

Proverbs - Chapter 15

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[v.1–v.2](#) – Have you ever tried to have an argument in a whisper? It's like trying to fight a pillow. That pillow will take blow after blow from you and not fight back. Every punch is absorbed and the pillow is never hurt. You finally get so tired that you give up. That's the way we need to be against others' anger toward us. There can never be a fight when one party just turns the other cheek.

READ [Matthew 5:38-42](#)

This has to be one of the most valuable proverbs that Solomon ever recorded. If we could just remember this rule, we could handle most every confrontation that crops up.

I've told you before that I could not handle my wife's job as a teacher. I am sure that she, as well as most teachers, has had to break up fights on the playground, hearing the same excuse from at least one of the people involved – "Well, they started it!" However, this proverb shows that if the party making that statement had just stopped fighting, it would have ended.

But when words are thrown our way ("fighting words") that provoke us, make us angry, and make us feel like we need to defend our pride, fights escalate and continue. They will get worse and worse and do more damage until someone stops it.

[Proverbs 26:21](#) "As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife."

If someone is angry with us, even if it is our fault, we have a better chance of ending the matter peaceably by responding gently and kindly instead of with anger – which is like pouring more gasoline on the fire.

That is Godly peacemaking. Jesus promised blessings on the peacemakers in [Matthew 5:9](#), and He also taught that if we have offended someone to go to that person and make it right ([Matthew 5:23-26](#)).

In the second verse, Solomon alludes to the fact that the wise use knowledge like this in the right way – whereas the foolish man

continually pours out foolishness that continues to fan the flames of an argument or disagreement. It is all about speaking the right thing at the right time to the right person.

We need to ask the Lord to give us that meek and gentle spirit of Christ.

[v.3](#) – One of the most beautiful passages of scripture is [Psalm 139:7-12](#):

READ [Psalm 139:7-12](#)

Where can we hide from the Lord? David could not hide in heaven, hell, the farthest parts of the sea, or in darkness. David could not hide his thoughts, dreams, or intentions from Almighty God. God is everywhere to see everything – and even the intents of our hearts are known to Him.

No matter where we go or what we try to do, the Lord sees and knows it all.

In the book of Joshua, Achan buried stolen stuff in his tent. He thought that no one knew but him – but God saw him do it and showed this to Joshua. His family was stoned and burned for his theft, lying, and disobedience. The Lord will punish us as well unless we repent.

In [Numbers 32:23](#), the Lord told Moses, “...**be sure your sin will find you out...**”. Be sure that He still sees and knows today, and that one day every secret sin will be revealed.

But the Lord does not only see evil things that we do – He also sees the good that we do. He has never missed catching a single prayer we’ve made in secret, every good deed that we’ve done, every time we’ve helped someone in need. When scripture tells us that not even a sparrow falls without Him knowing it, and that we are so much more precious to him than sparrows, we can trust Him to know our good thoughts and intents just as well as the bad.

[v.4](#) – This is a fairly simple and straightforward proverb to understand – but much more difficult to put into practice in everyday life. The question we have to ask ourselves is “Do my words build up or tear down?”

We are either a tree of life to others or a breach in their spirit. We either provide kind, healing words or words that injure and hurt.

The wise use their words of encouragement, counsel, instruction reproof, and warnings to others to make them better. The perverse tongue speaks things that obnoxious, criticizing, filthy, or foolish which hurt others (either intentionally or unintentionally).

The phrase "a breach in the spirit" means that the consequences of a perverse tongue are hearts that are broken, corrupted, damaged, or injured.

God gave us our tongue to glorify Him and to edify others – not to curse Him or tear others down.

[v.5](#) – When we first read this Proverb, we think of a father speaking to a son – and that is very possibly what was occurring here, as Solomon was attempting to pass along his God-given wisdom to his son. However, when we read that as God (our father) talking to us, it takes on much more importance.

As adults, God has given us several advantages to help our younger ones stay on the right path. And even though they may stray from time to time, that does not relieve us of our responsibility to try and lead them in the right way.

This proverb states that it is a fool who despises the instruction of the father, but it is a wise person that accepts reproof and correction as it is needed. The one who is wise does not get angry at correction, argue, or become bitter. They will seek counsel and listen to instruction, corrections, and warnings.

There are reasons we as adults can help those younger than us, as well as reason why God should be our compass in this life.

1. Age – We as adults have already been where the younger ones are. We have made mistakes and hopefully learned from them. We can pass that wisdom onto the next generation. With regard to God, He was before anything else. He sees and knows our past and our future – and He seeks to instruct us in ways that will keep us from making the same mistakes in the future as we have in the past. He always wants us to do better going forward.

2. Perspective – Most young people live for the moment, while we as adults attempt to plan for the uncertainty of tomorrow. We can attempt to help our younger ones see that there is much more to life than today. With regard to God, He seeks for us to realize that this life is just something we're passing through. One day, it will end for all of us and then eternity awaits. Where we spend eternity is much more important than what we have going on in our lives today, at this very moment.

3. Affection – The scripture tells us to set our affections on things above, not on things here on this earth. However, many people love the material things of this world, while we as Christians realize that gaining the whole world and losing our soul accomplishes nothing. Just as we fell in love with our children the first time we laid eyes on them, we need to remember that we are God's creation – and He loves us – even when we sin. He loves us so much that He sent Jesus to die in our place that we could be reconciled to Him. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for His friends."

4. Experiences – We have all encountered pain, suffering, and hardships in this life. None of us want our children to have to face some of the things we've had to face – but chances are they will. What we can teach them is how we were able to survive these times with God in our lives. God knows about all of our pain, sufferings, and hardships. Though His Son, Jesus Christ, He faced it all. There is nothing we can ever face that He hasn't faced Himself, and there is nothing we can ever face that He can't bring us through – if we trust Him to do so.

5. Knowledge – I feel that many of our younger ones and our children don't think we as adults are too smart. However, if they are like me, the older they get, the smarter their parents turn out to be. We need to pass along our knowledge of life to our children to help them along the way. God was the start of everything and will be the end of everything – as well as everything in between. He knows us better than we know ourselves. The Bible tells us that even when we were still in the womb, He knew us. Why not depend on the wisdom and knowledge that He can grant to us? And remember – the beginning of all wisdom is the fear, or respect, of the Lord.

v.6 – This verse references two different words: treasure and revenues. Treasure is something that is valuable, is usually hidden and had to be searched for, and is something that is owned by the

ones who find it. Revenues are something that is earned from an action.

Looking at this verse in that way, the righteous have much treasure in their house because it is valuable, it had to be searched for, and it is possessed by the one who find it. Treasure like wisdom and a personal relationship with God are not things that we could ever earn. They are there for the taking if we will only seek to find them.

Conversely, the verse states that what the wicked earn though their actions is trouble. They earn this because they deserve trouble as a result of their actions.

[v.7](#) – This verse mentions the lips and the heart. Neither of these alone can disperse knowledge. However, knowledge and wisdom comes from the heart and is spoken by the lips. The wise use their speech to help others, while the foolish do not. Think about the words of our Lord recorded in red throughout scripture. He always used words that showed wisdom, even when He rebuked His disciples and leaders of that day. Even when the Pharisees tried to trap Him into saying something that could be held against Him, with His wise words He literally left them speechless.

Consider the woman brought to Jesus in adultery. They were trying to trap Jesus. But rather than get into an argument with these men, Jesus knelt down and began writing on the ground. No one is sure what He wrote, but when He finally spoke, He told them to let the one who was sinless among them throw the first stone at this woman. They could not respond to that, dropped their stones and left. This allowed Jesus to offer words of wisdom to this woman, who had just escaped being stoned to death, not by excusing her actions, but reminding her that mercy had just been shown to her, and to go and sin no more.

Jesus used His words and speech to comfort, warn, edify, and rebuke – but all in kindness and love. That should be our model for everyday conversations.

[v.8–v.9](#) – We've spoken before in our study about the gravity of the word abomination. It means something that is detestable, that is despised, and that is even hated.

In these two verses, the scripture states that the sacrifice and the way of the wicked are abominations to the Lord. The sacrifice refers to

worship. Recall in the Old Testament where the Lord accepted Abel's offering but denied Cain's. The scripture doesn't say why the Lord rejected Cain's offering. Maybe it was because his heart wasn't in the right place or his offering did not meet the standard set forth by God. This upset Cain, but look at what God told him.

Genesis 4:6-7 "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is that countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door...."

Also, recall Saul bringing back the cattle and King Agag when he had been told by God to utterly destroy everything. Remember what Samuel told him after Saul had tried to justify why he had not obeyed the Lord and had brought the cattle back for sacrifices:

1 Samuel 15:22 "...Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice..."

Our worship needs to meet God's standards. It is more than going through the motions. It is lifting up heartfelt praise to a Holy God. It is obedience to what He has instructed us to do, which is what God wants more than anything else – our obedience.

The next item in the verses that is an abomination to the Lord is the way of the wicked. This refers to our lifestyle. In today's world, homosexuality is no longer an abomination to God; it is an alternate lifestyle. Abortion (murder) is no longer an abomination to God; it is a woman's right to choose. Adultery is no longer an abomination to the Lord; it is an affair. The world may rename the sin to tone it down, but God still says it is an abomination to Him.

Both of these items are placed in contrast with the prayer of the upright (Godly worship) and the ones who follow after righteousness (Godly lifestyle). God should be first in our worship, our lives, and in everything we do. Godly worship is a delight to the Lord, and a Godly lifestyle is something He loves.

Our love for God should be reflected in both of these areas of our lives. They are inseparable. We cannot participate in Godly worship and live a life that is an abomination to Him – and vice versa. Once again, this shows us that God wants all of us.

v.10 – None of us, by nature, like to be told that we are wrong. But there are occasions where we should welcome someone who corrects and reprovess us, especially if they do it in a kind way that shows their interest in our lives and love for our souls.

When we were children, we hopefully had parents to try and keep us on the right track – and when we disobeyed or got off track, we were corrected and sometimes even punished. We may not have like it then, but if it kept us from making the same mistake again, it was worth it.

As we got older and gave our hearts to God, the correction and reproof did not stop. We're human, and we make mistakes – and our Heavenly Father corrects and reprovess us when we make these mistakes to show us the error of our ways and hopefully make an impression on our lives so that we won't make the same mistake again.

We should take this as an act of love, and not take offense to this. Think about it – the God of the universe loves us so much that He is willing to take the time to correct us of our mistakes in hopes that it will make us better people going forward. If He hated us, He wouldn't care as much.

This proverb clearly states that if we hate the correction and reproof of the Lord, we will die. Maybe not physically, but certainly spiritually as Satan gets a foothold in our lives.

Remember that God corrects those whom He loves.

v.11 – Our all knowing God knows the very smallest details of hell and destruction. However, the intents of our heart are known to Him even more. After all, we are His creation.

After they had sinned, Adam and Eve tried to hide from the Lord, but He found them. Jonah tried to run away from God, but He found Him in the hull of the ship. Cain tried to hide his murder of Abel from God, but God heard Abel's blood crying out for justice from the ground. Christ knew about Judas' betrayal even before it occurred. There is no where we can hide from God.

If we make a mistake and sin, tell it to Jesus – He already knows. But He wants us to come to Him, confess our sins, and ask for forgiveness.

The Bible states that He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But we have to ask.

Don't be afraid to tell God about your shortcomings. He already knows and is just waiting to have that conversation with you. Forgiveness is available if we will just ask.

[v.12](#) – Scorners hate being taught or reproved and they also hate the ones trying to teach or correct them. The Bible states that churches will be full of scorners in the last days. People will get to a point where they do not want to hear the word of God. They will want to hear what makes them feel good. Scripture states that they will get teachers to do this because they have “itching ears”.

Scorners will not seek out wise counsel because they do not want to be told that they are wrong. However, as Christians, we need to be willing to take correction and reproof from fellow Christians that love us, but more importantly, from Almighty God. And we should seek counsel from people wiser than ourselves, and most of all, from the Lord.

[v.13-v.15](#) – These verses speak about the heart. Verse 14 basically states that a merry heart will put a smile on your face. A happy face is the result of a peaceful contented heart.

I've noticed smiles at the end of the day during our recent fundraisers. People had spent all day at the church, working hard, and were now cleaning up. People were tired, but there were smiles on everyone's face. As a Pastor, that shows me that the people had a contented and peaceful heart that even a tired body could not wipe away.

It also states that the heart of one who had understanding will seek knowledge ([v.15](#)). What we feed our minds is just as important as what we feed our bodies. What we feed our mind influences our total health and well being. Thus, a strong desire to discover God's truth is a mark of wisdom.

In contrast, a sorrowful heart will not result in the same outward countenance as a peaceful and contented heart. A heart that is troubled also saps our energy and our spirit.

Certainly we all go through times of trouble, but our hearts can still be peaceful and contented if we have Christ in our lives. Verse 15 says that one who has a merry heart has a feast that will not end.

Our attitudes color our entire personality. We cannot always choose what happens to us, but we can choose our attitude toward each situation. The secret of a happy heart is to fill our minds with thoughts that are true, pure, and lovely – thoughts that dwell on good things ([Philippians 4:8](#)).

Let's not let our circumstances today determine the condition of our hearts.

[v.16-v.17](#) – “Little is much when God is in it.” These two proverbs are similar in that they teach us to be satisfied with the fear (respect) of the Lord and love, rather than material things.

In v.16, we see that all the riches in the world cannot compare with the knowledge of knowing Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of our lives. All the treasures of this world mean nothing if God is not the head of our lives. It's about ensuring that our priorities are right. God comes first. He even told us to seek Him first and then all the other things would be added to us. Nothing compares with Him.

In v.17, we see that having little materially, but having a lot of love is much more important than having these items in reverse. One of Mom's saying to me growing up was, “We may not have much, but we have a lot of love.”

The comparison in this proverb is made to a meal. Remember meals that you've enjoyed with someone you loved that may have not been too fancy, but that were memorable because you enjoyed them with love around the table. Also remember those meals you've had where there is anger, tenseness, among the people around the table. You could have been eating filet mignon, but it was not enjoyable.

Love for each other, and love for God makes all the difference in the world. Jesus even reiterated this when we were told to love our Lord with all of our heart, soul, and mind and to also love our neighbor as ourselves.

[v.18](#) – A wrathful person gets angry quickly. Sometimes, it takes the smallest thing to set them off. Usually, this ends up in an argument or fight that could potentially have been avoided if cooler heads had prevailed.

However, one who is slow to get angry has the ability to calm feelings and end fights before they ever get started. They don't react with

haste or violence, but they listen, speak calmly, and try to defuse the situation.

Jesus taught His follower to turn the other cheek. He taught them to forgive 70 times 7. He taught them that the meek would inherit the earth. He taught that the peacemakers were blessed.

Ultimately, He gave the best example of this when He was being crucified and throughout His trial. If He is to be our example that is the measuring stick that we need to use with regard to our anger. Are we like Jesus or are we more quickly provoked?

v.19 – There are two important similes identified in this proverb. First, a slothful or lazy man's life is like a hedge of thorns – a difficult and painful obstacle to get through. He has a hard time making headway, and dreads the effort. However, the way of a righteous man is like a smooth, plain highway which makes his life comfortable and fast. He finds making his way through life much easier and looks forward to the future.

Working for God is a pleasure, not a problem. We can easily see this in our church. Over the last year, this church has worked. This church has reached out to the community, invited people to church, make contact with people who did not have a church home, helped people, got back to an attitude of prayer on a regular basis, and invested in the work of the Lord. And we can see the results in how our church has been blessed with new people joining, visitors coming in, and our financial situation getting stronger.

But this did not just occur on its own – many people have worked and put time and effort into the Lord's work here at Powhatan – and God had responded by blessing us. It's like we're moving down a paved road, looking forward to what God will do next. We're not dreading to be about the Lord's work, barely inching forward, and struggling to make headway.

Praise God He's put us on this road – and we intended to keep moving as He leads us.

v.20 – Here again in this proverb, Solomon speaks about a child honoring and showing reverence for their parents. A son who is wise, one who accepts their parent's instruction, correction, and guidance makes the father glad. That is God's way. He has placed parents over their children for these very reasons and He has given parents the role

of training and guiding children in the way they should go. Even in the Ten Commandments, God gives instructions to children that they should honor their parents.

The child that goes astray makes a father sad. But this verse also states that this type of child despises his mother. How? The foolish child despises his mother indirectly by being a source of heaviness, bitterness, and sadness to her by the way he is living.

Proverbs 10:1 "A wise son maketh a glad father. But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother."

Proverbs 17:25 "A foolish son is grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him."

If a child goes astray along a foolish path, they offend God, they hurt themselves, they offend others, and they hurt their parents. Being wise involves making the right judgments about things. The most important thing a child could ever give their parents is the knowledge that they are right with the Lord.

v.21 – Fools defy God and waste their lives in rebellion to His direction. But even worse is the fact that, many times, they think their sins are funny and amusing. Life is only a joke to fools and they will ultimately laugh themselves into hell. However, wise men know that life is serious and they desire to live their lives in accordance with God's rule and standards.

Sin is bad enough. But to run after it and to even laugh about it shows just how foolish some people can be. Perhaps they believe that there is no God, no hell, no heaven. But one day, they will be proven wrong – but unfortunately, it will be too late.

Even wise men make mistakes. But when they are convicted in their hearts of their wrongdoing, they go to God to ask for forgiveness and to make amends. The foolish do not. A wise man rejoices in the fact that God has given words of wisdom for him to follow, and that these will help save him from hell.

The choice, however, is ours. We can turn our backs on wisdom and make a joke out of this life (to our own detriment), or we can choose to be wise, walk uprightly, and look to God to protect us, save us, and forgive us when we slip.

[v.22](#) – Many people have tunnel vision. They are locked into one way of thinking, and they miss the right choice many times because they have closed their minds to new options. We need the help of others who can enlarge our vision and broaden our perspective. We need to seek out the advice of those we know who have a wealth of knowledge and experience. And, we need to be open to new ideas and willing to weigh their suggestions carefully.

Sometimes we don't ask because we are too proud. It's like raising your hand to ask a question in school. Sometimes, you may not have done so for fear of others making fun of you or being embarrassed. People don't like to hear negative criticism, or maybe they are impatient to wait for advice. Maybe they are so married to their idea that they aren't going to change it anyway. Regardless of the reason for not seeking out counsel, these are pathways to bad decision-making.

The best counsel we can ever seek out is God's Word. What does the Bible say about the decision we are about to make? Is there any guidance there that could possibly help us make a choice better than the one we already have in mind?

If we take the time to go to God with our potential actions, the end result will always be better. We need to be patient, be prepared for negative responses to what we have in mind, be open to change, and not be too proud to seek the advice in the first place.

[v.23](#) – Jesus himself taught us that it was more blessed to give than to receive. One of the things we can all give others on a daily basis is a kind word when they need it. There is a certain amount of joy that comes with giving the right words to someone who needs it at the right time.

Jesus Christ had this ability:

[Isaiah 50:4](#) “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.”

It is both our duty and privilege to seek this wise tongue so we can be able to help others – and we can take pleasure in doing so.

How do we do this? Several ways:

- Listen attentively and speak cautiously ([Proverbs 18:13](#), [James 1:19](#))
- Make sure our words are valuable ([Proverbs 10:19](#), [Proverbs 17:27-28](#), [Ecclesiastes 5:3](#))
- Examine our words by prayer ([Psalm 19:12-14](#), [Psalm 139:23-24](#))
- Keep our hearts and thoughts pure and wise ([Proverbs 4:23](#), [Luke 6:45](#))
- Always be gracious in our speech ([Proverbs 22:11](#), [Ecclesiastes 10:12](#), [Colossians 4:6](#))
- Make the glory of God the object of our speech ([Colossians 3:17](#), [1 Corinthians 10:31](#))
- Study God's Word to ensure our answers are correct ([Proverbs 15:2](#), [Proverbs 15:28](#), [Proverbs 16:23](#))
- Make sure our words fit the occasion ([Proverbs 10:32](#), [Proverbs 25:20](#), [1 Corinthians 13:5](#))
- Choose words that build others up ([Proverbs 12:18](#), [Ephesians 4:29](#), [1 Corinthians 10:24](#))
- Use gentle words when a person is angry ([Proverbs 15:1](#), [Judges 8:1-3](#))
- Give words of truth rather than opinions ([Proverbs 22:17-22](#))
- Learn wisdom to help solve problems for others ([Proverbs 10:21](#), [Proverbs 16:21](#), [Proverbs 27:27](#))
- Be encouraging and uplifting to others ([Proverbs 12:25](#), [1 Samuel 23:16](#))
- Use pleasant rather than harsh words ([Proverbs 16:24](#), [Colossians 4:6](#), [Luke 4:22](#))
- Avoid complaining or negative speech ([Proverbs 17:20](#), [Philippians 2:14](#), [Colossians 3:17](#))

The true purpose of the church is the mutual benefit members give one another while waiting for the return of Jesus Christ. One way we do this is ensuring that our speech is Godly and ensuring that our words are given at the right time and in the right way.

v.24 – I have always heard of heaven referenced as above and hell as beneath. This is one of the areas where this reference comes from. God, who dwells in heaven above, is the way of life to people who are wise. Jesus even stated that He was the way, the truth, and the life. The wise look to God above to lead us in the right way.

We do this so that we can live a life pleasing to God that we can be saved from hell beneath. We all know that everyone will spend

eternity in either heaven or hell. The wise look to God above to save them from the eternal torment that hell will be.

As a matter of fact, that is the ONLY place we can look to be saved from hell – and this scripture states that it is the wise who seek this pathway.

[v.25](#) – One of the things the Lord hates, as we have previously discussed, is a proud heart. The Lord hates pride, someone thinking themselves to be something they are not. Anything we may have is a gift from God and we should not glory in it as if we had accomplished anything ourselves.

Lucifer was cast out of heaven for pride. Pride caused the downfall of King Nebuchadnezzar. Pride had Haman hanged on his own gallows.

More recently, what about Adolf Hitler? He proclaimed that the Third Reich would last for 1,000 years – we know that it did not.

Ref. Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican

In contrast, the Lord loves humility and a contrite heart. Widows are especially important to God – He has taken care of them throughout the ages. He sent Elijah to care for the widow who was starving at Zarephath. He cared for Naomi, even having Jesus descend from her line.

In the New Testament, special care is instructed for widows.

[Jeremiah 49:11](#) **“Let thy widows trust in me.”**

Pride will ultimately result in our destruction. But for the humble, the meek, the downtrodden, He will take care of them.

[v.26](#) – Here again, Solomon speaks about our thoughts and our words and how they are windows to our very heart and soul. God is either pleased with what we say and think, or He feels it is an abomination.

The thoughts of the wicked are arrogant, cruel, foolish, haughty, and vicious. They speak harshly, sarcastically, and selfishly. However, the thoughts of the pure are cheerful, gracious, kind, peaceful, and wise. They speak carefully and slowly. Their words come from a pure heart, and are pleasing to God and men.

Our mouth is a vent to our heart. Every time we speak, we reveal to God and man what is in our hearts. Every time we speak, God and man appreciate and delight in our words, or they despise them as an abomination.

In Chapter 15, we learned that God sees everything done in the earth. He knows the thoughts and intents of our heart. We need to be careful to ensure our heart is pure, and that this is reflected in our speech.

[v.27](#) – We need to understand a couple of terms from this proverb. Greed is an ambition that is a covetous desire for more than we have or could reasonably expect. Gain is financial success or wealth. Therefore, this proverb condemns the desire to be rich which could lead to compromising Godliness and wisdom.

The gifts referenced here are items like bribes, which are paid to someone to compromise the law. A wise person will hate these types of gifts because they will not compromise their integrity. They won't sell out God at any price.

Certainly there are temptations that arise that are associated with our desire for financial success, but if given in to, they normally bring trouble for the person and their family. However, a person content with their income would never consider cheating to gain an advantage, and will protect his family.

Look at Paul's warning to Timothy:

[1 Timothy 6:9-10](#) "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Being wealthy is not a sin – it is not a crime. And if we are so fortunate to have wealth, we need to realize it has come from God. Even if we are paid a great sum of money for our knowledge that no one else has, it is God that has given us this knowledge and wisdom.

However, if we sacrifice our faith and trust in God for another dollar, we bring pain, suffering, and trouble on our own selves and our families.

[v.28](#) – I used to love to watch the game show *Jeopardy*. In this game, contestants have to buzz in the answer to the question on the board for various amounts of money. The first one to buzz in gets to answer the question. If they are right, they get the amount of money on the board for the question. However, if they are wrong, the amount of money the question is worth is deducted from their total. I saw some end the game with a negative amount of money. So what was more important – being the first to give an answer, or making sure that the answer given was correct?

A good man thinks before he speaks because he wants to say what he knows in the best way possible. The evil man doesn't wait to speak because he does not care about the effects of his words.

While it is important to have something to say, it is equally important to say it the right way. We need to plan our words carefully, taking the time to judge the impact they may have.

There is no shame in taking a little more time to answer someone. In my ministry, I have found that when I take the time to seek God's input on issues I have to deal with and answers I have to give, that He always comes through.

Here again, Solomon is encouraging us to take care with our speech. Sometimes, slower is better.

[v.29](#) – Prayer is not a right – it is a privilege. The Lord is not obligated to hear the prayer of any man, and he states He will reject the prayer of the wicked. But He also promises that He will hear the prayer of the righteous. This was well understood by the Jews of Jesus' day.

[John 9:31](#) “Now we know that God heareth not sinners. But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.”

The wicked are those continuing in sin. They know they are sinning but do not care. They do not confess it, forsake it, continue to ignore the warnings of God's Word, and deny the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord is never far from the wicked in His knowledge of them, because scripture tells us that He knows the thoughts and intents of every heart. But, He is far from helping them, comforting them, blessing them, and having fellowship with them – and He is far away

from answering any prayers they may have – other than one of repentance.

Saul was a man whom the Lord put into service as king. However, his wickedness caused the Lord to leave him. He begged for mercy but the Lord gave his kingdom over to David. He was so desperate for his prayers to be heard that he went to the witch of Endor to bring up Samuel, who condemned him even further.

David also sinned – and tried to cover it up. He learned a painful lesson from this. He learned not to wallow in his sins, but to confess them before the Lord and ask forgiveness.

Psalm 66:18 “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

However, after David confessed his sin, and God restored him, look at what he wrote:

Psalm 66:19 “But verily, God hath heard me. He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.”

We do not have to be perfect for God to hear our prayers, but we do need to be willing to confess our failures and shortcomings before Him.

v.30-v.31 – In these two verses, certain parts of the body are referenced – eyes, heart, bones, ears.

If we look on holy things, it benefits our heart. It has been said that the eyes are windows to the soul. Whatever we set our sights upon, those are the things we began to desire with our heart. If we set our sights on the Lord Jesus Christ, our light, it gives us joy in our hearts.

Our bones are made fat (Christian growth) by this, meaning that the more we look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, the stronger we become in our Christian life. Unlike old bone made brittle through the years, we are strengthened as Christians through a closer walk with Christ.

Our ears are also referenced as a part of us that we need to use to hear reproof and instruction. We are to be listening for correction constantly, because we are not perfect and we are certainly going to make mistakes. However, this scripture states that we are wise if we adhere to these warnings.

v.32 – This is another version of one of the most common themes of this book – a wise man will listen to and gladly receive reproof and correction, while a foolish and wicked man will despise them both. A wise man gains understanding by receiving correction, but a wicked man who refuses admonition must hate his own soul, because he is guaranteeing his own destruction.

Everyone arrives in this world knowing nothing. We learn by listening to instruction, correction, and reproof. While no one likes being corrected, the wise man swallows his pride and humbles himself so that he can be instructed and corrected.

This is part of the reason our churches are not full today. People don't like having their toes stepped on by God's Word. They look for places that make them feel good, instead of places where God's convicting Holy Spirit is welcome.

We need to be wise and realize that when God seeks to correct or reprove us, He is doing so because He loves us.

v.33 – How appropriate is this last proverb in this chapter? We have learned that beginning of knowledge is the fear of the Lord. Reverence and respect of the Lord is essential for wisdom. Likewise, humility is essential to receiving honor.

The fear of the Lord is respect for Him, His power, and His commandments. It is a fervent and holy desire to please Him in all things and to fulfill His desire for our lives as closely as possible. It is that realization that He is God, and we are His creation.

Humility is the knowledge that we are fallible and weak. It is the willingness for us to reject our own thoughts and be taught by God. It is the ability to take correction, confess our faults, and change our ways. It is the discipline to control our speech, avoid conflicts with others, and forgive others when they offend us.

God resists the proud, but he respects the humble.