

Chapter 14

Verse 1: We will see more of the godly woman in chapter 31, but for now, we shall again see that Solomon knows that a woman can be her husband's crown or she may rot the bones (12:4). She may be a blessing or a curse. She teaches her children the ways of God, eternity, and salvation. The godly woman can make her husband successful by covering his flaws and supporting his endeavors in the Lord. *The husband will likewise do the same for his bride. This grace should work in both directions.*

The foolish woman can also affect her husband in the opposite direction. Bridges says the foolish woman is idle, wasteful, has a love of pleasure, lacks forethought, and does not care. This destruction is done by her very own hand. How sad.

I have often counseled women to understand the godly ways of marriage. The woman can make her man fly high with support, love, understanding, and most of all, building up her husband. The man, likewise, can build his wife with words of kindness, gentleness, and most of all, self-esteem. Men and women alike respond to praise and encouragement.

I think that it was R. G. Lee who said, *"No nation will rise above the righteousness and purity of its women."* The men should be the leaders and carry the standard of righteousness, but unfortunately the spiritual watermark falls on the women in most generations. The Church of Jesus Christ would literally collapse without godly women.

Builds up- banah: To obtain children, make, repair, to set up.

Tears down- harac: to beat down, break, destroy, overthrow, pluck down, pull down, ruin, throw down utterly. This word depicts many modern women and feminists today. What a shame that Mothers do not give their daughters a proper witness for Christ and that Dads just sit back and allow their girls to lead promiscuous lives.

Verse 2: This is no new admonition or statement. This contrast is obvious. Solomon relates this to the foolish woman and the godly woman. One builds and one tears down. The upright man fears the Lord. The Hebrew calls the ungodly man perverse. He despises the Lord. To despise is **bazar** in Hebrew, which means disdain, contemptible, to scorn, or a vile person. What a sad lot for this sinner.

Verse 3: It is always good to know how and when to keep your mouth closed. I believe that this is the hardest thing for people to do. I know that that's true for me. This is a long passage, but it proves the point well. James gives us the *pain* point. Just do what James tells us to do. Let your lips protect you and not bring the rod of correction.

James 3:1-12

3 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

NIV

Verse 4: We may place 14:23 with this verse. I was taught very early on by Dr. Lawrence Bradley that we are to do everything humanly possible to help ourselves and then trust the Lord to guide. He does not guide a still vessel. God's will is found in work, and might I say, hard work. I have never sat back and let life come to me. God gives us oxen with which to plow. If you sit and look at the ox, you will both die. A friend of mine says, "A man who chops his own wood is warmed by it twice." The strength of the ox was created by God to help the man of God plow. No harvest will come from unplowed ground. The old hymn writer had it right when he said, "*We'll work till Jesus comes.*"

Proverbs 14:23

*All hard work brings a profit,
but mere talk leads only to poverty.*

NIV

The other truth that we see in this verse is, as the Hebrew text reads, “where there are no oxen the crib is clean, but there is much increase in the strength of the ox.” With the blessings of the ox also comes a mess to clean up in the stall, but the ox, will in turn, make up for his mess by plowing the fields. All blessings come with a mess attached to them. With the proper attitude and work, it all works for the good. Children are a blessing from the Lord. But do they not come with many a mess? A car and a house are great blessings, but are they not hard work?

Verse 5: These verses seem quite obvious, but take a closer look. A truthful witness will not give way to lies even when threatened, bribed, or given promises. He is a faithful witness. On the other hand, the false witness will lie about anything, at any time, for no reason at all. Someone once said they knew a man who *would lie when it's more convenient to tell the truth*. Bridges says... **“He will tell lies without any provocation.”** Lying is a terrible habit, and a Christian should never be involved in bearing false witness. Just tell the truth!

Verse 6: This verse explains so much about human nature. The scoffer is not serious about discerning truth because he thinks he already knows about all subjects. *He looks at the scripture and thinks it dark, but the darkness resides in his own heart* (Bridges p. 104). He is critical of that which could save his soul. This verse speaks volumes about how people hear and receive truth. The sun melts the snow and also hardens the clay. The word will be bitter to one and sweet to another. Two men side by side will go to different eternities after hearing the same message of salvation. The Hebrew is clear here. The text says the mocker or scorner will never find wisdom because he cannot do it (**'ayin, to fail**). The word **qalal** is used for the word **easy**, swift, and even trifling to explain how the righteous receive wisdom and knowledge. Truth is easy for the saved person because the Holy Spirit lives in them to explain. What one man finds impossible to understand, the saved man **understands** easily (**biyn**, considers, discerns, eloquent, perceive, to get, to know or understand).

1 Corinthians 3:18-21

18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the

wise in their craftiness"; 20 and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." 21 So then, no more boasting about men!

NIV

1 Cor 2:14

14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

NIV

Verse 7: Paul says that we have no fellowship with darkness. The admonition is to stay away. Godly people are not to join hands in pledge with the world. Marriage, business, and the like, are to remain separate. We try to win their souls, but we are not allowed to live in their worlds. Solomon tells us to "GO" away from the foolish. Hit the road... walk away... leave the room; that's as clear as it gets. Walk away from gossip, false teaching, or slander. If I know who your three best friends are, I can tell you what you will be doing three years from now.

The older men and women of the church have to take this on as a project. Teach young Christians to serve, not supervise. Teach them to follow the ways of God. Teach them the ways of God (Note: Titus 2).

2 Corinthians 6:14-15

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

Verse 8: One gift that God gives the Christian is a contemplative spirit. As soon as we come to know Jesus, we begin to search our hearts to see if our ways line up with His ways. Do our plans for life line up with His will for our lives? The wisdom of the Spirit drives us to seek the will of God. Why? Because our lives are not our own! We learn that God has bought us, redeemed us, and we seek to please God. Our behavior, our wills, our finances, our desires and wants, all come under the sovereign hand of our God. Many people after conversion change jobs, move geographically, and get new friends. Salvation changes everything.

2 Cor 5:16-17

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

NIV

The foolish man plans a deceptive life. He does not seek God about His will, His plans, or His purposes. The fool lives for himself and wastes his life in folly. *“He climbs a ladder and in the end finds out he has it on the wrong wall.”*

Verse 9: The greatest gift we have from God is our opportunity to be forgiven for sin. There is no true Christian who mocks the necessity of removing guilt. We love the privilege we have in Christ for removing guilt and being restored to a clear conscience. The righteous have a clear understanding of the results of sin. We also know the hatred of sin in heaven. We ourselves have come to hate sin in our own lives.

How many times have you confessed to an unbeliever a mistake and asked for their forgiveness only to be mocked because of your sensitive spirit. Never be ashamed of confession or cleansing the heart of sin. The Hebrew is **ratsown**. This means favor, desire, pleasure, and will. The Christian is never more like Jesus than when we are seeking favor and restoration for sin.

Are there those who mock the guilt offering? Are there those who mock the sacrifice of Jesus? Yes! They are abundant. They will face the full force of their sin one day because they have not loved the guilt offering. The sinner knows not the results of his sin or the pain in this life he experiences because of his sin. He mocks and laughs at the upright for feeling dirty and having shame for iniquity. How sad the lost are?

The righteous also know the joy of forgiveness and making amends with brothers. The sinner does not know how to ask for or give forgiveness for wrongs. The upright know goodwill. We forgive and heal. This is the way of the godly.

Mark 10:33-34

33 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

NIV

Ps 51:1-6

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
 according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all
 my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my
 sin is always before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is
 evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when
 you judge. 5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived
 me. 6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost
 place.
 NIV

Verse 10: Here Solomon takes us into the depths of the individual soul. There is a bitterness that only my Lord and I share. No wife, no mother, no friend, no brother can carry this burden from my heart. This bitterness has only the name of Jesus on it. This burden has so much shame and trial associated with it, that I can only trust the Master with it. He is my only counsel, who is sufficient with resolutions for this need.

Likewise, there is a joy that can only be shared with my Lord. I have places in my heart where God has fed me with hidden manna that only He and I share. This is the most personal of relationships. There is a place in the human heart that has a strange need that only Jesus can meet. Jesus is the only perfectly trusted friend we have. Do you have this type of relationship with Jesus?

Ps 51:6

6 Surely you desire truth in the **inner parts**; you teach me wisdom in the inmost
 place.
 NIV

Verse 11: This verse we have seen in several shapes and forms. The contrast between the righteous and the unrighteous regarding blessings from God is obvious. While we may live only in a **“tent,”** we will be protected because we are righteous in His sight. The wicked may live in a **“house,”** but it will be destroyed. I would rather live in a tent with Jesus than in a mansion without him. Then Hymn writer says it best...

I'd Rather Have Jesus

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold;
 I'd rather be His than have riches untold;
 I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands.
 I'd rather be led by His nail pierced hand...

Chorus:

Than to be the king of a vast domain
Or be held in sin's dread sway.
I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.

I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause;
I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause;
I'd rather have Jesus than worldwide fame.
I'd rather be true to His holy name...

Chorus:

Than to be the king of a vast domain
Or be held in sin's dread sway.
I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today...

3 He's fairer than lilies of rarest bloom;
He's sweeter than honey from out the comb;
He's all that my hungering spirit needs.
I'd rather have Jesus and let Him lead

Chorus:

Than to be the king of a vast domain
Or be held in sin's dread sway.
I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.

Verse 12: Man has always tried to find his own way in religion. He thinks it right, but in the end it causes death. Even for the Christian, there are times when we think that the way we take is from the Lord, and we only seek to serve our own purposes. The carnal man is always selfish. The fleshly lusts will end in death. The humanists and evolutionists have claimed God nonexistent and unnecessary. In the end, this will lead them to death. As for the righteous, we long for the will and way of the Lord to be on the right road and please our Master. Note 12:15; 16:25.

Prov 16:2-3

2 All a man's ways seem innocent to him,
but motives are weighed by the Lord.
3 Commit to the Lord whatever you do,
and your plans will succeed.

NIV

Rom 6:21-22

21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

NIV

Verse 13: There are several ways the truth of this verse comes to light. First, many people go through this life with great worldly enjoyment, and at the same time, they are void of spiritual joy. Even while they party, they ache with pain. The eternal joy of heaven will never be experienced by them. They have some enjoyment in this life, but it ends in grief.

Another way we see this verse is that, even for the Christian, there may be seasons of pain that invade our hearts of joy. We have great joy in the things of the Lord, and at the same time, we endure pain because of trials. All will work for the good of His glory, but the path is hard to walk. Many times in life, what starts out with great promise and joy ends in devastation and pain. Thus is the way of life sometimes. Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes to help us understand the reality of life. One of Solomon's favorite phrases in the book of Ecclesiastes is "*under the sun.*" Solomon is trying to teach us what it's like living "*under the sun*" and not "*above the sun.*"

Ecc 9:2-4, 11-12

2 All share a common destiny — the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not.

As it is with the good man,
so with the sinner;
as it is with those who take oaths,
so with those who are afraid to take them.

3 This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead. 4 Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

11 I have seen something else under the sun:

The race is not to the swift
or the battle to the strong,
nor does food come to the wise
or wealth to the brilliant
or favor to the learned;

but time and chance happen to them all.
 12 Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come:
 As fish are caught in a cruel net,
 or birds are taken in a snare,
 so men are trapped by evil times
 that fall unexpectedly upon them.
 NIV

The scripture never sugarcoats life for us. The Word of God teaches us the truth, and we know that all things do work together for good... However, that is only for those who love God and are called according to His purposes. We always have a deep, abiding faith, and our foundation is sure, but we are often taken through extremely difficult times of grief and sadness.

Verse 14: The writer of Hebrews tells us that it is impossible to please God without faith. Faith saves us and faith carries us through this walk of Christian service. To betray the Lord after one has been so blessed puts that person in a place of discipline. Lack of faith brings a full payment of trouble. In 12:1, we learned that discipline and loyalty bring knowledge. When we don't learn discipline, we get correction. Our choice!

The good man, however, is rewarded for his faith. I always think of Peter stepping out of that boat and going to Jesus when I think of great faith. Some have criticized him for taking his eyes off Jesus and sinking. Well, how many folks do you know who have walked on water in a storm?

Hebrew: Cuwg (soog): HCSB- **disloyal**, NIV- **Faithless**, KJV- **backslider**. Solomon speaks of loyalty. I would like to speak a word to those who have a history of disloyalty to the church. Many people grow up in the church, and they are ministered to, cared for, and taught by the people of the church. They come to know Jesus Christ because of the service and faithfulness of people who served Jesus with their whole hearts when they were small children. Those people grow up who were ministered to, and then they leave the church because of sin, backsliding, and disloyalty to the church. Many of them go to bigger churches where the programs are bigger and more people are there. Their loyalty to the little church that introduced them to Jesus Christ has waned, and they forsake the people who helped them get into heaven.

Every Sunday, many people come to our church and serve with their whole hearts and give Jesus their best while others sleep, backslide, and never fully commit to

the work of Christ in the very place where their brothers and sisters in Christ toil to accomplish the Great Commission. Disloyalty to your pastor, church, and brothers and sisters in Christ is disgusting. Solomon says you will get what your conduct deserves. A faithful man also gets what he deserves. What deeds are you sowing? Would your pastor and fellow Christians say you are a loyal member of your church?

Verse 15: Bridges says, “*To believe every word of man is credulity*” (*gullibility*). To believe every word of God is faith. Many people believe the words of man over the words of God every second of every day. Yet, in simple foolishness, miss eternal life because they do not believe God. The prudent will search out the deep things of life. Eternal life, integrity, family, occupation, ministry, and many other deep issues of life are never prudently searched out to a final and reasonable conclusion. This is seen in the contrast between evolution and creation. The simple (fools) believe the foolishness of the scientist while the wise believe God.

Eph 4:14

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

NIV

In matters of the church, men often come into conflict with the Bible as to how we should administrate the church. We must obey the laws of the land, but the church is not a business. We are not even a democracy. We are a **theocracy** (Governed by God). We seek the Lord as a body and seek His will, not ours. In business, a man can get into trouble trying to join forces with a nonbeliever. The two will never see clearly as to how to guide the ship. In marriage, unequally yoked is not permitted.

The wise take note of the end. They look to the logical and spiritual end of a matter. He gives thought to it. The simple believe anything. Some men spend more time planning a vacation than planning for eternity. Solomon basically intimates this... don't believe anything you hear and half of what you see.

Hebrew: Pethiy- Inexperienced, simple-, silly, seducible, foolish. The root word is **pathah**, which refers to being open or broad in a mental or moral sense. May we say, loose? This is a person who will be deceived, allured, enticed, or flattered too easily. This person believes and trusts too quickly.

The contrast is the sensible or wise person. This is **`arum (aw-room)**, which means crafty, cunning, subtle, or prudent.

**Don't believe anything you hear so quickly; be sensible and watch you steps.*

Verse 16: The next two verses deal with emotional destruction. Most men see fear as a weakness. This verse goes quite well with the previous one. Caution, fear, and prudence work well together for our safety. As in many spiritual matters, what men see as failure, God sees as a virtue. The Hebrew words in the latter part of the verse refer to prideful confidence. The wise man fears God and humbles himself. The reckless man acts as if he has no fear and pushes ahead. The Hebrew for hotheaded (NIV) means to rage. Caution is always best, especially when it comes to God. Anger that turns to rage can cause you to be careless and foolish. Many people have died or have been killed because of foolish and angry rage.

Prov 3:7-8

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord and **shun evil.**

8 This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.

NIV

Verse 17: Here again we tag onto the previous verse as we stay in the same vein of advice. There is a passion that erupts in a moment and a passion that creeps up by device. Solomon tells us that a quick temper will cause a man to do foolish things. The end results of uncontrolled passion will be foolishness. Then scheming takes place. The wicked devices will be plotted and planned by the crafty man. The Hebrew for "crafty" means to invent or plan lewdness. Have you ever done anything foolish when you were quickly angered?

Anger is a wind
which blows out the
lamp of the mind.

Anonymous

George Sweeting: *"When you lose your temper- you really lose something. You lose the ability to think sanely and to make balanced decisions."*

Verse 18: When the simple lose their temper, they inherit folly. The calm man controls himself, he inherits knowledge. Solomon tells us there is a reward for those who control their emotions. Our emotions were tainted at the fall; therefore,

they must be tempered by the Spirit. Be sensible and be crowned with knowledge. Is it not better to be seen with a crown of knowledge than to be seen as simple?

Verse 19: This is not the current state of affairs in this dispensation. The age of grace is grace that comes from God, but we live in a pagan world where evil men reign and rule while godly men struggle. Yet, there cometh a day when all things will turn and the state of the righteous will be turned by God for the better. Even in this world, however, we see the hands of grace guiding us through the rapids. But nonetheless, often we see the righteous get the upper hand and goodness reigns. In those days the wicked have to bow. One glorious day it will be so.

Rom 14:10-11

10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written:

"As surely as I live,' says the Lord,
'every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will confess to God.'"

NIV

Phil 2:10-11

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

NIV

Isa 45:23

23 By myself I have sworn,
my mouth has uttered in all integrity
a word that will not be revoked:
Before me every knee will bow;
by me every tongue will swear.

NIV

Verse 20: There lies in this verse a great spiritual lesson. The poor are shunned because they have nothing to offer. Instead of being helped or comforted they are hated. Bridges gives several examples of those who did the opposite, which is a beautiful display of loyalty. Ruth clung to Naomi when she was desperately poor and without sustenance. Jonathan clung to David when stripped of royal favors. Now that is true holiness.

The rich have many friends. Why? Because they have so much to give. Men think they may increase their comfort levels by courting the rich. How sad to think that men would court your affection and fellowship due to riches. The great spiritual lesson rests in this... God expects us to love Him with or without blessings. That is exactly what the book of Job is all about. God wanted to prove Satan wrong. God proved that Job loved Him when he was rich and he loved God when he lost everything. True love expects nothing in return. Do you agree?

Prov 19:7

7 A poor man is shunned by all his relatives —
 how much more do his friends avoid him!
 Though he pursues them with pleading,
 they are nowhere to be found.

NIV

Prov 19:4

4 Wealth brings many friends,
 but a poor man's friend deserts him.

NIV

Prov 23:1-8

When you sit to dine with a ruler,
 note well what is before you,
 2 and put a knife to your throat
 if you are given to gluttony.
 3 Do not crave his delicacies,
 for that food is deceptive.

4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich;
 have the wisdom to show restraint.

5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone,
 for they will surely sprout wings
 and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

6 Do not eat the food of a stingy man,
 do not crave his delicacies;

7 for he is the kind of man
 who is always thinking about the cost.
 "Eat and drink," he says to you,

but his heart is not with you.
 8 You will vomit up the little you have eaten
 and will have wasted your compliments.

NIV

Verse 21: The view from heaven looks like this. A rich man despises his neighbor because he is poor. Proverbs 11:12 says, “*Whoever shows contempt for his neighbor lacks sense.*” Yet, the poor man is not poor at all. He is rich in glory because his name is written in the book of life. God has elevated him to a place of prominence in glory due to his name being in the book of life. All the while, the sinful neighbor looks down on one of God’s chief servants. He sins by doing so.

Ps 41:1-3

Blessed is he who has regard for the weak;
 the Lord delivers him in times of trouble.
 2 The Lord will protect him and preserve his life;
 he will bless him in the land
 and not surrender him to the desire of his foes.
 3 The Lord will sustain him on his sickbed
 and restore him from his bed of illness.

NIV

See Luke 10:25-36. A lawyer asked Jesus who his neighbor really was. From that question came the greatest story ever told about neighbors. Be careful how you treat your neighbor.

Verse 22: Godly people think differently. They plan for the best in life and work hard to see God’s will done. Think of all the times you have planned a fellowship or administrated an activity for God’s kingdom. Then contrast that to those who plot, plan, and manipulate to get their way, or an advantageous position. Love and faithfulness are two grand rewards of the faithful servant. True motives produce spiritual results.

I like the NKJV here. HCSB uses loyalty and faithfulness for its translation. Mercy and truth are better words here. The Hebrew word for mercy is the wonderful word **checed**, which is the word used to describe the love God has for us. This is congruent with the NT word **agape**. This word reflects the unending faithfulness of God’s love towards us. The word for **truth** is **'emeth**, which refers to stability, truth, establishment, faithful, right, sure, trustworthiness, or certain truth.

Therefore, if you want God's unfaithful, steadfast and loving kindness, and established truth to be given to you, then produce, engrave, devise, plough, or practice the good (**charash**). Those who devise, practice and produce evil will err, will they not, Solomon asks? (Joy is also for those who plan good, s. 12:20 below).

Prov 14:22

22 Do they not go astray who devise evil?
But **mercy** and **truth** belong to those who devise good.
NKJV

Prov 12:20

20 There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil,
but **joy** for those who promote peace.
NIV

Verse 23: The old saying is true, *talk is cheap*. The talk of the lips leads only to poverty. The KJV says penury (poverty). The value of hard work will always result in strength for the body. Toil is never wasted if only for the exercise and strength of the activity- and knowledge of how not to repeat mistakes.

God has set out in the early parts of the book of Genesis that we shall have to work due to sin and the fall. He has also set forth rewards for those who do work. We reap what we sow.

I must confess that I do not like lazy people, especially lazy preachers. Men who have been called to lead God's people and feed the flock that are lazy in preparation and study should do other work. We have several generations in the ministry now that lack passion and industry. We have many generations of welfare recipients that are literally addicted to government programs. Laziness is a terrible character flaw.

Hebrew: Work- `etsab, painful toil, pangs for body or mind. Grievous labor, sorrow.

Hebrew: Profit- mowthar, Plenteousness, preeminence, profit.

Prov 21:5

5 The plans of the diligent lead to profit
as surely as haste leads to poverty.

NIV

2 Thess 3:10-13

10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies.

12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. 13 And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.

NIV

Quotes on Work:

John D. Rockefeller Sr.: The only thing which is of lasting benefit to a man is that which he does for himself. Money which comes to him without effort on his part is seldom a benefit and often a curse... And so with regard to money or other things which are given by one person to another. It is only in the exceptional case that the receiver is really benefited. But if we can help people to help themselves, then there is a permanent blessing conferred.

Thomas More: These things, good Lord, that we pray for, give us Thy grace to labor for.

John Wesley: O Lord, let us not live to be useless, for Christ's sake.

Leonardo da Vinci: O Lord, thou givest us everything, at the price of an effort.

Greek Proverb: God gives the birds their food, but he does not throw it into their nests.

Henry Drummond: Unless a man undertakes more than he possibly can do, he will never do all that he can do.

Verse 24: As a general rule, this verse is true. We have all seen the foolishness of the rich athlete who squanders his life and riches through ungodly living. Many people have been rich without wisdom, but riches without wisdom and self-control expose the sinfulness and foolishness of people. Wealth and wisdom together are an avenue to success. Riches and fools produce lasciviousness. Use what riches you have with wisdom and God's grace so that your riches will be a crown instead of a millstone.

Ps 49:20

A man who has riches without understanding
is like the beasts that perish.

NIV

Prov 11:28

28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall,
but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

NIV

Prov 27:23-24

23 Be sure you know the condition of your flocks,
give careful attention to your herds;
24 for riches do not endure forever,
and a crown is not secure for all generations.

NIV

Prov 30:8

8 Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.

NIV

Prov 22:1-2

A good name is more desirable than great riches;
to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.
2 Rich and poor have this in common:
The Lord is the Maker of them all.

NIV

Verse 25: Bridges calls the false witness an *agent of Satan*. The righteous man has within himself a moral compass that controls his lips. Lying is not an option. A false witness will allow a man to go to the chamber of death on his lying statement. The righteous rescue the perishing. Those who lie are not trustworthy to handle the things of God. If a person lies about a dollar, he will lie about anything. The scripture never puts a liar in a good light. Remember the first thing Satan said to Adam and Eve was a lie. If a person lies, they are speaking the language of Satan, for he is the father of lies.

A truthful witness is a lifesaver. Why is that? Because the truth sets us free.

Have you ever wondered why people lie in the first place? Let's list a few things:

- People do not want to take responsibility for their failures. This is a result of low self-esteem. People are afraid of the consequences of failure. Most times our failures are what makes us grow and succeed the next time we encounter the same situation.
- Deception. Many people simply lie on purpose to deceive and take advantage of others. Making money or exaggerating becomes an excuse for bearing false witness.
- On occasion, we say things that are not true because we are not conscious of our thoughts. We may get caught off guard or simply not want to hurt another's feelings. Therefore, we avoid an uncomfortable situation by not being honest.
- Lying can be because of financial, social, and even psychological reasons. Many pastors lie theologically without giving it a second thought. Fudging numbers, repeating stories with extra details, and preaching things that they know are incorrect are all lying. 270 people present is not 300. It is not right to say, "almost 20 salvations in a revival," when there were only 12. Just say 12.
- Lying can be a habit. People get used to stretching the truth and exaggerating, and the habit becomes acceptable to them.
- Avoiding the truth. The truth is black and white. It pierces to the bone marrow and divides the soul. The truth exposes, confronts, and disturbs the conscience.
- Getting caught lying in the first place. Lies beget lies.
- Talking too much. Prov 10:19- *"When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise."*
- Being too sensitive to what others think.
- Being criticized. You make a false excuse.
- Being unteachable. We say, "I know how to do it. I can do it on my own."
- We lie about others when we want to hurt them. We degrade them with untruthful criticism. Acts 6:13-14.
- We often lie when we disobey authorities that God has placed in our lives.
- We lie when we are being manipulative.

Prov 19:22

"What a man desires is unfailing love;
better to be poor than a liar.

Illustration: I talked to a young man one day that really impressed me. He told me a story about how he overcame the temptation to tell a lie. This young man worked for an appliance company and was installing an extremely expensive stove. This stove cost as much as this young man made in an entire week. The install needed a few screws in a few places in order to secure the stove so that it didn't move. As it turned out, one of the screws hit the motherboard of this stove, and when it was plugged in, it destroyed the electronics in the stove. Fried it good! He told me of the struggle he had in his heart about the incident. He knew what he had to do, but he thought he would be fired. He took the stove apart and took the mother board out and went to tell his boss. No one would have ever known what caused the stove to not work. The home owner would have just used their warranty and got a new stove. That was not something he could do. God knew what really happened and he could not lie. He told his boss the truth; he took responsibility and replaced the part at the boss' expense. That's called character. That's godly living. That's honesty. He was not fired and his boss appreciated the truth. The truth is always easy to tell when you're not in a bad spot; telling the truth is easy when it doesn't cost you anything. Better to be poor than a liar!

Verse 26: The fear that the scripture refers to here leads to happiness, confidence, and joy. This is not an overwhelming sense of dread. This is a respectful and reverent fear. I liken it to swimming in a lake. To fear the water is healthy and allows one to enjoy the water. Yet, we should never approach the water with unrestrained confidence and frivolity. The same water that allows for joy and fun can also take your life. Don't ever take God's grace and mercy for granted.

The righteous fear the Lord and are rewarded with a home that honors God and protects their children. The fearful respect for the Lord produces a pleasant refuge from the world. We are safe in Jesus Christ. **The fear of the Lord literally puts a fortress (barrier) between you and the world.** The word for refuge is **machaceh** from the root for *shelter*. This refers to hope, shelter, trust, and refuge, all desired and profitable results of fearing the Lord. Remember the theme of Proverbs... the *fear* of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Prov 29:25

25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare,
but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.

NIV

Verse 27: This verse gives us the results of the fortress that godly fear sets up, v.26. We receive a **fountain of life** and are protected from death. Men don't think about it, but death is their greatest enemy. Death is an enemy that is not thought

about until he shows up for battle. Only Jesus has won that battle. I am amazed at how people go through life and never consider the end of life. Death is an appointment that every soul will face. Have you considered where your eternity will be spent. Why would a person spend more time planning a vacation than their eternity? You could find the veritable fountain of life. Ponce de Leon, the Spanish explorer and conquistador, searched for the Fountain of Youth in Florida- as legend would tell it. But Ponce de Leon is dead, but if he found Jesus Christ and had the fear of the Lord, he's in heaven today.

The word for fountain is quite the word in Hebrew, and its etymology is unique. The word is **maqor (Maw-kore)**. This refers to a spring of life, a fountain, or well. By euphemism, it refers to the female anatomy or pudenda. Obviously intimating (insinuating) the source of life that only women naturally possess. Only God possesses the true source of life. Jesus called Himself the source of life in John 14:6. The word for life there is **zoe** or **zoa**, which refers to the eternal *source* of life. The fear of the Lord is a fountain or source of life.

Bridges beautifully describes this fountain... "How bright is the divine principle. It is full of life- temporal life, spiritual life, and eternal life. It is the effects of the heavenly comforter who produces water welling up to eternal life (John 4:14). It is not only a refuge from the snares of death, but a fountain of life among the countless redeemed; no one finds cover from condemnation who has not been made alive with spiritual life. This invaluable grace flows with the full streams of gospel blessing." (Bridges, p. 112).

John 4:9-14

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you **living water**."

11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep.

Where can you get this **living water**? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

NIV

John 7:38

38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

NIV

This fountain of life not only protects from the snares of death; this fountain is flowing even now. You may refresh your soul there now with joy and spiritual vigor before the eternal blessing comes to pass. Death and the grave have lost the victory; Jesus has given us eternal life by the fear of the Lord. The grave has no victory, no sting, and no power. Sin has been defeated by the fountain of life.

Rev 22:17

17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

NIV

Prov 16:6

6 Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the **fear** of the Lord a man avoids evil.

NIV

No more can a person be born physically without the physical presence of the female anatomy than can a person be born spiritually without the source of life that comes via the fountain of life that is found in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Unfortunately, the pastors have to explain this in our day and time because many ridiculous individuals in politics, education, the church, and society think a man can have a baby. Likewise, millions think they can get to heaven by some other human means than Jesus, the God-Man, who was born of a virgin. The fountain is found through the fear of the Lord.

Verse 28: The body of Christ, a church, a business, and nations are all blessed to have many people. The lack of people and servants can hurt the flock or business. A King is known by his people, and he loses strength when his numbers are down. This verse simply shows the importance of people. The NIV says the prince is ruined without subjects.

However, going after subjects, servants, and members just for the sake of having larger numbers or more financial resources is wrong. Many modern ministries are known for their numbers but lack spiritual growth and spiritual maturity. Many ministries can say they are rich but they can't say, "rise and walk, your sins have been forgiven." Remember King David was punished for numbering the troops without God's permission.

Some churches and preachers think they are doing God's will because they have a sizeable crowd. I know that there are many small churches that are doing great things for Christ. I know that many pastors preach to small crowds and they want more people. A big congregation is great, and we all love the excitement of people getting saved and joining a church, but never forget the size of a ministry does not always determine its usefulness to God. We are to trust God, not numbers. Was not Bethlehem a small place? Israel?

1 Chron 21:1-8 (S. 2 Sam. 24)

Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel. 2 So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, "Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me so that I may know how many there are."

3 But Joab replied, "May the Lord multiply his troops a hundred times over. My lord the king, are they not all my lord's subjects? Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?"

4 The king's word, however, overruled Joab; so Joab left and went throughout Israel and then came back to Jerusalem. 5 Joab reported the number of the fighting men to David: In all Israel there were one million one hundred thousand men who could handle a sword, including four hundred and seventy thousand in Judah.

6 But Joab did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, because the king's command was repulsive to him. 7 This command was also evil in the sight of God; so he punished Israel.

8 Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

NIV

Ps 20:6-8

6 Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed;
he answers him from his holy heaven
with the saving power of his right hand.

7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

8 They are brought to their knees and fall,
but we rise up and stand firm.

NIV

I pray that one day, as a pastor, that I could see my sheep understand how important their service, presence, and contributions are. The people make the

organization, the church, or the nation. When rulers send their people into war, they diminish their populations, which destroys the nation. The Russian/Ukrainian war is so needless and devastating right now (2025). The President of the United States is trying vehemently to get the killing stopped. Countless young men and women are dying for no reason. The shortage of population is devastating. We may say that promoting peace brings splendor to a king. How can we promote peace? Verse 29 can help.

Verse 29: A great contrast to the man who can and cannot control his temper is in this verse. A spiritual key rests here for those who want to control their temper. It's *understanding*. A fool doesn't have understanding and doesn't want it. A wise man seeks it, and it helps him control his emotions. The word for patience or slow to wrath (KJV) is *tabuwn*. It is translated as reason, discretion, skillfulness, understanding, and wisdom. The root word refers to *intelligence*. The man with a short fuse identifies himself with outbursts and explosions of ignorance, impatience, and foolishness. No one can describe this like our brother James.

James 1:19-20

19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

NIV

Col 3:8

8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

NIV

Prov 16:32

32 Better a patient man than a warrior,
a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.

NIV

Verse 30: The greatest gift we can have in this life is peace. Peace is so valuable that it can enrich a man's health. Peace is sought after by nations, kings, and common men. A satisfied heart that seeks only God is at rest. The heart of envy will rot the bones. Jealousy will decay a man from the inside out. A heart at rest can rejoice in the success of others. We have two entities here. One is a virtue, and the other, a stain upon the character.

- Peace, soundness, or tranquility: The Hebrew word is **Marpe'**, which refers to a cure, healing, remedy, wholesome, or yielding. This kind of life brings peace, soundness, and health to the body.
- Rottenness or decay comes to the bones because of envy or jealousy. Jealousy is a cruel master. Envy can destroy relationships, marriages, and careers.

Prov 27:4

4 Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming,
but who can stand before jealousy?

NIV

Verse 31: We may deduce from this passage a very important truth... God loves poor people. Better treat them right. Many of us are among them. To oppress a person when he is down is just cruel. God's heart is always for the poor. Those who can help them are among the servants of Christ. To mistreat the poor is an insult to God. Helping the needy is an honor to God.

Mark 10:21

21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

NIV

Luke 4:18-19

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the **poor**.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

NIV

Matt 5:3

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

NIV

Matt 25:40

40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

NIV

1 John 3:17

17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

NIV

Prov 17:5

5 He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.

NIV

Verse 32: The quintessential difference between the righteous and the wicked is the truth of verse 32. Even when Christians die, they die in the Lord. Calamity brings down the lost, but even in calamity we have hope in Christ. Not even death can harm us.

As a pastor, I have walked through many terrible calamities with my sheep over the years. Many of the terrible experiences of life have touched even the dearest and most spiritual saints. Yet, our God has been gracious, comforting, and present for us all. As Christians, we know death is but the door to a brighter day. The wicked are driven down or chased away in the day of calamity or death (**dachah**). The Christian has hope, confidence, and a refuge (**chacah**).

D. L. Moody- "Death may be the king of terrors... but Jesus is the King of Kings!"

Alexander MacLaren- "Death is but a passage. It is not a house, it is only a vestibule. The grave has a door on its inner side."

Cyclopedia of Bible Illustrations, 396- The story is told of a dear lady who was taking her first railroad journey, which required going through a tunnel. She dreaded the experience and kept herself in a highly nervous state about it. Weary from travel, she fell asleep, and as she slept, the train passed through the tunnel. Great was her surprise when she awoke and was told about it. Something like this happens to the child of God; he closes his eyes in the last sleep on earth and opens them upon the scenes of "*the land that is fairer than day.*" We pass through the valley of death and open our eyes in glory.

Verse 33: Wisdom rests in the heart of the righteous without measure. It goes from head to heart to hands. Wisdom lives in the heart without limit. Wisdom is so great and obvious that even fools will see it and know she is present. They may not respond to her, but they cannot deny her, and they are without excuse.

I love the word resteth, reposes, resides, or “sets down” in this text. This is the Hebrew word **nuwach**. Solomon says that the person of great understanding, intelligence, eloquence, and prudence has wisdom resting or reposing in his heart. We all know people who listen more than they talk. They are quiet and reserved, but when they speak, wisdom wakes up from her rest and drops a truth bomb on us. The beauty of wisdom displayed is enjoyable. When a Christian speaks with wisdom, problems are resolved, hearts are calmed, trust is renewed, and hope is evident.

Wisdom is so awesome that even a fool can recognize wisdom when they see it. Do you have wisdom in your heart? Do fools see the glory of the wisdom of God in you?

Col 4:6

6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

NIV

Verse 34: America has lost this admonition among the politically correct, the “woke,” the abortionists, the environmentalists, and post-modern society, but the truth is still applicable. Righteousness will exalt America if she will turn her heart toward heaven. Righteous living exalts a nation. However, the sins of America are many. Disgrace is ours too.

The cities in America are in shambles. The states are being run by politically correct fools that believe men can have babies and women can be fathers. Transgenderism and false equality are being taught and our children are under attack. Sex trafficking, murder, robbery, drugs and political corruption are seen as normal. Politicians and the media desire a race war and promote hatred instead of unity. Our leaders are corrupt, and when we get a godly leader, the media and liberal thinkers go after them with vehement violence. Disgrace will show up in the cities first. We have zombies on our streets that live in feces and bloody needles. The homeless are living on the doorsteps of corporations in downtown Atlanta. What a disgrace.

Prov 11:10-11

10 When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices;
 when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.
 11 Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
 but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.

NIV

Eccl 7:19

19 Wisdom makes one wise man more powerful
 than ten rulers in a city.

NIV

Eccl 9:14-18

14 There was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siegeworks against it. 15 Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man. 16 So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are no longer heeded.

17 The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded
 than the shouts of a ruler of fools.

18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war,
 but one sinner destroys much good.

NIV

Verse 35: We shall endeavor to be wise for our great God. Solomon actually gives us a great command here. Strive for wisdom, please God. Our thoughts go straight to our employment here, and that's quite applicable. We are called to be wise workers for our bosses. Shamefully, Christians are often considered lazy and unprofitable workers in the secular workplace. Christians hurt their witness greatly by not putting in their time at work properly. Can your boss count on you to do your job when that boss is not looking? Do you work in your chosen field like you are working for Jesus?

Another application to this verse reflects how we serve our King of Kings. How's your obedience to the Lord our God? How is your loyalty to your church and church staff. Do you attend worship as you should? Do you witness, tithe, serve, and obey God as you should? In my heart, verse 35 is asking me one question... does God delight in me as a wise and faithful servant. I pray I never receive the wrath that is reserved for a shameful servant. I pray my Father is proud of me.

Prov 22:29

29 Do you see a man skilled in his work?
He will serve before kings;
he will not serve before obscure men.

NIV

Prov 17:21

21 To have a fool for a son brings grief;
there is no joy for the father of a fool.

NIV

Prov 10:23

23 A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct,
but a man of understanding delights in wisdom.