eyes, yet not washed from their filthiness.”

Verse 21

This verse begins another group, a group of four things that bring sorrow, trouble, and anguish. “Earth” here concerns those who live upon it.

Verse 22-23

What four things?

1. A slave when he is king, sometimes a servant is elevated to a ruling status, and sometimes he “grabs the reins of power.” Former servants now ruling or being in charge can become “drunk” with their newly found position of authority, each will show everybody who is boss!
2. A fool when he is filled with food, another case of “promotion” that doesn’t work anymore, so it allows much evil to result.
3. An unloved woman when she is married, or a hateful woman, a woman with a bad disposition who finally gets married.

She is a woman who has passed much of her life without love, having nothing about her attractive either in looks, attainments, or manner and is consequently soured and ill tempered.

4. A maidservant that is heir to her mistress, another “elevation” that backfires. (Genesis 16:4)

Verse 24

With this verse Agur begins another series of things. This time four things are listed that are small on earth, little but exceedingly wise.

Verse 25-28

What four things?

1. Ants. An ant may not be strong but an ant is wise enough to prepare his food in the summertime for the winter when it would be hard to find.
2. Rock badgers. Because they are small (about the size of a rabbit), they live in the rocks. Their wisdom is displayed in their other protective measures.

It is hard to capture one. They have sentries regularly placed on the lookout while the rest are feeding. A squeak from the watchman suffices to send the flock hurrying to their holes.

3. Locusts. They have no leader, yet they all seem to know what to do. Joel 2:7-8
4. Lizard. The small kind have special suction cup toes that enable it to run up walls and cling to ceilings. Small as it is and easy to catch and crush, it is agile and clever enough to make its way into the very palaces of the king and to dwell there.

Verse 29

This verse introduces another set of four, this time things that are “stately in their going” or whose movements are remarkable.

Verse 30-31

What four things are stately in their march and their walk?

1. The lion, which fearlessly walks wherever he chooses and is fearlessly unafraid.
2. The greyhound, which can run like the wind.
3. The he-goat, how he walks and what state he assumes, in the presence of his part of the flock.
4. A king who that has things under control so that there is no danger of rebellion against him.

Verse 32

If you have been foolish enough in exalting yourself or have plotted evil, put your hand over your mouth. This is done when one recognizes he has said the wrong thing or to keep from saying more.

Verse 33

What will stir up this wrath, foolishly lifting oneself up? Butter results from churning, nosebleed results from twisting the nose, and anger results from stirring up wrath.

Chapter 31

Verse 1

History has not preserved, nor has archaeology uncovered, information that would help us identify “King Lemuel.” Some say it may be another earthly name for Solomon.

If his father was a king with a harem of wives, the rearing and teaching of his sons became the work of his own mother. “Oracle” indicates a Divine message.

Verse 2

“What” is used three times in this verse and is an impassioned exclamation expressing the inward emotion of the mother’s heart at the thought that the son might possibly fall into an evil way.

This son is precious to his mother as she thinks that the son might possibly fall into an evil way. This is evident from her three expressions concerning him.

1. “My son,” her very own son, one of the dearest possessions than any woman can have.
2. “Son of my womb,” not adopted by her but born by her, the fruit of her own body as blessed and enabled by God.
3. “Son of my vows,” she may have been barren and earnestly prayed for a child and vowed that if God granted her a child she would rear the same to His honor and glory. Her teaching these important things to Lemuel were likely part of her fulfilling those vows.

Verse 3

Her first plea was for him not to sacrifice his strength to women. Her second plea concerns “that which destroys kings” likely refers to “strong drink,” which she goes on to discuss in succeeding verses. She was warning against “wine” and “women.”

Verse 4

Solomon rightfully prayed for wisdom that he might be capable of ruling Israel, but strong drink can affect man’s reasoning power. A king needs all of his mentality all the time, so his mother correctly said, “It is not for kings, O Lemuel.”

Verse 5

A drinking monarch will not be a good king; he will “forget the law” and “pervert justice.” Matters that need attention will be neglected, because of drinking.

Verse 6-7

Another case of Hebrew parallelism in which the latter statement is but a restatement of the first. In other words, “the bitter in soul” is the same as “him that is ready to perish.”

If one overlooks Hebrew parallelism here, he would end up having God advising the sorrowful to turn to booze. But life has proven that people who do that don’t “drown their sorrows;” they only give them “swimming lessons.”

Verse 8

The “dumb” is anyone who for any reason whatever is unable to plead his own cause

Verse 9

The command to “judge righteously” is found elsewhere in the Bible. (Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:16-17)

We are to “open” our mouths and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.

Verse 10

From here to the end of the chapter sets forth the beautiful description of a virtuous woman, wife and mother. It has been a favorite of many Christian women and every Christian girl should know it well.

Verse 11

The first part of this description relates her to her husband and the first thing it says is that he can trust her. His confidence in her integrity and her attention to the family’s interests shows up in, “He will have no lack of gain.”

Beginning with verse 13, it shows the important part she plays in the sound financial condition of the home.

Verse 12

She is altogether an asset to him and in no sense a liability. She brings him joy and not sorrow by her behavior and by her contributions. “All the days of her life” shows that she will be his wife in years to come, she will be faithful to

the marriage vow; “until death do us part.” She will not only be good to him while he is strong and able but also when he is older and infirm.

Verse 13

Wool and flax (linen) were made into yarn or thread, the yarn or thread into cloth, and the cloth into garments. This made it a big job to make clothes for the family, but she did it willingly and cheerfully. She was neither lazy nor complaining.

Verse 14

Even as she sought wool and flax evidently wanting good materials to work with, even so she provides her family with good food, some of which came from distant places.

Verse 15

We notice three things:

1. She gets up early, is no late sleeper who is only concerned about herself instead of her family.
2. She cooks a good breakfast for the family, a good breakfast is a good foundation for the family’s day activities so they do not leave the house with empty stomachs.
3. She gets the family’s maidens busy with their work for the day.

Verse 16

In this she is probably not acting independent of her husband, but since he is one of the elders of the land she acts as his agent to investigate the worth of a particular field, to purchase it, and to plant it with vines for a vineyard.

Verse 17

All of this activity and working with her own hands elevated her out of being a weak, sickly woman. She was strong and healthy and able to uphold her part of the family's work and projects. And she didn’t think she needed to be “liberated!”

Verse 18

She is a busy woman. She not only gives tasks to the maidens, but she also works. She not only works outdoors planting vineyards but she makes garments and sells them. No wonder “her lamp does not go out at night.” Yet she is not just a slave who works but has no responsibility to see that the business is profitable; and she manages things so that her merchandise is “profitable.”

Verse 19

In verse 13, we read that she looks for wool and flax. In this verse she is using the “distaff” and the “spindle” to make the thread or yarn. In verse 24 we will read of her going on to make the actual garments and delivering them to the merchant to sell to the public. The distaff and spindle system of making thread preceded the spinning wheel.

The spindle and distaff are the most ancient of all the instruments used for spinning or making thread. The spinning wheel superseded them. The distaff held the wool to be made into thread or yarn, and the spindle was what the finished thread or yarn was collected on.

Verse 20

She extends her hand to the poor and stretches out her hand to the needy. She works for her family but does not forget others who are needy. Again, she is interested in business (personal, legitimate gain,) but in so doing she is not unmindful of those who are having financial difficulties.

Verse 21

They do not have the severe winters that we do; on the other hand, they didn't have the weather tight houses and furnaces that we have.

So, they had to have warm clothing to cope with their times of colder weather. Her children were well and comfortably clothed they were not neglected children of the street. The scarlet color would be warmer than plain white garments and dressier too. Every good mother wants her family to look nice.

Verse 22

The virtuous woman continues to be described in her relationship to different aspects of life. This verse shows that she likes nice things and is gifted at making them. She not only likes outdoor work but indoor as well. But she doesn't go overboard on making nice things and she makes nice things for her family also.

Our verse also shows that this healthy, hardworking woman also likes to look nice, (her clothing is fine linen and purple). Her wearing purple and fine linen shows that the family was not poor.

Verse 23

What about her husband? Is he a lazy, no good type of man? No, she was married to a prominent man, a successful man, one of the rulers of the land. Instead of a courthouse where legal transactions were recorded, their legal business was transacted in the city gates in the presence of the elders. He was one of them.

Verse 24

She makes linen garments and sells them and supplies belts to the tradesmen.

Verse 25

Clothes, we are told, express the person. In this sense this woman is expressed by two qualities; "strength" and "dignity." These two qualities are evident in all that has been said of her.

"She smiles at the future" is of course not to be understood as expressive of a presumptuous self-confidence, but only of a consciousness of having all appropriate and possible preparation and competence for the future.

Verse 26

Special mention is here made of her speech habits. An idle woman will often get herself into tongue trouble, "They also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house, and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking things not proper to mention." (1 Timothy 5:13)

Verse 27

Her thorough care of her household is again emphasized. They have proper meals. She sees that their clothes are in good order, and she keeps up the house.

Her business is again mentioned. Sleeping is not beyond the proper time to get up. She works with diligence after they get up.

Verse 28

Her household notices her care of them and her work in their behalf. She is greatly appreciated. Her husband and her children do not overlook her good life and work. He praises her and thanks God who gave her to him. They call her “blessed,” making “mother” one of the sweetest and dearest words in the world to them.

“Mother and love” go together in their minds.

Verse 29

“Many daughters” means “many women” (or “daughters of men”). Yes, the husband smiles that there are many women who have done worthily, but to him his own is the very best of all. Isn’t this the way it should be?

Thinking of her in this way, he will be happy and satisfied with her. He will not be thinking of other women nor leaving her for them.

Verse 30

He realizes that others may have “grace,” and others may display “beauty,” but it is better to be married to a woman “who fears the Lord.”

Such a woman as he has will be praised, but to fall for the grace of the other woman would be found “deceitful” and he will see how empty or vain her “beauty” can be when she lacks the important qualities of womanhood. A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised!

Verse 31

God’s final message concerning her to us is that we should give her what she deserves, what she has rightfully earned, especially praise and public recognition.

“Let what she has done be spoken of as a memorial to her and let her bright example be held forth in the most public places.”

“Let it be set before the eyes of every female, particularly of every wife, and especially of every mother, and let them learn from this woman what men have a right to expect of their wives, the head of the household, and the mother of their children.”