

Proverbs 17:1-28

“Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices *with* strife. 2 A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren. 3 The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts. 4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; *and* a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue. 5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: *and* he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished. 6 Children’s children *are* the crown of old men; and the glory of children *are* their fathers. 7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince. 8 A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth. 9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends. 10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool. 11 An evil *man* seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him. 12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly. 13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. 14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with. 15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both *are* abomination to the LORD. 16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing *he hath* no heart to it? 17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. 18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, *and* becometh surety in the presence of his friend. 19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: *and* he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction. 20 He that hath a froward [arrogant] heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief. 21 He that begeth a fool *doeth it* to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy. 22 A merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. 23 A wicked *man* taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment. 24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool *are* in the ends of the earth. 25 A foolish son is grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. 26 Also to punish the just is not good, *nor* to strike princes for equity. 27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words: *and* a man of understanding is of a cool spirit. 28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: *and* he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.”

Introduction: Peace Is Where It's At

“We have come as far as chapter 17, I hope you’re reading ahead. It says there, King James, **“Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices *with* strife.” (verse 1)** “filled with sacrifices,” the idea there is “lots of meat, with strife.” Better to have a quiet home and peace than a house with a full refrigerator and everybody’s screaming at each other. Some of you can attest to that, you grew up in an environment like that. My home was fairly normal, I grew up fairly normal. But some of you grew up in insane abusive situations where there was never a peaceful day. You know, peace to me is always a priority, I’d rather have peace, you know, to sit. There are times I sat at home with Cath and said *‘You know what, I don’t envy any man,’* I look around the planet, I can actually sit here, I can sit with my wife and watch some dumb chick movie, not dumb chicks, the movie’s dumb, don’t even take me there, I got all kinds of mean letters this week, some kind of movie that she’d like to watch, please. But I sit with her and say *‘You know what, I don’t envy any man, God has been so gracious to us, you know, we’re not millionaires, but we got everything, we’ve had everything with our kids, our church, we have everything for this pilgrimage, for this journey.’* Ah, peace, so peace is the premium. Look, I’m going to say, the other thing is, the verse says to us backwards, if you’re striving for riches, I think we should work hard, I think success is a good testimony. I was hoping Pakio was going to win the fight so he could get the microphone and talk about Jesus. You know, if you want to be a boxer, you want to be the champion so you can talk about the Lord. If you’re going to be in sports, you want to be the MVP, if you’re going to be in business you want to be the most successful executive in the company, whatever you do you want to be good so that you can talk about Jesus. So, there isn’t anything wrong with wanting to prosper and have a nice home. But also remember, it should never be a frustration, and it should never be something where we lose our peace over it, because it’s telling us here, in the final analysis, it’s more wonderful to sit in a quiet home with peace, with a dry morsel, potato chips, than a house filled with meat and hassle.

Wisdom Elevates Someone In Their Life

Verse 2, “A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.” By the way, in this culture, a servant among the

house was allowed, if the master decided, to have part of the inheritance. And what it's saying here is character rises above privilege. Wisdom elevates someone in their life. We can be born without privilege, and yet wisdom can raise us up above privilege. Character is the thing that causes us to be successful. So **"A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren."**

The Value Of Faith In A Human Life

"The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts." (verse 3) We're told this in *1st Peter*, it says *'The trial of your faith being much more precious than gold,'* listen to what it says, *'that your faith is more precious than gold, that perishes, gold, though it be tried with fire, that it might be found unto the praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.'* So, our faith is more precious than gold. Silver, we want that to be purified, gold refined in the fire, but the LORD is the one who tries the hearts of men, he's the one who understands the value of faith, and what it does in a human life. That's why a servant with character can rise above a son, because the LORD is the one who understands the purifying of the heart, doing work there.

If You're Going To Reject God, You're Going To Believe Anything

"A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue." (verse 4) I like that, "doer." This person's a good sinner, they're not all talk, they back up their talk with their walk, this is a wicked doer who giveth heed to false lips. **"and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue"** if you're going to reject God you're going to believe anything. If you reject God you reject truth, you're open to believe anything that comes down the pike. So it says here **"A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue."**

Two Things We Must Not Do: Mock The Poor & Be Glad At Calamities

"Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." (verse 5) "Whoso mocks the poor," it's hard for me to imagine that, but it goes on in places. Understand in ancient Israel, prosperity and God's blessing went hand in hand, in the Book of Deuteronomy in

some places they were told if they served the LORD, if they kept the ordinances, if they kept his Law, they would prosper, their crops would do well, the animals would reproduce. So, in the mind of a Jew [Israelite, all 12 tribes back then, not just the Jews] there was this idea that prospering is a signature of God's blessing, and if you're impoverished it's because you're in sin or there's something wrong. So it could easily develop an attitude like that. So it says here **'If you mock the poor, your reproaching his, the poor man's Maker.'** You see, the poor man is an image-bearer. He's not an ox, he's not a horse, he's not a sheep, he's created in the image and likeness of God. The poorest person in our culture is an image-bearer, and our culture is filled with all kinds of injustice. For you and I as believers, and certainly we should know this without it being said, that we should never mock the poor. Whoever mocks the poor is reproaching that poor person's Maker, because they are an image-bearer. The second half is a little tougher, **"he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished."** (verse 5b) So you can't be, if something happens to someone who really bugs you, you have to be careful not to say *'Ha, ha, ha, ha.'* You know, we want to divide up our calamities so the bad ones we wouldn't wish on anybody, but we're kind of glad to see some calamities sometimes happen to somebody that's really under our skin. It says don't do that, because if you think it's great if it happens to them, the LORD has to let it happen to you too, if that's your standard. So, **"Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished."** (verse 5)

A Proverb For Children & Old Men

"Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers." (verse 6) I have some of those now, six of them. **"Children's children are the crown of old men;"** I got the denial, **"and the glory of children are their fathers."** so children's children are the crown of old men, I have a great time with those grandkids. Their mom will tell them *'Don't say this,'* and then I'll say it, and they'll say *'We're not allowed to say that,'* and I'll say *'That's stupid,'* *'We can't say "stupid!"* You know, I'll have a great time with them. **"Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers."** Very interesting, sometimes here, after church, sadly talking to, you know, it's so often not just the woman in a divorce or a broken home, so often it's tough on her because the husband was the bread-winner...a lot of times these days it's the husband trying to talk to me and the wife's got custody, the home is destroyed, *I've*

tried to share Christ with her, she won't listen.' And I get to say, *'You know what, the kids will look back to you, in time, they get to be 17, 18 years old, something inside of them says "I want to know my father."* Because the glory of children is their father. That's just truth, it's unchangeable. And maybe as they grow up, as they watch you, they say *'I want to know dad's God, because dad's God is real, mom's is not,'* maybe as they grow, it's gonna be in their hearts. So be wise, be loving, do things right, lay the groundwork. Ah, sadly, we've seen foster kids come out of abusive situations where they're being punished or burned with cigarettes or something, and they don't want to tell the caseworker because they don't want to be taken away from their father, because the father is the glory of the children, so much so, it's very sad, when there is abuse, because the father is the glory of children, they're supposed to be able to lift their head to heaven and say *'Father,'* and have that mean something, because the LORD is our glory. [Sometimes the father was so bad in the life of a child that the child when he or she grows up wants nothing to do with the father, where a giant emotional hole has been created within that child who has now grown up, leading to all kinds of emotional disorders and such, such as a lack of tolerance and forgiveness that goes to extremes, like you gotta tiptoe through the tulips with this person, except the tulips are emotional landmines.] So, children's children, the grandkids, I love it, and they're all over the house, sometimes I have to make a big piece of meat to get them all there, but it's fine. And it's like the circus, I just sit there and watch it, the noise of it, the motion of it, the kinetic energy, it's remarkable to just sit there and watch the whole thing, and I love it. So, children's children, crown of old men, and the glory of children are their fathers.

Lying Lips & Bribery

"Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince." (verse 7) It's interesting, the Hebrew reads **"A lip of excellence becometh not a fool, much less the lip of lying a prince."** It's easier to remember, you have a lip of excellence or of lying. We say *'Don't give me no lip.'* That means, that's a smart-mouthed kid giving lip or something. **'Excellent speech, the lip of excellence, is not becoming to a fool, much less the lip of lying to a prince.'** Because who wants people in civil government that you can't trust [yet that's exactly who and what we get all the time, politicians are the best liars in the world, because they do it all the time, practice makes perfect]. I never heard of such a thing [laughter], much less the lip of lying a prince. It says, **"A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it:**

whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.” (verse 8) the idea *‘a bribe is as a precious stone,’* the Hebrew is *“a stone of favour”* it’s talking about a charm, a superstitious stone that was used to cast a spell. So it says *‘A bribe is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that has it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.’* It’s not condoning bribery, but it’s making an observation [and bribery and politics and the judiciary in this world go hand-in-hand], that someone that’s in a situation where they’re able to pay people off and make a bribe, that it’s to them like a charm, it’s a good thing. Again, over in **verse 23**, if you’ll look there, it tells us what’s wrong with bribes, which are talked about much in the entire Book of Proverbs, it says **“A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom”** the reason, here’s what’s wrong with any bribery, because it’s **“to pervert the ways of judgment”** of justice, literally. So the problem with a bribe is, it perverts the way of justice, to pay somebody off to do something they shouldn’t be doing. Ah, here it says *‘A bribe is like a precious stone, like a charm, to him that has it, whithersoever he turns it, it prospers.’*

Sometimes In The Kingdom There Are Higher Things Than Right and Wrong

“He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.” (verse 9) The New Testament tells us *‘Love covers a multitude of sins.’* **“but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.”** Look, **“he that covereth a transgression”** the idea is, you’re leaving room for reconciliation if you do that. If you blab it all over, it just puts fuel on the fire. This is good counsel for marriage, **“he that covereth a transgression seeketh love,”** you know, your spouse, husband or your wife, sometimes the best thing to do is to leave it go. Sometimes in the Kingdom, there are higher things than right and wrong. Because a lot of our bickering and fighting, Cathy and I rarely fight about important things. The worst fights we ever have are over stupid things. And sometimes when it comes to stupid things, the worst fight we ever had was over a ham [chuckles], but you know, it wasn’t the issue of who was right or wrong, there was something higher than that, to have taken a deep breath and calm down and say *‘You’re right Honey, and let it go,’* would have been more pleasing to the Lord than who was right or wrong about whether the ham smelled bad. I didn’t think it did, she thought it did, I was eating it whether she liked it or not, she was fighting with me, it turned into a huge blow-up, we found out two days later she was pregnant, that’s why the ham smelled bad,

but I got to eat some of it anyway, so [laughter]. The more important thing, there was something higher than right and wrong, the idea is. **“He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends.”** Ah that’s not what I was just doing here, I was helping you learn these things [laughter].

*Wise People Hear Reproof, Fools Get A Beating, Rebellion
Bad Stuff*

“A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.” (verse 10) So Solomon has little time for fools, in some ways. It tells us he was the wisest man that ever lived. So, “reproof entereth more into a wise man,” a man that’s wise, that wants to do what’s right, that needs to be reproofed, it can cut him to the heart, because he says *‘I can’t believe I blew it,’* or *‘I can’t believe I did that.’* It says it will enter into him more than a hundred stripes into a fool. Of course Israel was not permitted to lay 100 stripes on anyone, the Book of **Deuteronomy** said **‘It shall be that if a wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number, forty stripes he may give him and not exceed, thus should he exceed and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee,’** don’t do that, you respect him as a human being, you now, some kids didn’t get spanked enough when they were little, so they need to get beat forty times when they grow up. Get it over with while they’re little, folks. **“Reproof entereth into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.” (verse 10)** **“An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.” (verse 11)** interesting. **“therefore,”** because of that **“a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.”** Now in Solomon’s context, an evil man seeking rebellion, rebellion is always against something, against order, certainly in Solomon’s context it would have been against the Law of God, it was the Law of the Land. The king was to uphold that, Deuteronomy 17, we read that last week, the priests were to uphold that, the prophets were to uphold it [and Elijah killed off the prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth, to the number of 400, he slew them], so in this context, an evil man is someone who seeks rebellion, and that is rebellion against a righteous or moral standard. And if he does that a cruel messenger shall be sent against him. They were told in 1st Samuel rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is like idolatry. And here it says someone who does that, someone who is constantly kicking

against order, God's order and what's right, that's a rebellious spirit, that's an evil person, a cruel messenger will be sent against him.

Better To Meet A Bear Than A Fool

Ah, **verse 12**, **“Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.”** So it says, this may not sound good to you, but this is God's estimation. You have your choice, you're going through the woods, am I either going to meet a bear with a bunch of cubs, or I'm going to meet a fool, which one would you rather meet? I would rather meet the fool than the bear with her cubs. God says **‘No, you're better off meeting the bear with the cubs than the fool.’** Then I think *‘What about introducing the fool to the bear with her cubs, if I can outrun him I don't have to worry about the rest of that proverb, I don't have to run faster than the bear, I just have to run faster than the fool.’* **“Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.” (verse 12)** that tells you God's concern and estimation of what foolishness can do to the life of a human being, in contrast with a few stitches. [Don't forget what nuclear physicists gave us, nuclear weapons. If that is not like meeting a fool in his folly, I don't know what is.]

Warning: Don't Reward Evil For Good, God Takes Notice

“Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.” (verse 13) Ever happen to you? Anybody ever pay you back evil for good? Are you alive, check your pulse. [I've been at the receiving end of this, receiving evil for good, it's not pleasant.] We're told exactly the opposite by Jesus in regarding evil for good, he said **‘Rather, if someone smites you on the right cheek, turn the other, if someone compels you to go one mile, go the extra mile,’** he teaches us to do exactly the opposite. Here it says, on the other side of that, someone who rewards evil for good, they're not winning, don't lose your cool, testimony, they're not winning, it's going to come back on them. [Comment: On several occasions in my life I've seen this come to pass against someone who did me evil when I didn't deserve it. God has got our back on this one. We just have to be careful not to be seeking vengeance, keeping our attitudes free of that desire, as hard as it may be. but you can pray imprecatory for their good. Imprecatory is for a reason, to help those who need to learn that God exists and has the back of his children. Some need to learn these things the hard

way. I remember reading the account from a letter from The JESUS Film Project about a Hindu district in India that had killed some new converts and maybe even some JESUS Film Project workers. Shortly afterward a huge and deadly typhoon swept through this district, killing a number of Hindus but none of the Christians. The Hindu's recognized God's hand in this, and some of them actually came to Christ as new-believers, and the entire local Hindu community started protecting Christians and being friendly to them. This account is to the best of my memory, as it's been a few years since I read the letter, and like Pastor Joe, my memory ain't what it used to be. But it was quite a stunning account.]

Don't Put The Gloves On, Don't Get In The Ring

Verse 14, "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with." So it says this, the beginning of strife, how it gets started, it says when there's a sleuth, so there's a waterway, you can open a little pathway for that water, but then what happens is as it runs faster and faster, the erosion gets greater and greater, pretty soon you have the dam or you have the sleuth falling apart. And it says **"The beginning of strife" 'it's like when one lets out a little water,'** and the idea is, it opens up a larger stream of water. He says, **'therefore, because it's like that,' "leave off contention, before it be meddled with."** [I once was witness to an earthen dam letting go. It had been raining steadily for over a week, and this earthen dam up the street from our apartment building, the water got high enough that it started flowing through an emergency stone spillway at the top of the damn. But this spillway got plugged with debris, so that water spilled over the top. This dam was 20 feet high, and a gully was below it. One evening, in the middle of the night water cut through the dam like a knife through warm butter, and this 20-foot wall of water came rushing down the gully behind our apartment building, it sounded like an express train roaring by.] Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam, once water starts spilling over the top there's going to be a flood. Look, every quarrel has a history. Every quarrel has a history, everything Cathy and I are going to argue about is something we've disagreed about before, that comes up again. Some people they don't get hysterical, they get historical, so you're always going to hear the same thing again. Almost every quarrel has a history. All sin has a history, nothing happens out of thin air and just appears there all of a sudden. So Solomon says, **'Look,'** and he'd argued with a thousand wives, he knew what he

was talking about, and that's a thousand mother-in-law's, ***'The beginning of strife is when you let out a little bit of water, and pretty soon you got a flood on your hands, so'*** he says, ***"therefore leave off contention, before it is meddled with."*** Don't put the gloves on, don't get in the ring. I like that proverb, ***'Don't put the gloves on, don't get in the ring.'***

A Look At Our Modern Society

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD." (verse 15) This should be written on the wall of all the media centers and political centers in our country. ***"He that justifieth the wicked,"*** listen, pray for the Supreme Court, ***"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD."*** He doesn't care what the current trend is in our culture, you know, you go back to Proverbs chapter 8, where wisdom is brought before us, and wisdom says ***'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before there ever was an earth, when there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world, when he prepared the heavens, I was there, when he set the compass on the face of the deep, I was there.'*** Wisdom says ***'If you will exercise wisdom, understand, I create, I supercede all of this, I don't care what the current trend is in the culture, I'm not speaking from that perspective, I'm speaking from eternity.'*** If you want to exercise wisdom, it says here ***'Do not justify the wicked, and do not condemn the just, because the LORD says that is an abomination to him.'*** *Isaiah*, he would say this, ***'Whoa unto them that call evil good and call good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.'*** Where are we as a people? You know, you look at the media, look at what's going on, look how sin and so many things are glorified every night in the media, on the television all around us, and in legislation, and you look how somebody wants to stand up and say ***'I believe this is right, this is right for me, for my family,'*** and they're being sued, their businesses are being taken away, and it's insane. Social marijuana needs to be legal? But you can't pray at the beginning of a football game? Are you kidding me? You know, just think how crazy we're getting. The drinking age is being lowered to 18, if you're drinking alcohol, but you can't order a big coke anymore

because all of that's not good for you, you have to order two small cokes to get the same amount of coke? We've lost our minds. We've lost our minds. We're saving the Spotted Owl and aborting a million babies? We've lost our minds. We've lost our minds, we're calling good evil and evil good. So we need to pray, we need to pray for an awakening, pray for a revival, pray for God to move [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophets/Zephaniah/REVIVAL.html>]. ***'He that justifies the wicked, he that condemneth the just, they're both an abomination to the LORD.'***

The Real Price Of Wisdom, What Wisdom Is

"Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" (verse 16) Look, why, this is something Proverbs is asking, ***'why is there even a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom?'*** He wants to buy it, he doesn't want to learn it. *'Hey, I can afford to go to any school in the United States, I can go to Harvard, I can go here, I can go there, I can go anywhere, I can go to Columbia University, I can go anywhere I want,'* it says here ***'Why is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom? he doesn't have a heart for it.'*** Because the real price of wisdom is submission and obedience. Wisdom is the application of knowledge, wisdom is taking what's right and putting it into action, wisdom is not the talk, it's the walk. And he says here, ***Why is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom? he doesn't care about it, he doesn't have a heart for it.'***

A Friend Loveth At All Times, In Spite Of What They Know About Us

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." (verse 17) that's why they're a friend. That's why a dog is man's best friend, because he can't talk and tell you what he really thinks. ***"A friend loveth at all times,"*** in spite of what they know about us, ***"and a brother is born for adversity."*** It's interesting, Jesus of course, says this, ***"Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."*** There is a friend, you know, a friend loves at all times, that's our Saviour, that's our Lord. ***"and a brother is born for adversity."*** It's interesting, I grew up with just one sister, and that's a blessing, I love her. But I didn't have any brothers, but I got a bunch of them now, in the

family of God, and they would take a bullet for me, and it's a privilege to have the brothers that I have. So, **"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."** (verse 17)

Don't Co-Sign For Others

"A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend." (verse 18) Now what it's saying here, striking hands is the idea, today we would say **'he's co-signing for someone.'** *'Hey man, my credit is bad, they won't give me this, will you co-sign,' 'Ya sure, I'll co-sign for you.'* You become collateral for somebody else. In Israel you can still see it in the sheep market, they haggle, they strike a deal, and when they strike a deal they slap hands, that means they settled. So here it says, **'A man void of understanding strikes hands, makes a deal, he co-signs for someone, and he becometh a surety in the presence of his friends.'** It's just not wise is the idea, don't pull somebody else's debt and throw it up on your back. [Unless you are helping the poor and needy, but don't co-sign for them, give them a one-way loan out of what you can afford to give them, not expecting it back from them. There are other Proverbs that cover this theme. I once refused to co-sign for one of my adoptive kids, but did everything else I could to help them financially to keep their head above water.]

Don't Love Strife, Watch Your Mouth

"He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction." (verse 19) the person that loves strife, and some people do, you know one, don't you, at least one. Don't you know somebody who just loves to argue, their favorite indoor sport is starting an argument. If they can't find one, they'll start one. **"He loveth transgression that loveth strife:"** there's a problem there, someone that loves strife, **"and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction."** (verse 19b) the idea is, he's always bragging about his position, his influence, you know, the gate that he sits in and so forth, his life, he's seeking destruction, it's not gonna work out. **"He that hath a froward [arrogant] heart,"** twisted or perverse heart, **"findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief."** (verse 20) the Hebrew says **"he that has a twisted, a perverse heart shall not prosper."** Is what it says. **"and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief."** (verse 20b) it's just his mouth is going to get him into trouble. You know people like that, don't you? We love them, care about them, but you think

'Somebody's going to punch him in the mouth, he doesn't shut up, somebody's gonna clock him, man. He's always the tough guy, he's gonna get it.'

How Are You Raising Your Children? What You Sow You'll Reap

"He that begeth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy." (verse 21) now it's an interesting proverb, because nobody begets a fool on purpose. You know, it's not like *'You know, we're going to have a kid now, should we have a wise kid or a fool, what do you want to pick honey? I don't know, you pick.'* So it seems that it's saying in the context of the Book of Proverbs, he that begeth a fool, the inference is **'doeth it,'** the idea is, we've got lots of instruction in here about raising children. And somebody who begets a fool, is doing it to his own sorrows, someone is not disciplining their child, someone whose not raising them in the fear of the Lord, somebody whose not doing the right thing with them, letting them just run out and be crazy, it says they do it to their own sorrow. And the father of a fool, he has no joy it says.

'A Merry Heart Does Good Like A Medicine'

I like **verse 22**, it says **"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones."** Very interesting, it's **"A merry heart,"** to be a person that's joyful, circumstances of your life, God's faithfulness, so forth, **"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine:"** the Hebrew is, **"A cure, it causes to be good."** **"doeth good like a medicine"** the Hebrew is, **"A cure, it causes to be good."** So actually, it's speaking about a physical illness, that a merry heart, it does good like a medicine, it's good for your physical frame. Remarkably, human beings were not made to be melancholy and bummed out and depressed all the time, that joy...we're so complicated and so integrated [with this world] that when we find the Lord and there's genuine release from guilt, and there's joy in our lives, it says it's good for the whole machine, it's good for everything. **"but"** on the contrast, **"a broken spirit drieth the bones." (verse 22b)** it's unhealthy for someone whose just always crushed and always down.

Bribery

“A wicked man taketh a gift [bribe] out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.” (verse 23) he’ll receive the bribe, and he’ll receive it to pervert the ways of justice. The problem with bribery, it runs all through our political system, horse-trading one kind or another, runs all throughout Washington, all through our culture everywhere.

Wisdom Is Everywhere, But The Fool’s Brain Is Somewhere Else

“Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth,” (verse 24) it’s kind of saying this, wisdom, it’s the most commonplace thing, it’s right in front of us, in our every ordinary day God-given responsibilities, wisdom is all around us, it’s right there, it’s right before our eyes. It says **“Wisdom is before him that hath understanding;”** contrary to that, it says, **“but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.”** he’s daydreaming, he’s somewhere else in his mind, everything but the practical expression and use of knowledge that he has, the godly responsibilities that each of us have given to us, the fool, his brain is somewhere else. People say ‘*That kid’s in another world, daydreaming, somewhere else.*’

What A Fool Is

“A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.” (verse 25) I’m thankful not to know that, but, a foolish son, remember the Scripture, a fool is someone who says in his heart there is no God, and a fool is someone who can’t receive instruction. It’s not like what we would call somebody ‘*You fool,*’ there’s a different context in the Scripture. **Psalm 14:1a, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”** and through here we find out a fool is someone who can’t receive correction, can’t receive instruction. That kind of a son is a grief to the father, bitterness to a mother.

It’s Not Good To Punish The Just Or To Strike Civil Authorities For Doing Good

“Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.” (verse 26) Here we go again, it is not good, “nor to strike princes” the idea is, to beat a civil authority, beat them down, because of equity, for doing good, for being just. So to punish the just, that’s not good, nor to strike civil authorities, princes, for equity, for doing what’s right, doing what’s good. [JKF was struck

down under a barrage of bullets for trying to pull us out of the Vietnam War before it really got started. That's an example of striking "a prince for equity," for trying to do what was good for the nation.] We looked at this earlier in the chapter, no good.

Wise Use Of The Tongue

"He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of a cool spirit." (verse 27) [margin says "cool spirit," I like that better than "excellent spirit."] So the person that really knows what they're talking about doesn't have to prove it. **"He that hath knowledge spareth his words:"** again, you have two ears and one mouth, that's how God feels about it. You could have had two mouths and one ear, looked funnier, but would have said something different. [Some people are said to be talking out of both ends, so you know where their other mouth is.] Two ears and one mouth says you should listen twice as much as you talk. **"He that hath knowledge spareth his words"** doesn't have to argue, doesn't have to prove himself, **"and a man of understanding"** it says, **"is of an excellent spirit."** your NIV says **"he is even tempered,"** is the idea, the word in the Hebrew actually means **"to be of a cool spirit."** In other words, he doesn't get aggravated, so it's not just cool the way we say it, 'he's really cool.' If you meet somebody whose even-tempered, that is pretty cool, but that's not what its saying here. **'He that hath knowledge, he truly knows, he spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a cool spirit, he doesn't fly off the handle, he just knows how to control himself, event-tempered.'** **"Even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding." (verse 28)** So our two words there that are important are "counted" and "esteemed." **'Even though it might not be true, a fool, when he holds his mouth closed, he's counted as wise. And he that shuts his lips, is esteemed as a man of understanding.'** So you get in a situation, and there's one guy who just sits there and is quiet, and everybody says, *'The quiet guy, he knows. Look at that guy, he's not saying nothing, he knows, I'm telling you, he knows.'* He may know nothing, his IQ may be 5, *'Look at that guy, he hasn't said a word, he's just watching, I'm telling you, that guy knows what's going on.'* We say *'Hey, it's better to keep your mouth closed and have people wonder if you're a fool, than to open it and remove all doubt.'* So, here, **'even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise. And**

he that shuts his lips is esteemed as a man of understanding, quiet guy, he knows.'

Proverbs 18:1-24

“Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh *and* intermeddleth with all wisdom. 2 A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself. 3 When the wicked cometh, *then* cometh contempt, and with ignominy reproach. 4 The words of a man’s mouth *are as* deep waters, *and* the wellspring of wisdom *as* a flowing brook. 5 *It is* not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment. 6 A fool’s lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. 7 A fool’s mouth *is* his destruction, and his lips *are* the snare of his soul. 8 The words of a talebearer *are as* wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. 9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster. 10 The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. 11 The rich man’s wealth *is* his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit. 12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility. 13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth *it*, *it is* folly and shame unto him. 14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear? 15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge. 16 A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men. 17 *He that is* first in his own cause *seemeth* just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him. 18 The lot causeth contention to cease, and parteth between the mighty. 19 A brother offended *is harder to be won* than a strong city: and *their contentions are* like the bars of a castle. 20 A man’s belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; *and* with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. 21 Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. 22 *Whoso* findeth a wife findeth a good *thing*, and obtaineth favour of the LORD. 23 The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly. 24 A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend *that sticketh* closer than a brother.”

Someone Whose Selfish, Isolating Himself...

“Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.” (verse 1) Very tough verse, the Hebrew is difficult. It seems to be saying, that through selfish desire, that’s what it’s speaking about, someone whose selfish in what they want, that person having separated himself, he’s unfriendly, he isolates himself deliberately, that person seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom. If you know somebody that’s always right, this is a person where everybody else is wrong. Everybody else on the planet is wrong. They’re the only person that knows what they’re talking about. You know somebody like that? Don’t look at your husband, that’s not what I’m saying. You know somebody like that? Somebody where everybody else is always wrong. And that kind of person, you know, through selfish desire they just separate themselves and end up to be lonely, because who wants to hang around them? And the idea is, they’re intermeddling with all wisdom, it’s foolish to be like that. **“A fool has no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.” (verse 2)**...the idea is, all he wants to do is voice his opinion. It kind of goes with the first verse. A fool, he doesn’t delight in understanding, all he wants to do is shoot his mouth off, he just wants to tell everybody who he really is.

The Wicked Look Down On People, Mock Things

“When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach.” (verse 3) So, when the wicked cometh then cometh contempt, there’s a contempt that comes, because they look down on things, they mock things. Ignominy is dishonour, your translation might say **“and then with dishonour there is disgrace.”** That’s the idea that it brings across here.

What Cooks Inside Us, Sometimes It’s Deep Waters, But It’s Wonderful To Be Around The Wise

“The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.” (verse 4) So, a man’s mouth, the things that cooks inside of a person, sometimes it’s a deep water. And a wellspring of wisdom is like a flowing brook. Sometimes it’s just wonderful to hear what flows out of somebody like that. My pastor was like that, *‘If you strive to get it going you’ve gotta strive to keep it going,’* he would have these little proverbs of his own, *‘God guides, God provides.’* I remember one time one of the early Harvest Crusades, Chuck was on to be one of the main speakers, and the thing went so long, because different guys were sharing, he was the last one, and the whole night went

so long, and so long, then finally they brought him up, and he knew, you know, everybody was all delirious, the whole thing had gone too long, and he just walked out on the stage, and he looked at everybody, and he said “*Get right, or get left*” and he walked away. [laughter] One time a friend of mine was on staff there, Bill Gallo was with him, and some of the early heresies of the *Blab it, Grab it* doctrines, you know some of these guys, and he said ‘*I stuck my head in Chuck’s office and he was sitting there eating figs, and I asked him about one of these preachers, I said, Chuck, what do you think about this guy? He didn’t even look up at me, he went “Bad fruit.” That’s all he did.*’ [laughter] You know, sometimes you just know people like that, it’s wonderful to be around them, they don’t have to say much, and it’s just life, it’s wonderful to hear what they have to say.

Fools Mouths & Gossips, Bad Deal

“It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.” (verse 5) again, pray for our country. **“It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.”** **“A fool’s lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.” (verse 6)** here the idea is, a fool, he enters into an argument, he gets into it, you can’t get away from this guy, his mouth calling for strokes, we say ‘*That guy’s asking for it,*’ he’s just asking to get clocked. That’s what it’s saying here. Fool’s lips, they enter right into contention, and his mouth is calling for strokes, ‘*Somebody beat me, somebody knock me out and shut me up,*’ is the idea here. **“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.” (verse 7)** **“The words of a talebearer”** you could put Gossip there, we understand, **“The words of a gossip are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.” (verse 8)** you ever get stabbed by one of those? [yup, constantly] If you could see the scars on my back, it’s remarkable. **“The words of a talebearer, gossip, are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly”** and it can be painful and destructive.

The Lazy Again

“He also that is slothful in his work is a brother to him that is a great waster.” (verse 9) Find somebody who is lazy in what they’re doing, and you’re going to find him hanging around with the other guy whose a great waster. We say these guys are ‘*Two peas in a pod.*’ That’s our way of saying the same thing, **‘He that**

is slothful, lazy in his work, he ends up hanging out, is buddies with the guy that is a great waster.'

*The Rich Man Is Deceived By His Riches, The Righteous
Are Not*

I love **verse 10 and 11**, “**The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.**” (verse 10) “**The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.**” (verse 11) It’s just interesting, it makes a comparison between verses 10 and 11. Look, “**The name of the LORD is a strong tower:**” then in the next verse, that the rich man, his wealth is “as,” verse 10 is a fact, “**The name of the LORD IS**” not as “as,” but “**is a strong tower**” it’s the high-ground, it’s a fortress. “**The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.**” the word “safe” in verse 10 and the word “high” in verse 11 are both the same Hebrew word that means “inaccessible.” So what it says here, for you and I, is the name of the LORD, it’s a strong tower. We are not often put in a circumstance where we have to prove that or believe it. I’m reading a book right now called “*Killing Christians*” and it’s talking about what’s going on in the rest of the world, how many of our brothers and sisters are being martyred. And the testimonies of those that are saying “*This may be the day, that I get to see his face, this might be the day that I get to be a martyr, this might be the day that I get to meet my Jesus, my Saviour,*” and I think about the things I’m griping about. And some of the testimonies, standing in the middle of a crowd, with swords drawn, and saying ‘*I’m not going to deny Jesus, love saying his name,*’ and the next thing you know, everybody just walked away. “**The name of the LORD is a strong tower, the righteous run into it, and they are inaccessible.**’ When things get tough in life, please, get on your knees, get alone and say ‘*Lord Jesus, my Jesus, I’m calling out to you, I need you. I need your strength, I need your wisdom, I need your power, I’m loosing it, I need you Lord.*’ “**The name of the LORD is a strong tower:**” it’s the high-ground, “**the righteous runneth into it, and they’re inaccessible.**” By contrast, “**A rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and as an inaccessible wall in his own conceit.**” (verse 11) it’s “as an inaccessible wall” “in his own conceit” is literally “in his own imagination.” So, it’s saying here, the rich man is deceived, the righteous are not. The rich man’s deceived because he thinks his wealth is his strong tower, and that because he’s wealthy he’s inaccessible. It’s saying that the righteous man, the name of the LORD is his strong tower, and he runs into it, and **is** safe, it **is** his strong tower. The other guy,

it's "as" a strong tower, but it isn't really, and it falls apart in the final analysis. So there is a great contrast there, as we look at those two, **'the name of the LORD is a strong tower, the righteous run into it, and they are in fact, in an inaccessible place. The rich man's wealth is his strong city,'** which is a deception, **'and it's as an inaccessible wall, in his imagination,'** it says.

Again, Pride Goes Before Destruction, Humility Before Honour

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility." (verse 12) which would fit with verse 11 well, **"and before honour is humility."** **James** says **'Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, he will lift you up.'** **Psalm 75** says **'Promotion doesn't come from the north or the south, the east or the west, it comes from the LORD.'** So, **"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility."** Before is the cross, then comes the crown.

The Lost Art Of Effective Listening

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." (verse 13) He that answers a matter before he hears it, do you know anybody like that? Come on, you mean there's only one person on the planet, and I knew them? Somebody whose already thinking of the answer before you're done with what your saying. You haven't even got the sentence out, you're not even done with what you're saying, and they're already interrupting you with the answer to what they think you're saying. They're trying to help you to say you want to say by giving you the answer to the question you would say if you were as smart as they are, I think. [chuckles] Listening is a lost art. The best counsellor is the best listener. Not the person whose ready to answer before they hear what you have to say. Look, when we're close to somebody, in a home, a family environment, we can take that for granted because we know them **so well** that sometimes we can get on the wrong side of this. It's interesting, **Paul** says **'Henceforth, we know no man after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'** It's really tough in a Christian home, to look at your wife, to look at your husband, to see your kids if they're born-again, to see them in the Spirit and not in the flesh, to realize they are somebody besides who they are in the natural of my life. This is a person of a spiritual calling, it makes us listen differently, but **"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame**

unto him.” (verse 13) [Comment: I have a photocopy of an incredible book about Effective Listening, it’s out of print now. But this answering before someone’s done speaking is quite common, very common. It’s why most people are very poor listeners, which makes them bad on the job, bad in marriages, a whole host of negatives come along with this all-too-often common ailment. He describes everything Pastor Joe has discussed here, giving reasons why people do this, and how to train yourself against this bad habit. He uses Ben Franklin as an example of one of the best listeners ever to have lived, which helped him be one of the best counsellors and negotiators to have ever lived.]

The Indomitable Human Spirit Will Sustain A Person

Verse 14, “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?” “his infirmity” “in sickness” literally. But again, **“a wounded spirit who can bear?”** We’ve heard, I’ve heard doctors say, *‘they have no will to live, they have no will to live.’* And sometimes people just let go. Other times you hear *‘I don’t know what’s keeping them alive, they will not let go.’* And some people are so stubborn, finally the illness gets tired of them, then they get better. **“The spirit of a man will sustain [him in] his infirmity [in sickness];” (verse 14a)** A wounded spirit, be careful with your kids, how you treat them, what you say to them, people close to you. Look, vulnerability is related to love, and to the degree we love someone, that’s to the degree that we put our heart out where it can be stepped on. And to the degree that we love someone, that is the exact degree that we can be injured by them, more by what they say than by anything. So the spirit of man, someone whose got hold of the Lord, they’re living life to its fullest, it can sustain him in his infirmity. [Comment: It doesn’t have to be a person who has God’s Holy Spirit, it definitely says “the spirit of a man,” the human spirit, not God’s Holy Spirit. I can name several individuals by name who have this indomitable spirit that sustains them through all their infirmities, yet they are not at present called to salvation, God’s Holy Spirit is not in them. Douglas Bader, the famous legless Spitfire fighter pilot of WWII had this never-say-die, indomitable spirit within him, and to my knowledge, he was never a believer in that sense.] **“but a wounded spirit who can bear?”**

The Wise Want To Learn

“The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.” (verse 15) The wise man, all

through the Book of Proverbs, wanting to learn, wanting to learn more.

This Verse Can Go Two Ways, Positive & Negative

“A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.” (verse 16) now verse 16’s a difficult verse and Hebrew scholars argue over it, because “gift” is the same word there that is used of “bribe,” but the context here seems to be “the sphere of influence,” the context doesn’t seem to be negative here, we’re not certain. It may be saying **‘A man’s influence,’** and this is true, **‘makes room for him, and sometimes it brings him before great men.’** That happens to be true. It can be in the negative sense, which we know so well, **‘A man’s bribe can make room for him, and bring him into the presence of great men also.’**

There’s Always Two Sides, It’s Never One-Sided

“He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.” (verse 17) so, this is what it says, **‘He that is first in his own cause, the first to plead their case, it says, the first person to plead their case, they seem just. But then the person they’re complaining about, their neighbour comes, searches, literally “examines him.”** What it’s saying here is there’s always two sides. I’ll sometimes have a, I’m not a good counsellor and don’t want to be, just in the sense I’ve no desire to be a counsellor, I love being a pastor. Some people love counseling, I don’t know what’s wrong with them. But I’ll have a husband come into my office, and he sits there and tells me all about his wife. Now he’s pleading his case first. I haven’t heard her side. And I’m thinking, *‘You poor guy, you’re married to a witch, this is terrible, she must be the most terrible woman on the planet, I can’t believe God lets her breathe air, you poor guy.’* Then he leaves, and she comes in and talks to me, and I think, *‘They can’t be married to each other, because she’s telling me this story, I’m hearing from her about him, and I’m thinking ‘You poor woman, how could this ever happen in your life.’* The idea is, when the first person comes, they plead their story first, and you kind of listen to that, it’s warning us, look out because then finally when you hear the other side, and the person that came to you first is examined, then you find out the other side of the story. There’s always two sides to the story. And we just learned that here over the years, there’s always another side, it’s never one-sided, ever. And you know, look, we want to be thoughtful of friends, we want to be thoughtful of people we care

for, give them Biblical counsel, but remember, it's never one-sided, you need to find out what's happening [on both sides] in order to be an effective counsellor. So, **'He that is the first to state his case, it seems just, but then his neighbour comes and searches him out, and the rest of the story is told.'**

The Flip Of A Coin

"The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty." (verse 18) the lot in Israel considered different then, it's just rolling dice today. You know, they respected the fact that the LORD sometimes used that. Look, you got a tie-game in the NFL, the captains and team guys come to the center of the field with the Ref, and it's decided by the flip of a coin, and there's a couple guys there, 6-foot-9, 340 pounds, you know, that want to kill each other, and they let the thing be decided by the flip of a coin. The idea, the lot causes contentions to cease and parts between the mighty.

A War In The Home

"A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." (verse 19) "of a citadel." So, a brother sinned against, you know, the Civil War in the United States was the bloodiest war we ever fought. **'A war in the house, a war in the home, a war between brothers, a brother [or sister] offended or sinned against is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions, what they have to say, how they feel about what their brother did to them, they're like the bars of a citadel.'** Sadly we see that, and it can happen, strong feelings, deep hurt. [I knew two sisters who would not talk to each other, probably since they were teenagers. I grew up knowing them and their two families, their husbands, and the children of these two sisters were our playmates. When one died, the other would not even go to the funeral of the other. They were both best friends with my mother, who somehow managed to tip-toe through the minefield, as we all did. One sister was what I would call a devout narcissist, the world had to revolve around her, which probably didn't help matters any. Also they both had fiery tempers, being descended from a short person who possessed a fiery temper as well, who was one of our Navy's first fiery warriors of renown. I'm not sure, but I think he died in a duel back in the early 1800s, sad loss for our fledgling navy. Even through the generations, the apple never falls too far from the tree. Another example of this taken to an extreme is the sad history of the war

between two cousins and their respective families, the Hatfield's and McCoy's. This one involved guns and turned into real warfare. You can look that one up online.] It's not surprising, God recognizes that, he sees it, he says that it's true.

The Power Of The Tongue

“A man’s belly shall be satisfied by the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.” (verse 20) Now, this is talking about a wise man, somebody, all the things we’re hearing in Proverbs about the use of the tongue, the use of the mouth, we should know by now, the power of speech. You can tear a kid down, you can ruin a kid’s life by telling him everyday he’s an imbecile, he’s an idiot, you yell at him, you put him down, there’s power in that. That other side of the coin is that we understand there’s power in speech, you can build someone up, you can encourage someone, and it seems to be that’s what it’s saying here, **“A man’s belly shall be satisfied by the fruit of his mouth,”** someone who knows how to use wise counsel, uses his mouth wisely, **“and with the increase of his lips he shall be filled”** because ***‘life and death are in the power of the tongue, but they that love it, the idea is, they love wisdom, they shall eat the fruit thereof,’*** those who use their mouth wisely, they’ll enjoy reaping the benefits of that. That’s what those verses seem to put before us. **“Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.” (verse 21)**

‘Whoso Findeth A Wife Findeth Something Good’

“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.” (verse 22) I tell my wife that every day, *‘Honey, you’re a good thing.’* [laughter] Isn’t it funny why it says that **‘Whoso findeth a wife’** it doesn’t say “wives” by the way, Solomon found over 700 of them, but whoso finds one, it’s all in the singular here, ***‘findeth a wife,’*** that’s not like road-kill or something, *‘Where’d you find her? I found her, I turned over a rock down by the stream, she was laying there looking up at me, I’m telling ya, there’s more down there if you need one, you can find one down there, you can get ‘em.’* It says over in **chapter 19, verse 14,** **“House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.”** So it’s not just “finding” you know, *‘the LORD lets you discover her.’* When they do a wedding, you’re with a husband and wife, and people are going to say to you, *‘You’re a lucky guy, you’re a lucky gal,’* just tell them *“Luck*

has nothing to do with it.” It says **‘Whoso finds a wife has found the favour of the LORD.’ ‘A prudent wife is a gift from God.’** So there’s no luck in this, in this relationship there’s no luck. We just tied a knot, a rhinoceros can’t get between you now, for the rest of your life you’re tied together, and that’s because it’s God will, there’s no luck. So here, I like the way he says it, **“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing,”** ‘down there by the stream, under a rock, I think there’s more down there, I think there’s 700 down there so far.’ Literally it says **“Whoso findeth a wife, findeth something good.”** It doesn’t say ‘A good thing, a wife is a good thing to have,’ she’s not a thing, **‘Whoso findeth a wife findeth something good, and obtains favour of the LORD.’** Good thing, it’s a good thing.

*The Poor Are Humble In Approach, The Rich Are Arrogant
& Rough*

“The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.” (verse 23) The poor man, because there’s inequity in our world, he addresses things differently, he’s humbler usually in his approach, where the rich person, they’re arrogant, answer roughly, sadly, too much of that.

Friends & Friendship

“A man that hath friends [plural] must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” (verse 24) Now this is a very tough verse again. Some say that it’s just saying **‘A man that has friends has to show himself friendly, or you don’t get to keep your friends, that many friends is high-maintenance.’** Some say it’s kind of insinuating that. Some say it’s saying **‘Somebody that has friends is a friendly person,’** somebody comes into the church, *‘I ain’t going back there, I went to that church two weeks, nobody said Hi to me, nobody offered me any food, I ain’t going to that church,’* that guy is going to be lonely his whole life. It says here, you want friends you got to show yourself friendly. So in that context there’s a positive context. And beyond that it’s says, you know, **“there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”** (verse 24b) There are times, you’re down and out, the roughest periods in a lifetime, sometimes then it’s easy to spend the first week or two helping somebody, looking after him, four months later they need a phonecall, or six months later, sometimes in the context of those friends, there’s one, sometimes there’s two, you’re lucky if you

have them, they stick closer than a brother, they're in your life for the long-haul, longterm.

In Closing

So, read ahead, in this Book of Proverbs, there are remarkable things that are coming up, we're coming to chapters on alcohol, if I see you missing on a certain week I'll understand which thing you didn't want to hear about, I notice where you sit, so just read ahead, great stuff in here. Again, just think of the crazy, crazy world we're living in, and sometimes the simplest wisdom just seems like it's coming from another planet these days. If you said the simplest, most honest thing, in a media environment, you would get crucified, it's just crazy. So, wonderful, we work out there all week so we can gather with God's people, to come into a place where everybody kind of believes what we believe, and have that re-affirmed, and realize there are actually people that have a perspective, one what's true about this planet. So, always great to gather, read ahead these chapters down through 19 and 20, we're coming to some remarkable places in the Book of Proverbs. Let us stand, let's pray...[transcript of a connective expository sermon given on Proverbs 17:1-28 and Proverbs 18:1-24 by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

related link:

Take a look at our modern society and realize, we need a revival.
see

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophets/Zephaniah/REVIVAL.html>