

Proverbs - Chapter 14 (part 1)

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[v.1](#) – In this verse, the word “house” is a central figure. It refers to more than what you might initially think.

As used throughout scripture, the word “house” can mean several things:

- The individual people living in the building they call their home
- The actual dwelling where they live
- The entire family that lives together
- A family’s ancestors and descendants
- A lineage
- A race of people

The way the word is used here seems to refer to the marriage, family, and estate of a woman. A woman who is wise can benefit her marriage, her family, and their material belongings – even for her descendants. However, a foolish woman can ruin all of these.

In Chapter 12, we learned that a woman can be a crown to her husband or rottenness to his bones ([12:4](#)). As we will see in Proverbs 31, there are traits that a wise or virtuous woman exhibits.

READ [Proverbs 31:10-31](#)

There were women in the Bible who were wise and invested themselves in their families. Women like Hannah (the mother of Samuel), Lois and Eunice (the mother and grandmother of Timothy) all invested their lives in teaching their children and grandchildren the love of the Lord. The contrasts to this were women like Jezebel (the wife of Ahab who promoted worship of Baal and tried to have all prophets of God killed).

A wise woman can usually be identified when you look at her children. Women spend a lot of time with their children and children are definitely influenced by their mothers. You can see this in Biblical characters like Samuel and Timothy. Children must be taught – everything – and wise mothers realize that one of the best teachers is the example that they set before their children.

As this proverb points out, a wise woman builds up her “house” whereas the foolish woman tears it down bit by bit. Everything that a wise woman is, a foolish woman is not. A foolish woman is a shame to her husband, doesn’t

invest herself in her household or her children, and puts an example in front of her children that is not what God would have them to be.

As the church body of Jesus Christ, we are collectively his Bride. We need to be diligent about building up His church by our actions, not tearing it down.

v.2 – “Actions speak louder than words.” This old saying is especially true with respect to our Christianity. When we walk uprightly before the Lord, our actions will reflect this. Conversely, the one who is perverse in his ways (who regularly disobeys the Lord), despises the Lord.

Good trees bear good fruit – and this holds true with each of us. If our hearts are good, our actions will follow suit – and vice versa. There are people who profess to love the Lord, but their actions do not show it. The Bible calls these people hypocrites and the inconsistency of their words when laid alongside their actions show their true colors.

We’ve all seen people pretend to love the Lord to get something in return. They need something, they want friends, they are in a financial need, etc. so they come to the church because they know Christians are open and willing to help. But in the end, this is just an empty show, because as soon as their need is met, you never see them again. This is not only disrespectful against the church, but also toward God.

As we’ve already studied in this course, the fear or respect of the Lord is where all knowledge and wisdom begins. The fear of the Lord is a lifestyle, obeying God and His commandments and hating sin. Walking with the Lord each day is not taking a single step – it is taking many steps throughout our lives.

John 8:31 “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed...”

v.3 – All throughout Proverbs, Solomon warns us often about the consequences of our speech. How we use our tongues, one of the most difficult things to control, will largely determine how we’re treated in this life.

On one extreme, this proverb states that there is a “rod of pride” in the mouths of the foolish. Solomon is saying that the speech of the foolish becomes a weapon to hurt someone and cause pain. The foolish cannot control their proud speech and it causes them pain.

On the other hand, the wise use the same body part to preserve them and bring honor upon themselves. The wise use their speech for the good of

others, and they are loved for it. Their speech is always meant to edify and build up, rather than to tear down – even when they disagree with someone. The scriptures tell us plainly what type of speech we should have:

[Ephesians 4:29](#) “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

Jesus Himself gave us a wonderful example of this when He was on the cross, dying for our sins. He asked His Father to forgive those who had put Him to death.

That’s the kind of love we should have one for another – and if we do, the words we say will reflect that to the world.

[v.4](#) – I came along too late (or at just the right time, depending on how you look at it) to remember plowing with mules in the field. We always did our tilling and plowing with a tractor. But even before mules, many people plowed with oxen.

Oxen were great animals for this purpose, being very large and having a tremendous amount of strength for pulling.

The crib referred to in this verse typically means a storage area where corn and other grains were kept to feed the animals.

So in light of what this verse is saying, if the farmer has no oxen, the crib is clean. There is no need of it being full of corn or grain because he has no need of it. However, since he has no oxen to plow the field, he must do it himself. A man working alone only has the strength to plow a very small section of ground. Working this way, it would be hard for him to make a living and provide for his family. Also, the crib would be empty because everything he was able to produce would be used for food for his family – they would never be able to get ahead.

However, if he can save enough to buy a couple of oxen, he will have invested in a means by which he can produce more. He can plow many more acres each day. The oxen can pull the wagons to the market where he can sell his goods. By saving and investing, he completely turns his situation around.

To summarize, there is savings and investing shown in this proverb. The farmer goes without some short-term blessings to save enough money to buy oxen. These oxen eat food each day and require upkeep. But what he

has invested enables him to produce more than what he could have on his own.

Translating this to our modern church has benefits as well. Where there is a working group of believers, willing to forego short-term benefits for the result of long-range plans, the church will see spiritual growth. As we are blessed by God, we share those blessings with others. And as more people are blessed by our church, they, in turn, can bless others.

[v.5](#) – This proverb really needs no great explanation – Solomon points out the obvious - we are to always be truthful.

The world watches Christians, just looking for an excuse to criticize them. And even the best of Christians fail, because we're all human. But telling the truth or telling a lie is a matter of choice – and this is something we have direct control over.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 “Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

In Chapter 6, we spoke about the 7 things that God hates – and 2 of them involve lying.

In the law given to the Israelites, a false witness was to be punished with the same punishment that was at stake for the accused.

READ Deuteronomy 19:16-21

If we had the same consequences today, I believe we would think a little more before we spoke.

As Christians, honesty and truthfulness is our ONLY policy.

[v.6](#) – We've seen in previous chapters that scorners reject correction and instruction. They resent being told when they are wrong. They never seek out advice or guidance because they think they already have all the answers.

Scripture tells us that the Lord loves those who are humble, those who accept instruction and correction with meekness, and those who seek His guidance and direction. This humbleness shows dependence on God.

James 4:6 “...Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

This proverb states that knowledge is easy to them that understand – which is a reaffirmation of what Solomon has told us all along is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom – fear and respect of the Lord.

[v.7](#) – The “fool” referred to here represents people with no regard for God or the truths of the Bible. They are confident in their own thoughts, and will not listen to anyone but themselves.

This verse says that people like this are to be avoided – and there are several reasons for this. First, if we listen to them, we give credibility to what they are saying and may give them the impression that we agree with what they are saying. Second, if we’re not strong in our own faith, we can be swayed by them. However, we are given instruction on how to respond to them.

[Proverbs 26:5](#) **“Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.”**

As Christians, we walk by faith, not by sight. When we are saved, we are given something we can feel down deep inside, something that cannot be explained by science – but is just as real.

Unfortunately, we live in a world today where there are many “fools” among us, according to this definition. While we are to be a light for Christ in this world, we are not to get caught up in their beliefs and positions on things that do not align with God’s Word.

We need to be wise – having the wisdom that Solomon writes about – to discern right from wrong. We need never pitch our tent toward Sodom (remember Lot).

[v.8](#) - If we are wise, we will spend time in the Bible to learn God’s will for our lives. Each of us has a purpose in God’s kingdom, and God will reveal this to us if we take the time to seek an answer. The wise also search the scriptures to determine if what is being preached to them is correct.

[Acts 17:10–11](#) **“And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea; who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”**

[1 Thessalonians 5:21](#) **“Prove all things...”**

On the other hand, the foolish will not only deceive others, but they will be deceived themselves. They do not want to hear anything that doesn't align with their thinking and position on matters, so they find people that will support their views and positions.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables."

There are "religions" out there today that will tell you that a loving God will never send anyone to hell. However, as wise Christians, we know that a sinner who rejects the saving power of God will deceive themselves and choose hell over Heaven – that is a choice of their own free will, not God's.

There are "religions" out there today that will tell you that there is nothing after this life – this is all there is – once you die, that's it. However, as wise Christians, we know that these people are, sadly, deceived. The Bible tells us that there is a judgment coming after this life – and the reward or sentence we receive is entirely up to us.

As this proverb states, it is prudent for us to study the scriptures to ensure we are walking in the way God intends, but serious consequences await those who are deceived into believing that there is another way to glory other than through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

v.9 – This proverb begs that we ask ourselves a question – how do we feel about sin? Is it something we joke about, blame others for, or make excuses for? Or, is sin something that makes us tremble and makes us want to have no part of it?

The world today scoffs at sin – it's nothing serious, everyone sins, it's no big deal. But as Christians, we realize that sin has no part with a Holy God.

Again showing a fool, Solomon makes a point that the unwise think they can do whatever they want without any repercussions. However, we know that is not the case. God blesses the wise, but, as we learned in Chapter 13, the way of the transgressor against God is hard ([Proverbs 13:15](#)).

Sin is serious and is not something to be scoffed at, joked about, or not taken seriously. All throughout God's Word, there are examples where sin was punished.

Satan and many angels were thrown out of Heaven and condemned to Hell because they rebelled against God.

God sent a flood to destroy everything on the earth except for one family and 1 pair of every animal – because of sin.

When fools mock sin, they are mocking the price that was paid for them to be forgiven if they would only accept it. They are mocking the judgment of the One who will sentence them to eternity in Hell. Contrast this with the righteous who will gain favor of the Lord, and an eternity in Heaven – a perfect place.

To one who is wise, the choice is simple.

v.10 – When Mom and Dad passed away, I had many people telling me, “I know how you feel”. They too had lost their parents to death, and they were being sympathetic. However, I have made it a point to never tell someone in times like this, “I know how you feel”. – because truthfully, I do not.

For someone who has lost their parent, just as I have, there is that common bond. But that was their parent – not mine – I didn't have the same relationship with them as their child, and so the emotions that they were feeling were their own – the loss of their parent.

We are all unique in many ways – even though we have many things in common. No matter how sympathetic we are toward our friends, or how close we are to them, we can never fully grasp the full extent of their grief or even their happiness.

For example, look at Hannah and her husband Eli. Hannah was barren, and was grieved because she didn't have any children. Eli, her husband, loved her deeply, and tried to calm her grief by giving her things, and telling her that she was the one who had his heart and that should be enough.

What about Job's friends who came to comfort him? They didn't do a very good job, because they tried to get Job to open up about the reason God was punishing him.

All of them missed the point. They were sincere in their efforts to try and provide comfort, but they failed to see the real issue – and the more they tried, the worse it became.

Solomon is making a statement about humans being different. Sometimes, we can't fix problems that others have – but we can pray. We may not

know the right thing to say, but we can be there as a Christian friend to do whatever they need at the time.

The one that does know us inside and out is the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows every tear we've cried, and understands fully when we are on top of the mountain, or down in the valley. He's there – and we can always depend on Him. Ultimately, our comfort in times of trouble and our joy in times that are good depends on Him.

[v.11](#) – Sin has ruined many families. Because of sin, spouses are abused, the marriage covenant is violated by adultery, and children are often left feeling unloved and unwanted. The Lord has to be first in every life in the home. (See [Psalm 128](#)).

But the wicked don't think about God at all in regard to their actions – He never enters into their thoughts or their decisions.

[Psalm 10:4](#) “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts.”

In this proverb, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God declares that He will overthrow such people and their household.

This is not without precedent already. Eli was a priest of Israel who judged Israel for 40 years. God had promised him that his house would last forever as His chosen priests – but Eli would not stop his sons from sinning. God sent a message to Eli letting him know what was going to happen; and in one day, his two sons were killed in battle, Eli died when he heard the news, and his daughter-in-law died in childbirth. The Lord overthrew the house of the wicked.

READ [1 Samuel 2:12](#); [2:17](#); [2:27-34](#); [4:10-22](#)

We've just studied about Joseph in Sunday School. Here is man who was sold into slavery by his brothers as a teenager, falsely accused of assaulting his master's wife, and was thrown into prison – but he never turned his back on God. God raised him up out of prison, put him on the throne of Egypt, and used him to save a nation in the middle of a famine. The Lord caused this righteous man to flourish.

[v.12-14](#) – Sometimes, we are our own worst enemies. Many times, we get so caught up in thinking our way is right that we never see the danger to ourselves. We see problems that others have, but when we look in the mirror, we seem to overlook our own shortcomings and problems.

Sometimes, the “way that seemeth right” may offer a lot of choices and few sacrifices. Whenever a choice is almost too easy, that may be a signal for us to take a second look at other options. Do we like the choice because it’s easy, doesn’t require a lot of work, doesn’t require me to change my lifestyle, or has no moral restraints?

We need to remember that making the right choice is often not too easy, and probably will require hard work and self-sacrifice. The wrong choice may be easy, but ends in death.

Being a Christian is a wonderful thing – knowing you have Jesus in your heart, and knowing that He is right there with you through thick and thin. However, living a Christian life requires discipline, work, faith, and devotion. It requires self-sacrifice: daily taking up your cross and following Christ. It requires being mocked, criticized, or laughed at. It requires faith, believing in that which we cannot see but we know is real. It requires wisdom to make good choices. But all of this is worth the effort, because it will end in the eternal joys of Heaven.

In [v. 13](#), it speaks about the laughter and mirth of the wicked ending in sadness. Think about the man who wrote this book, Solomon. He also wrote Ecclesiastes. He summarized the best life had to offer and determined it was simply vanity and vexation of spirit.

Life’s experiences are not always happy ones, and the world tells us to demand happiness, do everything we can to attain it, and make personal satisfaction our main goal. Solomon, writing about his own life, found that his wealth, power, position, wives, and all his accomplishments didn’t make him happy. Seeking after these things is the “way that seemeth right unto man.” However, true and lasting happiness comes from pleasing God.

As a result, happiness cannot be achieved, but it can be received through a personal relationship with Almighty God.

The reason the laughter and happiness of the wicked ends in sadness is because it is all empty without God. If we chase happiness, we’ll never fully attain it. But if we seek after God, He will provide for us endless joy.

In [v. 14](#), the description of the wicked continues and the word “backslider” is used. When I was growing up, I heard this word used many times in sermons – but the older I have gotten, the less and less I have heard it used.

It describes someone who has known the joy of serving the Lord, only to “slide back” into a sinful lifestyle and away from God. On the surface, many would immediately think of someone who has gone back to a life of drug abuse, alcoholism, or some other lifestyle characteristic. However, we need to realize that backsliding can mean so much more.

Our heart is the true source of backsliding. It is our heart that first slips away from the Lord, His Word, and His holiness. When God slips from first place in our lives, everything else loses its meaning. Life seems to be no more than the process of getting through the day so we can do the same thing again tomorrow. Sin takes us away from God from the inside out.

James 1:13-16 “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.”

Back over in Chapter 4, Solomon told his son to “keep his heart”. In other words, watch carefully what we set our hearts upon.

I still recall a Youth Sunday here at Powhatan many years ago when a young man in the pulpit made the statement, “If you ever feel like God is not close to you, ask yourself, “Who moved?”

Let’s be careful not to backslide. Instead, let’s be good people, who live faithfully toward God with a good heart. Obedience to God brings His blessings and builds our faith. God will reward us if we are faithful.

v.15-16 – As a whole, society is gullible. Take for example the late night commercial stating that you can have the body of a Greek god if you’ll just take these 2 little pills twice per day. No exercise or changes in your eating habits are needed – the weight will just fall off and you’ll be ready for summertime in about 90 days.

Does this sound too good to be true – especially when the models they are using look like they didn’t need this breakthrough formula in the first place? Sure it does – and many of us wouldn’t waste our money on such as thing. But obviously, some people do, so you hear these ads again and again.

That’s what Solomon is trying to point out in this proverb. He’s giving us rules for safety and success – and they are fairly plain. Don’t believe everything you hear or read without taking the time to do your proper due

diligence and then you can make an informed decision. It started way back in the Garden of Eden when Satan made eating from the tree God had forbidden them to touch sound so inviting. Eve (and Adam) were both gullible and taken in by Satan – and it cost them dearly.

This is timely since our nation will be going to the polls soon to vote for our elected officials. Many will walk into the polls and vote for whatever candidate strikes their fancy, without knowing where they stand on critical issues. Some will be influenced by the latest sound bite they hear (watch how many last-second ads are on the TV). Solomon rightly tells us to “trust and verify” before making an important decision.

The same holds true for our spiritual life. Many are influenced by the latest “religion” to come along. They are drawn into it as long as it sounds good, excites them, and aligns with their preconceived notions. However, we need to stand firm on God’s Word, and know what it says. We need to study God’s Word to ensure our actions and decisions align with God’s instructions to us.

In the next verse, we see a picture of a wise man who has a fear, or reverence, for God. He knows that this respect of God is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. This wisdom causes him to depart from evil. He knows judgment is coming, so he readily repents when he has sinned. When he hears and sees a warning from God, he listens and obeys.

In contrast, the fool is angry toward God – angry for not being given everything he wants, angry for being told how to live his life, and just angry with the world in general. Take Cain, for example, who became so angry and jealous of his brother that he murdered him. In a rage, he committed this act.

When Nathan confronted David with his sin, David repented. When Jonah confronted Nineveh with their sin, they repented. But when Moses confronted Pharaoh with his sin, he hardened his heart – and Pharaoh and many of his people suffered severe consequences as a result.

Let’s not be gullible about what the world tells us; let’s make sure what we think is right is what God says is right. And above all, let’s make our decisions with a fear and respect of the Lord and never in anger or in a rage.

v.17 – In reading this proverb, there is caution to us about being angry – but we need to remember that anger, in and of itself, is not a sin. God was angry with Moses because he struck the rock to bring forth water and put the attention on himself rather than God. Moses was angry with Israel when

he came down from Mount Sinai and found them worshipping a golden calf. Jesus himself was angry that men had turned the temple into a place that involved everything but what it was intended for – worship.

Some people have quick tempers. They have trouble controlling this emotion, and it comes to the surface quickly. When this happens, they lose control of their thoughts, words, and actions – and many times, the ones around them are hurt. They behave rashly, and most of the time, their anger is unfounded – but the damage has been done – and it causes them shame.

Proverbs 25:8 “Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame.”

The good news is that with God’s help, this type of person can be changed.

But there is still another type of evil associated with anger and this is anger that is so deeply seated that the person plans revenge to get even or hurt the one they feel has offended them.

Moses missed going into the Promised Land because of his rash anger and quick temper with Israel that caused him to put himself above God. However, Haman, who plotted to kill Mordecai, was hung on the very gallows he had prepared for revenge against him.

The rule here is that we need to control our emotions, especially anger. Anger clouds our vision and hardens our hearts. When we feel anger welling up inside us, use the wisdom learned here to call out to God.

v.18 – In this proverb, the lesson is simple. Prudent men are those who are wise, understanding, and discrete. They take advantage of opportunities, but they steer clear of traps that Satan sets for them. In contrast, the simple man, one who refuses to fear God or His Word, relies on his own feelings, opinions, and traditions to guide him.

The prudent man is “crowned with knowledge” by always asking one question in everything he undertakes – Does God approve of it? This one thing keeps him looking to God for answers, guidance, and divine intervention.

Every day, we make choices – and we either base our decisions on our heart and our mind, or on the heart of mind of God revealed to us in His Word. As

a result of our decisions, we'll either inherit folly or be blessed and honored with knowledge. It's our choice, as are the consequences.

[v.19](#) – There is an old saying that “good guys finish last”. However, the Bible proves that is not true. In Revelation, we find that the righteous and good that love God are rewarded, and the evil are punished for eternity. Make no mistake – we will either be rewarded or punished for our deeds. Using the example of the rich man and Lazarus, we find that although the rich man enjoyed pleasures for a season, in the end he was punished. And Lazarus, who suffered greatly in this life, was comforted when he came into the presence of Almighty God. Lazarus, who literally begged for crumbs of bread that fell from the table of the rich man, was now being requested to just dip the tip of his finger in water and cool the burning tongue of the rich man as he felt the fires of hell. The rich man was bowing to the help of this man he had ignored while they were both living.

Ultimately, the scripture states that every knee will bow before Almighty God.

[Philippians 2:9-11](#) “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

[v.20](#) – I wonder how many friends and family members people that win the lottery find that they have? I am sure they hear from friends and family they haven't heard from in years as soon as it is known that they have money.

Solomon was one of the wealthiest men who ever lived, and he makes this statement about human nature that I am sure he saw true in his own life. Even a poor man's neighbors have no use for him because he can't help them, let alone himself. He is of no use to them because there is nothing he can do for them financially. On the other hand, a rich man has more friends and people wanting to be around him than he can count.

I met a business owner several years ago. He owns a well-known chain of burger restaurants. He made the statement that he has remained loyal to the providers of his beef, buns, and supplies that took a chance on him when he started out. He told me that when he was starting his business, no supplier wanted his businesses – he didn't have an established track record, was starting the business on the shoestring budget, and they were afraid they wouldn't get their money for their supplies. Now that he is well

established with money just rolling him, suppliers are beating his door down to get his businesses – but he won't allow them to.

When dealing with the poor and the wealthy in this life, we need to learn a lesson from Jesus. While He came for everyone, much of his time was spent with the ones who were outcasts, the downtrodden, the ones who society didn't care about – and Jesus brought love to them. He went to where they were – He met their needs where they were – and changed their lives.

True friends are not affected by changes in our circumstances. They are friends when we have money in our pockets, and when our pockets are empty. True friends judge one another by their character, not the size of their bank accounts. The poorest person in society may be the richest person on earth if they have an intimate relationship with God.