

Proverbs

Proverbs 22

1. A good name (*good reputation*) is to be more desired than great wealth, Favor (*to be treated with gracious kindness by those who can help you in your time of need*) is better than silver and gold.
 - a. **Principle:** Good character is better than wealth, for wealth is limited in what it can do, and it can run out. Good character lasts – bringing favor from people in this life, and from God in this life and the next.
2. The rich and the poor have a common bond, The LORD is the maker of them all.
 - a. Our worth is not determined by our rank in society or the amount of wealth, power, or fame we possess. First and foremost, our worth is determined by the fact that we all – rich or poor – have been created by God.
 - i. Therefore, to claim superiority because of the color of your skin, or the heritage of your family, or your rank in society is to make a false and an evil intentioned claim (*to raise yourself above others for personal or community gain*).
 - ii. This is true in the church as well. Note: **1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11.**
3. The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive (*blindly optimistic*) go on, and are punished for it (*pay the price for not thinking or taking appropriate precautions before leaping*).
 - a. **Proverbs 14:15-16**, The naive believes everything, but the sensible man considers his steps. [16] A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is arrogant and careless.
 - b. Example: **Hebrews 11:7**, By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.
4. The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD (*which motivates us to obedience, and brings wisdom and blessing*) Are riches, honor and life.
 - a. **Principle:** Humility and righteousness are inseparable, and they have their own natural rewards in addition to the rewards God gives.

- b. **Proverbs 3:16**, Long life is in her (*wisdom*) right hand; In her (*wisdom*) left hand are riches and honor.
 - c. **James 4:6b**, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.
 - d. **Matthew 23:12**, Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.
5. Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards himself will be far from them.
- a. To be **perverse** is to be obstinate in doing what you know is wrong, or to willfully and consistently go against what you know is right. This behavior is self-destructive in that it turns the law, the community, most probably your family, and other perverse sinners against you – which brings all manner of trouble (*thorns/snares*) into your life.
 - b. **Proverbs 16:17**, The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life.
6. Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.
- a. Early training, during a child's formative years, though rebelled against or even abandoned in late teen and early adult years, in most cases has lasting results.
 - b. Two considerations:
 - i. The focus here is on parenting, not the child.
 - ii. We ought to deal with each child according to the child's personality, intellect, temperament, character, gifts, and natural abilities.
 - c. Scripture about parenting:
 - i. **Deuteronomy 6:6-7**, These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.
 - ii. **Ephesians 6:4**, Fathers, do not provoke (*give them a reason to be angry at you and your way of dealing with them*) your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
 - iii. **Colossians 3:21**, Fathers, do not exasperate (*repeatedly irritate, frustrate so as to embitter them toward you*) your children, so that they will not lose heart.
7. The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower becomes the lender's slave.
- a. A **non-critical** (*of anyone*) understanding of this proverb:

- i. Those who have money have power over those who borrow from them or receive aid from them, because debt creates obligation to the lender until the debt is paid.
 - ii. Those who lack sufficient money to meet their needs give power over their lives (*obligate themselves, their resources, energy, time, and future opportunities*) to those they borrow or receive aid from.
 - b. A **critical** of the rich understanding of this proverb:
 - i. The rich tend to use their wealth and/or add to their wealth by ruling over, taking advantage of, and/or using those less well-off for personal advantage. (Note **James 2:7; 5:1-6**)
 - ii. The one who needs to borrow in order to have enough gives a measure of his freedom, time, strength, and resources in service to the rich in order to meet the demands of the lender and repay the debt. The rich tend to use this to their own advantage.
8. He who sows iniquity will reap vanity (*trouble, sorrow, loss*), And the rod (*club*) of his fury (*extreme anger/violent anger*) will perish.
- a. **Principle:** The evil person's power to do evil will not last forever and will not bring the fulfilled, satisfying life he desires.
 - b. **Reality:** The evil person's power to do evil in order to get his way will ultimately bring him trouble, hardship, and empty relationships. Eventually, his power to do evil will be destroyed, leaving him vulnerable to human justice and God's unavoidable justice.
 - c. **Job 4:8-9**, According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble harvest it. [9] By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of His anger they come to an end.
9. He who is generous will be blessed (*by God and those helped*), For he gives some of his food to the poor.
- a. **Proverbs 19:17**, One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and [the LORD] will repay him for his good deed.
 - b. **Proverbs 28:27**, He who gives to the poor will never want (*because God will compensate him*), but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses (*because God will punish him*).
 - c. **Deuteronomy 15:9-10**, Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,' and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to the LORD against you, and it will be a sin in you. [10] You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when

you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings.

d. Our attitude in sharing what we have with those in need is just as important as sharing. **2 Corinthians 9:7-8**, Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [8] And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.

10. Drive out the scoffer, and contention will go out, Even strife and dishonor will cease. Note **Matthew 18:15-17** for a method to use in driving out the scoffer.

a. **Principle:** If you drive out of your group those who repeatedly instigate disrespect, contention, conflict, and disunity, then strife within the group (*no one left to cause contention*) and dishonor in the community (*due to a reputation of discord and disunity*) will end, become non-existent.

11. He who loves purity of heart And whose speech is gracious, the king is his friend.

a. To love purity of heart is to love single-mindedness, integrity, and a heart, mind, and life that are free of mixed motives (*good/bad, truth/falsehood, selflessness/selfishness*) and hypocrisy (*false front that hides what you don't want others to see*). Such a person can be depended on to say and do what is right and good in every situation.

b. To have gracious speech is to speak truth with respect, and measured according to what needs and doesn't need to be said.

c. The king needs such a person because he can be depended on to be honest with the king yet respectful of the king regardless of the situation or the desires of the king.

12. The eyes of the LORD preserve (*guard*) knowledge, But He overthrows (*undermines*) the words of the treacherous man.

a. God protects knowledge so that it is always available and dependable. God undermines the words of the treacherous so that their intentions will not work out the way they hoped, but instead backfire or come to nothing.

b. **Principle:** God works to protect what is right and good and works against what is evil and what seeks to destroy what is right and good.

13. The sluggard (*lazy*) says, "There is a lion outside; I will be killed in the streets!"
- This proverb exposes the ingenuity of the lazy or fearful when seeking to avoid doing what needs to be done. In this case, the lazy/fearful person predicts doom in order to avoid what he doesn't want to do.
14. The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; He who is cursed (*abhorred, denounced by God because of his evil ways*) of the LORD will fall into it.
- The Lord does not push the willfully rebellious sinner into the deep pit, he falls into it all on his own due to willfully listening to and living according to the deceptions of evil doers (*including Satan*) – which blinds him to the presence of the pit.
 - Principle:** Willful, unrepentant sin always brings some form of loss or destruction with it in this life, and God's judgment in the next.
 - Proverbs 5:3-4**, For the lips of an adulteress drip honey and smoother than oil is her speech; [4] but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. (*Listening/following only leads to destruction.*)
 - Ecclesiastes 7:26**, And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner (*because he listens to her and lives accordingly*) will be captured by her.
15. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline (*correction*) will remove it far from him.
- This proverb does not give approval to physical abuse, undue harshness, or raging passion in any form of discipline (*instruction, verbal correction, physical correction, timeout, banishment*), for that kind of discipline, though seemingly effective in the moment, damages the bond of love and the prospect of meaningful relationship between parent and child. Once love and meaningful relationship are damaged, the parent may get obedience, but will have lost the child's will to listen and learn wisdom.
 - Scriptures to consider in raising children
 - Proverbs 13:24**, He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.
 - Proverbs 23:13-14**, Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. [14] You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol.
 - Ephesians 6:4**, Fathers, do not provoke (*give them a reason to be angry at you and your way of dealing with them*) your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

iv. **Colossians 3:21**, Fathers, do not exasperate (*repeatedly irritate, frustrate so as to embitter them toward you*) your children, so that they will not lose heart.

16. He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself Or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.
- Alternate translation: Latin Vulgate:** Oppress the poor for thy enrichment, and ere long a richer man's claim shall impoverish thee.
 - We set God against us when we oppress the poor for any reason, but especially so when we oppress them to enrich ourselves (*ungodly landlords, corporations going to third world countries to manufacture goods at wages they themselves would never accept*).
 - We waste money when giving to the rich in hopes they will be a benefactor or provide a financial advantage that will enrich us.
 - Both oppressing the poor and giving to the rich are motivated by self-interest/selfishness, and both self-interest/selfishness bring God's judgment on us – a judgment that results in the loss of what we gained by selfish and evil means.

Proverbs 22:17-21 either completes the second section of Proverbs (**11:1-22:16**), or it starts the third section of Proverbs. Either way, **vs 17-21** are exhorting us to take seriously and thoughtfully the words of wisdom contained in these proverbs, and to live accordingly. Generally, this new section is made up of four-line proverbs instead of the two-line proverbs contained in chapters 11-22:16.

Vs 17-21 present a unified proverb

17. Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your mind to my knowledge;
- To gain from the proverbs/God's Word what God has for us, we must intentionally, purposefully, and carefully listen to or read them along with thoughtfully considering/pondering their meaning and application.
18. For it will be pleasant (*delightful because they bring us to a good end*) if you keep them within you, That they may be ready on your lips.
- These proverbs/God's Word will be most useful/helpful to us and others if we fix their meaning and application in our mind – for our own use as needed, and for passing them on to others as needed.
 - Psalm 19:9-11**, The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. [10] They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than

honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. [11] Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

c. **Psalm 119:103**, How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

19. So that your trust may be in the LORD, I have taught you today, even you.
 - a. One of the purposes of the proverbs/God's Word is to build, nurture, strengthen, and solidify faith/trust in God and God's word – which leads to and enables us to live accordingly. This kind of trust is essential to living a spiritually healthy Christian life.
20. Have I not written to you excellent things Of counsels and knowledge,
21. To make you know the certainty of the words of truth That you may correctly answer him who sent you?
 - a. The proverbs/God's word hold excellent truths concerning knowledge and counsel that is superior to all other knowledge and counsel on how to live. If we will believe and apply (*live accordingly*) these proverbs/God's Word, we will become convinced of their unequalled value and we will prove/affirm their value in how we live and speak to/deal with others.
22. Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Or crush the afflicted at the gate;
23. For the LORD will plead their case And take the life of those who rob them.
 - a. **Robbing the poor**: Though the poor may be easy targets for being taken advantage of, don't do it, because God is looking out for them. Therefore, you are not dealing with just the poor, but with God and the poor – and God, who is able, will deal with you according to your evil deeds.
 - b. **Crushing the afflicted**: Historically, the judge and city leaders sat at the gate of the city to dispense justice and render verdicts. To crush the afflicted is to leave them in their unjust situation, and to do that is to set God against you because He will hold you responsible for not dispensing justice (*being an unjust judge or evil leader*).
 - c. **Zechariah 7:9-10**, Thus has the LORD of hosts said, "Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; [10] and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another."
24. Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man,
25. Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself.
 - a. **Principle**: The people we treat as friends/hang around with will influence us for good or ill – depending on their character, repetitive choices, and behavior.

- b. **1 Corinthians 15:33**, Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”
 - c. **Psalms 26:4-5**, I do not sit with deceitful men, nor will I go with pretenders. [5] I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.
26. Do not be among those who give pledges, Among those who become guarantors for debts.
27. If you have nothing with which to pay, Why should he take your bed from under you?
- a. **Principle 1**: Do not make a promise or guarantee a loan (*repayment*) for anyone other than yourself, because you have no control over the risk involved in doing so.
 - b. **Principle 2**: Do not make risky promises or take loans you know you might not be able to repay.
 - c. **Proverbs 11:15**, He who is guarantor for a stranger will surely suffer for it, but he who hates being a guarantor is secure.
 - d. **Proverbs 17:18**, A man lacking in sense pledges and becomes guarantor in the presence of his neighbor.
28. Do not move the ancient boundary Which your fathers have set.
- a. The ancient boundaries in Israel were set by God. He owned the land. The Israelites were caretakers – using the land as if leasing it. To move the ancient boundary was not only stealing from your neighbor, it was rebellion against God’s division of the land among His people.
 - b. **Principle**: Do not take any part of another’s land, for it is his possession for a home and for providing for himself and his family (*farm land*).
 - c. **Deuteronomy 19:14**, You shall not move your neighbor’s boundary mark, which the ancestors have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess.
29. Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men.
- a. To be skilled in your work is to do your job well because you are knowledgeable, devoted, and capable (*sufficiently trained or practiced enough to be skillful*).
 - b. **Principle**: Those who are diligent in their work will get noticed by those who want skilled workers that can be depended on to do good work. Those who want skilled workers have often risen to positions of authority (*i.e., king*) and have the means to pay the worker accordingly.