

Proverbs Chapters 13 and 14 - John Karmelich

1. I call this lesson, "The payoff for hard work."
  - a) One of the themes running through Proverbs is that there is a "payoff" to live a life pleasing to God. It's not just about heaven, but there are long term benefits for applying the concepts of biblical wisdom to our lives.
  - b) Success in life takes good planning and the determination to work for one's goals. The same applies to "spiritual success". Christians are called to make a difference for God. Part of "spiritual success" is about having the discipline to apply God's rules to our lives.
  - c) Like all of these lessons on Proverbs, that is not the intended theme of these chapters. The main topic is biblical wisdom. What I am adding in these lessons is some underlying themes. In this lesson, I'm going to comment every now and then on the importance and benefits of spiritual self-discipline as it applies to wisdom.
  - d) With that said, we're running a marathon today covering two chapters of Proverbs. I'm purposely keeping the introduction brief. We'll get back to this topic through the lesson.
2. Verse 1: A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.
  - a) Remember the key to understanding proverbs is to compare both halves:
    - i) In the first half, we have a wise son heeded his father's instruction.
    - ii) In the second half, we have a mocker not listening to rebuke.
  - b) Understand that this verse is not just about boys being told to listen to their fathers.
    - i) The point is that wise people listen to wise instructions.
    - ii) The second point is mockers don't listen to a good rebuke.
  - c) Let's define "mockers". The general idea is one who doesn't care about God. In their passive anger toward doing what is right, they make sarcastic comments. When told what should be done, the response is one of being flippant or sarcastic.
  - d) The main point of this proverb is to be willing to listen to good advice. That means to have a humble spirit. We can't let our pride get in the way of doing the right thing.
3. Verse 2: From the fruit of his lips a man enjoys good things, but the unfaithful have a craving for violence.
  - a) The term "fruit of his lips" refers to what a person speaks. It has nothing to do with eating. With that said, the second half says, "unfaithful have a craving for violence."
  - b) Ever meet a "hothead"? There are people who are angry at life and they are looking for an excuse to get into a fight. They hate their own lives and want to take it out on others.
  - c) Getting back to the "good guy" of this verse, the text is saying in effect, "If there is good on the inside, good will come out of one's mouth". In other words, if one is seeking God's wisdom and God's will for their lives, the "payoff" is one will speak good things.
4. Verse 3: He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.
  - a) The general idea is that humans are imperfect people. Sooner or later, we all talk too much, and say something wrong. Therefore, it is wise to think before one speaks.
  - b) The second part says, "He who speaks rashly will come to ruin". It does not mean that if we say the wrong thing once, it will definitely ruin us. The idea is one who continually speaks first and thinks about it later is the type of person who gets in trouble.
  - c) Let's read this proverb in context of the previous proverb:
    - i) Verse 2 says in effect a wise man speaks good things.
    - ii) Verse 3 says in effect to be careful what you say.
    - iii) The two proverbs go hand in hand. Having good "verbal output" requires good input. This is about prayer, studying God's word and listening to advice of good godly people. At the same time, it is easy to blurt out the wrong thing. The proverb is simply reminding us to think before we speak.

- d) In my profession, I occasionally have to give court testimony as an expert witness. It is the job of the opposing lawyer to discredit me as a witness. When that lawyer asks me a question, I always want to pause and think, "Why is he or she asking me this question? In order to give a wise answer, I need to ponder the question and not bluntly give out an answer. That too, is "wisdom".
5. Verse 4: The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.
- Here is a proverb that says in effect don't be lazy. A sluggard is a snail. It is a word-picture of laziness as a slug moves very slowly. The point is a lazy person may have desires, but they are too lazy to act out their desires.
  - There are statistics that show that most people who set out goals accomplish them. If one can have the discipline to make good goals and follow through, one will accomplish those goals. That is the idea behind this proverb.
  - Now let's read this in context of the previous two proverbs:
    - Verse 2 says a wise person speaks good things.
    - Verse 3 says to think before one speaks.
    - Verse 4 says to be diligent in one desire. All three are about one's effort.
    - The main topic of Proverbs is about applying Godly wisdom to our lives. Putting these together, we are learning to think before we speak and having the diligence to apply God's laws to our lives so that we can have wisdom.
6. Verse 5: The righteous hate what is false, but the wicked bring shame and disgrace.
- The idea of "righteous" is to be "right with God". The idea is to like what God likes and hate what God hates. If God hates sin, He wants us to hate it too. The idea is to have a motivational tool to avoid sin: We won't want to sin if we hate it in the first place.
    - One of the 10 Commandments is not to bear false witness. (Ref.: Exodus 20:16). That essentially means not to lie to someone. This proverb is teaching us not only to tell the truth, but to actually have a hatred of lying.
  - The second part says, "Wicked bring shame and disgrace". The key is to read this in context of the first half of the proverb. If the "good guy" hates to sin, then the "bad guy" doesn't think twice about sinning. The result for the "bad guy" is shame and disgrace upon themselves, whether they realize it or not.
7. Verse 6: Righteousness guards the man of integrity, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.
- Again, "righteousness" is about being right with God. It is about loving the things God loves and hating the things God hates.
  - In the previous proverb (Verse 5), a righteous person hates lying.
    - In this proverb (Verse 6), one's righteous "guards" the man of integrity. To understand it, look at the second half: "wickedness overthrows the sinner".
    - To put it another way, the bad things one does in life usually comes back to haunt them. At the same time, doing good things will naturally keep us on the right path.
    - For example, if we don't steal, we won't end up in jail and be on an "honest" path in life. That is how righteousness "guards" someone of integrity. A wicked person doesn't care about right and wrong. Their actions will catch up with them.
8. Verse 7: One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.
- Most proverbs are contrasting "good guy versus bad guy". In this proverb, we have a rare "bad guy/bad guy" illustration. Both halves are about doing something wrong.
  - The idea of this proverb is that in both cases, one is pretending to be something they are not. The first case is one who pretends to be rich.
    - For example, it maybe describing someone who is buying stuff on credit they really can't afford. The second half is about pretending to be poor. These are people who are so scared of being robbed they hide what they have.

- ii) For example, someone in true need may ask for financial health, and we could lie and say we don't have any money to give them. That would be an example that falls in the second half of this proverb.
- 9. Verse 8: A man's riches may ransom his life, but a poor man hears no threat.
  - a) Here's a proverb that explains "how life works". If one has a lot of money, there is the risk of losing one's wealth. A poor person doesn't have to worry about that.
    - i) For example, if one is rich, someone may kidnap your children in order to demand a ransom. Rich people get sued far more than poor people in order to collect financial damages. The rich have a legitimate fear of losing their riches.
  - b) OK, this proverb is obvious. Why is it here? Is God commanding us not be rich? No. ☺
    - i) The reason the Book of Proverbs exists is that God wants us to have a happy and fulfilled life. Proverbs is God's way of saying, "Here is how I want you to live so you can enjoy life as much as possible".
    - ii) It doesn't mean God wants us to live a vow of poverty. This proverb is warning us not to live for wealth. Money is neither good nor bad. It is a tool to get things one needs or wants. The point is we are to depend upon God, and not our wealth. Our wealth cannot buy our salvation or happiness.
    - iii) This proverb is God saying in effect, "I want you to have the same peace of mind that a poor man has about being kidnapped: That is, no fear at all. I'm not against you making money. I'm against you having to worry about problems that come with those riches. I, God want you to trust Me, and not your money."
- 10. Verse 9: The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.
  - a) One of the illustrations that Jesus used of Himself is that He is the "light of the world". (Ref.: John 8:12, 9:5). On another occasion, Jesus said in effect that those who follow Him are also "the light of the word". (Ref.: Matthew 5:4.) The difference between Jesus and Christians is that Jesus gives that light and we are to reflect His light.
    - i) The point of the illustration is that the same way a light (e.g., a lamp), gives off light, we as Christians are to "give off light". The idea is that our lives as Christians are to be living witnesses to the world around us. People should see our lifestyle and know that we are being witnesses for God.
  - b) This leads us back to this proverb. The point is the "light" of those who are living for God shines brightly. If we are making the effort "on the inside" to seek God, the natural output will be a "light" that is a witness to the world around us. It is an illustration teaching how we are to be witnesses to the world around us.
  - c) Now comes the flip side. ☹ Those that are wicked also "give a light", but it is a bad one.
    - i) The idea is for those who are wicked, their deeds will become known.
    - ii) The idea of "snuffed out" probably refers to eternal condemnation. In many cases, the life of the wicked is usually cut short.
- 11. Verse 10: Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.
  - a) One of Jesus' 12 disciples was named Nathanael. When He first heard that the Messiah (Jesus) was from Nazareth, apparently that town had a bad reputation. Nathanael is famous for the statement, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (Ref.: John 1:46.)
    - i) I open with that statement so I could ask, "Can anything good come out of pride?"
    - ii) The proverb says that pride only brings quarrels.
  - b) Let's define "pride" in this context: The idea is wanting to do our own will and not do God's will at any one moment. It is about putting oneself first. It is the opposite of the biblical definition of love, which is putting the needs of others before one's own needs.
  - c) Most fights come about when two people want things done their way, and neither is willing to compromise or give in. "Pride" comes in as we want it done my way.
    - i) A friend of mine used to joke, "My wife and I will stop arguing just as soon as she realizes that I'm right about everything." ☺

- d) Now let's read the second part: "But wisdom is found in those who take advice."
- i) The idea is that if we are wise, we are willing to listen. We don't let our ego's get in the way of taking advice from others. In other words, a teacher can't teach unless the student is willing to listen. Also note that wisdom is not just listening to good advice, but the willingness to actually take that advice!
12. Verse 11: Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.
- a) The general idea of this proverb is that those who make a lot of money fast by some dishonest scheme, usually lose it as quickly as they made it. Those who patiently work hard for a living usually keeps it as long as it took them to earn that money.
- i) There is an appreciation factor when one takes a long time to develop some wealth and such people are less likely to spend it quickly.
- b) One of my professors at college said, "The worst curse I can place on you is to be really financially successful early in life." He wasn't talking about dishonest gain, but those who struck it rich right after college. Now, over twenty years later, I can see he was right. I've watched the rise and fall of a few of my colleges as such. Yes, this proverb is talking about the fall of dishonest gain, but I believe an underlying point is that one who earns money slowly and honestly has a greater appreciation for it.
13. Verse 12: Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.
- a) The idea of "hope" is to wait for something one believes will happen. The idea of this proverb is "hope" can be hard, if it takes a long time. When that desire is finally realized, it brings a sense of fulfillment to one's life.
- b) I have to admit, whenever I set a long term goal, the final "thing" rarely turns out to be as satisfying as the journey to get there. One has to learn to enjoy the journey itself.
- i) I will argue the key exception is our salvation. Let's face it, living the Christian life is difficult at times. Sin is always a temptation away. I'm "betting" my eternal life is far greater than any suffering I have to deal with in this lifetime. I suspect this proverb deals a lot with that issue. (See also Romans 8:23; 1st Corinthians 15:19.)
- c) Let's discuss the term "tree of life". In the Garden of Eden story, there were a "good tree" mentioned called the tree of life. The reason Adam and Eve were banished from Eden is so they couldn't access this tree. (Ref.: Gen. 3:22-24). That tree is not mentioned again until the book of Revelation. Revelation 22 associates it with sustaining everlasting life.
- i) Tying that to the proverb, it is saying when a long-term desire is finally fulfilled, it revives our life in the same sense the "tree of life" is associated with life revival.
14. Verse 13: He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded.
- a) The general idea is if we are willing to listen to good advice, we will be rewarded. If our ego gets in the way, we will suffer the consequences.
- b) One can think of this verse in terms of our relationship with God. If we are willing to accept and follow the commands of the bible, we will be rewarded for that effort. If we shun those commands, we will eventually suffer. Both the good and bad are promises.
15. Verse 14: The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.
- a) This verse is saying in effect, "If we are willing to listen to God, it will keep us from the "snares of death". The first application is about salvation. The idea is the "wise" are those who are actually obedient to God in their lives.
- i) A more immediate application is that "generally speaking", if we follow God's commands, we will live a longer and more satisfying life. Let's face it, if we steal and cheat, we will end up in jail or end up dead sooner.
16. Verse 15: Good understanding wins favor, but the way of the unfaithful is hard.
- a) Here is a proverb that says in effect, "If we are willing to listen to God and follow His ways, we will live a more fulfilled and joyful life. If we are unfaithful to God, we only end up hurting ourselves."

- b) This is another proverb where God is saying in effect, "Look, I'm not just speaking to hear myself talk. Listen up, not for My sakes, but for your own sakes!"
  - c) The verse says good understanding "wins favor". Who do we win favor with? The first answer is God Himself. The second answer is people around us. This verse is another example of how living a life pleasing to God makes us a good witness to those around us.
17. Verse 16: Every prudent man acts out of knowledge, but a fool exposes his folly.
- a) How do you tell if someone is a good person or a bad person? We can't read people's minds. We can only watch their actions. A point of this proverb is we can tell if someone is prudent or a fool based on their actions. This proverb is saying in effect we can tell what is person is like on the inside based on how they act on the outside.
  - b) Let's remember what is "prudent" and a "fool".
    - i) The word "prudent" is a person who is acting wisely. In other words, the prudent are making decisions in life that are not sinful. They are doing the right thing.
    - ii) A "fool" is one who doesn't care about God's instructions of right and wrong. They are only interested in gratifying their own desires at the point of not caring who they hurt. A fool is one who is working their way to hell whether they realize it or not. Jesus said we are not to call people fools in the sense that we don't know who is saved and who is not. At the same time, we can discern foolish behavior.
18. Verse 17: A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.
- a) Let's define a "messenger". It is one who is passing on information from one source to another source. The first half of the verse is saying that if such a messenger is wicked (e.g., they purposely lie or purposely gossip), that messenger will eventually get into trouble for not doing their job properly.
  - b) The "good messenger" brings healing. How does a good messenger "heal"?
    - i) Well, if the messenger is telling the doctor our symptoms, that's a good sign. ☺
    - ii) If the messenger is communicating something important about our lives to others, and we want that second person to correctly hear the messenger, that "heals" our need to communicate with others.
  - c) The underlying point of this proverb is about being trustworthy, not lying or gossiping to others and also, about being good "stewards". The term "steward" is about being responsible with a task we are given to help someone else.
    - i) If we work for a company, we are supposed to be good "stewards" for that company. That means to do one's best to honestly help that company make a profit. If we are self employed, we hold that same responsibility for a client.
    - ii) If we are responsible for raising children, we are "stewards to God" to raise them as responsibly as possible.
19. Verse 18: He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.
- a) The general idea is one has to keep working at doing what is right. It ties to my theme that hard work in life for God pays off in our lifetime.
  - b) For example, a good marriage takes hard work. When one or both spouses start taking their marriage for grant it, is usually suffers.
    - i) Another example is one's occupation. Success requires one to keep focusing on one's goal. If one is lazy at work, one never becomes financially successful.
    - ii) Another example is our relationship with God. If we get too lazy to pray and spend time with God, He in turn says in effect, "OK, if that's what you want, try it on your own for awhile." ☺ That's usually when we get into trouble.
    - iii) The point is the good things in life require regular time and effort.
  - c) This leads back us to this proverb. The point is when one ignores discipline and being corrected when one is wrong, it leads to poverty and shame. There is honor when one accepts correction and keeps on working hard in life.

- d) Another way of paraphrasing this proverb is, "Don't let our ego's get in the way of being corrected. If someone we know, love and respect tells us we're doing something wrong, be willing to listen and digest their advice!"
20. Verse 19: A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but fools detest turning from evil.
- a) Verse 19 falls along the same theme of self-discipline. Sooner or later, one does achieve a goal. Putting the effort into our time with God, with our spouses, our families etc., eventually does pay off. One also needs to step back every now and then and appreciate our blessings as opposed to the pity-party of thinking how hard it is to make it work.
- b) The contrast is the fool. A fool doesn't care less about pleasing God. One can get to the moral point in life where they "can't stand not doing what is sinful". Once one goes down that path, I'm convinced there is an internal "need" to continue that lifestyle.
21. Verse 20: He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.
- a) An attribute of wisdom is having wise friends. They "rub off" on us. This proverb is encouraging us to hang around and develop friendships with other godly people.
- b) The older I get the more I realize the importance for men and women to have good friendships with members of the same sex, even when one is married. It not only helps in terms of accountability, but it also reminds us that "we're not alone out there". We often learn that the problems we face are the same issues that many of our contemporaries face.
- c) There is an old Christian expression that says, "Every Paul needs a Timothy and every Timothy needs a Paul". Paul's mentored a young pastor named Timothy. The point is all Christians need to pass on their wisdom to the next generation and younger Christians need the mentoring of a more senior Christian. That is also a part of having wise friends.
- d) The second half of this proverb says, "A companion of fools suffers harm." Everyone is influenced by one's friends. This is a warning to Christians that in terms of bad friendship. It is saying in effect, "If we play with fire, we are going to get burned!"
22. Verse 21: Misfortune pursues the sinner, but prosperity is the reward of the righteous.
- a) What the proverb is saying is if you do bad things in life, you can count on bad things happening to you. It's another way of saying, "what goes around comes around". A person who leads a life of sin just "happens" to get into trouble all the time.
- b) Let's balance this with a New Testament promise: "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:12, NIV)
- i) Here in Proverbs we read that sinners suffer from misfortune. In the New Testament, we read that all Christians will suffer persecution. What the bible is saying is, that no matter which life we choose, we're going to get hit! ☺
- ii) Think of it this way: Everybody has problems and trouble. Sometimes it is through no fault of our own and sometimes it is because of some sin in our life. The point is all people do go through hardships in life. The trick is finding out the root cause. If it is because of some sin in our life, we can learn from that and try to avoid it. If we are being persecuted for our faith, we can count it up as God testing us and disciplining us to be more like the person He wants us to be.
- c) The second part says, "Prosperity is the reward of the righteous". As I've stated in previous lessons, being a self-disciplined Christian is not a guarantee of financial prosperity. It generally means one does financially well and socially in life if one lives a good moral life and has the discipline to stick close to God.
23. Verse 22: A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.
- a) To explain this, let's look at the text in the 10 Commandments: "For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me". (Exodus 20:5b NIV).

- i) Does this mean God punishes the grandchildren and great grandchildren of those who sin? No, it means often that family members suffer the consequences of sin. It means sinful traits are often passed on to several generations. When we sin, we hurt those around us and often pass on those bad habits to another generation.
    - ii) Which leads us back to this proverb: The reverse is also true. When we live a godly life, our children and our grandchildren usually benefit from that. Show me a godly man, and I usually show you a wife and children who follow along.
    - iii) The point is the discipline of living life pleasing to God rubs off on one's offspring.
  - b) As one can tell by now, I don't believe this verse is about money. Now let's look at the second half: "A sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous." It's sort of an interesting fact in life that the money gained from a bad lifestyle "somehow" ends up with good people. Many children have grown up and think, "Boy, my parents are moral idiots and I never want to be like them." They end up using their inheritance for good.
24. Verse 23: A poor man's field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away.
- a) Remember that many Proverbs describe "this is the way life works". One way bad things happen is due to injustice in the world.
  - b) Suppose a crooked king or a crooked lawyer steals farm land from a poor farmer. The soil may be good, but the farmer lost that farm due to some sort of theft. That is one way this proverb could literally be true.
  - c) Ever wonder what God requires of us? "And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8, NIV)
    - i) Part of God's "requirements" for us is to perform justice. It doesn't mean we each have to take the law in our hands. It does mean as a society, we try to do what is right and give justice to the rich and poor alike.
    - ii) This thought by Micah applies to this proverb. The idea is we as members of the society have to do the right thing and make our best effort to see that justice is done in all situations possible.
25. Verse 24: He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.
- a) Here is the first of many proverbs on the importance of disciplining one's children. It is not about hitting kids in anger. It does teach a time-tested fact that corporal punishment, if applied correctly, does work. The bible teaches it is appropriate and loving to say, hit the children in the behind, again if it is done lovingly and not in anger.
  - b) Back to the theme of discipline and hard work, and underlying idea is to pass that trait on to one's children. By punishing them, we are teaching them to do right from wrong.
26. Verse 25: The righteous eat to their hearts' content, but the stomach of the wicked goes hungry.
- a) This verse "sounds like" those who seek God make plenty of money and have plenty of food on the table while the wicked don't have enough money for food.
  - b) What this proverb is saying is in effect, "A good person is satisfied with what they eat, while a wicked person always wants more."
  - c) So what's wrong with wanting more food? ☺ That's not the point. A sign of a godly person is to be grateful for what one has. This verse is not against having ambition in life. It is saying an evil "craves" more and more evil and is never happy with what they have.
27. Chapter 14, Verse 1: The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.
- a) Let's start by saying this has nothing to do with the construction business. This verse has nothing to do with women physically building or demolishing houses. ☺
  - b) One has to remember that when Proverbs was written, women did not have jobs. The main function of women was to run the home and raise the children. For what it's worth, I never condemn families when both parents have to work in order to financially survive. It is "ideal" if one parent can stay home with the kids.

- c) With that said, this verse is about a woman's "home" in reference to raising her children. The point is the hard work and discipline (there's that term again!) of being a wise woman does pay off with their children. That is what is meant by "building her house".
- d) In contrast, the foolish woman "tears down her house" by raising foolish children.
28. Verse 2: He whose walk is upright fears the LORD, but he whose ways are devious despises him.
- a) This verse is describing what "fearing God" means: The concept of "fear of God" is to understand we are accountable to God in all that we do. If we are living a life where we are obeying God's commandments, we are pleasing God whether we realize it or not. When we sin and don't care if we sin, we despise God whether we state it or not.
- b) This proverb is answering the question, "How do I know whether or not my life is pleasing to God?" The answer is obedience. If we are living in obedience to what God commands us, then we are being pleasing to God.
29. Verse 3: A fool's talk brings a rod to his back, but the lips of the wise protect them.
- a) A "rod to his back" was a common way of punishment. It is a way of whipping someone as punishment for violation of a crime.
- b) What this means is that when a foolish person talks, it eventually leads to bad or sinful actions. Their "talk" usually ends up in some action that gets them punished.
- c) At the same time, a godly person "just naturally" says things that are pleasing to God. It is the concept of "Good input makes good output". One's speech will be respected.
30. Verse 4: Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest.
- a) I run my own business. In periods of my life where work is slow, my desk is very clean as there is not much else to do. In a strange sense, that's the point of this proverb. The idea is an empty stable stays clean, but there is no work getting done.
- b) The point is about hard work again. For farmers, oxen were used to pull plows. Just because the ox leaves a place a mess is no excuse not to have them for plowing.
- c) The application is not to make excuses to avoid hard work.
31. Verse 5: A truthful witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies.
- a) The last verse was about hard work. Verse 5 is about integrity. One thing you'll see over and over again in Proverbs is constantly putting verses about hard work right next to other proverbs about integrity. This is an example of that here in Verses 4 and 5.
- b) The point of this proverb is that if one desires to be truthful, one "cannot stand" the idea of lying in the first place. If one is a liar by nature, the lies just pour out.
- c) I've yet to meet a person who hasn't lied at least once in their life. It doesn't make it right, it is just a common sin. That is different from a person who doesn't think twice about lying and does it without thinking it's wrong. The difference is when the righteous person lies, his or her conscious bothers them and they confess it or at times, try to make amends.
32. Verse 6: The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none, but knowledge comes easily to the discerning.
- a) Remember a mocker is someone who doesn't care about God, and usually makes some sort of sarcastic comment whenever there is a discussion of being morally right or wrong.
- b) This verse says the mocker seeks wisdom and finds none. How do they "seek" it? A mocker is seeking the wrong sort of advice or makes bad choices in life.
- c) The verse is also saying those who are trying to seek Godly advice, it is easy to find. The answers to making wise decisions are often a prayer away.
- d) There is a Jewish expression in Israel about the Palestinians that goes: "They never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity". That expression means it seems every time the Palestinians are in the media spotlight, they do something that looks bad in the global media spotlight. I'm not getting into politics here, just passing on this expression, which is about taking the opportunities to do what is wise or foolish when those opportunities arise. That's the application of this proverb.



33. Verse 7: Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips.
- a) Back in Verse 20 of the last chapter, it said, "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm." Both proverbs deal with picking wise friends. This proverb in Verse 7 is about avoiding people that we discern as foolish.
  - b) Jesus said in Matthew 5:22 we are not to call people fools. What He meant by that is we never know who is saved and who is not saved. At the same time the bible teaches we are to judge foolish behavior. Here in this proverb, it says that if we discern is person has a foolish nature, we are to avoid that person.
  - c) Does this mean a non-religious person can't teach us anything about life? Of course not. He or she may be an expert in their field of business. The issue is biblical knowledge and applying God's word to our lives. In that aspect a foolish person can't help us at all and usually advises the wrong thing.
34. Verse 8: The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception.
- a) The "prudent" person is the one who is applying wisdom to their lives. This proverb is saying such a wise person thinks about decisions before they act on them. For example if a decision involves stealing or lying, a prudent person chooses differently.
  - b) The second part mentions fools and self-deception. The point is a foolish person will rationalize their bad decisions in life. For example, one can think, "Well, it's ok to steal because the person I'm stealing from is a bad person." The point is the fool will come up with all sort of rationalizations to sin. It doesn't make it right.
    - i) "The blood of Christ has never covered one excuse". Corrie Ten Boom
35. Verse 9: Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.
- a) Here is another sign to recognize a fool: They mock at the concept of making amends when something is done wrong. When a godly person makes a mistake, a sign that they are righteous before God is they make an attempt to make up for their mistakes.
  - b) The second part of the proverb is teaching that a common trait among the godly is "good will" toward men. This gets back to the biblical concept of love, which is putting the needs of others before themselves. In other words, they help people.
36. Verse 10: Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy.
- a) Here's another proverb on "how life works". What goes on inside of us emotionally cannot be truly shared with others, be it sadness and joy. For example, let's say we are facing the death of a loved one. All the family involved may be sad, but we each miss them for different reasons. Our relationship with the departed person is different from the next person. The point is our bitterness is a little different from another's bitterness and we can't fully share that emotion with another.
  - b) OK that's obvious. Why is that proverb here? Don't know, but that won't stop me from guessing. ☺ The previous proverb was about showing goodwill toward others. The general topic at hand is about showing biblical wisdom. I would guess this proverb has to do with being of help to others. We can't fully know what's going on in a person's heart, but we should be willing to listen if we are asked. I know that in times of grieving, just having people there is helpful. When I am joyous about something, it is nice to have a friend or loved one there to share the moment. My guess this proverb is just about "being there" in a loving act toward others, and not trying to fully comprehend their hearts.
37. Verse 11: The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish.
- a) In my bible, I have the words "house" and "tent" underlined. The implication of this proverb is that the wicked live in a house, but they still go to hell, while the upright only live in a tent, but will flourish. The reference is to salvation.
  - b) This proverb has nothing to do with the size of our houses or tents. This is another proverb teaching that material wealth has nothing to do with wisdom or salvation.

- c) Jesus taught us to not think of this world as our home. (Ref.: John 8:23 et. al.). The word picture is we are "tent-dwellers" in that our life on earth is only a temporary place to "hang out". Our permanent home is in heaven.
38. Verse 12: There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.
- a) Here is another verse on salvation. Jesus said the road leading to hell is a wide road (Matthew 7:13). Jesus is implying lots of people are on that road. Well, if lots of people are on that road, they must "think" they are doing the right thing, or they wouldn't be on that road in the first place. The point is there are many false ideas about salvation.
- b) If I had to pick the biggest lie in society, it is that many people think, "I will get into heaven because my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds". They think they will get into heaven because they are relatively a good person (as in relatively better than the next guy). The problem with that standard is we don't know what is "good enough" for heaven. That is why God sets the bar at "perfection" in order to know what it takes to get into heaven. That is why the blood of Jesus makes us perfectly forgiven for sins.
39. Verse 13: Even in laughter the heart may ache, and joy may end in grief.
- a) Here is another verse on "how life works". Sometimes we make jokes in difficult times. The point of that one can be laughing on the outside, but still have pain on the inside.
- b) It is one thing to tell a joke in order to help deal with pain. It is another to cover up one's sins with laughter in order to mask those sins. That's the underlying warning here.
- c) It is best to read this proverb in context of the previous proverb. The previous proverb taught that one can "think" they are going on the right path in life, but are still working their way toward hell. The point of this proverb is a foolish person can still have moments of joy or have fun in life. At the same time, they are ignoring their conscious about doing what is right or wrong.
40. Verse 14: The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways, and the good man rewarded for his.
- a) One reason I believe God exists is that it is the only way I can deal with the suffering of this world. I can sleep at nights knowing that there is a God who will judge people fairly for the actions of this life. If there was no God, this world would be an unfair place.
- i) That principal goes with this proverb. The proverb is promising that both good and bad people will be "repaid" for their deeds. Sometimes that happens in this lifetime, but most often, it applies of a judgment day after we are resurrected.
- b) If you read other translations and paraphrases of this verse, it is also implying something else: The idea is the godless person will have a sense of emptiness about life. They will eventually get bored with it. Living for God gives one a purpose for living far greater than making money or just raising a family. There is nothing wrong with money or family. This verse is teaching us about the ultimate purpose of living, which is about bringing glory to God in all that we do.
41. Verse 15: A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.
- a) Here is another verse about "thinking twice" before making big decisions.
- b) Notice we have a bunch of proverbs that deal with salvation, judgment day, and having the right frame of mind about life (i.e., living for God and not ourselves).
- c) With that in mind, it is "appropriate" to once again say in effect, "Be careful about the decisions one makes in life. We are accountable to God whether we realize it or not, so think carefully about the decisions we make". That is the idea and context of this proverb.
42. Verse 16: A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless. <sup>17</sup> A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated.
- a) I can combine these two proverbs as they both teach the same principal. The topic is the same as the last proverb. The point is the wise man thinks twice about his or her decisions as they know they are accountable to God. The person who is a fool doesn't care about accountability. Such fools are quick to do sinful and evil things.

- b) Verse 17 takes it one step further. Usually foolish people are quick tempered. Further, they are hated by society.
  - c) Why does the quick tempered man do foolish things? I have to admit, I usually make bad decisions when I'm angry and I'm guessing so do most people. We take our anger and pain out on innocent people. Like I said, Proverbs is often explaining "how life works".
  - d) Why is a "crafty man" hated? The proverb is speaking of a person who has a reputation about deceiving people for sinful reasons. Most people in society want to do the right thing and have everyone live peacefully. It would make sense such people are hated.
43. Verse 18: The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
- a) The term "simple" refers to one who is naive about what is right and wrong. They are more likely to get into trouble just because they don't know better. The implication is that the "simple" are not interested in learning what is right in the first place.
  - b) The "prudent" is one who knows right and wrong and is always attempting to do the right thing. The idea is the prudent person seeks Godly knowledge so they know how to apply it and do apply it at the right moment.
44. Verse 19: Evil men will bow down in the presence of the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
- a) There is a promise made to the Christian that those of the "synagogue of Satan" will worship before the feet of the saved person. (Ref.: Revelation 3:9). It doesn't mean bad people will worship good people. It means that evil people will be forced to acknowledge God at the day of salvation possibly at the same moment Christians willfully bow to God.
    - i) In other words, all people will bow before God, either by free choice or by force. (See Isaiah 45:23 and Romans 14:11). This proverb is stating that fact as well.
  - b) OK, I get that. What's the point? This is another proverb reminding us that we are all accountable to God, no matter how we lived our lives. It is a motivation tool.
45. Verse 20: The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.
- a) Here's another proverb explaining how life works. People who are poor are usually shunned by neighbors. The "neighbors" have enough problems in life without having to constantly having to help the poor. It makes sense that those are poor don't have a lot of friends as people don't want to go out of their way to help them.
  - b) Here's the point of this proverb: Just because "that's the way life is" when it comes to poor people, doesn't make it right. God does not call on us to take a vow of poverty. At the same time, He does call on love our neighbor, and that includes giving where there are obvious needs. Helping the poor is often best by teaching them to help themselves. We should still financially help until they get to that point. The point of this proverb is simply to not ignore the poor just because society does.
46. Verse 21: He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.
- a) Here is another verse about helping those around us. Again, Jesus commands us to love our neighbor. (Reference Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:39). The point of the "Good Samaritan" story in Luke 10 is to help us understand just who is a "neighbor". The point of the Good Samaritan story is that anyone we come in contact with should be treated as a "neighbor" when obeying the command to "love our neighbor".
  - b) We are back to the issue of being accountable to God. The point is whether we realize it or not, we are blessed when we help those in need.
47. Verse 22: Do not those who plot evil go astray? But those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness.
- a) The point of this proverb is those who "work hard" at planning evil do go astray and those who work hard at planning what is good do find "love and faithfulness". It ties back to my lesson theme of "The payoff of godly hard work".
  - b) A point of this proverb is hard work all until itself is neither good nor bad. It is what we plan and what we carryout in those plans that matters.

- c) Remember that Proverbs speaks in generalizations. It is generally true that if we plan things that are biblical (e.g., to help others), it generally ends up being beneficial. Yes, there are exceptions if plans go astray. My point is that just because one plans things "for God" is not a guarantee of success. We are to live on God's timing, not ours.
48. Verse 23: All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.
- a) Speaking of my hard work theme, take a look at this proverb! The simple point is just "planning" is not good enough. One has to follow through on their plans.
- b) This proverb is best read in context of the previous proverb. The previous proverb told of the benefits of planning good things and the warnings of planning bad things. The point of this proverb is the importance of following through with good plans.
- c) This proverb is not saying every entrepreneurial effort will bring financial success. Many businesses fail despite hard work. The point is all hard work teaches us valuable lessons and that wisdom is the "profit".
49. Verse 24: The wealth of the wise is their crown, but the folly of fools yields folly.
- a) Here is another proverb about what one gets when they work hard: If they work hard at living a life pleasing to God, there is a "spiritual wealth" that comes with hard work. If people live a life for just personal gratification without caring about being accountable to God, they end up with an empty life of "foolish stuff". That's the general idea here.
- b) The other idea of this proverb is that if one regularly seeks God, one "just naturally" matures in their wisdom. It doesn't mean we sin less as we grow older. It means as we spend a lifetime studying God's word and His requirements for our life, we grow in our knowledge right and wrong for making good decisions. In other words, the person who seeks God gets "better and better" at understanding and applying wisdom.
- c) The opposite is true for the foolish. The proverb is teaching they will grow "worse and worse" as time passes.
50. Verse 25: A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is deceitful.
- a) A good witness might say, "Hey, what you are doing will kill you. Or, what you are doing is sinful and leads you to hell". The point is a good witness is describing one who passes on Godly wisdom to other people.
- b) The false witness is describing someone who doesn't care about God. Their advice is another brick in the paved road leading to hell. Enough said.
51. Verse 26: He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.
- a) It is never a guarantee in life that just because one is saved, one's children are saved. At the same time, parents influence strongly the way their children turn out in life. Let's face it, God gives His followers the responsibility of passing on knowledge of Him to the next generation. That starts with our own household.
- b) The idea here is if we trust in God, it becomes a place of security. We live with the knowledge we are saved for eternity and God watches out for us. That faith is to be past on to our children. It is for us to teach that concept of faith and salvation to our children.
52. Verse 27: The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.
- a) To live in the "fear of the LORD" is not about being afraid all the time. It is about understanding we are accountable to God and we fear His judgments. With that said, there is a peace to living such a life. We know as Christians we are forgiven and out of gratitude, we live of life of obedience to God. In that sense it is a "fountain of life".
- b) Let me put it another way: To be "born-again" is just the beginning. The remainder of our lives is all about obedience. We grow in our relationship with God. When we apply biblical wisdom, we live happier lives. The "fountain of life" is about how we grow and mature as believers, as well as about our inevitable admittance into heaven.

53. Verse 28: A large population is a king's glory, but without subjects a prince is ruined.
- a) This proverb is essentially saying that for a king to have "real" power, that king needs to have a large population under that kingdom. If the number of people in the kingdom is small, then the prince won't be so powerful when he is king.
  - b) OK, so what? ☺ Again, it's best to read this in context of the surrounding proverbs. The underlying topic for the last couple of proverbs is about working hard to live a good godly life, and eventually, one will reap the benefits.
    - i) Now supposed we are that king. If we live a life pleasing to God, we will have benefits (i.e., "payoff's") like a king with a heavily populated kingdom.
  - c) This proverb is another way of saying in effect, "bear fruit" for God. Jesus taught that we can and do bear fruit for Him essentially by sticking close to Him. (See John 15:5).
54. Verse 29: A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.
- a) As I stated earlier, we are very likely to sin when we are angry. The point of the second half of this proverb is if a person gets angry a lot, it will become obvious of the "folly", which is to say, foolish and sin actions on a regular basis.
  - b) If we are patient, odds are, we will think before we react. It is a trait of wisdom to think about our actions before we act and thus, make better decisions.
55. Verse 30: A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.
- a) In other words, stress kills. If we are constantly stressed about things, that wears on our body and shortens our life span.
  - b) Envy is about wanting something we don't have. Putting the two together, God wants us to have a sense of satisfaction about what we have, if for no other reason, our health.
  - c) It doesn't mean we shouldn't be ambitious or work hard. The point is to enjoy life at whatever state we are at, and not stress about the fact we're not yet at the next level. The point is to live in a state of envy or "always wanting more" is bad for our health.
  - d) Let's put this in perspective of the previous proverbs. The main theme of late has been working hard to live a good godly life will produce good results. In that perspective, one can see how this proverb is warning against "stressing out" to reach one's goals.
56. Verse 31: He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.
- a) One thing I've pounded through my lessons in Proverbs is that we are not to call people "fools", but we are to judge foolish behavior in ourselves and others. One sign of foolish behavior is to watch how people treat the poor. Do we have contempt for the poor or do we make an effort to help the poor.
  - b) Again, it's not about stopping every moment of the day to help the poor. Some are specifically called to this type of ministry and others are called to different ministries. The point is our attitude and at times, putting our money where our mouth is!
57. Verse 32: When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge.
- a) Here is another verse about salvation. The second part says that the righteous have a "refuge" in death, which is about going to heaven.
  - b) The "calamity of the wicked" in this proverb refers to damnation, but it can also refer to calamity in this lifetime. Many a time God "brings down" the wicked in this lifetime.
  - c) Again, always think about proverbs in context of the surrounding proverbs. It seems every so often we read of a "fear God because judgment day is coming" type of proverb like this one. The previous proverb is about helping the poor. If for no other reason, one should keep that in mind, because judgment day is coming for all people.

58. Verse 33: Wisdom reposes in the heart of the discerning and even among fools she lets herself be known.
- a) This proverb is saying the concept of wisdom is everywhere.
  - b) When good people do wise things, it usually becomes publicly known.
  - c) When foolish people do bad things, others can learn from their bad examples and therefore wisdom can be found by learning from bad examples.
59. Verse 34: Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.
- a) A few proverbs back was one about how "a powerful king has lots of people under him."
    - i) A similar thought is in this proverb. The idea is if a vast majority of people in a nation strive to do good, it benefits the whole country.
  - b) This proverb expands the idea of "working hard to do what is right" from an individual basis to a group basis. God holds us accountable as groups as well as individuals. For example, a church that has gone bad will often cease to be a church. A city or a nation that has gone bad will soon cease to be a city or nation. That is the promise and warning of this proverb.
60. Verse 35: A king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant incurs his wrath.
- a) Here is a promise and warning about being wise in life. It gets one promoted in life.
  - b) In summary, this verse is part of the recurring theme that hard work toward living a good godly life has benefits in this lifetime as well as the next.
61. OK, we crossed the finish line. This lesson has been a marathon pace of proverbs. It's time to stop and catch our breath. ☺
- a) In a short time, you'll probably forget have the details of this commentary. What is important to remember is how to study the proverbs. Such rules as reading them in context and comparing both halves help us to understand what they mean. I also encourage you to compare different translations as well.
  - b) My last bit of advice is that "hard work pays off". That is an underlying theme of many of these proverbs when it comes to wisdom. It is not only about eternal heavenly benefits, but benefits in this lifetime. To sum it up, living the Christian life is "worth it".
62. Let's pray: Father, Living a life for You can be difficult at times. We don't always see the benefits. Help us to remember that all of this is worth it. Help us to live a life pleasing to You and to make a difference to the world around us. Help us to abide close to You so that we can bear fruit for You. Help us to apply godly wisdom so that the benefits pay off, both in this life and the world to come. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.