

Proverbs

A **fool** causes problems for everyone around him. His foolishness overshadows whatever sensibleness he may have so that it is as if he has no sense. The threat to those around a fool is so great that **Proverbs 17:12** says it is better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool headed off to do something foolish.

Proverbs 10:23 tells us that to a fool, to do something foolish is to do something fun and exciting. For the fool, this kind of fun and excitement includes quarreling in ways that damage relationships (**Proverbs 18:6**), and venting their anger without concern for the damage it does (**Proverbs 29:11**). Therefore, to be friends with a fool is to set yourself up for unnecessary trouble (**Proverbs 13:20**).

One of the great challenges in dealing with a fool is when he or she is a member of your own family. When they are a family member, it becomes much harder to distance yourself from them, and impossible to avoid the suffering brought into your family by them. As **Proverbs 10:1;17:21;19:13** say, a foolish child is a source of disappointment, sorrow, and trouble for his parents. And though a fool's parents love him and want what is best for him, **Proverbs 15:20** says his behavior and treatment of his parents shows he despises them. Clearly, a fool causes problems for everyone around him, and does so without remorse.

Proverbs 24

1. Do not be envious of evil men, Nor desire to be with them;
2. For their minds devise violence, And their lips talk of trouble. (**Note vs 19**)
 - a. Though an evil person's life-style and friendship may seem appealing, the reality is, they are selfishly evil people committed to using evil means to get or do what they want. To envy what they have and make them your friends or associates will only end in loss and destruction – in relation to their influence on your character, reputation, family relationships, and possibly your freedom (*jail or having to flee and hide from the Law*).
 - b. To be **envious** of evil men is to be jealous of or crave the freedoms, power, prosperity and pleasures they have. Envy of such a life-style and the desire to be around them will lead to (1) you becoming like them, (2) living a life-style that will end in your own destruction, and (3) turning God against you so that you experience His judgment in this life and the next.

- c. **Proverbs 23:6-7**, Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, Or desire his delicacies; [7] For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, “Eat and drink!” But his heart is not with you.
 - d. **Proverbs 23:19-20**, Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked; [20] for there will be no future for the evil man; the lamp of the wicked will be put out.
3. By wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established;
 4. And by knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches.
 - a. Given all the challenges related to marriage and family, it requires **wisdom** to build a well-constructed family that is safe, loving, community minded, well-mannered, educated, and pleasant for all its members.
 - b. Though wisdom is required to build such a home, **understanding** is required to make it stable, unshakeable, secure and firmly fixed so that the relationships are not easily damaged and destabilized. This kind of **understanding** includes:
 - i. Understanding each other’s hopes/fears, likes/dislikes, personality type, gifts/abilities, way of thinking, and beliefs/values.
 - ii. Understanding why the family is/should be committed to its beliefs, values, traditions, and practices.
 - iii. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of each member.
 - iv. Understanding the value of community, the importance of community mindedness, and how to be part of/maintain a good-working community.
 - c. The right use of **knowledge** (*instruction, continued learning, using what has been learned appropriately*) fills a home with the precious and pleasant riches of mutually loving, mutually trusting, mutually respectful, mutually meaningful relationships.
 - d. Finally, God’s word is a ready source for wisdom in building a home, for leaning to understand in ways that firmly establish a home, and for the knowledge that leads to enjoying the family and family relationship to the upmost.
 5. A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power.
 6. For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory (*deliverance*).
 - a. **Principle:** Wisdom is equal to or better than physical strength, wealth, or even military might. Knowledge used wisely increases the strength of

whatever power you have. If you lack wisdom or knowledge, seek it from those who are truly wise and knowledgeable.

- b. **Proverbs 20:18**, Prepare plans by consultation, and make war by wise guidance.
- c. **Proverbs 21:22**, A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the stronghold in which they trust.

- 7. Wisdom is too exalted for a fool, He does not open his mouth in the gate.
 - a. A fool is not only disinterested in seeking wisdom, his foolishness makes it very difficult for him to consider and make sense of wisdom – should it be offered to him. Therefore, when he is around the wise, a fool often remains silent (*doesn't want to speak up and expose his lack of wisdom*) because there is nothing meaningful or helpful that he can contribute to the conversation, situation, or decision making.
- 8. One who plans (*calculates*) to do evil, Men will call a schemer (*a deviser of evil*).
- 9. The devising of folly is sin, And the scoffer (*one who cares-less, and who laughs at the cost to others of his evil schemes*) is an abomination to men.
 - a. Society will brand a schemer the one who callously plans on doing evil to the harm of others, and despise him. Plus, God will condemn him.
 - b. **Proverbs 12:2**, A good man will obtain favor from the LORD, but He will condemn a man who devises evil.
- 10. If you are slack in the day of distress (*let up, give up and so fail to stand firm*), Your strength is limited.
 - a. If in the time of distress you fail to use what strength you have accordingly, you will needlessly/foolishly limit what your strength is able to do.
 - b. If you are using what strength you have, and doing so according to the need, then if it is not enough, turn to God for strength.
 - c. **Isaiah 40:28–31**, Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. [29] He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. [30] Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, [31] yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

11. Deliver those who are being taken away to death, And those who are staggering to slaughter, Oh hold them back.
12. If you say, "See, we did not know this," Does He (*God*) not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work?
 - a. Stand against injustice. Have compassion for those who are about to suffer the effects of injustice, and do what you can to protect them.
 - b. Claiming ignorance of injustice or ignorance of your responsibility to stand against injustice is not an excusable excuse in the sight of God. He knows you know better, and He will administer justice toward you accordingly.
 - c. **James 4:17**, Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.
13. My son, eat honey, for it is good, Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste;
14. Know that wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find it, then there will be a future, And your hope will not be cut off.
 - a. Scriptures describing the rewards of wisdom/righteousness
 - i. **Proverbs 8:35**, For he who finds [wisdom] finds life and obtains favor from the LORD.
 - ii. **Psalms 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.
 - b. **Principle**: Just as honey is desirable because of its sweet flavor, so wisdom is desirable because of its rewards – a better life here, eternal life hereafter, and a rational confidence that you are safe in God's hands.
15. Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; Do not destroy his resting place;
16. For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of calamity.
 - a. **Principle**: When the wicked seek to silence or destroy the righteous, they may be victorious for a time, but their victories are never permanent, because God is on the side of the righteous.
 - b. It is foolish for the wicked to think they can destroy the righteous, so don't even try. Why? Because God is on the side of the righteous and

against the wicked. Therefore, though the wicked can create serious problems and bring hard to bear pain into the lives of the righteous, they cannot destroy the righteous any more than the devil could destroy Job. God will, according to His will and time, continue raising the righteous up so they can continue living and behaving righteously. However, in time, God will bring an end to the wicked so as to put an end to them and their ungodly treatment of the righteous.

- c. **Psalm 37:23-24**, The steps of a man are established by the LORD, and He delights in his way. [24] When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.

17. Do not (*openly and outwardly*) rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad (*hidden, inward rejoicing*) when he stumbles;

18. Or the LORD will see it and be displeased, And turn His anger away from him.

- a. This proverb is about our mindset and attitude toward those who willfully mistreat us – like an enemy would.

- b. Scriptures concerning a godly mindset/attitude toward enemies.

- i. **Matthew 5:43-48**, You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” [44] But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [45] so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. [46] For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? [47] If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? [48] Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- ii. **Proverbs 25:21-22**, If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; [22] for you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

- c. **Principle**: Rejoicing when bad things happen to bad people is (1) a failure of love, (2) a rejection of compassion and mercy, and (3) an abandonment of godliness. Failing in these ways becomes a reason for God to deter His anger toward them and possibly point it at you.

- d. **Restate**: To turn away from just one of the three is bad and jeopardizes our good standing with God. To turn away from all three is exceedingly foolish for it turns God against us and away from presently and actively carrying out justice on our behalf on our enemy.

19. Do not fret because of evildoers Or be envious of the wicked;
20. For there will be no future for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out.
 - a. In this context, to **fret** is to allow your mind to be so agitated over the evil doings of evil doers that you give a good amount of time and energy to being annoyed, irritated, angry, and complaining. Therefore, don't waste time, energy, and brain power being upset over evil doers. Focus your time, energy, and brain power on doing good and loving others as you ought – for fretting only adds to the evil in the world.
 - b. To be **envious** of the wicked is to wish you had what appears to be their good fortune (i.e., wealth, success, power, influence, notoriety), but because you don't, you are unhappy or even upset.
 - c. Wasting time and energy fretting and being envious of sinners is foolish because their good fortune will not ensure a good future. They will likely be punished in this life for their evil, and will die in their sin and spend eternity apart from God.
 - d. **Psalm 37:7-9**, Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. [8] Cease from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. [9] For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.
21. My son, fear (*reverence, submit to, serve*) the LORD and the king; Do not associate with those who are given to change (*changing allegiances, rebelling against God and earthly authority*),
22. For their (*those who don't fear the Lord and the king*) calamity (*disaster, misfortune, cause of misery*) will rise suddenly (*it may not come quickly, but when it comes it will come suddenly*), And who knows the ruin that comes from both of them (*Lord, king*)?
 - a. **First Principle:** Fear (*reverence, submit to, serve*) God and earthly authorities, because they can punish you (*ruin you and your life*) for bad behavior.
 - b. **Second Principle:** Don't hang around people who change allegiances and/or rebel against God and the earthly authorities, because you will be counted as one of them and suffer their fate.
23. These (**vs 23-34**) also are sayings of the wise. To show partiality in judgment is not good.
 - a. Partiality makes a travesty of justice, and if practiced repeatedly, breeds discord and division within the home, community, and nation.

24. He who says to the wicked, "You are righteous," (*an example of partiality in judgment*) Peoples will curse him, nations will abhor him;
25. But to those who rebuke the wicked will be delight (*it will bring them delight*), And a good blessing will come upon them.
 - a. To label and treat the wicked as if they are righteous is to support evil and its destructive consequences on those who suffer at the hands of the wicked – whether it be individuals, families, communities, or nations.
 - b. To rebuke the wicked – privately and/or publicly is to stand against evil and support righteousness, which gives you the good feeling (*delight*) of having a good conscience and having done good for all involved. It also brings blessings from God and those served when promoting and protecting the way of righteousness.
26. He kisses the lips Who gives a right answer.
 - a. If kissing the lips is an expression or show of love and endearment, then being honest, clear, and direct (*giving a right, honest, clear answer as opposed to being dishonest, unclear, and indirect*) is an expression or show of love and endearment.
27. Prepare your work outside And make it ready for yourself in the field; Afterwards, then, build your house.
 - a. In an agrarian society, planting in order to reap and raising animals so you have sufficient food and clothing to sustain you until you can reap again is far more important than building a house. It is wise to live in a tent while doing what is necessary to provide for the family during and immediately after building your house.
 - b. **Principle:** First, do what is necessary to sustain a family, then build a house for the family.
 - c. **Luke 14:28-30**, For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? [29] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, [30] saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'
28. Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, And do not deceive with your lips.
 - a. Do not give testimony against those dear or near unless it is true and necessary. And when giving testimony, do not lie about anyone or anything.

- b. **Deuteronomy 19:18-19**, The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, [19] then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.
29. Do not say, "Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."
- a. **Proverbs 20:22**, Do not say, "I will repay evil"; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.
 - b. **Romans 12:17a**, Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.
 - c. **1 Thessalonians 5:15**, See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.
30. I passed by the field of the sluggard And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, [31] And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; Its surface was covered with nettles, And its stone wall was broken down. [32] When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. [33] "A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest," [34] Then your poverty will come as a robber And your want like an armed man.
- a. There is no reward in or for laziness, only loss. The loss may not come quickly or all at once, but it will come, and when it comes the lazy person will have done it to himself.
 - b. **Proverbs 6:9-11**, How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? [10] "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest"— [11] Your poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man.