

CHAPTER 22

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

What do people think, when they hear your name? Do they think graciousness, goodness, kindness, and faithfulness? Does your name become sweet to their ears and thoughts? Do they crave your company? Do they want to honor you with gifts and service?

Is your name a bitter thought? Do they think harshness, selfishness, stubbornness, moodiness, or a lack of discretion? Do they hope to avoid you? Do they avoid you?

You cannot ignore these questions and be wise. Your reputation and relationships are the great measure of your life!

Stop and examine yourself by your reputation with others! Some people are used as examples of specific virtues or all virtues. Some people are used as examples of poor character and problem relationships.

How Is Your Name Used?

What Is Your Name Worth To You? Is your name more important than any amount of money or success? Do you work harder to improve your name, than to get ahead financially? How much do you value the esteem and respect of good men?

God does in some respects measure you by what others think! You cannot be approved by God and disliked and avoided by good men. It is impossible.

Your family and close friends do not count, for it is our reputation before good and wise men that is the key. You can easily tell a person's character by the number and kind of friends he has. These facts do not lie.

The opinions of others are not our only measure, or the most important (***John 5:44***).

But they are certainly a measure. We deceive ourselves foolishly to approve our life and conduct, **If** we find a shortage of esteem of good men and women.

Demetrius had a great name and reputation (***3John 1:12***).

Timothy was highly regarded before and after he met Paul (***Acts 16:1-2; 2Corinthians 8:18***).

This high measure, is a necessary qualification for the holy office of bishop in Christ's churches (***1Timothy 3:7***).

Of course, we are not speaking here of the profane and ungodly opinion of the world at large, for it would be a bad name to have all such men speak well of you (***Luke 6:26***).

We are speaking of good and wise men. Those who know the heart and will of God.

Your opinion of yourself in this matter is worthless. It is contrary to fact. People with good names usually think poorly of themselves.

People with bad names usually think themselves quite desirable.

The difference between modesty and self-righteousness is a great part of a good name.

Our great goal is to grow in "*loving favour*" with God and men, as did Samuel and our Lord (***1Samuel 2:26; Luke 2:52***).

This happens when we keep the two great commandments, love of God and love of neighbor.

The "*loving favour*" of our Proverb is how God and others treat us, which we can choose by living a consistent life of godliness toward them.

So great are these goals, our reputation and esteem by others, that they should exceed any other goal. Men work long days of hard labor for many years to get rich, but building a good name and reputation are more important.

If you had a choice between a good reputation and precious ointment, you should choose the good name (***Ecclesiastes 7:1***).

Consider your funeral, and see the comments in ***Proverbs 10:7 The memory of just men is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot.***

How will you be remembered? Will your memory bring pleasant thoughts to hearts? Or will most cringe and be relieved?

You Have Two Names: Your first name is your personal name. How you live and treat others creates the reputation of your first name. God gave you that name with a pure reputation. What have you done with it since? You have either enhanced it or dirtied it.

Your second name is your family name. How your family lives and treats others creates their reputation. Are you promoting your family name? Or are you letting it decay? Do others desire to be with your family? Or have they been offended enough to back away?

David had a great name in the Bible. His name was much set by in Israel (***1Samuel 18:30***). Though Saul

was king with a princely son, Jonathan and the nation loved David, for he was better than any other (*1Samuel 18:1-16*).

Everyone wanted to be with David, be like David, or be married to David. He earned this by being gracious and wise at all times.

Blessings at Solomon's coronation included having a name greater than his father's, which was easily the greatest in Israel (*1Kings 1:47*).

Even God compared all later kings with David, and he, was described as a man after God's own heart. What a goal!

Nabal was the opposite. He was churlish ^{bad disposition}, overbearing, harsh, and difficult (*1Samuel 25:2*).

His name meant fool, and even his wife said he was one (*1Samuel 25:25*).

He was a man of Belial, wicked and profane.

The Lord, gave him ten days to think about what kind of man, he was before he died. And David married his beautiful wife (*1Samuel 25:39*).

Consider Joseph. Though a purchased slave, he earned the loving favor of God and Potiphar, by his exemplary conduct (*Genesis 39:1-6*).

Though a convicted rapist, Joseph earned the loving favor of God and the jailor (*Genesis 39:19-23*).

Though a term prisoner, he earned the loving favor of God and Pharaoh (*Genesis 41:38-45; Acts 7:10*).

Anyone who says their circumstances or past have poorly affected their name is just making excuses.

Consider Daniel. Though a captive eunuch from a strange, small country, he earned the loving favor of God and Ashpenaz, the prince of the eunuchs in Babylon (*Daniel 1:9*).

What can you do, to build your name and reputation and win the loving favour of others? Just a little folly can spoil a reputation (*Ecclesiastes 10:1*).

Reader, we must avoid even the appearance of evil, and we must quickly make amends for offences. (*Matthew 5:23-24; 1Thessalonians 5:22*).

Graciousness, is the greatest trait, for a good name and the loving favour of others, for it can win the friendship of kings and cause women to be always honored (*Proverbs 22:11; 11:16*).

Men love those, who build their lives in a godly manner (*Proverbs 27:9*).

Are you a tree of life (*Proverbs 11:30*)?

Do others benefit by being around you. Do they seek you out for help? (*Proverbs 9:8; 25:12; 28:23*)?

Is your speech a healing balm, a sarcastic whip, or a foolish noise? Men love pleasant and good words that are kind, gentle, friendly, and helpful (*Proverbs 12:18; 16:24; 18:21; 25:11*).

Charity never fails! **If** you learn and apply the fifteen phrases describing true love (*1Corinthians 13:4-7*), then your name will blossom, as a beautiful flower.

If your name is not great and your friends are few, it is proof you have not learned true love. Charity never fails!

If you are young, you have an advantage. Your reputation is still being built, and you should apply yourself with all diligence to make it the very best before God and men.

Your Name And Reputation Are Daily Choices.

You should choose to build your name and reputation. You should choose to preserve them more than any other project or goal.

You can change your name and reputation, so consider it, a blessed privilege and duty and a high priority for your life.

Rather than emphasizing exercise, diet, and sleep to build your body, which has little value to God or men, exercise yourself, unto godliness and loving others (*1Timothy 4:7*).

We have taken the name of Jesus Christ, by profession and association, so it is important that our own names and reputations give honor, to our belief and it's Leader.

Let us be as those of Pentecost, which grew in favor with all the people (*Acts 2:47; Philipians 2:14-16*).

Let our lives adorn the doctrine of God our Savior with glory and beauty (*Titus 2:5, 8, 10*).

Jesus of Nazareth grew in favor with God and men during his youth (*Luke 2:52*).

Jesus of Nazareth, was most gracious in conduct and speech (*Psalms 45:2; Luke 4:22*).

Because the Lord loved righteousness and hated wickedness, the Father's loving favor blessed Him, with the oil of gladness above His fellows (*Hebrews 1:9*).

Let Us Have Perfect Names Even As His Is Perfect.

Proverbs 22:2 The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

When the rich and poor meet together, the rich despise the poor for their poverty and stupidity, and the poor envy the rich for their prosperity and arrogance.

But the LORD made them both, and they have no reason to resent each other. For if the truth be told, they both arrived naked and destitute, and they shall both leave the same way.

The rich and poor meet together at birth and death. We should observe they are very equal in many important matters.

The rich and poor are born the same way, they both arrive naked, they both are unconscious and ignorant, they both are sinners before God.

The rich and poor both are vulnerable to the same diseases, both tempted with the same sins, both will meet God after death with the same amount of assets.

The financial difference between the rich and poor was not their decision. The sovereign, creator God of heaven determined the economic factors in each life before the foundation of the world (***Acts 15:18; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Daniel 4:35***).

If you don't like this fact, it is too bad. You cannot change it, and God's choices have already, and always will, affect your life.

Observe that in this Proverb we are not talking about poverty resulting from foolish actions. When a man is lazy, wasteful, and/or foolish, his poverty is his own fault. But that is not the object of this Proverb. There are plenty of other Proverbs condemning such conduct. Here we are talking about the differences God has made.

Consider The Most Important Factors In Economic Life.

Who chose the set of parents you received? Successful parents provide children with an inheritance, employment contacts, a superior education, great credit, ambition and confidence, and many other advantages.

The child born with the silver spoon in his mouth did not choose! Neither did the child born to mentally challenged parents scraping out a living!

Who chose the citizenship you received at birth? One child is born in poverty-stricken Ethiopia with no opportunity for anything, and another child is born in middle-class America with every opportunity.

The infant citizen in either country did not make the choice of his nation. God made the choice for him.

Who chose your intelligence and abilities? One child is born, with an IQ in the top 10% of the population, verbally and mathematically skilled, with personal charisma and leadership abilities.

Another child is born in the lower 25% of the population, cannot read, speak, or do math well, and has a weak and timid personality.

God made these choices, and to miss His great sovereignty, is to be ignorant of life's realities.

Who chose your field of endeavor and employer or business? One man gets an early job with a great company in a booming industry; it promotes from within, generously rewards good performance, and purchases stock options for its employees. He is rich in twenty years.

Another man works for twenty years at low wages in a dying industry and is laid off, without warning or benefits. He is destitute at the age of forty with nowhere to go.

God made these choices, and the rich and poor must recognize them.

These examples could be multiplied many times for other factors. God determined the important factors that lead to financial success before you were born.

God has made, the choices for both the rich and poor, and they should tremble before Him, and love and respect each other. No man knows the future, but God does, and He blesses or deprives men accordingly.

God knows all the factors and deals them according to His own just and righteous will.

But let us absolutely settle any question you may have about God's sovereignty in these factors. Solomon stated this axiom of life: *"I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all"* (***Ecclesiastes 9:11***).

And who is responsible for this time and chance? Solomon also gave us a Proverb, *"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD"* (***Proverbs 16:33***).

The rich and poor also meet together in another circumstance. They come together necessarily in economic pursuits, for the one cannot exist without the other.

The poor provide the labor, service, and trades to supply the rich with food, service, and luxuries; and the

rich provide the poor with employment, wages, and purchases of their products.

If all men were either rich or poor, the advanced economies we have would come to a grinding and screeching halt.

If all were poor, who would provide capital?

If all were rich, who would provide labor?

The rich and poor meet together, because they need each other.

This mutually pleasing relationship extends to the church as well, where those rich in spiritual gifts should not despise those less gifted (*1Corinthians 12:21*).

When the rich and poor meet together, the rich should care for the poor and be willing to distribute of their abundance to the needs of the poor, and the poor should be willing to honor and rejoice with the rich for God's good favor upon them (*1Timothy 6:17-19; Acts 4:34-37; 2:44-45; Romans 12:15; 1Corinthians 12:26*).

There should be no respect of persons at all for economic advantage in the house of God (*James 2:1-10*).

To make fun of the poor is very wrong, for it is to reproach your Maker (*Proverbs 14:31; 17:5*).

For it is the LORD that makes both rich and poor, as Hannah prayed (*1Samuel 2:7*).

Job knew that both rich and poor were made alike in the womb by the hand of God (*Job 31:14; 34:19*).

The rich should tremble, knowing that God can reduce them to poverty in a minute; and the poor should not despair, knowing that God can enrich them easily.

Why does God make one poor and another rich? He is the LORD, and He does according to His own will (*Job 33:12*).

God can teach the poor humility, contentment, patience, and faith through their poverty.

God can as well teach the rich the necessity of humility, beneficence, generosity, and thankfulness.

Our Proverb should cause us to tremble before God, who does all these things for His own glory. He is Lord of all! And we should be thankful for every blessing He chose in His eternal counsel to send our way.

Each citizen of this country should be very thankful for being born in America. And we could go on and on. Count your many blessings! You will be surprised to see what the Lord hath done!

If you are poor in this world, it is helpful to remember that there are many poorer than you can even imagine.

Thank the Lord for His bounty toward you!

If you are rich in this world, it is helpful to remember that there are many much richer than you. Thank the Lord for His reminder to be humble.

When it comes to salvation, there is no rich or poor, for all men are equally naked and condemned before their Holy God and Judge (*Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:28*).

There is no respect of persons with God (*Acts 10:34; Job 34:19*).

He is not impressed at all by the wealth of the rich. The rich cannot buy themselves out of even one sin.

Neither can they redeem even one brother by their wealth (*Psalms 49:6-9*).

Both rich and poor, small and great, shall stand before His bar of judgment (*Psalms 49:1-2; Revelation 20:12*).

The rich man went to hell, and the poor beggar Lazarus went to Abraham's bosom (*Luke 16:19-23*).

Riches mean nothing to this Judge. Salvation is of the Lord! Though in Christ, rich and poor are equal, they still have different roles and stations in life, which are still to be honored. (*Galatians 3:28*)

The Christian employee, is still under his Christian employer (*1Timothy 6:1-5*).

And these God-ordained differences should never be despised or overthrown. Each man is to abide in his natural calling with a diligent use of the rank, talents, opportunities, and duties God gave him (*1Corinthians 7:24*).

As the church of Jesus Christ, the LORD has made us all and bought us all. There are no differences in Christ Jesus. We have the same salvation, we have the same hope, we have the same trials, we have the same future expectation.

There should be mutual love, respect, and joy in and with each other. Any other attitude, such as envy, strife, or resentment, is from hell. May the Church of Jesus Christ prosper, through mutual love without respect of persons.

Some of the most wicked people of our day are class warfare politicians. Pitting rich and poor at each other for political favor. This an area that only God can straighten out!

Christian, no matter how poor you are in the things of this world, the Lord has given you eternal life and riches. He has written your name in the Book of Life, and He has predestinated you to everlasting glory and

wealth. We should be able to sing His praises forever, our future far outweighs, the empty riches of the wicked in this world. Thank you, Lord.

Proverbs 22:3 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

**Warning Danger Ahead
Proceed At Your Own Risk!**

Wise men are farsighted. They look ahead for potential trouble. They avoid a painful future by altering decisions today.

Fools are nearsighted. They confidently rush on with little regard to the risk of their actions. The warnings they ignored materialize into trouble that punishes them, often severely.

Prudent men, those with discretion and wisdom, see the danger ahead, so they avoid it. They do not want to be hurt, so they change course.

Simple men, the foolish and hasty, move forward without caution and get hurt. Caught up in the moment, they fail to protect their future. This rule is so important it has an identical twin (***Proverbs 27:12***).

Wisdom soberly looks ahead before making decisions.

Wisdom knows pessimism is better than optimism. Our own Proverb states, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Paul described this cautious approach as being circumspect, the inspection of every angle and direction, a full circle of caution (***Ephesians 5:15***)!

Haste makes waste! Hindsight may see 20-20, but foresight in a wise man, with God's blessing, is just as good.

After several plagues, some of the Egyptians brought their cattle into their barns and houses, when they heard that Moses' God was threatening hail (***Exodus 9:20-21***).

They could look past their hatred of Moses and Israel to see the reality of the danger. But foolish Pharaoh, after all the plagues, took his chariot down into the Red Sea in passionate folly! The one saved their cattle from certain destruction; the other was punished by drowning!

Slow Down And Think!

Where are you not looking ahead in your life? In what area, are you bulling ahead, against the warnings of wisdom and counselors?

If you tend to haste, you need to consider this rule more than most.

If you tend to stubbornness, you also need to consider it soberly.

**Have You Carefully Assessed All Aspects
Of Your Life As To Their Consequences?**

If you have not, then do so today! Or you will be punished.

Consider war. A wise general, sees a battle and its consequences and determines to withdraw, to fight another time under different circumstances.

The enemy, and his own men, and his heart may call him a coward. But he knows discretion is better than valor. He wants the odds in his favor before fighting. A foolish general marches on, with a grand display of bravery, to the annihilation of his army.

Consider business. Foolish financial managers, make short-term decisions, for current profits, ignoring the coming changes, in the economic or political environment, that will wipe them out.

Wise men, have a strategic plan for future growth and safety, even though it may cost them short-term profits. They hide their companies from the coming trouble.

Consider business and investment opportunities. A wise man laughs at stories of quick riches, as he knows there is no free lunch.

A wise man looks for the fine print, the lying testimonials, and the promotional tricks.

Fools, in their excitement to avoid labor and be somebody important, simply want to know where to sign and make their deposit. They believe every word they hear. Their punishment is certain.

Consider marriage. Fools follow emotions with little regard for proving a spouse. They end up in a painful marriage and are punished for the rest of their lives by their impatient, impulsive, and ignorant choice.

Wise men use many counselors and God-given criteria to end dangerous relationships and identify worthy candidates.

Remember, the odious woman and strange woman are only known by looking past their present impressions (***Proverbs 6:25; 30:23***).

Their appearance when "dating" is very desirable, but their future is miserable hell.

Ask seven wise married people for their honest assessment before you plunge into a lifelong relationship out of infatuation or necessity.

Consider education. **If** a man does not prepare himself adequately for a profitable field of endeavor, he must endure the punishment of working harder, for less money than his wise peers.

The long-term pain of underemployment obliterates the short-term pleasure of playing basketball, idolizing cars, or taking life easy.

Consider finances. Fools spend their money and have no safety net for trouble, or capital to take advantage of lucrative opportunities.

Wise men, by limiting spending and setting part of all income aside in saving, have both for the protection and prosperity of their family and estate. Again, only the man looking ahead will make the right choice today.

Consider child training. Wise parents see the spirits and actions of their children and alter their training to head off trouble down the road. Foolish parents, too lazy to either look or train, stay in their parental rut and suffer the painful consequences of rebellious children.

Consider sin. Wise men avoid temptations that lead to sin (*Romans 13:14*).

Wise men stay away from even the appearance of evil (*1Thessalonians 5:22*).

Fools rush on, like Samson and David, into sins that punish them horribly in the future.

A wise man knows, that watching television tonight may have painful consequences, for his soul and family in the future.

Consider the Day of Judgment. Wise men see the terror coming and live a holy life in light of it (*2Corinthians 5:10-11*).

Fools love the pleasures of sin for a season, ignoring the eternal pain of their actions. The short-term "pleasure" brings long-term punishment.

Our Whole World Is Insanely Simple They Ignore The Coming Day Of Eternal Death.

The Lord Jesus Christ will soon appear. His coming will be a day of dread for those who lived in pleasure and ignored His Word. But it will be an eternity of pleasure for those who lived for Him here.

Reader, be wise. Humble yourself, see the coming evil, and hide yourself in Christ!

Proverbs 22:4 By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.

Only the LORD can give so much wisdom with such great promises in fourteen Words.

Thank the Lord for the opportunity of learning this secret of the living.

The world stumbles on in educated ignorance, wondering why they are so poor, despised, and dysfunctional! They will never know this wisdom.

Neglecting an inspired jewel like this, is self-deceit and self-hate. The blessings are great and the conditions easy.

Here are conditions for the three blessings in this Proverb: A wise man will grasp each of the five aspects of this simple and direct Proverb.

¹Humility is the first condition. It is not thinking highly of yourself. Humility admits you are a sinner, and do not have all the answers, and without God's help knowing you cannot do anything well or right.

Humility is proven by a desire and ability to take correction, saying you are sorry, avoiding public praise, serving others quietly, being reserved publicly, never talking about yourself, and praising others.

Humble yourself before your Creator, and reject every idea you have contrary to the wisdom before you.

²The fear of the LORD is the other condition. This is reverently seeking to honor God in all you do.

Such a man does everything possible to obey and please the LORD, and He avoids anything, to dishonor Him as much as possible.

You can recognize the fear of the LORD by the desire a man has for preaching, faithful Bible reading, living righteously, and how much he hates sin (*Proverbs 8:13*).

Now the blessing for meeting these two conditions: ¹Riches are the first blessing. Sometimes these are financial blessings, but they are often other things as well.

There are many other things greater than money in the bank. Think about health, peace, answered prayers, extended blessings, great mercy and great grace! (*Proverbs 15:17; 16:8; 17:1*)

Spiritual blessings here and hereafter are also included. **If** you are disappointed or unmoved by heavenly riches, you have neither humility nor the fear of the Lord, and you do not understand real wealth (*Luke 16:11*).

²Honor is the second blessing. A humble man who fears the LORD will grow in favor with God and men. God honors those who honor Him (*Luke 2:52; 1Samuel 2:30; James 4:10*).

A man who truly fears the LORD will be honored by others, for his conduct will be gracious and righteous (*Proverbs 18:12; 22:11*).

Men will want to be his friend, and he will be lifted up from among other men by these two excellent and exceptional traits.

³Life is the third blessing. The senses in which life is meant here include things that cannot be described (*1Corinthians 2:9*).

Scripture mentions an abundant life, a good life, a joyful life, a peaceful life, a productive life, an extended life, and eternal life. And both here and hereafter will be spent with God Himself as your friend (*Genesis 15:1; Exodus 33:11*). Priceless blessings!

Proverbs 22:5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

Why do bad things keep happening to some people?

Why do they keep getting into painful situations with no escape?

People like this have not kept their heart and soul like they should have. They have been froward, unwilling to take correction and instruction, and they are being dealt with.

A froward person, is contrary to what is demanded or reasonable; perverse, difficult to deal with, hard to please; refractory, ungovernable; bad, evilly-disposed, 'naughty'.

Stubborn individuals like this, are going to do things their own way, regardless of what is right or what they are taught. We can confirm this definition elsewhere in the Word of God (*Proverbs 2:15; 4:24; 6:12,14; 8:8; 10:32; 16:28; 17:20; Psalm 101:4; 1Peter 2:18*).

Self-will is a self destructive sin (*2Peter 2:10-12*). See the comments on *Proverbs 14:9* and *Proverbs 28:14*.

Youth are often froward, and self destructive. Not willing to listen to the instruction of parents and elders, they run into sin and find themselves in the thorns and snares of its consequences.

Youth are sure they can avoid the thorns and miss the snares; so they rush ahead frowardly. The Holy Spirit warns against this folly and vanity of youth (*Proverbs 22:15; Ecclesiastes 11:9-10; Psalm 25:7*).

**Thorns Are The Painful
Difficulties In Life!**

Instead of a plain and easy way, a hedge of thorns makes the way full of troubles and problems (*Proverbs 15:19*).

The way of transgressors is hard; they will not have an easy and pleasant life. (*Proverbs 13:15*)
Thorns were part of God's first curse upon man for his sin in Eden (*Genesis 3:17-19*).

**Thorns Are Still God's Curse
(Isaiah 5:1-7)!**

God hates frowardness, so God is froward to them (*Proverbs 3:32; 11:20; Psalm 18:26; Leviticus 26:23-28*).

Rather than blessing them, He curses and judges them (*Jeremiah 23:12*).

Instead of prospering the work of their hands, He hinders it with blasting (*Amos 4:9; Haggai 2:17*).

No matter how the froward turn, they are pricked, torn, hurt, and shredded by thorns from God.

The negligent father is pained by rebellious children (*Proverbs 29:15; 1Kings 1:6*).

An impulsive marriage brings fifty years of trouble and grief (*Proverbs 30:21-23*). See the comments on *Proverbs 21:9*.

Obnoxious habits not corrected cause all friends to disappear. See the comments on *Proverbs 18:24*.

Foolish spending brings a chronic shortage of money (*Proverbs 21:17*).

**Snares Are Traps
That Catch And Hold Men
For Punishment!**

Instead of being free from fear and evil, the froward are trapped and caught by their sins (*Proverbs 29:6, 8; Job 18:8; 22:10; Psalm 11:6*).

The LORD will not let them get away with rejecting His wisdom and counsel (*Joshua 23:13; Ecclesiastes 9:12*). See the comments on *Proverbs 13:14*.

Sin gets men into trouble from which they cannot escape. Men are trapped by their folly, and sin keeps punishing them without respite or relief (*Proverbs 18:7; Ecclesiastes 10:13; 1Timothy 6:9*).

The adulterer is caught between the adulteress and her husband (*Proverbs 7:22-23; 6:26-35; 5:20-23*).

The impulsive co-signor, finds himself trapped with serious liabilities (*Proverbs 22:26-27*).

The unbridled talker finds himself shamed by the correction of his neighbor (*Proverbs 25:8-10*).

**The Man Who Keeps His Heart And Soul
Will Be Far From Thorns And Snares
(Proverbs 16:17).**

This lifesaving goal is to be sought with all diligence! Such a man humbly hears the Words of wisdom and instruction, and he is a doer of these Words. (*Proverbs 4:23*)

A man that keeps his heart and soul, does not resist, rebel, or try to protect his own opinions. He is careful to apply God's Word to his whole life.

Reader, how do we keep our heart and soul with all diligence, to avoid the thorns and snares of life?

We keep our heart and soul with all diligence by the fear the Lord, and not man (*Proverbs 13:14; 29:25*).

We keep our heart and soul with diligence by avoiding foolish men (*Proverbs 22:25; Deuteronomy 7:16; Judges 2:1-5*).

We keep our heart and soul with all diligence by letting nothing interfere with hearing God's Word.

We obey all the truth we hear. We pray for wisdom to understand and grace to obey.

We keep our heart and soul with all diligence by begging God to be saved from our hearts (*Psalms 139:23-24*).

We keep our heart and soul with all diligence by making straight paths for our feet (*Hebrews 12:12-13*).

We keep our heart and soul with all diligence, by seeking to be conformed to His perfect will, more than anything else in life (*Romans 12:1-2*).

The fear of the Lord and the way of righteousness is a fountain of life, to save us from the snares of death (*Proverbs 14:27*)!

Our LORD's yoke is easy and His burden light, why will we reject the good and easy path, for one with painful thorns and dreadful snares (*Matthew 11:28-30*)?

Reader, let us beg the Lord for thorns to keep us from sin! Let us ask for snares to catch our feet and keep us in the way of righteousness! Pray to avoid temptation, and **IF** we fall to any sin, come to ourselves quickly (*Luke 15:14-20*).

Such thorns and snares that turn us to our Father are gracious pricks of pure mercy!

Our Lord Jesus kept His soul in faithful obedience to His Father. And the thorns He wore as a crown and the snare that held Him for three days was by His free choice for all our sins!

And by those thorns and that grave we are delivered from the snare of hell! Glory to God!

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Child training works! A properly trained child, will fear God and live a wise and righteous life as an adult.

An untrained child, will not fear God or live a wise and righteous life as an adult.

**Only A Miracle Of Grace
Can Undo Poor Child Training!**

God is faithful. His Word is true. Do not question this promise. Exceptions do not alter the rule. Believe it! Do it!

There is no secret or mystery here. Slothful parents hunt for special methods to train their children. Slothful parents are always looking, reading, buying books, and attending seminars, but they are hardly ever training.

Parental reader, action is more important than technique. Consistency is more important than intensity. Stop looking for an easier or smarter way. Get busy! Obey the Word of God!

This Proverb is a commandment, not a suggestion.

This Proverb is a promise, not a possibility.

Bible believers trust this rule as much as any other verse.

Bible believers are not intimidated by the task before them.

Bible believers put their trust in the precious Scripture, and they get to work, today!

The Holy Spirit said, "*Train!*" He did not say raise.

We raise vegetables, but we train children. Feeding a child nutritious meals, providing warm clothing, giving him his own bedroom, and kissing him good night is not training.

Most every species of animals does these things for their young.

Training a child is calculated instruction and discipline, to form long-term character and wisdom, in the fear of the Lord and knowledge of Scripture.

We train them "*up*." This describes the period from birth to maturity.

Training can begin immediately, as infants can be taught a feeding schedule and that not all crying gets immediate attention.

It progresses from, a control stage, to instruction stage, then, to counseling stage. It continues through puberty and that whole new set of issues.

And parental reader, it continues to maturity, when a young adult creates a new home and starts the process again.

We train them up "*in the way*." Parents cannot train every step, but they can train the way (***Genesis 18:19***).

God gives them to us with a blank slate for a mind. We fill that mind with godly knowledge and wisdom.

As Scripture does not dictate every step of our lives, allowing us much individual liberty, so we train them in the way of godliness.

They are to be trained up in "*the way they should go*." It cannot be the way they want to go.

Each Child Defaults To Foolishness And Sin From Our First Parents!

Without training against that default instinct, they will grow into committed and hardened sinners.

No Training Is Default Training!

Parental reader, you will have a fool for a child, **If** you do not train them in the way they should go (***Proverbs 29:15***).

The way they should go is the way of righteousness laid out plainly in the Word of God (***Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 29:29; Ephesians 6:4***).

When they are "*old*," they will follow the training. Here is a promise to be believed. But it also allows for possible difficulties during adolescence, or the teenage years, before they are "*old*."

Properly trained as a child, the teenage years do not have to be difficult. **If** trained consistently, they will revert to that training as an adult. Believe it! Count on it!

What Is Child Training?

Child training, is a consistent example of righteous living, that the child can first feel and then observe as they grow up.

Child training, is teaching the existence of God and the absolute authority of the Word of God.

Child training, is enforcing God's rules and parental authority strictly. It is teaching by reproof and the rod.

Child training, is teaching by repetition throughout the day.

Child training, is using both positive and negative reinforcement for behavior.

Child training, is a very open relationship with children, allowing them to know you and learning them well.

What Is Not Child Training?

Yelling is not child training.

Browbeating or nagging them is not child training.

Spurts of enforcing rules and punishment is not child training.

"Time out" is not child training.

Sending them to a Christian school is only a part of child training.

Playing catch in the yard is not child training. Sesame Street is not child training.

Father, God clearly holds you personally responsible for training your children! Putting the mother in charge is not child training. She should strengthen your training.

Rocking them tenderly is not child training.

Giving them an allowance without working for it is not child training.

Previous generations grew up on farms observing the training of animals. **If** they did not train certain animals, they would either starve or be severely handicapped.

Child training was easy after watching colts broken and mules trained for the plow.

There is no rocket science here, and the search for new or creative techniques misses the boat. Any parent can train their children, **If** they will flush their selfishness and slothfulness and get busy! It is shame that seeing-eye dogs can be trained, but children cannot!

We have a mess on our hands in this country. The state believes your children belong to them. You do not have a right to spank your children in the eyes of the state. They consider it child abuse!

So, as a parent, you must walk with God! You must have a command understanding of the Word of God!

If you are going to be a successful God fearing parent in this generation, you will have a prayer life that will get wisdom, knowledge, understanding, discernment and instruction from God Himself to properly raise your children in this wicked environment!

The children of this generation are a mess. They are arrogant, foolish, ignorant, immature, lazy, profane, rebellious, selfish, and wasteful.

There is a clear an obvious cause for their personal and social dysfunction. Their parents were too busy, selfish, and lazy to train them.

The consequences are a generation of fools, which will beget more fools. Our nation's future is bleak, not because of Washington, but because of foolish parents.

Let the righteous arise! Every godly parent should seize this Proverb as his own and get to work.

Godly and wise descendants are one sentence away (with a little regular effort)! Give a reasonable and consistent effort, and trust the Lord for the rest (*Psalm 127:1-2*).

God can multiply a few loaves and fishes to feed a great multitude with much left over. He can bless your efforts to bear the fruit of righteous children, who will rejoice your heart. There is no reason to be defeated! There is every reason to be elated!

Proverbs 22:7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

The Proverb is an observation. Money is power. Those who have it, rule. Those who do not have it, serve. Solomon saw this fact by analyzing human existence (*Ecclesiastes 1:12-18*).

We are to find the lessons. Solomon did not teach the rich to oppress, nor did he teach the poor to revolt. The Bible condemns both errors.

God made rich and poor, for each other (*Proverbs 22:2*).

The financial wisdom of this Proverb is beneath the surface for the diligent (*Proverbs 1:6*).

Money corrupts. Those with it are often blinded to wisdom (*Proverbs 18:11; 28:11*).

Those with money are often blinded to true religion (*Proverbs 30:9; Matthew 19:24; James 1:27*).

Those with money are often blinded to others (*Proverbs 18:23*).

Those wanting money are blinded, to its vanity, to temptation, and to destruction. (*Proverbs 23:5; 28:20, 22; Ecclesiastes 5:10; 1Timothy 6:9-10*).

Money itself is never the measure of character, because God sends prosperity to fools (*Proverbs 1:32; Psalm 49:6-20*).

Money can corrupt both master and servant. But both are accountable to Christ Himself (*Ephesians 6:5-9*).

Money is power. It can be loaned to others, which makes them servants. It can buy you out of trouble (*Ecclesiastes 7:12; 10:19*).

God protected the poor in Israel, interest or terms favoring the creditor could not be used (*Proverbs 14:31; 22:16, 22; Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:36-37; Deuteronomy 15:1-11*).

Interest could be charged only to unbelievers (*Deuteronomy 23:19-20*).

Men who did not work were rejected, since hunger is the best teacher (*Proverbs 16:26; 20:4; 2Thessalonians 3:10*).

God wanted Israel to be a creditor nation, loaning money (*Deuteronomy 28:12-13, 43-44*).

Lenders are the head, and borrowers the tail! The creditor wags the debtor! **If** Israel obeyed Him, He promised to make them creditors; **If** they disobeyed Him, He promised to make them debtors.

God has better things in store for His people than being servants through financial debt. You should work and save to avoid debt (*Romans 13:8; 1Corinthians 7:21*).

Godly ambition avoids foolish or unnecessary debt (*1Corinthians 7:32*).

Obligations are paid on time (*Proverbs 3:27-28; Romans 12:17*).

Personal bankruptcy is not an option for Christians (*Psalm 37:21; 1Peter 4:15*).

Godly ambition prays only for moderate income and wealth (*Proverbs 30:7-9*).

Every saint should have enough for himself and also be able to help others (*1Thessalonians 4:11-12; Ephesians 4:28*).

Those individuals, with, true salvation, pay everything that they owe (*Luke 19:8-9*).

**Minimizing Debt
Is A Rule Of Bible Economics.**

Nations and citizens are in debt today: advertising promotes it; easy credit funds it; tax laws encourage it; and bankruptcy courts protect it. But God considers it folly and servitude (*Deuteronomy 15:6; Nehemiah 5:1-13*).

America is a tail! A slave nation! Regardless of what they think or say! It has built a house of cards on a pyramid of debt!

Zero-down mortgages and interest-only loans? God forbid! The head will soon wag the tail, and the house of cards will be swept away in financial panic!

Only fools love leverage, because it cuts both ways! Solomon warned often against financial risks (*Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26-27; 27:13*).

The poor should never borrow, because interest is higher for them, and they have no assets to pay off debts.

The poor stay poor due to their foolish spending and borrowing habits. Credit cards are a curse to all but the very wise, the easier the credit, the higher the charge.

A godly man has a perfect credit report, because he always pays on time (*Luke 16:10-12; 1Corinthians 10:32; 1Thessalonians 4:12*).

A godly man wants borrowing power, **If** he ever truly needs it (*Proverbs 22:3*).

A godly man is a lender and a giver, ready to help those truly in need, laying hold of eternal life (*Proverbs 28:8; Psalm 112:9; 1Timothy 6:17-19*).

A godly man knows liquidity is a secret of wise men (*Proverbs 21:20; Ephesians 4:28*).

If you are justly poor, do not be dismayed! It is a good sign, for God looks out after the poor (*Luke 1:53; 1Corinthians 1:26-29; James 2:5*)!

You might even be the servant of a rich tyrant on earth, but you are the Lord's freeman! And **If** you are a freeman on earth, you are the Lord's servant. God made both for better things (*Proverbs 22:2; 1Corinthians 7:22*)!

There is a story of rich and poor that blesses saints. Jesus Christ was rich, God Himself (*Philippians 2:5-6*).

Jesus became the poor carpenter's son of Nazareth and died on a cross. Why? That whosoever will could be saved. (*Philippians 2:7-8*)

And all those who were condemned to eternal wages of torment for their sins, through His poverty could be the rich inheritors of eternal life and heaven itself (*2Corinthians 8:9*).

How did the Father reward His deed? He is exalted forever (*Philippians 2:9-11*)!

Proverbs 22:8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

Sin And Hypocrisy Never work!

If you sin with a goal in mind, you will lose it. Sin will bring vanity, profitless and worthless loss.

If you use anger or violence to pursue your sinful way, it will not work. You will fail miserably.

Do not lie to yourself, for only godliness and righteousness will succeed and bring a good reward (*Psalm 11:18*).

You reap what you sow. *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"* (*Galatians 6:7*).

Why the warning about such deceptions? Because men believe they can get away with sin. But God will not be mocked. You cannot make light of His Word by sinning against it. He will deal severely for any rebellion!

Anger or violence will not bring success to sinful ways. You may temporarily force others into submission, but your wicked ways will not succeed.

There is One much higher than you, and He will crush your feeble attempts to promote yourself and defend your sinful life (*Ecclesiastes 5:8*).

Consider foolish Sennacherib (*Isaiah 10:5-19*)! Consider Pharaoh and all that happened to him!

Of course not all anger is wrong. The anger condemned here is the rage or violence of a man living in sin.

Phinehas was angry in a righteous cause, and it brought him a great blessing (*Numbers 25:1-15*).

Jesus was angry, but His rod did not fail at all. But remember, sinful anger fails! (*Mark 3:5*).

You Cannot Compromise God's Laws And Succeed!

If you compromise in any area of your life, you will pay for it. No matter what your intentions, they will not be achieved. You lose!

David tried to enjoy Bathsheba without consequences, but she conceived.

David got her husband drunk to cover the sin, but he was too faithful.

David angrily killed him and married his wife, but it cost their child's life and brought much judgment. David lost terribly!

A hypocritical father using anger, to dominate his children will lose horribly in the end, guaranteed!

A wife defrauding her husband sexually, to protect pride will lose miserably!

A husband sneaking pornography, cannot press his wife into a loving relationship!

An unfair employer, will not survive in the end no matter how he plays his managerial cards.

A covetous man who does not give, cannot keep his estate by diligence or frugality (**Proverbs 11:24; 21:13; Haggai 1:1-11**).

A rebel child, will not amount to anything, no matter how energetic he might be to prove himself (**Proverbs 20:20; 30:17**).

And the joy of the religious hypocrite, who pretends on Sundays, is very short (**Job 20:4-29**).

The only sure way out of these sins is complete repentance and cleansing. So, be sure your sin will find you out!

Proverbs 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Generosity Brings Blessings

God will bless the man who gives easily and liberally to those in need. The LORD looks out for the poor!

God purposely withheld from the poor; but to the wealthy God gave abilities and opportunities to help.

God is pleased to see a successful man giving cheerfully out of his excess to help those in poverty or trouble.

It is not enough, just to think kindly about the poor, there must also be the performance (**2Corinthians 8:11; James 2:16**).

The Holy Spirit also wrote about, caring for the poor elsewhere (**Proverbs 19:17; 21:13; 28:27**).

The Holy Spirit also wrote about the financial returns to generous men, "*The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself*" (**Proverbs 11:25**).

Contrary to the arithmetic of the depraved human heart, giving your money away is a simple way to get ahead! Give, and it shall be given back to you in the same measure, so give generously (**Luke 6:38**)!

The LORD provided for the poor in the Law of Moses, when He commanded Israel to keep their hearts tender and their hands open wide to any brother in need (**Deuteronomy 15:7-11**).

And God in His Law also promised, a blessing on those who would give. Job knew these principles well, and he appealed to the Lord about his careful attention to the poor (**Job 31:16-23**).

David described many blessings on those who help the poor. Consider them. He wrote, "*Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness*" (**Psalms 41:1-3**).

David also identified giving to the poor as a mark of a righteous man (**Psalms 112:9**).

Isaiah warned that the true worship of God required mercy on the poor, and he promised many wonderful blessings for those who put forth the effort (**Isaiah 58:7-12**).

God is well pleased with such sacrifices, and He is able to repay in proportion to a man's liberality (**2Corinthians 9:6-11; Hebrews 13:16**).

But giving also proves eternal life. Paul told the rich to be "*ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*" By so doing, they could lay "*up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*" (**1Timothy 6:17-19**).

Jesus Christ will remember any act of charity done to the least of His brethren (**Matthew 25:31-46**).

Can you generously help someone in need? It ought to be a priority of your life to make sure you help those that need your assistance. It ought to be exciting!

God has not charged you to help all the world's poor, but it is certain, that He will bring divine opportunities, to help your way.

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

The scorner's character has frequently been called attention to, in preceding chapters.

Few characters in society are more, despicable in spirit or pernicious in influence, than a scorner. He is profane, contemptuous, insolent, flippant, and prickly.

A scorner, deals in jeers and gibes, in sneers, satire, and lampoon. He himself, is the most contemptuous to others, as well as the most contemptible in himself.

A Scorner Sneers The Sacred Mocks At The Momentous!

The verse in Proverbs presents the scorner as: A social disturber. "*Cast out the scorner and contention shall go out.*" This implies that he is the breaker of harmony, the creator of ill-feeling and confusion.

A scorner, is a disturber in the family. The domestic circle to which he belongs, or with which he has any connection, he is sure to agitate with heart-burnings and jealousies.

A scorner, is a disturber in the church. When by hypocrisy he sometimes happens to gain admission into a Christian community, he soon makes his pernicious influence felt. His irony creates wounds, his jests shock the serious, his innuendos shake confidence and create suspicions.

A scorner, is a disturber in the nation. **If** he takes up with politics, aspires to popularity and has oratorical power, he is a demagogue, a firebrand. His object will be to disparage his superiors, to undermine authority, to set class against class.

A scorner, is, in fact, a disturber in all his social relations.

A social pest. "*Cast out the scorner.*" A scorner, should be thrust from the circle in which he is found. Excommunication is his righteous doom.

Sometimes the scorner gains great influence as a politician, and governments, instead of casting him out, take him into office and bribe him by voting him a princely income.

A scorner, should be expelled, be cast out from all places of public trust, from all confidential intercourse, and treated as a social pest.

Society should cast on him the eye of dignified contempt. Whether he is the member of a family, a church, or a cabinet, he should be removed. Never place confidence in the man of a scoffing spirit.

A scorner, is a canker worm in the social garden and he must be eliminated. He is a Jonah on the social ship, and the sea will "not cease from its raging" until he is thrown overboard.

But what, if we are not be able to cast him out? He may be a husband or a child. At least give a protest. At least show that you stand not on the same ground. At least turn away from his scorning.

Turn from him to your God. This will bring peace. Honor your Lord by enduring as he did year after year the contradiction of sinners. And who knows, that this meek and silent endurance with a loving, bleeding heart, may have power to cast out the scorning.

Then would he be a more welcome member of the family or of the church. 'Strife and reproach' would cease, the persecutor of the faith become a monument of grace, shining witness to the truth.

This verse can be read in another way: Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.

If one can eliminate the "mocking" person from their lives, it will cut down on the amount of strife, quarreling and insults they have to deal with!

Suppose the "mocker" is a close relative and we have to deal with them. This Proverb is teaching to cut down on our dealings with them as much as possible. What if the mocker is a member of our immediate family? Then pray to God to help that person and help us in our dealings with them!

All relationships go through difficult periods and that's a separate topic. Proverbs like this are describing the kind of person with no interest in getting along with the godly!

So what else is a scorner? As defined by "Strong's Concordance:" to scorn, make mouths at, talk arrogantly, to mock.

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

The scorner has no interest in truth or correction action. He is simply interested in doing his own thing and getting his own way. **Proverbs 13:1** *A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.*

Proverbs 14:6 *A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.* Wisdom continually eludes the scorner, because he refuses to "hear it" when he does find it.

Proverbs 15:12 *A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.* He is afraid that he might have to make changes that he doesn't want to make.

Proverbs 19:29 *Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.* He may try to avoid it,

but sooner or later, it will catch up to him. **If** not in this life, in the life to come.

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

Proverbs 24:9 *The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.* Scorners usually do not have too many friends. Who wants to be a friend of a person who is constantly ridiculing you... making fun of you... mocking you... In short, the scorner is a fool.

Proverbs 1:22 *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?*

What the Scorners Scorn: They scorn the doctrine of the Second Coming. (Because if it is true, then they are in trouble!) **2Peter 3:3-4** *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*

4 *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

Scorners mock the doctrine of the resurrection. (Because if it is true, then they have lived a lie, and will have to give account in the life to come.) **Acts 17:32** *And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.*

When the early Christians spoke in language they had never learned, the onlookers mocked in ignorance. (Scorners mock the work of God in any setting.) **Acts 2:13** *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

Scorners mocked the messengers of God because of the message they brought. **2Chronicles 36:16** *But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.*

Scorners scorn the people of God. **Psalms 123:4** *Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.*

Scorners mock the faith of the people of God. **Hebrews 11:36** *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:*

Scorners even mock God Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ. **Luke 18:32** *For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:*

It is always problematic to have scorners in the local church. They will be mocking the doctrine of Dispensationalism. They will be mocking the doctrine of Separation.

They will be mocking the decisions made by the pastor. They will be mocking decisions made by the board of deacons.

They will be mocking the old fashioned music. They will be mocking and ridiculing people everything they didn't like. They will be mocking and causing contention in the assembly.

Scorning is very harmful in the local church. This kind of scorning and mocking can be divisive, contentious, and hurtful to many. It is offensive, unkind, cutting, and can cause deep wounds.

This kind of scorning can ruin the fellowship among the saints and cover the whole assembly with a dark cloud. And to make matters worse, it is often based on half truths, outright lies and deliberate misrepresentations.

This kind of scorning can also spread like a disease throughout the church body until many are affected by it. Nothing good comes from a scoffer/scorner.

We are to avoid the scorner when possible. **Psalms 1:1** *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

Proverbs 29:8 *Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.* They can bring a whole city into a snare. They can also bring a whole church into a snare. Therefore, these troublemakers should be avoided.

Don't forget what Solomon says about the scorner: They won't hear rebuke. They will hate you if you do rebuke them. They refuse to seek counsel.

Scorners are often full of hate. They cannot find wisdom even if it is placed right before their face. Scorners love their scorning. Scorners are determined to mock.

There is no reasoning with an unreasonable scorner.

The few stir up contention among many, but while the many might get drawn into the brawl, the source of the trouble is usually an individual or a small group.

One or two gossipers can spread rumors and get a whole crowd all riled up. The crowd was living in harmony before the troublemaker stirred things up. Solomon tells us here that the crowd will return to harmony once scorning is removed.

Often the trouble maker will start the rumors, cause people to become angry and polarized, and then he can just step back and watch the fire blaze out of control. **Proverbs 26:21** *As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.*

"Strife" A legal case in court; the contention among believers can rise the point of legal action! (Corinth is an example) Verbal wrangling between individuals, implying strife and opposition, but not necessarily in a legal setting.

Sometimes the *"strife"* does not find its way to the judicial system, but it can be extremely hurtful and contentious. This brings great shame on the body of the Lord Jesus.

"Reproach" shame; disgrace; dishonor; insult; slander; When such contention among believers is expressed in the local church, it IS a shame and a disgrace.

"Reproach" is damaging to the testimony of Christ. It provides fodder for the unbeliever to speak evil of us, only this time with good reason!

Sometimes the *"reproach"* is aimed at one person: the object of the scorner's hated, a so called friend, a Sunday School teacher, a deacon, the pastor, one of the elders, etc. Slander and insults can be hurled back and forth, to the detriment, of the name of Christ in that community.

"Shall Cease" be put to an end; exterminate; stop; put away; leave behind. In the midst of a painful conflict, that is really what everyone in the crowd wants.

Nobody but the scorner really "loves" scorning or fighting. Solomon tells us how we can bring about peace. And it doesn't require a series of expensive trips to the therapist or to the psychologist. Just cast out the scorner and the scorning will stop, and so will the strife and reproach.

So remember this truth if contention arises here. The way to end it is to remove the scorner.

Proverbs 22:11 He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.

Here is precious wisdom! A man with a pure heart has gracious speech, so that great men choose him as their friend.

This wisdom begins with a pure heart, one free from all bitterness, envy, guile, hypocrisy, malice, pride, or selfishness.

Such hearts use gracious words, acceptable, agreeable, courteous, forgiving, gentle, kind, merciful, and pleasing words.

The combination is so delightful and rare that noble men are instantly and deeply drawn to it.

Graciousness is the most beautifying character trait. A gracious person is often described as a beautiful or charming person. Whether man or woman, graciousness makes a person delightful, pleasant, and winning.

It is a rare and sweet pleasure to meet a person like this. This trait is most clearly shown by excellent speech.

You will meet only a few in life; they will have great reputations; they will warm your soul; and you will crave their company.

Consider that Solomon, a king, admitted weakness for gracious men! He had heard about the friendship between his father David and Prince Jonathan, because he heard David's gracious speech had won Jonathan in a few moments (*1Samuel 17:57 - 18:4*).

Though David was a lowly shepherd and yet a threat to his future reign, Jonathan loved him as his own soul! Why? Because David's heart was free from any ambition, guile, pride, or selfishness!

So Solomon taught graciousness. He said: A gracious woman is always revered (*Proverbs 11:16*).

If a woman has few friends and is disliked, she needs graciousness. It is her odiousness, the opposite of graciousness, that turns others away (*Proverbs 30:23*).

A virtuous woman speaks very cautiously and discreetly, and then only with kindness (*Proverbs 31:26*).

She only says acceptable things, and she only says them at acceptable times. A meek and quiet spirit of desirable women, which God and men admire, is a large part of graciousness (*1Peter 3:3-4*).

An unwanted woman must examine herself through the ears of others. The best things she can do are to reject all critical and negative thoughts and cut her words in half.

A beautiful woman without the gracious discretion to know what to say and when to say it is like a jewel of gold in a pig's nose (*Proverbs 11:22*)!

Her words and manners, keep reminding you of the hairy pig, wearing the little piece of gold! When an average or ugly woman does not have gracious discretion, words fail to describe the horror of this creature!

Solomon also taught that wise men speak graciously, but fools destroy themselves with their words. While he attached the critical adjective "odious" to women, he attached "froward" to men. (*Ecclesiastes 10:12*).

A froward man is difficult, harsh, obnoxious, perverse, and unreasonable. He is the opposite of the gracious. A King delights in righteous speech, for he wants

counselors and ambassadors that advise and represent them well (*Proverbs 16:13*).

Solomon highly praised pleasant words (*Proverbs 10:20, 32; 12:18; 15:23; 16:21, 24; 24:26; 25:11*).

Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of graciousness. David prophesied of His gracious lips (*Psalms 45:2*). When Jesus first spoke in His hometown of Nazareth, the skeptics were amazed at his gracious speech (*Luke 4:22*).

Even his enemies had to admit that no man had ever spoken like Him (*John 7:46*).

Scripture is full of His gracious Words, coming from the purest heart (*John 4:6-30; 8:10-11; 9:37; 11:25-26; 18:1-26; 20:16; 21:1-14*).

Graciousness Begins With A Pure Heart.

Bitterness, envy, or strife in the heart is from hell, and leads to all sorts of confusion and evil (*James 3:14-16*).

A man's speech simply reflects his heart (*Luke 6:45*).

So you must keep your heart with all diligence (*Proverbs 4:23*).

If your heart is cheerful, contented, forgiving, kind, and thankful, you will think gracious thoughts. You must reject all sinful thoughts of bitterness, envy, evil surmising, malice, or revenge.

A pure heart produces gracious speech. Paul said, "Let your speech be always with grace" (*Colossians 4:6*).

He told the Ephesians to avoid all corrupt speech and focus on edifying words that build others up.

Paul said that a tenderhearted spirit, based in kindness and forgiveness, was right, but bitterness, wrath, malice, and evil speaking were wrong (*Ephesians 4:29-32*).

If you think kindly about others, rule your spirit, and guard your tongue, you will learn to be very gracious!

Reader, lay hold of this wisdom! This Proverb is pure gold! If you seek to grow in favor with God and men, there is no better way than graciousness.

Start with your heart and thoughts about others, you will have the internal fountain for gracious words.

The perfect place to practice is at home with spouse, parents, children, or siblings, where you are generally the least gracious.

With the blessing of God, the king will soon be your friend!

What Else Can You Do?

Listen more; talk less (*Proverbs 17:27*).

Promote others (*Philippians 2:3-4*).

Learn to live charity^{Love} (*1 Corinthians 13:4-7*).

Avoid folly (*Ecclesiastes 10:1*).

Hate jesting (*Ephesians 5:4*).

Be cheerful (*Proverbs 15:13, 15*).

Be content (*Hebrews 13:5-6*).

Exalt mercy (*James 2:13*).

Develop pitiful compassion (*1 Peter 3:8*).

Eliminate moodiness (*Proverbs 16:32*).

Overlook others' faults (*Proverbs 19:11*).

Make peace (*James 3:17-18*).

Only say what is acceptable to others (*Proverbs 10:32*).

Praise others (*Proverbs 12:25*).

Hate the limelight (*Numbers 12:3*).

Despise envy (*Proverbs 14:30*).

Don't be a busybody (*1 Peter 4:15*).

Pray for it! David had a pure heart, because he asked the Lord to search and perfect his heart (*Psalms 139:23-24* *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:*

24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.).

Pray for a greater measure of the Spirit of God in your life, so that you will bear the gracious fruit of the Spirit.

Any man or woman bearing love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance will be gracious! He will be incredibly gracious! She will be a new creature! (*Galatians 5:22-23*).

Forget what you think about yourself! Graciousness is what others feel about you.

Most odious and froward people, think themselves gracious, and most gracious people think themselves odious and froward!

It is this arrogance of spirit or humility of spirit that makes a person either odious or gracious! Humble yourself before God's Word!

Reject your pride! Others certainly don't miss your abrasive and irritating words and manners. If you have few friends, especially noble men, craving your presence, you are likely odious!

Parents, teach your children graciousness! Instead of wasting your life and their mind with the profitless drivel of today's profane education model, work on this great character trait that pleases God and men. It will do more for their future success than memorizing the periodic table of elements!

Can you define graciousness? Can you illustrate it daily in their sibling relationships? Can you apply it to the

various situations with people you encounter every day?

Study The Word!
Meditate On The Word!
Live The Word!
Require The Word!

If Christians were more gracious in their speech, others would be attracted to their Lord. Since the Founder and Teacher of Christianity, the Lord Jesus Christ, had a perfectly pure heart and totally gracious speech, it is a disgraceful shame when His so-called followers have neither!

Honor Your Savior
Defend Him By A Pure Heart
And Gracious Words!

Proverbs 22:12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.

True Knowledge Is Eternal.

The God of the Bible has had all of knowledge from the very beginning (*Proverbs 8:22-31*).

God will preserve all of knowledge forever (*Psalms 119:152, 160*).

God despises the arrogant thoughts of the wicked (*Psalms 119:113*).

God will destroy and humiliate the wicked, by exposing their words as lies and their thoughts as hallucinations (*1Corinthians 1:19-20; 3:19-20*).

"*The eyes of the LORD*" are a metonym for His providence in the affairs of men.

Eyes are used for His providence because they are the human sense that perceives and guides, and the precedent usage, is easily found elsewhere in Scripture (*2Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 32:8; Zechariah 4:10*).

God has committed His government of the universe to the preservation of true knowledge and the revealing of it to His dear children.

But God is just as committed, to expose and destroy the thoughts and words of sinners.

God will cause the hardened heart to be blind, confused, deceived, more hardened, and ultimately damned, because they reject the knowledge He offers, in creation and Scripture.

Are you not familiar with the God of the Bible? Too many preachers have replaced sound doctrine with

entertainment and fables, to scratch the itching lusts of carnal Christians (*2Timothy 4:1-4*)!

Introduce yourself to the God of the Bible, Who will do exactly as described above, by reading any two of these passages. There are more passages, but these should get the sober point across to any noble reader. (*1Kings 22:1-4; Job 5:8-14; 12:14-25; Psalm 147:19-20; Isaiah 8:13-16; 19:11-17; 29:9-16; Jeremiah 4:9-10; Ezekiel 14:1-11; Matthew 11:25-27; 13:10-15; 15:12-14; John 12:37-41; Romans 1:18-32; 1Corinthians 1:17-24; 3:19-20; 2Thessalonians 2:9-12; 1Peter 2:6-8*).

Pharaoh, the greatest ruler on earth, told Moses, "*Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.*" Famous last words! After destroying Egypt, killing their firstborn, giving their wealth to Israel, and drowning Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, the world knew the LORD!

God had blessed Pharaoh's life and his rise to power just for this event (*Exodus 9:16; Romans 9:17*)!

God knew full well his heart, and used his wicked thoughts, to prove that those who willfully harden themselves to the truth will ultimately be hardened by God Himself with no remedy. In fact, He told Moses beforehand exactly how the event would play out (*Exodus 14:4, 17; Romans 9:18*)!

On March 31, 1912 the Harland and Wolff shipyard in England had finished their finest project. In just two years, 1000 workers had built the world's largest and finest ship.

So confident were the architects and workers that they called the ship unsinkable and said, "Not even God Himself could sink this ship." Famous last words!

Two weeks later the Titanic was in two pieces at the bottom of the North Atlantic with the loss of 1507 lives! Great human confidence, wealthy luminaries, and many children did not move the Lord!

God has reserved knowledge to Himself, which are His secret things; but He has also revealed much of it, for the righteous who consider this knowledge a HIGH priority (*Deuteronomy 29:29*).

God inspired men to write the Bible, and then God preserved its copying, and translating, so that His knowledge is available for those who WILL read it (*Psalms 12:6-7; 45:1; Isaiah 30:8; 2Timothy 3:16-17; 1Peter 1:25; 2Peter 1:19-21*).

God prepares men to preach His Word and build churches, which are the defense and support of knowledge on earth (*Jeremiah 3:15; Ephesians 4:8-16; 1Timothy 3:15; Jude 1:3*).

Education is a handicap for finding true knowledge (*Matthew 11:25-27; 1Corinthians 1:19-20; 3:19-20; 1Timothy 6:3-5, 20-21*).

The faithless speculations of educated men have created the following absurdities and many others: The universe and life resulted from an explosion, mankind evolved from monkeys.

Capital punishment is not a deterrent, sodomy is normal, men and women are equal.

The greatest love is self-love, picasso was an artist, rap is music. War helps economies, corporal punishment warps children, etc.!

Though great efforts have been made by secular and religious powers to destroy Bible Christianity, it is still represented in most every city on every continent.

Bibles have been burned, ministers and believers imprisoned or put to death, threats issued, counterfeit doctrines created, religious ridicule used, and worldly temptations offered.

But the eyes of the LORD have preserved His knowledge and His people in the earth.

What Is The Lesson?

There is only one place to go for knowledge, God and His Word.

All other thinking is total darkness (*Isaiah 8:20; Psalm 119:128*).

The information explosion has not helped at all, men are ever learning without any truth (*2Timothy 3:1-7*).

It is critical that you humble yourself before God and beg Him, to teach you true knowledge.

Seek out a true preacher of The Word of God, that you might have help in learning (*Acts 8:30-35*).

Proverbs 22:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

**Challenges Are
Opportunities To The Diligent
Excuses To The Slothful**

**Adversity Means
A Little More Effort To The Diligent
Quick Defeat To The Slothful**

Any difficulty, is enough for the slothful, to cancel his plans and quit, for the lion that is in the streets might slay him!

The slothful desires all the good things of life, but his hands refuse to labor, so he must make up ridiculous excuses to justify himself. (*Proverbs 19:24; 21:25*)

The slothful loves to remain motionless; he prefers the bed to any other place (*Proverbs 6:9-10*).

The slothful dreads the thought of change, exertion, persistence, and pain.

The slothful and all wise men know that lions prefer the hills and woods, but the slothful makes up preposterous pretenses to avoid work! See the comments on *Proverbs 19:24*.

These are the words of the slothful man. He does not truly believe the city streets are this bad, but he uses this wild excuse to cover his slothfulness to others.

The explanations men have used to justify laziness and procrastination are Legion. As long as slothful men live on the earth, lions and other dangerous beasts will roam city streets and threaten their lives! Such excuses are so common, the LORD gave a twin for this Proverb (*Proverbs 26:13*)!

Seven men with good reasons proving a lion is not in the streets are not enough to overthrow the conceited excuses of a slothful man (*Proverbs 26:16*).

The slothful has convinced himself of failure, in order to keep from making an effort. The sound reasoning of diligent men is easily brushed aside!

The ingenuity, of lazy men to frame defenses for not doing their duty, is marvelous! They can explain away their responsibilities with a thousand excuses.

His lazy mans lie may become a self-fulfilling prophecy, for "*the way of the slothful is as an hedge of thorns*" (*Proverbs 15:19*).

The more the slothful man considers the difficulty of a project, the more difficult it becomes!

The slothful half-hearted efforts make even anthills seem like mountains! He fears the lion without, but forgets the lion within; who beguiles his soul into perpetual sleep, both for success in this world and success in the world to come.

Procrastination and hypochondria are sins. Both are excuses of cowardly and lazy men (*Romans 12:11*).

Ask a lazy man why he isn't happy, and he will fill your ears with his aches and pains. You would think Job exists in every generation!

Ask a lazy man why he didn't finish the job today, and he will fill your ears, with how tomorrow is better and a sure thing. The problem is he will say the same or similar things tomorrow about the next day!

What is the cure for fear and sloth? Get out in the street! Charge your duties with zeal! It will amaze you how empty the streets are of opposition, when you face them head on!

Ten fearful and slothful spies forgot the works of God in delivering them from Egypt and told the nation that Canaan was too difficult for them to take. Instead of the lion in the streets, they used the giants and grasshoppers excuse. (**Numbers 13:26-33**)

They said, *"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight"* (**Numbers 13:33**). Poor boys! They died in the wilderness for their lack of faith and diligence to take the promise land!

Jesus gave varied talents to three men. Two invested theirs and earned a nice return and the high praise of their lord. The other was a slothful loser, who buried his talent in the ground, out of intimidation and slothfulness. (**Matthew 25:14-30**)

The slothful mans excuse, was that his Lord was too severe in His expectations! Poor boy! His talent was taken away and given to the man with ten. The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer in the kingdom of Christ!

How shall we respond? Our Lord has called us to carry our cross daily (**Luke 9:23**).

Shall we dread the effort and shrink from our profession into carnal backsliding (**Philippians 3:18-19; Hebrews 10:38-39**)?

Shall we count up the cost and labor to pay it in full for the glory of our beloved paymaster? Will you take it up today? (**Luke 14:25-33**)

If you see a lion in the way of either natural or spiritual projects, remember His precious promise, *"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet"* (**Psalms 91:13**).

Let it never be said of you and me, *"The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle"* (**Psalms 78:9**).

The promises of God are obtained by the zealous, not the slothful (**Hebrews 6:9-12**).

Jesus obtained His crown, by facing and enduring the lion, in several encounters (**Psalms 22:11-21; Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 12:1-3**)!

Rejoice child of God, that Jesus did not hide from the lion without, or you would die in your sins! Consider His example and follow it in all your duties!

Proverbs 22:14 *The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.*

The enticing and flattering words of beautiful women are an incredible draw, and they seduce and trap men in sin, just as pits were dug to trap wild animals.

Adding intimate kisses to her alluring words, only a few exceptional men can resist her!

Male reader, her warm embrace and charming words should chill your soul, for they indicate the LORD has forsaken you!

In Solomon's time, digging a deep hole and covering it with sticks and leaves was a way to capture large animals. While prowling at night, the animal would fall through the weak covering and be unable to get out of the deep pit.

In the same way, the luscious mouth of a whore hides the pain, trouble, and destruction of touching her (**Proverbs 23:27-28; 6:29**).

Once a man has fallen for the seductive pleasures of a whore, he is only rarely recovered. The pit is too deep, too narrow, to allow ordinary means of escape (**Proverbs 23:27**).

Proverbs and many other Scripture warn, that only a few men are ever delivered from the addicting and damning attraction of strange other women (**Proverbs 2:19; 5:22; 6:32; 7:26; 9:18; 2Peter 2:14; Revelation 21:8**).

A whorish woman uses her mouth to allure, invite, and kiss her prey into submission, and few can resist her (**Proverbs 2:16; 6:24; 7:5, 13, 21**).

"For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil" (**Proverbs 5:3**).

A woman's mouth can be used for good or evil: holy women use them to adore, reverence, and kiss their husbands.

The sensual look, sound, feel, and invitation of a woman's mouth were too much for Samson, but Joseph heard her words, rejected her, and fled the scene (**Genesis 39:7-12; Judges 16:15-17**).

And here is the secret to avoid her deep pit: Run, man, run! Go far from her (**Proverbs 1:10; 4:14-15; 5:8; 7:6-10; 9:6; 13:20; Matthew 5:27-30; Romans 13:14; 2Timothy 2:22**)!

How do strange women use their mouths to seduce men today? They flirt boldly in public with compliments,

insinuations, jests, and invitations. And sometimes these even occur in our churches of our Lord!

And strange women also use the modern means of internet chat rooms, cell phones, email, cards, notes, letters, and e-cards. All wise men will steer clear of all such correspondence and communication with any bold or forward woman. Be a Joseph!

God is able to deliver men from strange women, which is why Jesus Christ taught men to pray that He would not lead them into temptation.

But when a man has sinned against Him; remember, God will not breach and man's will without permission.

God can and will abhor what he has done. The Lord will let him fall into this deep pit of the whore if he continues down this road and demands it; (*Deuteronomy 32:19; Psalm 78:59; 81:12; 106:40; Amos 3:2; Revelation 3:16*).

If it were not for the examples of David and Mary Magdalene, men might despair of mercy!

How do you get out of the deep pit? Repent, and Pray and beg God sincerely for mercy, fully stating the obvious nature and consequences of your folly (*Proverbs 28:13; Job 33:27-28*).

Then get away from her and anything to do with her! Then cut off all avenues Satan has to remind you of the "pleasure" she gave and all opportunities for you to encounter her again.

Show your sincerity, by practicing godly repentance, as defined in the Bible (*2Corinthians 7:10-11*).

Do not despair with this sin or its horribly binding consequences! Run to Jesus Christ and beg for mercy.

Remember, Jesus does not owe you immediate grace and strength, but His mercy endureth forever. So stay on your face before Him until He delivers you.

Jesus will forgive and strengthen you, as He did all the harlots that came to Him in the New Testament.

Take Paul's example of casting himself upon the mercy of Jesus Christ for his own problems with concupiscence (*Romans 7:7-25*).

When you think it is impossible, when you think your case is hopeless, remember our Lord's answer to His disciples, about the impossibility, of a rich man making it to heaven, "*With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible*" (*Matthew 19:23-26*).

The Lord Jesus suffered every temptation you face to a much greater degree: He can relate and help with your temptations and failures with strange women (*Hebrews 2:18; 4:15-16*).

Young man, in order to never need the remedy, you must avoid all attractive and forward women. "*Keep your heart with all diligence*" (*Proverbs 4:23*).

Avoid all lusts and activities that lead in her direction. Find a God-fearing wife and maximize your marriage. Learn to appreciate and love Joseph! Forget Samson's strength and see his great weakness for evil women!

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Children arrive programmed. No matter how sweet and darling mothers may believe, their hearts are void of wisdom and full of foolishness. They do not know or want what is right.

David spoke of being conceived in iniquity, and he told us children tell lies right from birth (*Psalms 51:5; 58:3*).

Wise parents observe young children lying by furious screaming for no reason at all, they are lying and angry by demanding attention.

Children are selfish, willful, impatient, lazy, discontented, liars, conceited, rebellious, etc. They do not need to be taught these things, as they know them instinctively from birth. Without training, children only know foolish thought processes and reactions to life.

If children are not corrected and taught wisdom, they will pursue these errors to a life of hell. And the best and only way of such correction and training is by the use of the rod.

A rod is a straight, slender wand of wood or other material that applied to the back can cause moderate pain without any bodily harm.

A rod stings rather than thuds. It is called the rod of correction, for its purpose is to correct the foolishness raging in every child. It is wise for a parent to consider use of the rod.

Sometimes the rod is used like a shepherd nudging and prodding sheep or cattle to stay together or go in a certain direction. It doesn't take much to get a child attention most of the time .

It was often a hickory stick, a popular American tree, and thus the old educational phrase, "Reading, writing, and arithmetic, all taught to the tune of a hickory stick."

Consider Encyclopedia Britannica's entry for flogging in its 14th edition: Flogging has been one of the most universally utilized methods of punishing public crimes, as well as a means of preserving family, domestic, military and academic discipline.

A foolish, rebel child, Bob Dylan, wrote (1964), "The Times They Are A-Changin'." Parents do not spank much anymore; and of course, the amount of public crime and general rebellion, especially among youth, is much greater. But truth does not change.

And truth is simple. The rod of correction will save children from hell in this life, could in the next.

And we still kill capital offenders. But many want to outlaw spanking, which would save such fools from killing others and thereby themselves (*Proverbs 10:13; 13:24; 23:13-14; 26:3; 29:15*).

Jesus was born without foolishness, without sin; He always obeyed His parents (*Luke 2:51*).

Our Heavenly Father uses the chastisement on all His children (*Hebrews 12:5-11*).

Proverbs 22:16 He that oppreseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

Rules For Your Financial Success

God can and will bless or curse you economically depending on how you treat the rich and the poor. God's secrets are revealed here.

If you take advantage of the poor to enhance your wealth, God will diminish you to poverty.

If you reward the rich for the same greedy goal, you will also end up poverty-stricken.

Good men give to the poor and deal fairly with the rich, for this is just and righteous.

God expects a man to be merciful and kind to those with less than he has. This is especially true for the poor and needy like widows and their children. The Holy Spirit expanded this rule later in this chapter (*Proverbs 22:22-23*).

Son, How Important Is This Rule Of Wisdom?

Consider the LORD and what He will do to those who oppress the poor! God judges severely those who mistreat the weak and needy (*Job 20:15-29; Isaiah 5:8-10; Zechariah 7:8-14*).

Godly men bless and help those poorer than themselves, for they know that any difference among men is by God's sovereign choice, not because they of deserving (*Romans 12:16; 1Corinthians 4:7*).

Godly men know God has special affection for widows and their children, so godly men are very cautious and

generous in financial dealings with them (*Proverbs 23:10-11; Psalms 12:5; 68:5*).

Taking advantage of the poor to get ahead is not wise and is actually counter-productive, because God will fight for them (*Proverbs 28:16*).

A wise godly man will pay full price or more for purchases from them (*Proverbs 20:14*).

A wise godly man will give full measure or quantity for their purchases from widows (*Proverbs 16:10*).

A wise godly man will lower the price for a widows purchases, even if you control the market (*Proverbs 11:26*).

A wise godly man will be generous to the poor and fatherless (*Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Luke 6:38*).

Reader, you will never lose giving to the poor, for God will repay (*Proverbs 14:21, 31; 19:17; 28:27*).

What kind of man gives to the rich instead of the poor? A greedy man, that thinks only of building, a network or obtaining favor for potential profits.

Such men will take advantage of the poor while they pamper the rich. Jesus Christ is different, for His rule, when putting on a feast, is to ignore your friends and invite those who cannot repay (*Luke 14:12-14*).

There is no goodness or righteousness, shown by generosity to own family or friends (*Luke 6:32-36*).

Favoring the rich, while denying support-help to the poor, is perverse, and will cause God to respond as surely as stealing from a widow or orphan.

Reader, hate the thought of bribes, or any gifts even related to such thoughts (*Proverbs 15:27*).

Just because you have rich friends, these friends cannot save you from God's response (*Proverbs 11:21*).

God hates this kind of wickedness (*Psalms 5:5; 11:5*).

Men in general have been the enemies of truth and a godly lifestyle (*James 2:1-7; 5:1-9; Acts 13:50*).

Consider God's treatment of His children. Jesus Christ became poor in order to make them rich (*2Corinthians 8:9*).

Though this is contrary to all human reasoning, this soul saving transaction, was accomplished by the wisdom of God.

For those who neglect God's grace, He will take from them, the little that they think they have, and give it others (*Luke 8:18; 19:24-26*)!

Proverbs 22:17 Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

There Are Prerequisites For Learning Truth And Wisdom!

And they are not listed in any college handbook. First, humble yourself to admit you are ignorant; Second, stop thinking and talking, so you can be taught by those wiser than you; Thirdly, love and commit to what you are taught. This process guarantees learning!

Solomon taught these three points, by inspiration from God. When his father King David died, Solomon was made king, though still young and tender. He followed these steps to become the wisest man that ever lived, short of Jesus Christ (*1Kings 3:5-28; 4:29-34*).

By nature, men rebel against these three steps, so most live and die as fools.

Reader, you were born with an arrogance that resists humbling yourself, to instruction from others.

Reader, you would rather think your own thoughts or speak them, than listen to others.

Reader, your heart loves its own foolish notions and does not want to change, to truth and wisdom.

Bowing Your Ear Is Humbling Yourself And Admitting Ignorance!

David said, "LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me" (*Psalms 131:1*).

Solomon said, "And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in" (*1Kings 3:7*).

These men got rid of pride! What level of truth and wisdom did these two acquire? More than any other natural man! Those who follow their example, will have similar results.

David and Solomon rejected any confidence in your own thoughts. They admitted ignorance and they begged God and teachers to help with their foolishness (*Proverbs 30:2-3; Psalms 32:8-9; 119:18; Isaiah 66:1-2; 1Corinthians 3:18*)!

Learn the basic axiom of wisdom, God's thoughts are above our thoughts as high as the heaven is above the earth (*Isaiah 55:8-9*)!

Hearing the words of the wise requires several things: You must stop contradictory thinking, so your mind can receive instruction (*2Corinthians 10:4-6*).

You must stop talking, about your ideas and opinions, so you can learn better ones from those wiser than you (*Proverbs 18:2; 26:12*).

You must select wise men as your teachers (*Proverbs 19:27; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Isaiah 3:12*).

Children assume, they know more than their parents. Amazing! They need to grasp, the importance of hearing their parents.

Citizens assume they know more than government officials. Amazing! They need to listen.

Church members assume they know more than their pastor.

Men today do not want to be taught, so they hire entertainers to tell them fables (*2Timothy 4:1-4*).

Seeker sensitive churches provide the place where these rebels, gather for cookies and milk and a sensitivity sessions.

While the situation is more widespread than before, the basic character flaw is very old (*Isaiah 30:9-10; Ezekiel 33:30-33; Amos 2:12; 7:12-17*).

Solomon exhorted his son often about the importance of hearing. At the same time you must reject false instruction (*Proverbs 1:5, 8; 4:1, 10; 5:7; 8:6, 33; 14:7; 19:27; 19:20; 23:19*).

Cornelius had a right attitude about hearing (*Acts 10:33*).

The noble Bereans were ready to hear (*Acts 17:11*).

Jesus warned, strongly about how you hear (*Luke 8:18*).

Do not provoke God to be against you by refusing to hear your prayer (*Psalms 95:7-11; Hebrews 3:7-19*)!

Applying your heart to knowledge rejects old attitudes, goals, and opinions, to learn new ones. It is a choice, to love things, you are learning and hate contrary ideas (*Psalms 119:113,128*).

Applying your heart, is making true knowledge very important, to your soul and paying the price to get and keep it (*Proverbs 2:1-5; 18:1*).

Applying your heart means getting excited and thankful about wisdom (*Proverbs 2:10; Psalm 119:47; Jeremiah 15:16*)!

Applying your heart also means holding on to knowledge for dear life (*Proverbs 4:4; 6:21; 7:3*)!

Your **love** or **hatred** of instruction, says a lot about your character (*Proverbs 10:8; 12:1; 15:5*). And the consequences are great in both directions (*Proverbs 8:36; 13:13, 18; 15:10; 28:14*).

Job and David loved the correction and instruction of God's Words (*Job 23:12; Psalm 119:162-163*).

Truth and wisdom, should be a most worthy cause for celebration (*Nehemiah 8:10-12*).

Child reader, bow down your ear to your parents, hear them carefully, and choose to love and trust their experience and wisdom. It is for your life! They know more about the world than you can imagine!

They have a far greater love for your future peace, pleasure, and prosperity than even you. Reject their instruction, and die young (*Proverbs 30:17; Ephesians 6:1-3*)!

Adult reader, You first need to find a man of God to teach you the Word of God without apology, compromise, or obvious error (*1Kings 22:7; Malachi 2:7; Galatians 1:6-9*).

Reader, you must bend your ear to your pastor, hear him carefully, and tremble before the Word of God that's preached (*Isaiah 66:2; 1Thessalonians 2:13; 5:20; Hebrews 13:7*).

For those that do not like these methods, God and wise men will watch you wallow in ignorance and distress. Satan and your flesh hate Bible preaching. (*Proverbs 13:15; 1Corinthians 14:37-38*)

You must desire the sincere milk of the Word as a newborn babes, and recognize the conflict (*2Corinthians 10:4-6; 1Peter 2:2*).

You need to humble yourself to admit ignorance? To allow a wise man to correct, instruct, rebuke, and teach you?

To despise your own habits, ideas, preferences, and traditions and embrace the Word of God on every subject? This is your great goal, for this is the means of truth and wisdom.

Proverbs 22:18 For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

The Words Of God Are Wonderful Things!

It is your duty to bow down your ears and hear God's Words (*Proverbs 22:17*).

It is your duty to apply your heart to love God's Words (*Proverbs 22:17*).

The Words of God will bring great pleasure to your soul, and you will be prepared to share them with others.

Keeping God's Words in your heart will be pleasant to your soul. They will be sweeter than honey (*Psalm 119:103*).

Keeping God's Words, is the rejoicing of your heart (*Psalm 119:111*).

Keeping God's Words, is like finding great spoil (*Psalm 119:162*).

Jeremiah said God's Words, were the joy and rejoicing of his heart (*Jeremiah 15:16*).

Do you crave God's Words? Job said, "*Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food*" (*Job 23:12*).

How long do you go without food? Do you crave God's Words like you do food?

Is the preaching of God's Words the best part of your week? Or is it going out to eat?

Do you go to a Bible preaching church, to hear His very Words explained?

Does your pastor even believe He has God's Words? Does he present them as individual jewels from God's mouth?

Reader, do you have the Words of God? There are so many Bibles today, all proclaiming to be the word (singular) of God. But which Bible has the Words (plural) of God?

Jesus Christ and His apostles had Scripture from which they argued important doctrine from single Words (*Matthew 22:31-33, 41-46; John 8:58; 10:33-36; Galatians 3:16; 4:9; Hebrews 8:13; 12:26-27*).

Only by knowing, the certain Words of God can we use them to answer others, for Solomon said, "*That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?*" (*Proverbs 22:21*).

It is only the certain Words of truth that we want to hear, and it is only the certain Words of truth that we want to speak.

If you keep these precious Words within you, and **If** you meditate upon them and **If** you apply them to your own life and the world around you, His precious Words, will become fitted in your lips!

You will have ready Words on the tip of your tongue for those seeking the truth!

You will be able to answer their hard questions, for the Words of truth will be very familiar to your mind.

God's true saints have His Words fitted in their lips, and they feed many (*Proverbs 10:21; 15:7*).

God's true saints exalt Jesus Christ as the sovereign Lord of all in their hearts, and they are always ready to give an answer to those asking for reasons for their faith (*1Peter 3:15*).

If this is not true of you, reader, where have you failed? Do you need a better teacher, to listen more attentively, to read more often, or to meditate more carefully? I warn you, you had better do whatever it takes!

Proverbs 22:19 That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.

Are you thankful for words? The smallest part of language that conveys meaning?

The certain Words of truth, bring wisdom and knowledge, and are necessary to know and believe God.

The certain Words of truth, communicate the excellent things God has prepared for His own (*1Corinthians 2:1-16*).

God had taught Solomon the importance of words, so he reminded his readers to consider the great gift he gave them, the certain Words of truth (*Proverbs 22:17-21*).

Specific words are also necessary to properly answer questions (*Proverbs 22:17-21*).

Christians are required, to give a reasonable answers for their hope in God to those who ask, and a reason requires an intelligent and logical use of words (*1Peter 3:15; 1Samuel 12:7; Isaiah 41:21; Acts 24:25*).

Luke wrote two treatises of many Words to a noble Greek man named Theophilus to prove the facts about Jesus Christ and his apostles (*Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-4*).

God Chose To Communicate To The World By Words!

God could have created music videos, an elaborate picture books with heartwarming scenes, warm and fuzzy feelings by dramatizations, chanting in Arabic, mumbling in Hindi, Charismatic tongues, or a special food to convey truth.

But God chose the teaching of His inspired Words (*Deuteronomy 4:1-19; 6:4-9; 8:3; 11:18-21; 12:28-32; 17:18-20; 18:18-19; 27:1-3, 8, 26; 28:14; 29:19-20, 29*).

The Bible is the Words of God, preserved nearly 4000 years (*Psalms 12:6-7; Isaiah 30:8; Matthew 5:18; 1Corinthians 2:13; 14:19; 1Timothy 4:6; 6:3; 2Timothy 1:13*).

Each Word is necessary for man to live the life of faith (*Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4*).

Jesus and Paul argued from single Words (*Matthew 22:32, 43; John 8:58; 10:35; Galatians 3:16; 4:9; Hebrews 8:13*).

God will judge the publishers and readers of modern versions that alter, delete, and add Words (*Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19*).

Bible preaching is plainly described in the Bible, and it is nothing like the feel-good, rah-rah pep talks of seeker sensitive pastors (*Nehemiah 8:8*).

There are three steps to Bible Preaching:

1. Read the Words,
2. Explain the Words, and
3. Make application for the Words.

You do not need intermittent chords from the organ, flannel graph figures on a board, an interpretive dance, a WWJD bracelet, or a chalk drawing.

Preach the Word, Paul charged. How? By preaching Words! (*2Timothy 4:1-2*)!

God's children love such preaching! The Holy Spirit praised the Bereans for being nobler than the Thessalonians. Why? Because they received such preaching with a ready mind (*Acts 17:11*)!

Jesus told His apostles they were blessed for hearing His Words (*Matthew 13:16-17*).

So they in turn taught the Words of truth to others (*Acts 5:20; 10:22; 13:42; 26:25*).

Are you thankful for sound Bible preaching of God's Words? Not many are (*2Timothy 4:3-4*)!

It Is A Good Day And A Great Blessing When The Words Of Truth Are Made Known

Proverbs 22:20 Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

The Bible is the most excellent book on earth. It has more counsel and knowledge than any other. Reading anything else is vain and vexing in comparison.

The Bible has the purest poetry, the sweetest songs, the profoundest philosophy, the truest doctrine, the most sublime themes.

The Bible has the most accurate history, the grandest mysteries, the most glorious personages, the best advice, and the greatest value.

The LORD, Creator of all things, inspired every Word. It is as relevant today as ever, for He designed it for all generations.

Solomon asked his son to humble and apply himself to the Words, he wrote inspired by the Holy Spirit (*Ecclesiastes 12:8-12*).

Solomon wanted his son to have the pleasant reward of truth (*Psalms 19:7-11*).

Solomon wanted the Words of God, in his son's heart and mouth.

Solomon wanted them in his heart, so he would trust in the Lord.

Solomon wanted them in his mouth, so he could answer the certain Words of truth to those that asked him questions during his life (*Proverbs 22:17-21*).

The Proverb applies not only to Solomon's writings, but to the rest of the Bible as well (*Isaiah 8:20; 2Timothy 3:16-17*).

Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived on this planet, other than Jesus Christ, Who was God in a human body (*Colossians 2:9*).

Solomon could talk about trees and other subjects at such a depth that kings sent wise men from great distances to hear him (*1Kings 4:29-34*).

Solomon was widely renowned for his great knowledge, understanding, riches, and projects. God inspired him to be one of the 40 authors of the Bible.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Solomon wrote this collection of Proverbs, a book of philosophy, and a love song, three of the Bible's 66 books.

Have you humbled and applied yourself to God's Word? Do you know it well? Is it hid in your heart? Is it fitted in your lips? Can you give its certain Words of truth to those that ask questions?

Do you know how excellent God's Word is in counsel and knowledge? Or is it just a dry, holy book of the Christian religion to you?

Do you falsely presume God's Word is only for ministers or theologians?

Do you prefer the animated version from Disney? There is no light or truth anywhere in comparison to the Bible. You cheat yourself to ignore it.

State educators (indoctrinators), will use daily brainwashing to convince you that books written by Dr. Seuss and Dr. Spock are superior to the Bible.

The State educators (indoctrinators), will make it illegal to carry the Bible, quote the Bible, or use the Bible as a source.

The State educators (indoctrinators), cannot afford to have students or citizens with an absolute subject authority, for then their fantasies would be exposed.

The devil and educators have conspired together to guarantee tenure for hallucinators by ridiculing the inspired Words of truth (*Genesis 3:6; John 8:44; 2Corinthians 11:3; 1Timothy 6:20-21*).

Religious schools are not better. Roman Catholics brainwash their followers to believe that unmarried men, rooming together, chanting in Latin, and fondling beads are wiser than the Bible.

Protestant schools affirm that only the original manuscripts can be trusted, so you must trust their learned professors to tell you the meaning from Hebrew or Greek. Three dead languages!

Again, tenure is guaranteed for hallucinators, by undermining faith in the Words of God that, were inspired and preserved in the English King James Bible!

God gave you a written document, to know the truth on any subject and be saved from the hallucinations of pagan and profane dreamers.

The Bible's widespread acceptance would force educators to get a real job, its widespread acceptance would put the entertainment industry out of business, its widespread acceptance would force politicians to live and rule wisely.

The Word of God is ridiculed and slandered on every side. But any man, woman, or child can be wiser than all three of these segments of society by believing and obeying the Bible (*Psalms 119:98-100, 104, 113, 128*).

If you want to know about the origin of the universe, sell Charles Darwin's depraved fantasies and buy a Bible.

In the few minutes it takes to read *Genesis 1-3*, you can know everything about the creation of the heavens, the earth, the sea, all plant life, all heavenly bodies, all animals, birds, and fish, and the origin and names of your first parents (*Hebrews 11:1-3*)!

Do you mean, in five minutes, I can outwit the late Carl Sagan? Easily!

Interested in geography or geology? What formed the Grand Canyon? Curious about those buried mammoths in Siberia that have stomachs full of tropical vegetation? Wonder no more! Read **Genesis 6-9**, and you can learn about the worldwide flood that drowned all living creatures but for Noah, his family, and the animals he saved for you on the ark!

Are you confused by the great variation of languages throughout the earth, especially since your teachers told you that all men evolved from one salamander that wanted to walk on two legs and go to flight school to be an astronaut?

All you need is **Genesis 11** to find out that God confused mankind's one language into this great diversity at the Tower of Babel, when they would not obey His command to separate and populate the earth!

Are you unsure about capital punishment? Get sure (**Genesis 9:6**)!

What do you think of same sex unions? Think right (**Leviticus 18:22**)!

What is the origin of sodomy? Wonder no more (**Romans 1:18-28**)!

Is it possible to pick a spouse and guarantee a great marriage? Easily (**Proverbs 31:30**)!

Can children be trained to do what is right? Of course (**Proverbs 22:6, 15; 29:15**)!

Does God endorse sex? He invented and perfected it (**Proverbs 5:19; Genesis 2:25; Solomon's Song; 1Corinthians 7:1-5; Hebrews 13:4**)!

But the Bible gets much, much better than the few examples of wisdom above.

The Word of God tells the secret mysteries about Jesus Christ that are hid from the world (**Matthew 13:1-17; 1Corinthians 2:1-16**).

The most profound facts in the universe are centered around Him (**1Timothy 1:15; 3:16**)!

The Origin Of Death And Its Cure Are Revealed In The Bible.

Jesus Christ died as a Substitute to save the world from death and hell, and you can believe on Him for the assurance you are one of His.

This world's future is very bleak (**2Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2Peter 3:1-18**)!

Do you know the excellent things in counsels and knowledge that are found in the Bible?

Proverbs 22:21 That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?

Truth is absolute! Truth is not relative! Truth is not open to discussion! Truth is not a matter of opinion! Truth is not subject to interpretation! Truth is not subject to personal preference!

Truth is a settled fact! Truth does not change with time! Truth does not care about trends! Truth does not differ in cultures or circumstances! Truth is not found by sensitivity sessions, public opinion polls, political, or educational symposiums.

Truth Is The Sovereign Choice Declaration Or Command Of God Regarding Any Subject!

Why did the Holy Spirit use Solomon to write Proverbs? To make his reader know the certainty of the Words of truth, so he could teach them to others! (**Proverbs 22:20**)

Why did God give us the Bible? For the very same reasons (**Malachi 2:7; 2Timothy 3:16-17**)!

Absolute Truth Is The Word Of God!

Truth is objective! Truth is identifiable! Truth is communicable! Truth may be written! Truth may be learned! Truth may be repeated!

Man is confused, because his heart is desperately and deceitfully perverse (**Jeremiah 17:9-10; Romans 3:9-18**).

Since man rejected the truth in creation, God removed his natural ability to recognize the obvious (**Romans 1:18-32; Isaiah 44:20**).

Therefore, he creates his own rules of right and wrong to justify and defend his base lusts (**Psalms 36:1-2; Luke 16:15; Ephesians 4:17-19**).

This generation is the most confused of all! Compulsory education and various audio, print, and video media force the depravity of educated thinkers on all, who have exposed human depravity to new depths.

God has cursed man's educational efforts, and His curse is evident in the confusion of current thinking (**1Corinthians 1:19-20; 3:19-20; 1Timothy 6:20**).

The home-educated farmer, who knew God from his Bible and working with the creation each day, has been

exchanged, for a yuppie, educated by evolutionary, socialistic God-haters and entertained by whoremongering, lawless buffoons.

The nation is reaching the tail end (literally) of a social experiment, in bringing about total moral confusion and depravity. They call adultery an affair, sodomy gay, fornication partying, and bratty children ADD.

Man is more confused today than his imagined caveman ancestors.

Man thinks he came from a monkey, mates with any filly like a horse, eats like a pig, kills unborn children like an ostrich, repeats what he is taught like a parrot, laughs at idiotic comedies like a hyena, struts to music like a chicken, and dances like a baboon.

Man rejects corporal and capital punishment, while aborting babies and watching "Texas Chainsaw Massacre." He ridicules hard-line Bible preachers, while castigating anyone even questioning evolution.

But there is absolute truth in the universe, and these confused animals just described will never find any truth. Solomon knows truth, and he gave it to his son and any readers so desiring truth in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

The Bible is truth, and anyone willing to tremble before the Word of God and its Author will find absolute knowledge and understanding.

Truth does exist; it should be taught; and it must be defended.

Jesus said, "*Thy word is truth*" (*John 17:17*).

Peter said the Bible was more sure than God's voice he heard from heaven (*2Peter 1:16-21*).

Isaiah wrote, that any idea contrary to Scripture, proved total darkness (*Isaiah 8:20*).

David exalted God's Word on all subjects, and he hated any differing opinion (*Psalms 119:128*).

Paul said the world's science was not true science and all things, could and should be proven, as good or bad (*1Timothy 6:20; 1Thessalonians 5:21*).

Because natural man is a slave of the devil, who is the father of lies, man has no interest in truth (*John 8:44-45*).

Jesus knew he could have gathered larger crowds with lies. But He is the Truth, so He presented truth with such authority and clarity that the people were astonished at His superiority, to their effeminate and ignorant instructors (*Matthew 7:28-29*).

The apostles did not preach fables. They taught absolute truth as the faith in God (*Luke 1:1-4; Titus 1:1*).

The apostles rejected eloquence, to keep world lings from understanding or believing it (*1Corinthians 2:1-5*).

The apostles were eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who proved His resurrection, with many infallible proofs (*Acts 1:3, 22; 1Corinthians 15:3-8*).

The Apostles Taught This Fact And The Whole Bible As Absolute Truth.

Consider this: Adultery is an offence worthy of death, and so is sodomy; but the latter is an abominable, unnatural perversion.

Abortion is child murder, and ADD can be easily solved by restoration of spanking.

One man and one woman in marriage is the only basis for sex and the fundamental unit of society.

Women are to reverence their husbands, and they should learn spiritual truths from their husbands. These facts and thousands more like them are absolute truth, for they are declarations and commands of the sovereign LORD.

Every Word of God is pure (*Proverbs 30:5*). The only wholesome words in the world are those of the Lord Jesus Christ (*1Timothy 6:3*).

Every reader should know how to give answers of truth to those who might ask (*1Peter 3:15*).

And it is the duty of true saints to earnestly contend for the faith, the absolute truth, once delivered to the saints (*Jude 1:3*).

Opinions of all men, saved or unsaved, are worthless. We must give truthful Bible answers for all sincere questions.

God seeks true worshippers, who will worship Him in spirit and in Truth (*John 4:23-24*).

There is nothing left to debate, to discuss, to invent, or to modify. God has revealed His perfect will for man to know and do, and to this revelation we must seek with all our hearts (*Deuteronomy 4:5-10; 6:24-25; 29:29; 32:46-47*).

Anyone speaking otherwise should be rejected (*Proverbs 9:6; 14:7; Deuteronomy 13:6-18; Psalm 101:3; Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 5:11; 2Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6,14; 1Timothy 6:3-5; 2Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 3:10-11*).

Seek Bible answers for all your questions, and settle for nothing less. Exalt God's revealed precepts, and hate every false way (*Psalm 119:128*).

The opinions of any man or all men amount to the same, confusion! Give Bible answers for any sincere questions from others. Let your words be the certain Words of truth. Earnestly defend the truth at all times.

Proverbs 22:22 Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:

After the solemn preface in the preceding verses, one would have expected something new and surprising: but no, here is a plain and common but very needful caution, against the barbarous and inhuman practice of oppressing poor people.

Observe: The Crime Prohibited. It is the oppression of the poor. This is a common crime. The poor have always been oppressed.

The poor do the hard and the trying work of the world. The poor build our houses, the poor construct our vessels, the poor weave our fabrics, the poor man, works on our vessels over the perils of the sea.

The Poor Produce The Wealth Of The Country.

The fortunes of our rich, are trees that have been planted by the hand of the poor man and watered by the sweat of his brow.

From the fruit of that tree the poor is kept away by the hand of owners and managers. The single grape that falls from its clustered branches shall sooner be allowed to rot in the earth than be put kindly into the hands of the worker.

In agriculture, the poor man toils as a beast of burden in the hot suns of summer and the bleak winds of winter. The poor labors give value to the estates of the landlord, and cover the fields with golden crops in autumn; yet out of all, the poor can scarcely afford a place to live, or buy clothing for his family, or a wage for their food.

In war, the poor fights the battles of despots and nations. The poor falls with millions of his class on the field of slaughter and blood. The poor builds thrones and constructs crowns, yet the poor gets no honor or reward; others wear the laurels and gain the prizes.

Thus The Oppression Of The Poor Man Is A Common Crime.

To "rob the poor because he is poor" is a great aggravation. To rob any man is wrong, to oppress the richest brother is a crime, but to rob the poor "because he is poor," is of all oppressions the worst.

Rich men will not suffer themselves to be wronged, poor men cannot help themselves; and, therefore justice requires that we should be more careful to guard their rights.

In this crime, there is the lowliest cowardice, and the most heartless cruelty.

Cowardice Because The Victim Is Powerless!

Cruelty Because The Victim Is Already In Distress!

Observe: The Punishment Threatened; "*The Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.*"

No crime is more frequently denounced in the Bible, or as abhorrent to God than that of oppressing the poor; ***Isaiah 3:15*** *What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.*

The accumulation of Divine vengeance is heaped upon this sin. ***Psalms 109:16*** *Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.*

God Is The Perfect Counsel Of The Poor! He "*will plead their cause! Malachi 3:5* *And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.*

In courts of human judiciary, there are sometimes attorneys generous enough, to stand up and gratuitously defend some poor and unprotected prisoner. This, God does for all the poor.

If they have no friends amongst men, they have one Great Friend Who will ever be true to them. God is the avenger of the poor.

God is not only the counsel, but the judge. "*He will spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.*" Oppressing is paramount to self destruction!

Do not exploit the poor, because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the LORD will take up their case and will plunder those, who plunder them. (***Proverbs 22:23***)

Again, this true principal is nothing new. In fact, we've had a Proverb, on the proper treatment of the poor already, in this chapter and in the past few lessons.

This is a clear command against the rich and powerful taking advantage of the poor and the weak.

This speaks of the underclass, the underprivileged. The term "*poor*" also speaks of those who are weak and helpless because poverty and political weakness often go hand in hand.

In most societies, money is power. Money buys, so called justice. Money buys all kinds of advantages.

Those with money have the power to hold on to their money. Thus, there will always be class warfare in one degree or another. This has been true, since the beginning of time, apart from the very short age of innocence, in the Garden of Eden.

In **Matthew 26:11**, Jesus said, "*For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.*" It is just a fact of life. The war on poverty will never be won until His Kingdom comes.

This is true because of human nature: There will always be lazy people who will perpetuate poverty through their indolence.

There will always be selfish, greedy people who keep hard working poor people poor.

There will always be those who abuse alcohol and drugs. There will always continue to be various forms of bigotry. There will always be the abuses of raw greed.

We can pass all the laws we want, but we will never change human nature. You can penalize poor behavior and reward good behavior, but unless society suddenly becomes overrun with regenerated Spirit filled hearts, there will always be poverty in one degree or another.

Proverbs 22:23 For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

The poor and weak have a powerful Friend!

If you mess with the poor, The LORD will mess with you! It is a rule of godliness and wisdom to treat the oppressed and vulnerable with great care.

The Bible often mentions orphans and widows as those deserving special treatment, but the rule applies to any afflicted, helpless, poor, or needy person (**Proverbs 23:10-11; 31:8-9**).

With pronouns in this Proverb, we must find the antecedents in the context. Solomon had just written, "*Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate*" (**Proverbs 22:22**).

The Lord will plead "*their*" cause, meaning the cause of the poor and afflicted.

The Lord will spoil those that spoiled "*them*," meaning the poor and afflicted. **If** you bother or harm a poor or afflicted person, the Lord will defend them by hurting you!

The rule is simple: Do not take financial advantage of a poor person, since his poverty makes him more vulnerable.

Do not press claims or rights against afflicted or troubled persons. Using the example of orphans and widows, consider God's repeated warnings (**Exodus 22:22-24; Deuteronomy 24:17; 27:19; Malachi 3:5; James 1:27**).

Using the example of the poor, consider God's repeated warnings (**Proverbs 14:31; 17:5; Exodus 22:25; 23:6; Deuteronomy 15:7-11; 24:12-15**).

How severe is God's revenge against those harming the weak and needy? "*Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless*" (**Exodus 22:22-24**).

This is serious business! Helping the helpless is wise! Hurting the helpless is suicide! Do not worry about oppression you cannot stop, for their Friend is watching (**Ecclesiastes 5:8**)!

Are you tempted to think, But I have never robbed the poor, and I have never oppressed the afflicted. Really? Let's see.

If you are a husband, have you ever hurt your wife, the weaker vessel, out of bitterness (**Colossians 3:19; 1Peter 3:7**)?

If you are a parent, have you ever hurt a child by a critical, harsh, or overbearing approach (**Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21**)?

If you are an employer, have you ever failed to follow through on a commitment (**James 5:1-5**)?

If born again, have you ever presumed on the services of other church members (**Jeremiah 22:13-14**)?

Rachel oppressed Leah, so God gave Leah three times more children, and Rachel died in childbirth (**Genesis 29:31; 30:14-16; 35:16-20**)!

Peninah oppressed Hannah, Elkanah's other wife, so God gave her Samuel, five other children, and her husband's heart (**1Samuel 1:1-6; 2:21**)!

Judas Iscariot oppressed the Lord Jesus Christ, so God dashed his bowels across a field and cut him out of any mercy in this world or the next (*Psalm 109:1-20*).

Proverbs 22:24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

Angry Men Are Fools Full Of Fury.

There is nothing godly, noble, or manly about angry men, no matter what kind of re-construction you put on it or excuses you make for them.

Angry men are fools. **If** you want to be a wise man, you will avoid them at all costs, or you run the risk of learning their profane and wicked habits to the destruction of your soul (*Proverbs 22:25; 13:20*).

Angry men are fools. **If** you want a peaceful life, you will avoid them, for they will bring conflict into your life without an end (*Proverbs 15:18; 19:19; 29:22*).

Angry men cannot learn new ways of living, so you will be required, to get them out of trouble over and over. The best choice is to realize they are helpless slaves of their depraved emotions and avoid them.

Angry men will tempt you to learn angry habits yourself, and they will cause you a lot of trouble.

You do not have a right to any friends you wish. God has authority to limit His children's friends. Wise men appreciate God's wisdom about friends, and they socialize accordingly. Do not deceive yourself; evil communications corrupt good manners (*1Corinthians 15:33*).

Anger is in the bosoms of fools (*Ecclesiastes 7:9*).

Wise men defer anger (*Proverbs 19:11*).

Wise men rule their spirits and are slow to anger (*Proverbs 14:29*).

Why? Because wise men know, that truly great men know, how to rule their spirits and avoid anger (*Proverbs 16:32*).

Why? Because wise men know that anger, never helps them work the righteousness of God (*James 1:19*).

Why? Because wise men know, that angry haste in any such matter, will bring them shame (*Proverbs 25:8*).

Angry men often glory in their quick temper as a sign of manliness or toughness. Only fools get angry quickly, because they are weak slaves, to their base passions (*Proverbs 14:17, 29*).

Angry men cannot rule their spirits, so God compares them to defenseless cities without walls, any slight event will trigger their total collapse and ruin (*Proverbs 25:28*).

Reader, the lesson should be clear enough. What will you do with it?

Cut off acquaintances or friends who get angry quickly or often. Angry men should be left in their own fury. Solomon's reason is plain enough in the following verse, "*Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul*" (*Proverbs 22:25*).

Reader, the lesson should be clear enough. Avoid angry men. Do not befriend them, associate with them, or be connected in any way you can avoid. Do not go into partnership with an angry man, for you will smart for it.

Do not marry an angry man, for he will cause you more pain than you can imagine.

Do not buy or sell to an angry man, if you can avoid it. Why cause yourself a perpetual headache? Do not even go to dinner with such a person (*Proverbs 17:1; 21:9*).

Jesus taught that anger without a cause is murder in the sight of God (*Matthew 5:21-22*).

Of course, the effeminate religionists and silly women of the present generation have removed these three words from their newfangled Bibles, leaving the verse to condemn any and all anger (*2Timothy 3:1-7*).

However, God and His prophets and apostles got angry at sin and sinners. Paul wrote that it was possible to be angry and not sin (*Ephesians 4:26-27*).

Rather than choose angry men for friends or go anywhere with furious men, choose the saints of God for your friends, and go with them to the house of God.

The true children of God do not get angry or furious.

The true children of God are filled with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (*Galatians 5:22-23*).

Do these nine traits describe you? Do they describe your friends? Do they describe your church?

Proverbs 22:25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

Sin is contagious, but virtue is not! We transfer sickness one to another, but not health! Evil friends will corrupt you; but you will not convert evil friends.

**A Law Of Wisdom
Man Defaults To Sin But Never To Virtue!**

Friendship and association with evil persons will teach you wicked habits and trap your soul. You are the company you keep.

Our Proverb is connected to the one before it, which condemns friendship with angry men and association with furious men (*Proverbs 22:24*).

Godly men will steer a wide course from such men. Anger and fury are marks of folly, which reveal the wicked character of men who cannot rule their spirits (*Proverbs 14:17; 16:32; Ecclesiastes 7:9; James 1:19-20*).

Angry and furious men seldom have friends. They are resented, even by most men.

But friendship sometimes overlooks or excuses the error you once despised. Love is blind! The sin will then infect your conduct. You first make excuses, you then become numb, and you then before long overreact with him, you then are like him! Now, you are a depraved soul who can now fuel this new sinful habit.

One of Solomon's important lessons for growing in wisdom, is to avoid ungodly and wicked men (*Proverbs 1:10-19; 4:14-17; 9:6; 13:20; 19:27*). See the comments on *Proverbs 13:20*.

Solomon's father David had taught this rule before (*Psalms 1:1; 26:4-5; 101:3-8; 119:63*).

Even rulers, with great character and authority, must avoid the bad influence of evil counselors (*Proverbs 25:5*).

This lesson has been observed by the prudent throughout their lives. Unprincipled friends destroy the integrity of the righteous.

Saints learn a carnal approach to life, and they trap their souls with the pressure to compromise from their friends.

Israel did not destroy all the pagan nations of Canaan, and it cost them dearly, trust God's Word (*Psalms 106:34-40*).

Consider Solomon and his marriages. He made affinity with Pharaoh and married his daughter (*1 Kings 3:1*).

And though this man was blessed with great wisdom and wrote this book and the next two of the Bible, the evil women in his life corrupted his wisdom and ruined his soul (*1 Kings 11:1-11; Ecclesiastes 7:26-29*).

Marriage must be only in the Lord (*1 Corinthians 7:39; 11:11*).

Believers must marry believers, and these believers must both be sold-out, on-fire, totally-committed disciples of Jesus Christ as measured by Scripture.

God once destroyed the earth with the Flood for the sons of God marrying the daughters of the world (*Genesis 6:1-3*).

Paul warned, "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*" (*1 Corinthians 15:33*).

Why the warning of deception? Your deceitful heart will tell you that you can still hold fast to your convictions with a less than perfect friend. But you cannot, and you will not. You are trying to protect your foolish infatuation. Forsake the foolish, and live (*Proverbs 9:6*).

Our nation is now obsessed with ecumenical fellowship between many denominations and doctrinal beliefs, all of which are an abomination to God.

It doesn't matter what 15,000 pagans singing "Amazing Grace" sounds like. God condemns such associations! **If** a man or Angel does not worship according to Paul's gospel, reject him (*Galatians 1:6-9*)!

The Lord will do so, so you might as well get the first lick in (*Matthew 7:21-23; 1 Corinthians 16:22*)!

Parents have a grave responsibility to protect their children from evil companions. They must screen their friends and eliminate, any that would not pull their character and conduct higher.

Equal friends are of no value. **If** many parents practiced this rule, fools would have no friends, which is safe and appropriate justice.

Do you want a friend who will only teach you the way of righteousness and holiness? Let the Lord Jesus Christ into your life for fellowship (*Revelation 3:20*).

He will provide sweet relief, constant comfort, and wise encouragement for your soul. And He will never leave or forsake you!

Proverbs 22:26 Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.

Solomon warned his son against foolish financial risks. It was a common temptation, especially for a wealthy prince, to guarantee others' debts. The desire to help those in need, whether from charity or pride, could be hazardous.

The wise man saw the danger of over committing capital and often warned against it (*Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 27:13*).

Striking hands: shaking hands in our culture; sealed a deal (*Proverbs 6:1; 17:18; Job 17:3; Psalm 144:8, 11*).

This simple gesture of financial commitment could have severe consequences. Done hastily without due thought, a man could create enough contingent liabilities and be obligated to pay off enough debts of others to wipe himself out financially (*Proverbs 22:27*)!

Reader, are you prudent with the income and assets God has given you? A symptom of this foolish and wicked generation, is the many personal and corporate bankruptcies.

Wise men minimize debt, shun needless risk, avoid cosigning loans, maintain savings, invest cautiously, purchase insurance, and work diligently. They do not get in a position even close to bankruptcy, and they would never use it, to cheat a single creditor of even a dime.

Consider the ways Americans strike hands and take on foolish financial risk.

Men flash credit cards for frivolous and discretionary spending, and then the bill arrives with a 21% interest rate attached. Many never get out of this hole.

They stay afloat temporarily, by using other cards to fund their living. But disaster is just ahead! Solomon is warning you!

They learned it from big government and mass merchandising. Central governments have little fiscal restraint, because they believe they can create money to pay their bills. They will keep spending until the whole house of cards (their financial system) collapses.

And modern advertising and purchasing convenience, will keep citizens spending, beyond their means. The government should require warning notices on credit cards, not just cigarettes!

Prudent men do not put all their eggs in one basket, no matter how attractive the deal appears.

Prudent men diversify their investments and sources of income.

Prudent men do not enter business deals undercapitalized, for they know that is one of the surest invitations for trouble.

Prudent men do not overextend themselves by building too big, buying too much, or living too high.

A wise man always asks, "What if"? And his question is not, what if this venture goes gangbusters, how will I spend my millions? The question is always, **If** this venture goes bust, can I still support my family and fulfill my obligations.

Solomon warned against any financial choice that creates unnecessary or dangerous risk. You have been warned!

Proverbs 22:27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

Solomon taught, risk management 3000 years, before Harvard added a business school in 1908.

Truth and wisdom do not depend on a socialist education, liberal professors, the case study method, textbooks with Keynes' fantasies, MBA's, CPA's, or MTV.

In fact, truth and wisdom are missed by these educational tools of educated fools! This should not surprise or discourage you, for what else do you expect from evolved monkeys!

What have the best and brightest brought us? The Great Depression, Many recessions, Boom-and-bust business cycles, Insane fiscal and monetary policies, An unbelievable national debt, Elimination of savings, Obsession with spending, Accounting fraud, and An epidemic of bankruptcies!

This ancient Proverb from the Lord could have helped! Apply it to your own life, for business school graduates are too wise to learn from it (*Proverbs 26:12, 16*)!

The Holy Spirit used Solomon, to write this Proverb to give financial knowledge and discretion, to young men (*Proverbs 1:4*).

There is an impulsive temptation in men, especially young men, to take on more risk than they should. A greater fear of loss, would save many young men from financial trouble or destruction.

A more disciplined and patient approach to investing and career planning would also help. The lesson here is to minimize unnecessary risk.

The Proverb has two halves: The first half identifies the financial error that results in the punishment. It reads, "*Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts*" (*Proverbs 22:26*).

Those who foolishly, make financial decisions or enter financial deals with unnecessary financial risk, are heading for serious pain and trouble.

Solomon warned often against contingent liabilities (*Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 27:13*).

Secondly, striking hands: we shake hands, sealing deals.

The issue here is being a surety for debts, which we call cosigning a loan or guaranteeing another's performance. It is very tempting to enter these arrangements to help friends in financial transactions.

So Solomon warned against them by describing a possible painful outcome, the creditors might repossess your bed! **If** you do not manage financial risk, it will eventually wipe you out!

Prudent men analyze potential danger and avoid it (**Proverbs 22:3; 27:12**).

Fools plunge ahead. It has been wisely said, Discretion is the better part of valor. There is nothing courageous or noble about a man that plunges into financial deals without careful, cautious, and pessimistic analysis.

Even if other fools before him found success that way proves nothing. God judges such men, with *"the prosperity of fools"* (**Proverbs 1:32**).

An entrepreneurial spirit, is only an asset when handcuffed to prudence. Wise men hate risk and avoid it.

Where have you created contingent liabilities, Financial risks that might take away your bed?

Are your life, health, house, and vehicles properly insured? Are you covered for liability judgments in a suit-happy generation?

Do you speculate in financial derivatives like futures contracts or writing options? Have you put all your financial eggs in one basket, so if things do not work out you will be wiped out? Can you sleep on the floor?

Do you know to cut your losses short? It means to admit you are wrong and sell bad investments, close marginal businesses, or leave a dead end job.

Do you smell the lie when terms are too good to be true? It means they are not true, and you are about to become a victim!

It is much better to forgo some investment return than to risk not having your investment returned! How many loans have you cosigned? Get free (**Proverbs 6:1-5**)!

Avoid speculation. Reduce financial risk. Hate debt. Diversify. Protect capital.

Insure important assets. Be knowledgeable. View the future with pessimism. Never bet the farm on anything. Do not believe above market returns.

Be content with ordinary returns. Work hard. Work smart. Save some of all income. Secure a transferable skill.

Give God the glory for a wonderful Proverb, that can save you from much pain and possible disaster.

Proverbs 22:28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

Here is a old-time Proverb, with a sober warning, never compromise your integrity in any business dealings, especially not in a subtle manner, which would defraud another person of their property.

The lesson is taken from the old custom of leaving landmarks to distinguish property lines and boundaries. And our Preacher condemned it also in **Proverbs 23:10**.

In open fields where property lines met, the custom called for a small ditch, an upright stone, a pile of stones, or some other semi-permanent marker to identify the boundaries of adjoining fields.

These markers would be used for identifying property, valuing an inheritance, settling an estate, and so forth. Profane men could easily move such markers at night to increase their field incrementally by stealing property from their neighbors.

Consider a small square field of only 40 acres that is divided equally by four farmers into smaller square fields of 10 acres. **If** one of these farmers is a son of Belial and moves the center marker only ten feet, a very small movement, he increases his land by over 1/4 acre by stealing subtly through encroachment from all three neighbors. No man's natural eye could discern such a movement, and only very careful measuring could prove it.

We have iron stakes buried in the ground to mark property boundaries, and they have been duly surveyed and recorded in carefully maintained maps in county offices. But such was not the case in ancient Israel, so we should appreciate the care for their markers.

God gave property to men, and He protects it. Here is one of the great laws of God's wisdom in governing a people. The commandment *"Thou shalt not steal"* protects the property of others and includes our Proverb's warning.

In fact, the LORD condemned even desiring the property of others with his commandment, *"Thou shalt not covet."*

The Law of Moses stated clearly the purpose and protection of landmarks, and a curse was pronounced in public worship against anyone tampering with them (**Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17**).

Job listed this as one of the heinous crimes of the wicked, and the Lord compared the evil princes of

Judah to those who would move the bound (*Job 24:2; Hosea 5:10*).

We have encountered the wise man's warning, about business fraud before, for it is a sure temptation of life (*Proverbs 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23*). See the comments on *Proverbs 16:11*.

Now, should we merely smile at the quaint real estate practices of the past, or should we seek God's wisdom in these Words? Let us seek to learn. Providing things honest is a rule of the New Testament (*Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:21; 1 Peter 3:16*).

The chief thrust of the lesson: Is to reject any secret fraud or clandestine encroachment on the property of another, even if you have not used force. Though men do not see your actions, God does see them; and you are violating the just rights of your fellow man.

If we broaden our lesson, it condemns transactions without established terms. Before entering a business deal or commitment, the details of the arrangement should be defined, so that neither party suffers unjust loss, nor do disputes arise in the future.

The lesson condemns altering covenants or commitments, whether written or oral, in which another party would suffer loss. We must fulfill our commitments and provide things honest in the sight of all men. **If** we give our word, let us exceed others' expectations.

The lesson condemns all fraudulent arts, forgeries, concealments, altering, or compromise in business transactions. Every business owner knows shortcuts that can enhance profits at the expense of the customer. Such base thoughts should not occur in a sanctified heart.

The lesson also condemns foolish and unnecessary squabbles with neighbors, that should have been avoided by maintaining better communication. It is better to be defrauded than fight.

The lesson condemns the breaking of settled customs, even if not in writing.

He is not a godly man who excuses himself because a contract was not in writing, if the performance was expected.

Noble men do not quote the constitution or some other dusty relic as the basis for their actions. Men of principle fulfill the accepted expectation of society in the discharge of their transactions, regardless of any provision or idea that could excuse him.

If you have taken the name of Christ, then let your conduct in all transactions and dealings with others be with complete honesty and open fairness. It would be better to suffer loss, then to compromise the property rights of others or offend the Lord.

Proverbs 22:29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Hard Work Works!

The diligent man, will be promoted above average and inferior men, and mingle with the prosperous and successful.

Discrimination is an excuse. Education is only a tool. Intelligence is not necessary.

Diligence is the key, hard and persistent effort applied to one's professional duties.

Solomon is teaching how to get ahead economically and professionally in the world. Neglect it to your own loss!

Diligence is hard and persistent effort.

Consider the definition provided by the Oxford English Dictionary. "Diligent. Of persons: 'Constant in application, persevering in endeavor, assiduous', industrious; 'not idle, not negligent, not lazy.' This word simply means the old-fashioned concept of hard work persistently applied with dedicated focus.

"*Kings*" were the highest persons in a nation. "*Mean men*" are the lower class of men that make up much of a society.

Hard work can take a man from the lower classes to stand before kings. What if he were just a baker? No problem! **If** he were diligent, it would not be long before he would have contracts to feed the king, his court, and maybe his army!

There is no question whether hard work will make you successful or not. This is not a suggestion or possible method of improving job performance.

God's Word declares it, and that settles it (*Proverbs 10:4; 12:24; 13:4; 21:5*).

Honest men have seen it fulfilled over and over again. Solomon observed and rewarded it, and that settles it (*1 Kings 11:28*).

There are two obstacles. Which one hinders you? First, men are lazy. They default to procrastination, put forth the least effort possible, avoid extra work, and seek leisure at the earliest opportunity.

They do not get up early, work hard, stay focused, work late, or look for more to do. Solomon repeatedly condemned and ridiculed such sluggards (*Proverbs*

6:6-11; 10:26; 12:24; 19:15, 24; 20:4, 13; 24:30-34; Ecclesiastes 10:18).

Second, this generation promotes laziness in two ways. Promoting laziness: pays for time rather than performance. Promoting laziness: calls 40 hours a week with lunch breaks, coffee breaks, holidays, and vacations a job. What would a dairy farmer think?

Promoting laziness: also allows and promotes "business opportunities" that fleece the simple and pad the pockets of the con artists.

The rule is not just for the Old Testament. Paul taught the same thing, "*Not slothful in business,*" in the New Testament (***Romans 12:11***).

And Paul taught it in detail in several places (***1Thessalonians 4:11-12; Ephesians 4:28; Titus 2:9-10***).

When will you get up tomorrow morning? How hard will you work? How focused will you stay? Your future is at stake.