

Proverbs - Chapter 13

Rev. Roger Hill
February 2012

[v.1](#) – Part of wisdom is being able to realize when we need instruction and correction – and, more importantly, being willing to listen and adhere to it. Solomon again uses the analogy of a father and son to describe how a son who is wise will listen to the instruction of his father. In contrast, a son who scorns his father's instructions and turns away from them will not begin to listen to any correction when they have done wrong.

It's a contrast between a spirit that is willing to be led and corrected, and one that is not. While we can apply this to our everyday lives with children that we care for, it is more importantly applied to our relationship with our Heavenly Father. If we are wise, we will listen to His instructions (given to us throughout His Word) and be willing to be corrected when we falter and stumble. Through this, we learn from our mistakes and listen to the guidance of One who is wiser than we will ever be.

Let's not fall into the trap of scorning or scoffing at God's instruction to us, or His rebuke of us when we have done wrong. When He corrects us, He is not doing it as a punishment – but rather because He loves us and want us to live clean lives.

[Hebrews 12:6](#) **“For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth...”**
(refines)

[v.2 - v.3](#) – Part of being wise is exercising self-control. We have not mastered self-control until we can control what we say. The adage of “Think before you speak,” has much truth for our Christian living. It only takes one statement spoken out of anger or with malice to destroy a lifetime of good. Things we say can easily cut down and destroy someone else, along with our reputation.

[James 3:5](#) **“...the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things.”**

This verse tells us that our speech, when used correctly, is good and therefore must bring forth good fruit. A good example would be using our speech to share the gospel with someone who is lost.

In contrast, one who opens their mouths to hurt or injure will, in the end, be brought to destruction.

"It has often been remarked that God has given us two eyes that we may see; two ears that we may hear much; but He has given us one tongue, and that fenced in with teeth, to indicate that though we hear and see much, we should speak but little." ~ Unknown

v.4 – As in Chapter 12, Solomon speaks about the wisdom of hard work compared to that of laziness. One who is lazy desires to have good things, but does not do the work necessary to attain them and therefore has nothing. The one who is diligent about their work, however, is many times able to attain what they set their sights upon.

In relation to our lives as Christians, I think most Christians would desire a closer and deeper relationship with our Lord. But the question becomes, are we willing to put the time and effort into that search that is needed to attain that close relationship? Do we spend enough time in prayer? Do we read our Bibles enough? Do we tell others about Christ whenever the opportunity presents itself? Do we faithfully attend church where we can hear the gospel proclaimed and find fellowship with other believers? Do we involve ourselves in the work of the Lord when we have the opportunity?

We need to remember that God wants that closer relationship with us as much as we do. It's available to all of us – but it requires hard and diligent work.

v.5 – Note here in this verse the reference to someone who lies. The scriptures tell us that all liars will have their place in hell. There is a stark contrast between the righteous who hate lying and one who engages in this practice. Lying is something the righteous want no part of – they don't lie to people and they don't want people lying to them. Their world view is that people should always tell the truth.

Contrast this with the wicked person who lies and ultimately brings shame on themselves. The scripture says they are loathsome, which literally means to "stink". They are morally offensive. But we must remember, although God hates the sin, He loves the sinner. Although it may be difficult, we need to share the love of Christ with these people.

v.6 – I have mentioned in sermons that every choice has a resulting consequence. Every good choice gives us other opportunities for

good. Choices we make that are evil follow the same pattern, but in the opposite direction. When we make choices in obedience to the Word of God, we have more order to our lives. When we make choices in disobedience to God's Word, it results in confusion and destruction.

Ex. Saul and the King Agag ("To obey is better than to sacrifice.")

We don't have to give in to sin. In the Old Testament, both Joseph and David were tempted with adultery. Joseph resisted, and even though he faced some difficult times for his choice, God was with him and brought him out of his trial. David, on the other hand, gave in, and it cost him his child. God forgave him, but David had trouble for the rest of his life.

Our choices shape our integrity. We need to ensure that the choices we make are in obedience to the will of God.

[v.7](#) – We all need money to survive. Everything seems to be increasing in cost – gasoline, groceries, etc. We all want money for material things. There is nothing wrong with that in and of itself. However, when our love for money and wealth becomes more important to us than our relationship with Almighty God, something is wrong. Money never brings happiness. There are wealthy people who are spiritually poor because nothing they could ever buy with their wealth can take the place of a personal relationship with Christ.

Moses, for example, was raised in the lap of luxury and had everything he wanted. Yet, when he realized he was a Hebrew and meant to be the deliverer of God's people, he gave it all up. He chose God's people over all of Pharaoh's wealth.

In contrast, there are many people the world would consider poor by financial standards, who are rich in contentment and satisfaction in their Christian walk with Christ.

There was a reason that Jesus said it was easier for a rich man to go through the eye of a needle than to enter into Heaven. He realized that, while wealth brings power, opportunity, and many possessions, it also brings with it a lot of pressures and negative side effects.

It's much better to life full of learning, loving, and serving rather than a life full of money alone.

This verse contrasts two types of riches – worldly riches and heavenly riches. God may bless us to have both, but giving up heavenly riches to obtain worldly riches is never a wise choice.

[v.8](#) – This is really a difficult verse to understand, and many people have different opinions on this. One view is that a rich man can possibly buy his way out of trouble, but the poor avoid most of these dangers by not having anything material that would attract his enemies. The other view is that the wealth of a rich man attracts people who would want to steal his wealth, while the very poverty of the poor offers some type of protection against this.

I think an important word in this verse is “ransom” – a price paid for someone to be released from being held captive. Many people lose their souls because they are so intent on pursuing the almighty dollar that they forget about Christ. Ambition and wealth become the ransom that needs to be paid for the price of their eternal lives. But refusing to give it up, they remain in this sin, and come to the end of their lives where there is nothing but emptiness.

Jesus said that even if we were to gain the whole world, it was not worth losing our souls.

The second part of this verse about the poor is important also. Usually, the poor are portrayed as the “good” against the “evil”. However, in this verse, it is stated that “...**the poor heareth not rebuke.**” It is speaking about how the poor look at the rich with their ambition and pursuit of wealth, and complain because they do not have the same in their lives. They fail to listen to the statement made in Ecclesiastes that riches are vanity.

We all came into this world with nothing, and scripture tells us that we will certainly not carry anything out with us. If you’re blessed to be wealthy, thank and give praise to God for this, be good stewards with what He has entrusted you with, and help others in any way you can. If you’re poor but have God in your heart, be content with your situation knowing that you’re just a pilgrim in this world and there is a mansion awaiting for you one day. Our treasure is laid up in Heaven.

Ref. [1 Timothy 6:6](#); [Hebrews 13:5](#)

[v.9](#) – To understand this verse, we need to understand how the two words “light” and “lamp” are used here.

A man's family is called his light and his lamp.

1 Kings 11:36 – "...and unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem..."

1 Kings 15:4 – "Nevertheless for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem."

This is scripture that reflects that God will bless the families of the righteous, just as He will judge the families of the wicked. We all have a responsibility to lead and influence our descendants in the way of the Lord. Ultimately, it is each person's decision on whether they accept Christ's free gift of salvation or reject it – but we can be the influence that helps them arrive at their decision.

We must remember that this can be a positive or negative influence. The good news is that a righteous man can break the cycle of judgment of wicked parents, just as a wicked man can break the cycle of blessing of Godly parents.

We all want to leave our children an inheritance. What better inheritance to leave them than a strong love for God that is reflected in our lives each day?

v.10 – Pride always seems to result in arguments, disagreements, and even fights. It started from the beginning of time when Satan's pride got the better of him and he was cast out of Heaven. Since that day, he has made it his job to pull every person he can away from God. He knows he's defeated and his end will soon come – but today, he's alive and well, and pride is one of the resources he uses to cause contention among people.

There is no place for contentions and fights among the people of God.

1 Corinthians 11:16 "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."

Pride is not something that comes from God – it comes from the world.

1 John 2:16 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Ref. [Matthew 5:21-26](#)

[v.11](#) – There is a lot of wealth being generated today by people who are vain enough to believe that they're doing nothing wrong. They cheat people, use people, and the money just keeps rolling in. They look at their bottom line and are proud of what they have been able to accomplish.

But we know already from Proverbs that wealth obtained dishonestly is for only a short time. They may have good results today, but those results can be deceiving.

We've even seen it in the past several years. We almost had a complete repeat of the stock market crash that dropped the United States into the Great Depression. Companies such as Enron and others that dishonestly reported profits and drove stock prices up eventually had this catch up with them. Banks, some of those around for over 100 years, folded. The NASDAQ stock index fell about 70% in a couple of months. All the wealth they had made dishonestly was gone in a flash.

This proverb states that those who labor will increase their wealth. Our world today does not want to hear that – everyone wants to get something for nothing – but God's principles do not work that way – and this scripture bears that out.

For those who worked hard to get ahead, those same principles will work today as they did when they started – and progress made typically leads to more progress.

As Christians, we must be careful not to let a love for money and wealth overshadow our love for God. Scripture tells us to "provide things honest in the sight of all men." Being faithful and diligent workers with God in our heart will accomplish this.

[v.12](#) – Hope is expecting something you desperately desire. When we don't receive that which we desire as quickly as we hoped, we become anxious and impatient. But, when the thing we hoped for finally comes around, your soul and heart is so excited, and all of the impatience and anxiousness is gone away.

I can think of no greater pain than one of hopelessness – getting to a point where one just gives up – they let go of that last shred of hope. Getting ourselves to this state is damaging – it destroys our outlook on

life, it destroys our performance at our jobs, as well as our relationships. Hopelessness is so destructive, we must avoid it at all costs.

For those who put their hope in this world and what it can offer, it always ends in hopelessness.

Colossians 3:2 “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

It is wise not to count on too much from this world, but hope for much more as shown to us in the Bible from the world to come. As Christians, our hope may be deferred until our work here is done – but when we experience everything that Heaven will be and our desire is realized, it will be a tree of life to our souls.

v.13 – This verse is pretty straightforward and is pretty clear. If you despise the Word of the Lord, you will be destroyed. If you fear (respect) the Word of the Lord enough to adhere to it and follow it, you will be rewarded.

To get a better understanding of this, we need to start at the beginning. All of us were made by God, the Creator. He expects our total submission and total love for Him. He is a holy God, but He is also a just God, and He will not overlook those who despise or reject His word.

All through scripture there are examples of the consequences paid by people who rejected God’s word.

* A flood destroyed the world and everything in it except for Noah, his family, and the animals aboard the ark because the people had rejected God’s word.

* King Ahab despised the Word of God and he was killed in battle by an arrow that struck him in the only place it could have to cause his death.

* King Uzziah despised the Word of God and he was stricken with leprosy.

We should keep the Word of God hidden in our hearts that we might not sin against Him – not because we are afraid of being destroyed,

but more because it is our duty, and there is a reward associated with keeping His commandments.

v.14 – Truthfully, most of us do not like being told what to do. But usually, when a law is given to us, it is usually for our own good, designed to keep us from trouble. While no one likes to be told what to do, the wise recognize that laws are there for their benefit.

A simplistic example of this is our speed limit laws on highways. We may not like it, and feel that we can drive faster than allowed and not encounter any trouble. However, they are there for our protection. While we may feel that we can drive 60 MPH instead of 45 MPH and still not cause an accident, there may also be a 16 year old driver who feels the same way. Do you really want them driving that fast around you with their lack of experience?

While we feel these rules and laws are sometimes violations of our freedom, they are there for our benefit. Wisdom accepts instruction and correction – only fools resent them.

As you read your Bible and notice the many guidelines and standards for Godly living, be wise and accept them, looking at them as rules and standards to help you live a Godly life (“...depart from the snares of death.”) The Psalmist states that the Word of God is a lamp and a light for our lives, showing us the right direction to take in all circumstances.

v.15 – We can choose to have a good life or a hard life – the choice is ours – and this proverb calls for us to make that choice. A good understanding, or living by the rules of wisdom we have been studying, will bring us blessings. However, if we choose to go our own way with no regard for God’s rules for our lives, we reject wisdom and our lives will be hard. We truly reap what we sow.

The choice is simple – live a wise life by gaining understanding of God’s Word and following it to be blessed, or to reject God’s Word and suffer the consequences.

We’ve learned in earlier chapters that good understanding begins with the fear (respect) of the Lord. We have already been told in these previous chapters that people who are wise and humbly obey these proverbs will find favor in the sight of God and man. But the foolish refuse instruction. They may listen, but they do not obey – they seek to do things their way with no regard for God’s way.

Look at Abraham and Lot. One feared God and had a wise understanding of what he should do (Abraham) and the other did not (Lot). Even after separating from his nephew and getting the poorer side of the land, God blessed Abraham, spiritually and financially. Lot, had the better land, but he settled in a place where he knew he should not (toward Sodom) and ruined his life in so many ways.

Transgressing against God always makes things so much harder than they need to be. One of the secrets of having the “good life” is a personal relationship with God, wisely following his standards.

[v.16](#) – Do you believe everything you hear / read, or do you search out the facts for yourself to make an informed decision? Solomon made the following statement:

[Proverbs 14:15](#) “The simple believeth every word, but the prudent man looketh well to his going.”

The simple or foolish man believes everything that comes along, while the wise or prudent man is a little more cautious or skeptical about things. Prudent men look for facts, not just hearsay. They do not jump to conclusions, listen to rumors, or settle on opinions without all of the facts they can gather.

The foolish, on the other hand, believe most everything, especially if it conforms to their thinking. The very things they say shows their true character.

[Ecclesiastes 10:3](#) “Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.”

Think about the people who were taken in recently when the man forecasted the return of Christ late last year. There were people on the news stating that they knew Christ was returning on that date. Where are they now? What are they saying now? They must have completely disregarded the scripture that states no one, not even the angels in Heaven, know when He’s coming back. We as Christians KNOW that He’s coming back – but as wise Christians, we don’t pretend to know the day or the hour – because that’s what God’s Word says.

Their very speech laid open their folly for the whole world to see – and how much damage was done to the cause of the Gospel because of them?

We need to be wise and prudent with the knowledge we're given – and be concerned whether or not it tracks with what God's Word has already told us.

v.17 – Before the age of email, phones, texting, and even “snail mail”, messages were sent by courier. The people by whom messages were sent were dependable and could be counted on to get the message to the proper person on time without delay.

Someone who was lazy or foolish was not sent because it was known they would get distracted by something and fail to get the message through. Faithful couriers, or ambassadors, could be counted on to make sure the message was conveyed accurately and on time.

Believe it or not, this verse is still relevant today. As Christians, we are ambassadors for Christ, with a message given to us that has to get through to the one who are lost and dying, heading for hell.

2 Corinthians 5:20 “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us....”

An ambassador is a representative. We, as Christians, represent the King of Kings, when we deliver the message to the lost that He has for them. Being faithful to our duty as an ambassador for Christ will be health to them that hear and act upon our message – we will bring them good news that will literally save their eternal life.

This is a great responsibility and a great charge for all Christians.

v.18 – We all want success, riches, and honor. None of us would choose to have failure, poverty, or shame. But this proverb gives us a prerequisite for attaining success, riches, and honor – and it should be noted that all of these things may have a different meaning than what we have in our minds.

We all arrived in this world with nothing. We were corrupted from the beginning by the sin brought into the world by Adam and Eve. They wanted to do thing their way, not the way God had instructed them – and because of their sin, they went from being in a place where everything they wanted was at their disposal, to being exiled from the

Garden of Eden, having to work for everything they got, and having the distinction of being the first two people to rebel against Almighty God – what a shameful legacy.

To have true success in this world, to have riches that are more spiritual than material, and to have honor and not shame in the eyes of God, we must be willing to submit ourselves to the truth and wisdom of God, and His correction. God's Word is full of instruction for us – many of which we are discussing every Sunday evening in this study. Godly ministers and teachers can help keep us on the right track. We must be willing to learn.

But learning also requires change. We must correct errors in our character we thought were right or we must learn new things and new knowledge. We cannot let our pride, rebellion, and stubbornness get in the way.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated that hearing His Word and not doing it was like a man who built his house upon the sand. The storms of life would eventually tear it down. Contrast this with the wise man who built his house (his life) upon the rock (the unchanging Word of God) which stood firm throughout all that life could bring against it.

v.19 – The desire of a righteous man is to increase in righteousness, truth, and wisdom. When these are goals of ones life, they produce enormous pleasure and profit when they are achieved. The pleasure of walking close with God and living a holy life far exceeds any temporary joys of the fool, even when they seem to be living in prosperity for a short time.

The ultimate desire or accomplishment is to be raised from the dead to enjoy all that Heaven has to offer with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Solomon saw that fools hate to leave their sinful ways behind. Perhaps the temporary pleasures they are enjoying is just too much for them to give up – but in the end, it will all come crashing down.

Jesus said that there was a strait gate and a narrow way that leads to life and only a few would find it. We may have some self-sacrifice to do now, but the end result will be worth it all. He went on to say that there was a wide gate and a broad way that leads to destruction, and most people would gladly choose to go that way.

What way are you on today?

[v.20](#) – You are known by the company you keep – we’ve all heard that said. It’s really just a version of Solomon’s proverb. No matter how wise you are, foolish friends will bring trouble. However, no matter how foolish you are, wise friends can teach you wisdom.

This is easier said than done. Our heart will tell us that we’re strong enough to resist the leading of foolish friends. But that’s not what the scripture says – we are told to be aware of who we associate with because it can not only damage our lives but our testimony.

We need to pray for the ungodly and witness to them every chance we get. We need to reach out to them constantly with the love of God. But as Christians, we need to live at a higher octave and not be influenced by them. We need to be the “salt and light”, making them thirsty for the Word of God, and showing them how to live a Godly life.

[v.21](#) – Trouble chases sinners until it catches them. It crushes them and presses them down. Actions have consequences, and sin brings evil, grief, loss, pain and trouble.

[Numbers 32:23](#) “...Be sure your sin will find you out...”

[Proverbs 13:15](#) “...The way of transgressors is hard...”

[Proverbs 22:5](#) “...Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward...”

Any sin brings judgment after us, and it will follow us until it catches and destroys us if we do not repent.

Good actions have good consequences. Obedience brings blessings like joy, peace, and Heaven.

Sinners think they can get away with sin, but there is a holy God who sees all.

Think about Lot, whom we spoke about before. He pitched his tent toward Sodom, but ended up losing his land, his wife, and ended up in a cave with only his two daughters. The consequences of his actions caught up with him.

Evil will pursue sinners, but good will follow those who do God’s will. The psalmist David knew this as he penned the words we know so well.

Psalm 23:6 "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

v.22 – We all want to leave something behind for our children. This can be financial, but the most important thing we can leave for them is a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible promises longevity to the righteous and days that are shortened to the wicked. This verse also alludes to the short-term prosperity that the wicked may gain that will be transferred to the righteous.

There are precursors of this in scripture:

- * Israel was taken into slavery by the pagan country of Egypt, but when they left, they took much of this nation's wealth with them.
- * Saul was jealous of David, and persecuted him. But God gave Saul's throne to David and David's throne continues to this day in the lineage of Jesus Christ.

For our descendents, we may not be able to leave them much financially. But we can leave them with an example of a parent / grandparent that knew God intimately and followed Him wisely. I can think of no better inheritance to leave to them.

v.23 – Tillage referred to here is tilling and cultivating ground for raising crops – farming. Seeds are planted in the ground and dependence is on God for the increase.

For example, one wheat seed planted results in 200 new ones. More importantly, one bushel of wheat planted results in 200 bushels harvested. You can see what the proverb means by "much food is in the tillage of the poor."

The want of judgment is the lack of good sense. It is a lack of discretion and foolish management. It is hasty decisions, poor choices, and lack of foresight.

Poor farmers have much food because they work and labor at a Godly trade day after day. But the others who are destroyed have nothing to show for their work because of poor decision making – they are materially and financially poor.

Spreading the gospel is like the farming this poor farmer does daily. It may seem like boring work, hard at times, but it is fruitful and has proven to be for many years. As we plant one seed of the gospel with a sinner, how much more do we get in return? When we share the gospel as regularly as a farmer plants a seed, there will be an increase brought about by God that we cannot even imagine.

[v.24](#) – Just as God chastens those whom He loves, so to must we discipline our children. “Spare the rod and spoil the child” is true.

We don't discipline our children because we hate them, any more than God disciplines us. God loves us and we love our children. Therefore, we discipline them to keep them in check, bring them in line, and have them learn where the boundaries are and how to avoid making the same mistake again.

We do all of this out of love. This goes back to the wise being able to adhere to instruction and reproof. When we discipline our children, we reprove them because a correction needs to be made. When we are reprovved of God, He does so because a correction needs to be made.

Making mistakes is human – we all make them. However, it is wise to accept the correction and not make the same mistake again.

[v.25](#) – Look at the difference between the righteous and the wicked in this verse.

The righteous eats whatever is in front of him because he has chosen to be content with whatever God provides. He chooses to be content with what he has now, because his real treasure is laid up and awaiting him in Heaven.

The wicked is never satisfied with what he has. Whatever is in front of him, he wishes it was something different. He is greedy about what he can attain, and is jealous when others have what he does not.

Where one is satisfied, the other is as troubled as a stormy sea.

Isn't it fitting that Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus? Lazarus had nothing, but when he died, he was comforted. The rich man, who had everything while he lived, lifted up his eyes in hell and only wanted a drop of water from the tip of Lazarus' finger to cool his tongue. Lazarus, a righteous man, was now satisfied. The wicked rich man was now in want for something as simple as a drop of water.