

Proverbs - Chapter 16

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v.1-v.3 – These first three verses have a lot in common, speaking about our heart, our speech, our works/actions, and even our thoughts. The general synopsis of these verses is that God is in control of all of these.

In v.1, we see that the final outcome of plans that we make are literally in God's hands. We already know this, because we know that all we could ever accomplish or hope to achieve in this life has to be blessed by God. So the question becomes: if God controls everything, why do we even bother to make plans?

Certainly, there have been times in all of our lives when we have laid plans out on what we were to do and how we were going to do it, only to have those plans changed by things outside of our control...and many times, for the better. In doing God's will, there has to be a partnership between the efforts we put forth and God's control. He wants us to use our minds and wisdom, to seek out the counsel of others, and to plan...all the while knowing that the final results are in His hands. As we live for God, we need to ask for His guidance as we plan, and then act on our plans as we put our trust in Him.

In v.2, we see the sage wisdom that most of us already know. We think we know ourselves, but we need never forget that God knows us better than we know ourselves. Plans and actions we take always seem to be the right ones, at least initially, in our own eyes. Many of us have started down a path we thought was right, only to realize we made a mistake somewhere along the way.

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

People can rationalize anything if they have no standard for judging right and wrong. We can always try to prove that we are right...we see it in courtrooms every day. However, before we put any plan into action, we need to ask ourselves these three questions:

- (1) Is this plan in harmony with God's truth?
- (2) Will this plan work under real-life conditions?
- (3) Is my attitude about this plan pleasing to God?

Verse 3 sums up the first two verses and gives us a workable solution...make sure we first commit our works unto the Lord—all of them, not just part of them.

In a sinful and uncertain world where we cannot know what tomorrow brings, we can easily become doubtful, fearful, and worry ourselves to death. But that's not the plan God has for His children...and if we'll just commit our works to Him, He'll take care of us and our problems.

[1 Peter 5:7 "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."](#)

There are different ways to fail to commit our works to the Lord. Some commit their work only superficially. They say they are working for the Lord, but in reality they are doing it for themselves. (Ref. ECGMA). Others give God temporary control of their works, only to take back control the moment things stop going the way they expect. Others commit themselves and their actions fully to the Lord, but they put forth no effort themselves...and then they wonder why they do not succeed.

We commit our works to the Lord by:

- (1) Doing everything His way
- (2) Doing everything for Him ([1 Corinthians 10:31 "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."](#))
- (3) Turning our works over to Him completely
- (4) Trusting Him for the results, not ourselves

There has to be a balance, trusting God as if everything depended on Him, while working as if everything depended on us.

[v.4](#) – This verse does not mean that God created some people to be wicked and evil. It means that God uses even the activities of wicked people to fulfill His good purposes. Our minds are not equipped to understand God completely. However, we can accept by faith that He is all-powerful, all-loving, and perfectly good.

We can believe that He is not the cause of evil in this world.

[James 1:13, 17 "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. Every good gift and every perfect gift is](#)

[from above. And cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."](#)

Think about it...even Satan is a created being. God created him for His glory. But Satan rebelled against God in pride and God allowed this to occur – showing free will. One day, God will display His wrath and power as Satan, his angels, and his followers are cast into everlasting fire...all to the glory of God.

Our Holy God does not make people sin, but He does have the ability to control and use their sins for wise and righteous purposes. Think about the Holocaust. The Jewish people were nearly wiped out by Hitler. But look at them today, especially Israel. God has protected those people, and has brought them back from the point of extinction. They are His chosen people.

God will use all things, even evil, to His glory.

[v.5-v.7](#) – These three verses speak about pride and how it affects our actions. Pride is stated as being an abomination to God, something He hates and detests. Pride is that voice inside of us that whispers, "My way is best".

Pride is simply resisting God's leadership and believing that we are able to live fully without His help. Pride can creep into our lives so easily. We get pulled by pride when we find ourselves trying to make it without God or looking down on other people. Only when we eliminate pride from our lives can God really make us all we were meant to be.

The following is a comparison of humility and pride and the results they bring:

Results of:	Humility	Pride	Reference
	<i>Leads to wisdom</i>	<i>Leads to disgrace</i>	<u>Prov 11:2</u>
	<i>Takes advice</i>	<i>Produces arguments</i>	<u>Prov. 13:10</u>
	<i>Leads to honor</i>		<u>Prov. 15:33</u>
		<i>Leads to punishment</i>	<u>Prov. 16:5</u>
		<i>Leads to destruction</i>	<u>Prov. 16:18</u>
	<i>Ends in honor</i>	<i>Ends in downfall</i>	<u>Prov. 18:12</u>

Verse 6 states that truth and mercy will get rid of iniquity (willful sin) in our lives, and that the fear or respect of the Lord will keep us away from evil.

We have learned in our study that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. It is the very start of wisdom and knowledge. It is the foundation for a Godly life. The fear/respect of the Lord drives us to seek His approval in every part of our lives. It drives us to hate and turn from all sin.

The mercy is compassion we show to others when they are in our power or in debt to us and have no right or claim to mercy. Truth is perfect fidelity and adherence to what is right according to God, and pure dealings with each other in true sincerity without deceit or pretense.

These may appear to be polar opposites on the surface. Mercy seeks to temper judgment for the benefit of another, while truth demands that we do right at all times, even when it's difficult to do. But being wise means that these two characteristics meet together to do good rather than evil.

Verse 7 sums up the prior two verse by stating that good will come to a person whose ways please the Lord. We want others to like us, and under some circumstances, we'll do almost anything to win their approval. But God tells us that if we're looking to please someone, He's the One we should be looking to.

If we make an effort to be peacemakers, we will usually be easier to be around, even for our enemies. But even if it doesn't, we haven't lost anything, as long as we are pleasing God—the only One who truly matters.

v.8 – Our lives are a series of choices, and we make them based on our priorities. Some may live a successful Christian life, but the world looks on them as a failure. Some may achieve great status in this world, many times in a wrong or dishonest way. The world looks on them as successful, but they have little or not relationship with Christ.

Why do so few people live lives deemed as successful by God and men? Because most of the time, the world's priorities and God's priorities are opposite. The world measures success by a college education, a successful career, a nice home, and a good retirement. The Lord measures success by Godliness and contentment.

Our highest priority should be righteousness in the sight of God. Pleasing God is much more important than making money. We need to make a decision to be right rather than rich.

Look at Lot and Abraham. Lot chose to pitch his tent toward Sodom because of the potential financial advantages that region. He ended up losing everything and living in a cave. In contrast, Abraham took the poorer land, but stayed close to God. Lot ruined his life in pursuit of wealth, but Abraham accepted less to be great with God.

Righteousness is better than great revenue without right for several reasons. No amount of money can overcome a guilty conscience. No amount of money can compensate for lost spiritual blessings. No amount of money can save us from God's judgment.

[v.9](#) – Solomon had all the wealth anyone could possibly want. He could literally do anything he wanted to do. However, he realized that even though we can devise plans and ideas in our hearts and minds about what we want to do, the final outcome is dictated by God.

When we realize this about the God we serve, we learn to depend on Him. As we do this, He blesses the ones who depend on Him and turns the plans of evil people upside down.

Did you ever wonder what is God's will for you? The reality is that it is not a mystery. If we commit our works to the Lord, plan to achieve the Godly objective doing it the Lord's way, and believe that He will take care of the details, we'll often find that we are blessed in whatever we undertake.

There is no "perfect" anything, so we don't need to waste time looking for it. There are always going to be uncertainty in our actions, questioning whether we made the right choice, and some glitches along the way. We cannot allow ourselves to get frustrated, even when things aren't going the way we had intended. Remember, the first step in this process is to commit our works to the Lord—let Him take care of the details.

When we are facing a decision and not knowing what to do, we just need to submit our lives and works to the Lord, choose the course of action that pleases us best (within the boundaries of the Godly wisdom He has given us), and trust the Lord for the details. We don't need to worry or fret about making the perfect choice, because we are imperfect creatures living in an imperfect world. Our Heavenly Father cares for us, and He can more than compensate for any "mistake" we make with an inferior choice.

[v.10-v.11](#) – These two verses deal with being just and honest. Verse 10 references the judgments and sentences rendered by rulers and that they should be fair and accurate.

David and Solomon were two of the greatest kings ever, with wonderful reputations, at times, in their lives (see [2 Samuel 14:17](#), [1 Kings 3:28](#)). However, both of them used their lips not just to render judgments that were fair and accurate, but they also used their lips to utter profane statements and to pervert judgments during their reigns (see [2 Samuel 11:14-27](#), [2 Samuel 23:3-5](#), [1 Kings 11:1-11](#)). Solomon wrote these inspired proverbs, many of them dealing with politics and ruling people, for the future instruction of his son as leader of Israel.

As we have seen previously, wisdom starts with the fear of the Lord. A wise king, therefore, would have a respect for God and his judgments would reflect God's will. Therefore, he would have a divine sentence in his lips. God even gave an order for all the kings of Israel to have the scriptures always before them (see [Deuteronomy 17:18-20](#)). What if our civil leader, rulers, and president followed that same standard today?

In the end, we realize that there is and always will be only one completely righteous king. A divine sentence is in His lips, and He never makes a mistake in His judgments. He rules the universe and is coming soon to judge the world.

Verse 11 continues the theme of being just and honest, but here, it is more directed at people that deal every day with other people, not rulers per se.

Let me ask you a question: Should a quarter-pounder from McDonald's weigh exactly 4 oz.? Should it weigh that amount before or after it is cooked? Is that the weight of the meat itself, or does it include the buns, lettuce, tomato, and fixings? Does it change your opinion if you are the buyer or the seller?

In the U.S. today, there are more than \$6 trillion of economic transactions each year based on electronic measuring devices. Just a 1% error could amount to more than \$60 billion dollars each year.

Let's look at a real-life example. A typical convenience store pumps about 100K gallons of gas each month. A gallon is 128 fluid ounces. If the store owner adjusted his pumps to 127 fluid ounces per gallon (an

amount that none of us would even notice and that you couldn't even measure with a measuring cup), they could pocket about an extra \$3,000 per month. Who would even know?

The Lord would know. He expects us to be honest in our dealings with each other, specifically in terms of weights and measurements (see [Leviticus 19:35-36](#)). One of Israel's sins before being destroyed as a nation was deceitful practices by merchants with false balances and weights (see [Hosea 12:7](#), [Amos 8:5](#), [Micah 6:11](#)).

Before scales were developed, the sellers would provide the balances and weights. The buyers did not want to carry the weights everywhere, and who would trust theirs anyway? The extra weights were kept in a bag. Theft and stealing was done when the weights were altered.

If we take things on the job, pad our expense reports, etc., we are essentially stealing. And God is not pleased with this type of activity. Accurate and honest conduct in our dealings with others is a testimony of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[v.12-v.13](#) – The next several verses deal with how kings should properly rule the people. The success of a civil government depends on righteousness. God has ordained governmental authority over nations, and He has wise and inspired instructions about it all through scripture. The ideal government is one that loves God and hates sin.

Any king or ruler must be righteous to be worthy of the office and to discharge their duties successfully. A ruler or king that acts justly and wisely for the interest of their people will be respected and admired. People will respect their integrity and follow their directions.

Also, and most importantly, a ruler with these characteristics will have God securing their position. God has always raised up rulers in times of need, and He has also put them down.

God states that a ruler that acts wickedly is an abomination to Him. Wouldn't things change in our country, state, and town if all of the leaders acted righteously, placing the direction of God and the interest of the people ahead of their own agendas?

While verse 12 reminds us that kings should be righteous and not act wickedly, verse 13 states that kings should also say the right things. This does not mean a ruler should wet his finger, stick it to the wind to

see which way the opinion polls are blowing, and then follow that direction, saying what people want to hear. What we say and how we say it reflects our heart—and this is especially true of rulers that have the audience of many.

Don't you love people who are honest, straightforward, and plain-spoken, and who do it in a nice way? People like this have a way of gaining the respect of people, even if you don't agree 100% with what they say. This proverb states that people will love rulers and kings who speak right—honest speech at the right time and in the right way.

[v.14-v.15](#) – These next two verse deal with the wrath and favor of kings and rulers. We have no king in the U.S. right now. However, when kings held absolute power and judgment, sometimes punishment was severe. Therefore, it was wise to appease the anger of kings and rulers of that day.

With this knowledge in hand, people learned to live respectfully and obediently. You would know that the favor of the king was wonderful, but his wrath was horrible and not something to be faced. Getting a king angry was just like writing your own death sentence.

Therefore, we find that this verse indicates that the wise person will pacify the anger of a king. To pacify means to "...allay the anger, excitement, or agitation (of a person); to calm, to quiet, to appease...."

The Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest king in the universe. He is the King of Kings. And His anger against His enemies is greater than any earthly king. If He is angry against us for our sins, we can appease that anger by simply asking His forgiveness, and scripture tells us that we will receive it. What a blessing!

Verse 15 carries on the theme that winning the approval and favor of rulers is wise. A king's countenance is his appearance, demeanor, or spirit. A king's countenance with light is favorable, as indicated by the second part of this verse comparing it to a latter rain which comes just before the harvest, finishing it off with the growth that is needed.

This theme, although aimed at kings and leaders, can also be applied in every other relationship, such as children with parents, wives and husbands, employees and employer, etc.

There is another king whose wrath or favor means so much more—Jesus Christ. David said, ["Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye](#)

[perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” \(Psalm 2:12\)](#)

v.16 – How important is money to you? We work hard for it, go to school to get an education to make more of it, work long hours to accomplish our work and hopefully get a raise or promotion, get to know all the right people to help us along the way, etc. There is nothing wrong with any of this. We earn money to help supply the necessities of life, and to have some enjoyment along the way. But is all of this more important to us than wisdom and understanding of God? If so, we need to get our priorities straight.

Wisdom is the power to have right judgment – the ability to know the best course of action in any situation to please God. Understanding is the power of right discernment – the ability to grasp all the facts of any situation to understand it completely. No wonder David told Solomon to get wisdom and understanding above everything else, and likely why Solomon chose wisdom when God offered Him anything He wanted.

Our greatest goal in life should be to grow in wisdom and understanding. However, most of us apply our greatest planning, efforts, and time to the pursuit of money – gold and silver and referenced here. But Solomon warns us that we have our priorities out of order – wisdom is greater than any amount of money.

If this were being told to us by a poor man, we might dismiss it by saying that he simply had never known the power and benefits of having wealth. But this is coming from Solomon – a man who had riches, glory, and honor exceeding anyone who came before or after him. He knew all about money and its benefits, and still he tells us to choose wisdom.

v.17 – We used to do a song called “The Right Road”. I couldn’t help but recall this when I was writing these study notes. It speaks about how glad the writer of the song was that they had found and were travelling down the right road that leads to Heaven.

This highway of the upright spoken of by Solomon is the upright lifestyle of wise and Godly people. They hate evil and avoid it as much as possible. They understand where they are going and are more interested in their final destination than in the enticements they may encounter to make a wrong turn. There is, however, another road of life that can be chosen—the way of the wicked.

We must carefully understand the road we choose each day. Other will entice us to go their way, they will despise us for choosing the right way, and our own heart will sometimes mislead into the wrong way.

We need to trust our map – The Word of God. There is an old song entitled, “I’m Using My Bible for a Roadmap” which sums this up. If we trust the direction the Lords leads us in, we’ll never end up lost.

v.18 – Once again, Solomon speaks about the poison of pride in our lives. Getting arrogant about anything is a sure way to end us falling hard. Pride is a poison to the heart, soul, and mind. It hardens our hearts from loving or forgiving others, and damages relationships. It makes us desensitized to warnings or corrections, and so it leads to backslidings and failures. It blinds us to dangers and risks, so rush headlong into foolish choices without any caution.

Pride costs Satan his position in Heaven and Solomon saw it bring many men to their knees. Even his son, Rehoboam, pridefully and arrogantly provoked Israel and ended up losing 10 of the 12 tribes. His pride and overconfidence costs him most of his nation.

Pride in our lives doesn’t have to be a death sentence. There is a cure. Confess our sins completely to God, forsake them, apologize to those we have wronged, and humble ourselves before a Holy God.

Humility is not saying or thinking we are humble. Humility is obeying God and serving others. Pride provokes God to judgment, but humility brings blessing.

1 Peter 5:6 “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”

v.19 – The axiom of this proverb is fairly simple to understand – it is better to be poor and humble than rich and proud. For most of the world today, it would be impossible to grasp the meaning of this proverb. They would want us to believe that success and wealth justify arrogance, and that associating with the powerful and wealthy people of this world is as good as it gets. They could not be more wrong. Pride is evil enough to destroy any pleasure, benefit, or value placed on wealth.

Moses knew this concept, choosing to leave the palace of Pharaoh to join his fellow Israelites in their struggle to free themselves from

captivity. Moses ended up being more powerful and famous than Pharaoh could have ever dreamed because of his reliance on God.

This priority is true for several reasons:

** Pride always being contention and strife. ([Proverbs 13:10](#), [Proverbs 18:23](#), [1 Timothy 6:17](#)).

** The Lord loves and blesses the humble, but He hates and opposes the proud ([Proverbs 6:16-19](#), [1 Peter 5:5-6](#)).

** Contentment is the key to success and happiness ([Ecclesiastes 5:10](#), [1 Timothy 6:6](#), [Hebrews 13:5-6](#)), but the proud and rich always seem to want more than they have.

** When we give things up for Jesus, we never lose anything ([Mark 8:34-37](#), [Mark 10:28-30](#)). In fact, the only true way to success with our lives is to lose it for Him.

v.20 – Every day, we face various decisions and dilemmas. When we face these, there are two critical ingredients that need to be included in every decision or dilemma that we face – wisdom and faith. Wisdom, the power of making a right judgment, will help us respond to each situation justly and prudently. Faith, belief and confidence in God, honors God by ensuring we place whatever decision or dilemma we face in His hands.

When we face situations such as this with selfish motives, we usually end up making a bad choice. Some try to bend the rules to get their way, feeling that the end justifies the means: however, this compromise never works. It is certainly not approved of in the eyes of the Lord.

All though the scriptures you will find wisdom, and in the book of Proverbs, there is practical wisdom here, suitable for our everyday lives. All though the scripture we find that we can always depend on God.

This proverb is two-fold, so if we miss either side of the proverb, we miss it altogether. When we use wisdom to settle a matter wisely, we find good. But the second part of the proverb (notice the word "and". It is not separate from the first part of the proverb, but a continuation of it) speaks of faith and trust in God, and the happiness it brings. God

expects us to use the wisdom we have sought out and found. But He also expects our faith and trust in all decisions or dilemmas we face.

The entire book of Proverbs reminds us that wisdom is found when we ask God for it and seek it out. Faith is found in the same place:

[Romans 10:17 "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."](#)

The wise learn to use God's Word and apply it faithfully. They never handle a matter in any other way than what the scripture indicates, and in this, they trust God for the final outcome.

[v.21](#) – The measure of a person, aside from their relationship with Almighty God (the most important thing) is their impact on others. One of the most important ways we can have a positive impact on others is through communicating our wisdom to them in a Christian manner.

The first part of this proverb describes the wisdom of the heart, which others will call prudent. Notice two things about this. First, the wisdom comes from the heart, not the head. Second, the impact on others is prudence, not brilliance. The wisdom spoken of here is not head knowledge, but one of a discerning and understanding heart – the very thing that Solomon asked of God. The resulting prudence is practical wisdom for happy and successful living.

The second part of the proverb deals with how to relate this wisdom. We may have practical wisdom in our hearts, but not know how to communicate this effectively. Wisdom has to be communicated with gracious speech, and kind words. Proverbs speaks about this as well in several areas:

[Proverbs 25:11 "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."](#)

[Proverbs 16:24 "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul and health to the bones."](#)

[v.22](#) – A well-spring is the source or fountain-head of a stream. It is a source of a supply of water that will never end—it will never run dry. Think of a pond that you see in this summertime weather all dried up. It wouldn't be that way if it were fed from an underground spring with

plenty of water to fill it up when it became dry. And it would always give water....the same thing, all of the time.

Solomon even describes a person's good speech as a well-spring:

Proverbs 18:4 "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook."

Here, understanding is described as a well-spring by providing us in our life an unending supply of wisdom to correctly analyze decisions we must make and come to the right conclusions.

But most do not have that type of supply for understanding various situations and the consequences they bring. Every time they look to find an answer, they end up looking to themselves instead of to God.

For years, people searched for the fountain of youth, a spring of water that would enable them to never grow old. It was never found. However, God's Word provides us with a well-spring of wisdom that can make our lives all that they can be. David gave us some insight to this:

Psalm 119:130 "The entrance of thy words giveth life; it giveth understanding to the simple."

Psalm 119:104 "Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore, I hate every false way."

The Bible, which has God's precepts and words, builds understanding. It is God's Word found in the Holy Bible that teaches wisdom and builds understanding.

v.23-v.24 – Whenever you come across someone who you consider to be wise, you don't make that determination by how they look, what they drive, where they live, or what they do to earn a living. You make that determination after you hear them speak. Wisdom will always show though not only in our character, but also in our speech.

The Bible has a lot to say about the tongue and the words we should say. God gave us our tongue to glorify Him, and to help others (which by the way, glorifies Him). A tongue can do great good or great harm, and God and others will reward or condemn us for the words we use and how we use them. How well do we use it?

Are we slow to speak, choosing our words carefully to ensure we speak the right things at the right time? (See [James 1:19](#), [Proverbs 29:20](#))

Do we limit our words to make sure we remain on the topic? (See [Proverbs 10:19](#))

Do we study the matter at hand before we speak? (See [Proverbs 15:28](#), [Proverbs 18:13](#))

Do we teach, support, and edify others with our speech? (See [Proverbs 16:24](#), [Ephesians 4:29](#))

In order to be wise in our speech, we must first have clean hearts, which is actually the very source of our words. We need to fill our hearts with scripture and the Words of God to ensure we always have the right things to say at the right times.

The next verse, v. 24, continues to talk about pleasant words being sweet, and being good for our souls.

It's sort of like a dessert at the end of a meal. There comes a point where something sweet just rounds out a good meal to make it complete.

When we hear the Word of God, scripture read in our Bible study, preached from the pulpit, or studied alone by ourselves, those words should be sweet as a honeycomb to us, and should serve to provide what we need for a healthy Christian life.

v.25 – Every person thinks their way is right, because it seems and feels right to them. But God warns against this. Too often, people are in love with their opinions so much they find it hard to change, even if the Bible condemns it. There is only one final authority for truth and wisdom, and that is the will of God revealed in the Bible.

We all likely have strong opinions of how life should be lived, and how things should be done. Some of these thoughts come from our parents, teachers, friends, religion, habits, culture, media, experiences, etc. However, a lot of this comes from down deep inside our hearts. But all of these sources, apart from divine truth, will lead us astray.

The first part of this verse describes one way of one man. This is a person's opinion about a particular matter. He becomes confident that

his opinion is good and right, and his bias forces him to justify himself and defend his thinking.

However, the second part of this verse describes the end, or result, of one way of one man to the ways (plural) of death.

A wise man learns not to trust his own thinking and to seek God's will on every matter. He avoids getting caught up in believing that his is the only right way. He prays for God to search his thoughts and heart, and judges each option in the light of God's doctrine and tenets.

When Jesus returns to redeem His church, and many stand before Him in judgment, they will hear Him say that He never knew them. Why? Because they tried to get to Heaven their way, instead of the only way prescribed by the Bible:

John 14:6 "...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

v.26 – Have you ever been so tired you just thought you would drop....but you kept going because you knew that once you were finished, you could rest? Have you ever been so hungry for something you had your mind on, that you drove right past numerous places to eat just to make it to the one that had what you had a taste for?

This proverb talks about our appetite...not just the one for food, but our appetite for all things. "His mouth craveth it of him" means that no matter how difficulty or drudgery we may find in what we are doing, our appetite for what comes at the end is an incentive to keep going. For example, hunger makes us work to get that need satisfied. A payment we need to make pushes us to work a little hard to ensure we get paid at the end of the week.

With this analysis in mind, what is our appetite like for God's Word? For Heaven? We may have to go through difficult times, endure hardships, and sometimes work hard even when we don't see anything happening. But the prize before us, a home in Heaven with one long endless day to spend with Jesus, should give us the incentive we need to keep pushing forward.

v.27–v.30 – We will take these next several verses together since they speak of someone who does evil, both with their speech and with their actions.

Verse 27 speaks about the person that digs up evil about others. These are the people who are happy when someone fails. They look for sins in others. They eavesdrop on conversations hoping to hear something they can spread about someone else.

If you think our country is not in love with these types of people, look at how many "investigative report" shows are on TV. They tend to pervert facts, twist motives, and pay informants. Also, in this particular time in our country, a presidential election is on the horizon. Look at all the "sins" one candidate is throwing at the other...in the end, they are both doing the same thing – bringing up past facts in hopes of affecting a present circumstance.

The scripture states their lips are as a "burning fire". They look to destroy everything they come in contact with. In reality, many of them learned this habit as a little child...we called them "tattle tales". This is not saying that we shouldn't be honest in our opinions, even of others. But not in this way...scripture plainly teaches us that this form of speech is evil and God is not pleased with it.

In verse 28, the effects of evil speech are continued. "froward" person or mouth, as referenced in Proverbs several times, is someone who is perverse, crooked, devious, deceitful, and corrupt. The old saying of "If you can't say something good about someone, don't say anything at all" certainly applies here. This type of speech violates a person's reputation.

What we call gossiping, the Bible calls backbiting, tattling, and whispering. These terms all describe the sin of revealing or spreading secrets in order to agitate, divide, harm, or undermine others.

Godly people never harm others by divisive words. Rather, they seek to be peacemakers.

In verse 29 and verse 30, we turn to evil actions. However, these are no less damaging than the wounds caused by evil speech. This verse specifically speaks about a violent person enticing others to join them in their evil deeds. It reminds me of the saying that "Misery loves company." For some reason, evil people need other included in their actions, possibly to try and receive some type of validation for what they do. However, this scripture shows clearly that God is not pleased when we do evil, let alone enticing someone else to be party to our sins.

Verse 30 uses the analogy of someone who closes their eyes to the right way that is before them, so that they can focus their attention on plotting perverse and evil things. From this action taken root in their heart and reflected by their speech, they bring the plot they dwelt on to pass.

Christians, we need to be so careful about what we say and what we do. The world is looking at everyone who professes to be a Christian, just waiting for the moment when we stumble. The only way we can keep from falling is to place our thoughts, actions, and words under the control of Almighty God.

v.31 – The “hoary head” referred to here is one who has hair of white, referring to the gray a person’s hair turns as they get older. The Hebrews believed that long life was a sign of God’s blessings. Therefore, the “hoary head” – white hair – and old age were good.

While the young glory in their strength, older people can rejoice in their years of obedience and practical wisdom. White hair is not a sign of disgrace to be covered over, but a crown of glory.

However, take note that this verse ends with “...if it be found in the way of righteousness.” If we have the wisdom to match our gray hair, then they complement each other.

The Bible constantly teaches us to respect our elders. We are to show special honor to those who are old.

Leviticus 19:32 “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear they God. I am the Lord.”

Proverbs 20:29 “The glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is the grey head.”

Age should bring with it greater wisdom, holiness, love of Christ, and a Godly example.

v.32 – This proverb teaches that the ability to defer your anger and control your spirit is better than any man of valor or any man with great military accomplishments.

Gideon was a mighty man of valor defeating a huge army of Midianites with only 300 men. Samson was a strong man who killed 1,000

Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey. But by following this proverb, scripture states that we can be better than either of these men.

We do this by being cautious and slow in getting angry and controlling and ruling our spirit. It takes more courage, discipline, strength, and wisdom to resist emotions like anger than to conquer a city.

The fact is that, when we feel we have been wronged, every part of us screams for vengeance. Anger blinds our minds to do rash and stupid things, and we end up making a situation worse than it had to be. That's why this emotion needs to be controlled.

Please understand...getting angry is not a sin. Jesus Himself got angry when He saw they had turned the temple into a trading post. But we can be angry and not sin, as stated by the Bible.

Slow down. Try not to act on impulse. We can be better than all the men of valor or military heroes in the Bible – but we have to control this emotion of anger.

[v.33](#) – Turn on your TV when you get home, and you'll find someone somewhere trying to predict something. Local newscasts try to predict the weather. Sportscasters try to predict the outcome of a game. Business analysts try to predict the actions of the stock market and the economy. But rarely, if at all, do these predictions come to pass exactly as they had stated.

Even in the insurance business, rates are set as a result of actuarial analyst that attempt to predict what our income and loss payments will be. But not one of them – anywhere – predicted that on April 16, 2011 we would have an outbreak of tornados in NC that did so much damage. The end result made their predictions seem idiotic.

In the end, God controls everything. What may appear to us as an accident may just be God working His sovereign rule over this world. Scripture tells us that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Lord knowing about it...and that we, His children, are even more important to Him.