

## CHAPTER 27

**Proverbs 27:1** *Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

Your known future is only today! You may not be here tomorrow, and you surely do not know what will happen tomorrow. God has given you today, and you must use it wisely!

Life expectancy is based on averages, but there is no John or Sally Average. In fact, you may die young to make the average. What do the insurance companies say it is life expectancy average?

Tomorrow might bring rain, your loss of a job, your spouse leaving, an auto accident, a diagnosis of cancer, or even death! You cannot know or stop any of these events.

What can we do? We must live one day at a time. We must count each day a gift and use it wisely to God's glory (*Psalm 90:12; Romans 14:7-9*).

We must live and breathe the things of heaven, so any loss tomorrow brings will not disturb the eternal rest of our souls.

Business and other plans must be submitted to God's sovereign will, for only He knows tomorrow (*James 4:13-16*).

Confident plans without this submission to God's will are sinful!

Confident boasting in strategic plans or budgets is not only evil, it is stupid; for they are mere speculations! Jesus said, *"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"* (*Matthew 6:34*).

**What Precious Wisdom!** Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough evil today to keep you busy. We simply say, *"Give us this day our daily bread."*

Fools plan on getting right with God tomorrow, but it never comes. There are always more excuses. Felix, trembling under Paul's preaching, told him, *"Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee"* (*Acts 24:25*). It never came!

Youth impatiently presumes on many morrows, for they crave future pleasures. Those of middle age expect to reach old age. And the old think they will outlive their neighbors. Such delusions about the future are madness! The minutes reading this commentary could be your last!

A rich man planned gloriously for many years to come, but his soul was taken that very night. Fool! And we are no wiser, **If** we do not use today, to plan for eternity. (*Luke 12:16-21*)

Will the Lord Jesus Christ find you waiting for His surprise visit at the hour of your death or His sudden coming?

### Heaven And Hell Are Of Grave Eternal Importance!

Will you live today accordingly?

Or will you make the fatal mistake of planning tomorrow and dying today?

**Proverbs 27:2** *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.*

Do not talk about yourself. Do not talk about your job, your family, your car, or anything that is yours. Think and talk about others and their things. Ask questions about the welfare of others, rather than telling your situation, difficulties, abilities, or blessings. As too much honey will make you sick, self-promotion is also sickening (*Proverbs 25:27*).

Here is a key difference between gracious and odious people. An odious woman is a master at slipping in her opinions, experiences, expertise, and her insightful wisdom.

A gracious woman never talks about herself. She is always inquiring sincerely about the welfare of others. And remember it is the Lord's praise that counts, not your own (*2Corinthians 10:18*).

Odious people are disappointed if you do not praise them enough, ask enough questions about them, and listen intently for them to tell you about their life. But gracious persons, neglecting themselves, are always commending others, pursuing them, and praising them.

Paul simply put it this way, *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others"* (*Philippians 2:3-4*).

Love is defined perfectly in, where fifteen glorious phrases define charity. These four phrases relate to our Proverb: *1Corinthians 13:4-7* *vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, and seeketh not her own.*

Vaunting yourself is boasting; being puffed up is conceited thinking; not behaving unseemly is gracious

and courteous conduct; and seeking not your own is being more interested in the things of others. Self-praise, or boasting, is only justified in extreme situations of defending an office or the Lord and His gospel. Samuel justified himself before Israel to condemn them for seeking a king (*1Samuel 12:1-5*).

Paul boasted to Corinth to defend his Apostolic Office (*2Corinthians 11:10-12; 12:11*).

Job was very wrong, for he had no need for it (*Job 32:1-2*).

A good name is a noble goal, if done for the right motives (*Proverbs 22:1*).

### **Self-Promotion Is Despicable And Brings Shame.**

Safety from this sin, requires you to measure yourself by the standards and habits of others. Just because you think you are not a self-promoter has nothing to do with it, if others think you are! And especially if the Lord thinks you are!

Deserving the praise of men is one thing, but trying to get it by praising yourself is disgusting. Timothy and Demetrius had great reputations, and they deserved to be praised. But one mark these men had, you can be sure, was a total lack of self-promotion. (*2Corinthians 8:18; 2Timothy 1:12*)

We should desire such noble reputations, but the only righteous way to obtain the praise of others is to earn it.

**If men are not praising you, there is a reason!**

Avoid "back door compliments," which are done by weak attempts to credit the Lord for your abilities or accomplishments. The focus is more on you than on the Lord. Athletes are famous for this one.

The bottom line is indirect self-praise, which is neither pleasing to the Lord nor encouraging to men. Do you talk too much about yourself?

Are you gracious or odious? How can you tell? Easy! How much do others want to be around you? How many friends do you have? Is your company sought or avoided? This barometer is painful, but it is always accurate.

Parent, teach your child the wisdom and virtue of not talking about themselves. Teach them the grace of inquiring about others as much as possible. You will do more for their success before God and men than pursuing the top score in any academic course.

The Lord Jesus would not raise his voice in the streets, and He never sought for others to praise Him (*Matthew 8:4; 12:19; 16:20*).

Though He was the Son of God, He gave us an example to follow. His life was totally dedicated to the service of God and man, which is what should control our own speech at all times.

***Proverbs 27:3 A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.***

How do you argue with dumb? It is almost impossible to deal with an angry fool, for he is too dumb and stubborn to listen to reason and too blind to see the consequences of his wild passion.

Sand and stone are dense materials, very heavy for their quantity; but they are not nearly so burdensome and oppressive as an angry fool. What can a wise man do?

It is bad enough to be near a fool, because their idiocy can almost drive a wise man crazy. Their arrogant and confused cackling is a lot of noise without any profit (*Ecclesiastes 7:4-6*).

What can a wise man do? Solomon said elsewhere, "*If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest*" (*Proverbs 29:9*). See the comments on *Proverbs 29:9*.

What can a wise man do? What is a mother bear like, when her cubs have been taken away? Horrifically dangerous! So dangerous is this provoked creature that Proverbs by Solomon and of our own nation assume her blind fury! But Solomon said it would be better to meet her than to encounter a fool in his folly (*Proverbs 17:12*)!

A fool does not fear God. A fool has rejected the wisdom of God to guide his actions.

A fool is dangerous to himself and all others near him. But when he is angered, usually by something ridiculously insignificant, his potential for harm is horribly aggravated.

A fool is capable of anything, for there is neither conscience nor understanding to limit his actions.

Simeon and Levi viciously slaughtered a city of men for the fornication of their sister Dinah (*Genesis 34:25-26; 49:7*).

Doeg the Edomite slaughtered all God's priests, their families, and their livestock, in rage against David (*1Samuel 22:18-19*).

Haman sought to wipe out a people for the offence of Mordecai not bowing to him (*Esther 3:5-6*).

Joab unmercifully assassinated Abner, Absalom, and Amasa in jealous folly (*1Kings 2:28-34*).

The danger is clear! What can a wise man do? Avoid them for your life (*Proverbs 9:6; 14:7*)!

Get away from fools and scorners. They will soon turn and rend you for something. So wise men will avoid them as much as possible.

Cast out the scorner: and contention, strife, and reproach will end (*Proverbs 21:24; 22:10,24; 26:21; 29:22; Psalm 101:3-8; Matthew 7:6; Romans 16:17-18*).

Do not give them any honor (*Proverbs 26:1, 8*). See the comments on *Proverbs 26:1* and *26:8*.

Neutralize them as much as possible. If they have any public influence or respect, they will use it in the day of their foolish rage to harm the innocent.

Shut their mouths and put them in their place (*Proverbs 26:5; Galatians 2:4-5; Titus 1:9-16*)!

Punish them as severely as you are able in a public way to send a loud message to others (*Proverbs 19:25; Deuteronomy 17:8-13; 1Timothy 5:20*).

***Proverbs 27:4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?***

#### **Anger Causes Much Trouble Envy Is Even Worse!**

A hot temper hurts those around it for a short time, but jealousy breeds constant aggravation.

Men do vicious and unreasonable things when angry, but envy, causes them to see and do everything, with a poisoned view.

Anger may control your emotions for a time, but envy can eat your soul away until death.

#### **Anger And Wrath Are Well Known.**

They are passionate indignation, intense resentment or exasperation, ire, or rage against a person or thing. God condemned unjustified anger, and He expects justified anger to be gone by night (*Psalm 37:8; Matthew 5:21-22; Ephesians 4:26, 31-32*).

Anger must be ruled (*Proverbs 14:17, 14:29; 16:32; 19:11; Ecclesiastes 7:9; James 1:19-20*).

Angry men must be avoided, lest you learn to think and act like them (*Proverbs 13:20; 22:24-25; 1Corinthians 15:33*).

Anger and wrath cause men to do cruel and outrageous things. The violent feelings are very intense, they overrule a person's better judgment and common sense.

Anger leaves a man temporarily insane. Israel provoked Moses, and his angry and imprudent response cost him the land of Canaan (*Psalm 106:32-33*).

Angry men cause foolish fights and get into trouble they would otherwise avoid (*Proverbs 29:22*).

Anger can make a man a scorner (*Proverbs 21:24*).

Simeon and Levi were so angry Shechem had violated their sister that they disregarded their father's covenant with him and killed his entire family and city (*Genesis 34:1-31; 49:5-7*).

Herod's anger at being mocked by the wise men caused him to kill all the children in and around Bethlehem. Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous! (*Matthew 2:16*)

But what is envy? It is the hostile and malicious feelings of jealous resentment toward another person for their advantage over you.

Envy is worse than anger or wrath. It needs no provocation, as do anger and wrath. Men envy others for goodness and prosperity!

Envy is deep in a man's heart and is only removed with great difficulty, whereas anger quickly leaves when the provocation ends.

Envy will not forgive another's offence; though it is long ended, yet revenge still simmers.

Envy is hidden out of sight, so men are unaware of its seething danger in another's breast.

David was perfect for King Saul. He soothed him with his harp; he was his son's best friend; he married his daughter; he fought his battles for him; Israel respected him; he was exceeding wise; he was very loyal; and the LORD was with him. But Saul envied Israel's love for David (*1Samuel 18:6-11*).

Saul should have used him well; he should have sought his wisdom and fellowship with God; but instead he tried to kill him repeatedly.

Jacob loved Rachel the most; but she envied her sister Leah, because she had conceived children (*Genesis 30:1*).

Joseph's ten brothers envied him, because his father loved him; and though he was a virtuous young man, they sold him as a slave into Egypt (*Genesis 37:11; Acts 7:9*).

Jews crucified our perfect Lord Jesus out of envy (*Matthew 27:18*).

How did these blessings and goodness evoke such bitter and wicked actions? Envy is heinous!

Joab was David's nephew. He was a great warrior and captain of David's mighty men for 40 years. He served David faithfully, risking his life often to protect David and promote his kingdom.

But Joab could not rule his spirit, and envy caused him to murder two men better than himself that David had honored. Solomon had to kill him. (*1Kings 2:5-6, 28-34*)

**Moses** once corrected Joshua's envy. When Joshua heard that two men were prophesying in the camp, he asked Moses to command them to stop, out of envy for Moses.

Moses said, *Numbers 11:27-30* *Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!*

God's holy foreknowledge and providence understood every aspect of every life, even sin and its results.

Therefore, to envy another for any advantage is to despise God and His choices (*Proverbs 19:3; 1Corinthians 4:7*).

Instead, be thankful for what you have; forgive those who have sinned against you; and appreciate God's choices for His own glory (*Proverbs 16:4; Daniel 4:35; Romans 11:36*).

It is sickening when the poor envy the rich, which they do much of the time. If it were not for the rich putting their capital and expertise at risk in an economy, the poor would not have anything, not even jobs!

Poor men should be thankful for what they do have, and they should be thankful, God made some men rich, who want to provide jobs for them.

**If** you do not kill envy, learning to forgive the faults of others and rejoice in their blessings, you will destroy your own soul.

The poison of envy will eat your heart like a cancer, until it has consumed your life with bitter resentment (*Proverbs 14:30; Job 5:2*).

You will destroy the pleasure of living; envy will lead to perverse decisions; and worst of all, your envious malice against others does nothing at all to them! They flourish in spite of you!

Envy leads to emulation (*Galatians 5:20*). What is emulation?

- It is the desire or effort to equal or surpass another in any achievement or quality.
- It is the ambitious rivalry between men for power or honor; it is grudging ill-will against the superiority of others.

Envy and emulation are horrible sins, and God hates them, for they are spawned in hell (*James 3:14-16*).

Saints rejoice at blessings and honor given to others (*Romans 12:15; 1Corinthians 12:26*).

Reader, are you happy for everyone in your life?

Are you glad at the successes and joy of those who have wronged you? Or does the devil himself have a root of bitterness in you that is choking out the very life of your soul?

Anger and wrath may lead to momentary folly, but envy will consume and destroy your life. Be wise, and put all these sins away!

***Proverbs 27:5*** *Open rebuke is better than secret love.*

Here is a short and somewhat obscure Proverb, but it is one we must learn and practice from both directions.

Are you a true, loving friend? Do you appreciate such friends?

There are two kinds of friends, shown by "love" and the next verse (*Proverbs 27:6*).

One is better than the other, so we must learn and love the good one and reject and despise the bad.

What is open rebuke? It is telling a man his fault personally and directly, whether against you, others, or God.

It is open, for you do it to his face, rather than pretending all is well; and it is rebuke, for you confront his error, rather than flattering with compliments.

Open rebuke is not telling others, for unnecessarily rebuking others is very wrong (*Proverbs 25:9; 11:13*).

Our Lord taught this rule (*Matthew 18:15*);

James taught it (*James 5:19-20*);

Paul taught it; and he practiced it with Peter, whose fault was public (*Galatians 2:11-14; 6:1-3*).

Rebuking a friend for sin is true love, which Moses had taught long before (*Leviticus 19:17*).

Not correcting a friend is simple hatred. Charity cannot bear its object in sin, as helping them live a holy life is the highest standard of love and friendship (*1Samuel 23:161; Corinthians 13:6*).

What is secret love? It is showing affection, friendship, and service without the courage or commitment to correct another's faults.

It is secret, for the real character of love and correction, is missing. It is called love sarcastically, for only outward flattery and superficial kindness exists in such a relationship. It is truly hatred (*Leviticus 19:17*).

The connected Proverb helps (Proverbs 27:6). A friend wounding you by correction is faithful. But one who kisses without correction is an enemy. The kisses are deceitful, for there is no substance, the wound is faithful, for it is proof of true friendship.

Greater favor and stronger friendship will result from rebuke than from worldly flattery (*Proverbs 8:23; 27:9*).

Dear reader, do you love this way? **If** so, you will warn the unruly (*1Thessalonians 5:14*), reprove and chasten your children (*Proverbs 13:24; 29:15*), provoke others to righteousness (*Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:23-25*), and please others, rather than yourself, for their edification (*Romans 15:1-2*).

Do you receive the open rebuke of this proverb without bristling? David said he would consider reproof and smiting by a righteous man a true act of kindness (*Psalms 141:5*).

As sinners, we need such friends, who will confront rather than flatter us. Cherish them!

Our Lord Jesus faithfully rebuked His dear friends (*Matthew 16:23; Luke 9:55; John 21:17*).

***Proverbs 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.***

#### **True Love Wounds! Kisses Often Lie!**

Here is a great Proverb of true friendship and love. No matter what you think, true friends wound each other, they correct, rebuke, and warn each other for their mutual perfection.

These faithful gestures of love are precious. On the other hand, false friends may easily show much outward affection or attention, which are a lying cover for their selfish hearts (*Proverbs 27:5*).

Solomon rejected the world's idea of love.

**If** we believe the world's love songs, they think love is pleasure taken from another person.

Consider love in the world, "**If** you can't be with the one you love, then love the one you're with," and, "Will you still love me tomorrow?" The words, "I love you," are too many, just a lie, to get something from another.

**If** both persons are lying and taking from each other at the same time, the world calls that "great chemistry."

#### **Love And Lust Are Not The Same!**

The whore of Solomon's parable said, "*Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves*" (*Proverbs 7:18*).

But all she was talking about was the sin of fornication, gratifying sexual lust at the expense of another person.

Amnon thought he loved his half-sister Tamar, but it was merely fascination with her body, which brought about great hatred after he had violated her (*2Samuel 13:1-19*).

Who cares **if** you send cards, kiss, or say the three words? They are not proof of anything of value! They might very well be cover for your selfish ambition to take advantage of another person!

Who cares **if** you shake hands, smile a lot, and give many compliments? Flattering others to obtain their response for mutual self-love is disgusting!

These are not evidences of friendship or love. Only wounds show true friendship and love!

Flattering words and a kiss are what Judas used (*Matthew 26:49*)!

Words are what Joab used to kill Amasa (*2Samuel 20:9-10*).

Words are what Absalom used to seduce the men of Israel into sedition against David (*2Samuel 15:5*).

Hatred is often hid behind lying words and acts of affection (*Proverbs 26:24-26*).

David feared such words and handshakes, so he begged God to deliver him (*Psalms 144:1-15*).

#### **True Friendship And Love Give!**

Friendship and love give for the benefit of others! Love is selfless! Lust is selfish!

True love is finding the blessing in giving to another. Since pleasing God and having a good account, on the Day of Judgment, are life's greatest goals, the highest measure of love is helping another meet those goals.

Paul was a great example of such love (*2Corinthians 5:11; 11:1-2; 12:14-15; Galatians 4:16; Colossians 1:28-29; 1Thessalonians 2:7-12*).

Do you love anyone by this high standard? Do you have any friends who love you that way?

If you truly love another person, all your actions toward them will be governed by the goals of helping them please God and prepare for the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, you will correct, rebuke, and warn as necessary. You will not coddle, compromise, or overlook actions that hurt their relationship with God or lead to sin in their life.

Godly love will not cover sins: it will correct sins. It will not condone evil; it will condemn evil.

This truth about friendship and love is too high for most. They believe the devil's lie that friendship and love are seeking pleasure and keeping things comfortable, happy, and peaceful in relationships, regardless of another's conduct.

If you truly care for a person, you will want to help perfect them (*Luke 17:3; Galatians 6:1-2; 1Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25; James 5:19-20*).

If you do not rebuke their sin, you hate them (*Leviticus 19:17*)!

This kind of love creates the greatest friendships and relationships (*Proverbs 28:23*)!

Solomon wrote, "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee" (*Proverbs 9:8*).

David, one of the most affectionate men, wrote, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head" (*Psalms 141:5*).

Peter called Paul beloved, though Paul had rebuked him publicly (*Galatians 2:11-14; 2Peter 3:15*).

David and Jonathan were the greatest of friends. They loved each other as their own souls (*1Samuel 18:1, 3; 20:17; 2Samuel 1:26*).

What was their relationship? They helped each other be the best before God. When David was hiding from Saul, "And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God" (*1Samuel 23:16*).

What kind of friend do you want? What kind of friend are you? Do you want one who pampers your fancies and flatters your vanity? One who enjoys your presence, cheers you with kindness, and serves you?

Such a friend will not help. You are a sinner; you need a real friend, who will watch for your soul and correct you when necessary. The other kind is quite worthless, very deceitful, and will leave you wanting in the time of real need.

Godly men are anxious to have their faults pointed out, and they are very grateful when another will perform the selfless act (*Psalms 141:5*).

A faithful reprover should be valued as a truly great treasure.

David, anointed to be king of Israel, was thankful for the sincere friendship of Abigail, proven by her respectful rebuke of him (*1Samuel 25:32-34*).

More husband and wives ought to pursue this higher degree of affection and companionship.

Where can you find godly friends described and implied by this Proverb? In a true Church of Jesus Christ, where the duties and privileges of friendship and love are exemplified, taught, promoted, and required.

You need the body of Christ, made up of unique members chosen by God, for maximizing your spiritual prosperity (*1Corinthians 12:12-27*)!

Who loves you the most? The one having the most mutual pleasure with you, or the one doing the most for you?

If you learned anything from this Proverb, you know it is the one doing the most for you.

If you are one of God's children, Jesus Christ gave His life for you and lives today for you (*Romans 5:6-11*).

The Lord wisely chastens your every fault for your perfection in holiness. He is the greatest Friend you will ever have! (*Hebrews 12:4-17*)

***Proverbs 27:7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.***

The poor have an advantage over the rich, they appreciate and enjoy things more. The abundance of the rich steals simple pleasures from them. But this advantage does not depend on economic status!

The temperate man can choose it for himself! By choosing to be moderate in his use of all things, he enhances the pleasure of any given thing.

Honeycomb is extremely good and sweet to the taste, one of creation's greatest pleasures (*Proverbs 16:24; 24:13*).

But **If** a man is full of dainty foods or gorged on an ordinary diet, the honeycomb's sweetness is revolting and may even cause vomiting (*Proverbs 25:16, 27*).

Yet a laboring man who is hungry can find great pleasure even in simple soup (*Genesis 25:29-34*)!

Marriage is a sweet thing, a gift of God (*Proverbs 5:18; Genesis 2:18; Ecclesiastes 9:9*).

**If** a wife is gorged on discontented fantasies of a better life, she can easily loathe her husband and the pleasures she should be enjoying.

**If** she would choose to hungrily consider the abused or lonely state of many women, she would find sweet pleasure in even an average marriage.

### **A Basic Rule Of Wisdom Is To Live Moderately.**

Wise Agur prayed to be saved from both poverty and riches: he wanted moderate food convenient for holy living (*Proverbs 30:7-9*).

Paul learned to be content in any circumstances; he could be full or hungry, and he taught this moderation, in light of Christ's coming, regardless of supply (*Philippians 4:5; 4:11-13*)

Contentment, and the pleasure it creates, is a choice! Part of the great gain of contentment is the greater pleasure it brings (*Proverbs 15:15; 17:22; 1Timothy 6:6*)!

It is possible to be very pleased with whatever you have (*Hebrews 13:5-6*).

Paul taught the Corinthians this carefree life by looking temperately at all their activities in a disciplined way (*1Corinthians 7:29-32*).

The world is obsessed with abundance and excess! This generation has more than ever before, but they scream for yet more.

This generation is addicted to covetousness. They are bloated with every conceivable pleasure, they are neither happy nor satisfied.

This generation rushes from one activity to the next, they are always looking for one satisfying event, which they never find. They overwhelm their senses in a mad search for fulfillment, but in the end it is all revolting.

Since a modest meal does not give them pleasure, this generation supersizes it! Since ordinary athletic events do not satisfy, this generation invents X-treme sports!

Though this generation can drive only one at a time, they think three cars will give purpose and pleasure!

Since monogamy does not match their obsession for variety, this generation choose fornication and adultery as a way of life!

Since a simple singing and preaching service is too bland, this generation hire Christian rappers!

Unless the righteous are careful, their contented peace will be stolen by these pleasure addicts, who are never contented or satisfied!

Israel murmured against their free supply of manna, then the LORD sent them quail until they loathed it (*Numbers 11:4-9; 11:18-20*).

It did not matter for such wicked people: they were committed to discontentment!

Son, are you content with your life? Are you truly satisfied and at peace? Is the joy of your continual feast obvious to others (*Proverbs 15:13, 15*)?

Do you enjoy the simple pleasures of a honeycomb? Are you thankful for pleasant enjoyments the world would call bitter? Or have you joined their rat race and obsession for more in a vain pursuit of happiness?

### **You Will Not Find Happiness:**

In another activity,

In another goal,

In a different spouse,

In an exotic vacation,

In a new car,

In another event,

In a different house,

In a better job,

In a more romantic husband, or such like.

### **Happiness Is Having Your Heart Right With God!**

Who is the only Source of joy and peace! Then these things can give the pleasure you thought was lost!

Only contentment with what you have brings happiness and peace. Contentment is a choice! A choice of being full when there is little and being hungry when there is much. Such a choice makes both honeycomb and bitter things pleasant.

This choice is the great gain of wise men, valuing godliness over thrills (*Psalms 73:25-26; 1Timothy 6:6; Hebrews 13:5-6*).

The more you have of anything, the less pleasure any increment can give, until a further increment becomes revolting.

This is true of food, sex, entertainment, or most anything. A life of moderation, the discipline of temperance, will maximize the pleasure of things sweet and bitter. Believe it! Of course, you will not hear such things from the world!

It was when the prodigal was in the pigpen, lusting after the husks the pigs were eating, that he realized how good life had been at home (*Luke 15:16-17*)!

How did he get in such a fix? Fantasizing that pleasure was in the big city with whores!

**If** you set your affection on anything in this life as necessary for your happiness, you create a great temptation for presumptuous sin and guarantee yourself the lean soul of the covetous (*Psalm 106:13-15*).

It is not luxurious fare that makes a great dinner: it is love at the table, which is a simple choice (*Proverbs 15:17*).

It is not a different spouse that would enliven your life, it is loving the one you have (*Proverbs 5:19*).

A woman with a good husband, who is disappointed with marriage, cannot appreciate what she has, her *full soul loatheth the honeycomb*. **If** she were to consider the many hungry women without husbands, she could find him quite sweet.

The rich in this world, full of sumptuous living and social activities, have no interest in the Lamb of God or His spiritual kingdom. They loathe the simple life of faith with lowly sinners.

But the poor rejoice, that the kind God has given them the riches of heaven. The rich are sent away empty, and the poor have the gospel given to them (*Luke 1:52-53*).

### **The Wisdom Here Is Temperate Use Of All Things.**

The rich should learn moderation, and the poor should learn contentment. The pleasure in any thing is the attitude toward it.

True success in life is godliness with contentment, and there is no shortcut or alteration that will work.

A continual feast is waiting for those who make the LORD their portion!

***Proverbs 27:8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.***

**If** a female bird wanders from her nest, she destroys her young and exposes herself to many dangers.

In the same way, men and women who leave or neglect their proper roles are dangerous to the human family and put themselves at risk.

Solomon's simile teaches us the wisdom of identifying our God-given responsibilities and faithfully doing them.

The present generation wants change! They are like female birds hating the restrictive life of staying with nests.

The present generation wants to expand their horizons! They want to test new waters! They want to realize greater potential!

The present generation wants to explore new vistas <sup>prospects</sup>! They want to eradicate the old stereotypes (as they call them)!

The present generation wants to revolutionize the world! They are like silly birds that leave their eggs to destruction and are snared by the fowler!

What would you think of a mother bird that laid eggs and then left them to wander the skyways for fulfillment? You should think the same thing of these modern birdbrains who want to rework human existence, morality, and relationships!

The present generation says, boys should play with dolls, and girls should play with guns! Boys should sing in the glee club, and girls should be football players! Boys should wear long hair and earrings, and girls should wear short hair with denim and boots! Boys should be nurses, and girls should be doctors! Boys should be agreeable, and girls should be independent!

So we have women fighter pilots, men as home nannies, college students voting, men having sex with men, labor unions grounding airlines, wives defying husbands, children divorcing parents, policemen tried for roughing up criminals, career women moving their husbands, men learning their feminine side, women judges and governors, illiterate juries ruling in capital cases, and moronic athletes and actors making more than CEOs.

We have girls in the Army writing to waiting guys at home, couples living together before marriage, human bodies burned in incinerators next to pet cemeteries, women voting, deacon boards judging pastors, women trying to lead the home spiritually, athletes thinking they have only a mom, wives working husbands to death to support decorating addiction, women preachers, and girls in the Boy Scouts and Little League. What insanity!

Is the author old-fashioned? Neanderthal? An anachronism <sup>belongs to another age?</sup>

Only as much as expecting birds to stay with their nests and hatch their eggs! Old-fashioned is wisdom!

Today, mothers abort their unborn babies by premeditated, sadistic, and violent means! Solomon

would not need to use a wandering bird as an illustration for this generation! These modern wicked creatures destroy their own young for mere selfish pleasure!

Thus saith the LORD! The woman was made for the man, and she is to be a submissive wife, (allowing him to lead the family) with her primary duties at home (**Genesis 3:16; 1Corinthians 11:9; Titus 2:4-5**).

**If** she is restless or resentful of this God-ordained axiom for human success, society immediately begins to deteriorate, her family suffers real pain, and she is miserable!

So-called Christians are doing the same! Silly women are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (**2Timothy 3:6-7**).

Wives should be learning from their husbands at home, but silly women, who are wives, want to teach their husbands at home! (**1Corinthians 14:34-35**)

Silly women want greater roles in the church. They want a voice. They want to preach!

Silly women run from seminar to seminar to apply their weaker abilities to subjects they will never master, that have no value for human progress, and that undermine established truth.

What is the source of this insanity? Men did not glorify God or give thanks for His truth, so He blinded them to pervert the right way of things and rush after sick perversions like sodomy (**Romans 1:18-32**).

The insane mind of modern man, think Picasso, abortion, rap; and women's liberation, is God's reward for ignoring Him.

Our nation wandered into the cesspool of evolution, so God, has turned men over to perversely degrade themselves with all sort of abominations. Silly women as parents, preachers, and policemen!

The LORD of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Who reigns over the universe as the High King of heaven! "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (**Hebrews 13:8**).

The LORD Jehovah of the Bible graphically described a similar situation in Israel. His judgment upon the Jews for their willful rebellion (**Isaiah 3:1-26**).

God took away their mighty men and left women and children to oppress them, which obviously lead them into many foolish errors.

God promised to strip the arrogant and haughty women and leave them rotting.

Is this too harsh? What would you do to a mother bird that left a nest of eggs?

Are you standing in the place your Creator assigned you? **If** a woman, are you happy as a loving, obeying, serving, and waiting wife?

**If** a man, do you zealously lead your wife and train your children in the fear of the Lord?

**If** an employee, do you faithfully serve your company's goals rather than your own?

**If** a child, are you thankful for your parents and committed to obeying every request?

**If** a Christian, are you in a church where you worship Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth?

Or have you wandered out of the way of understanding and joined the congregation of the dead (Pr 21:16)?

Paul said, "*Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called*" (**1Corinthians 7:20**).

Rather than chafe against the Lord and His ordinances, love and submit to them. They are gifts of divine wisdom to protect, preserve, and prosper the human race.

**If** you choose the modern road of change, you reveal a silly birdbrain that will punish and destroy you.

***Proverbs 27:9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.***

The aroma, odor, or scent of good cologne or perfume quickly brings deep pleasure to your soul through your olfactory nerves (**Proverbs 7:17; Psalm 45:7-8; Song of Solomon 1:3; 3:6; 4:10**).

#### **Scent Is A Powerful Sense.**

The effect is immediate and powerful. In the same way, a good and honest friend can lift your spirit and cause great pleasure by sincere and profitable advice. This is an observation of Solomon. Do you have such friends? Are you such a friend?

Man by nature is selfish, and most friends pursue their own agenda and interests in their relationship with you (**2Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 3:3**).

Selfish men do not tell you this directly, but they talk far more about themselves than inquire about you.

Selfish men love you for your hearing ears! Their talk is self-centered, superficial, and without tangible value for your soul.

Selfish men eat with you, banter with you, and flatter you; but they do not truly serve you for your own good.

Most friends are little more than acquaintances. They tell you about their circumstances, and they may even inquire about and listen to yours.

Most friends send you a birthday and anniversary card, and you return the same to them. They consider mutual flattery and your companionship when they need it to be sweet.

Most friends know nothing of the sweetness described in this Proverb.

**If** you lose your health, position, or wealth, they are not nearly as friendly; they may even disappear (*Proverbs 14:20; 19:4, 7; Psalm 38:11*).

Great friends do much more (*Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 1Samuel 18:3; 20:17*).

Great friends are more interested in your profit than their pleasure, your perfection than their peace.

Great friends understand true love, the sacrificial desire for your prosperity in soul and body.

Great friends won't let hard times drive them away from you; hard times draw them closer to you:

Great friends know, they can fill a greater role and help you more in difficulty than in success.

What is hearty counsel? It is counsel from the heart, genuine, sincere, and affectionate.

It is counsel filled with goodwill and kindly sentiment, warm with affection and friendly feelings.

It is the opposite of superficial chatter, foolish banter, selfish discussion, or evil flattery.

It is more than advice and instruction, no matter how true and valuable. Sympathetic understanding is a balm for the soul (*Romans 12:15; Job 2:11-12; 42:11*).

How is it sweet? It is rare, comforting, and provocative to the soul. It stirs the spirit with confidence, goodwill, hope, joy, and thanksgiving. As pleasant odors can stir the body, so hearty counsel pleasantly quickens the soul. Pleasures are far better shared, and sorrows must be shared (*Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*).

Most measure friendship as sweet depending on what they take from the relationship. But that is not true with godly friends (*Matthew 7:12; Acts 20:35*).

Jonathan and David were the greatest friends in the Bible. They met after David killed Goliath and became Israel's hero.

Though the heir apparent of Israel's throne, Jonathan loved David for his courage, graciousness, and godliness. While other men would have envied and

hated David, Jonathan loved him as his own soul (*1Samuel 18:1-3*).

The affection and loyalty were so fervent that Jonathan covenanted his life and service to David, and David covenanted his protection to his family (*1Samuel 18:4; 19:1-2; 20:9-17*).

When fleeing for his life from King Saul, David often hid in obscure places for safety. Jonathan, though the king's son and heir to the throne, and though a mighty man of valor himself, went into the woods and encouraged David in the Lord (*1Samuel 14:1-17; 20:30-31; 23:16*).

Jonathan reminded David of God's faithfulness and promised his own. He lifted David up from spiritual discouragement and heartily comforted him. How sweet that friendship and counsel was to both of them that day in the wood!

Consider the counsel Jonathan gave David (*1Samuel 23:17*).

Jonathan said, There is no reason to fear my father; God will deliver you (*Psalms 27:1-14*).

Jonathan said, You will be the next king, because God will keep His promise (*1Samuel 16:13*).

Jonathan humbly submitted to God's choice of David and promised his devotion and service (*Proverbs 17:17*).

Jonathan told David that King Saul knew of his choice of David over himself (*1Samuel 20:30-31*).

Was this friendship and counsel sweet to David? The answer is clear (*1Samuel 23:18*).

They made a covenant together before the LORD. Jonathan promised his loyalty and service to David above his father and Israel's throne.

David promised Jonathan his desired position and the perpetual care of his family. How sweet the friendship and counsel was to David!

He counted Jonathan's love greater than the love of any of his wives (*2Samuel 1:26*).

Jonathan was not David's only friend. Such a virtuous man had many friends.

Consider Ittai the Gittite (*2Samuel 15:16-23*).

Consider Jehu and Jehonadab purging Baal worship from Israel (*2Kings 10:15-28*).

Consider Paul and Timothy and the building of New Testament churches among the Gentiles (*Acts 16:1-3; Philippians 2:19-22; 2Timothy 1:1-5*)?

Consider Aquila and Priscilla giving hearty counsel to Apollos (*Acts 18:24-28*)?

Consider Andrew was a true friend to Peter (*John 1:40-42*).

Consider Philip to Nathaniel (*John 1:43-51*).  
Consider Ruth and Naomi (*Ruth 1:16-17; 3:1-5; 4:13-17*).

Consider Luke and Theophilus (*Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1*)?

Consider Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and Jesus (*Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-46*)?

Consider the hearty counsel that Jethro gave Moses (*Exodus 18:1-23*).

Hearty counsel includes rebukes and warnings. David wrote, *"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities"* (*Psalms 141:5*).

Kind correction by one who desires your perfection is sweet and true friendship. Contrary to the world's notions, true love corrects sin (*Leviticus 19:17*).

Godly men desire wounds of a friend more than kisses of an enemy, and open rebuke is better than secret love (*Proverbs 27:5-6*).

David had many wives, but he only had one great friend among them. Who was it?

Not his first love, Michal, for she despised his intense love of God and His worship (*2Samuel 6:20-23*).

Not the mother of Solomon, Bathsheba, for she participated in the heinous sin of adultery with him (*2Samuel 11:1-5*).

It was Abigail, who heartily warned him against ruining his reputation by the murder of her wicked husband. How sweet was this counsel? He blessed her and married her as soon as she was available! (*1Samuel 25:1-44*)

Where are such friends found? They are very rare, but they are found among the saints of the Lord Jesus Christ, who have learned true friendship from their Lord and Master (*John 13:34-35; 15:11-17*).

These saints are in the true churches of Jesus Christ, where the Holy Spirit and the Word of God have molded men's hearts to be the sacrificing, serving, sensitive, and sympathetic friends that this Proverb describes (*Philippians 1:3-5*).

**The Blood And Doctrine Of Jesus Christ  
Is The Tightest Bond Of All Among Men.**

How do you learn such friendship? By the fear of the Lord, by the love of Jesus Christ, by walking in the Holy Spirit, by the practice of *1Corinthians 13:4-7*!

It is these ingredients and these alone that will make you the heart-rejoicing friend of this Proverb. There are no shortcuts. Neglect one of these factors, and you will be a vain friend (*Proverbs 18:24*).

You have the ability to relate to other men, and you must use it to improve them (*Proverbs 27:17, 19*).

There is no room for selfishness, self-protection, or self-promotion in true friendship.

You must be willing to expose yourself to your friend in order to help him. How else can you comfort him when he is in trouble *"by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God"* (*2Corinthians 1:4*)?

The apostle instructed, *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another"* (*James 5:16*).

Can you develop the heart of a true friend? How important are such friends? They should be esteemed and protected above your own family members (*Proverbs 27:10*).

Great efforts must be made to avoid offences (*Proverbs 18:19*).

Solomon kept Hiram as a good friend, who had always been a lover of David (*1Kings 5:1-18*).

But foolish and profane Rehoboam forsook his father Solomon's friends for his own ignorant pals and lost the majority of the kingdom to his enemy (*1Kings 12:1-20*).

Reader, will you add the precious odor of true friendship to this vile world? Or will you add your own stench of selfish insensitivity?

Will you make your way to the house of God and find this soul communion among the saints of God?

**If** your church lacks this kind of friendship, then show them how it is done! And honor those that do it to you!

There is no friend like Jesus Christ, so begin by cultivating your relationship with Him.

***Proverbs 27:10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.***

**Great Men Have Great Friends!**

Here is precious wisdom! But very few men qualify as great friends! It is very prudent to keep such friends, even above a blood brother.

A small band of committed and virtuous friends is far better than the natural relationship of family. Blood may be thicker than water, as it is said; but it is not thicker than godly character in Jesus Christ! *"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother"* (**Proverbs 18:24**).

When trouble comes, and it will come, you want a real friend to stand with you; one that loves at all times and considers your adversity to be his own. You want a friend that thinks the same as you and will stand with you no matter the cost or difficulty. (**Proverbs 17:17**)

A cultivated friendship based on character, conviction, truth, and wisdom will far surpass the expected help of a natural brother, that is only connected to you by blood and name.

Your success depends on great friends, for there are four benefits (**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** *Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.*

**10** For <sup>2</sup>if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

**11** Again, <sup>3</sup>if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?

**12** And <sup>4</sup>if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.).

When God gives such a friend, it is a great blessing. Solomon used this Proverb to help his son rule a great nation that stretched from the Euphrates to Egypt.

Solomon himself had benefited much by his father's friends, Hiram the King of Tyre (**2Samuel 5:11; 1Kings 5:1-18**) and Benaiah, Captain of the bodyguards (**2Samuel 20:23; 23:20-23; 1Kings 1:38; 2:25-46**).

Consider inspired history: Joseph found greater kindness from foreign captors than his brothers.

David found greater loyalty and service from vagabonds than his envious brothers, and he found greater love and loyalty from Jonathan.

Jesus found greater sympathy and loyalty from His disciples than His brothers (**John 7:1-5; Luke 22:15**).

Jesus knew His true friends were those who heard the Word of God and kept it (**Matthew 12:46-50**).

God chose David for his pure heart (**1Samuel 16:6-13**).

Jonathan saw this clearer than the envious brothers. Jonathan though losing much, loved him dearly. Loving virtue above family and career, Jonathan chose David over his own father (**1Samuel 17:28; 18:1-4; 19:1-7**)

They covenanted together, against the blood ties of Jonathan and included their children. (**1Samuel 20:1-17; 23:42**)

David valued Jonathan's love above women. And he preserved Jonathan's son in the day of his calamity (**2Samuel 1:26; 9:1; 21:7**)

Godly friends are superior to blood brothers, for the relationship is built on a better foundation. They are superior for their regenerated hearts, they are superior for the precious blood of Christ, they are superior for the absolute truth of God's Word, they are superior for godly hatred of compromise, a life pursuit of holiness, and the hope of eternal life.

The Bible recognizes these friends as dear as one's own soul, even distinguishing them from a precious wife (**Deuteronomy 13:6; 1Samuel 18:1, 3; 20:17**).

Do you understand the importance of this lesson? Without great friendships based in godliness, who will help in the day of your calamity? You will go down and stay down.

There is a place for godly networking, though the objective and methods are infinitely superior to the world's effort to find contacts and customers for their own selfish ends.

God instructed His messengers to be lovers of good men (**Titus 1:8**).

Paul was the instructor of Timothy (**Acts 16:1-3; Philippians 2:19-23; 2Timothy 1:1-5**).

Most of so-called Christians have no clue about great friends, because they despise men that are holy (**2Timothy 3:1-5**).

What kinds of friends meet the intent of this Proverb? The very context, unusual in Proverbs, gives valuable traits of godly friends (**Proverbs 27:4-5, 9**).

True friends love at all times, whether you are in good or bad circumstances (**Proverbs 17:17**).

True friends are chosen for their fear of God, love of truth, and personal righteousness (**Psalms 119:63**).

Do you know such men? You cannot compromise any of these measures, or you will lose the benefit you are seeking.

The blood of Jesus Christ creates an immediate bond greater than human blood, when two lovers and followers of Christ meet by the kind providence of God.

There is no selfishness, self-protection, fear, doubts, or hidden agenda between such friends. They fully trust

each other, and they strengthen each other in God (*1Samuel 14:6-7; 23:14-18*)

And they love to unite their zeal in doing great things for God (*2Kings 10:15-16*).

False friends, who comprise, the vast majority of all men in the world, are fair weather friends, they only stand with you while it is easy and profitable (*Proverbs 14:20; 19:4*).

False friends, are carnal friends, whose friendship is based on worldly compatibility. They are weak friends, whom you must constantly help due to their lack of character.

David had no use for false brethren or the harsh spirits of his nephews (*Psalms 101:3-8; 144:11; 2Samuel 3:39*).

**Do you deserve great friends?** Loners do not have them, for they are too selfish to give. Rebels lose out because their unruly spirits are dangerous and offensive. Compromisers will not have any, for they cannot be trusted.

The greater zeal a man has for Jesus Christ, the greater he will be loved by such men. Godliness and virtue attract godly and virtuous men; and godliness and virtue separate carnal men. Holy living will bring holy friends.

In order to have great friends, you must be friendly (*Proverbs 18:24*).

In order to keep great friends, you must not forsake them (*Proverbs 27:10*).

Friendship is a two-way street, and you are foolish to think that great men should need no encouragement.

It is the providential blessing of God that brings great friends into your life, and most of them should be found in your church, **If** it is a church sold out to Jesus Christ (*1Corinthians 12:18*).

Some can be thankful they have double brothers or sisters, united by both family blood and Jesus Christ's blood!

***Proverbs 27:11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.***

#### **Children Can Ruin A Great Man!**

When a man takes a strong stand for truth, wisdom, and righteousness, his children can make him or break him.

Children can break him in spirit, by crushing his heart (*Proverbs 17:21, 25; 19:13; 1Samuel 2:27-36*).

Children can break his reputation, by giving an occasion for his enemies to condemn him (*1Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25; 8:3-5*).

Children can gladden his heart and give him confident credibility to silence his detractors!

Children are a wonderful blessing from God (*Proverbs 5:15-18; Psalms 127:3; 128:3-4*).

Children are like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, in that they can assist their father and leverage his character and wisdom by multiplying his influence in the world (*Psalms 127:4*).

When a man has a quiver full of them, a large family - he can be bold toward his enemies (*Psalms 128:5*).

This only works when children are wise and righteous. When children are foolish and wicked, they give their father no advantage at all.

Children are then a blot on his character and reputation, for either he did not train them, he was an evil example, or God has forsaken him. It is only noble and prudent grandchildren that are a crown to old men (*Proverbs 17:6*).

This matter of obedient children for the reputation of their fathers is so important, that God requires his two church officers, bishops and deacons, to have faithful and obedient children (*1Timothy 3:4-5,12; Titus 1:6*).

A man with unruly children, that he cannot control indicates that he would never be able to take care of a Church of Jesus Christ.

Solomon was such a son to David. Hiram, King of Tyre, had always loved David very much. He rejoiced and thanked God on David's behalf, when he became acquainted with Solomon (*1Kings 5:1-7*).

This was after David's death! Though his enemies might have reproached David for his other sons, they had to stand in awe of Solomon!

But Eli's sons broke his heart, brought God's judgment, and caused Israel to hate his family and God's worship (*1Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25*)!

And Samuel, who should have learned from this terrible calamity, had wicked sons as well that ruined his rule over Israel (*1Samuel 8:3-5*).

Simeon and Levi caused their father Jacob's reputation to stink among the Canaanites (*Genesis 34:30*).

Foolish sons can break a father's heart and ruin his reputation.

If children can make a man glad and great, even in the sight of his enemies, then training them should be of the utmost importance.

No wonder Abraham took it seriously (*Genesis 18:19*)!

No wonder Joshua took it seriously (*Joshua 24:15*)!  
No wonder it is a command throughout the Bible (*Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6:4-7; 11:18-19; Psalm 78:1-8; Joel 1:1-3; Ephesians 6:4*)!

### **Fathers! Do Not Neglect This Duty!**

If you are slothful in this matter, you are not only ruining your children, but you are also bringing much future pain into your life, much grief into your wife's life, and ruining your personal and family reputation! What should you do today to sharpen your arrows? (*Proverbs 17:21,25; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17*)

Children! Do you understand your duty to honor your parents? God has commanded it, but you can also bring joy to their hearts by being wise and righteous; and you can silence their critics by your noble and virtuous character and conduct.

Do not neglect this opportunity, for such things have a way of coming back to punish you (*Proverbs 1:31; Galatians 6:7*)!

The Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of His Father, answered forever the reproaches of God's enemies. The Son of the woman obeyed perfectly and died obediently, triumphing over the devil openly (*Romans 8:32-34; Colossians 2:13-15; Revelation 12:7-11*).

The Father announced His great pleasure and promoted Him over all (*Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11*).

If you claim to be a son of the living God, what is your conduct doing to Him and for Him? Are you gladdening His heart by your wise and sober life? Are you adorning His doctrine and silencing the enemies of the Gospel by your virtuous conduct and speech? You have a glorious privilege and awful duty. Fulfill it cheerfully today!

***Proverbs 27:12 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.***

Do you believe most of what you hear or read? Are you decisive and opinionated about choices? Wise men are cautious, critical, pessimistic, and skeptical about unproven assertions or situations.

Wise men do not believe all they hear or read, and they do not make decisions without carefully analyzing possible danger (*Proverbs 14:15*).

Only foolish simpletons naively view the future and rush forward optimistically. And they get punished.

Prudence is the power of discernment. It is the discretion or practical wisdom to detect problems or dangers in any matter and avoid them by carefully altering actions to find the most profitable course. Obviously, prudent men move more slowly than simple fools, because they know that hasty or heady decisions are risky (*Proverbs 19:2; 21:5; 25:8; 2Timothy 3:4*).

This rule for wise living is so important that Solomon repeated it for you (*Proverbs 22:3*).

A prudent man, one with cautious discretion, looks ahead and sees fallacies or risks.

A prudent man, hides himself from their danger by altering his beliefs or his actions.

A prudent man, will never be caught believing lies or walking into a trap.

On the other hand, simpletons blithely let life happen to them. They do not question what they believe or what they are doing.

Simpletons keep going forward and get clobbered repeatedly by dangers they overlooked.

Of course, your foolish spirit wants to do what it wants to do, and it wants to do it now!

Foolish companions and peer pressure further encourage this insane approach to life.

It is prudence, a component of wisdom, that slows men down to consider what they are doing.

Only wise men look at every angle in a complete circle, circumspection, before making decisions (*Ephesians 5:15-17*).

Fools rush ahead in blind zeal and stupid passion.

Wise men will not believe anything or do anything, until they prove God's truth or will in the matter.

The Bereans were commended for testing even Paul's preaching, and the Thessalonians were commanded to do it (*Acts 17:11; 1Thessalonians 5:21*).

It is fools that believe the evening news, Ben Spock's childcare hallucinations, testimonials of any kind, think tanks of the left and the right, or any man because he calls himself a reverend or a doctor!

The best way to become prudent is to learn the Bible (*Psalms 19:7-11; 119:98-100; 2Timothy 3:16-17*).

The Bible contains the truth of God and His will for successful living.

The book of Proverbs is Solomon's inspired rules for a prosperous life.

Without God's truth and precepts, you will be subject to the folly of feelings and the vain ideas of men. Without instruction from God's ministers, you will be tossed to and fro by crafty deceivers (*Ephesians 4:14*).

You need to be in a Bible-preaching church to grow in prudence and wisdom.

Are you prudent? Do you save some of all income, so future financial difficulties can be avoided (*Proverbs 30:25*)?

Do you insure major assets against catastrophic loss, so you cannot be wiped out (*Proverbs 6:1-5*)?

Are you very cautious about marriage, either your own or your children's, to prudently avoid the odious woman (*Proverbs 30:21-23*)?

Have you looked ahead to see if your job, profession, or business will be needed in the future (*Proverbs 27:23-24*)?

Have you acquired a transferable skill, or are you unskilled and subject to layoffs?

Do you invest in high-yield opportunities, or do you question deals that sound too good to be true?

Have you been reading some new version of the Bible without examining its origin and text?

Do you prove everything you hear at church, or do you assume it to be right?

Have you vigorously examined the training of your children to maximize its potential?

Did you fall for Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," or did you recognize it as an animated crucifix for Catholicism?

Are you a purpose-driven Christian, or do you see the horrible compromise of seeker sensitive Rick Warren (*2Timothy 4:3-4*)?

Have you read the "Left Behind" novels, or do you know the antichrist comes before Christ's return (*2Thessalonians 2:3*)?

Do you endorse Jim Dobson's permissive child training, or do you stick with the old paths of inspired Scripture (*Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Jeremiah 6:16*)?

The book of Proverbs was inspired by God and written by Solomon to teach you wisdom.

The rule of wisdom in this Proverb is to be prudently cautious about everything you believe and do, lest you believe a lie or expose yourself to danger.

Only fools press forward without critical and skeptical analysis. The Lord is offering safety from frauds and risk, **If** you will slow down and prove all things (*1Thessalonians 5:21*).

**If** you continue to let life happen to you without cautious inspection, you will be repeatedly punished.

The greatest danger you will ever face is the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, when He will examine everything you have done in this life (*Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Romans 14:10-12; 2Corinthians 5:10-11; Hebrews 9:27*).

It is high time you woke out of your sleep and began living a holy life to prepare for that day (*Romans 13:11-14; Ephesians 5:3-7*).

Only a wicked fool eats, and drinks, and makes merry without regard for the Day of Judgment that is fast approaching. Those that are obsessed with the foolish pleasures of this life will soon be punished for eternity.

***Proverbs 27:13 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.***

Business optimists and risk-takers are financially dangerous, and so are men who live and play loose with women. Stay away from both types.

Do not work for them. Do not invest with them. **If** you must do business with them, get the best contract possible, for they are going down; and they will take you with them, unless you protect yourself.

This Proverb has a twin in *Proverbs 20:16*, which doubles the warning against risk-takers and immoral men.

Consider the terms: A surety guarantees financial obligations of others, much like a co-signer of loans.

A pledge is a performance bond, much like a security deposit, which gives reassurance a person will perform, or it can be retained to cover any damages.

A garment in this context is an example of an O.T. pledge, something valuable you hold as a security deposit.

A strange woman is any woman who will have sex outside marriage.

King Solomon warned his son against guaranteeing debts of others. With great authority, capital, and

reputation, a prince could easily get himself committed to obligations he might have to end up paying off himself.

Since affairs of state involve large obligations with heavy consequences, he taught his son often against this temptation, and we benefit by these repeated warnings (*Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26-27; 27:13*).

When entering business deals, Solomon taught his son to measure a man's character and integrity by his risk-taking practices and his relationships with women.

**If** the man was a foolish optimist, who guaranteed strangers, then extra security should be taken of him, in order to protect any dealings.

**If** the man was a fornicator or adulterer, the same advice applied, because both practices will eventually destroy a man (*Proverbs 22:26-27; 5:8-10; 6:26*).

Noble men do not need security deposits taken.

You may safely enter any deal with them. They fulfill their duties, meet their obligations, and pay their debts.

You can count on noble men. Their word is as good as a contract, their handshake as good as a security deposit.

Much business used to be transacted this way, until governments stopped enforcing contracts and punishing debtors, thieves, and covenant breakers with severity.

How can you find and prove such men? They are prudent in all business dealings and avoid risky ventures, so they are seldom hurt by a bad deal (*Proverbs 14:15; 22:3; 27:12*).

Noble men laugh at Ponzi schemes, mock get-rich-quick programs, and they insure all that they should.

Strong men with character keep riches (*Proverbs 11:16; 13:23; 18:9; 21:5, 20; 28:19*).

For this reason there is the opposite Proverb, "A fool and his money are easily parted." **If** a man has preserved his capital, then you know you have found a strong and wise man.

How else can you find noble men for safe business dealings? Observe their relationships with women.

**If** they are adulterers or party animals, stay far away.

**If** you must deal with them, get a strong contract or guarantee before doing so.

**If** they have little character or conscience in matters pertaining to love, sex, and marriage, then they cannot be trusted in financial matters.

Furthermore, lascivious living will eventually destroy them in other ways as well. The adulterer and whoremonger are going down to death and hell.

What is the lesson? Avoid foolish optimism or risk-taking in financial matters yourself.

Pessimism is a virtue in business transactions and investments (*Proverbs 14:15; 22:3; 27:12*).

Examine things very carefully and get other counselors involved to avoid pain (*Proverbs 15:22*).

Is there another lesson? Keep your heart and life free from whorish women, for moral and sexual compromise will bring economic trouble. Adultery proves a foolish soul and distorted priorities, and whores have never been cheap by any measure (*Proverbs 6:30-33; 23:27*).

Is there another lesson? Avoid doing business with, or get extra security from, men who are foolish, hasty, impulsive, naïve, optimistic, or vain talkers in financial matters. Protect yourself by staying away from risk-takers, for their folly will take you down with them.

Is there another lesson? Avoid doing business with, or get extra security from, men who are loose with women, for they show a lack of character, and they are also going down. A man who cheats his wife or another woman's husband will soon cheat you. Beware!

By the grace and mercy of God, He sent His only begotten Son to be the Surety of His contract, covenant, promise, and testament of eternal life to them (*Hebrews 7:22; 8:6; 9:15; 12:22-24*)!

And because of His faithfulness and justness, any one may confess their sins at any time can be forgiven and cleansed from them all (*1John 1:9*)!

You may put all your trust in Him, for He alone is just, perfect, and right in all His ways.

***Proverbs 27:14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.***

When is a blessing a curse? When it is flattery! Pay no attention to excessive blessings, compliments, or praise! They are actually a curse, for there is a false or foolish motive behind them (*Proverbs 26:24-28; 29:5*).

The person has already deceived you, or he is about to deceive you. Godly men are not moved by flattery, nor do they give flattery to others.

The man here praises his friend with a loud voice. What does this sound level tell us about the blessing? It indicates an insincere display rather than a holy and noble compliment. He intends for the friend and others

to hear the blessing. The loud praise is excessive, because it is flattery. He is using a blessing for other than friendly edification.

He rises early in the morning to praise his friend. What does this timing tell us about the blessing? It indicates a compliment and praise out of place and proportion, for there are other more important things to be done in the morning. The untimely praise is excessive, because it is flattery. He is using a blessing for other than friendly edification.

The flattery here is between friends. **If** an enemy used a loud voice early in the morning to praise you, it would be easy to know it was false and dangerous (*Psalm 5:8-10*).

But when it is between friends, it is much harder to see its danger. Wise men, who value sober warnings, will steel themselves against excessive compliments, even from friends. (*Proverbs 29:5*)

God hates flattery. Flattery is a compliment or praise to get another person to believe or do something wrong. It is a trait of depraved men (*Psalm 5:9*).

Whores use it to seduce men (*Proverbs 6:24; 7:21*).

Israel used it to secure God's deliverance from enemies (*Psalm 78:34-37*).

God will cut off all flatterers and blind their children (*Job 17:5; Psalm 12:1-3*)!

Good men will not give flattering titles to men, though very popular in religion (*Job 32:21-22; Matthew 23:6-12*).

Most ministers use "Reverend" or "Father" to demand flattery from others! Paul never used flattery when in Thessalonica (*1Thessalonians 2:5*).

True ministers will not flatter: they will name sins, name names, and take no prisoners (*2Corinthians 10:4-6*)!

In a marketing era, Image is more important than content, appearance than performance, and perception than reality; so it is easy to approve flattery.

Sanguine confidently optimistic have the temperament for it; salesmen are taught to do it. Rather than objectively present a product by its factual merits, they promote things with loud flattery and feigned friendliness. Compliments from a salesman about any personal matters are manifestly insincere.

Talk is cheap. Wise men ignore most bad things said about them (*Proverbs 27:14, 21; Ecclesiastes 7:21-22*), and they ignore all good things said about them!

One act of true kindness is more meaningful than many exuberant blessings. Correction and rebuke are far more valuable for prosperity and success than any compliment.

It is a duty for saints to think soberly of themselves, but this is hard to do, if you enjoy the praise of men (*Proverbs 29:5; Romans 12:3*).

Saul flattered David by offering him his two daughters, intending to use the bait to kill him by the Philistines (*1Samuel 18:17-25*).

Absalom flattered the men of Israel to steal their loyalty from his father David, king of Israel (*2Samuel 15:1-6*).

The citizens of Tyre and Sidon flattered Herod, but God had him eaten by worms for accepting it (*Acts 12:21-23*).

All praise is not sin. Praise to get a person to believe or do something wrong is sin.

Jesus commended His disciples (*Luke 22:28*).

Paul mentioned a fellow believer, who was praised in all the churches (*2Corinthians 8:18*).

Paul praised Corinth (*1Corinthians 11:2*).

Paul praised Timothy (*Philippians 2:19-22*).

And both husband and children will praise the virtuous woman for her diligent and noble efforts (*Proverbs 31:28-31*). Subversive praise, or flattery, is sin.

Praise severely tests a man's character (*Proverbs 27:21*).

Most men are vulnerable to flattery, from men or women; they believe the praise is true, and they will compromise to get more of it (*Proverbs 29:5*).

Wise men will prefer the rebuke of a sincere friend above the kiss of an enemy (*Proverbs 27:5-6*).

Jesus, the greatest example for every believer, did what He could to hinder praise and popularity (*Mark 7:36*).

### **Take Heed That You Forget Compliments!**

***Proverbs 27:15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.***

Imagine a very rainy day and a house with leaks. You cannot leave, because of the rain outside; and you cannot relax, because of the dripping inside. You are very miserable and quickly going crazy, as the rain

comes through the roof and ceiling to drip, drip, drip on your nerves and things!

So is a woman that likes to argue, nag, question, and prod! This irritating wife takes the blessing of marriage and turns it into torture for her husband.

Long rains are not bad. In fact, they are absolutely essential for agricultural prosperity. Extended rain for an agrarian society in a dry climate was a good thing; and the continual drizzle of rain upon a secure house is a pleasant noise that makes for a cozy and secure atmosphere.

Therefore, we understand the continual dropping to be a leak in a house that is very irritating and unnerving, as it steadily destroys a man's peace and assets (*Proverbs 19:13*).

**What is a contentious woman?** One that argues, debates, disputes, fights, quarrels, and questions! She is not content, and she cannot let anyone else be content.

A contentious woman aggravates, irritates, pushes, and nags. She has no clue her role is to be a cheerful, submissive helper (*Genesis 2:18; 3:16; 1Corinthians 11:9*).

She is the odious woman the world cannot stand (*Proverbs 30:21-23*).

It is better for a man to live alone in seclusion than with this tormentor (*Proverbs 21:9, 19; 25:24*).

A continual drip is frustrating, irritating, and destructive. You want to escape the noise, but where can you go? You know it is destroying your sanity and assets, but it will not stop. A nagging woman is similar.

You cursed your soul and future by marrying her, now you cannot escape the monster. She eats at your table and sleeps in your bed! If she grants you a ray of sunshine in a weak moment, it quickly ends with the return of rain! If you seek to correct her, you might as well try to reason with a bear robbed of her cubs!

Why are some women so despicable? They were born, as fools, with hardly a conscience; it was an odious mother that trained them;

They falsely believe marriage was made for them; a man has never put them in their place. When they read a Proverb like this, they have no clue it applies to them.

They have more self-righteousness and stubbornness than ten Pharisees. If you ask for an explanation, they exclaim, "I am only trying to help. If I did not keep riding him, he would not amount to anything. He needs me to remind him."

Young man, marry wisely! Being single, frustrated and lonely, is better than marrying this cruel creature. Marry

only by the fear of the Lord, for odious women can deceive men to marital ruin (*Proverbs 30:21-23; 31:30*).

A woman that fears God knows her place, obeys her husband, reverences him, ravishes him, has a meek and quiet spirit, and serves him (*Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:22-24, 33; Proverbs 5:19; 1Corinthians 7:1-5; 1Peter 3:3-4; Proverbs 31:10-27; Titus 2:3-5*).

**If** you marry foolishly, your friends will know it, because you cannot hide her! Put her to the test, and multiply any weakness you see by ten to preview her as a wife! (*Proverbs 27:16*)

Young woman, you must ignore the lies that are being spread today about the role of the woman. God has already settled this matter. You were made for your husband, and his desires are to be your desires (*1Corinthians 11:9; Genesis 3:16*).

Marriage is not a partnership, where you have an equal say in matters. Learn the beauty of a truly gracious woman and secure the perpetual adoration that all good men, women, and her family will have for her (*Proverbs 11:16; 31:28-31*).

Troubled man, **If** you are already snared in a torturous marriage to such a woman, your choices are limited.

You must labor by prayer, example, and exhortation to bring her to fear the Lord (*Psalms 34:11; 1Corinthians 7:16*).

You must get her in a Bible-preaching church, where the whole counsel of God is taught, including the role of the woman, by a man of God who will do most of your dirty work for you (*Acts 20:20, 27*).

You must wisely, kindly, and forcefully bring the Word of God to bear on your wife in your home.

Fathers, you must save your naïve and hormone-blinded sons from pursuing a jewel of gold and missing the smelly pig wearing it (*Proverbs 11:22*).

Probe and test their dates; spend time with their mothers. As an experienced husband, you can smell the stench of a contentious spirit easily. Ignore his foolish and lovesick comments about her virtues, because he does not have a clue about marriage; she has likely deceived him (*Proverbs 30:21-23; 31:30*).

Settle for nothing less than a woman who independently fears God from her heart, and is gracious to the praise of all who meet her. There are few such women left, but there are some.

Mothers, it is your duty to teach your daughters to be the godly, gracious, submissive, and reverent wives the Lord expects them to become (*Titus 2:3-5*).

You can teach the traits of a gracious woman by example and instruction.

Teach them to love from their hearts, cut their words in half, compliment rather than criticize, agree rather than argue, submit rather than fight, smile rather than sneer, romance rather than withdraw, clean rather than shop, work rather than nag, praise rather than correct, thank rather than complain, kiss rather than cry, and forget rather than avenge.

Contentious woman, confess your sin to God, your husband, and anyone else knowing your stubborn and insubordinate spirit.

The Lord is merciful, and so is your husband, if you will go meekly in repentance. You are violating the role God gave you, and you will never be happy, if you continue in a devilish course of contention.

Your greatest joy will only be realized by pressing closer and closer to the virtuous woman (*Proverbs 11:16; 31:10-31*).

One of the greatest testimonies to Christianity, which is sorely lacking today, are happy, functional homes, where the husband is king, and his wife is a charming, gracious, and submissive queen.

It is nagging, contentious, and insubordinate wives that cause the Word of God to be blasphemed, for even pagans know that a wife ought to support and serve her husband, not nag him into despair and grief (*Titus 2:5; 1Timothy 5:14; Esther 1:16-20*).

Let women that do know their God condemn the world and glorify the truth.

***Proverbs 27:16 Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself.***

There is a woman in this Proverb, indicated by the feminine pronoun "her." You do not want to meet her, and you especially do not want to marry her!

She is the contentious woman from the previous verse that cruelly drives her husband stark crazy (*Proverbs 27:15*).

The poor man cannot disguise or restrain her any more than he can hide the wind or the strong scent of his cologne. Everyone knows he is condemned for life with an odious woman.

God inspired Solomon to write this Proverb. He made the woman for the man, and He knew her better than all psychologists and therapists combined (*1Corinthians 11:9; 1Timothy 2:13-14; 2Timothy 3:6-7; 1Peter 3:7*).

Since Solomon wrote for the benefit of his son, he warned often of the seductive threat of the strange woman and of the marital threat of the odious woman. Both women are worse than death (*Proverbs 27:11; 30:21-23; Ecclesiastes 7:26*).

What is a contentious woman? She is a talkative woman that must express her opinions, correct minor details in conversation, question everything, and make constant suggestions that no one asked for.

She is an irritating, quarrelsome, and obnoxious person. She cannot think, speak, or act graciously, because she cannot even identify or appreciate the virtue.

She has an arrogant, haughty, incorrigible spirit that must argue, criticize, and question.

How does this woman give herself away? Her husband is beat. He is neutered, for this wretch stole his confidence, strength, and vitality.

She talks much, so you only need listen for the woman with her mouth flapping. **If** she is not a yacker, just look for the sour face that smiles only annually.

She will not have real friends, for no one desires her unbearable presence. Her social interaction is mainly the evil habit of being a busybody.

No man wants others to know he lives in a marital hell, so he tries to hide the odious character of his wife. This is what Solomon said was as difficult as holding the wind or the scent of cologne in your hand. Both will get away from you! Both will be discovered by those around you!

It is impossible to disguise or hide the hairy, grunting, and stinking pig when trying to display the gold ring in its nose (*Proverbs 11:22*)!

Men use various techniques to hide their disgraceful wives. One man tries to hide his contentious wife by avoiding public excursions with her.

A man works late, finds hobbies, or just refuses to go out.

Another man may foolishly try to deceive his friends by complimenting her to them (though they all know better).

One man will weakly submit to her overbearing demands and questions to avoid a public squabble.

And yet another man will pamper her greedy soul with anything in sight to buy a little peace and tranquility for himself.

Such women do not deserve husbands, and no man deserves such a wife. Since this despicable creature can disguise herself during dating, it is every man's duty to

learn how to spot the telltale marks that reveal her cruel character (*Proverbs 30:21-23*).

They are simple. She talks a lot, she has a haughty spirit, she is forward to speak, she has opinions on everything.

She disagreeable in public, she gets visibly agitated, she complains about circumstances, and she questions everything.

Some men are male versions of the same thing. They talk too much, complain about everything, argue and debate no matter what is said, question accepted opinions and decisions, and so forth.

These men should be avoided in all social unions as much as the odious woman should be avoided in marriage.

Contentious persons that cause division and strife should be rejected, for they are destructive of peace and pleasure (*Proverbs 22:10*).

There are several lessons. <sup>1</sup>Every young man must prove his marital prospects and listen closely to the opinions of married men about them.

<sup>2</sup>Every young woman should emphasize graciousness above any other pursuit in her life.

<sup>3</sup>Every man married to a contentious woman needs to find an attic room or wilderness retreat (*Proverbs 21:9, 19; 25:24*).

<sup>4</sup>Every woman tending toward the odious character described here should repent before God, her husband, and her children and seek to live graciously.

***Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.***

#### **It Takes Iron To Sharpen Iron.**

A knife is not sharpened by cloth, bread, wood, plastic, or even copper. A knife may cut and shape these things to be more useful, but they will only dull the knife. Sharpening a knife requires iron at least as hard as the knife. Once sharpened, a knife is bright, sharp, and ready for much more productive service.

The noun "*countenance*", may mean a person's face and appearance (*Proverbs 25:23; 1Samuel 16:7,12; Daniel 1:13-15; Matthew 6:16*).

It may mean the expression of feeling toward another person (*Proverbs 16:15; Genesis 31:2; Psalms 4:6; 44:3; Acts 2:28*).

It may mean the spirit, demeanor, behavior, or conduct of a man (*Proverbs 15:13; Deuteronomy 28:50; Psalm 10:4; Ecclesiastes 7:3; Daniel 5:6, 9*).

Our Proverb addresses the spirit, demeanor, behavior, and conduct of a man.

**If** we limit our Word to improving a man's facial appearance, we mock Solomon's wisdom. A file doesn't just make a knife look better; it makes it better!

**If** we limit the Word to showing feelings, it makes little sense, for friends already express approval of each other.

The Preacher promoted good friends, they will make you better (*Proverbs 27:9*).

A good friend will make you brighter, sharper, and more useful. But not any friend will do. Only wise friends make you wiser, so the best men love other good men. (*Proverbs 13:20; Titus 1:8*)

Weak and foolish men will dull and corrupt your life (*Proverbs 13:20; 1Corinthians 15:33*).

**If** a man is good enough to be your father's friend, it is your wisdom, to keep him as your friend (*Proverbs 27:10*).

Two are better than one, because they sharpen and improve each other in several ways. They can share successes of labor, help each other up when they fall, find complementary abilities, and defend against mutual enemies. What a great blessing! (*Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*)

Loners never amount to much, for they cannot grow (a knife cannot sharpen itself). They become dull and rusty with ignorance, poor habits, and depressed spirits. Loners are always the weakest members of any group, for they continue to rust and decay without the sharpening steel of noble friends. Our proverb's wisdom cannot be overthrown.

Let them spend more time with holy brethren, and they would be sharpened into useful men; lazy habits of self-indulgence are hard to break.

Selfishness, laziness, and pride keep a man from seeking friends, he is happy rusting by himself in solitude.

Foolishness, ignorance, and bad habits hinder a man from keeping friends, because he drives them away.

Successful athletic training requires competition with those better than you, otherwise your skills are never tested, you never learn the best techniques, and you deceive yourself regarding your ability and techniques.

Being a loner and limiting friends is like preparing for Wimbledon by playing tennis on a computer. Absolutely guaranteed to bring failure!

God declared in Eden we are social creatures (*Genesis 2:18*).

A wife and children provide increased value to society, but they are not enough. Rarely do wives sharpen a man like another good man, for that is trying to sharpen iron with a weaker metal. Women may be sharpened by men and in turn sharpen one another, but seldom do they provide the collision of equal or superior metals that results in a bright, shiny, sharp edge.

David described the love of Jonathan as exceeding that of women, though married at the time to the very wise Abigail (*1Samuel 25:3; 2Samuel 1:26*).

Jonathan sharpened David by strengthening his hand in the LORD with spiritual provoking and covenant promises of loyalty and service, a woman could not and would not make (*1Samuel 23:16*).

Job was this kind of sharpening influence among his companions (*Job 4:3-4*).

The brethren from Rome sharpened even the great apostle Paul, for there is mutual comfort in believing brethren (*Acts 28:15; Romans 1:12; 15:24*).

Paul loved Timothy for this effect (*2Timothy 1:3-5*).

Our Lord sent teachers out two-by-two (*Luke 10:1; Acts 13:2*).

Jesus Christ had the tongue of the learned from His Father, and He knew how to speak a Word in season to those who needed it (*Isaiah 50:4*).

Jesus Christ could and did sharpen many. The hearts of two burned within them when they had Him but a short time (*Luke 24:32*).

For this reason the Lord Jesus Christ ordained Churches of saints, where they can help, support, exhort, warn, and rebuke each other to the profit of their souls (*1Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:23-25*).

We are to bear one another's burdens and convert one another from errors, which is the sharpening purpose of the church. (*Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19-20*)

The first church, under powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, showed great zeal toward their fellowship and society of saints (*Acts 2:42-47*).

Look at the close relationship of the members and be convicted to make greater efforts yourself toward this end.

We have two lessons from our Proverb. <sup>1</sup>We need noble and godly friends to maximize our growth, <sup>2</sup>we need to be such friends to others to maximize theirs.

Dear reader, are you diligent in fulfilling your role in improving the lives of your brethren? Are you a sharpening influence to make them more useful and productive in their lives? And do you value and promote your relationships with other good men for your own perfection?

***Proverbs 27:18 Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.***

Success is easy, even for lowly and simple men. All you must do is take good care of a successful master, and he will take good care of you.

The man who keeps the fig tree gets to eat the precious fruit, and the faithful servant will be rewarded by his master. Here is another Proverb, to exhort wise men to their diligence and faithfulness in their vocations.

You can bet on this general rule! God makes rare exceptions for more important purposes, but if you want to get ahead, make your master so happy he cannot resist cutting you in on the real action.

It has happened many times before; it will happen again. A wise servant can be promoted right past a foolish son. See the comments on *Proverbs 17:2*.

Faithful men are rare today, which makes this Proverb even truer than in Solomon's day. (*2Timothy 3:1-5*)

The contrast between your diligence and others' laziness will be wider than ever, the same is true of your cheerfulness and their sullenness, your punctuality and their tardiness, your carefulness and their carelessness, and your obedience and their obstinacies.

Believe it! Find your fig tree and keep it better than others. Success is easy!

A young boy, with average abilities, starts at a fast food restaurant. He is black and stutters; the owner is white and articulate. The boy fears God and reads a Proverb every morning.

The young boy, is early to work, spit polished, cheerful, raring to go, and goes full speed all day, without complaint or letup.

The young boy, knows only full speed and faster, nothing slower. Sauntering makes the day drag and steals the owner's profits, he explains modestly!

The young boy, follows all rules exactly, brings his own lunch, never misses work, asks for more tasks during

lulls, cleans beyond his assigned area, does the work of two or three during rush periods, helps a customer change a flat tire, puts his arm shoulder-deep in the grease trap to recover a kitchen timer, doesn't snitch even a French fry, never questions his boss, doesn't offer foolish suggestions, and is friendly and respectful at all times to all parties. Before leaving for the day.

The young boy, thanks the owner for his job and offers to do anything else that may be needed. When told an employee for the next shift just called in sick in order to go fishing.

The young boy, enthusiastically volunteers to work a double, though he has to miss his own basketball game that night.

The young boy, cheerfully works the second shift at full speed, closes the store securely, deposits the day's sales at the bank, and mails letters for the owner.

When young boy began, He made minimum wage. After one year, he was a supervisor. After two years, an Assistant Manager. After three years, the youngest Store Manager in the history of the chain.

After four years, the owner gave him 25% of store profits on top of his wages and retired to another city. After six years, the owner died and willed him the rest of the store. Today he has 5 stores and is thinking about where to retire.

Too good to be true? Joseph began at minimum wage, slavery, and in thirteen years he sat on the throne of the richest nation on earth! He found three fig trees, and he was the best keeper that all three had ever seen, Potiphar, the jailor, and Pharaoh!

#### **Let God Be True!**

Too good to be true? Jacob ran away from home with only a staff. Twenty years later, he had four wives, twelve sons, and much wealth! He had found a fig tree, a gnarled old tree with potential, and he kept it faithfully in spite of setbacks, Laban!

#### **Let God Be True!**

Too good to be true? Elisha was merely a plowman when he found his fig tree, the service of God and Elijah. But so faithfully did He serve both masters that he was given a double portion of Elijah's spirit (*1Kings 19:19-21; 2Kings 2:1-15*).

#### **Let God Be True!**

Let every man of God heed his royal call as a servant of the King of kings!

Reader, how do you keep your fig tree? Faithful diligence brings honor! Waiting on your master brings promotion! Don't complain; get to work!

You don't need an education; you need sanctification! You don't need brilliance; you need diligence! You don't need a sponsor; you need a motor! You don't need an opportunity; you need humility!

First you must find a fig tree. A fence post is not a fig tree. It may be wood, but it bears no fruit; so a dead or dying business is not where you want to be, no matter how much you like it or believe in it.

**If** it isn't making money, guess what? It isn't making money! Cut your losses! You can keep that fence post in bed with you, but it will not bear fruit!

A telephone pole is not a fig tree, though wood and very tall; the "business opportunity" of a promoter with a shiny watch is just a tall tale, even if he flashes leased "wealth." Such men do not have real fig trees, or they would be eating from them instead of trying to get your figs!

**If** he doesn't have a business without you, don't give him your business!

A silk Ficus tree is not a fig tree, though it looks like one to the greedy and hasty eye; so don't listen to hypothetical possibilities too good to be true.

**If** they sound too good to be true, they are a lie! Simple enough? Chuck promoters (*Proverbs 12:11; 14:23*)! Find a real fig tree!

**First**, you need a real fig tree that bears real fruit you can see and touch, a successful business in a necessary industry with potential. Solomon recommended farming (*Proverbs 12:11; 27:23-27; 28:19*)!

Food works (*Ecclesiastes 5:9*)! Wholesaling works (*Proverbs 31:24*)!

Commercial real estate works (*Proverbs 31:16*)! And just about anything works, if people already need and/or want it.

**Second**, keep the tree carefully. The Bible tells you how.

You do not snitch a dime, answer back to (*Titus 2:9-10*) your boss, shame your boss, or goof off even once (*Proverbs 17:2; Ecclesiastes 10:1*).

You work harder than anyone else, speak when spoken to, please your boss well in all things, always reverence authority, work smart, and show friendliness. It's easy! Pick the fruit, and eat it! (*Proverbs 14:35; 18:24; 22:29; 29:19; Ecclesiastes 10:7; Titus 2:9*)

**Third**, do everything on and off the job to the Lord Jesus, with a single fervent heart committed to His glory. You put His kingdom first in your life, for which He will add everything else you need or desire (*1Kings*

**3:10-13; Matthew 6:33; Ephesians 6:5-7; Colossians 3:22-23).**

Don't say you have done all this and are still on the bottom rung, for the rule is as true as any verse in the Bible. It is true as gravity. You have been cheating somewhere, for the rule works! Do you have a tree? Are you keeping it well? Is the Lord first?

What if you get the wrong tree? Impossible, if you make a reasonable effort to avoid fence posts, telephone polls, and Ficus trees. Your Master in heaven, will see your care of even the wrong tree, and reward you accordingly (**Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:25**).

The tree has less to do with the equation; your service and Master in heaven have more to do with it.

God can and will straighten out your tree problem, when you clean up your act! Have you forgotten about Moses? David? Abigail? Mordecai? Daniel?

What of your religious fig tree? Saul of Tarsus ignorantly picked a horrible tree - it bore poisonous plums - but he kept it faithfully. He didn't know any better; but he was perfectly faithful with what he knew. So his Master promoted him to Apostle of the Gentiles for that faithfulness (**1 Timothy 1:12-14**).

**Give God the glory!** How are you keeping your tree? With your whole heart? Or with a double mind? Can God count you faithful?

Regenerated reader, there is a glorious fig tree that only you know about. It is the Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom.

Jesus said, "**If any man serve me, him will my Father honour**" (**John 12:26**).

How much honor? Jesus said again, "**Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them**" (**Luke 12:37**).

No! Can it be true? **Psalm 58:11** *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

I hear the Blessed and Only Master saying, "**Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord**" (**Matthew 25:21, 23**).

Here is the truly important fig tree, the Lord Jesus Christ. How are you serving Him? A crown awaits the faithful (**2 Timothy 4:7-8**)!

How glorious is the honor? *"The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve*

*him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads"* (**Revelation 22:3-4**).

**Lord, Lead Me To Thy Tree  
I Shall Keep It Faithfully!**

***Proverbs 27:19 As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.***

Water makes a natural mirror. Looking into water shows a man the image of his face. He can see how he looks, for the reflection is very accurate.

Human hearts are also quite similar, as our natures, passions, and vulnerabilities are much the same. We can know much about another person's heart by virtue of knowing our own.

Here again is a simple simile, a comparison indicated by the words, "like" or "as."

In the way a man is able to see his face and know its features by the reflection he can see in water, so a man is able to know and understand other men through having a similar heart.

Though there is a way, in which a man's heart answers himself by way of his conscience, that internal knowledge is not the lesson of this Proverb (**Proverbs 14:10; 20:27; John 8:9; Romans 2:15**).

The analogy chosen here and the lack of a reflexive pronoun, indicate that we are dealing with the similarity of one man's heart to those of other men.

Consider species of birds, animals, and fish. Each individual creature is unique, there are no two parrots, dogs, or perch exactly alike.

They have very slight variations in size, color, temperament, and strength, by breed and by individual.

But within a species, they do all have the same nature. All parrots are similar, that's how we know they are parrots! They do not have an eagle's nature, nor do they have an ostrich's nature. We can learn a lot about parrots in general by having just one for a pet.

Men vary in size, color, temperament, intelligence, and strength. But all men still have the same heart and basic nature. No man has the nature of a parrot, dog, perch, or angel. He is a man, and the heart of one man is very similar to the hearts of other men.

Our similarities of nature are much greater than our differences of individuality. Every snowflake is different, but all snowflakes are still frozen water vapor!

God made the hearts of all men alike (*Psalm 33:15*), and all nations and races are made of the same human blood (*Acts 17:26*).

From Adam to your grandchildren, man perpetually begets the next generation in his image and with his likeness. The same heart and nature is passed from one generation to the next. (*Genesis 5:3*)

The depraved heart of the natural man is the same from one person to the next. They all walk according to the course of this world and Satan's direction (*Ephesians 2:1-3*).

They are all foolish, pleasure-mad, envious, and hateful (*Titus 3:3*).

There are none that understand, seek God, or fear Him (*Romans 3:9-18*).

*"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one"* (*Psalm 14:3*).

The regenerated heart of the spiritual man is also the same from one person to the next. Every child of God knows the horrible conflict Paul described between the flesh and the spirit (*Romans 7:14-24*).

They all know Paul's strait betwixt departing to be with Christ and remaining here to love and serve others (*Philippians 1:23-24*).

They all relate to the wide variety of Psalms, in which David covered the spiritual spectrum of praise, prayer, distress, and delight. His very personal Words describing his circumstances and passions answer the deepest thoughts of our own hearts better than we could ever express.

Our Proverb teaches wisdom. We can know ourselves better by observing others. For we see the good (of the new man), the bad (of the old man), and the ugly (the perverse conflict of the two).

It is only human pride that thinks we are different, better than others.

A wise man will remember, *"As in water face answereth to face."*

A wise man will condescend to men of low estate, for he knows it is his own true estate (*Romans 12:16*).

Our Proverb teaches more wisdom. We can know others better by knowing ourselves. For we know the good (peace and joy in the Holy Ghost), the bad (guilt and pain of temptation and sin), and the ugly (the instability of the double minded man).

We can help bear the burdens of others' suffering, and we can rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep (*Romans 12:15*).

Our Proverb teaches even more wisdom. We can know how to treat others by how we want to be treated.

We know the good (actions we appreciate), the bad (actions we resent), and the ugly (the pain of inconsistency).

The golden rule assumes how we want to be treated will be perfectly suitable for all others (*Exodus 23:19; Luke 6:31*).

Every time we stoop to the froth of socially and politically correct speech, we defraud others and ourselves of true profit!

For the reality of our hearts can provide the only help of value to other hearts, and only the reality of their hearts can truly connect with our hearts. Why do we waste so much time in foolish and superficial generalities!

Now, we must come to terms with this Proverb. We can understand the actions of others better than we admit, for they are only doing what we ourselves would do!

We can commiserate with the suffering of others better than we admit, for we have known the very pain ourselves!

We can receive and give counsel and comfort better than we do, for we know what we craved in their situation!

We can pray for one another with heartfelt sympathy, for our experienced groaning can be offered up for them.

No honest person can say, "No one is suffering like me." For God has plainly declared that every man's temptations are common (*1Corinthians 10:13*).

They are more similar from man to man than they are different. Get off your high horse, and humble yourself before God and all other men. We have been there before! You are not in uncharted territory!

Our Lord was tempted in all points like we are tempted, and this experience makes Him a merciful, faithful, helpful, and compassionate High Priest (*Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15-16; 5:1-2*).

Yet He never sinned (*Hebrews 4:15; 7:26*)!

We who know the grief, guilt, and shame of sin, have humble roles to serve others (*Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 13:3; 1Peter 3:8-9*).

***Proverbs 27:20 Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.***

There is always room for one more fool to live a painful and dysfunctional life and die a miserable death! Hell and destruction are never full! So fools are always lusting after the evil things that will ruin their lives!

The eyes of man are never satisfied! Fools rush to their own hurt and loss every day! There is always room for one more fool to go in!

There is no limit to loveless marriages, foolish children, lonely hearts, underemployed sluggards, early deaths, starving dreamers, and other problems.

You can join them, reader! Prisons have few vacancies, because another fool shows up to fill the house of pain.

Divorce Court never closes, because one more fool chose to marry for lust instead of faith or chose to divorce for feelings instead of facts.

A.A. always takes new members, for there is one more lush unwilling to drink water. Hell and destruction are never full.

Fools are hilarious! They always want, wish, and lust for something to make them happy, which they never find!

Fools think a man, a woman, a child, a house, an amount of money, a car, a boat, affection from another fool, marriage, an event, a promotion, or something else will make them happy! But they never find it, no matter how hard and long they look!

Fools are doomed to misery, for they have got on a treadmill to nowhere!

Fools are never content with what they have, even if it is much; for they imagine there is something more exciting out there to make them happy.

Fools live frustrated and lonely lives, searching for Nirvana, and then they die and wake up in hell! What a miserable existence! Hell and destruction are never full!

#### **A Fool's Eyes Are Never Satisfied!**

Hell and destruction are a miserable and painful existence and an unnecessary event (*Proverbs 23:13-14*).

The lake of fire is never full either! It always has a little more room! But the lesson here is about painful lives.

You too can destroy your marriage, you too fail with your children, you too live with a lonely and frustrated soul.

You too can turn your life into hell and destruction. The grave never says, "Enough", so fools find new ways to lie and die miserably. No matter how many bodies are cast into the ground each day, there is room for more! (*Proverbs 30:15-16*)

The eyes of man are never satisfied, because man craves anything other than God. There is no end to the lust of the flesh and eyes and the pride of life.

Every foolish man thinks a little more of this or that will make him happy. (*1John 2:15-17*)

A foolish man cannot relax; he dreams of something better; he needs another event to bring him a taste of excitement.

A foolish man refuses to accept his present circumstances, for he thinks himself too good for them!

A foolish man thinks in the near future he will discover something to bring peace and joy.

Give a woman a good husband: she wants a different man.

Give him a good job: he wants to work for himself.

Give her a warm home and children: she wants something to do.

Give him a good income: he wants more.

Give her a good body: she wants it better.

The problem is not improvement; the problem is out-of-control priorities leading to sin.

Why do men with beautiful wives divorce more often than those with average wives?

Why are women that could be content with the Lord always frustrated and looking for more?

The strange woman, by her sins of fornication and adultery, takes men down to death and hell (*Proverbs 2:18-19; 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; Ecclesiastes 7:26*).

But there is always room for one more fool to use the cover of darkness to go near her house to taste her deceitful offerings. He sees her beauty and hears her flattery and is sure he has found the treasure of pleasure. (*Proverbs 7:6-10*)

Foolish men are not satisfied with their wives, so the punishing ruin, of adultery, always has room for one more fool to be accepted, into its downward spiral to destruction.

Adam and Eve were not satisfied in Paradise, and it cost them everything. He that loves silver will not be satisfied with silver, which is vanity and vexation of spirit (*Ecclesiastes 5:10*).

Covetousness is idolatry and a great evil, which leads to constant frustration and unhappiness (*Ephesians 5:5*).

Men's hearts always want something else or something more, and this evil fretting against God and lust for new things, will take them down to destruction.

Godliness with contentment is great gain (*1 Timothy 6:6*).

But fools cannot learn the lesson! They hear it, but they cannot learn it. For they have convinced themselves, deceived themselves, that there is something else that will excite and fulfill their little souls.

God will never, let you find anything positive, outside Him, so those who get their eyes and hearts attached to the things of this life are doomed to misery!

Fool! Are you discontent, frustrated, and suffering misery and pain in your life? It is your fault! You have chosen your own lusts over the things of God and heaven.

You protect your pet sins; you resent correction by your teachers; and you intend to do things your way.

**If** you will make the blessed God your everlasting portion, you can always be content and filled with joy (*Psalms 16:11; 73:25-26*).

**If** you choose wisdom, you can find life and escape death. There is also room for one more saint! (*Proverbs 13:14; 14:27*)

***Proverbs 27:21 As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.***

Silver and gold were identified, separated, and refined from impurities in a fining pot or furnace. There the trial of great heat separated base metals from precious metals. The end result of the hot trial left the pure metals that were ready to be used for fine jewelry.

Praise is a fiery trial for men (*Proverbs 17:3*).

**If** a man has a base or weak character, praise will make him proud, conceited, and overbearing.

**If** a man has precious or strong character, it will not affect him at all. He will continue in his modest and humble course, giving glory to God and being thankful for any good that he might be able to do toward others.

Praise creates a severe test of your soul.

Praise will reveal what kind of person you are. It will prove a spirit of godly humility or a spirit of devilish pride.

Do you crave the praise of men? Does it greatly warm your soul? Or do you know full well it is not true! Do you fear it?

Do you well understand that anything you are or have is a gift from God?

What do you have that was not given to you? **If** what you have was a gift from another. How can you be proud or take glory in it, as if it were your accomplishment? The only difference between you and others is God's gift (*1 Corinthians 4:7*). Give Him thanks!

Those taught by the Spirit of Christ will recognize the great danger in praise.

We should carry a sign saying we are flammable, to keep the heat or spark of praise at a distance.

We should dread praise more than rebuke, for the one bears the good fruits of humility and instruction, and the other may work our ruin by the most pleasant poison!

A seed of pride lies active in the most sanctified soul, and just a little praise can be enough to water it into rapid and extensive growth that will choke your fruitfulness and bring judgment.

We have already been warned about praise in this chapter.

First, we were told to let others praise us, and not be seeking to get the word out ourselves *verse 2*!

Second, we were told that rebuke and wounds from friends are better than love and kisses of flattering enemies *verses 5-6*.

Thirdly, we were taught to ignore excessive praise and flattery, for it is more like a curse *verse 14*.

Do you understand and practice each of these warnings about praise?

David, after killing Goliath, could have written his own ticket! Public opinion would have secured him the throne; after all, he had been anointed king (*1 Samuel 16:1-13*).

But David told Saul he was just a son of Saul's servant, Jesse the Bethlehemite (*1 Samuel 17:58*)!

When offered his daughters, he thought the honor too high to consider (*1 Samuel 18:17-24*).

David was totally gracious in spite of universal adulation and won Jonathan's heart (*Proverbs 22:11*).

Saul was envious that his praise was less than David's (*1Samuel 18:6-11*);

Absalom, use to praise, used praise to steal the hearts of weak men in Israel (*2Samuel 14:25; 15:1-6*).

Herod should have fallen on his face to rebuke lying lobbyists that his words were like the words of a god (*Acts 12:20-23*).

Diotrephes earned the severe rebuke of John for loving the preeminence (*3John 1:9*).

Time would fail to write of the golden character of Joseph, Daniel, and the apostles of our Lord Jesus. The first two did not let exalted offices affect their modest and holy spirits; and the latter group, who with miraculous power to heal and resurrect were praised as gods, strongly rejected such attention (*Acts 3:11-12; 10:25-26; 14:11-18; 28:1-6*).

Due to the nature of a bishop's office, a candidate cannot be a novice, lest the public esteem of the work and it become a snare to his soul (*1Thessalonians 5:13; 1Timothy 3:6*).

Satan was puffed up, by his exalted position and aspired to be like the most High, and he is a perpetual example, of the danger of pride and the Lord's severe condemnation of it. (*Isaiah 14:9-15*)

But contrast our Lord, who left the throne of glory to become a servant among mortals (*Philippians 2:5-8*).

He even requested that His glorious miracles not be spread abroad, for He was not the least interested in the praise of men (*Mark 7:36*).

The wise man Agur counted himself horribly brutish (*Proverbs 30:1-3*).

The wise man Solomon thought himself a child (*1Kings 3:7*).

And the greatest apostle considered himself less than the least of all saints (*Ephesians 3:8*).

Prepare yourself ahead of time, reader, so that when the deadly, elixir of praise, is offered you may politely and deftly direct the attention to heaven, from where all blessings descend.

***Proverbs 27:22 Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.***

No! There is hope for the foolishness of childhood or the temporary foolishness of adults, but there is no hope for a fool.

He is what he is, and you cannot make him wise, no matter what you do (*Proverbs 17:10, 12; 29:9*).

You should avoid him, make sure you are not like him, and understand why some people never change.

What is a fool? A fool is a person who has rejected God by either words or deeds (*Psalms 14:1; 53:1; Titus 1:16*).

A fool is too proud and stubborn to be instructed, so he must be treated like a brute beast (*Proverbs 10:8; 12:1; 14:16; 26:3*).

A fool is confident of himself, so he continues in his madness without caution or examination (*Proverbs 10:23; 12:15; 15:5; 17:16; 26:11; 28:26*).

A fool is self-centered and profane (*Proverbs 14:9; 17:24; 18:2; 20:3; Ecclesiastes 10:2-3*).

Child foolishness can be corrected and eliminated by reproof and corporal punishment (*Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 29:15*).

Adult foolishness can be corrected by instruction, rebukes, and warnings. There is hope in both these cases, but not with fools. (*Proverbs 1:5; 9:8-9; 19:20; 25:12*)

A mortar was a cup-shaped stone vessel that held grain, so it could be pulverized with a pestle, a club-like instrument used to pound the grain. Braying the grain meant to beat, bruise, and crush it to powder. The metaphor is powerful!

If you were to smash a fool in a mortar with a pestle, you could not drive away his foolishness and make him wise.

How can you keep from being an incorrigible fool?

<sup>1</sup>The fear of the Lord is your first step, for it is the beginning of wisdom and understanding (*Proverbs 1:7; 9:10*).

<sup>2</sup>Then you must reject your own thoughts (*Proverbs 16:25; 26:12*).

<sup>3</sup>Then you must love instruction and reproof to be wiser (*Proverbs 9:8-9; 12:1*).

<sup>4</sup>And then finally, you must avoid fools, so you do not become like them (*Proverbs 9:6; 13:20*).

**Is There Hope For A Fool?**

A wise man will identify fools, remember that they are beyond help and hope, and not waste his time or breath on them (*Proverbs 17:10, 12; 29:9*).

They are not worthy of honor, so it is wrong to give them any honor (*Proverbs 26:1, 8*).

They should only be answered to shut their mouths (*Proverbs 26:4-5; Matthew 7:6*).

If you must direct a fool, brute force will be necessary (*Proverbs 26:3; Psalm 32:9*).

Some people never change, never grow up as they should, never increase in wisdom and understanding, they are fools!

Do not be discouraged or waste your time. Avoid and rebuke them instead.

It is your duty and privilege to fear the Lord, humble yourself before teachers and counselors, and avoid the proud rebellion that enslaves hearts and minds.

It is much easier to learn this way than to be brayed with a pestle in a mortar, which the Lord Jesus Christ has done and will do to His foolish enemies (*Matthew 21:42-44*)!

### ***Proverbs 27:23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.***

All men must have a profitable profession or business, for productive labor is God's will.

But each man must take precautionary care of his profession or business. Either can disappear easily by many causes. Business analysis and foresight is part of wisdom.

Why is this important? Because life in a sinful world is full of change, and a great job or business can decline and come to an end quickly.

Solomon uses two examples to make his point, rich men become poor, and strong kings are forced out (*Proverbs 27:24*).

The rich men of previous generations are not the rich men of this generation. The Rothschilds, Vanderbilts, Morgans, Carnegies, Astors, and Rockefellers have fallen far from the preeminence they once had.

Today the rich are Gates, Buffet, Allen, Walton, Ellison, and Ballmer. Any one of these could buy out all the older families combined. Riches are not forever, they go away by many means.

### **Economic Success Is Temporary.**

Invincible kings, who once ruled mighty empires, have disappeared. Alexander the great died at 33, and his sons were murdered. His crown and family stopped right there!

Where are Ramses II, Genghis Khan, Louis XVI, John F. Kennedy, and their families? What happened to the great Nebuchadnezzar? Even his glorious city of Babylon disappeared from the face of the earth. What happened to the mighty Roman Empire? Present Italy and its capital are laughingstocks in comparison!

Solomon saw such political change firsthand. King Saul and his family were wiped out; only a dependent cripple named Mephibosheth was left.

David, Solomon's father, replaced Saul; and he was not even from the same tribe of Israel. And Solomon's son Rehoboam quickly lost ten of the twelve tribes through poor leadership. The crown does not endure to every generation. Political success is only temporary.

The employment and business world can change drastically and quickly. Businesses and jobs have been lost through changes in laws, economic depressions, over expansion, new inventions, neglect and sloth, competition, tax changes, war, political upheaval, natural disasters, theft, cultural changes, death, and other reasons.

The shifting sands of business and the economy can swallow up those not diligent enough, to provide for the future.

A job or business is God's kind blessing; He expects wise men to take good care of them.

Diligence is necessary and commanded (*Proverbs 22:29; Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 12:11; 1Thessalonians 4:11-12*).

Foresight is necessary and commanded (*Proverbs 6:8; 22:3; 27:12; 30:25*).

David, though king, appointed great men to wisely care for his substance (*1Chronicles 27:25-31*).

Hezekiah, who loved farming, made costly efforts to provide well for it (*2Chronicles 26:10*).

Part of that diligence is to know your present situation well and provide for your future.

In an agrarian society, it was important to know the condition of your flocks and herds. Do they have any diseases? What was the rate of loss from theft? Wild animals? Is there sufficient grazing area? Water? Which shepherds would stay with you and which ones would leave?

You needed to know and correct present threats to your prosperity, and you needed to look to the future to accommodate growth or handle adversity.

It is easy to let professional competence or your business edge slip.

It is easy to fall into professional habits or ruts and lose your sharpness.

### **Slothfulness Is Part Of Human Nature.**

Solomon warned men to apply themselves to preserve their economic means, for the changes in life will surely steal away the former success of the slothful (*Proverbs 24:30-34*).

Are you as valuable to your employer as the day he hired you? Are you operating your business as intensely and carefully as you were during its very best year?

Wise men observe changes and trends in their industry and in their company. They are not caught by surprise when their jobs or businesses are no longer secure.

Is your job still in demand? Or is your profession in decline? Are you keeping up with technical changes?

Do you have a plan for what you will be doing ten years from now? Is it a valid expectation, or will you need further training or a new job?

Have you wisely taken the time to keep yourself marketable and valuable?

Do you have a transferable skill, liquid capital, professional contacts, or all three to help you in the future?

These matters all take effort, and Solomon exhorts us to diligence in considering them carefully and correcting them.

It is not enough to keep going to the same job or operating the same business, even if you do it diligently. You also need to measure the future viability of your job or business, and make whatever changes are necessary to avoid loss.

The Proverb calls for diligence, not fear. Since you cannot even see tomorrow, you must trust the God Who holds the future in His hands. Do your reasonable best in providing for the future, and trust the Lord for the rest.

For without God's blessing, any labor to build a house, or efforts to keep a city, will be in vain. Sleep, beloved! (*Psalms 127:1-2*)

Ministers of the gospel, who are shepherds of flocks, must be diligent in the oversight of their congregations,

knowing individual problems, correcting them, taking precautions against trouble, and planning and preparing for prosperity (*1 Peter 5:1-4*).

A great day of reckoning is coming for Ministers of the gospel, though much more terrible (*1 Corinthians 3:11-17*).

Our Proverb has very natural and earthly wisdom for us, taking care of business! But these Words also testify of Jesus Christ. Who is the good shepherd, knows His sheep, is known by His sheep, planned the purchase of Gentile sheep, and will not lose one of them (*John 10:1-16*)!

Thank you, Lord, for being diligent to know the state of your flock.

***Proverbs 27:24 For riches are not for ever:  
and doth the crown endure to every  
generation?***

How secure is your job? There are forces at work to take away your profession and leave you without income.

Wise men constantly assess the changing marketplace and prepare as well as possible for the future.

Prudent men seek transferable skills for themselves and their sons that will always be needed and able to provide a living.

God is ultimately in charge of the future, but He expects wise men to use the means and warnings He gives.

Solomon exhorted diligence toward your financial livelihood (*Proverbs 27:23*).

The Proverb here is an important reason to be careful and prudent about your income. Rich men do not keep their riches forever, and kings do not perpetuate their authority and rule.

How much less can ordinary men preserve their financial means? God expects His children to be diligent in business for good reasons (*Romans 12:11; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; Titus 2:9-10*).

### **Riches Are Not For Ever!**

The rich men of yesterday are not the rich men of today, and the rich of today will not be the rich men of tomorrow. Riches certainly make themselves wings and fly away (*Proverbs 23:4-5*).

Where is the wealth of Persia today? The whole region is in poverty compared to its storied past. The

Rothschilds once directed Europe financially, but that banking family has been on the decline for 150 years. Riches are not forever.

Farms and plantations once yielded luxurious living. But the Industrial Revolution reduced profits until owning a factory was the means to riches.

Labor unions, cheaper wages abroad, and the rise of the service industry transferred wealth again.

Today, the information age has done it yet again. What was lucrative yesterday may very well not be tomorrow. Every man should identify a transferable skill and secure his future.

Doth the crown endure to every generation? No! The greatest of monarchs lost their throne either to an external enemy, an internal foe, death, or the folly of an heir.

King Solomon's son, Rehoboam, lost 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel as soon as Solomon died!

Where is Alexander the Great's dynasty? There was nothing enduring about his crown. He died at 33, his heirs were killed, and his generals divided his empire four ways.

Charles I of England lost his crown and head to Parliament, and Louis XVI of France lost both to the French Revolution.

Nicholas II was the last of the Romanovs, who had ruled Russia for 300 years. His life and reign also ended abruptly.

Joseph Kennedy dreamed of an American political dynasty. But where is that family today? Assassinations and accidents have destroyed them. A future that appeared very bright in 1960 evaporated altogether by 2000. The crown does not endure to every generation.

What is the lesson of wisdom here? Since riches and political power do not endure, it is necessary to take diligent care of your means of financial support (*Proverbs 27:23*).

King Solomon gave this advice to his son, which means it is even more important for you.

**If** you are not careful, you could awake some day to find yourself without income or its means.

A wise man will prudently identify a transferable skill and manage it for his financial security.

What is a transferable skill? It is a skill. It is expertise in a needed field that others will happily pay for. This is getting a life before a wife (*Proverbs 24:27*)!

Wise men choose positions that cannot be filled by cheap immigrant labor.

It is transferable. It must also be valuable in other cities or states. You want flexibility to change employers or location without reducing income. Neglecting either of these factors is not wise.

Working for high wages in a factory is neither a skill nor transferable. A layoff, plant closings, cheap immigrant labor, robots, or outsourcing can leave a man without a job.

His unique job in a unique factory can rarely be transferred to another plant, and never at the same rate of pay.

The current high income seduces most to ignore the future, but then they are unemployed without a skill to transfer into new employment elsewhere.

Consider lawyers. It is a definite skill, especially as laws multiply and court proceedings grow more complicated. It requires state certification that limits competitors to those with identifiable training. And because every nation and city needs many of them, it is a very transferable skill. It cannot be outsourced, and robots or machines cannot replace them.

Consider nursing. It is a definite skill, especially as health care becomes more and more sophisticated. It requires state certification that limits competitors to those with identifiable training.

And because every nation and city needs many of them, it is a very transferable skill. It cannot be outsourced, and robots or machines cannot replace them.

Solomon wrote Proverbs to make men wise and save them from the trouble that hurts fools.

While Solomon gave excellent advice in this Proverb about securing your professional life. He also knew that time and chance under God's providence had an even greater role (*Ecclesiastes 9:11*).

David had taught him that the security of a city or the financial security of a profession depended altogether on the Lord (*Psalms 127:1-2*).

### **Trusting God Always Comes First!**

Furthermore, efforts for your financial or professional security should be only a minor concern of your life.

Your great ambition should be godliness and contentment, which is great gain, and which will save you from the damning destruction of pursuing earthly riches (*1 Timothy 6:6-10*).

You should show the same fervent zeal in securing your heavenly position as the men of this world exert in securing their place on earth (*Luke 16:1-13*).

There are some riches that will last forever, and there is a crown that endures to all generations. The Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and possessor of heaven and earth, will always own and rule the universe.

The Lord Jesus Christ's riches, crown, and kingdom will endure forever. And the riches and crowns He will give His children will also endure forever!

Have you laid hold of eternal life with all your heart and might (*1Timothy 6:6-19*)?

***Proverbs 27:25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.***

#### **Does Money Grow On Trees?**

This common question is used to rebuke spendthrifts by its obvious negative answer. But the wise answer is a definite positive! Yes, money grows on trees, in fields, and on mountains! Yes, indeed! Bless God for His marvelous kindness to men! By seasonal agricultural providence, He offers a living for those who will gather it.

#### **The Earth Produces Potential Income For The Taking.**

King Solomon taught His people to work smart to be successful (*Proverbs 27:23-27*).

To motivate them to this task and privilege, he reminded them that riches and position do not last forever. He wrote, "*For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?*" (*Proverbs 27:24*).

Riches have a way of flying away, only strong men retain them, and many factors work to remove kings from their office. (*Proverbs 11:16; 23:4-5*)

Working smart here is carefully considering your means of income to enhance its potential and guard against its erosion. "*Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds*" (*Proverbs 27:23*).

A man cannot settle for going to work every day, for one day his job or business may disappear. He must diligently analyze his industry, his role in that industry, and what adjustments, improvements, or precautions are called for.

To further motivate them, Solomon reminded them of God's blessing on agriculture, thus the Proverb at hand.

Hay appears! Pastures do not need plowing, sowing, or cultivating! Hay appears! It may be cut to the ground, cured by the sun, gathered into bales, and stored for winter. God does His part, so it is great folly and sloth not to do yours!

What an ungrateful soul, **If** you do not cheerfully and diligently use His kind contribution!

The tender grass shows itself! After cutting or grazing, new grass quickly shows itself by heaven's order! It reproduces automatically! It grows spontaneously!

Again, no need for plowing, sowing, or cultivating! God gives, and gives some more and He calls men to diligently use what He provides.

A farmer, wisely using his fields, directs and redirects his flocks and herds to a wonderful feast, profitable for them and him!

The same is true of herbs of the mountains. Even in less fertile places, God blesses the earth to bring forth a variety of plant life for man's use and profit.

What must man do to make a profit? Gather it! Why slumber in bed, when money is growing on the mountains!

God provides all this produce to give a positive testimony of His goodness to men, who have their hearts filled with food and gladness from fruitful seasons (*Acts 14:16-17*).

Have you thanked Him? Do you use it as you should? "*Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches*" (*Psalms 104:23-24*).

Agriculture is a gift from God. He created dry land and all plant life on the third day, and it was good (*Genesis 1:9-13*).

God then assigned these plants to be the food for both man and beast (*Genesis 1:29-30*).

Did man discover farming and the treatments of various grains by trial and error? No! He could have starved to death in the process!

God gave him inspired wisdom to know how to cultivate, harvest, and process each of the plants (*Isaiah 28:23-29*).

Agriculture is one profession. God's blessings also assist income in other trades and occupations. The chemist benefits from divine laws of synergy.

The banker facilitates the productive use of capital (*Proverbs 14:4*).

The doctor discovers cures and therapies by heaven's blessing (*Proverbs 8:12*).

The engineer uses God's laws of physics and properties of matter to the benefit of man. God has blessed and will bless all noble callings (*Proverbs 8:12-21*).

What is the lesson? God providentially assists profits for wise and diligent labor.

One motive for labor is this divine blessing, which multiplies your efforts.

**If** you squander this kindness, you will be punished with poverty. Therefore, take heed to know your flocks and herds well, for riches are not forever.

Identify God's blessing on your profession or trade and exploit it for profit and pleasure, giving thanks to God for His great goodness.

***Proverbs 27:26 The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.***

Can you do economic analysis? God and Solomon expect you to.

**If** you cannot, or will not, you are heading for financial poverty. You will not be alone, for many in this lazy generation think no more about the future than counting the days to their next paycheck. But your Creator inspired a divine library to help you prosper financially over them.

Solomon, God's preacher to you for practical wisdom and success, wrote an extended lesson to warn you about the ever-changing economic landscape (*Proverbs 27:23-27*).

Solomon knew men must prudently consider their means of income, for financial or business success, never stays the same and even the most secure positions are soon lost.

In an agrarian society, maximizing the yield of fields to support an estate, required careful examination of all species of livestock and plants used to generate food, clothing, and revenue.

In this short section, he listed flocks, herds, hay, grass, herbs, lambs, and goats: a diversified business enterprise for sure. Diversification is prudent, but it is not enough.

For each animal and plant segment of operations, a wise man analyzed its vitality and yield, market prices for its product, and compared these to maximize total revenue with the least risk.

This is no small task. Farmers may be lightly esteemed by many, but they are often sharp businessmen, even using futures markets to hedge their business plan.

This Proverb identified lambs and goats, two segments of the business. Lambs are only the offspring of sheep, and Goats with their peculiarities may not be an exciting venture, but they are both necessary.

The lambs produce wool for clothing and grow into sheep, and goats can grow and produce milk on almost nothing, giving value to inferior land.

What is the lesson for you? You must analyze each part of your economic endeavors and alter your plans to maximize profit and minimize risk in a changing world. Is your industry growing or decaying? Is your company competitive within your industry? Is your position valuable in your company?

Are your skills in demand and marketable? Could you or someone else add another business? What is the prudent expected return?

Do you know the market value of your house? Are you over-exposed to real estate fluctuations? Is it insured? Have you done everything to minimize taxes?

Are your investments wise in light of worldwide economic changes and your government's fiscal policies?

Are you diversified? Are you financially liquid to take advantage of exceptional opportunities that might become available? These are some financial duties from God.

**If** these questions intimidate or confuse you, then you should consult with some wise counselors, either professionals or your successful friends, and let them help you analyze your economic situation.

Solomon taught that there is safety in a multitude of wise counselors. With their assistance, you can keep the wisdom of this Proverb. (*Proverbs 15:22*)

What a blessing, the Scriptures! From the origin of the universe to its soon renovation. From the attributes of God to the details of Salvation, the Bible deals with your whole life, including economic safety and success.

Those ignorant of the Word of God, think it an outdated and impractical textbook, this Proverb should open your eyes.

Thank God for inspiring Solomon to write you about the necessary parts of your life. That of making a living and building a family estate. Read the related commentaries of the verses surrounding this one (*Proverbs 27:23-27*).

Exalt God's Word! Hear it preached, hear it explained regularly, and by all means obey the wisdom, God has conveyed to you for your profit.

***Proverbs 27:27 And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.***

When was the last time you had a tall glass of cold goat milk? Not in a few days? You must be an American or European, for more people in the world drink the milk of goats than the milk of any other animal, including cows.

Some of the most esteemed cheeses in the world are made from goat milk.

Let the Bible open your eyes. You have missed something important in other cultures, and which was important in Solomon's time.

The Bible does not address goat milk elsewhere, except to prohibit boiling a young goat in its mother's milk, an unnatural act of cruelty (*Exodus 23:19; 34:26; Deuteronomy 14:21*).

The Bible mentions sheep milk (*Deuteronomy 32:14*), which is also used in other cultures; and of course, it mentions cow milk. which some ignorantly think is the only animal milk fit for use, as if cow mammary secretions were sacred! (*Deuteronomy 32:14; 1Samuel 6:7,10; 2Samuel 17:29*)

Did Solomon, the wisest king ever, know something that we do not know today?

Might Americans and Europeans be wrong, thinking of this animal as the "stinking goat," and presuming the milk must taste "goaty," "strong," "wild," or "nasty."

The facts are these: Goat milk is very white; and with proper feeding conditions, it is sweeter than cow milk.

Goat milk is marginally superior to cow milk nutritionally, as a quick survey of available research will show.

Goat milk is higher in protein and fat, and lower in sugar, which are all advantages.

Goat milk's fat and protein are of different compositions and more readily assimilated by humans. The fat in goat milk has smaller globules, different chain lengths of its fatty acids, and is naturally suspended without homogenization.

Humans are able to digest goat milk more easily than cow milk, and most of those that have allergies to cow milk will not have them with goat milk.

Infants that cannot even digest their own mother's milk, or cow's milk, will often be able to thrive on goat milk.

Goat milk can be found in America or Europe at most health food stores.

A single goat, which is relatively small and does not require much space, can produce enough milk for a family.

For these reasons, the goat has been called "the poor man's cow." A good milker can produce a gallon a day, and commercial goats fed carefully and milked aggressively can produce two gallons a day.

What is the wisdom of this Proverb? The context is Solomon's exhortation to his son to be diligent in knowing the condition of his flocks and herds. Observe the earlier reference to his son (*Proverbs 27:11*).

The singular pronouns "thou" and "thy", the plural of flocks and herds, the mention of riches and crown, and reference to maidens. (*Proverbs 27:23, 27; 27:24*)

This is not an ordinary goat farmer being addressed, but a rich king, Solomon's son.

Solomon's Proverbs are addressed first to his son, for he sought to train him to be a wise king, as his father David had taught him (*Proverbs 4:1-9*).

There are 27 addresses of Solomon to his son or children (*Proverbs 1:8; 4:1*; etc.).

The Proverbs were then for the rest of the nation (*Ecclesiastes 12:9-10*).

In the Proverb before you, Solomon exhorted his son directly, you indirectly. It is your wisdom to consider the privilege and opportunity to learn from the wisest king.

Wise men care about sourcing basic necessities like food and clothing, about the details of their business or profession, and do not delegate without personal oversight.

Solomon wrote elsewhere, "*Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field*" (*Ecclesiastes 5:9*).

This was a wise exhortation, for kings are distracted by affairs of state and the temptations to luxurious waste of the powerful and wealthy (*Ecclesiastes 2:4-10*).

It was not enough for a king to be knowledgeable and proficient in building palaces, overseeing military training, or keeping up a harem of multiple wives.

A wise king would be concerned about the basic production for his table, that of his household, and that of his staff.

For it is these things on which he and his citizens depend. David was such a king, for he had well appointed men in charge of his flocks and herds (*1Chronicles 27:29-31*).

Wise men carefully assess their business and/or profession, for economic and political fortunes can change rapidly (*Proverbs 27:23-24*).

Wise men do not delegate without review; they do not presume on the future. Consider Boaz checking on his subordinates (*Ruth 2:4-5*).

Your means of income must be analyzed critically, with a prudent view of the future (*Proverbs 22:3; 27:12*).

Neither business success nor political popularity is guaranteed (*Proverbs 27:24; 23:5*).

Solomon gave an economic lesson by considering the produce of the field and goats' milk (*Proverbs 27:23-27*).

Solomon taught his son and citizens the importance of caring for business details and to be conscientious of basic production of food and clothing.

A prudent man protects his source of basic necessities to support himself and his family. Do you have enough goats' milk for everyone depending on you? And will you have it tomorrow?

The wisdom here is part of being diligent in business (*Romans 12:11; 1Thessalonians 4:11-12*).

A business or profession is a gift from God, and it should be used and maintained with careful thought and foresight.

Are you diligent in analyzing and managing your business, career, consumption, continuing education, credit, insurance, investments, job situation, liquidity, retirement, risks, savings, security, taxes, will, etc.?