

CHAPTER 20

Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

**How does wine mock?
How does Strong drink rage?
How do they deceive men?**

Here are powerful figures of speech creating a short, excellent Proverb against drinking. Does this verse condemn moderate drinking of wine or strong drink, as some think? Absolutely! Solomon begins a warning against strong drink. We also know this from many Biblical passages:

Drinking strong drink, warned against by God: ***Habakkuk 2:15*** *Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!*

Drinking strong drink, leads to poverty: ***Proverbs 21:17*** *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.*

Proverbs 23:21 *For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.*

Drinking strong drink, brings sorrow, strife, needless wounds, gossip, and red eyes: ***Proverbs 23:29-30*** *Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?*
30 *They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.*

Drinking strong drink, deceives and harms all who drink it: ***Proverbs 23:31-32*** *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.*

32 *At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*

Drinking strong drink, fills a persons thoughts with lust and leads to adultery: ***Proverbs 23:33*** *Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.*

Drinking strong drink, is very addictive: ***Proverbs 23:35*** *They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.*

Metonymy is a figure of speech where a related thing is substituted for another. This is done to add force and beauty to language. The Bible is full of metonymy and other figures, so that primary definitions are often ludicrous. Consider these common examples that we use:

"Step on the gas" substitutes the fuel for the accelerator pedal. We do not want anyone to stand on a gas can. We really mean for the driver to speed up the car.

"He really used his head" substitutes the location of thinking for the brain. We don't mean he banged his skull. We really mean he used good thinking to solve a problem.

"The White House announced" substitutes the place where he lives for our President's words. We don't mean that our Chief Executive's residence actually spoke. We really mean that the President gave new information to the public.

To mock someone is to ridicule or make a fool of them, and wine, the fermented juice of the grape used as a beverage. Wine stays in a bottle or glass quite meekly and doesn't do anything rude. It can stay in a wine cellar for many years without ridiculing anyone.

Fermented wine will mock you, **If** you drink it (***Proverbs 23:29-30***).

Drinking can make you drunk, and then you will make a fool of yourself. Consider what it did to: Noah (***Genesis 9:21***), Lot (***Genesis 19:31-36***), Nabal (***1Samuel 25:36-38***).

To rage is to lose self-restraint and get angry, and strong drink is a beverage from the fermentation process. Grocers are happy that beer, schnapps, and whiskey will stay in a bottle without fighting, even for years, even on the same shelf!

But strong drink can lead to rage, **If** you drink it. Drinking can make you drunk, and you may fight for no reason. Stories of barroom brawls are Legion.

Any person who drinks without sober regard for these effects of alcohol is a fool. No wise man will drink fermented juice.

Though our Lord was called a winebibber, a drunkard, He was never drank any fermented beverage (***Matthew 11:19***).

Proverbs 20:2 The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.

It is hard to grasp this Proverb in the 21st Century, for there are no kings or authority figures that provoke much fear anymore.

What modern leader compares to a 600-pound male lion regally strolling its territory! But once upon a time there was real authority, which justifiably deserved comparison to the roaring of a lion. Back then it was

wise to obey your rulers, for provoking them could easily cost you your life.

A king with absolute power, enforcing all laws and crushing all opposition, is a beautiful sight (*Proverbs 30:29-31*).

A king with absolute power, is like the king of beasts, the lion, which enforces its rule upon all jungle creatures (*Proverbs 30:29-31*).

A male lion's roar can be heard five miles away in the African night, and other creatures tremble. Your loins would be loosed! Great kings evoked similar fear in their subjects: disobeying them was foolish and highly dangerous.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was such a king! The greatest historian in the greatest history book, God in the Bible, declared him the most glorious of all kings (*Daniel 2:37-38*).

If his cabinet could not tell him his dream from the night before, he might cut them in pieces and turn their houses into dunghills (*Daniel 2:5*)!

He could do the same to citizens opposing his religious opinions (*Daniel 3:29*)!

When he threw a party for government workers, they either liked his music or were thrown into a fiery furnace (*Daniel 3:1-6*)!

Late night talk shows and MTV morons did not ridicule him; Pierced and painted college students did not have anti-war demonstrations; He did not care about the latest polls!

Tabloids did not dig up sins of his youth to demean him. Subordinates did not take contrary positions and try to raise public opinion against him.

Democracy, or mob rule by the lowest common denominators in society, was unknown. There was little need for jails; children obeyed their parents; wives submitted to their husbands; servants obeyed their masters.

Shoplifting was at a minimum; teenagers did not set fires in cafeterias in rebellion against dress codes; Unions did not shut down the airlines.

Rather than new laws being debated, they were obeyed. Capital offences did not take seven years to prosecute; Mother Theresa did not intervene for serial killers.

Rulers today are little more than smiling and waving cheerleaders.

Rulers today must ask for permission to do most anything. They are often called in question, publicly opposed, ridiculed on talk shows, and put out to pasture when the media decides it is time for a new one.

Rulers today evoke no fear, for they have been neutered by an effeminate and rebellious generation, bent on destroying dominant males and strong authority.

A real king would help us understand God, be better fathers, be better children, be better wives, be better to fulfill our duties with greater zeal and contentment.

God did not ask you or anyone else's opinion when: God chose your birthplace, birth date, parents, height, intelligence, blemishes, or privileges in life.

God is not going to ask your opinion when you stand before Him naked and condemned in the great Day of Judgment. He will be King! And you will tremble! Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess!

Men today are told to get in touch with their feminine side. Wives are taught they are equal or superior to husbands.

Children are allowed to disobey and defy their parents. Laborers unite in unions to defy authority and destroy property. Ladies try to be senators; girls degrade the army; and "time out" is used for enforcing parental authority.

There Is No Fear Of The King There Is No Fear Of Godly Parents, Masters, Or Pastors.

Great dread of a sovereign ruler is not a negative, **If** you are living right! And there is much learning, in watching sinners punished, by such a noble and ferocious despot.

God designed rulers to be a terror to evil works. This kind of fear is productive, for choosing to do right will bring his blessing and praise (*Romans 13:3-5; I Pet 2:13-17*).

What should you do, **If** you provoke a strong ruler? Submit, and pacify him (*Proverbs 16:14-15; Ecclesiastes 10:14*).

Reader, are you obeying every ordinance of civil government, even though it no longer has many characteristics of the lion? Civil government can still prosecute and punish transgressors, and you should submit and obey to avoid their wrath and to please God (*Romans 13:1-7*).

Reader, do you understand the fundamental need, for strong authority and try to exalt it in those over you and enforce it on those under you? Make the efforts you can to restore godly authority, combined with appropriate affection, for the glory of God and profit of man.

If you dislike absolute, despotic, and sovereign rulers, what will you do in the day rapidly approaching?

God, The Only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords, will soon reveal Himself to judge this earth for their wickedness. The books will be opened, and you will be judged by pure justice (*Revelation 20:11-15*)!

The terror of this proceeding caused Paul and the other apostles to persuade men (*2Corinthians 5:10-11*).

There will be no hung juries, plea bargains, pardons, or stays of execution. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is the only hope!

Proverbs 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

Are you a peacemaker? Do you hate conflict, strife, and trouble? Do you love quietness, rest, and unity?

Godly men hate fighting; they back out of conflicts involving themselves.

Godly men intervene to bring peace when others are fighting.

Godly men know it is a credit to their reputations.

But fools, being void of godly character and integrity, provoke others in various ways to cause conflict and strife. Fools are noxious nuisances to men.

Common for Proverbs, is the disjunctive "but" contrasting the Proverb's two clauses. The fool of the second clause is contrasted to a wise man in the first clause.

The first clause does not state it is a wise man, because that is unnecessary, given the second clause. By the same method of contrast, we understand the meddling of the second clause to be a fool's conduct and speech that cause or exacerbate conflict and fighting. Furthermore, in contrast to the wise man's deserved honor, the fool is rightly despised!

Strife is fighting. A wise man avoids fights. He knows that strife, even in his heart, is devilish confusion and evil (*James 3:14-16*).

A wise man knows that God condemns strife and commands peace (*Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:19-23; Ephesians 4:1-3; Philipians 2:3; James 3:17-18*).

A wise man knows at best that fighting marks a carnal Christian, but most likely a child of hell (*1Corinthians 3:3; Titus 3:3; James 4:1*).

A wise man chooses, the blessed course, of a peacemaker (*Matthew 5:9*).

A wise man is honored for not fighting. It is his glory: to pass over a transgression (*Proverbs 19:11*), to be slow to wrath (*Proverbs 14:29*), to rule his spirit (*Proverbs 16:32*), to avoid fights rather than try to end them later (*Proverbs 17:14*).

A fool is despised for causing conflicts. He is despised for quick anger (*Proverbs 14:17*), he is despised for his pride (*Proverbs 13:10*), he is despised for repeating offences (*Proverbs 17:9*), he is despised for sharing them with others (*Proverbs 16:27-28*).

Good men would want to take these obnoxious types and flog them (*Proverbs 18:6*)!

**Worldly Men Believe Fighting Is Manly
Because They Cannot Aspire
To Be Nobler Than Junkyard Dogs!**

It takes more character, discipline, and strength to resist fighting than it does to give in to the childish emotions and devilish urges that call for it.

God surely inspired this Proverb! Men think honor must be defended by fighting, but God honors the man who will not fight! Only proud, wicked beasts feel they must strike another blow.

The Pharisees, religious fundamentalists for man's basest lusts, taught, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," by applying a civil law, to personal offences (*Matthew 5:38*).

Jesus praised the godly man, who turns the other cheek to the man who smites one (*Matthew 5:39*)!

Only base fools think they must protect their person and reputation by fighting others for any hurt.

Great men end controversies, forgive injuries, and befriend even enemies!

How honorable are you? Can you return a soft answer to an angry man, even when he is wrong (*Proverbs 15:1*)?

Are you a little child in malice (*1Corinthians 14:20*)?

Can you forgive everyone, even those quarreling with you (*Colossians 3:12-15*)?

Do you hate bitterness and love tenderheartedness (*Ephesians 4:31-32*)?

Can you recognize that most fighting for "principle" is truly for pride (*Proverbs 13:10; 21:24*)?

Are you willing to suffer being defrauded (*1Corinthians 6:7*)?

Do you follow your heavenly Father and seek good for your enemies (*Matthew 5:43-48*)?

Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

Lazy people always have excuses for not working hard; they always expect a handout or subsidy from others; but they really should be left hungry!

Here is practical wisdom, which could benefit every home, business, church, and nation. Proverbs are dark sayings, which the Lord expects us to open up for the understanding of wisdom deep within them.

Sluggards are lazy people. The Oxford English Dictionary says, "One who is naturally or habitually slow, lazy, or idle; one who is disinclined for work or exertion of any kind; a slothful or indolent person."

Solomon told sluggards to learn diligence from the ant (***Proverbs 6:6***).

Solomon said sluggards should stop sleeping so much (***Proverbs 6:9***).

Solomon told sluggards they were irritating to bosses (***Proverbs 10:26***).

Solomon told sluggards they were coveting what they will not work for (***Proverbs 13:4***).

Solomon told sluggards to cease from being conceited in their excuses (***Proverbs 26:16***).

The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold. When soil should be turned in fall or spring, the cool weather frightens the sluggard. He prefers a warm bed and house. Lazy people always have excuses.

A diligent man does not notice little things like temperature. He has a job to do; and he gets right at it; and he creates his own body heat for comfort!

The sluggard is not easily moved from his excuses. He can give ten reasons why it is not a good time to work. There will always be an excuse, for the problem is his heart, not his circumstances.

Even though seven men, tell a sluggard the truth about hard work and reward, he arrogantly rejects their advice (***Proverbs 26:16***).

But the LORD knows how to teach him! A sluggard begs in harvest. When others reap their return, he wants some of the wealth, even though he wasted his opportunity.

Sluggards are socialists and communists by conviction! But Solomon was a capitalist by conviction!

Solomon wrote inspired by the Holy Spirit, "*The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute*" (***Proverbs 12:24***).

And again, "*The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat*" (***Proverbs 13:4***).

The sluggard should be given nothing. The Lord's welfare system is simple, we will help you learn to work by letting you get hungry!

Paul wrote the Thessalonians, "*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat*" (***2Thessalonians 3:10***).

Hunger cravings help a man work (***Proverbs 16:26***)!

Christian charity is for true needs, for acts of God; it is never to subsidize laziness (***Acts 2:44-45***).

Parents! You must crush laziness early in a child. You must teach the duty and joy of hard work. You must let them share the blessings of reward. You must praise a job well done. You must require all assignments to be done on time.

Proverbs 20:5 Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

The Getting of Wisdom from the Wise. We take the Word "*counsel*" here to mean wisdom. The distinction which Cowper draws between knowledge and wisdom is philosophic and important:

"Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft times no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.

Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothed and square, and fitted into place,
Does but encumber what it seems t'enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much,
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."

Wisdom to man is a very valuable thing. It is here represented as "*water*." Which "*a man of understanding*" will strive to get at.

We have to sketch the advantages of knowledge. Knowledge does two things for man:

1. Knowledge is basically the collection of facts. And improves the sphere of a man. The sphere of man's mental existence, large or small, bright or gloomy, sterile or fruitful, happy or otherwise, depends entirely upon the kind and amount of his ability to collect and analyze these facts.

An ignorant soul has a dejectedly small and cloudy area that he moves in. There is as much difference between the sphere of an intelligent man and that of an ignorant man as there is between a dungeon and a palace.

2. Knowledge improves the powers of a man's being. It brightens the eyes of the intellect, and gives to imagination pinion feathers for a loftier and happier flight;

Knowledge gives to thought, a wider reach and a firmer grasp, and it unseals in the soul, and new fountains of flowing delicious sentiment and thought.

Some men are favored with more wisdom than others. This is implied. Solomon supposes that in some men it lies as "deep" as "*water*."

The difference in the amount of men's intelligence arises from the difference in their capacities, desires, and opportunities for mental improvement.

There are men of genius, men of strong philosophical tendencies, men of leisure, men with splendid libraries; such men are in a position to get more knowledge.

Therefore, it comes to pass that in all areas there are those with valuable intelligence, like "*deep water*" within them. These waters are ever deepening, for it is a law that the more knowledge a man has the more flows into him. The more we know, says Coleridge, "the greater our thirst for knowledge.

Those who have the most wisdom are generally the most reserved. This is implied from the expression "*will draw it out*." It will not run out spontaneously; it has to be drawn out.

Knowledge dwells in large quantities of facts, especially of God, it is not like water on the surface, that you can get at easily. Knowledge is rather like water that lies fathoms under the earth, clear, beautiful, and refreshing, obtained only by a pump.

Knowledge has to be drawn out. It is, has always been, and perhaps ever will be, that the most intelligent men are the most modest and reserved.

The superficial are talkative; the profound are introverted.

The fluent in speech are the most shallow in thought. Great knowledge is always restrained.

In consequence of this reserved state, of the most wise, is it requires discernment in others to draw it forth. "*A man of understanding will draw it out*."

Would you draw knowledge out of the wise man in your circle? There is a way to do it. Not by flippant

questionings, but by modest enquiries, advised by a truth-loving spirit.

Would you draw knowledge out of your teacher? You must so study the lessons that he gives you, as to bring his mind into a constant flow to supply for your cravings after knowledge.

Would you draw knowledge of the highest kind from your pastor? Then let him feel that you have come to enquire of the Lord.

Some pulpits are filled with thoughtless men, because congregations will not think. Even Christ Himself felt that He could not unfold what was in Him on account of the ignorance and prejudice of the people.

Proverbs 20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

Talk is cheap. Your boasting is worthless. Your history is irrelevant.

True character is measured by present actions and results, not by self-praise, past events, explanations, or excuses (***Proverbs 20:11***).

Yet fools talk more than wise men, and sluggards talk more than hard workers (***Proverbs 14:33; 26:16; 29:11***).

Most men love themselves and will quickly tell you how gifted and faithful they are, but real performers, as measured by the Bible, are very rare.

Talk is cheap. What you think about yourself, is deceiving and destructive (***Proverbs 12:15; 14:12; 16:2, 25; 21:2; Jeremiah 17:9***).

What you say about yourself is worse (***Proverbs 14:3; 25:14; 27:1; Ecclesiastes 10:11-14; James 3:5***).

Neither God nor men care about your opinion in general, and especially when it is about yourself.

If you must tell others you are good at something, then there must be lack of evidence to prove it, or why would you say it? Testimonials are stupid enough for promoting new products, but they are ridiculous about yourself!

Men have long enjoyed the damning sins of arrogance, boasting, conceit, pride, self-love, and self-esteem. But today these destructive evils are glorified in popular athletes and arrogant leaders and promoted as panaceas for most psychological or relational problems.

Self-esteem theories are adored, though they merely whitewash the sins of conceit and selfishness.

Humanistic psychologists have always been deluded, but when so-called Christian leaders promote this narcissistic view of life, truth is in peril (*2Timothy 3:1-5*).

In a day of advertising, mass marketing, and public relations, there is a perverse emphasis on appearance over performance, on perception over reality, on sound bites over substance, on feelings over facts.

Due to constant verbal communication via telephone, the Internet, television, radio, and email, there is a perverse emphasis on words over actions. This distortion has created a situation where boasting is accepted over results.

Yet today there are few faithful men that will do what they should (*Psalms 12:1; 2Timothy 3:13*).

Athletes brag about abilities and accomplishments, and politicians, claim to be near divine in what they promise to do.

Great men do not need to promote themselves, because others will do it for them. Great men never stoop to self-praise; their praise comes from others (*Proverbs 27:2*).

If Other Men Do Not Praise You There Is An Obvious Reason For It!

Where is the humility of Solomon? As king of Israel and the well-favored son of David, he admitted he was a little child in understanding. God loved this confession, and so do wise men reading it. (*1Kings 3:5-9*)

Where is the humility of Paul? Though the greatest of the apostles, he admitted he was less than the least of all saints (*Ephesians 3:8*).

Where is the humility of Agur? As the author of Proverbs chapter 30, he admitted his ignorance (*Proverbs 30:1-4*).

These three great men did not praise themselves, but we praise them.

Where is your humility? Don't tell about your job performance. Let a promotion tell it! Don't brag about your great marriage. Let your spouse spread it!

Don't tell about your personal holiness. Let your fruits and persecution prove it!

Don't tell about your charity and kindness to others. Let your number of devoted friends be the measure!

Don't tell how much you can be trusted. Let your credit score tell the truth. Don't tell how much you fear and love God. Let your changed life and the testimony of others prove it (*1Thessalonians 1:6-10; 1John 2:4*)!

Stop talking about yourself! Show your great character to God and men by your actions! James ridiculed Christianity based on mere faith, which is more than the carnal decisions most evangelists solicit today (*James 2:14-26*)!

James exalted works as being superior to faith as the evidence of knowing God and obtaining His approval. Jesus, Paul, and Peter taught the same conduct-based doctrine (*Matthew 7:21; 2Corinthians 5:9-11; 2Peter 1:5-12*).

Self-righteousness is one of the most damning sins of all. Once you are infected, how will you be healed? You do not know you are diseased. Whose rebuke would you accept? You have assured yourself that your standing before God is excellent (*Luke 18:9-14*).

Listen to Jesus Christ! He said this to the most conservative and respected religious leaders of His day, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (*Luke 16:15*).

You will soon give an account of your life to God, and then the truth will be known. Your words of self-praise and self-justification will be just marks against you. *Amos 4:12*. . . . *Prepare to meet thy God!*

Jesus Christ will judge you for your words and actions (*Matthew 12:34-37*).

Jesus Christ gave you warning that it would be better to have bad words and good performance than good words and bad performance (*Matthew 21:28-33*).

Many preachers promote themselves more than they promote Jesus Christ. They call their ministries after their own names. They cultivate lackeys to keep their respective personality cults thriving.

Just read the dust jackets of the books they write! But the Lord Jesus Christ will humble them, in an instant of time. He may say to these self-praising success stories, "I never knew you," (*Matthew 7:21-23*).

Reader, are you well known for faithful actions and results that match God's Word?

Reader, do you have to help people out by giving them verbal hints or explanations as to how faithful you are? Forget the talk!

Reader, measure yourself only by faithful action, performance, consistency, and results. Focus on the actions, God's Word makes important; and do them only for the Glory of God. May the Lord bless you to be one of the rare faithful ones in this generation.

Proverbs 20:7 The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.

A good man lives with integrity; he does more than claim goodness (*Proverbs 20:6*). He will walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

A good man lives by fear of God and faith in Christ, keeping all the commandments. God will send blessing and favor to his descendants.

Here is a Proverb with the promise of a wonderful blessing. Let the godly lay hold of it!

Understand the condition:

¹This man is not today's typical carnal Christian, who talks and acts one way on Sunday and with other believers, but lives another way during the week, while at home or in the world.

²Here is a just man, doing what is right and holy in the sight of God. He seeks the Lord with His whole heart. He walks in this course each day.

³Here is a man with a clean conscience, who guides all his affairs with the discretion of God's Word. He is blameless before God and men, by confessing his sins and makes proper amends.

⁴Here is a man whose affections are set on heaven above, and his sinful lusts are crucified with Christ. He trembles at the Word of God and humbly walks with his God.

Reader, understand the promise. God rewards good men with blessings upon their posterity. **If** those children or grandchildren sin, they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity, but the Lord will be more merciful than He would have been otherwise.

If those children also live righteous lives, which is quite likely given the example they have witnessed, the Lord will greatly assist and bless them for their just father.

Consider David, the man after God's own heart, who was perfect in God's sight, except for Bathsheba (*1Kings 15:3-5*).

To honor David's virtuous life, the Lord showed repeated mercy to His descendants (*1Kings 11:12, 32, 36; 15:4; 2Kings 8:19; 2Chronicles 21:7*).

David described the just, "*His seed is blessed*" (*Psalms 37:26*).

David also said, "*What man is he that feareth the LORD?... His seed shall inherit the earth*" (*Psalms 25:12-13*).

Parent! Do you love your children? Your extended posterity? Forget a college education! Forget instruction

and training! Grasp the priority of this Proverb! Live humbly and walk justly before God, and He shall bless your children because of your life!

Job's life of integrity even included sacrifices for his children after their birthday parties (*Job 1:1-5*)!

Phinehas and Jonadab, examples of just men, were promised a godly seed (*Numbers 25:11-13; Jeremiah 35:18-19*).

Believer, are these promises only for others? Consider again! "*Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed*" (*Psalms 112:1-2*)!

Proverbs 20:8 A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.

You have been deprived. You have never seen a real king, great authority, or evil judged rightly.

A great king is a glorious sight. He uses his throne for the right judgment of his people. He greatly restrains evil. It is one of the world's most beautiful things (*Proverbs 30:29-31*).

Good government, of any sort: emphasizes the throne of judgment, where wrongs are corrected, the oppressed defended, the wicked punished, and the righteous honored.

Such a government will reduce evil by the consistent fear of revenge it conveys (*Romans 13:3-4*).

Kings that hate wickedness and enforce righteousness will endure (*Proverbs 16:10-12; 29:14*).

It was this kind of king that the Queen of Sheba witnessed in Solomon (*1Kings 10:9*).

This is not every king; this is a great king. Many good judges in our land are like this Proverb. They take their job seriously, and they use their offices for the prudent exercise of justice and judgment to protect the innocent and punish the guilty.

A wise king will scatter the wicked and crush them under the wheels of justice (*Proverbs 16:14; 20:26*).

Consider what David did to the two generals who beheaded Ishbosheth, Saul's son (*2Samuel 4:1-12*).

But many rulers, including kings and Presidents, compromise the throne of judgment. They use their throne and office for luxury, entertainment, and selfish ends, rather than the zealous use of justice and

judgment for citizens (*Ecclesiastes 8:11; 10:16-17*).
God will judge them (*Psalms 82*)!

Reader, are you a person in authority? Sir, as a husband and father, you have a throne of judgment. As a master, magistrate, or pastor, you also have a throne of judgment.

Do you exercise your office and authority for the greater benefit of those under you, rather than yourself? Do you promote righteousness and condemn evil? Do your eyes make the wicked fear?

**Good Rulers Fear The Lord, And Love Truth,
And Hate Covetousness (*Exodus 18:21*).**

Good rulers examine matters to judge righteously (*Proverbs 25:2; John 7:24*).

Good rulers balance mercy and truth (*Proverbs 20:28*).

Good rulers rule justly, ruling in the fear of the Lord (*Exodus 23:6-8; Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 2Samuel 23:3*).

Good rulers do not shirk their duties and rule by consensus (*Ecclesiastes 10:5-7; Isaiah 3:1-15*).

Good rulers beg God for wisdom to rule (*1Kings 3:7-9*).

Good rulers will not tolerate the wicked (*Psalms 101:3-8*).

No man rules like Jesus of Nazareth (*Isaiah 11:4-5; Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 9:9; Hebrews 1:8*).

Every man will soon appear before His throne (*Romans 14:10-12; 2Corinthians 5:10-11*).

Heaven and earth will flee from this King's face and eyes (*Revelation 1:14; 19:12; 20:11*).

Sinners will be naked and condemned in His sight (*Psalms 5:5; Habakkuk 1:13; Hebrews 4:12-14*).

The wicked He will scatter in His fury to an eternal hell (*Revelation 20:12-15*).

Proverbs 20:9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

Can you answer this rhetorical question? The answer is negative: No Man, can make these two statements.

It is a matter, of literary style, that an interrogative of positives creates a powerful negative conclusion.

Man's heart by nature is corrupt, and his motives by nature are impure. Solomon used the power of the rhetorical negative to teach man's depravity.

The Bible, the inspired holy book of Christians: teaches that all men have perverse hearts and selfish motives. Adam, the father of humanity, ruined his descendants by rebelling against God (*Romans 5:12-14*).

Since the Garden of Eden, all men by nature despise God and righteousness and love sin and evil (*Psalms 14:1-3; 51:5; 58:3; Romans 3:9-18; Titus 3:3*).

Job used rhetorical questions to teach the same truth. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (*Job 14:4*).

And again, "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" (*Job 15:14*).

And again, "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (*Job 25:4*).

**The Human Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things
And Desperately Wicked Beyond Ability
For Man To Comprehend (*Jeremiah 17:9*)!**

Consider it well! No man can overcome a curse that twists his thinking and perverts his motives (*1John 1:8-10*).

Only by the creative power of Jesus Christ, can men obtain a new heart of righteousness and holiness, and become capable of true wisdom (*John 3:3; 5:25-29; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24; Philipians 2:12-13*).

The doctrine is clear, man is depraved, foolish, sinful, and unjust, and he cannot cure himself. But why is this Proverb here without any apparent context (*Proverbs 20:8-10*)?

It would fit better in Romans! Remember the purpose of the Holy Spirit's Proverbs, is to teach young men discretion and wisdom (*Proverbs 1:1-4*).

There are two lessons: ¹No man can be fully trusted to have innocent intentions. And ²we cannot foolishly presume that our own motives are pure.

Solomon made a similar use of the doctrine of human depravity in his book of philosophical writings. He wrote, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (*Ecclesiastes 7:20*).

Again, it appears there is little or no context for the statement (*Ecclesiastes 7:19-21 Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city*).

20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

21 Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee:).

But if we look closer, we see that Solomon was warning against thoughts of self-righteousness and excessive harshness toward others (*Ecclesiastes 7:16-22*).

An essential prerequisite for wisdom is to know man's nature, it is incurably foolish and depraved. Therefore, cynicism is necessary to deal with human ability to deal with problems.

Reader, you must always test your own opinions and thoughts by the Word of God (*Psalms 119:128; Jeremiah 23:29*).

As Paul wrote later, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (*Romans 3:4*)!

Make no claims of self-righteousness (*Proverbs 20:6*).

Let your walk prove your integrity (*Proverbs 20:7*).

If a ruler corrects you, do not reject the rebuke foolishly (*Proverbs 20:8*).

Examine even minor aspects of life (*Proverbs 20:10*).

A child is known by his actions, not his words (*Proverbs 20:11*).

And **If** you have the ability to see or hear truth with understanding, it is by the grace of God (*Proverbs 20:12*).

The only hope, for you or any other person, is the grace of God and resurrecting power of Jesus Christ, to give you a new heart (*Romans 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 2 Timothy 2:24-26*).

There is no rehabilitation of the human heart; it must be recreated.

There is no way that perfection can be achieved here; we must wait on God (*Hebrews 12:23*).

Even the best of men and their most noble actions are tainted and spoiled by the remaining pollution in their members.

Considering Your Condition With Humility Is Necessary To Learn True Wisdom!

Neither you nor any other man can be fully trusted. You must beg God for mercy on your miserable state, and you must trust every Word of God, over any thought of yours (*Psalms 119:113*).

Since you cannot make your heart clean or be pure from sin, you must cast yourself on the grace of God, and trust His infallible Word for this life.

Proverbs 20:10 Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.

How much can a farmer steal in a year by selling 100 gallons of milk a day that contain 127 fluid ounces, when milk is selling for \$3.00 per gallon?

This is not a word problem for learning mathematics. This is a character test about business and personal integrity. The theft amounts to \$855.47.

Enough to get him locked up! It was so minor that no one could detect it. But God that inspired this Proverb saw it all!

What is your annual theft through personal phone calls or emails averaging just 15 minutes a day, if your salary is \$50,000 a year? \$1,562!

What about 30 minutes a day? \$3,125!

What if you add another 18 minutes for arriving late, getting coffee, paying bills, Internet surfing, extending lunch, and/or leaving early? Then you have stolen \$5,000 or 10% of your wages. Everyone is doing it? Real Christians do not steal from employers.

The Lesson Of This Proverb Is Financial And Personal Honesty!

In Solomon's day, you bought commodities that were weighed out on the merchants' scales or measured by their measuring devices.

If they used altered weights or measures, they could easily steal a little from each customer. The LORD detested, hated, and loathed such business practices.

And the LORD is just the same today. Are you always impeccably honest with money?

It would be far better to sell your milk 129 fluid ounces to the gallon than to short customers.

It would be far better to work extra time, off the clock, than to cheat your employer.

How can it be better to short yourself? You end up with a pure conscience and reputation; your customers or employer are thrilled and trust you; and God can easily make up for the loss in ways that cannot be measured by a calculator!

Take an English lesson to expand your vocabulary. Paul told Titus to teach employees to never purloin ^{small thefts}, but to always show good fidelity (*Titus 2:9-10*).

What is purloining? It means to pilfer, filch, or peculate. What are pilfering, filching, and peculating?

Like purloining, they are all verbs for petty thefts or stealing in small quantities at a time.

Uh-oh! Do you mean like the two examples above that could be multiplied many times? Yes!

Paul told Titus to teach this authoritatively (*Titus 2:15*)!

God hates financial and business cheating, and the Gospel of Christ condemns it.

Employees that never take advantage of an employer can beautify the doctrine of Jesus Christ by their fidelity, faithfulness, honesty, loyalty, and trustworthiness, on the job (*Titus 2:9-10*).

Does your business character and reputation beautify the Gospel, or disfigure it? Godly employees obey and please their employers at all times, in all matters, without ever talking back.

Do you pay your bills on time? Without cheating into the grace period? Do you return overpayments immediately?

Do you return merchandise in as good of condition as when you bought it? Do you pay day laborers that day? Do you tip all service employees generously that are counting on tips to make a living?

Do you give your employer a full day's work or more? Do you file a complete and honest tax return?

Are you impeccably careful about filling out your expense report? Do you minimize your per diem expenditures regardless of what your employer offers?

Do you disclose what is wrong with a car that you sell used? Do you inform buyers of the problems with your house or business?

Do you eat your mistakes in restaurants or expect your meal to be free? Do you return borrowed items in better condition than when you got them?

Do you encroach on your neighbor's property lines? Do you violate his airspace by your barking dog, or his yard by its droppings?

Are you conscious of others doing things to help you, and do you compensate them when it becomes more than once or twice?

Do you round numbers in your favor, or cheat others in very small amounts? Do you complain, wheedle, threaten, or otherwise try to talk others down in their selling prices?

**God Hates Business, Financial,
Or Personal Cheating!**

It is amazing to watch poor men, who think they have the right to cheat to get ahead. Guess what? That is why they are poor!

The generous man, who scatters his money freely to help the poor and to keep a clean reputation before God, gets ahead of the man holding it back (*Proverbs 11:24-26*).

Reader, you will have opportunities today to be fair, generous, honest, righteous, and sacrificial.

If you choose to protect yourself and cheat anyone else, even by a very small amount, your God will be highly offended and make sure you lose out.

If you choose to be considerate, diligent, faithful, and trustworthy, you can beautify the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The honest man shows himself to be a true child of God (*Psalms 15:1-5; Romans 12:17*).

Proverbs 20:11 Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

Actions speak louder than words. Even young children, who have not learned hypocrisy, show their souls by deeds.

Men commend themselves, they pretend to be wise, they profess to be believers, and Men take Christ's name; but a man's conduct proves his soul.

**Hypocrites Are Exposed If You Ignore Their Words
And Measure Their Actions By Scripture!**

**Ignorance Of The Word Of God
Always Gives Satan An Advantage!**

**Wisdom Includes The Ability
To Perceive The Character Of Others.**

Solomon knew his son must be a good judge of men to be a successful king. He had just written, "*Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?*" (*Proverbs 20:6*).

Wise Men Measure A Man's Conduct!

David knew the danger of hypocrites and pretenders. He begged God to eliminate them for the prosperity of his kingdom and people.

David prayed, "*Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood*" (*Psalms 144:11*).

David hated lying words and false handshakes and oaths.

Jesus taught to measure Prophets by their fruits, the spiritual results of their ministries (*Matthew 7:15-20*).

Claims mean nothing; popularity means nothing; growth means nothing; and impressive assemblies mean nothing. The measure of a minister is spiritual fruit in the lives of his hearers. Many ministries are bankrupt by this measure. (*1Timothy 4:13-16*).

A good tree does not bear bad fruit. Men do not look for grapes on thorn bushes, and they do not look for figs on thistle plants (*Matthew 7:15-20*).

A fig tree does not bear olive berries, a grapevine does not produce figs, and a good fountain does not send bitter water (*James 3:10-11*).

The heart of a man, is shown by what comes out of his mouth and the rest of his life (*Matthew 12:34-37*).

This rule is a general axiom of life to judge true character.

When it comes to the Gospel and eternal life, the rule applies as well. Professions of faith mean nothing in comparison to works of righteousness (*Matthew 7:21; 2Peter 1:10-11*).

The devils believe there is one God and tremble about it, but it does them no good (*James 2:19*).

Faith without works is worthless (*James 2:14-26*).

John wrote, "*He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him*" (*1John 2:4*).

Exceptional sins do not alter the rule, for they are exceptions, and the best of men will sin. David, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Peter, among others, sinned notably.

But their overall character was much greater in proving honest and good hearts. David sinned heinously, but his general conduct was far superior to the constant profanity of Saul's life.

Proverbs 20:12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.

Newborns are inspected at birth to see if their ears and eyes work. Saints give praise to God for a healthy child. Pagans breathe a sigh of relief to fate.

Functional ears and eyes are very precious and useful gifts. But they are the LORD's choice.

God Does Not Owe Anything

To Anyone Including Hearing And Vision.

It is His sovereign and gracious choice that any hear or see. Hearing and seeing are not rights; they are blessed privileges.

And the great gift of hearing and seeing, is the ability to discern and perceive the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Words of wisdom and truth.

It Is The Rare Ability To Understand, To Repent To Obey The Gospel.

A deaf or blind child is not an accident. It is not a result of fate. It is the wise choice of God. God is perfect in all His choices. And He makes thousands of them for each of us.

God did not consult you if you wanted to live. He chose your generation of birth, height, nation of origin, sex, parents, temperament, siblings, intelligence, athletic ability, opportunities in life, and every other factor that influences your existence.

He is the LORD! You are nothing! He is the Potter! You are the clay!

Humble yourself before this great and dreadful God. Crush your vain thoughts about what you think! Give Him praise and worship. Adore Him. Thank Him for all that you have and are. Offer Him all that you have and are. Beg Him for mercy for your sins. Dedicate your life to Him, today!

When the disciples saw a man born blind, they knew it had been God's choice. Jesus told them it was for God's glory (*John 9:1-3*).

Would God blind a man for 30 years just for His own glory? Easily! Would God put a man out to pasture like an ox for His own glory? Definitely! Read *Daniel 4* about Nebuchadnezzar!

Spiritual hearing and sight, is much more important, than physical hearing and sight.

Most men do not think about God in any meaningful way their entire lives (*Psalms 10:4*).

Spiritual senses, are given when you are born again. You received natural hearing and vision at your first birth, but you receive spiritual hearing and vision at your second birth.

Jesus said, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*" (*John 3:3*).

And also, "*He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God*" (*John 8:47*).

Both sight and hearing are the gifts of God! Jesus hid the truth from the Jews, but revealed it to His disciples (*Matthew 11:25-27; 13:10-16*)!

Why do most men not even consider God and truth? Why do most think the Gospel to be foolish? Their hearts are hardened toward God and His Spirit and therefore, they have no ears to hear, and no eyes to see the Gospel, and they hinder understanding and conviction. *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Proverbs 14:12)*

The rich man in hell asked Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his five brothers from joining him there. But Abraham's sober answer was that: *“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” (Luke 16:27-31)*.

If they were not interested in reading Word of God, they would not be interested in a man back from the dead!

**There Are No Human Means
To Bring Hearing To Ears To Bring Sight To Eyes.
Only The LORD Can Do This Great Work!**

Manmade evangelistic efforts, to sound the Gospel to deaf ears or show the Savior to blind eyes, are absolutely and utterly foolish and vain.

Salvation is of the Lord! The Gospel is only heard and seen by those the Holy Spirit calls: *“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged”.* (*John 16:8-11*)

How is a man born again with spiritual ears and eyes? This work is by the power and grace of God, (*Ephesians 2:8-9*).

Cornelius feared God, praying each day, and giving alms to the poor (*Acts 10:1-4*).

And when the Gospel, is brought to such a man by the providence of God, he believes and obeys. (*Romans 10:14-15*)

If you can hear or see the things of God, give Him thanks, and run in the direction of that conviction, today!

If you fear you are not born again, your duty is the same. Run to the Lord Jesus Christ, own Him as your Savior and Hope, and Obey Him.

Jesus Christ is coming, for He is the Blessed and Only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords (*1Timothy 6:14-15*).

Jesus Christ is coming with ten thousands of His angels to destroy His enemies (*Jude 1:14; 2Thessalonians 1:7-9*).

Believe and obey Jesus Christ today, for tomorrow may bring to you the curse of His coming (*1Corinthians 16:22*).

Proverbs 20:13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

One of the simplest rules for success is to hate sleeping in. Of course, you need sleep; but you must learn to hate wasting time in bed. Life is short, each day is short, and time wasted in bed will come back to haunt you.

Solomon analyzed life with the wisest mind in the history of the world. His inspired Proverbs convey true wisdom for your success.

Poverty Is Only A Snooze Button Away.

If you love your warm bed in the morning and dread leaving your cocoon for the day's opportunities, you are headed for trouble.

If you daily sneak a few more minutes to cuddle yourself before getting up, eventually you will wind up in poverty.

Solomon's advice is to open your eyes and get up and get at the day! As a king and a father, the wise man observed that a character trait of slothful types was to sleep in rather than wake up and attack the day.

If you open your eyes, put your foot on the floor, and get moving, you are ahead of your dozing neighbor, and you are on the way to being productive.

If you smile to yourself each morning about the joy of doing nothing in the comfort of your bed and how much you hate getting up and going, in other words, loving sleep, you are allowing a dangerous habit to develop.

If you are awake enough to think such thoughts, you are awake enough to get up and do something productive! Get up!

Solomon taught a great work ethic, because God expects men to work hard.

God charged Adam to dress and keep Eden (*Genesis 2:15*).

God judged man for sinning by promising bread only as a result of sweat (*Genesis 3:19*).

God went so far as to command starvation for the punishment for any man that does not work hard (*Proverbs 20:4; 2Thessalonians 3:6-12*).

Get up, woman! God judged the city of Sodom in part for the idleness of girls and women (*Ezekiel 16:49*)!

Diligence rewards men, and laziness ruins men (*Proverbs 10:4; 12:24; 13:4; 22:29*).

God mocked slothful men. He told them to watch ants: they know how to work (*Proverbs 6:6-8*)!

God asked if they were ever going to get up (*Proverbs 6:9*)!

God said poverty was coming as surely as a traveler gets to a destination or as irresistibly as an armed man (*Proverbs 6:10-11; 24:33-34*).

God compared extra minutes of cuddling in bed to a door turning back and forth on its hinges (*Proverbs 26:14*)!

The longer you lie still in bed and fast from food, your metabolism slows proportionately. Extra sleep makes you drowsy (*Proverbs 19:15; 23:21*).

Of course, you need sleep; but you do not need the extra minutes after you wake up in the morning! That extra hour of prolonged inactivity and dozing will often make it harder to get up rather than easier.

The military knows how to train such arrogant and stubborn children, it demands that they get up at 5:00 A.M. rather than the 7:00 A.M., they could have chosen in civilian life! But of course, sluggards justify their sleep addiction (*Proverbs 26:16*)!

If you are obsessed with a few extra minutes in bed, then go to bed earlier at night! And guess what, as soldiers and successful men have discovered, rising early can become an easy habit!

There is a limit to this rule, and God shows His mercy by the limitation. He does not want you getting up too early, staying up too late, or fretting about your efforts. He wants you to go to sleep instead, because He loves you.

When you assume it is your efforts that make the difference in life. God considers it offensive and wrong. He wants you to put your trust in Him to make the difference! (*Psalms 127:1-2*).

Loving sleep in bed will bring you financial poverty. And being lazy and sleepy about godliness will surely ruin you spiritually.

Slothfulness in reading your Bible, slothfulness in praying, and slothfulness in being a faithful steward,

including attending the preaching of God's Word, will bring you poverty in your walk with God.

Get up! This is why there are repeated warnings in the Bible about waking up spiritually (*Matthew 24:42-44; 25:1-11; 26:36-45; Romans 13:11-14; Ephesians 5:14-21; 1Thessalonians 5:6-10*)!

Proverbs 20:14 It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

Buying something for a low price is dangerous.

Telling a seller all the problems with an object to get the price reduced and then bragging to friends or family about your great deal is lying and stealing. Righteousness demands a fair price and impeccable honesty.

The LORD cares about such details. The Word of God and the true Christian faith include even minor aspects of our lives (*Psalms 119:96; Deuteronomy 22:6-7*).

God judges how we buy things from others. **If** we take advantage of a seller and boast of it, He counts it as sin.

The Scriptures often condemn wicked selling practices, such as false weights and balances (*Proverbs 11:26; 16:11; 20:10, 23; Leviticus 19:36; Deuteronomy 25:13; Micah 6:11*).

But here the LORD puts us on notice about wicked buying practices. See the comments on *Proverbs 16:11* and *Proverbs 11:26*.

Natural man wants to buy low and sell high, even the same thing from the same person. Adam begat thieves! So men are prone to dickering:

Natural man does not want to pay the asking price. To get the seller to lower his price, they use many deceitful techniques.

Natural man says, "This thing has problems; it is nothing; it is not worth the price you are asking; others sell it cheaper; it is not what I was looking for; I don't really need it anyway."

But when these men get with friends and family after buying it at a reduced price, they boast about the great deal they got.

Why the change in tune? Why the reversal of story and tone? Here is the lie. Why didn't they tell the seller that it was such a great deal? Why did they tell the seller, that at the lower price, it was barely acceptable?

Such men are liars; and since they used lies to obtain another's property, they are thieves.

(Romans 12:17)!

So they have a common expression by which they admit their guilt, when they boast, "I got a steal!" Consider this well reader. The thief confesses his crime and sin, while he boasts!

These men will often reason, "I didn't force him to sell at that price. It's a free market and a free economy. He was a grown man. If he didn't think it was a fair deal, he would not have sold it to me at that price." These men are forward, perverse, and naughty.

If you boast about your great deal, you are admitting plainly that you took advantage of the seller, especially if you bought it for less than the asking price.

If you did not take advantage of the seller, then what in the world are you boasting about? Your boasting is clear evidence that you lied and stole the merchandise. Why didn't you tell the seller, "I can't believe you are selling it for this low price; you're practically giving it away"?

The LORD is the avenger of defrauding, including buying and selling (*Leviticus 19:11; 25:14-17; 1Thessalonians 4:6*).

What is the rule to follow in economic transactions, the rule to follow in all transactions and relations? The Christian buyer should treat the seller, as if the roles were reversed. The golden rule is in affect here (*Matthew 7:12*)!

This is the only way this rule can be, void of offence, before God and men and do all to His Glory (*Acts 24:16; 1Thessalonians 10:31*).

Other men say, "I must negotiate to get ahead. I don't make much, so I must buy things as cheaply as possible." Have you noticed that such men are usually dirt poor? There is a reason.

God is turning their sinful ways upside down on their own heads. Paying a little extra will probably bring financial reward (*Proverbs 11:18, 24-28; 28:8; Ecclesiastes 11:1-6; Luke 6:38*).

An honest man will use the same language, and talk as openly, with the seller, as he will with his family.

An honest man does not change his story after getting the merchandise, for he paid a fair price and did not lie.

An honest man does not boast about what he did to the seller in buying below market.

God hates all lying, false witnessing, misrepresentation, and defrauding, which are some of the crimes in this Proverb (*Proverbs 12:17, 19, 22; 20:17; 26:18-19, 24-28*).

Here the LORD tells us just how honest He expects us to be! We should speak as openly and honestly in business as with friends and family.

If we boast like we are taking advantage of people in private conversation, we must be lying and stealing in our public practices.

Those who are salesmen must consider the force of this lesson. They cannot misrepresent their product, the price, or any aspect of their business to increase sales. They should be as honest and open with their customers as they are with their suppliers!

Could you overstate your qualifications to get a job, then boast of getting a job for which you are not qualified?

Could you understate your liabilities to obtain a loan, then boast of getting financing you did not deserve?

Could you overstate your financial need to obtain a bigger pay increase, then boast of getting a raise higher than expected?

Could you tell a boss you are sick to get the day off, then boast of fooling him while playing golf?

Could you tell a policeman you were only driving 40, then boast of talking your way out of ticket when doing 50?

Let us measure every word by the rule of this Proverb.

What a beautiful standard of holiness and honesty! There is no God like the LORD. He is our Rock, and there is no evil in Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ is His Son, Who loved righteousness and hated iniquity more than any. Praise the Lord!

There is no holy book like the Scriptures. No wonder Moses told Israel God's statutes were their life, wisdom, and righteousness before the nations.

If such honesty and integrity were practiced, there would be no war or dispute of any kind. But alas, the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it (*Jeremiah 17:9*)?

Holiness is more than worshipping reverently on Sunday mornings. It is the strict and careful observance of all God's laws.

Holiness hates compromise with any evil; it applies to very small events of life; and it includes your approach and words. Let the buyer beware!

**We Must Provide Things Honest
In The Sight Of All Men**

Proverbs 20:15 There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

There is evidently a comparison here between material wealth and enlightened speech.

"Gold," and "rubies" here represent worldly riches, and the "lips of knowledge," represent the speech that preachers grace unto the hearers. We offer three remarks on the comparison in the verse:

First: One Is Rarer Than The Other.

This seems to be implied, for it is said, "*There is gold and a multitude of rubies.*"

In the days of Solomon there seemed to be plenty of material wealth, for we read that "*the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance.*"(2*Chronicles 9:27*)

And wealth is pretty abundant in America. Intelligent speech is rare. Where wealth counts its thousands, wisdom can only count its tens. "*Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the way of understanding?*" (*Job 28:12*)

Second: One Is More Intrinsically Valuable Than The Other.

There is no more intrinsic worth in "gold" and "rubies" than in brass and stones. They are valuable only on account of their scarcity.

In wise Words of Truth, there is an intrinsic worth. These Words are the embodiments and the vehicles which enrich immortal spirits.

These Words are appreciated by God, and these Words are counted valuable by all holy minds in all times and in all places. These are indeed "*a precious jewel.*"

**Their Luster No Time Can Dim
Their Worth No Change Can Deteriorate!**

Third: One Is More Serviceable Than The Other.

"Gold" and "rubies" can only serve men temporally and for a short time. Wise words will serve men forever.

Thousands have felt the value of such Words. "Such was the delight of hanging upon the lips of the golden-mouthed Chrysostom, that the common proverb was 'Rather let the sun not shine than Chrysostom not preach.'"

God's Words convert, purify, dignify, and save men. "*The "lips of knowledge"* are the vehicles through

which God pours the highest blessings of his grace upon man.

**Value This Spiritual Wisdom
As The Great Thing!**

Job 28:15-19 It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.

18 No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

Proverbs 20:16 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

Taking risks does not prove courage or wisdom; it is usually evidence of haste and folly. Unnecessary risks tempt God.

God will judge such presumption. This Proverb teaches that men should also judge those who take foolish risks. Because they show the character fault of foolish risk taking, security should be required in any transactions with them.

Solomon often warned against suretiship. In fact, our Proverb has a twin in *Proverbs 27:13*. (*Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 22:26-27; 27:13*). See the comments on *Proverbs 6:1*.

A great part of wisdom is avoiding risks that could cost you financially or in other ways. Wise men strive to preserve capital, not foolishly risk it to loss by naïve and ignorant optimism.

Prudent men avoid danger and risk; simple men pass on foolishly and get punished (*Proverbs 22:3; 27:12*).

Being a surety is guaranteeing the performance of others, as in co-signing loans. Doing this for a stranger, due to haste or pride, can create serious financial trouble.

If the stranger does not perform, creditors can enforce the contract on the guarantor, the fool who co-signed the deal. It was a big temptation to kings' sons to guarantee others.

If a person has exposed himself to such risks, how can you trust him to make good to you?

Solomon gave his son a rule about business partnerships. Do not enter transactions with risk-takers, unless you take security deposit from them.

Garments were valuable possessions in Bible times. So Solomon suggested taking the garment of risk takers as a performance bond, security deposit, or earnest money (*Genesis 38:13-18; Exodus 22:26-27; Deuteronomy 24:10-13*).

By taking a security deposit, a wise man can safely enter contracts with foolish men.

The second clause of the Proverb has an ellipsis ^{words} intentionally omitted to shorten the sentence and increase the force. So, pledges, or security deposits, should also be required from men who, have dealings with strange women.

So, immoral, or amoral, lifestyle of a whoremonger, indicates that you, should not trust him in business or financial transactions.

It is wonderful to meet godly men, with whom you can enter partnerships and transactions and not worry at all. But men who are not disciplined financially or morally are not good business partners. They should be avoided.

A wise man will not risk his own financial life by trusting a person who takes unnecessary risks with capital or women.

Son, it is better to be safe than sorry. Resist all the appeals of others, and the pride and greed raging within, to be a risk-taker. And avoid commitments with whoremongers.

Proverbs 20:17 Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.

The book of Proverbs deserves, the study of all young men who intend to embark, or have embarked, in business pursuits. It abounds with those maxims which will stimulate, Diligence, Insure Integrity, and Promote Success.

The Holy Spirit, author of the book, inspired Solomon who was not only an ethical philosopher, but a shrewd man of business.

Solomon understood the moral laws that should rule men in all their communication with each other.

Solomon also understood the necessary conditions of real success in all business undertakings.

Sin may possibly be pleasant at the beginning and while it is being committed: "*bread of deceit*".

Wealth gotten by fraud, by lying and oppression, may be sweet to an unsaved man. To some, even more sweet for being ill-gotten, such pleasure does the wicked mind take in the success of its wicked endeavors.

All the pleasures and profits of sin are "*bread of deceit*." They are stolen, they are forbidden fruit. They will deceive men, for they are not what they promise. For a time, it is a "*sweet*" morsel, and the sinner blesses himself in it. However: It will be bitter in reflection.

In the sinner's "*mouth*" it "*shall be filled with gravel*." When his conscience is awakened, he sees himself cheated, and he becomes apprehensive of the wrath of God against him for his sin. How painful and uneasy then is the thought of it!

The Pleasures Of Sin Are But For A Season And End With Sorrow!

There should be honesty in all our dealings. This fact, implies, that some property may be obtained by fraud.

How much wealth is acquired every day, in the world by a fraudulent business scheme and deceit!

Fraud is, perhaps, the most active architect in the building up of fortunes. The fact implies, that property so obtained may for a time be very pleasant. It "*is sweet to a man*."

Public opinion gives its owner credit for industry and skill, and knows nothing, for a time, of his fraudulent measures.

Conscience Sleeps In The Lap Of Luxury!

Whatever can minister pleasure to appetite, taste, vanity, or ambition, stands at this wicked frauds side and awaits his bidding. He feels it "*is sweet*."

The fact implies, that the pleasure attending such property must end in suffering: "*afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel!*"

What more emphatic expression of chagrin and bitter disappointment, than the idea of a hungry man, putting in his mouth with an eager hand, the bread that should relieve his appetite, and finding it turned to sand and gravelly stone?

What biblical examples do we have recorded about this sin? It was so with Achan and his wedge of gold. It was so with Gehazi and his talents of silver. It was so with Judas and his thirty pieces.

With All Such The "Bread" Once "Sweet" Became "Gravel!"

What is the lesson? Consider well before every undertaking what you embark upon. Two questions should be settled before you start on an enterprise.

First, whether the enterprise in itself is lawful. Is it a right thing?

There are sinful enterprises. The manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks, the publication and sale of immoral and worthless literature. Men who take true "good advice" will never embark in such enterprises as these.

Second, to know whether the means to be employed is good, that is, whether they are in harmony with righteousness. Christ Himself urges us this deliberation, before embarking in our undertaking.

Young men, ponder well these truths, which all your business undertakings require. Caution in credit, honesty in dealing, deliberation in embarking and temperateness in accumulating.

Proverbs 20:18 Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.

Good advice is necessary to good decision-making, and good advice is only obtained from good counselors.

The Holy Spirit teaches us to submit our major plans to the scrutiny and criticism of wise counselors, who can save us from disappointment and trouble.

This is true wisdom, to deliberate before action, and establish our plans by wise counsel.

"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes", **Proverbs 21:2**; for our deceitful hearts convince us, that our plans are brilliantly devised and certain to succeed (**Proverbs 16:2,25; 18:17; 21:2; 28:11; Jeremiah 17:9**).

So it is important that we use a multitude of counselors for safety (**Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 24:6**).

Rushing forward in heady pride, is foolish and will eventually cost you dearly.

If you are prone to be impulsive and hasty by your temperament or training, you must doubly heed this warning. It is a sin to be hasty. See the comments on **Proverbs 19:2**.

Haste is destructive, as our own adage says, "haste makes waste" (**Proverbs 21:5; 25:8**).

Paul condemned a sin he called "heady", which is to impetuously and rashly rushed ahead in some course recklessly (**2Timothy 3:4**).

If you neglect seeking counsel, you are proud, heady, hasty, and foolish.

If you reject counsel you have been given, you are rebelliously wicked.

If you avoid counsel for fear of its criticism, your heart is foolishly involved in a risky proposition, you are already emotionally attached to a plan.

It Is Foolish To Get Your Heart Involved Before Your Head!

The only perfect counselor is the Lord Himself. But He has not left us without other counselors. (**Isaiah 9:6**) We have His Perfect Word, which is able to make us wise (**Psalms 19:7-11; 119:98-100**).

We have His ministers, who can be perfect counselors by His Word (**2Timothy 3:16-17; Malachi 2:7**).

We have parents, who usually have much greater wisdom and experience, and they also have strong motivation, to save us from trouble (**Exodus 18:13-27**).

We have friends and brethren who are known for wisdom (**Proverbs 20:25; 27:9-10; Acts 15:1-6**).

Reader, what kind of counselors do you seek and use for your weighty decisions? An elder in the Church: though older men are not always wise, though generally are (**Job 32:9; 12:12**).

If there are any moral considerations at all, Christian counselors should have God's wisdom in their heart and a high degree of concern for your safety and prosperity. A saint is always better than a pagan.

Also look for critical counselors, the landscape is littered with the corpses of optimists.

When a plan or purpose is "established," it is made stable, secure, and permanent. The plan has a solid foundation for the future, because this was obtained from counselors.

When plans and "purposes" are pursued without good counsel, they are usually "disappointed" (**Proverbs 15:22**).

Merely seeking counsel to fulfill this Proverb is not enough, for you must also listen, to the advice and follow it. Otherwise, the whole mechanism of safety and success is violated and overthrown.

Rehoboam sought counsel, but he rejected the advice of the wise men who had counseled his father. And he lost the kingdom for it. (**1Kings 12:1-19**)

A multitude of counselors is not needed for every decision, and we see this by the inclusion of war in the Proverb. War is the weightiest decision made by men, for it determines the lives and futures of whole nations, with potentially enormous hardships.

Decisions like this should only be pursued after thorough counsel from many angles (**Luke 14:31-32**).

So our lesson does not apply to all decisions, but rather to those of serious consequences and risk.

Matters like marriage are certainly worthy of counsel. The pain and consequences can be horrible; and most people entering marriage have no experience at it, so they need the good advice of others. See the comments on **Proverbs 19:13**.

An uninvolved third party can save you much grief in this decision, and they can probably spot any problems easily.

Matters like joining a church, business ventures, employment changes, housing moves, child training, health issues, investment alternatives, and similar plans should be subject to counsel. Why would you rush ahead in such decisions without seeking good advice?

A multitude of counselors is the wisest course, for they will give you much to think about from different perspectives and a variety of experiences.

If their counsel is shared by a wise man, it will result in even better counsel.

The bottom line should be found by considering the overall weight of answers. The answers of the wisest counselors, and their advice, on the most important aspects of the plan or purpose.

The choice to seek counsel takes time. It also requires humility to ask others for their opinion, implying your need of their assistance. Such caution is prudent discretion; and such humility is wisdom.

Do not let either men or devils, convince you, that you cannot afford the time or you can make better decisions, than counselors.

Young man, you need wise counsel more than most. Folly and vanity are resident in your heart, and sober counsel can save you from much trouble and pain. Older man, you are not above this lesson, for the hearts of all men are deceptively dangerous. In addition, all humans have 13 defilements resident in their hearts **Mark 7:20-23**.

The ultimate counselor is the Holy Spirit: who guides us by His Word, not feelings. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (**Psalms 119:105**).

If you submit your plans to the Lord, He will establish your thoughts (**Proverbs 16:3; 3:5-6**).

If your heart is in fellowship with Him, you can move ahead with your plans, submitting all to His will (**Proverbs 16:9; James 4:13-15**).

The more you learn the Word of God, the more wisdom you will have (**Psalms 19:7-11; 119:98-100; Isaiah 8:20**).

This book of Proverbs, is filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and the wisest man with the most experience in life, and he wrote by the inspiration of God (**Proverbs 1:1-9**).

Our Lord Jesus has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and the closer you are walking with Him, the more wisdom you will have yourself (**Colossians 2:8**).

Proverbs 20:19 *He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.*

A talebearer is one who, officiously tells tales: one who impertinently communicates intelligence or anecdotes, and makes mischief in society by his officiousness.

We should learn from Solomon's description: That this individual is insidious. He gets hold of the "secrets" of men. By his soft words and bland manners he ingratiates himself into the confidence of the unsuspecting, and gets hold of things connected with their experience, which they would not on any account make public.

He is treacherous. He "revealeth secrets." Sometimes he may do it for sport, for the mere love of gossip; sometimes from vanity, to show what confidence men confide in him; sometimes maliciously, in order to disturb old friendships, to create social broils.

In any case, he is a traitor. He has betrayed those who trusted to him. That which they regarded as amongst the sacred things of their experience, they use secretly.

He is fawning. He "flattereth with his lips." Those to whom he betrays the secrets, he flatters; he gives them to understand that he will tell no one else, that were it not for their intelligence and integrity, he could not make to them such communications. He is a base fawning parasite.

He is dangerous: "meddle not with him." The man that will flatter you, vilify in your absence, betray the "secrets" of others, is to be shunned.

All men have some secrets: things which they would not willingly allow to fall from their own lips, still less from the lips of others; yet at times they are tempted to entrust them to those in whom they have confidence; the talebearer gets hold of them.

Advice Concerning Gossips: "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets:" Solomon introduces this Proverb by letting us know (as if we didn't already know!) that there are

some people who have loose lips. Some people “go about” as talebearers.

What is a talebearer? A Slanderer; informer; one that shares harmful information about another person, even spoken in an open, public setting. Someone who spreads rumors about another person in a negative sense

This person also “goeth about” (walks about). It speaks of motion or movement. The words are used primarily of: walking, wind blowing, of snakes slithering, and of rivers flowing or meandering. It is a figure of speech to describe a person’s whole manner of life.

Talebearing is what they do: wherever they are, wherever they go, what their habit of life is, and what is their daily practice is.

The “*talebearer revealeth secrets*”. To reveal means to uncover; disclose; lay bare; make known; secrets that are intimate conversations; counsel; plans; confidential information that someone did not want revealed.

Solomon tells us why we should beware of the talebearer: they reveals secrets. They make known private conversations you had with them.

When you open up your heart to them, they lay bare that information in public. When you tell them something in private, they don’t keep it private.

They have big mouths and have no control over their tongues. When you give private counsel to them, they let everyone know what you said.

The one who flatters you to your face often tells another story behind your back. The talebearer is an unfaithful friend. (*Proverbs 11:13*).

A faithful friend would conceal the matter. One who is a talebearer, is not faithful. You cannot count on him to keep private, that which was said in private.

Not all conversations were meant for everyone to hear. You should be able to trust a friend, to keep their lips closed if they are told confidential information.

Also, talebearers who reveal “*secrets*” don’t always repeat the information accurately. Sometimes they leave out key details which could put a very bad spin on what you said to them.

Sometimes they only repeat half of what was said, and half truths can be damaging...and misleading, “*Therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips*”

What does it mean to “Flatter”? This Word appears 28 times in the OT. It is only translated “flatter” twice. Most often it is translated as “deceive, allure, or entice.” (*Proverbs 1:10; Proverbs 24:28*).

The term (like many words) has several meanings. The context has to determine which meaning. Thus, Solomon warns about the kind of person who uses deceptive means to draw information out of you.

This person might begin with flattery, buttering you up... so that you will feel confident about their friendship and will be willing to open up and share some personal information.

Perhaps they might deceive you with their lips by giving you some misinformation. (Tom asked me to ask you about a particular situation... when Tom never said such a thing!)

Therefore, “*meddle not with him*”. What does it mean to meddle? We usually use this English word to mean “interfere”... or to stick your nose in someone else’s business. That is not exactly the meaning here.

The term means, “a pledge or exchange; to make a bargain with; to make a deal with; to share; to pledge the heart with; fellowship.”

It seems to be used here in the sense of a pledge of the heart; becoming engaged in a deep, intimate fellowship, on an emotion level with another person, to exchange personal information that is close to the heart.

Solomon’s advice here is that you not share the deep things of your heart with a talebearer. Don’t disclose deep, personal information with any such a person. You cannot trust that person to handle that personal information with care. In other words, when you lay bare your heart to a talebearer... he is likely to lay it bare before the general public!

Proverbs 20:20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

In a day when children's rights are exalted, this Proverb sounds harsh and old-fashioned. But God's Words are never harsh or old-fashioned - they are right and relevant!

This Proverb enforced by a few governments would curb youthful violence in a hurry! For a generation of proud, rebellious, and scornful children, this Proverb spells their doom. It is a great Proverb, declaring the holy judgment of a Holy God against arrogant youth!

What does it mean for a wicked son's lamp to be put out in obscure darkness? It means to have his life ended like snuffing out a candle! The lamp of a person is the spirit and soul within the body (*Proverbs 13:9; 20:27*).

Death occurs when the soul leaves the body to return to its Creator, the light goes out!

The Proverb speaks of not even leaving a spark! He will die in ignominy and shame. Then he goes to hell! God Himself will do the thorough work!

The most certain means of extending your life on earth is to honor your parents (*Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2-3*).

But just as certain is the shortening of your life by dishonoring or disobeying your parents. He also wrote that down (*Deuteronomy 21:18-21; 27:16; 30:11, 17; Romans 1:32*)!

The great God made the promise; He wrote it down for you; and it is certain. Is it any wonder that rocker rebels, the young movie and performing stars of the last two generations, seldom lived out their days? These lamps were put out in obscure darkness at the age of 27: Kurt Cobain, Brian Jones, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Jim Morrison.

That is young! And the deaths they died confirm obscure darkness. The list of names could be multiplied indefinitely, especially with dead rap rebels of the last two decades.

What does it mean to curse a parent? It means to use expletives or oaths in addressing them or talking about them. It means to verbally wish them harm, in or out of their presence. It means to damn them in God's name. It means to think any of these things in your heart!

Do you think yourself free from these sins? God has cursed every child that is merely disrespectful to its parents. Even if it is just rolling the eyes. (*Deuteronomy 27:16; Proverbs 30:17*)!

Your parents spooned food into your slobbering mouth every few hours, and now you curse them with that same mouth? They changed your clothing and bedding countless times to keep you from laying in your own excrement, and now you curse them because they will not approve your self-destructive folly?

They catered to your every need, secured your education, and protected you from harm, and now you curse them because they do not provide toys equal to your spoiled peers? Your lamp is soon to be put out!

Child rebellion proves human depravity, for it is unnatural. But it is also God's judgment for man's unthankfulness and rejection of Him (*Romans 1:20-32*).

Today child rebellion is widespread among so-called Christians as one more symptom of the perilous times (*2Timothy 3:1-5*).

These effeminate and compromising Christians, reject Bible Proverbs like this for Dr. Spock's hallucinations and purpose driven twaddle (*2Timothy 3:6-7; 4:3-4*).

If you were or are a foolish child that has dishonored your parents, repent now to the Lord, repent to your parents, and do something significant to honor them this very day. God will forgive you through Jesus Christ (*Proverbs 28:13; 1John 1:9*).

If you are sincere and thorough enough, your parents will forgive you. Humble yourself before the truth and wisdom of heaven to save your life. Run to your parents and thank them for the infinite number of things they did and do for you. Keep your lamp burning!

If you are a parent of children, you must teach them this Proverb's wisdom. You cannot tolerate any parental disrespect, not even in body language or facial expressions.

You must cut off the insidious corruption of Hollywood, any program that allows even minor parental disrespect is pure poison (*Romans 1:32*)!

You must cut off disrespectful friends and any other influence that will undermine their good manners, and put out their lamp! For only arrogant and profane souls think they have a right to be disrespectful, obscure darkness is coming soon to them.

For frivolous PTA nitwits that think childish tantrums are cute and not very serious. Obscure darkness is coming soon for them and your children. Neither group has the right to even question the subject, for God has spoken and settled it. For both classes of rebels, the blackness of darkness for eternity comes next.

Proverbs 20:21 An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.

Things Hastily Gained!

Such as an inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning. Good men leave an inheritance to his children, (*Proverbs 13:22*).

Parents often leave their house and whatever money they have left to their children, (*Proverbs 19:14*).

This is the norm. When a parent dies, it is quite natural for him or her to leave whatever wealth they have to their children.

Sometimes family squabbles and other issue interfere with that. But it is still the norm.

It is a good idea for parents to have a will or a trust, drawn up so that your wishes are carried out, when you leave this world. Don't leave it up to the state to decide!

What does hastily mean? To make haste; to be in a hurry; to do something immediately or suddenly; to be overly eager; to be in a rush.

This term in this context is a bit ambiguous. As is the case in several of Solomon's Proverbs. It may have been intentionally ambiguous. Solomon may have wanted his readers to think about both possibilities with the use of this term.

It could refer to the fact that an inheritance is gained suddenly when the last parent dies. The second that parent dies, the heir immediately becomes the owner of the property and wealth.

In the case of a very wealthy family, the son could instantly become a millionaire, or a billionaire! Suddenly he has the legal right to the family estate. The term could also refer to an inheritance gained suddenly in another way.

In **Proverbs 28:22**, Solomon uses the same term "*haste*". Only here he uses the term with evil connotations: "hasting to be rich." It implies dishonest means of obtaining wealth.

Dear old dad is on his death bed, and his son is in a hurry to get his inheritance. So he finds a way to accelerate his dad's decline, with a teaspoon of antifreeze in his coffee every morning.

Don't think this sort of thing doesn't happen. It does! In the last days men shall be without natural affection (**2 Timothy 3:3**).

It doesn't have to include murder. Sons of wealthy parents have been quite ingenious in their plans to hasten their inheritance.

Some have had their aging parents declared incompetent to handle their own finances, and take over. Some have tricked their parents into signing over their wealth to them;

Sometimes the son may lie to his father and conjure up a real good story as to why he needs his inheritance now (**Proverbs 21:6**).

Then there is the story of the prodigal son: In **Luke 15:11-12** *A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.*

This son got his inheritance hastily. He couldn't wait. He wanted it now. This must have broken the father's heart. Surely he could see what was coming for this son. And by the way, he enabled his sons failures.

The father knew that this overly eager son would not have the wisdom to handle the money properly. He must have known that it would be wasted.

The son insisted, and the father relented. The father became an enabler for his sons sins. This son got his

inheritance hastily at the beginning. *"But the end thereof shall not be blessed"*.

Proverbs 20:22 *Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.*

Is revenge sweet? Your spirit and the world say that it is. But the Lord God of heaven declares it is sin. Who will you believe? Solomon warned his son against this sin (**Proverbs 24:28-29**).

God told him not to even think or speak about repaying evil to anyone. Rather than take things into your own hands regarding your enemies, let the LORD take care of them.

When someone hurts you, the natural response, is anger and thoughts of self-defense and revenge. You react immediately, instinctively, and violently. It is due to your depraved heart inherited from Adam.

Paul described his own natural instincts this way: *"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another"* (**Titus 3:3**).

Mankind loves to fight and war. Rather than overlook offences, you want to repay! Rather than forgive wrongs, you can hold a grudge forever!

Paul described your warlike character very graphically, *"The poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known"* (**Romans 3:14-17**).

Revenge comes from pride: a humble man does not worry about repaying evil. Revenge is blinding it can easily lead to horrible crimes, including murder.

Proverbs are about wisdom. The blinding rage of revenge perverts your ability to perceive, understand, and judge correctly. Revenge destroys wisdom. And it leads to sinful actions.

The situations at stake are personal offences against you. Offences against God are to be dealt with as the Bible directs. Rebellious children are to be punished; Sinning church members are to be excluded; Violent citizens are to be executed by the king; etc.

This is the law of Jesus Christ, and it is the highest form of charity and wisdom in the world. Personal offences are to be overlooked, and personal enemies are to be loved. (**Matthew 5:38-48**).

Rather than returning evil for evil, a noble and wise man will return good for evil. Thus avoiding the,

blinding danger of grudges and revenge. But calming enemies with kindness and patience, and glorifying God is a difficult matter (*Proverbs 25:21-22; Leviticus 19:18; Romans 12:17-21; 1Thessalonians 5:15; Hebrews 12:14; James 3:16-18; 1Peter 3:8-11*).

Here Is Wisdom! Learn It Today!

You should not even think about revenge, not even in your heart, not even when evil befalls your enemies from other sources! God and Solomon condemned any joy when your enemy falls (*Proverbs 24:17-18*).

Sinful thoughts against another are murder (*Matthew 5:21-22*)!

Who are your enemies today? Are there any that you resent? Are you harboring a grudge or thoughts of revenge against any? Maybe your spouse? Maybe a colleague or boss at work? Maybe a neighbor? Maybe a church member?

This is true wisdom! This is true Christianity! Confess your sin to God, and look for opportunities to befriend enemies! Treat them as you want them to treat you, not as they have treated you (*Luke 6:27-36*).

Glorious men pass over personal transgressions by others (*Proverbs 19:11*).

Glorious men are not moved, especially to anger or revenge, by others' offences.

Glorious men are too noble to be disturbed, distracted, or destroyed, by such minor and insignificant things.

If you cannot gloriously and nobly ignore offences, there is only one other option, God's way (*Matthew 18:15-17*).

Joseph assigned his brothers' offences to the sovereignty of God and did them no harm, though he had them in his power (*Genesis 45:5; 50:20*).

Abigail kept David from foolish revenge against Nabal (*1Samuel 25:23-35*).

David let Shimei curse, believing God would hear (*2Samuel 16:5-14*).

Learn to commit your soul to your faithful Creator (*1Peter 4:19*).

The best revenge is to leave enemies to God. He is most fair, His judgments most awful. Vengeance is His: He will repay (*Deuteronomy 32:25; Luke 18:7-8; Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30*).

David left Saul to the Lord, though he could have killed him twice. What was the result? Saul fearfully consulted a witch, killed himself, was hung up for

display by Philistines, his bones buried under a tree, and his family was cut off from the throne!

Moses was wickedly confronted by his sister and Korah. Rather than punishing these arrogant and profane rebels himself, he left the matter to the LORD. Miriam was sharply rebuked by the Lord, became white with leprosy, and was quarantined outside the camp (*Numbers 12:1-15*).

What of Korah? He was swallowed alive by the earth (*Numbers 16:1-40*)!

Only the Lord can create and sustain a loving and peaceful spirit in a man, so that anger and revenge are only fleeting thoughts of folly. Faith in God is the cure! God will always take care of His.

If you are guilty of vengeful thoughts, confess your wickedness to God, cast yourself upon His mercy, begging for strength, pray for your enemies, and seek opportunities to do good to them. This is wisdom and the will of God!

Proverbs 20:23 Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good.

Which is closer to a pound, fifteen ounces or seventeen ounces? It depends whether you are buying or selling!

Proverbs 20:23 is as relevant as the Departments of Weights and Measures in the world's prosperous nations.

It would be better to buy a pound and get fifteen ounces than cheat a seller!

It would be better to sell a pound and give seventeen ounces than cheat a buyer!

The LORD demands scrupulous honesty in business dealings. He abhors and loathes false financial practices, and He will punish such men.

Fools say the Bible is not relevant to modern society. King Solomon, 3000 years ago, taught the value of just weights and measures for an efficient and prosperous economy. Men and nations have flourished with honor and wealth when or where this Proverb was obeyed, just as promised (*Proverbs 4:7-9; 8:12-21; 22:4; Psalm 144:11-15*).

Moses required honest weights and measures 3500 years ago, and He promised the world would envy Israel for their wise and righteous laws (*Leviticus 19:35-36; Deuteronomy 4:5-8; 25:13-16*).

God called unfair business practices an abomination, so Solomon repeated this economic rule often (*Proverbs 11:1; 16:11; 20:10*).

When Israel violated this Proverb, God sent prophets to warn them of coming judgment (*Hosea 12:7; Amos 8:5-6; Micah 6:10-11*).

Consider the Proverb's Words.

"Divers" means different weights for cheating customers with a balance scale. Such business practices are an abomination to God, He abhors, hates, and loathes them.

"false balance" was a rigged balance scale to cheat customers while using correct weights.

"Is not good" is the figure of speech called meiosis: which is a deliberate understatement, for the Proverb's parallelism defined as an abomination!

Imagine for a moment trying to buy and sell, apples or diamonds, olive oil or motor oil, or even croutons or construction materials, without a system of weights and measures. Chaos would quickly rule the marketplace, if there were no standards for weights and measures.

Confidence in purchasing and using materials, is based on these standards, and this confidence turns creative and productive genius and power loose, to produce and prosper.

The U.S. has the greatest economy in the world. Its Constitution gave responsibility to "fix the standard of weights and measures" to the federal government. In 1836, Congress established what is called the National Institute of Standards and Technology (N.I.S.T.) as part of the Commerce Department.

By their defining and enforcing of standards, the consistency in the national economy now propels America's role in the global economy.

But give credit where credit is due! Moses laid down this important law 3500 years ago. Solomon restated it 3000 years ago. Both did so by the inspiration of God, for the benefit of mankind.

Though men and nations may mock the Bible, the degree of prosperity they enjoy, is to the degree they follow it.

Third-world nations either neglect or reject this Proverb's wisdom to their own poverty. Let God be true, but every man a liar!

There are subtler ways people can cheat. Solomon wrote, *"It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth"* (*Proverbs 20:14*).

While this man might use a fair balance and only one set of weights, he cheats a seller by making false statements about the quality of an item. He is lying, because as soon as he buys the item for a lesser price, he boasts about the "steal" he got from the seller! God forbid!

What is the lesson, beyond appreciating the Bible's inspired wisdom?

Learning God's opinion of cheating in business!

If God considers financial cheating an abomination, then you must never cheat buyers or sellers, even if it means giving more than they purchased and paying for more than you received.

If you think such scrupulous conduct will steal your profits, you have missed the lesson and do not know the God of heaven! He can easily make up for any such righteous squeezing of profit margins (*Proverbs 11:18, 24-27; 28:8*)!

Proverbs 20:24 Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

What are your plans for today? The LORD will alter them if He chooses; and He will use them for Himself, if He chooses not to alter them!

Either way, He is the Potter, and you are the clay. It does not matter if you believe God is sovereign or not, because God is sovereign over your life, whether you believe it or not!

Wise men will submit to Him, knowing they can neither forecast the future, determine the future, or change the future.

The LORD rules over all! He created all of us, for His own pleasure, and He governs it all for His own pleasure (*Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Revelation 4:11*).

The LORD rules all chance events and even the movements of sparrows (*Proverbs 16:33; 1Kings 22:34; Matthew 10:29*).

The LORD knows the end from the beginning, and you do not even know tomorrow (*Proverbs 27:1; Isaiah 44:7; 45:21*).

Pharaoh, his parents, and Egypt thought he was a great success! His whole life had been constant progress to the throne. He was rich, strong, and victorious. He ruled, the greatest nation on earth at the time. But his existence and position were simply for the LORD to show His power and honor Himself by crushing him (*Exodus 9:16; Romans 9:17*).

The King of Assyria thought he was the greatest king alive. But God had simply used him like a rod to chasten Israel. (*Isaiah 10:5-15, 10:8-11, 13-14*).

And when the LORD was through using him, He destroyed him miserably for his arrogant attitude (*Isaiah 10:16-19*)!

King Ahasuerus of Persia could not sleep, then brought the incredible promotion of Mordecai and horrific demotion of Haman (*Esther 6:1-14*).

Ruth chose gleaning to provide for Naomi and herself, but she happened on the field of rich Boaz, who soon married her (*Ruth 2:1-3*).

Wicked Jews and Romans killed Jesus of Nazareth, but they did no more than His eternal counsel had determined would be done (*Acts 2:22-24; 4:27-28*).

The wicked fulfilled every prophecy the Lord had given hundreds of years earlier (*John 19:31-37*).

Yet He held them accountable and obliterated their nation for the crime (*Matthew 23:34-36; 1Thessalonians 2:14-16*).

Timing and chance, governed by God, are far more important factors in human successes than a man's own swiftness, strength, wisdom, understanding, or skill (*Ecclesiastes 9:11*).

Men do not know what or when anything is going to happen (*Ecclesiastes 9:12*).

God has so ordained events, that men, cannot find anything outside His government of the universe (*Ecclesiastes 7:14*).

Therefore, godly wisdom submits all to God's will (*James 4:13-15*).

If Saints do not know His secret things, they beg in prayer until they are revealed (*Deuteronomy 29:29; 2Samuel 12:22-23*).

Saints tremble before God in humility and obedience (*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Isaiah 66:1-2*).

Godly men make preparations, but then they beg Him for success (*Proverbs 21:31; Psalm 127:1*).

Godly men devise plans, but they know He rules the details (*Proverbs 16:9*).

The wise do not glory in anything they have, knowing they merely receive His sovereign gifts (*1Corinthians 4:7; 15:10*).

The wise are not in despair, because they know God rules the future (*2Corinthians 4:8-18*).

The wise fear no man, for they know the will of God will surely be done (*Daniel 3:16-18; Acts 21:14*).

Here is the faith of God's own. They glorify their Creator, rather than make Him angry, as did Belshazzar (*Daniel 5:21*).

God's own know the course of their life is beyond their knowledge and ability, for it is in God's hands (*Jeremiah 10:23; Acts 17:28*).

God's own seek Him diligently, knowing He can direct favorable providence upon them (*Psalms 37:23; Hebrews 11:6*).

God's own laugh at chance, Fate, and coincidences, knowing all is a matter of His providence.

Since God's secret will for their lives is unknown, the children of God dedicate themselves, to the revealed things that are known: and the commandments they are to keep (*Deuteronomy 29:29*).

Rather than despair about the future, and His secret and sovereign providence, the wise seek Him with the whole heart, in cheerful submission and thanksgiving, regardless of their portion in life.

The born again, who have fled for refuge to Jesus Christ by His sovereign gift of faith, should know the hairs of their head are numbered, and they are of more value than many sparrows (*Matthew 10:30-31*).

The Potter has prepared them from before the foundation of the world as vessels of mercy unto eternal life (*Romans 9:21-24; Ephesians 1:3-12*).

Proverbs 20:25 It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry.

Reader, are you careful in keeping your duties to the LORD?

Haste Covetousness Selfishness Can Trap You Into Profaning The Things Of God.

You may use, what belongs to the LORD, or you may make a vow you cannot or will not pay. There are two sins here, both showing the profanity of carnal and careless Christians.

Let us see both sins. Follow closely: ¹A man eats something holy, something that is the LORD's by precept or by dedication. Example, the firstfruits of harvest were the Lord's by precept (*Exodus 23:19*).

The man devoured them in greed. Or, He dedicated a lamb to the Lord by a freewill offering (*Leviticus 22:23*).

The man's covetousness chose to eat it himself. This is the first sin, **Taking something that belongs to the Lord and devouring it our self.**

²Then we have the phrase "*and after vows to make enquiry.*" Does "*after*" mean this profane man follows his devouring with vows of enquiry? Or does "*after*" mean he follows his vows with enquiries? We choose the latter, for the former makes no sense.

What would a profane man vow to enquire about after devouring the Lord's portion? Why would he vow? What would he vow? What would he enquire about? We have here the sin of foolish vows, when a man only afterwards thinks about his vow.

We have a profane man who first makes a vow to the Lord, and then thinks about whether he should have made the vow, whether he can pay the vow, and tries to find a way to get out of the vow (*Ecclesiastes 5:6*).

Vows Should Be Thought Out Completely Before They Are Made: For We Do Not Have To Vow, But We Must Certainly Pay What We Vow. *Ecclesiastes 5:4* *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.*

Let's make it simpler. We have an ellipsis here, as in many Proverbs. An ellipsis, is missing words that are supplied by the reader. The words are not used to avoid repetition or to add force to the sentence. The ellipsis here is "*it is a snare.*" If we supply them where they are missing, you will see both sins clearly. The verse fully reads: ***It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and it is a snare after vows to make enquiry.***

Both of the actions above are snares to a man's life, in that they bring God's judgment, as do other temptations and sins (*Proverbs 18:7; 22:25; 29:6, 8, 25*).

We must be cautious in all religious duties to deliver ourselves from the wrath of a holy God, for even in the New Testament God accepts only worship with reverence and godly fear (*Hebrews 12:28-29*).

When a thing belongs to the Lord, it is holy (*Leviticus 27:9, 30*).

When a thing belongs to the Lord, it cannot be used in haste or greed for self.

When we make vows, we had better pay them: for it is better not to vow, then to vow and not pay (*Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Ecclesiastes 5:1-7*).

We better be able to pay, and we better not, enquire about trying to find a way out, of the vow later (*Psalms 15:4*).

For even thinking afterward about how to get out of a vow shows a very wicked heart.

The spoil of Jericho was the LORD's (*Joshua 6:17-19*).

But Achan took of the cursed stuff; so Israel stoned and burned him and his entire family. This covetous man could not resist devouring things that were holy to the LORD. Read his sorry testimony. (*Joshua 7:16-26*).

To remind Israel always of the caution they should use in His worship. Moses stoned a man for profaning the LORD's Sabbath by picking up sticks on the holy day of rest (*Numbers 15:30-36*).

God rejected Saul as king of Israel for profanely offering a sacrifice when Samuel was five minutes late to an appointment. This man continued to prove for the rest of his life that the snare described in our Proverb had altogether swallowed him up. (*1Samuel 13:8-14*).

Ananias and Sapphira thought they could devour some of their offering to the Lord, but God struck them dead before witnesses in Jerusalem. While they owned the land it was theirs; but once their mouths had dedicated it, it was the Lord's. (*Acts 5:1-11*)

Our Proverb warns us to pay the full cost of worship. **If** we do not, we will ensnare our souls in sinful guilt and bring upon ourselves the just vengeance of a jealous God.

Our Lord Jesus warned His hearers in the gospel to count the cost before committing, because not paying would be a snare to them and bring them to shame. Unless you are willing to pay the full price, the Lord demands, you cannot be His disciple. (*Luke 14:25-35*).

Consider your church. You owe the Lord His Holy House (*Romans 14:17-19*).

Are you helping build the Lord's house? When Israel built their houses first, He ruined them financially (*Haggai 1:1-11*).

What about giving? We owe the Lord the *firstfruits* of all increase (*Proverbs 3:9*).

Are you giving like you should? When Israel did not pay, He charged them with robbery and cursed them (*Malachi 3:8-9*).

What about your body? It is the temple of the Holy Ghost (*1Corinthians 6:15-20*).

God bought it for a price, and you owe Him your body as a holy sacrifice. Is yours holy? (*Romans 12:1-2*).

What about baptism? You vowed loyalty and a new life in the name of Jesus Christ when you were baptized. Are you living up to your baptism? (*Galatians 3:27; 1Peter 3:21*).

What about attendance? Are you fulfilling your obligation to the God? You owe your attendance and participation to the LORD at every assembly (*Hebrews 10:25*).

How have you snared your soul, reader? What are you using yourself that belongs to the Lord? What have you promised that you are not keeping?

Stewardship requires faithfulness. Are you a faithful steward of all God gave you? Tithe/Talents/Treasures?

Proverbs 20:26 A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.

The preacher in Proverbs is Solomon, the king of Israel, and the son of David, another king of Israel (*Proverbs 1:1*).

Both men were wise and successful kings. Here Solomon gives inspired and learned advice to kings and others in authority.

Wise Rulers Will Destroy Wicked Persons Under Their Authority.

The origin and purpose of civil government are not mysteries. The LORD ordained rulers over nations and other principalities to punish evildoers (*Romans 13:1-4; 1Peter 2:13-14*).

Resisting or resenting this authority is to resist and resent God Himself.

Civil government, has the right to capital punishment, in enforcing its laws, and God set up these rulers as His ministers to execute revenge upon those who are wicked and do evil.

Bringing the wheel over the wicked is to crush them. Grain was crushed in Solomon's day by turning or rolling a heavy wheel over it (*Isaiah 28:27-28; Judges 16:21*).

This separated the wheat from the husk. Wise government will take heavy measures to crush wicked men who have set themselves against authority and law.

The wisdom here teaches that civil government should be strict and severe. There can be no tolerance or compromise with criminals.

We can see in our day, how that compromise and delay, cause an increase in crime, by hardening the hearts of criminals. We can see also in our day of hung juries,

appeals, delay tactics, further appeals, and stays of execution (*Ecclesiastes 8:11*).

We have several references to kings in this chapter of Proverbs. Solomon was providing wisdom for his son Rehoboam, the next king of Israel, and for rulers in general.

Solomon describes the positive virtue of this great fear as the rulers execute this judgment and the balancing of mercy and truth, in protecting the innocent (*Proverbs 20:2, 8, 28*).

Wise rulers seek quiet and peaceable lives for their productive citizens. These people can only have such lives, **if** the wicked are scattered and defeated.

Leaders must take, the justice part, of their office seriously and do all they can to destroy criminals and crime. They must be free of sentimentality to aid, abet, or pardon criminals. There is not room for one wicked person, one criminal, in a just and good nation.

Death row should be emptied today of its 3700 monsters, by way of public stoning on pay-per-view television, with the proceeds going to the victims' families.

One more cent spent on their upkeep in our penal system is a waste. David, a king after God's own heart, had no tolerance for criminals (*2Samuel 4:1-12; Psalm 101:4-8*).

Those who resist or resent civil government and those who speak evil or lightly of those in authority should be dealt with most severely. God Himself opened up the earth to swallow men and their families alive for speaking against Moses (*Numbers 16:1-34*).

The New Testament says they should be destroyed like rabid dogs, for they obviously do not understand the basic necessity of authority (*2Peter 2:10-12; Jude 1:8-10*).

There is no such thing, as freedom of speech against authority, in God's wisdom (*Exodus 22:28*).

Let every man, in a position of authority, use strict measures against the wicked in his realm of control.

This applies to employers, fathers, husbands, and pastors, as well as kings and presidents, governors and sheriffs. Righteousness, peace, and quiet depend on strong leaders ridding our society of the rebellion of fools.

Jesus Christ is the greatest of Kings, with the most wisdom. He is King of kings! When the Jews rejected and crucified Him, He promised to return and will deal with those wicked men (*Matthew 21:41*).

His armies came to burn up their city, and grind them to powder (*Matthew 21:44; 22:7*).

Jesus promised there would be not one stone left on one another when Jerusalem is destroyed (*Luke 19:44*).

He promised more distress and trouble upon them than any nation had suffered before or since (*Matthew 24:21*).

And He fulfilled all this and more in 70 AD by the Roman armies under Titus Vespasian Augustus.

But at the same time, to those who feared His name and loved Him, the Sun of Righteousness, came with healing in His wings (*Malachi 4:2*).

He is soon coming again with eternal blessing and reward for those who love His appearing (*Titus 2:13*).

Proverbs 20:27 The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

Man is not an animal, and he is not like any animal. God, put something in man that makes him very different.

God gave man a conscience, and this conscience is a law, teacher, and judge for each man, woman, and child. This candle of God inside you examines and tries your thoughts, words, and deeds.

The word conscience has two parts: con (with) + science (knowledge) = knowing with and within yourself about yourself.

This invisible conscience inside you has a sense of right and wrong.

This invisible conscience will approve right things and condemn wrong things you do.

This invisible conscience will also reflect on what others do and make judgments as to whether they were right or wrong.

Consider how, you can have a thought within yourself, and yet analyze and judge that thought as well! A man can only know himself by his conscience; he cannot know another man by it (*1Corinthians 2:11*).

Sometimes your spirit is full of joy, and sometimes it is full of bitterness, and no other person can fully feel or know either emotion (*Proverbs 14:10*).

Your conscience can convict you that what you or others have thought, said, or done is wrong (*Romans 2:15*).

This internal sense of guilt can be very strong, and it can control or influence what you do or not do.

The accusers of the woman, taken in adultery, left her alone, when their consciences were confronted, about the justice of their actions (*John 8:9*).

How did you get a conscience? The LORD gave it to you, so it is called the candle of the LORD.

Conscience is a light from God, to help you make decisions.

Conscience can also prove your sinfulness, for you have sinned against your conscience many times. Even if God has not condemned a thing, it is sin for you. **If** your conscience condemned it (*Romans 14:22-23; James 4:17*).

All men have a conscience. Gentiles, reprobates, and the Pharisees had consciences, though hard to believe (*Romans 2:15; 1:32; John 8:9*).

Amnon and Judas Iscariot had consciences (*2Samuel 13:1-2; Matthew 27:3-5*).

The universal restraint and godly laws of men reflect this conscience, though their sorrow for sin is not godly sorrow (*2Corinthians 7:9-11*).

Conscience In An Unregenerate Man Is A Source Of Condemnation For Him!

Great men and women have great consciences, and they follow them. A great conscience is one that is well taught and very active in assessing all parts of life, and great men listen to it and obey it.

Such persons are very sensitive to doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong. They are very opinionated against evil. God gave you a conscience, to be a daily companion to keep you doing right things and avoiding wrong things. Exalt it! Use it!

Your conscience can and must be taught. The more you learn, the better your conscience will serve you. You must teach your conscience the truth and wisdom of God. And you must obey it when it tells you to do certain things and when it says other things are wrong.

God gave you a candle to help make you great, but the sinful world around you, seeks to quench your conscience, so you will approve all they want to do! You must not allow worldly lifestyles, communicated by various media, corrupt or numb your conscience!

If you acquire God's wisdom by these Proverbs and the rest of Scripture, your conscience will help you more (*1Corinthians 8:1-7*).

You can even keep your conscience ignorant, to stop it from condemning you in matters of liberty (*1Corinthians 10:25-27*).

Some societies have had women live bare-breasted. The consciences of their women are formed to see no harm in it at all. They are amused and offended by any objection to it. Only careful teaching can put shame in their consciences about the practice. Now, think carefully about what your children see at home, on the television, or at school!

Your conscience must be taught. In order for you to please God, you need a conscience that knows the will of God and will seek to enforce it in your life.

This conscience that loves truth and wisdom only exists in born again children of God, and yet it needs the instruction of God's Word to form its opinions properly on every subject (*Hebrews 5:14*).

Your conscience must be obeyed. If you ignore it, then it becomes calloused, cauterized, and less sensitive to things, leaving you vulnerable to most any temptation (*1Timothy 4:2; Ephesians 4:19*).

If you reject God and His Word, He can and will blind your conscience, leaving you without the candle of the LORD to direct you (*Romans 1:21-28; 2Corinthians 4:2-4*).

Prize Your Conscience From God

Self-examination, a duty of true Christians, is done partly through the conscience (*Psalms 26:2; 139:23-24*).

Self-examination, could have saved the Corinthians from trouble (*1Corinthians 11:28-31*).

Do you meditate with your own heart at night (*Psalms 4:4; 16:7*)?

Do you let the preaching of God's Word convict you (*Psalms 73:17, 21*)?

The confidence of a pure conscience is an exceedingly wonderful and powerful thing (*Proverbs 28:1*).

Your conscience should always consider others (*1Corinthians 10:28-33*).

Paul lived virtuously to avoid offence in his conscience toward God or men (*Acts 24:16*).

Such conscientiousness toward God, will help you fulfill the first commandment, to love God, and toward others it will help you keep the second commandment, of loving your neighbor as yourself.

Your goal is to grow in favor with God and men (*Proverbs 3:1-4; Luke 2:52*).

Your goal is to be perfect. Your conscience can help you achieve these goals by accusing you for wrongdoing and excusing right choices.

Paul kept a good conscience at all times, and he required it of Timothy and deacons. (*2Corinthians 1:12; 1Timothy 1:5, 19; 3:9; Hebrews 13:18*).

Infants, which do not have active consciences, were never baptized in the New Testament. One of the first acts of obedience to God is baptism, which the Bible calls the answer of a good conscience toward God (*1Peter 3:21*).

Your conscience should approve or accuse you right now.

If you have been living a godly and righteous life, your conscience should approve you as having been faithful to this Proverb.

If you have been living a foolish or worldly life, your conscience should accuse you of wrongdoing.

What will you do with the candle of the LORD?

Proverbs 20:28 Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.

Mercy Defined: The AV translates this term as "mercy" 149 times. Strongs Concordance defines it as: goodness, kindness, faithfulness.

In *Exodus 34:6*: This term is used as part of God's character. It is translated here as goodness. The same Hebrew term is translated "mercy" in the very next verse (*Exodus 34:7*).

It speaks of the fact that God is loyal to His people. God is faithful to His promises. God's loyal love may be expressed in deeds of mercy and goodness. But "mercy" itself highlights God's faithfulness to his children. God's loyalty and love is dedicated to His people.

In *Psalms 89:28*: Here the same Word is used and it speaks of God's loyal love with David. God's promise to David will stand, because God is loyal.

It is also, the reason God gave the land to Israel and defeated their enemies (*Psalms 136:17-22*).

It is the reason He continues to deliver His people. (*Psalms 136:23-25*).

It is the reason we should give thanks to God who rules in heaven (*Psalms 136:26*).

The reason God delivered Israel was because He is faithful and has loyal love towards His people. This is

what is meant by the Word translated “*mercy*” in ***Proverbs 20:28***.

Truth Defined: The Hebrew term translated truth is variously defined as well: Strongs Concordance: firmness, faithfulness, sureness, reliability; stability, continuance; faithfulness, truth.

There is some “overlap” in meaning in these two terms. Both terms speak of loyalty and faithfulness. The first term emphasizes being loyal and firm in “love.” The second term implies being loyal and firm to “truth.”

“Mercy and truth preserve the King.” Preserve: means, to guard, keep; protect; guard from dangers. The mercy and truth of God towards the king preserves the king. This is especially true of the theocratic king of Israel (***Psalms 89:28***).

In ***Psalms 89:33***, God will not take away His “*lovingkindness*” from David (same Word as *mercy* in ***Proverbs 20:28***).

Psalms 34-35, God is loyal and faithful to David because of the promise that God made to David.

Solomon wrote “*Mercy and truth shall preserve the king.*” God’s mercy and truth shall preserve the king.

In ***Psalms 40:11***, David prays for God’s tender mercies. The mercy and truth of God will preserve the king.

In addition, the mercy and truth, of the subjects toward the king, preserves the king. However, when considering the Proverb at hand, Solomon left it ambiguous whose mercy and truth he is talking about.

It is also possible, that the mercy and truth of the royal subjects will preserve the king. When the people are happy, well cared for, they will demonstrate loyal love and faithfulness, to the leadership of their king.

Position As King Is Safe When People Are Loyal To The Throne.

If the people are not loyal and true to their king, then the king is not in a safe position. He will not be preserved.

Consider the case of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam (***1Kings 11:43***).

In ***1Kings 12:4***, Jeroboam and the people came to him with a reasonable request. Rehoboam rejected the reasonable request of the people, and as a result the people were not loyal and faithful to him. They started a civil war! (***1Kings 12:13-14***).

Rehoboam, should have spent more time meditating, on the Proverbs, that his father wrote, for his sons to have wisdom and discretion.

Wisdom and discretion were provided for Rehoboam in the Scriptures.

Rehoboam did not avail himself of it. Proverbs did him no good and he paid for it dearly. It does us no good either, **If** we don’t avail ourselves to them.

Consider what Absalom did also. He showed compassion on the people (although it was phony). He stole the hearts of the people, by showing mercy and truth. This put him in favor with man. (***Proverbs 3:3-4***)

When a king shows mercy and truth to his people, he will be in their favor, and that means “safety” for the king and his throne.

In this Proverb Solomon causes readers to think about the importance of the mercy and truth (loyalty, love, and faithful steadfastness).

These godly characteristics preserve the king and his government. God’s loyal love and faithfulness protected the kings of Israel.

The king’s loyal love and faithful towards his people kept him and his throne safe from upheaval and rebellion.

The people’s loyal love and faithful towards their king also kept him and their government safe.

No matter how you slice it, these qualities are exceedingly valuable to any leader. Loyalty and faithfulness are needed, for a business to function, efficiently and effectively.

Loyal love and faithfulness keep a local church strong and united.

Loyal love and faithfulness keep families together and protect the sanctity of the home.

Proverbs 20:29 The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head.

Young and old men, have their own abilities, teaching the need for respecting and trusting each other and using those advantages for mutual profit.

Young men should respect old men for their wisdom, shown by gray hair. Old men should respect the greater strength of young men, which is a great asset.

Both should use their abilities for service to the other.

The glory of young men is their strength. A man can run the fastest, lift the most, or work the hardest between 18 and 34.

A young man, can do most anything, **If** he puts his mind to it. These are prime years of a man's physical strength.

A young man, does not reach skeletal or muscular maturity until this period, and it begins a long and steady decline after this period.

A young man's strength is a wonderful thing. High levels of both human growth hormone and testosterone, turn most anything he eats into hard muscle.

A young man's body responds immediately to physical training.

A young man, can recover quickly from strenuous physical activity, and he has a hormonal drive that makes him aggressive and confident in danger or labor.

A man's strength declines after 34 until it is gone. The decline of the two chemicals after 19 is the physical cause. (*Ecclesiastes 12:1-7*).

Men lose their ability to perform, and the driving desire to perform, in physical or sexual activity, the glory of youth leaves them. David needed a young woman to keep him warm, but she was as safe as could be (*1Kings 1:1-4*)!

However, old men begin acquiring something in their 30's that young men can hardly understand, wisdom.

Collective wisdom is a combination, of Spiritual, mental and of emotional and maturity, and experience, and accumulated instruction.

Though declining in strength and stamina, older men grow in knowledge and understanding until the very late years of life.

Older men watch young men with amusement, for they have lost the foolishness, impatience, and ignorance of youth.

Society recognizes these differences by sending foolish young men with strength and vigor into battle, while wise older men direct the war and the matters of civil government.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff of our military differ greatly in age from the soldiers in the field. Job said, "*With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding*" (*Job 12:12*).

The wisdom here is the respect due each age. Both ages of men are necessary for the profit and safety of a nation, church, or family.

God early on, commanded honor for old men and despising the infirmities of old age is wrong (*Proverbs 23:22; Leviticus 19:32*).

Applying the rule to women: it is older women who are to teach younger women, though younger women are beautiful and fertile, they are inexperienced with husbands and children (*Titus 2:3-5*).

Therefore, the young men (or women) should reverence the older for their wisdom, especially when in authority (*Job 32:4-7; Ephesians 6:1-3*).

It is God's judgment, when the young rebels oppress their elders (*Job 30:1-12; Isaiah 3:1-5*).

Paul told Timothy to treat older men with reverence and younger men with respect (*1Tim 5:1; 1Peter 5:5*).

Old men should appreciate young men, who are capable of doing things, they no longer can or will do. David had been a giant-killer in his youth, but a day came, when he was thankful for young men to take over (*2Samuel 21:16-17*)!

Faithful young men, agreeable to your cause, can be of great asset in doing the things your mind can plan. Children of the youth, like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, are valuable assets (*Psalms 127:4*).

And old men should not despise qualified young men, whom God has put in office (*1Timothy 4:12*).

But both ages of men must seek godliness more than anything else!

Young men must avoid undue confidence and glory in their strength, for the LORD does not take pleasure in the legs of a man (*Psalms 33:16; 147:10; Jeremiah 9:23-24*).

The young man must, rule his spirit and flee the hormonal lusts of his youth, and he should diligently seek counsel from older men for all his important decisions (*Proverbs 20:5; 24:6; Psalm 25:7; Ecclesiastes 11:9-10; 2Timothy 2:22*).

Old men must be found in the way of righteousness for their gray heads to be crowns of honor (*Proverbs 16:31*). See the comments on *Proverbs 16:31*.

There is no virtue in age alone, a wise child is better than a foolish old man, even if he is king (*Ecclesiastes 4:13*).

An old man still foolish with the imprudence of youth is a disgrace to his age and sex. And an old man who has not learned to be sober and spiritually minded is a disgrace to his religion (*Titus 2:1-2*).

Now apply the wisdom of this Proverb to the kingdom of God. The Church of Jesus Christ should have fathers, men of spiritual age and wisdom, who have long known the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it should have young men with great strength, spiritually ambitious with strong minds, who are filled with the Word of God (*1John 2:13-14*).

**Are You Fulfilling Your Role?
Do You Appreciate Respect Age?**

Proverbs 20:30 The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.

Stubbornness and foolishness are wicked traits from Adam. Sin is more than a bad habit; it is the inborn nature of rebellious humanity.

We must be bruised, wounded, and beaten to be corrected! Physical pain works. Severe rebukes work. This is the lesson. Do you give wounds well? Do you receive them well?

Severe punishment is much less painful in its consequences, than uncorrected self-will. Resenting and eliminating this form of correction is destroying our nation. Do you dislike it?

This is the application. Parents drive foolishness from children with the rod (*Proverbs 22:15; 23:13-14*);

The Lord scourges foolishness from His children (*Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:5-11*);

Friends correct one another by faithful blows (*Proverbs 27:6; Psalm 141:5*).

The Lord Jesus was bruised and wounded for our iniquities (*Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53:5, 10*).

Here we see the nature of Proverbs as clearly as anywhere. The Words are chosen and arranged to create maximum beauty, force, and rhythm; but the sense is slightly hidden for us to discover and relish. Can you find numerous metonyms?

When a body is bruised or wounded, the area usually turns blue.

We describe it as "black and blue." The first clause teaches that physical punishment will drive wickedness from a person, as in *Proverbs 22:15*.

Correction and discipline, including corporal punishment, is God's ordained means for purging sin and reforming us. See the comments on *Proverbs 26:3*.

Notice the metonyms. Neither blueness nor wounds correct rebels. Corporal punishment properly applied reforms them; which creates wounds, which often turn blue! These are metonyms, the substitution of one thing for another related thing. This metonymy of effect,

where the effect is put for the cause. For metonymy, see the comments on *Proverbs 20:1*.

**Corporal Punishment
Does Not Truly Cleanse Evil Away
It More Correctly Trains Fools!**

Here again is metonymy of the effect, where "evil" is substituted for the rebellious sinner. And by synecdoche, where an associated idea is used for another, "cleanseth" is used for reformation or correction of the disobedient fool.

Combining three cases of metonymy and one of synecdoche, we have this sense of the first clause, corporal punishment corrects rebels.

To master Proverbs, you must learn several figures of speech. But you can grasp most of it by slowing down and meditating!

In the second clause, "stripes" are metonymy of effect for beating with a rod (*Proverbs 17:10; 19:29; Psalm 89:32; Deuteronomy 25:2-3*).

The "inward parts" are and "belly" is metonymy of subject for man's soul and spirit (*Proverbs 18:8; 20:27; Job 32:18-19; Psalm 44:25*).

Stripes, applied on the back by a rod, for the purpose of correcting behavior, will have the same training result that the wound of the first clause has (*Proverbs 17:10; 19:29; Psalm 89:32; Deuteronomy 25:2-3*).

Our Proverb teaches God's ordinance of corporal punishment. But our twisted society will suction babies apart in the womb, while protecting teenagers and criminals from being touched!

**Perverse Persons Are The Corrupters
Of Our Nation!**

Let every friend consider, sharp reproofs work! The wise use of corporal punishment will correct fools and sinners and reform the heart. Let every man humbly and gratefully receive wounds from God and man.

Without receiving corrective wounds from God or men, there is no evidence either loves you, and there is no hope for your perfection.

Some natural men limit this Proverb to medical advice. The blue color around a wound is evidence that infection is being purged from it! And developed abdominal muscles ("a six-pack") promote the health of your lower internal organs! What an ignorant travesty!

God hates sin. So God severely bruised and wounded the Lord Jesus. During the hours leading to His death,

He turned blue from many wounds, and many stripes that covered His back.

Why? Because He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, chastised for our peace, and by His stripes we are healed (*Isaiah 53:5, 10*). Praise ye the Lord!