

## Proverbs 24:1-34

“Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. 2 For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief. 3 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: 4 and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious riches. 5 A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength. 6 For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors *there is safety*. 7 Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate. 8 He that diviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person. 9 The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men. 10 *If* thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. 11 If thou forbear to deliver *them that are* drawn unto death, and *those that are* ready to be slain; 12 if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider *it?* and he that keepeth thy soul, doth *not* he know *it?* and shall *not* he render to *every* man according to his works? 13 My son, eat thou honey, because *it is good*; and the honeycomb, *which is sweet* to thy taste: 14 so *shall* the knowledge of wisdom *be* unto thy soul: when thou hast found *it*, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off. 15 Lay not wait, O wicked *man*, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place: 16 for a just *man* falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief. 17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: 18 lest the LORD see *it*, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him. 19 Fret not thyself because of evil *men*, neither be thou envious at the wicked; 20 for there shall be no reward to the evil *man*; the candle of the wicked shall be put out. 21 My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: *and* meddle not with them that are given to change: 22 for their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both? 23 These *things* also *belong* to the wise. *It is* not good to have respect of persons in judgment. 24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou *art* righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: 25 but to them that rebuke *him* shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come

upon them. 26 *Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.* 27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house. 28 Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive *not* with thy lips. 29 Say not, I will do so to him [her] as he [she] hath done to me: I will render to the man [or woman] according to his [or her] work. 30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; 31 and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, *and* nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. 32 Then I saw, *and* considered it well: I looked upon *it*, *and* received instruction. 33 *Yet* a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 34 so shall thy poverty come *as* one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.”

*Introduction: Don't Envy The Evil, But Look What Wisdom Will Do For You*

“**Chapter 24**, begins by saying, and we should know this, “**Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.**” (verse 1) don't be envious of evil men, “neither desire to be with them.” I don't know why anybody would desire to be with them [birds of a feather flock together, as another Proverb brings out, the evil flock together, and the good flock together, and neither group mixes well with the other], unless they are envious of their wealth or success, worldly speaking. Ah, just being envious of evil men, who would be envious of Judas or Jezebel, we know what happens in those things. “**For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.**” (verse 2) that's what they meddle with, and their lips constantly talk of mischief. Wonderful contrast in **verses 3 and 4**, where he says this, “**Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.**” Very interesting, through wisdom, and wisdom is seeing things with discernment, wisdom is not just knowing, but it is knowing how to make something applicable, how to apply it. [i.e. wisdom is applying knowledge aright.] Whether to make a left or a right with what you know, wisdom. So, through wisdom, it says, not envying the wicked, not wanting what the

world has, but through wisdom, a house is builded, the idea is, is rebuilt or restored. How many of us, I don't know here this evening, but you imagine how many come to the church, imagine how many in the Church across this country, get saved, they come to Jesus Christ, the ultimate Wisdom, and through that wisdom, their homes, marriages are restored. I've had kids come to me on Sunday morning and say *'Pastor Joe, I'm 14-years-old, when I came here and I got saved first, and since I got saved I talked my parents into coming, my parents have gotten saved, they were talking about divorce, they're not getting divorced anymore, no more heroine in our home, things are changing...'* you hear this all the time. ***'Through wisdom a home is built or rebuilt, restored,'*** it says, ***"and by understanding it is established:"*** (verse 3b) "understanding" is the Hebrew word that means "to react with proper response, insight." ***"Through understanding"*** it says ***"as house is established"*** that means "set upright," the indication is "it wasn't before." ***'It's set upright,'*** ***"and by knowledge" learning by perception,*** "shall the chambers be filled with ***all precious and pleasant riches.***" (verse 4) that's with "imperishables." So look, we look at the world today, I look at young couples, you know, we do a lot of weddings here, I think *'The world they're headed into, how do you afford a home, how do you afford an apartment anymore? How do you pay off college and get into a mortgage? you put yourself into debt for the rest of your life.'* And some of you think *'Well if I have this, then we'll be happy, if I can get into a \$200,000 debt we'll be good, you know, if I can pull this off,'* And here it's saying, ***'No, that's the worldly people, don't envy them, there's a standard, there's a blessing, God doesn't forbid us anything, he daily loads us with benefits,'*** the truth is, it isn't by good luck that a home becomes what it should be, there has to be wisdom, there has to be understanding, there has to be knowledge, there has to be tenderness, there has to be the understanding about what God says the way a husband should treat a wife and a wife should treat a husband. You know, there should be goals, and those goals are not just attainment goals, there should be maintaining goals. Yes, there are things we love to get as we get settled, but Jesus reproves his Church and says ***'You're left your first love.'*** You know, you're building a home, you're starting a new life, you're in love with each other, you get married, you go on a Honeymoon, everything's wonderful, and within ten years half of those marriages end in divorce. Because it becomes attaining, *'If we could only get this, if we can get that,'* and

there's no longer, there's maintenance goals too, let's maintain our first love, let's maintain what drew us together in the first place, let's go back and examine that, we can talk, let's remember. And you know what, we're busy, all of us. Sometimes that's hard, sometimes we don't reach out to do any of that until there's a crisis. A crisis can be ok, you know at the point of crisis you're either going to disintegrate or you're going to get healed, so thank goodness for crisis in our lives sometimes, you know, you learn by humility or humiliation. I tend to end up on the second half of that sometimes. But here it's saying, this is by design, it's by blueprint, it's not by happenstance that these things come, it's through wisdom that a house is built, it's by understanding that these things, that they're set upright and become what they should be. And it's by knowledge that the chambers, the home should be filled with tenderness, great memories, with laughter, those are the things that make a home, when kids come, grandkids come, you have a big feast, there's crumbs and grease everywhere when you're done. It's wonderful. It's as good as it gets in this world. ***'By knowledge the chambers are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.'***

### *A Wise Man, Woman Is Strong, Increasing In Knowledge*

**"A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength." (verse 5)** there's growth, there's change, **"For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety." (verse 6)** Now, it's wonderful to have a multitude of counsellors when you want them. It's not always wonderful to have a multitude of counsellors when you don't want them. Counsel should be something that you go for, not something that gets rammed down your throat. I think we should all have some relationships, because that's healthy for the Body of Christ, that are meaningful enough, that someone can tell us the things that maybe we don't want to hear, that are hard to hear because of our pride. [wives, be gracious to your hubbies on this one] I think it's important to have people that we know that they love us, and what they're saying they would never say to hurt us. Those things are good, but it says a wise man, wise woman, is

strong, increasing in knowledge, growing. Because it's by wise counsel you make war, and we are all in a war, there is an unseen enemy, **"and in multitude of counsellors there is safety."** (verse 6b) On the other side of this...**"Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate."** (verse 7) the gate was the place where the elders of the city came and sat, because they were esteemed, it was usually there were stone arches, it was cool, they sat around the inside of the gate, they determined the civil cases in the city according to the Law of Moses, they planned war and so forth. So, **"Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate."** he may open it everywhere else, but he doesn't open it there.

### *You Get "A Bad Rep" By Doing Evil*

**"He that diviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person."** (verse 8) somebody whose out to do evil, listen, the idea is you get a rep, you get a rep, you're going to get a rep, you don't think so, Balaam, Jezebel, Absalom, Ahab. How many of you kids have named your daughters Jezebel? I haven't dedicated a Jezebel yet. You get a rep, **"He that diviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person."** **"The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men."** (verse 9) the scorner, the person who constantly is critical, you can't escape them, blow the Trumpet Lord.

### *What Is, Who Is Your Strength?*

**"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small."** (verse 10) ok? If thou faint in the day of thy adversity, thy strength is small, it's not saying if you struggle in the day of adversity, it doesn't say if your heart is broken in the day of adversity, the idea is if you faint, you throw in the towel, you give up, your strength is small. So then you ask yourself *'Well what is my strength?'* then, that's failing? You know, the Everlasting God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. What is your strength? Paul said, you know, **'his grace is sufficient, his strength is made perfect in my weakness.'** So, it's a beautiful

exhortation, ***‘if thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small,’*** the idea is, ***‘his strength is not small, it’s to put your trust in the right place.’*** It tells us this in *Psalm 50*, ***“Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and you shall glorify me.”*** So that strength is available to all of us, and it’s not small. It doesn’t say we won’t struggle, it doesn’t say we won’t be tested, it doesn’t say we won’t go through a hard time, but we will not faint.

*If You Can Save Someone You Know Is In Trouble, But  
Don’t...*

***“If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?”*** (verse 11-12) so it says, the idea is in 11 and 12, if thou forbear, if it’s within your power to deliver someone who is at the point of death, or ready to be slain, if somehow that’s within your power, and you don’t do that, and you say *‘Well, I didn’t know it,’* well God knows whether you knew it or not. But we can always say that, *‘I didn’t know,’* ***“If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he render to every man according to his works?”*** He’s the one, we think of Esther and the way she laid down her life and actually put it in jeopardy, and saved the entire nation of Israel [Judah], they were all going to be slaughtered. We think of Reuben, and with his brothers, they wanted to kill Joseph, he came up with a plan to get him out of the pit and sell him to the Midianites, and it changed the course of human history, we’re sitting here tonight. Because of Jonathan, we love him, who by the way was 35 to 40 years older than David, sometimes we forget that, he was a much older man. He had gone into the camp of the Philistines and overcame the garrison at least ten years before David was born, and he was probably at least 20, so he’s at least 30 to 35 years older than David, and yet he stood with David, protected David when his father Saul wanted to kill him, certainly that’s effected the course of human history. Then Jesus put before us of course the Good Samaritan, he saw a man, the religious

person, the Pharisee, the Levite, they all passed by, the Scribe, but the Samaritan, whose hatred, he saw the man, he went over, he bound up his wounds with oil and wine, he took him to the inn, told the innkeeper *'Take care of him till he gets on his feet, whatever,'* he gave him a certain amount of money and said *'Whatever else I owe you I'll pay when I come this way again.'* So, we certainly have those encouragements in the Scripture, to pour out our hearts to those that are broken here, particularly those who are at the point of death, to those that are ready to be slain, if it's within our power to do so.

### *Wisdom Is Sweet Like The Honeycomb*

**“My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.” (verses 13-14)** this was Hagen Das, when you found a beehive, you got honey, that's why in that day you called your wife 'Honey' because she was really special, you can call your wife Hagen Das now if you want to. I love honey, one of my friend's cousin is an entomologist at the University of Virginia, and he found this guy back in the mountains that find these certain thistles, and they move their lives into these thistles, and he sent me this jar of thistle honey, and it was almost as clear as water, and it tasted like butter, it was so sweet, it was amazing. And Robie happened to be back and doing something in church, and I let him taste it, and when my jar ran out, the name was on there, I gave the jar to Robie, I had two jars, I called the guy, he said *'Some Rock Star out in California bought all my honey that I harvested this year,'* Robie bought all the guy's honey, all of it, that was the end of my supply of thistle honey, I could have shot him, but anyhow. **“My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste:”** now here's the point **“so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.” (verses 13-14)** look, this is the way when you learn, discover something new in God's Word, when somebody explains something to you Biblically and it becomes clear, **“so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul:**

**when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.”** it just should be sweet to your inner man, just like honey is to your taste, wonderful picture.

### *God's Advice For The Wicked*

**Verse 15** is advice for the wicked, so if you're not wicked you don't have to listen, I want to hear what the LORD has to say to them though, it's a warning. **“Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place: for a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.”** (verses 15-16) isn't it interesting, that God stoops down to the wicked man, he wants to save them. Saul of Tarsus was slaughtering the Church, God cares enough to try to speak to the wicked, he says **‘Why wilt thou die, turn from thy sin that thou might live,’** he says to the wicked, **‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,’** he says. So, **“Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place: for a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.”** (verses 15-16) I'm glad God says that to him (“spoil not his resting place”) because I don't get a lot of rest, and when I get to sit somewhere quiet for a couple minutes, I really appreciate it, I don't want no wicked guy coming around ruining my resting place [Pastor Joe pastors a mega-church, multiple thousands of members], there's enough things that do that anyway. **“for a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.”** and the idea is, they shall not rise again. Here is says “they will fall into mischief,” the Hebrew says **‘they will fall into disaster.’** The idea is, you know, the righteous man is not a man who lives without problems in this world, and he's not a man that doesn't make mistakes, in the Old Testament the righteous man was not blameless, he was righteous, but it was in the sense he went to the altar and offered sacrifices and understood that the blood of an innocent substitute had to be shed in his place. So it's the righteous man who falls seven times, and he gets back up again. Now look, if that's true in the Old Testament, for everyone in this room, you know, grace gives us no excuse. People say **‘Well grace is such a cheap Gospel,’** it's not a cheap gospel, it's the most demanding Gospel there is,

and by the way it is the only Gospel there is, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of Grace, when you mess up, grace grabs you by your collar, shakes you off, stands you back on your feet, says **'No excuses, let's get going.'** Grace will turn you into a Navy Seal, is your Drill Instructor, Grace is the most gracious gospel there is, because you get picked back up, kicked in the rear end, and put back on the trail again. It's a wonderful thing [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/whatisgrace/whatisgraceintro.htm>]. But he says the wicked are not like that, they're going to fall, the idea is, in contrast, they'll fall, but their fall is into disaster, unlike the righteous who fall and get back up on their feet. Again, and it's not the falling sometimes that's the terrible thing, it's the wallowing in it.

*Here's A Tough One, 'When Your Enemy Falls, Don't Rejoice'*

**"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him."** (verses 17-18) because you can think in your mind *'where he is I've been, before I was saved.'* These are some tough verses, **'Don't rejoice when your enemy falls,'** look, **"let not your heart be glad when he stumbleth:"** I don't know about you, this is hard for me. I have somebody I actually think in terms, this is an enemy, an enemy to me, my family, the church, my kids, they drive me nuts, and I hear they go down, I'm like *'YES!!!'* So it says **'Rejoice not'** look, this is hard, look what it says, **"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not"** this is your responsibility and mine, **"let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him."** "displease him" the Hebrew is **"it's evil to him"** **'and he turn away his wrath from him.'** You think when your enemy falls, *'ok I can't enjoy it, because if I enjoy it, then the LORD's gonna get him off the hook,'* which is the same thing, *'Alright, I'm gonna feel really bad so he can stay in a bad place,'* it's a tough proverb, it's certainly something that deals with our heart more than the person that is failing. **'Rejoice not when your enemy falls, don't let your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest the LORD see it, your rejoicing as an evil thing, and it can be, and he turn**

*away his wrath from him.’* It doesn’t say that there can’t be a settled sense of righteous indignation, *‘LORD, you’re wise, forgive me, I thought about all kinds of things I should not have thought about, I should have left this to you,’* so when that person goes down it’s right to pray *‘LORD, while they’re broken, get to their heart, while they’re broken, get them, be gracious, I will never forgive that person as much as you’ve forgiven me, so LORD, be merciful.’*

### *Don’t Be Envious Of The Evil Or What They Have*

**Verse 19, “Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; for there shall be no reward to the evil man, the candle of the wicked shall be put out.” (verses 19-20)** You have to decide right away, are you in the fret category. There’s a lot of fretters, in the church, in our culture. Some of us excel at fretting, and we want to fret. Some of us enjoy fretting, I don’t, I don’t fret about things that other people fret about. I could go to a university and get a PhD in fretting and not fret as much as some other people fret, even trying to train to fret, I couldn’t. And fretters, worriers, the hard thing on worriers, they wear themselves out, because they have to be in control of everything [they’re *control freaks*], because they worry if they’re not, it’ll never work out right, and God put them in charge of fretting, because there aren’t enough fretters around then, and if they don’t fret, who knows what might happen. But, **“Fret not thyself because of evil men,”** and I wonder if Solomon learned this from his father David, he was pursued for years by Saul, he said he was a partridge upon the mountains. **“Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;”** here’s the reason **“for there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.” (verses 19-20)** “the lamp” there were no candles in those days, **“the lamp of the wicked shall be put out”** that’s not good.

### *Obey God And Civil Government, Avoid Civil Disobedience*

**Verse 21, “My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change: for their**

**calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?” (verses 21-22)** now it’s an interesting challenge, ok. **“My son, fear thou the LORD and the king:”** so it has it in the right order, we’re to fear the LORD, knowing that he sets up civil government, Paul tells us **‘The powers that be are ordained of God.’** Daniel tells us that God raises up one man and puts down another, and sometimes in his wisdom he sets over a nation even the basest of men, because it suits his purposes. Paul told us **‘We should pray for those in authority, for rulers and so forth, people in Washington,’** and he said that when Nero was ruling. So it’s saying something, it says **“fear thou the LORD and the king,”** now the king is subordinate to the LORD, and I think he’s not saying here *‘Obey the king when he’s insubordinate,’* I mean, Paul and Peter, who both told us that we should be subordinate to those who are in civil government, were both put to death for not being subordinate to those in civil government. Because there comes a point where civil government says *‘You can’t read your Bible, you can’t confess Jesus Christ, you can’t believe in morality,’* there comes a point if civil government asks us to deny Jesus Christ, we’re in a very precarious situation. That’s why Sunday night, every Sunday night we should be here praying for our nation, praying for our government. But he says this **“My son, fear thou the LORD and the king:”** know there’s sovereignty involved, **“and meddle not with them that are given to change:” (verse 21b)** that’s rebellion, that is those who would bring about civil disobedience in the sense they’re trying to overthrow government and so forth, because those who do this don’t have any sense that God is sovereign, even in human government. So **“My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with those that are given to change:”** those that are trying to overthrow government. Why? **“for their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?” (verse 22)** who knows what’s going to happen to both of them, first of all the king that they’re not happy with, and the person who tries to overthrow that king, the king and the rebels, who knows what’s going to happen to them both. The idea is, we should have a settled conviction, we should understand God is sovereign, human government, look, Americans are not called to magisterial reform. I think we should be good citizens. I’m thankful for people who are called into government. But we could all go into government, we could all go into all the social causes, we could have them all straightened out, and everybody in America would still go to hell

when they died, and the Church would never have fulfilled their calling. Again, when Paul was in Athens, and it was at least 50 to 100 years after its zenith, probably closer to 100, and when Paul preached the Gospel there Paul was not concerned about restoring Athens to its former glory. [Comment: Paul, if he was concerned about restoring any nation to its former glory, it would have been the Houses of Israel and Judah, but he wasn't, he was totally consumed with preaching the Gospel of Salvation. What is that Gospel, much of which is found in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 15? See <http://www.unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>.] Paul was concerned with saving Athenians. And God has not called us to restore America to her former glory. I would love to see that, I'm a patriot. He's called us to save Americans. And if enough Americans get saved, you may see some of that former glory. But that's what we're called to. So, who knows what's going to happen.

### *There's A Place To Speak Truth*

**“These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.” (verse 23)** oh boy, we see that, don't we, the favour of man over truth. **“He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: but to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.” (verses 24-25)** So, I don't know about you guys, that drives me crazy, telling the wicked that they're righteous, we see too much of that. **“but to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.” (verse 25)** there's a place to speak truth. **Verse 26** kind of wraps this thought up, where it says **“Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.”** I'll explain that. ok? Ah, it says in *Psalm 2, 'kiss the Son while there is time.'* The idea is, is do homage, that's what it's saying here. It says when a political leader rises up that speaks righteously, it says right answers, the idea is, he speaks straightly, what a national treasure it is when someone rises up and the whole country leans back and says *'Wow!, how refreshing to hear somebody with no baloney in their approach,'* it's just wonderful. The idea is, people will hold that person in homage, that man will be a national treasure, rather than someone that's choosing the

respect over people instead of judgment, someone that's calling the wicked righteous. Someone who stands up and tells the truth, and he speaks what's right, he's doing it in the spirit of God, that person gets held as a public treasure, people respect him, they'll kiss him, the idea is they'll acknowledge that.

*'Prepare Your Work Without, In The Field, Then Build Your House, Family'*

**Verse 27, "Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house."** So, this is just good common sense. Are you getting married? Get a job first, then get married. Don't get married and then look at your new bride and say, *'Wow, how are we going to pay the bills? I didn't think of that.'* It says here, **"Prepare thy work without,"** do the foundational things [like getting the proper education for the career, your field of endeavor first], **"and make it fit for thyself in the field;"** that's where the place of labour was, **"and afterwards build thine house."** You know, Jesus says, ***'The wise man, when he builds his house, he digs deep, and he lays his foundation upon the rock, because when the difficulties of life come that house stands.'*** Same idea here. Do what's right, ***'prepare thy work without, make it fit for thyself in the field,'*** you know, a place of labour, taking care of what's important, afterwards build your house. Necessity before leisure, look, and here's the rule, you have to understand, young family, getting started, here's the truth, spiritual life, the pressing things in life are rarely important, and the important things in life are rarely pressing. The pressing things in life are you're getting ready to leave, the cat throws up. You're getting ready to leave, and the roof starts dripping, leaking. Our lives can get filled like The Three Stooges, the light bulbs are filling with water, the pressing things in life are rarely important, the important things are rarely pressing, to do devotions with your kids, to get up in the morning to spend a half hour alone with the Lord [in prayer]. [Comment: I was taught early on in the Worldwide Church of God, through my first pastor, we should strive for an hour of prayer a day, and an hour of Bible study a day, and to try to get this in early, before the issues of our daily existence interrupt and make this impossible. George Mueller, the apostle of faith and miracles in the 1800s lived

by this rule as well. And he had pressing issues all day long, he maintained orphan houses, taking care of better than 2,000 orphans by the end of his career.] That's an important thing...the important things really don't press on us sometimes that way. So he's saying here, **'Look, do what's wise first, lay the foundation, do what's right, he says, and then build.'** Just good sound advice.

### *Don't Be A False Witness*

**"Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips." (verse 28)** It doesn't take a lot of explanation, we shouldn't, who wants to do that, what kind of neighbour are you anyway if you do that?

*'Don't Seek Revenge Against Someone Whose Done You Wrong, God's Better At It'*

**"Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work." (verse 29)** here's what it's saying so you understand it, you know, we have a defender, it says don't witness against your neighbour without a cause, don't deceive with your lips, and say not I'm going to do to him [or her] as he's [or she's] done to me, because in verse 29 the "I" there it should be circled, it's the **LORD** speaking, because he says **"I will render to the man [or woman] according to his [or her] work." 'I can handle the situation.'** You don't have to come up with false accusations, you don't have to respond because you're aggravated, don't sit around saying *'I'm going to do this to him,'* this is what happens, if you rehearse something enough times, times in your mind, and I can do that, because when somebody gets me that mad, I don't rehearse good things in my mind, *'I know what he's going to do, I'm going to step to the left, hit him with a fast jab, and going to drop him on the right,'* and if you rehearse that enough times, in your mind, then when you get in the situation, you don't have to act, you just react, because you rehearsed it, rehearsed it, rehearsed it. And the key for all of us is,

under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is we act, we don't react. And he says here **'Don't do those things, and here's the reason, he says, "I will render to the man [or woman] according to his [or her] works," 'I'll take care of this, either you can defend yourself or you can let me do it. If you let me do it, I'll do a much better job.'** [I'm in this situation right now as I'm typing this, and I found this verse in Proverbs and have been applying it. This is a promise from God to render pure justice, as long as we sit back and don't seek to carry out that justice on our own. We can pray for God to do this, so that by experience, the offending person will see the hand of God, learn and repent, that's ok. But to seek vengeance ourselves, God repeatedly tells us in his Word not to do that. I've seen this work earlier in my Christian life, sometimes years later I'll learn about a person who did me really wrong, and things didn't work out for that person nicely at all. Also the people, unconverted though they be, that helped us along the way, they're blessed somehow in their lives (cf. Genesis 12:1-3; Gal. 3:29). I've seen that too. We're God's kids, he watches over us like the good parent he is.] I remember Chuck Smith [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/history/smith.htm>], people would attack him, and you'd kind of get mad and say '*Chuck, aren't you going to do this, aren't you going to do that?*' and he would say '*Na, you know I learned a long time ago, the Lord told me, 'You want to defend yourself, go on, but if you let me do it I'll do a much better job.'*' And that's what it's saying in the verse there.

### *An Overgrown Field Speaks To Solomon, And To Us*

Solomon, starting in **verse 30**, **"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man."** (verse 30-34) not a lot of sleep, you have the word "little" three times, "travelleth" a robber, and armed man, that's what Solomon says, **'I was going nuts in the palace one day, I**

*was going crazy with my 700 wives, 300 concubines, and 1,000 mother-in-laws, and I had to get out, they're on my brain, and I was walking through the field, and I saw this field, I just kind of looked at it, and it started preaching to me, it started to speak to me, and he said, as I was going by it, out and about this field,'* he understood it was an agricultural revenue, *'but I understood when I looked, it was preaching to me, it was the field of a lazy man, a slothful man,'* and he said, *'the vineyard, the vines there, they were of a man without understanding, and lo, consider this, it was all grown over, with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall,'* Solomon understands someone else had put that in place, *'this lazy man, this person is enjoying a field and a vineyard, maybe left to him by his father, somehow bequeathed to him in a will, you know, somehow he's got into his hands that somebody else had worked hard for at some point, and he's taken that for granted, there's thorns, there's nettles, the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof, was broken down. Then I saw, I considered, it entered into my heart, I looked upon it, I received instruction, it began to speak to me, and it said this, 'Yet a little sleep,'* now what it means is a little more than you should have, it says the Lord gives his beloved sleep, sleep's a good thing, but there's those times when there's a little more sleep than you should have. A little slumber, a little folding of the hands, you have that when you sit back and fold your hands and you wake up five hours later. *'A little folding of the hands to sleep, that's the routine, instead of stewardship over what God's given, your poverty comes as one that travelleth, as an armed bandit, and thy want as an armed man.'* Solomon said this, I realize that in life, whatever we do, we can be neglectful of something that's going to grow. It's going to grow one way or another. You care for the right things in your life, you get up and you read the Word of God, you sow the proper seed, it's going to bring forth 30, 60, 100 fold, it's going to bear something. If you're lazy, don't care about the Lord, you're playing Christianity, you're going to grow something else, thorns, thistles, and something that somebody else worked for and tried to hand you, it's going to end up broken down. All of us have a field, your marriage, your kids, your business, your calling in the Lord, we all have a field, and it preaches. Solomon said *'That field spoke to me, and I realized here's somebody who didn't take seriously, and when he didn't take seriously what*

***should have been planted there, other things grew.*** If we don't take seriously what should be planted in our marriages and our kids, something else will grow. Have you ever noticed that? You know, I haven't had a garden for over some years, I need to do it again, next year, that's my favorite year to do it. [laughter] But I did it when the kids were little, I did it year after year, and I always put in tomatoes, eggplants, cayenne peppers, great bells and I had a pretty nice garden, and I was always pretty enthusiastic in the beginning when I first planted it, and I'd be out there, weeding and weeding, and once the tomatoes and everything got bigger, then you're picking these big hunk of tomatoes and stuff, I wasn't as enthusiastic about getting out there and pulling the weeds all the time. And I'm thinking *'If I didn't plant tomatoes there, they never would have grown, if I had just left it alone, weeds are growing everywhere, it's not fair, I didn't plant any of the weeds.'* I read this article in Agricultural Magazine, it said that in every acre of a farmers field there's a ton and a half of weed seeds. Ya, three thousand pounds per acre of weed seeds, I think that's not fair. And Solomon is saying if you don't plant something, something else will grow. Because in your kids lives these days with mobile devices and pornography and the insanity, there's a ton and a half of weed seeds per acre in their lives, I guarantee you. And if you don't cultivate what's right and plant something else, something else will grow. And the walls that should be in their lives will be broken down. If you don't do that right in your business, same thing will happen. Your calling, what did God call you to do? Don't belittle it, whatever he's put in your hand, do it with all your might, who knows what he might do with that, moving you forward before he comes. But if you don't cultivate, if you don't plant the things, something else will grow there. And Solomon said ***'I stood, and I looked at it,'*** wisest man that ever lived, the Bible tells us, he said ***'That field preached to me,'*** and he was wise enough to listen...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Proverbs 24:1-34, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

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