

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 11]

Some of the main topics dealt with in **Chapters 1-8** are summarised in the form of a picture of both Godly Wisdom and folly, each inviting humans to a feast.

Proverbs 9:1-6 [NIV] *“Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars. She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city. ‘Let all who are simple come in here!’ she says to those who lack judgment. ‘Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.’”*

The seven pillars are figurative. In the Christian Bible, the number seven represents perfection or completeness. So this verse states that Godly Wisdom lacks nothing, is complete and perfect.

The feast of wisdom –

The picture that the first verse indicates is a grand house that is very spacious.

Within this house wisdom has laid out a magnificent feast and dispatched young ladies to call her guests. Wisdom goes herself to call whosoever to this feast.

There is a special place for the uninstructed simple, the Hebrew word is *“pethîy”* meaning seducible, as a result of **not** using Godly Wisdom.

There is a link between this feast and the one that Jesus Christ used as a parable. [**Luke 14:16-24**]

Many may **not** attend this feast that Godly Wisdom is offering because they are side-tracked by other purely physical activities that seem more important at the time.

The lesson is don’t let anything become more important in our life than our search for Godly Wisdom.

Proverbs 9:7-12 [NIV] *“Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you. Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer.”*

These verses are explaining the effect of an open or closed mind. The scorner who rejects corrective teaching and the wise person who is open to the teaching and discipline of Godly Wisdom. There is an element of the teaching of Jesus Christ in these verses. [**Matthew 7:6**]

The way we respond to criticism tells if we are a mocker or a wise person.

Instead of responding to Christian Bible based correction or criticism with a put-down or clever retort, listen to what is being said, seek to learn from your critics, by meditating on their words, and if necessary ask them to clarify their remarks.

This is the way to Godly Wisdom, for this is getting to know the Creator God.

The Creator God can give us clear insight into living this life because He created life.

To know God is far more than knowing the facts about Him.

It is to stand in awe of Him, and His Wisdom and seeking to have an intimate relationship with Him through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who is also God.

John 17:3 [NIV] *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

It is this intimate relationship with our Creator God that will be the basis of our eternal life.

We can begin to experience this right now in this as yet limited physical life. [**1 John 5:11**]

The word translated “know” is Greek word “*gnōskō*” which is used in **Luke 1:34** to refer to the intimate sexual relationship between a man and woman in marriage.

The ultimate gain or loss in our decision to seek Godly Wisdom is very personal for we are talking about character.

Our character is the one thing we **cannot** borrow, lend or escape from, for it is us!

The feast of folly –

Proverbs 9:13-18 [NIV] *“The woman Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge. She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way. ‘Let all who are simple come in here!’ she says to those who lack judgment. ‘Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!’ But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.”*

The foolish woman who is also personified as a harlot brazenly invites the simple, seducible persons to her paltry meal of stolen food and wine [**v17**]. A contrast to the specially prepared feast of wisdom.

Wisdom’s feast is on the way to life, this foolish harlot will lead you to death.

There is something hypnotic and intoxicating about wickedness.

One sin will lead to another wanting more, and sinful behaviour seems to be more exciting than the Christian life.

This is why many people put aside all thoughts of Godly Wisdom’s sumptuous banquet in order to eat the stolen food of folly and human wisdom. [**Isaiah 5:20-24**]

Don’t be deceived. Before reaching for forbidden fruit, take a long look at what happens to those who eat it.

The first example of this wrong choice is Eve. We can read a record of her foolish mistake in **Genesis chapter three**.

We may note that the invitations of both wisdom and folly are directed to the simple [seducible] and ignorant.

The wise, though they may still grow in wisdom [**v8-9**] and the scoffer [**v7**] heed no invitation.

Godly Wisdom for all people –

The next few chapters of Proverbs are short couplets that cover a wide range of topics, contrasting the righteous person with the wicked.

These statements are **not** intended to apply universally to all people in every situation. For example, some good people do go hungry. Rather, they are intended to communicate the general truth that the

life of the person who seeks God is better in the long run than the life of the wicked person, a life that ends in ruin.

These statements are **not** cast-iron promises, but general truths.

A proverb like these assumes a just government that cares for the poor and needy, the kind of government Israel was intended to have [**Deuteronomy 24:17-22**]. In contrast a corrupt government often thwarts the plans of righteous men and women.

Proverbs 10:1 [NIV] *“The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.”*

As parents and grandparents in a normal family are bound up in the life of a child and grandchild, this proverb centres on the response of the child to the teaching of the parent. The Hebrew word translated “foolish” is “kegiyl” meaning one who makes stupid or silly decisions.

Proverbs 10:2-3 [NIV] *“Ill-gotten treasures are of no value, but righteousness delivers from death. The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.”*

Some people bring personal unhappiness by choosing ill-gotten treasures. For example taking drugs for instant sensual pleasure destroys the hope of any future lasting happiness.

God’s principles for right-living bring lasting happiness because they guide us into long-term right behaviour in spite of our ever-changing feelings.

Proverbs 10:4-5 [NIV] *“Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.”*

Lest the statement in **verse 3** is taken as an invitation to fecklessness, these verses concern the subject of laziness which affects others as well as our own wellbeing.

Proverbs 10:6-7 [NIV] *“Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked. The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot.”*

The crown may be the praise of thankful neighbours. While the vicious language envelops the mouth of the wicked.

Both will be remembered long into the future, one as a blessing to all involved, the other as a memory likened to the stink of decaying matter.

Proverbs 10:8 [NIV] *“The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.”*

Here we see the contrast of the obedient and the opinionated.

Even in the field of human learning it is the second-rater who tends to “talk big.”

Proverbs 10:9 [NIV] *“The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.”*

When we have nothing in our lives to hide we have nothing to fear, the word translated “securely” is “betach” meaning a place of refuge, confidence and secure hope.

Eventually those who live a perverted life will be exposed. [**Galatians 6:7**]

2 Timothy 3:8-9 [NIV] *“Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth, men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.”*

All who oppose God's truth will eventually be exposed as the fools that they are.

Proverbs 10:10 [NIV] *“He who winks maliciously causes grief, and a chattering fool comes to ruin.”*

This is referring to crafty insincere conduct that eventually causes pain to others and eventually to the person acting in this way, the talkative fool. The Hebrew word is *“sepheth”* meaning vain, empty words. Such a person will become intolerable to others and eventually be overthrown which is the literal translation of the Hebrew.

Proverbs 10:11 [NIV] *“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.”*

This fountain of life is traced to its ultimate source, Jesus Christ [Lord] in **Psalm 36:9**, but is seen springing up in the good and the wise people, here and also in **Proverbs 13:14; Proverbs 14:27; Proverbs 16:22**.

This delightful metaphor is enlarged upon in **Ezekiel 47:1-12** where it is a future stream of miraculous waters that is flowing from the Temple of God.

Jesus uses this to illustrate the gift and working of the Holy Spirit in a person. [**John 4:14; John 7:38-39**]

The Hebrew word translated *“violence”* is *“châmâc”* meaning oppressive, unrighteous. The overwhelming words that well up from the heart of the wicked flows out through their mouth, to bring oppression and unrighteousness to others.

A polluted stream full of filth, in total contrast to that of a righteous person.

Proverbs 10:12 [NIV] *“Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.”*

Hatred as the opposite of love *“stirs up”* Hebrew word *“uwr”* meaning to open up, reveal, makes naked.

“Dissension” – Hebrew word *“medân”* meaning discord, from root word meaning brawling and contention.

“Love” – Hebrew word *“ahâbâh”* meaning affection.

This Hebrew word is parallel to the Greek word *“agapé”* a love which is the *“fruit”* of the Holy Spirit.

“Covers” – Hebrew word *“kâcâh”* meaning conceals.

This covering of sins or conciliation is balanced by other passages.

Proverbs 28:13 tells us **not** to conceal our own sins.

Proverbs 27:5-6 tells us **not** to shirk to give a rebuke to a friend when we see them going astray.

1 Peter 4:8 [NIV] *“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”*

Indicates that any rebuke should be given in private, one on one.

James 5:20 [NIV] *“remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”*

To give such a rebuke is to show love for that person and encourage them to repent.

Proverbs 10:13 [NIV] *“Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment.”*

If our mind is enlightened with Godly Wisdom it will overflow into our words and so into the lives of others [v11] making us a mouthpiece for the Creator God.

Matthew 12:34-37 [NIV] *“You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”*

The careless words are those that are spoken without pre-thought, without allowing the mind to consider the outcome of the words in the minds and lives of those who hear them.

James 3:1-13 [NIV] *“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig-tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.”*

Every time we open our mouths and speak we are taking on the role of a teacher!

1 Peter 3:15-16 [NIV] *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”*

We should make sure that we are well acquainted with the Christian Bible, the basis of our hope of salvation. Then we should speak at the right time.

If our mind is closed to the teaching of the Creator God, He may have to use physical circumstances [“rod is for our back”] to get our attention.

This is exactly what the Creator God will do just before and directly after the second coming of Jesus Christ.

We can read of this future course correction in the account of the “plagues” in Revelation.

Proverbs 10:14 [NIV] *“Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin.”*

“Store up” – Hebrew “*tsaphan*” meaning keep secret or reserve. They do this for use at the proper time or occasion.

The fool is more likely to blurt out their stupidity and endanger themselves and others.

Proverbs 10:15-16 [NIV] *“The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor. The wages of the righteous bring them life, but the income of the wicked brings them punishment.”*

When considering the first half of this verse we need to take into account **Proverbs 18:11** for people who look on their worth as security. Poverty all too often takes away from a person the means and opportunity to a full life as the Creator God wishes.

When we meditate on the two verses as one subject, what is important and defines the character of a person is the way they use their income however small it may be. [**Mark 12:41-44**]

The use and abuse of wealth has serious and permanent effects.

Matthew 6:24 [NIV] *“No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”*

Wealth can influence your relationship with the Creator God.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 [NIV] *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*

The desire to get rich can lead us into many ungodly actions, robbery, cheating, even murder.

Matthew 6:31-33 [NIV] *“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

The greatest possession we can ever receive, one that is beyond any wealth or position in this world’s society, is a place in the Kingdom of God.

Proverbs 10:17 [NIV] *“He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.”*

If we are to progress in the quality of our life, it being more than mere existence, we must always remain teachable all of our lives. If we ignore correction our example could cause others to follow our poor example.

Proverbs 10:18 [NIV] *“He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.”*

The first of four proverbs on speech.

By hating another person you may become a liar or a fool.

If you conceal your hatred, you end up lying to yourself and other people. If we out of hatred slander another person and are proved wrong then you become a fool in the eyes of all involved.

The only way out of this situation is to admit your hateful feelings to the Creator God, asking Him to change your heart from hatred to love for the person who is the object of your hate.

Proverbs 10:19 [NIV] *“When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.”*

Two scriptures in the New Testament should be read in conjunction with these verses.

Matthew 12:36-37 [NIV] *“But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”*

Every word we intend to speak should first be meditated on to evaluate what the effect and response will be on the person or persons who hear them.

Hebrews 4:12 [NIV] *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”*

This refers directly to God’s Words but our own generated word can have a similar effect on the person receiving them. Very powerful.

Our words are something that we should use with great care because of the damage it can do to another person.

Proverbs 10:20 [NIV] *“The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value.”*

“Choice” – Hebrew word “bâchar” meaning selected, acceptable, tried.

This indicates they were thought through before being uttered, coming from our refined heart, that is a positive attitude of mind. In contrast the ungodly person has little concern as to how their words affect those who receive them.

Proverbs 10:21 [NIV] *“The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment.”*

“Nourish” – Hebrew “rââh” meaning to make friends with, to pastor others, shepherd others.

“Fool” – Hebrew “ĕvîyl” meaning silly and perverse.

“Judgement” – Hebrew word “lêb” meaning feelings or intellect, understanding.

Always consider how we use words for they are powerful for good or evil, and how we use them will decide the outcome.

Proverbs 10:22 [NIV] *“The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it.”*

It is only the wealth that God brings to us that will be without regret, and loss of sleep and health.

Psalms 127:2 [NIV] *“In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat, for he grants sleep to those he loves.”*

When God blesses the work we are doing, if it is guided by the love for others, we prosper without pain.