

Proverbs

Proverbs 28

1. The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, But the righteous are bold as a lion.
 - a. The **wicked** know they are doing wrong and therefore live in fear of getting caught – which is why when they think the law or another person is pursuing them, they flee – even though no one is pursuing them.
 - b. Because the **righteous** are doing what is right, they can be confident they are safe in God’s hands. Therefore, they are bold as a lion – having no reason to fear the law or the wicked.
 - i. **Proverbs 14:26**, In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge.
 - ii. **Psalm 27:1-3**, The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread? [2] When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell. [3] Though a host encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war arise against me, in spite of this I shall be confident.
 - iii. **Psalm 125:1-2**, Those who trust in the LORD are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever. [2] As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds His people from this time forth and forever.
2. By the transgression of a land many are its princes, But by a man of understanding and knowledge, so it endures.
 - a. **NLT**: When there is moral rot within a nation, its government (*the one currently in power*) topples easily (*and another takes its place*). But wise and knowledgeable leaders bring stability.
 - b. As a nation progressively becomes evil, so do the number of powerful people competing for control – which produces instability in leadership and difficult times for the people.
 - i. **Example**: In just over two centuries, the 10 tribes (*northern Israel*) had nine dynasties, each brought to power by an assassination.
 - c. However, where a person of understanding and knowledge is in power, the nation enjoys stability and the one in power is secure in his position.
 - d. **Proverbs 11:19**, He who is steadfast in righteousness will attain to life, and he who pursues evil will bring about his own death.

3. A poor man who oppresses the lowly Is like a driving rain which leaves no food.
 - a. The purpose of rain is to do good to the earth, which in turn is good for the people. But when rain destroys the plants the people need for food, it oppresses/makes life worse for the people instead of better.
 - b. In the same way, a poor man oppressing the poor and powerless is doubly evil because:
 - i. A poor man ought to sympathize with, care for, and protect the lowly since he, too, knows how hard life is when one is poor and powerless.
 - ii. To oppress the lowly is to make their life excessively hard by taking away much of what little they have or by using them for personal gain without fair compensation or regard for their well-being.

4. Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, But those who keep the law strive (*struggle to oppose*) with them.
 - a. Law-breakers find comradery in other law-breakers and praise those who are especially adept at getting away with breaking the law and reaping rich rewards.
 - b. Law-keepers are disgusted, appalled, and motivated to work against law-breakers because of (1) the harm they do to those effected by their law-breaking, and (2) the influence of their life-style that encourages others to break the law – which increases the number of law-breakers.
 - c. **Romans 1:32**, ...and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.
 - d. **Ephesians 5:11-12**, Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; [12] for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

5. Evil men do not understand justice, But those who seek the LORD understand all things.
 - a. **Principle:** There is a inseparable link between morality, obedience to God and His word, and godliness **AND** discernment, sensible thinking, continued learning, wisdom, and practical application.
 - i. Sin distorts our thinking, our sense of right and wrong, and our ability to think in rational ways, making us irrational and foolish.
 - ii. Righteousness makes us intellectually healthy, resulting in growth in understanding, sensibleness, wisdom, and godly living.
 - b. **John 7:16-17**, So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. [17] If anyone is willing to do His will, he

will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.”

6. Better is the poor who walks in his integrity Than he who is crooked though he be rich.
 - a. In this life, the one who lives a life of integrity (*honest, humble, godly, free of ungodly influences or motives*) – be he rich or poor – has God and God’s blessings on his side, along with the respect and gratitude of those he helps and serves.
 - b. In this life, the one who lives a crooked life (*dishonest, ungodly, living according to ungodly influences and motives*) – be he rich or poor – has God and God’s discipline and judgment against him, along with the resentment and ill-will of those he has taken advantage of, cheated, and mistreated. Therefore, the poor who live a life of integrity are better off with God and man than the rich who live a self-serving, dishonest, proud, take advantage of others life.

7. He who keeps the law is a discerning son, But he who is a companion of gluttons humiliates his father.
 - a. Keeping the law represents wise, sensible living, whereas gluttony was referred to as representative of any fleshly desire that, given free reign/ uncontrolled, leads to selfish, sinful, self-destructive, foolish living.
 - b. Scriptures:
 - i. **Proverbs 17:25**, A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.
 - ii. **Proverbs 23:20-21**, Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, or with gluttonous eaters of meat; [21] For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe one with rags (*both wine and overeating make you sleepy*).
 - iii. **Psalms 119:9**, How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.

8. He who increases his wealth by interest and usury Gathers it for him who is gracious to the poor.
 - a. A legal/biblical understanding of interest and usury
 - i. According to God’s Law, an Israelite was not to charge **interest** on anything loaned to a fellow Israelite. What was loaned was to be repaid, but without any added interest. In other words, a loan to a fellow Israelite was for the purpose of meeting a need, not making a profit.

- ii. **Usury** is interest on money borrowed in excess of the legal rate set by the government/those in authority.
 - iii. **Deuteronomy 23:19**, You shall not charge interest to your countrymen: interest on money, food, or anything that may be loaned at interest.
 - b. In an act of irony, one of the ways God works against evil is to take the unjust profits away from the wicked and give it to those who do justice, care for the needy, and are gracious to the poor.
 - i. **Proverbs 14:31**, He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.
 - ii. **Psalms 146:9**, The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, but He thwarts the way of the wicked.
9. He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.
- a. **Principle:** If you will not listen to/obey God, He will not listen to/answer your prayers because rebellion makes your prayers despicable to Him.
 - b. In other words, you cannot mix religion with a lawless, ungodly life and expect to be seen/treated by God as if you are religious.
 - c. Supporting scripture:
 - i. **Proverbs 15:8-9**, The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight. [9] The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but He loves one who pursues righteousness.
 - ii. **Proverbs 15:29**, The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.
 - d. **Honest, rational self-talk: Psalm 66:18**, If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.
10. He who leads the upright astray in an evil way Will himself fall into his own pit, But the blameless will inherit good.
- a. **Principle:** God has so designed this life and the life here-after that evil, punishment, and death will come upon those who are evil, and good, blessings, and eternal life will come upon those who are righteous.
 - b. We know from the Word of God, church history, and the current state of the universal church that the first half of **vs 10** applies to those in the church just as much as to those outside the church. For example:
 - i. **Jeremiah 14:14-15**, Then the LORD said to me, “The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a

false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds. [15] Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who are prophesying in My name, although it was not I who sent them—yet they keep saying, 'There will be no sword or famine in this land'—by sword and famine those prophets shall meet their end!"

- ii. **Matthew 5:19-20**, Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [20] For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.
- c. Warning: **Matthew 24:24**, For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

11. The rich man is wise in his own eyes, But the poor who has understanding sees through him.

- a. **Principle:** No one who is proud/conceited is wise, nor are they good judges of God's character or their own character. No one who is humble and discerning is foolish regardless of their social or financial position – and they are good judges of God's character, their character, and the character of others.
- b. Being able to accumulate wealth is not proof of wisdom. Being able to discern, understand, and live according to the truths, beliefs, values, and ways of life that make you spiritually/eternally rich is proof of wisdom.

12. When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, But when the wicked rise, men hide themselves. (**Note vs 28**)

- a. Scripture:
 - i. **Proverbs 29:2**, When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, people groan.
 - ii. **Proverbs 11:10-11**, When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there is joyful shouting. [11] By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.
- b. The righteous seek to make life safe and good for everyone. The wicked seek their own good by evil means – at the expense of those ruled, thus making life hard, insecure, and unsafe for all who come under their rule or control.

13. He who conceals his transgressions (*plural*) will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.
 - a. **Matthew 5:4**, Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
 - b. Where there is no honest confession and correction of direction (*forsaking the sin or way of unrighteousness*) there is no forgiveness and restoration, only a damaged or broken relationship, judgment, and punishment.
 - c. The one who confesses his sin, makes right the wrong done, and corrects his way, finds mercy and compassion leading to forgiveness and the restoration of relationship.
 - d. **1 John 1:8-9**, If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. [9] If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - e. **Psalms 32:1-5**, How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! [2] How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! [3] When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. [4] For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. [5] I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; and You forgave the guilt of my sin.

14. How blessed is the man who fears always, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.
 - a. In this context, to **fear always** (*continuously*) is to fear God, to fear the failure to resist temptation and pursue godliness, and to fear the appropriate consequences God will bring into your life now and in eternity in response to your ungodly choices and behavior.
 - i. **Proverbs 23:17**, Do not let your heart envy sinners, But live in the fear of the LORD always.
 - b. To **harden your heart** is to make yourself insensitive to truth, God's word, your conscience, and the convicting work of the Holy Spirit so that you become unconcerned/indifferent to your own ongoing practice of selfishness and sin. Such a person has neither the inclination nor the intention to repent and change his ways.
 - i. **Romans 2:4-6**, Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? [5] But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of

wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, [6] who will render to each person according to his deeds.

- c. To **fall into calamity** is to experience trials, tribulation, loss, and misery as a result of ungodly choices and behavior. In other words, it is a form of reaping what you have sown (**Galatians 6:7-8**).
15. Like a roaring lion and a rushing bear Is a wicked ruler over a poor people.
 - a. A wicked ruler (*tyrant*) is likened unto an angry, devouring beast whose only interest is getting what he wants, and in so doing, makes everyone's life under his rule more miserable than it would otherwise be. This is especially true of the poor whose lives are already miserable.
 16. A leader who is a great oppressor lacks understanding, But he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.
 - a. To oppress is to force excessive burdens, hardships, injustices, cruelties on those under your power and authority.
 - b. Oppressing those under your authority – for any reason, but especially for personal gain – is foolish, for it drives those under your rule to rebel against you, or at least to try and thwart your efforts to accomplish your goals. Therefore, it works against remaining in power for an extended period of time.
 - i. Solomon's son, Rehoboam, is an example of this (**1 Kings 12**).
 - c. The leader/ruler who hates unjust gain, and therefore is just, fair, and treats those under his rule well, will be supported, possibly even loved, and those under his rule will want him to remain in power.
 17. A man who is laden with the guilt of human blood Will be a fugitive until death; let no one support him.
 - a. One who is guilty of first or second degree murder, and especially if he is guilty of murdering numerous times, must remain a fugitive from the Law until he dies to avoid being apprehended.
 - b. Because of the gravity of his crime, no one should protect/hide him from the effort of the Law to apprehend and punish him.
 - c. **Numbers 35:30-31**, If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. [31] Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death.

18. He who walks blamelessly will be delivered, But he who is crooked will fall all at once.
- Those who **walk blamelessly** have God as their deliverer. This does not mean they will be delivered from all trials and troubles in this life, but they will experience ongoing deliverance in ways that enable them to deal with in a godly manner whatever trials and troubles come along. And in the end, they will be free of all trials/troubles in eternity.
 - To **fall all at once** does not mean falling soon after becoming crooked, but falling quickly, probably without notice, and with no possibility of stopping the fall or landing safely. A person can remain crooked for many years before this kind of fall takes place.
 - Proverbs 10:9**, He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out.
19. He who tills his land will have plenty of food, But he who follows empty pursuits will have poverty in plenty.
- Scripture
 - Proverbs 10:4**, Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
 - Proverbs 20:4**, The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, so he begs during the harvest and has nothing.
 - Principle**: Those who work diligently and wisely will have what they need for themselves and their families. Those who are lazy or involved in foolish money-making endeavors will, along with their families, live in want (*poverty*).
20. A faithful man (*responsible, reliable, trustworthy*) will abound with blessings, But he who makes haste to be rich (*infers the use of deceit, fraud, cheating, doing what is unlawful*) will not go unpunished (*probably in this life, but for certain in the next*).
21. To show partiality is not good, Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.
- To **show partiality** is to abandon justice, which in turn (1) harms those who need justice done for their protection/good, and (2) allows evil doers to continue being evil – thus increasing and spreading the harm further.
 - To show partiality **for a piece of bread** shows how greedy we can be and therefore how easily we can be tempted to be partial.
 - Proverbs 18:5**, To show partiality to the wicked is not good, nor to thrust aside the righteous in judgment.

22. A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth And does not know that want will come upon him.
- The way of sin makes us irrational. Giving way to greed makes us foolish. Gratifying evil desires blinds us to the long-term consequences of our evil choices and behavior. Getting away with evil for a time promotes the belief we can continue getting away with it. But all of this is a lie, an irrational self-deception.
 - Proverbs 13:11**, Wealth obtained by fraud dwindles, but the one who gathers by labor increases it.
23. He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor Than he who flatters with the tongue.
- If the one rebuked learns and goes forward to live a better, wiser life, he will be grateful for the rebuke. If the one flattered remains foolish, and then gets caught in his foolishness, he will resent you for not being honest with him.
 - Proverbs 9:8-9**, Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, reprove a wise man and he will love you. [9] Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser, teach a righteous man and he will increase his learning.
24. He who robs his father or his mother And says, "It is not a transgression," Is the companion of a man who destroys.
- To rob anyone is sin. To rob your parents who have raised you, provided for you, protected you, and educated you is the evil of robbery **PLUS** the evils of ingratitude, disrespect, and disloyalty.
 - To rob your parents is to damage your relationship with them, damage their trust in you, damage them financially, and damage your standing with God.
 - A son or daughter ought to be taking care of his parents, not harming them by taking what belongs to them for his/her own benefit.
25. An **arrogant** (*literally: wide, broad*) man stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the LORD will prosper (*literally: grow fat*).
- Proverbs 13:10**, Through insolence (*prideful haughtiness, arrogance*) comes nothing but strife, but wisdom is with those who receive counsel.
 - Alternate Translation (ESV)**: A **greedy** man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched.
 - Proverbs 11:25**, The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered.

- c. **Alternate Translation (DSB):** A man of **unrestrained passions** stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will be blessed.
 - i. **Proverbs 16:20**, He who gives attention to the word will find good, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.
- d. In an effort to gratify our desires in ungodly ways, we will exert control over people and circumstances for our own benefit, and do so without regard for their good. This will stir up conflict.
- e. When we trust in God and remain faithful to His word and ways, we will be able to discern which desires are acceptable and how they can be satisfied within the boundaries of godliness. When we do this, we will experience satisfaction beyond our imagination.

26. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered (*from the destruction that comes from trusting in your own heart*).
- a. To **trust in your own heart** is to subjectively decide (*i.e., according to your personal/human beliefs, values, principles, fears, desires, impulses*) right and wrong, happiness and unhappiness, love and selfishness.
 - i. Making your unconverted, impure heart the basis for decision making is dangerous, because circumstances, time of life, and the influence of others are not fixed entities. You and they change from time to time, which in turn often changes what is in your heart.
 - ii. Making God and His Word the basis for decision making is wise because it is a fixed entity that can be used to guide you in any situation or with any person or group at any time.
 - b. Scriptures:
 - i. **Proverbs 3:5-8**, Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. [6] In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. [7] Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. [8] It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.
 - ii. **Jeremiah 9:23-24**, Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; [24] but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.
 - c. The current popular saying “follow your heart” is not true wisdom. It may be an effort to set people free to do the things they really want to do or believe in, but it is so focused on pleasing self that it lacks appropriate consideration for such important things as your responsibility to those

around you, the good of the community, prior commitments, love, and true godliness.

27. He who gives to the poor will never want, But he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.
- a. The human nature way of thinking is that giving to the poor is a waste of money (*their poverty is their own doing*) and a loss of resources for meeting your own needs. However, the opposite is true. God blesses the charitable person, but brings costly troubles into the lives of the uncharitable and the stingy.
 - b. Scripture:
 - i. **Proverbs 19:17**, One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.
 - ii. **Proverbs 11:24-25**, There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want. [25] The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered.
 - iii. **Luke 6:38**, Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.
28. When the wicked rise, men hide themselves; But when they perish, the righteous increase. (**Note vs 12**)
- a. Scripture:
 - i. **Proverbs 29:2**, When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, people groan.
 - ii. **Proverbs 11:10-11**, When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there is joyful shouting. [11] By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.
 - b. When wicked people rule or have a majority in any society, the well-being of the righteous is directly threatened and the rest of the people live in fear of what the wicked will do to them. Hiding is one way to be unseen and hopefully avoid being mistreated, taken advantage of, or killed by the wicked. But when the wicked perish, there is a visible increase of the righteous – possibly because they have come out of hiding.