

Proverbs 14:1-35

“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. 2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but *he that is* perverse in his ways despiseth him. 3 In the mouth of the foolish *is* a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them. 4 Where no oxen *are*, the crib *is* clean: but much increase *is* by the strength of the ox. 5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies. 6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and *findeth it* not: but knowledge *is* easy unto him that understandeth. 7 Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceiveth not *in him* the lips of knowledge. 8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools *is* deceit. 9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous *there is* favour. 10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy. 11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. 12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death. 13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth *is* heaviness. 14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man *shall be satisfied* from himself. 15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent *man* looketh well to his going. 16 A wise *man* feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. 17 *He that is* soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated. 18 The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge. 19 The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. 20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich *hath* many friends. 21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy *is* he. 22 Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth *shall be* to them that devise good. 23 In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips *tendeth* only to penury. 24 The crown of the wise *is* their riches: *but* the foolishness of fools is folly. 25 A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful *witness* speaketh lies. 26 In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. 27 In the multitude of people *is* the king’s honour: but in the want of people *is* the destruction of the prince. 29 *He that is* slow to wrath *is* of great understanding: but *he that is* hasty of spirit exalteth folly. 30 A sound heart *is* the life of the flesh: but envy [jealousy] the rottenness of the bones. 31 The wicked is

driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death. 33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but *that which is* in the midst of fools is made known. 34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. 35 The king's favour *is* toward a wise servant: but his wrath *is against* him that causeth shame."

What Is A Wise Woman As Compared To A Foolish One?

“Chapter 14 says this, **“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.”** (verse 1) now, the Hebrew could be translated **“*the wisest of women*”** it’s the idea, it’s every wise woman, not some wise women do this, or most wise women do this, the idea is **‘*every genuinely wise woman in the context of her family, home, builds her house,*** she’s one who brings to bear those things that are godly [cf. Proverbs 31:10-31]. **“but the foolish”** some of your translations may have that as neither, it’s not famine but neuter, but it may say **‘*through folly,*** the idea is, **‘*it can be torn down with her own hands.*** **‘*But every wise woman builds her house,*** that’s just common sense. Why invest into your own environment the things that are just going to rip things down and drive you crazy?

How Can You Tell Someone Fears the LORD?

“He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.” (verse 2) you’ll see a lot of these are contrastive. The idea is this, do you fear the Lord? You say you have the fear of the Lord in your life? Well it says here the evidence of that, in **verse 2**, is **“he that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD:”** that’s how you can tell who is the person that fears the LORD, the person whose seeking to walk uprightly. **“but he that is perverse in his ways”** he’s sinful, he’s crooked, he has no fear of the LORD, he **“despiseth him.”**

One More Identifying Trait Of The Foolish

“In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.” (verse 3) So, in the mouth of the foolish there is a rod of pride, we’ve all taken a beating from that, haven’t we. We all know somebody, and we listen to them, and think, *‘Oh, can’t they see, my ears are hemorrhidging, I’m ready to fall over and pass out, and all they’re doing is telling me about how great they are.’* Ah, **“In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of**

pride” (verse 3a) and you don’t want to take that beating. “but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.” (verse 3b)

Where No Oxen Are, The Stall Stays Clean

I love the fourth one, **“Where no oxen are, the crib is clean:”** now that’s not like a crib today, a crib today is your really cool apartment or cool Condo or your house is your crib, this is not the same thing. This is a stall in a barn. Ok? **Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.” (verse 4)** You could say it this way, look, **‘kill the ox, the stall will stay clean, but no work will get done.’** And it’s a great proverb, sometimes around here, this place, now I have to come and look at the bulletin to see what’s going on around here. I can’t keep up with it. And sometimes people that serve here regularly, God bless them, I’m thankful for everybody’s involvement, can get territorial, you know, *‘You’re in my area...’* and look I think it’s basic Christian responsibility is after you use something you leave it clean, I understand all that. But the point is, this is a tool, this facility, it’s a means to an end, it’s not an end in itself. It’s a tool. And sometimes classrooms are messed up, hallways are dirty, bathrooms need to get cleaned, there’s no way to avoid that, except this, kill the ox, then the stalls stay clean, but no work will get done. Wherever there’s progress there’s management. If you got a team of oxen that plow the fields, that do the work, you can’t have that without ox food, and ox, you know, everything that oxen do, that means there’s management, there’s cleaning, it’s just the way it is. But I love it, but where no oxen is, the crib is clean. Is that what you want, or do you want things to be accomplished? But look, **“but much increase is by the strength of the ox.” (verse 4b)** it’s how the work gets done. You’re not bugged when you raise kids, you know, we raised four little kids, there wasn’t a day that they made the house cleaner by the end of the day. We weren’t *‘This is our territory you little rascals, you little leaching, get out of here, what do you think you’re doing,’* no, they’re kids, and you love them, and there’s a process of baby gates and things getting smeared on the wall, diaper pails and all of that. Just when I thought we were done with all that we have grandkids, we’ve got diaper pails again, cribs again, we have baby gates again, locks on the doors again, French fries in the refrigerator again, we thought all of that was gone. **‘Kill the ox, the stalls stay clean, no work will get done.’**

When You Encounter A Foolish Person, Exit Stage Right!

“A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.” (verse 5) It’s a proverb. **“A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.” (verse 6)** so, the scorner, the mocker, it says, he seeks wisdom, he doesn’t find it. That’s because he doesn’t look real hard. That’s because he’s got a beam in his own eye that he has to take out before he can see anything, so the scornful person, the mocker, he looks for wisdom, he doesn’t find it, he doesn’t look real hard. But a person whose knowledgeable, he understands, it’s easy. **“Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.” (verse 7)** when you feel like somebody’s just shooting off their mouth, exit stage right. You know the great thing is, when you’re surfing, when you’re watching TV, people’s faces come up on television, and I already know, there’s a way I can tell if I can’t trust what they’re saying, if their lips are moving. So when I see those people I just surf on, because I’d rather listen to Mickey Mouse, I’d rather watch a cartoon than listen to some of the people who are professing to be running things and helping us. So, **“Go from the presence of a foolish man”** or, I have a note here, **‘Surf on’ “when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.” (verse 7)**

A Fool Is Revealed By His Attitude Toward Sin

What The Bible Definition Of A Fool Is

“The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.” (verse 8) **‘to understand the path you’re on in life.’** **“Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.” (verse 9)** So, fools, a fool is revealed, it is saying here, by his attitude towards sin. And in the Scripture is different from somebody you look at today and say *“Fool,”* in the Scripture it says **“A fool says in his heart ‘There is no God.’”** [By the Bible definition then, a fool is an atheist, because he or she says there is no God.] So it’s vastly different. And it says a fool is someone that makes a mock at sin. You see that in the media, look at what’s going on in our culture. Sin will return one day and mock them, you can be guaranteed of that. But how many do we hear, they make a mockery of sin. But it says **“but among the righteous there is favour.” (verse 9b)** the idea is, when you’re with people that are upright, there’s family, there’s favour, you’re with people that matter in your life. So, hey look, fools make a mock at sin, that’s because they don’t have the right to say what sin is. There’s only one God, Sovereign, Creator, Redeemer, he’s the only one that has the right to say what sin is. Nobody else has

the right to measure it or identify it. And we're all guilty of it, we're all infected with it, there isn't anybody in this room that's more righteous than anybody else, there isn't anybody else in this room that has more access to God than anybody else in this room because of their behaviour. We only have access to God because of the blood of Jesus Christ. Without the blood of Christ none of us has access to God. But we live in a culture where you can't say that to somebody, *'Well this is my lifestyle, well this is my lifestyle, this is what I do, and this is what I smoke, and this is what I drink, and this is who I sleep with.'* Well we just say *'There's a God, and he says those things are sin.'* That's important for you to understand, because this [life on earth] is temporary, this life is like a vapour, it's gonna pass away, and this God has handed to us freely a means of salvation. He's handed to us freely a means whereby the sin that you're involved in, that he identifies because he's Holy, can be erased from your record, and never brought up before his throne. And you can stand in there in the very righteousness of his Son. So it's very important that God be the one who identifies what sin is and sin is not, because God is the one that can speak to human hearts about repentance. The Holy Spirit is going to come and convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment to come, and then God can make the pathway through our sinful Resumes' to where they are completely exonerated, we're completely clean, we can stand in his presence with no record of our sin. So it's important for us to understand that he is the one who has the right to say what sin is. ***'But fools, they make a mock of sin. With the righteous there's favour.'***

There Are Things In Life We Bear Alone

"The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." (verse 10) the heart, an interesting thing. **"The heart knows its own bitterness;"** with everybody else, they don't know what goes on inside sometimes. There are things in life, even as God's children that we bear alone, you couldn't describe it to someone else. For God, it becomes a place of sanctified loneliness, he allows certain things to happen to us, and we're locked up to the vertical, because there's no relief on the horizontal. And God can turn that into something worthwhile, it says the heart, not just the mind, there's something deeper within us, that's visceral, that you can't explain with intellect. **"The heart knoweth its own bitterness;"** the other side of that, **"and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy."** Sometimes those days come there's just joy, and nobody can mess with that,

nobody can get to it, God's put it there, he's allowed it to be there, it's untouchable. So, let no one intermeddle with his joy either.

The House Of The Wicked Verses The Tent Of The Upright

“The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.” (verse 11) very interesting, ah, the house of the wicked shall be overthrown, the structure. There is no house that is permanent. But it says **“the tent”** in contrast to the house **“the tent of the upright shall flourish or shall blossom.”** There's a reason why, Abraham in chapter 13 of Genesis, it tells us when he comes back from his backsliding from Egypt, besides Hagar, he brings back flocks and herds and silver and gold, and the Hebrew says **‘he was overloaded with gold and silver.’** I don't know what that's like, I'd like to try that for a week, overloaded with gold and silver, he's saying *‘Throw some of that stuff off, the camels, their knees are buckling,’* overloaded with gold and silver. And yet it says **‘that he traveled in the Land of Promise, looking for a city whose builder and maker was God.’** And Abraham becomes known to all of us as the man of the tent and the altar. And when you watch and you listen to him, the tent described his relationship with this world, and the altar described his relationship with the next world. He knew there was no continuing city here, and he was a pilgrim. This is a guy who could have had a mansion, he was overloaded with gold and silver, but he lived in tents. And wherever he went he pitched his tent and he built an altar. He just knew the shedding of the blood of an innocent substitute defined his relationship with the next world. It says here **“the house of the wicked”** there is no permanent house. You know, they put confidence in those things, **‘the house of the wicked shall be overthrown; but the tent of the pilgrim, of the upright, it's going to flourish.’** There's something about that, it'll blossom.

Every Path We're On Leads Somewhere

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (verse 12) now, over in **chapter 16, verse 25** it says this, **“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”** Same thing, twice. The Bible talks about the witness of two or three witnesses, I think it's important enough for God to say it twice. There is a way, it seemeth right unto a man, **but** the end, and that's always the measuring stick is the end of the journey, but the end thereof are the ways of death. So, there's a way, a

path, I think the Targums translate it “a road,” the idea is “there is a way,” some translations might say “a highway,” the idea is “there’s a pathway.” Where does it lead? It seems right. Where’s it end up? that’s the question. Because there’s a way that seems right unto man. Man’s not the one that ultimately says whether the path is right. Ah, **Psalm 73**, and Asaph said **‘I looked at the prosperity of the wicked, I knew that God was good, I almost stumbled, my feet were standing in a slippery place, I well-nigh slipped, and it ate me up so that I couldn’t even talk about it to God’s children because I didn’t want to stumble them. I said this wasn’t fair, the wicked are prospering, righteous people are suffering. What’s the deal, what’s going on?’** he says, **‘Until I went into the house of the LORD, and I considered their end, I put things back into the light of eternity.’** And he says here, **‘There is a way, there is, that seems right unto man,’** you can go home and turn the news on tonight. *‘Oh, he’s going to heaven because he’s genuine.’* Oh really? Where did you read that? There are people genuinely cutting the heads off of other people in the news. They’re genuine about what they’re doing. There are people doing all kinds of things genuinely, because that way seems right to them. Where does that end? Where does that end up in eternity? There is a way, a path, it leads somewhere. Every path we’re on leads somewhere. It seems right to a man [or woman], but their end thereof are the ways of death. We can be sure of this. Jesus said when Thomas asked him, **‘Lord, we don’t know where you’re going, how can we know the way?’** Jesus said, **‘I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.’** The Greek is beautiful there, it’s all emphatic, he says **“In counter distinction to all others, I am the way, in counter distinction to all others I am the truth, in counter distinction to all others, I am the life.”** And the tenses are **‘No man has ever come, no man is coming, or no man will ever come to the Father but by me.’** So there is a way, and it’s our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. There’s a way that seems right to a man, the end of it is death. But Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, and we have eternal life through him.

Some Can Act Happy, But Are They?

“Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.” (verse 13) So people, *‘How you doing? Oh, ho, ho, I’m doing great!’* and you know inside, they can put it on, can’t they? and the end of that mirth is heaviness, you know there’s people that can act that way.

Where Backsliding Starts

“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.” (verse 14) Notice this, “in heart shall be filled with his own ways,” it’s a great one. The backslider in heart, because that’s where it begins. You see, Christians, and you hear *‘They fell into adultery, they’re all strung out on heroine,’* and you say *‘I don’t understand, they were doing great last week, they were doing great!’* No they weren’t. All sin has a history, nobody’s doing great one day and in adultery the next day. There was something cooking in the heart, it says here, that was finally manifested. That’s why in **chapter 4, verse 3**, it says, **‘Guard your heart, or garrison your heart, a military word, guard your heart with all diligence, because from it flow the issues of life, from desire, not from intellect.’** Here, **‘The backslider in heart, he lets his heart go that way, it’ll make a convert of the mind, shall be filled with his own ways, and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.’** They’re both in the process of sowing and reaping there.

The Prudent Verses The Fool, How To Tell The Difference

“The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.” (verse 15) The simple believeth anything somebody tells him, you can sell them the Brooklyn Bridge. **“A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.” (verse 16)** but the fool, look, he rages and is confident. He’s reckless and hotheaded, your translation might say. You know somebody like that? You know, you just don’t want to start, because they can never control their temper, they end up threatening everybody, they’re reckless, they’re hotheaded. It says **‘a wise man feareth, he departs from evil, just he stays away, but the fool rages and is confident.’** **“He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.” (verse 17)** so, he that is soon angry. Please listen, it doesn’t say he that is angry dealeth foolishly. The Bible doesn’t condemn anger. This is saying **‘he that is soon angry, he flies off the handle.’** Anger is not sin. We’re created in God’s image and likeness, he has anger, you need anger, anger is a necessary part of love. If I see someone raping my granddaughter, again, I can’t stand around and say *‘Oh honey, that’s terrible.’* No, I’d better be angry. When we see injustice and the less fortunate injured through something ruthless, we better have anger. Anger is a necessary part of love. Here’s the problem, we’re sinful, we do

stupid things with it. We punch holes in sheetrock walls, and you gotta get out the spackle and paint, we break chairs and we gotta glue them back together again. We do stupid stuff with our anger. Anger has a purpose. Jesus overturned the tables of the money-changers. It says he was angry on the Sabbath because of the hardness of their hearts, when he wanted to heal the man with the withered hand. Anger's necessary, it is not sinful. It says what's wrong here is somebody whose **soon angry**, they got no tolerance, they fly off the handle. That's not righteous indignation, they deal foolishly. And besides that, **'a man who doesn't fly off the handle, he plans his wickedness slowly, he's going to be hated, he's no better.'** **"The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge."** (verse 18) good counsel. **"The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous."** (verse 19) eventually we will see that, some of you might be thinking *'I wish we could see that today.'* It will come.

'The Rich Have Many Friends, But The Poor Is Hated'

Listen, **"The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends."** (verse 20) it's not saying that's right. It's just saying that's what goes on in the world sometimes. But the rich man, he has plenty of friends. Right? Get a pool, you'll have all kinds of friends. Buy a pickup truck, *'Hey, could I borrow that?'* *'No, you can't borrow it,'* it means you're going to go out and drive it and be moving everybody all the time. The rich man has got plenty of friends. [That's why some rich people dress like ordinary people in worn genes, flannel shirts, T-shirts, worn sneakers, just to keep this list down a bit.] The poor man, he's hated of his neighbours, you can ask the prodigal son, when he left home and he's living with prostitutes and drinking and he was loaded with money, he had all kinds of friends. It says when his money ran out, so did his friends, they ran out at the same time. So, **'the poor is hated of his neighbour, the rich man, he's got plenty of friends.'** But now a correction, **verse 21**, he says, but you know, **"He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he."** Oftentimes if your neighbour is poor, the poor is hated of his neighbour, look at verse 21, and he that despises his neighbour, he's sinning, he's not right. **"but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he."** (verse 21b) instead of hating him, that man is going to be blessed, happy is he. **"Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good."** (verse 22) it's great stuff to read over.

*'Hard Work Pays Off...The Difference Between A True
Witness And A False One'*

“In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth to penury.” (verse 23) hard work pays off. But talk is cheap, you sit around talking all day and don't get anything done. **“The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.” (verse 24)** There's a reward in hard work. I like that, he uses that word to tell us something about fools there [and remember what the Bible defines as fool as, he who says there is no God, i.e. an atheist]. **“A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.” (verse 25)** like that? A deceitful witness speaketh lies, a true witness delivereth souls. We can apply that to evangelism, today. I hear so many things that are preached in churches that are not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, positive attitude, positive affirmation, it might as well be Tony Robins in the pulpit, there's no sin, their's no repentance, there's no Gospel, there's no Jesus, there's no cross, there's no empty tomb [i.e. *liberal Christianity* to the max]. **“A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.” (verse 25)** Look, **“In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.” (verse 26) [cf. Revelation 3:10]** It tells us in Psalm 19 the fear of the LORD is clean. It's not talking about cowardice, that we're supposed to be groveling before the LORD. Look, I had a good father, he loved me, and I feared him. I enjoyed him, I was a little kid. You know, if my mother said *'I'm telling your father when he gets home,'* that was not good. I would rather get whacked by her than whacked by him, and she whacked me all the time and he only whacked me occasionally. I knew he loved me, but I also revered him, he was my dad. And it says here **“The fear of the LORD is strong confidence:”** it's clean, it's good, **“and his children shall have a place of refuge.”** a hiding place. So, ***'the fear of the LORD, that's strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge.'*** You know, parents that reverence God, they demonstrate, they show something, it ends up to be a blessing all the way across the board. [Comment: also the end of this verse has a prophetic meaning too, cross reference this to Revelation 3:10, that says during the Tribulation, World War III, God's children are promised protection, a place of refuge, from the ravages of this warfare. Whether that's a rapture to heaven or to a place of safety somewhere on earth is much debated, but you can always back up to Revelation 3:10 and know that no matter what your beliefs concerning the specifics, the promise for a place of refuge is firm, uncontestable, for as the LORD said in Numbers

23:19, he cannot lie. So, let's do our jobs, get the Gospel out, and trust God to do the rest.] **"The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."** (verse 27) so, the fear of the LORD is not constricting, it's not taking away your freedom, it's life-bubbling up, it's a fountain of life.

A Proverb For The Politicians

"In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince." (verse 28) the king has a huge kingdom, people are rejoicing, he has a lot of subjects. But in the want of people, as the population dies and dwindles to nothing, that's the destruction of the prince, there's something wrong. [Comment: If ever there was one, this is a proverb for politicians, one they all know is true. Pollsters make their living helping politicians calculate how many people they have in *their camp, on their side, who they can count on for votes.*]

Don't Put On The Gloves, Be A Spectator Not A Participant

"He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." (verse 29) verse 17 it said, **"he that is soon angry deals foolishly,"** this one says **"He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly."** In other words, don't put on the gloves, don't get in the ring, be a spectator instead of a participant. Because there's always somebody looking for trouble, there's always something you get hooked into. Be wise, **'he that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, he that is hasty of spirit exalts folly.'**

A Sound Heart Is The Life Of The Flesh, But Jealousy, Watch Out!

It says, **"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy [jealousy] the rottenness of the bones."** (verse 30) now, interesting, that scientists, organic chemists, are telling us today how much stress, aggida, hatred, bitterness, effects your adrenal glands, it effects the acid in your system. They're saying now again they've discovered stress is responsible for arterial sclerosis, causes hardening of the arteries, it produces chemicals we're not supposed to have. So, it says here **"A sound heart is the life of the flesh:"** um, the Hebrew has the idea "a sound" it's healthy in the sense "it's tranquil" or "peaceful," and I'm not saying it's easy. But my goal is to have a tranquil heart. Most days, by the time the

day's over, it ain't tranquil. [Why do you think alcohol is so abused in this world, amongst non-believers, or believers who don't know any better, who then use alcohol as a stress reliever, which leads to alcoholism? Why the drug problems in this world? The number one reason is this world where Satan's influence has run wild is so full of stress that it literally drives people to drink and/or getting drugged up. It's a sad reality that will end when Jesus returns to earth. That's the world's great hope, is for the return of Jesus to the earth, cf. Zechariah 14:1-15.] Sometimes, if I watch a television show, I don't care how the acting is, I don't care about storylines, I want mindless entertainment. I just want to ratchet down. My wife will say *'Are you watching three things?'* I'll say *'Ya, I don't know what any of them are, but I'm flipping around.'* ***'A tranquil heart, a peaceful heart is the life of the flesh: but envy [jealousy], the wrong attitudes, churning inside, is rottenness to the bones.'*** Science is bearing these things out.

How Are You Doing With Widows And Orphans?

"He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor." (verse 31) it's really interesting, because everybody who, all the scholars who write on Proverbs need wisdom to figure out what this verse is saying. Because it can go this way, ***'He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his, the poor's Maker:'*** Is that what it's saying? Or is it saying ***'He that oppresseth the poor reproaches his own Maker:'*** In other words, there are a lot of good people, I love the Will Smith movie *'Pursuit of Happiness'*...it's a complete success story, because even poor people are image bearers, it's talking about the Creator here. The poorest people we know, the poorest people we see on television, in neighbourhoods around the world where poverty is unimaginable, they're image bearers of Almighty God. And no one has the right at any time anywhere to oppress the poor, when they do they're reproaching their own Maker, they're reproaching the poor's Maker. ***"he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor."*** (verse 31b) should be a capital "H" here, the idea is "their Maker," ***"he that honoureth Him hath mercy on the poor."*** Jesus said, you know, there's going to be that day when those who come to me and he's going to say to them ***'Where were you when I needed you, you weren't there.'*** He's going to say to them, ***'When I was sick you didn't visit me, when I was in prison you didn't come to me, and when I was torn down you weren't there.'*** (read Matthew 25:41-45) James tells us ***'Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is to remember widows and orphans in their***

affliction.' (**James 1:27**) Don't tell me about your religion, don't tell me about all your spiritual stuff, how are you doing with widows and orphans? How are you doing there? So, great challenge for us, **"He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor."** (**verse 31**) I'm sure nobody here does that, oppressing the poor, but it says that person that does this is reproaching his own Maker, or the Maker of the poor, which is the same Maker. **'he that honoureth him, his Maker, that's somebody who has mercy on the poor.'**

The Righteous Have Hope In Their Death

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death." (**verse 32**) Now, the wicked is driven away from what? From eternal life, the wicked is driven away from the presence of God, the wicked is driven away in his own wickedness, **"but the righteous hath hope in his death."** (**verse 32b**) "hath hope" in the Hebrew the idea is **'they are secure in their death.'** I have been enough times in hospice, I have watched enough people take their last breath. And it's wonderful to see someone who has faith in the Lord do that. It says there's a security, they have even hope in their death, because *'Alright Lord, this is where the rubber meets the road, all my life I believed in this, believed in that, but now, Lord, I'm getting ready to take my last breath, all that matters now is that the truth of the cross, your Son, is effective in my life. Because I am a sinner saved by grace, I'm ready to take my last breath, and Lord I'm going to release myself into your presence, not on my own righteousness, not on my own performance, solely in the completed work of your Son on the cross for me. I'm hearing in my ears right now his voice saying "It is finished."* So the righteous, that's by faith, they have hope in their death.

'Righteousness Exalts A Nation, But Sin...'

"Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known." (**verse 33**) The idea is, it's settled there, it's not just causing rest, wisdom itself is able to rest in the heart of the person that hath understanding. **"but that which is in the midst of fools is made known."** (**verse 33b**) [And remember the Bible definition of a fool is one who says there is no God, i.e. a fool in Bible terminology is an atheist.] **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."** (**verse 34**) That should be

written around the Capitol in Washington, it should be written across the front lawn of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, the White House, it should be written on every scratch pad they hand out to Congressmen and Senators and the Supreme Court, and court justices and whatever court of appeals they're in, **"Righteousness exalteth a nation."** 'Oh, that's a cool bumper-sticker for Christians,' no it isn't, it's an historic fact, study the Roman Empire, study Great Britain, study nations around the world, you look at when they peak, you look at what was going on, and then you look at their decline. You look at when they started to open the door to all kinds sinful things and sinful behavior, because man when he's flourishing and when he's wealthy, he lets down his guard over everything, then he's indulgent. So this happens to be truth. [see

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/topical%20studies/America-ModernRomans1.htm> and read through that entire 84-page article. Also order and read L. Fletcher Prouty's **"JFK, The CIA, Vietnam, and the Plot to Assassinate John F. Kennedy"** (it's filled with a ton of facts, but it's entirely accurate). We've got to stop being flag-waving Christians and focus entirely on getting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. What is that Gospel? See

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/misc/WhatIsTheGospel%20.htm>] **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."** it's just truth. **"The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame."** (verse 35)

Proverbs 15:1-33

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. 2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. 3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. 4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. 5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent. 6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble. 7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so. 8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. 9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness. 10 Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall

die. 11 Hell and destruction *are* before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men? 12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise. 13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit *is* broken. 14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness. 15 All the days of the afflicted *are* evil: but he that is of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast [Sid Phillips]. 16 Better *is* little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. 17 Better *is* a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. 18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but *he that is* slow to anger appeaseth strife [cf. verse 1]. 19 The way of the slothful *man is* as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous *is* made plain. 20 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother. 21 Folly *is* joy to *him that is* destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly. 22 Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established. 23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word *spoken* in due season, how good *is it!* 24 The way of life *is* above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. 25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow. 26 The thoughts of the wicked *are* an abomination to the LORD: but *the words* of the pure *are* pleasant words. 27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live. 28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things. 29 The LORD *is* far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. 30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: *and* a good report maketh the bones fat. 31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. 32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. 33 The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom; and before honour *is* humility.”

The Tongue, Right & Wrong Use

“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.” (verse 1) Listen to that, “a soft answer turneth away wrath.” Is that easy? No. Is it true? If you don’t believe me, try it. I’m sure in the next two days you’ll have a chance. If you’re living on earth with all these other human beings, you’ll get a chance to try this in the next few days. [Strangely, with a few people in my life, my soft words don’t seem to turn away their

wrath, they just seem to get wrathful toward me regardless. Goes to show, you just can't make all the people happy all of the time.] A soft answer, a soft response turneth away wrath. Grievous words, when you get into the ring, you get in there and you're grappling, it causes all kinds of problems. Look, *'I can't do it, you don't know how hard it is.'* You can do it. I know from experience. Get me in the middle of an argument with my wife, and the phone rings, you pick up the phone, *'Hello.'* You know, you fight with your wife on the way to church, you're ready to throw the kids out the window, and you get here and you walk in the front door and somebody says *'Hey, how you doing?'* and you say *'Oh praise the Lord. How are you?'* Right? Police officer pulls you over, walks up to your window, you don't roll down the window and say *'You flat-foot, I can't believe you pulled me over, you make me sick.'* You don't do that. Right? because you have a certain level of respect. Well the Creator says to us that we should have a certain level of respect for him. **'A soft answer turns away wrath.'** It doesn't say *an easy answer*, it doesn't say *No sweat*, God just says **'Do this.'** I think it's great counsel, and it works wonderfully. It's action verses reaction. Because, when my wife, and we've had arguments several times, we've been married 37 years, if she gets aggravated with me, and she only does that if I give her a reason, and then she yells at me and goes *'Yen, ya, ya, yaaa!'* then I want to go *'Yen, ya, ya, yaaa!'* back to her. That's reaction. There's no thought in that at all. Action is thoughtful, reaction is not. If I can say *'I'm sorry, you're right.'* soft answer. A soft answer, turns away wrath, grievous words stirs up more trouble. And it's going to talk to us several times about the tongue here, ok.

God Sees It All

"The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness." (verse 2) uses knowledge the right way, aright, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness, it's like a flood, it's like you know, you can't stop it, it just comes. Every translation you look at in the original language, it says these words, "poureth out foolishness," it's like a torrent. **"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (verse 3)** "are in every place" even the place where you're trying to give a soft answer. "beholding" literally **'keeping watch of the evil and of the good.'** The eyes of the LORD are everywhere. The writer to the Hebrews tells us **'All things are open and naked before the Lord.'** David when he was in adultery said **'Before thee,'** when he finally confessed it, **'Before thee, and thee only have I sinned and done this great**

evil in thy sight.’ The idea here, if we were cognizant of the fact that everywhere we are, it says, the eyes of the LORD are in every place. When you think you’re alone, you know, putting on pornography, nobody’s there, he’s just as conscious watching you over there as he is when you’re sitting in church. [Comment: God is tapped into the mind, brain, of every single human being alive, via “the human spirit” he places within each of our brains, to give us human intelligence and intellect on a physical level, not spiritual level (cf. 1st Corinthians 2:9-13). Through this human “spirit of man” God can read the thoughts of everyone alive. Want to see a Scripture that says just that much? **Proverbs 20:27, “the spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.”**] Somebody offends you in traffic and you give them an obscene gesture, three of you left, I know who you are, I’m going to be watching for you in traffic. I’ll won’t use any names, but one of the gals in our church years ago, and she was pulling in the parking lot, with eight or nine teenagers, kids in the back, and I kind of pull in right behind her, I saw who it was, so I started giving her a hard time, I was leaning on the horn, and she rolled down the window and gave it to me, and the kids all screamed *‘that’s pastor Joe!’* It’s great, I love this story, I’m protecting the names of the non-innocent. **“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”** If you don’t believe that, ask Jonah when you meet him. **“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” (verse 3)** David says *‘When I go up to heaven, thou art there, when I go down to the depths of hell you’re there. If I take the wings of the morning, behold thou art there,’* in **Psalm 139** he describes it.

*More About The Tongue
and
Hearing, Listening*

“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.” (verse 4) A wholesome tongue, healthy, is a tree of life, but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. Look, again, parents, grandparents, you can hurt your kids and your grandchildren way more deeply by something you say than by spanking them. You can be way more destructive with your mouth, tearing them down. It says a wholesome tongue, a healthy tongue, it’s a tree of life, it gives life, it produces. But perverseness therein in the tongue, it’s a breach of the spirit, it’s a breaking through the wall of the spirit, it’s hateful and hurtful, produces nothing. **“A fool despiseth his father’s instruction:”**

throughout the Book of Proverbs, **“but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.” (verse 5)** If somebody who can listen to correction and understand this is right, that person is wise, they’re prudent. **“In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.” (verse 6)** “is much treasure” literally **“there’s storage in abundance”** the Hebrew says. So **“In the house of the righteous, there’s storage in abundance.”** No doubt, it’s not just pointing us to the physical, but that’s material and spiritual, in the house of the wise, there are things stored there in abundance. That should be their example, the way they minister to their children and their grandchildren, and how they reach out to their neighbour, in the house of the wise there is storage in abundance, not just physical but spiritual too, but in the revenues of the wicked there is trouble. **“The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so.” (verse 7)**

Why Would The Sacrifice Of The Wicked Be Abominable To God?

Verse 8 is interesting, look, **“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.”** Look down in verse 9, here in verse 8 you have “the sacrifice of the wicked,” down in verse 9 we’re going to have “the way of the wicked,” over in verse 26 we’re going to have “the thoughts of the wicked.” So we’ll take note of this. **“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.” (verse 8)** why would the sacrifice of the wicked be an abomination to the LORD? because it sets up a religious pretense that someone can live sinfully, not repent, and think they can pay God off with blood [in that ancient sacrificial system, much worse for someone to think they can pay God off with the blood of his Son, whilst not repenting]. I can make God happy by killing an animal. He says in Isaiah, **‘Your feasts and your sacrifices, I can’t stand them.’** He says, **‘Come let us reason, though your sins are as scarlet, they will be white as wool.’** There’s a way for that to happen, but it isn’t through your religious practice. [And many make a big deal of their religious practice, without spiritual change, both Jewish and Gentile worshippers alike, all an outward show, which Jesus during his physical lifetime on earth condemned roundly, especially amongst the Jews.] For anyone to think that falling to a statue on their knees or doing penance, or burning incense, or any of this stuff, you know as Martin Luther, crawling on his knees up the steps, supposedly doing penance, he used to fast and whip himself and

roll around in thorns, and things of a monk, and all of a sudden the verse that we have in the Scripture comes into his mind **“The just shall be live faith,”** overwhelmed him, and he got up, and he was born anew, and he worked and he wrote the 99 Thesis and put it on the door of Württemberg Castle, because he had been doing this all along, the sacrifice of the wicked. Religiosity is going to please a Holy God? People who go to church on Sunday [or Saturday] and don’t know why they’re there, don’t know what they’re doing, throw some money in the bucket and leave, and they think they can do that on Sunday and live however they want to live all week long, live in sin, do whatever they want, then come back to the confessional next week and do a religious thing, God says that’s an abomination, that’s ridiculous, **‘I’m going to be happy with that, you’re going to kill an animal, you’re going to sprinkle blood around, I’m ok with that?’** **“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.” (verse 8)** That should be every day of our lives when we’re alone with him, we should say *‘Lord, Father, make this real, Abba, as I’m sitting with you, remind me, because I don’t want to believe this Lord, nobody’s ever loved me this way. I’m sitting here alone with you right now, I’m lifting up my voice, and your Word tells me you’re delighted. Lord help me believe that, help me grow in that grace.’* **“the prayer of the upright is his delight.”** Now here not the sacrifice, but **“The way of the wicked”** the path they choose **“is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.” (verse 9)** Look, again, **“but he”** the LORD **“loveth him that followeth after righteousness.”** That pursues, he loves the one who follows after righteousness. And look, each of us as Christians, as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Saviour, we go through that every day, every season of our lives, our knowledge of the cross, our confidence in the blood of Christ which continually deepens. Paul says **‘I pray that you might comprehend with all the saints what’s the height and the depth and the breadth and the width of God’s love towards you in Christ Jesus.’** He says we should grow in grace in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It says in the ages to come he’s still going to be teaching us these things. So here he says **‘the way of the wicked, their path that they choose, is an abomination to the LORD. But, he loveth him that, the LORD loves the man or the woman that pursues righteousness, that’s what they want.’**

‘He Who Hates Correction, Reproof, Hell Is Waiting’

“Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.” (verse 10) look, hell and destruction, the LORD has the right to say these things, it says, the idea is eternity, **“Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?” (verse 11)** that’s why he says **“correction,” verse 10, “is grievous to him that forsaketh the way.”** He doesn’t want anybody to straighten him [or her] out, he doesn’t want to hear what he’s doing is wrong, **“and he that hates reproof is going to die.” (verse 10b)** the LORD says **“Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?” (verse 11)** **“A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him [or her]: neither will he go unto the wise.” (verse 12)** a smart-aleck, that doesn’t appreciate someone who wants to correct him, **“neither will he go to the wise.”**

Our Countenance, The Look On Our Faces Talks

Verse 13, “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.” So, a merry heart. In other places it says it doeth good like a medicine, here it says it makes a cheerful countenance. You can put on all the makeup you want, you can get all the nips and tucks you want, and you can be a good-looking miserable person. It says **“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance”** you can see it on someone’s face. Listen, I have the privilege of working with some of the guys now for over 30 years, some of them have been on staff 20 years, some of them, I dedicated and they grew up in the church and they’re on staff now. But we look at each other so much, we spend enough time together, if I walk in and somebody says ‘Hey, you ok?’ and I say ‘Ya,’ and they say ‘You lying dog, what’s going on?’ because we know each other’s faces so well. Accountability is there, we talk about accountability is important, but accountability genuinely is borne out of love. And we know each other, we know each other’s marriages and struggles, we know each other’s kids, and the ones that were prodigals, we know each other’s lives, grandkids, we grew up together, we’ve prayed together, we’ve laughed together, we’ve buried people together. And sometimes you can look at somebody and see their countenance is swung up, there’s joy, you can see it in their face, you look at them and you can see. They don’t ever badmouth the Lord or say anything wrong, and you may look, and they’re wrung out. **“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.” (verse 13)**

We're All Still In School

“The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.” (verse 14) So look, the heart of the person that has understanding seeketh, the “eth” on the end tells us that the tenses indicate it’s someone who continually seeks knowledge, ***we are all in school.*** You think you got out of school in 12th grade or whenever you got out, got your G.E.D., or you got out of school with your Degree from the university, we are all in school, **“the heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge”** we’re all growing.

A Merry Heart Can Shield You

“All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.” (verse 15) It is just something for that individual, things are right in their heart. [Comment: There’s more to the second part of this verse than Pastor Joe got into. I’m an extreme history buff, and in my studies about our Marines in the Pacific during WWII, especially that of five Marines, most of whom started out together at Guadal Canal, almost all of them ended up to one degree or another with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, although they didn’t have a name for it back then besides calling it “Shell Shock.” Some of the PTSD manifested itself more seriously as they grew older. But one of these five, Sid Phillips, never ever suffered from any form of PTSD. Why? He always had a totally positive attitude, a merry heart. It appears it psychologically shielded him from all the bad he witnessed on Guadal Canal, and it was bad. Another was actually a believer, Eugene Sledge, but even he suffered from some PTSD. These Proverbs, as part of God’s Word, go deeper than we can imagine sometimes, even medically. Cancer is activated more by stress, doctors will tell you.]

‘Better To Have Vegetables Than Indigestion And Ulcers’

Verses 16 and 17 now, this is the first proverb in the Book of Proverbs, and we’re in chapter 15, where it begins with the word **“better.”** So we’re going to have two “better’s” here. And if you want to know what is better than other things, you can find out for the first time here some of it. It says **“Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.” (verse 16)** Amen. It really matters whether you want to agree with it or not, amen. **“Better is a little with the fear of the LORD”** if you’re not the wealthiest guy in the world, you don’t have

everything you want to have, you don't have a house on the shore and a house in the mountains, and a house in Montana and a house on the West Coast, and a house in Hawaii and in the Caribbean, there's lots of people that have those and they're in Betty Ford Clinic for their alcoholism. **"Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith."** (verse 16) we understand, right? Because this is temporary, this is going by fast. Before we know it, we're going to be standing on the other shore. The second better is this, and I have to amend this one a bit [as I have] **"Better is a dinner of herbs [vegetables] where love is, than a stalled ox [with someone I know] and hatred therewith."** (verse 17) you kind of want to test it, *'Let's just eat and get outa there, they make me miserable, alright honey, let's go home and have Eggplant, roll the TV in, some salad.'* So we know this is true, **'Better is a dinner of vegetables,'** and I'm a carnivore, it's hard for me to admit that, **'Better is a dinner of vegetables than a fatted ox in an environment where there's hatred.'** But that tells me something else, it says **'Better is a dinner of herbs where there's love than a stalled ox where there's hatred,'** and then what it's really saying is, **'and best of all is a fatted ox in a home where there is love,'** that's the ultimate [Joe Focht interpretation], is what he's trying to tell us. But you'd rather have vegetables than indigestion and ulcers.

'Wrath Stirs Up Strife, Being Slow To Anger Appeases It'

"A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife." (verse 18) [cf. verse 1] [But when you're slow to anger with a wrathful man or woman, strife is still stirred up, so it's better to shut up and run the other way. I've learned this proverb by hard experience.] **'he that is slow to anger calms things down, he appeases strife, he takes a different track.'**

The Way Of The Slothful

"The way of a slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain." (verse 19) "hedge of thorns," you can't get anywhere. The way of a slothful man is like a hedge of thorns, you can never get out, because everywhere there's thorns. **"but the way of the righteous is made plain."** It's like a highway, it's made even.

Having Wise Verses Foolish Children

“A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.” (20) I know that’s true, because I have two of them, **“A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother. Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.” (verses 20-21)** “is destitute of wisdom,” that has zero understanding. **“but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.”** I know that’s true too. Folly is joy to the person who has zero understanding, because before I was saved, we did some of the stupidest things you could imagine to have fun. I mean, it was ridiculous, it was folly, it was joy, it was all we knew, we didn’t know anything else. Ah, Harris is not here, he was part of this. We lived up in the mountains for awhile and a whole bunch of us lived up there, and people in the city would come and visit us all the time, we had a band. And then we’d all get stoned, Don’t you do this, I’m just telling where folly was, and we’d all go out in this cow pasture and we’d all hold hands in a big line, sometimes there was like 20, 25 of us, and a young guy would put his hand on the electric wire, and we’d all be looking going *Oooh, ooh, ooh!* and we’d all be holding hands, because as soon as he touched that, we’d all be stoned, holding hands, and as soon as he went *‘boom!’* it felt like *‘Boom!’* and slammed you in the chest, we were rolling around on the ground laughing, everybody was rolling around. It was folly, somebody could have died, grabbed the wire and had a heart-attack, you know, then we’d have to throw him on the wire again to see if we could resuscitate him, ah, we didn’t have any paddles. I think of some of this stuff we used to do, I remember down on the shore when we were young, it was before we should have been drinking, and I wasn’t saved, this was all BC, and there was this one place down there, they had this bowl of goldfish on the stage, and if you would get up there and eat a live goldfish, everybody in the bar would applaud *‘Yeah!’* and one of our guys got up and he ate like the last nine goldfish, and people went crazy, they were screaming, so he took the whole bowl and drank all the water out of it, it’s a true story. But the important thing is, it’s making us realize that what the Word of God is saying is true, it says **“Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom:”** he has no understanding at all. Look, you ever do this when you were a kid, you’d take something and hold it above your head, and you spin around, and you look up, you spin around and around, and then you have to throw it down and jump over it? It’s one of the funniest things you’ll ever see, don’t try this...he flies backwards, it’s something that fools do, and we loved it, we had joy, folly is joy to him that’s destitute, who doesn’t have any understanding. That’s who we were before we were saved. **“but a man of understanding walks uprightly.” (verse 21b)**

*Seek Wise Counsel, You'll Have Joy By The Answer Of
Your Mouth*

“Without counsel purposes are disappointed:” i.e. nothing works out, **“but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.”** (verse 22) So, get good advice, if you’re making decisions have godly people around you, not just people who say they’re Christians, godly people. **“A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!”** (verse 23) “A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, it’s so important.” You guys know that experience? I had somebody send me a note today, it just said the kind of thing that lifted my heart. And I just said to them, I emailed them back, I said *‘You don’t know how important this is,’* Sometimes it’s just like taking a note and throwing it in a bottle in the ocean, and you’re not sure if it’s going to get to anybody, or anybody’s ever gonna care, and I said *‘Well your note washed up on the East Coast today, and ended up on my desk just when I needed it,’* and I thanked them, you know, just a good word occasionally. You know, just God is so gracious, it comes just on the day that you need it. So, it says **“A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!”** (verse 23)

The Way Of Life Is Upward, Hell Is Beneath

“The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.” (verse 24) I love this, just self-explanatory. Isn’t it? It’s literally **“The way of life is above”** it’s **“upward”** in the Hebrew. **“The way of life is upward to the wise.”** You look what’s going on in the world, you look what’s happening with us, you can be really discouraged. If we keep our eyes on heaven, and you realize we’re just making the journey through here, we’re Pilgrims, this is not home, Jesus didn’t die on the cross to fix everything in this world, he died on the cross to get us out of this world and into glory [and we’ll come back with him in glory to **rule over this world** during the period of the Millennial Kingdom of God right after his 2nd coming.] And it says for the wise person, it says, life is really upward, **“that he may depart from hell beneath.”** (verse 24b) You know, Paul says in **Colossians** **‘Put your affections in things above, not on things of the earth, for Christ is seated at the right hand of God.’** Paul would say **‘I count everything as dung, that I might know him, the power of his resurrection...by any means I might be conformed unto**

his death.’ he says, **‘This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, I press toward the mark of the high calling in Christ,’** he says. So, **‘The way of life, that is above for the wise, those that are wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.’** The idea is there’s things that pull us in the world. The wise man is responding to that upward call. **“The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.” (verse 25)** *‘make is secure,’* he cares for the widow and the orphan. **“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.” (verse 26)** “We have come as far as right around **verse 24 in chapter 15**, where it says that **“The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.”** There’s an upward pull, a downward pull, there’s only two directions, it’s not rocket science, and it doesn’t even seem like a giant measure of wisdom, but it says to the wise, life is upward, literally, that he may depart from hell beneath. The fool goes on and perishes. **“Verse 25 says, “The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.”** the household, it meant more than a building in this culture, you hear of “the house of David” and so forth, **“The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.” (verse 25)** Understand they didn’t have social programs the way we do today. When a woman was left as a widow she often was taken advantage of because there were landmarks that set off the boundaries of her property. That property was passed from generation to generation for the firstborn male in the tribe, and it says here ***‘the LORD will obliterate the house of the arrogant, that household, but he will establish the boundary stones or the landmarks of the widow.’*** The idea is, ***‘He will protect her, he will be her covering,’*** because she’s facing life in that very difficult circumstance in that culture, and it says, as James says to us under the inspiration of the same Spirit, **“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)** to remember orphans and widows, here the LORD’s speaking up.

The Thoughts Of The Wicked, What God Thinks Of Them

Verse 26, notice this, it tells us there, **“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.”** Back in verse 8 it told us **“the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,”** for the wicked to think they can come and play religious games, and that

the blood of an animal is going to make them right before God without repentance, it says **“the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.”** Verse 9 says then, **“The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.”** The religion, the way, and now we have the thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, no doubt because in the heart and mind of the wicked there’s always this moving forward. You and I at least we think things we shouldn’t think, we have thought, *‘Oh, I can believe I think that, I can’t believe I struggle with that, Lord, I don’t want that to be in my mind,’* we at least have that context because of the Holy Spirit, and we’re bringing those things into the captivity to Christ. But the thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, **“but the words of the pure are pleasant words.” (verse 26b)** We listen to our kids at home, the idea is, God’s children, the words of the pure are pleasant words.

Why God Hates Bribery

“He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.” (verse 27) now it uses a specific Hebrew word here which is not the specific word for “bribe,” but it insinuates a bribe, and later in the verse where it says “gifts,” it’s specifically a bribe, so it says here **“He that is greedy”** and you can translate it **“of bribes troubleth his own house; but he that hateth bribes shall live”** that’s an individual that can’t be bought. Now, more specifically, it tells us over in **chapter 17, verse 8, “A bribe”** and we’ll talk about it when we get there, **“as a precious stone, or stone of favour, in the eyes of him that has it”** and Solomon making an observation and not an approval here, **“withersoever it turneth it prospers”** he finds he can use it. But **verse 23 of chapter 17** really puts its finger on the pulse of bribery, and helps us understand from God’s perspective what’s wrong with it, and that is **“A wicked man taketh a bribe out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.”** The error with bribery is, it is always offered to pervert the way of judgment, it is always offered to bend the rules, it’s always offered to do something that would not have been accomplished without bribery. So we hear much about it in the Book of Proverbs, it’s there, **chapter 17, verse 23,** it says *‘it perverts the way of justice or of judgment.’* That’s the problem with it. So, it says here **“He that is greedy of gains”** the idea is *‘of bribes, he troubles his own house, that kind of individual whose willing to be bought and take a payoff, no matter how prosperous he looks to you and I, ultimately it’s trouble in his own life,’* **“but he that hateth gifts, bribes, shall live.”** i.e. he can’t be bought.

'The Righteous, They Meditate On How To Give An Answer'

Verse 28, "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things." So, interesting, not the mind here, it's the heart, even in the Hebrew, it's the heart of the righteous, "studieth" is the wrong word there, the Hebrew word is "meditates" you know, kind of ruminates, **'The heart of the righteous meditates to answer, it's something that turns over and over in his heart, it's an issue that's there, and that issue is in regards to how to answer, not to what to answer, but how to answer.'** The righteous individual in his heart, there's a mediation that goes on, and that is, he understands the things that come out of his mouth effect people's lives. James tells us that the tongue is set on fire of hell, and then the whole surrounding. And again, the tongue promotes bigotry and prejudice and abortion and murder and drugs, it's all promoted through the tongue, it finds its way into our existence through the language, through the tongue. So he says here **'The righteous person, in their heart they kind of ruminate, they meditate, they hold onto this, you know, on how to answer, how to give an answer.'** Because even with my wife, it's not always what to answer, sometimes I know what to answer, but that's not wisdom, it's how to answer, that then all the wisdom is right there, how you do it. Sometimes what you say may be correct, it may be incorrect, that ends up ultimately not to be the issue. When someone, they're feelings are hurt, they want consolation, so it's the righteous person who takes some time to think about how to answer. **"but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things." (verse 28b)** verbal diarrhea, it doesn't stop. We would say **'Put your brain in gear before you put your mouth in motion,'** that's a modern proverb, all of you know that, ah, kind of lends itself to that idea. **"The LORD is far from the wicked:"** no matter what they say, **"but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." (verse 29)** wonderful.

Our Eyes Can Talk Too

Ah, **verse 30, "The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat."** You're thinking *'I really never cared whether my bones are fat or not,'* ah, the NIV gives us the sense of it, **"The light of the eyes, a cheerful look,"** in other words, you can tell by someone's countenance, and my wife does this to me, drives me crazy, *'Well you look like,' 'Stop interpreting*

*my looks, I will tell you in language,’ ‘Well you looked at me like,’ ‘Stop interpreting my looks.’ It says here **‘A cheerful look, they smile with their eyes, it rejoices the heart.’** Again, they’ve discovered that the human eye is not just a receiver, it’s a transmitter. I can be somewhere with Cath and something is driving me crazy and I just go with my eyes, you know, *‘Let’s get outa here.’* You can do that with your eyes, you look at somebody that you’re very familiar with, you can transmit all kinds of messages with your eyes. I remember when my dad took his last breath, that last breath, and those transmitters just went blank, and it was so obvious, that the spirit just moved out. And you realize *‘Wow, so much of life, his sense of humor had always been transmitted by his eyes.’* So, **‘the light of the eyes, a cheerful look, it says, rejoices the heart.’** **“and a good report”** through the mouth **“maketh the bones fat.”** (verse 30b) produces health. So your attitude toward someone, you look at them, the things you say to them, you can crush a kid with a sentence, you can say one thing to a kid, and that kid will have that stuck in his back for the rest of his life. Oh, he’ll go on, he’ll grow, but it will always be there. And the idea of “fat bones” is health, it’s **‘a good report maketh the bones healthy.’***

Hearing Correction Verses Refusing Correction

“The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.” (verse 31) the idea is, the person who is willing to hear, **‘hearing the reproof of life, life-giving correction’** is the idea. **‘Someone whose willing to hear life-giving correction abides among the wise.’** It isn’t easy for us all the time to be corrected, is it. Sometimes the closest people to us, it’s the hardest to receive from, and we know that they know us, and we know they know, they really care about our lives and what we’ve done, and it says **“The ear that heareth the reproof of life”** the idea is **‘life-giving correction, that person “abideth among the wise.”** Jesus would say **‘He that hath an ear, let him hear.’** He would say it as he taught parables, he would say it seven times in the Book of Revelation, that’s what your ear is for, it’s not just to hold up your glasses, but it’s to hear, he that hath an ear let him hear. **“He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.”** (verse 32) contrary to verse 31, despiseth his own soul, his own life, the soul, the internal, the spiritual man, **“he despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.”** (verse 32) **“The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.”** (verse 33) The Hebrew says this, **“The fear**

of the LORD the correction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.” So if someone really fears the LORD, somebody wants to please the LORD, that person will allow wisdom to correct them, they’ll realize ‘*Man, I shouldn’t have done that. Lord, you’re right, I blew it, your Word says...and my attitude was completely wrong, Lord I should have never punched that guy in the nose, it felt so good, it really felt good.*’ It says someone whose willing, **‘the fear of the LORD is receiving the correction of wisdom.’** **“and before honour is humility”** a willingness to be corrected.

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1. **“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”** How, you might ask, has America sinned? See <http://www.unityinchrist.com/topical%20studies/America-ModernRomans1.htm> also order off amazon.com **“JFK, The CIA, Vietnam, and the plot to Assassinate John F. Kennedy”** by L. Fletcher Prouty © 2011, and read William Blum’s “KILLING HOPE” at: http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Blum/KillingHope_page.html

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