

Proverbs - Chapter 19
Part I

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v.1 – Integrity and honor are far more valuable than material wealth, although most of the world doesn't see it that way. They place more emphasis on attainment of "things", even if that means sacrificing their integrity. People cheat on their taxes and tell themselves the government has too much already. People steal from their employers and tell themselves that they work hard enough that they deserve a little extra. People rob God by not tithing and tell themselves that they can't afford to give up part of what God has already blessed them with.

Integrity even extends to our speech. Some people will say anything to get ahead, to attain material wealth. Solomon instructs us to guard against this, and to avoid speech that is perverse and wicked, especially against others.

There is nothing wrong with ambition. However, if we put personal success ahead of God, we've made success and ambition our idol, and God will judge us for it. In everything we do, God should rightly have first place.

There is nothing in this world worth losing our soul over. If we give up the evil things of this world for Jesus Christ, we will one day be rewarded in this life by blessings we can't even imagine, and one day with eternal life in Heaven.

v.2 – Since we have just come through the Christmas season, some people undoubtedly received gifts that had to be assembled. These items usually come with instructions. Here's the question: Did you take the time to read and follow the instructions, or did you rush into the assembly attempting to do it yourself without the aid of the instructions provided?

I feel certain there were some that went both ways. In the past, I have found that taking the time to read the instructions to understand what needs to be done in what order usually results in a quicker assembly time and fewer mistakes.

The same holds true for our success in life. Ignorance and haste can ruin our future success. We always need to understand what we are doing before we do it, which means we have to take the time to slow down. We also need to know what is happening and what could potentially happen before we take any action.

There is an old saying that “ignorance is bliss” – nothing could be further from the truth in our lives. We need to take the time to be knowledgeable and prudent about our actions, and cautious wisdom states that we should slow down to avoid errors in judgment.

Many people likely would have been spared the troubles sin has brought into their lives if they had just taken the time to slow down and consider the consequences of their actions. Many people would not have hurt the feelings of someone else if they had just taken the time to consider all the facts and think about their words before speaking.

God has given us His “instructions” in the form of His Word...and we are to take the time to study it, know it, and then follow it to live happy, righteous, and productive lives. In this microwave world, Godly wisdom tells us to slow down, learn of God, and then act in obedience toward Him.

v.3 – How many times have people encountered trouble in their lives due to their own foolishness, and then blamed God for their trouble? In today’s world, people want to do things their way, without any consideration of what God has to say. But the minute something doesn’t work according to their plans, they seek to place the blame on God rather than where it truly belongs...themselves.

The Lord is good to everyone, and His mercy is available to everyone. He offers wisdom freely to anyone who desires it. But fools scoff and laugh at wisdom because they feel their way is better than God’s.

At one time or another, each of us has chosen our own way and met with pain and suffering because of our decision. When this occurred, did you feel angry, feel that the Lord was unfair, or resent Him for not delivering you or answering your prayer?

This proverb states that the heart of the fool frets against the Lord...and the Lord sees all of our fretting, and our angry, discontented thoughts. We must realize that nothing we are or have are ours...it is all a gift from the Lord. He gives us our material blessings, our families, our jobs, our station in life...whatever that might be. And just as the ruler who gave his servants the talents, God expects a return on what He has blessed us with.

When we fret about what we have (or don’t have), the troubles with our families, the job we hate, and our station in life, we’re actually telling Him that we don’t appreciate what He’s given to us, regardless of what that is. We need to focus more on the Giver rather than the gift, and find our joy and contentment in Him.

There are many examples in scripture of where pain and suffering has been brought about by the actions of someone, and then they blamed God for their circumstance:

- Adam sinned against God with Eve, and then blamed God for giving him Eve in the first place.
- Cain was cursed for killing his brother, and then blamed God because his punishment was too great
- Ahab murdered Naboth for his vineyard, and then found himself at war. He blamed God for never blessing him.

If there were ever anyone who could have fretted against His position in life, it would have been Jesus Christ. But when He was faced with the most difficult and painful task of his life on earth, going to the Cross of Calvary (to pay OUR debt), He said, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done."

What an example He set for all of us!

[v.4](#) – Money tends to attract "friends", and lots of them. The prodigal son saw this all too well. When his pockets were full of money, he was the life of the party, and ended up squandering all that his father had given to him. But when the money ran out, all of these "friends" were gone, and he was alone in a pig sty.

Friendships based on money are false, and the people flocking around the one with money are only there in hopes of getting some of it themselves. But when the money is gone, those fair-weather friends are as well, and even neighbors who were one helpful avoid and reject a poor man.

Numbers of friends around someone should not impress us. The love of money is the root of all evil, according to scripture. It causes people to make friendships based on financial gain rather than character. Remember that Solomon, a rich man, is writing this to his son...and he has referenced this to his son several times already. Being the son of a rich king, he would have had "friends" around him all the time, and Solomon was encouraging him to see through the façade of those who only wanted to be around him because of the wealth of his family.

We should not love others just for what they can do for us. Jesus Christ, who held all the riches in the world, became poor to be a friend to us, and to save us, so that we could become rich through Him as joint heirs with Him.

v.5 – Telling the truth is extremely important in all facets of our lives. A false witness is someone who tells lies for or against another person, especially when that person is on trial for a crime.

But this proverb goes further than that and condemns all lying.

The Bible has a lot to say about lying:

- God hate lies and all liars ([Proverbs 6:17](#), [Proverbs 6:19](#), [Proverbs 12:22](#))
- Scripture states that all liars will have their part in the lake of fire ([Revelation 21:8](#), [Revelation 22:15](#))
- Every time someone lies, they claim and prove that the devil is their father ([Genesis 3:1-5](#), [John 8:44](#))
- Telling the truth and not lying is one of the 10 Commandments ([Exodus 20:16](#))
- Apostles in the New Testament also condemned lying ([Ephesians 4:25](#), [Colossians 3:9](#), [1 Timothy 1:10](#))

Lying will eventually bring judgment. One lie always seems to lead to another until the lies are realized, causing damage to the person's soul and reputation.

This proverb is actually repeated in v. 9 – and the fact it is repeated twice should give us an inclination to see how important this proverb really is. We should always tell the truth.

As an aside, it should be noted that there are several occasions in the Bible where lying was not condemned. This was always in instances where it was necessary to protect the innocent.

- Rahab was justified before God by lying to protect the two spies ([James 2:25](#))
- God blessed two midwives for lying to Pharaoh to protect babies he sought to kill ([Exodus 1:15-21](#))
- David, a man after God's own heart, lied on numerous occasions ([1 Samuel 19:11-17](#), [1 Samuel 21:10-15](#), [2 Samuel 15:31-37](#))
- God Himself sent a lying spirit to Ahab who did not want to hear the truth, and did not deserve to hear the truth ([1 Kings 22:19-22](#)).

v.6 - 7 – This proverb is an observation by Solomon. As a powerful and wealthy ruler, he experienced the constant requests of people for him to intervene on their behalf...to use his power and influence for their benefit. In this book of standards for his son to live by, Solomon warns him that a

prince would also have many followers, and that the majority of these would have selfish motives in mind. He cautioned his son to be wise in this regard and not trust their words or their actions in their attempt to gain his influence.

The following proverb in v.7 sheds some additional light on the first verse. When a man has no money or power, he loses his friends because they see no need to maintain the relationship any further. In fact, they are afraid he might ask help of them, so they flee. We would call these "fair-weather friends".

Many people followed Jesus Christ after getting something from Him, like being fed on the hillside with the five loaves and two fish. They wanted this "free meal ticket" to continue so desperately that they tried to forcibly make Him king ([John 6:1-27](#)). Jesus repeatedly rebuked them for their ulterior motives until they finally left him ([John 6:28-71](#)).

Solomon observed that most people are selfish. When they see no financial benefit from continuing to be around a person, they leave...and he even observed this in families and friends.

There is no shame in poverty if Christ is in our hearts, because the poorest person on this earth is a joint heir with Jesus Christ if they are a Christian. Think about the poor beggar Lazarus? In his life, all he had was pain and suffering, he was sick, and he had to beg for every morsel of bread he was given. Yet the scripture states that when he died, he was carried by the angels to Heaven where he now enjoyed good things.

[v.8](#) – If we love ourselves (and we all do), one of the best things Solomon states we can do for ourselves is to gain wisdom. It is free and it lasts forever.

Wisdom is the power of right judgment. It is knowing the right thing to do in every situation. Although it is offered to all, there are only few that ever truly find it. The difference between a fool and a wise man is very great, so Solomon told his son, "**Wisdom is the principle thing. Therefore, get wisdom. And with all thy getting, get understanding.**" ([Proverbs 4:7](#))

Look at how valuable Solomon thought wisdom to be.

[Proverbs 3:15](#) "**She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.**"

Proverbs 8:11 “For wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.”

We obtain wisdom by humbling ourselves before God. We trust in the Bible, God’s Holy Word. We dedicate ourselves to learning wisdom. We seek for it. And we use the teachers that God has put before us to help us learn, such as pastors, parents, Sunday School teachers, and other influential people in our lives.

v.9 – See comments on v.5

v.10 – As a great king over Israel, Solomon taught wisdom by proverbs such as this. If wisdom is to be promoted in a nation, it requires that fools be dishonored, rebuked, and punished. If this practice is not followed, then the actions and folly of fools will be accepted and even honored, which will eventually destroy the nation. In addition, the respect of authority requires servants and princes to keep their respective offices without confusion between the two.

Solomon saw that it was ridiculous to allow servants to question, control, or punish princes. Rebellion cannot be allowed or else anarchy will result. We can actually see this today in many dysfunctional homes, schools, and other institutions.

King Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, committed his life to observing what is good and right for people. When he saw fools honored, the rich being despised, princes being forced to obey, and servants taking advantage of the princes, it sickened him. (**Ecclesiastes 10:6-7**).

This is a good indication of why wisdom indicates we be submissive to the will of God. He is our Master, and we are His servants. We have no right to question Him. It is rather our duty as His creation to follow His standards. When we disobey, or when we decide to do it “our way”, we should not expect to be blessed.

v.11 – It’s hard to turn the other cheek when we’ve been wronged ourselves, and even more so when someone we love has been wronged. We want to take revenge, to make the wrong right. But this proverb tells us that we can use discretion to choose mercy over wrath and pass over the wrong that was done to us.

Discretion is the ability to know the right action for every occasion. Deferring is putting off, delaying, or postponing something. Godly discretion chooses

to delay or postpone getting angry when someone offends us. That is the mark of a gentle spirit and Christian maturity.

Anger has been called "temporary insanity" and giving in to it causes us to sometimes misjudge the action and to retaliate out of impulse. Once this happens, we many times start a war that is hard to end. Discretion is the wise choice in allowing ourselves time to regain our sanity before judging the offence made against us.

We must choose a spirit which glorifies in forgiving those who hurt us, rather than seeking immediate retaliation or retribution.

Understand that the offences referenced here are personal offences against us by others. This proverb is not teaching us to pass over or compromise sins against God or any other rightful authority.

God's wisdom does not change. He taught us to turn the other cheek. He said for us to do good to our personal enemies. The same holds true today.

Peter once asked the Lord how often he had to forgive a brother who had offended him. He wanted the limit at seven times, after which he could take matters into his own hands and get revenge. Jesus raised the bar on Peter by telling him seventy times seven, far above Peter's discretion or what he was willing to honor. Only by the strength of Christ can we do this.

Sooner or later in the coming days, all of us will be offended somehow. Think now about the action you'll take. Will you retaliate to get your satisfaction immediately, or will you defer your anger and resentment and glory in the opportunity to once again show Christ alive in your life? We all have a choice.