

# The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

## [Part 13]

**Proverbs 11:15** [NIV] *“He who puts up security for another will surely suffer, but whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge is safe.”*

This is a repeat of **Proverbs 6:1-5** just in case we forgot what had been previously told to us.

**Proverbs 11:16** [NIV] *“A kind-hearted woman gains respect, but ruthless men gain only wealth.”*

The Hebrew translated “*kind-hearted*” is “*chên*” which also means gracious and precious. The cruel or tyrannical man is not respected, he only has his wealth.

**Proverbs 11:17** [King James] *“The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.”*

The Hebrew in this verse does not personalise the man but refers more to his family. The cruel head of the family is vexation to the very family that he should be caring for.

**Proverbs 11:18-19** [NIV] *“The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward. The truly righteous man attains life, but he who pursues evil goes to his death.”*

The wages of the wicked man is deceptive because it will not benefit him forever. [**Romans 6:23**]

The reward of the righteous is sure because it is eternal life.

**Proverbs 11:20** [NIV] *“The LORD detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose ways are blameless.”*

Nothing is more hateful to God, than hypocrisy and double-dealing which is indicated in this verse.

God delights in people whose goal and direction in life is to act with truth, integrity and sincerity which is the full meaning of the Hebrew word used “*tâmîym*.”

**Proverbs 11:21** [King James] *“Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.”*

Joining with other people who are sinning will not protect you from the wrath of the Creator God.

The children of those who are justified by the Creator God will be preserved by God escaping the bad influence that the wrath of God will bring on the children of the wicked. [**Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18**]

**Proverbs 11:22** [NIV] *“Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.”*

Physical attraction without discretion soon wears thin. We are to seek those character strengths that help us make wise decisions. Not everyone who looks good is pleasant to live or work with because their beauty makes them self-centred and self-opinionated.

While taking good care of our body and appearance is not wrong, we need also to develop our ability to think and act in a wise way.

**Proverbs 11:23** [NIV] *“The desire of the righteous ends only in good, but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.”*

The second part gives us a clue to what the first part is concerned with, namely the outcome under the judgement of the Creator God.

We must have this end of all our thoughts, words and actions in mind constantly. [**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**]

**Proverbs 11:24-26** [NIV] *“One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. People curse the man who hoards grain, but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell.”*

The overall teaching of these two verses is that the Creator God, in both physical and spiritual things, deals with people according to the way in which they deal with other human beings. [**Matthew 6:14-15; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9**]

**Proverbs 11:27** [NIV] *“He who seeks good finds goodwill, but evil comes to him who searches for it.”*

With the Creator God there are no “grey” areas. If you are **not** doing good then what you are doing is bad. Those who seek the goodwill for others will find God’s favour. Those who are bringing trouble on others will receive more than they bargained for of trouble themselves. What you seek for others you will receive yourself!

**Proverbs 11:28** [NIV] *“Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.”*

A true Christian believer is a branch of the living vine producing good fruits of the Holy Spirit.

**John 15:5-8** [NIV] *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

If our life is **not** centred around Jesus Christ’s words and actions we are rooted in this world and will wither and die.

**Galatians 5:22-23** [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

These are the lasting fruits that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, can produce in us.

**Proverbs 11:29** [NIV] *“He who brings trouble on his family will inherit only wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise.”*

One of the greatest blessings the Creator God has given to humanity is the family.

A Christ-led family can provide for its members acceptance, encouragement, guidance and counsel.

Bringing trouble on your family through carelessness, uncontrolled anger or through an exaggerated desire for independence, can cut you off from all the blessings family life can bring. In our family we should strive for healing, communication and understanding.

The fool lacking Godly Wisdom will end up being subject to those who act out of Godly Wisdom.

The Hebrew word translated “fool” is “*ēvîyl*” meaning silly or perverse.

**Proverbs 11:30** [NIV] *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.”*

The Godly wise person is a model of meaningful life. Like a tree attracts people to its shade when life gets “hot.” Or like the fruits of a tree support and nourish the life of many. So the living example of a Christian who applies Godly Wisdom in their lives can nourish the spiritual lives of others.

Gaining Godly Wisdom ourselves can be the first step in leading people to Jesus Christ.

Leading people to God is important because it keeps us in touch with God while offering others the path to eternal life.

**Proverbs 11:31** [NIV] *“If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner!”*

Even the righteous, when they offend as human beings receive sharp course correction from the Creator God, [**Hebrews 12:5-13; Proverbs 3:11-12**] much more will the wicked be rewarded for their sins. [**Romans 6:23; Hebrews 10:26-27; Galatians 6:7**]

Let us then in true humility accept the sacrifice that our Saviour Jesus Christ made for all humanity. [**John 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4**] Then seek to copy Jesus Christ’s example and keep His commandments, thus being a light to this world. [**Matthew 5:14-16**]

**Proverbs 12:1** [NIV] *“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.”*

If you want to be taught, there is no end to what you can learn. But all teaching includes accepting discipline and correction.

A person who rejects constructive criticism or correction, especially from God’s Word the Christian Bible, has a problem with personal pride and is unlikely to learn very much.

The Hebrew word translated “stupid” is “baar” meaning brutish, that is **not** using the God-given human spirit that separates us from all other animals and offers us intellectual understanding.

**Proverbs 12:2** [NIV] *“A good man obtains favour from the LORD, but the LORD condemns a crafty man.”*

The Hebrew word translated “good” is “tôwb” meaning bountiful, kindness and cheerful.

The Hebrew word translated “crafty” is “mezimmâh” a person who plots mischievous acts and thoughts. This could be said of a person who covers selfish and vicious designs under a profession of being religious or a friend.

**Proverbs 12:3** [NIV] *“A man cannot be established through wickedness, but the righteous cannot be uprooted.”*

This is a repeat of the teaching found in **Proverbs 10:25**. To be established in life is a sign of being successful and comes **only** to those who do what is right, **not** by cheating or ignoring family commitments, mistreats his workers but profits from their labour. Such apparent successes are only temporary, achieved at the expense of personal character.

Cheaters grow more and more dishonest and those who hurt others become callous and cruel, leading to more sinful lives.

Real success maintains personal integrity. If we are **not** a success within God’s standards, we have **not** achieved true lasting success.

**Proverbs 12:4** [King James] *“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.”*

The virtuous wife is very extensively expanded in **Proverbs 31:10-31** with the character of a wife “par excellence”. Such a woman is an honour and comfort to her husband.

Any wife who is the reverse of this perfection is very detrimental to her husband and family.

**Proverbs 12:5** [King James] *“The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.”*

Thoughts are not unknown, they are all under the knowledge of the Creator God, therefore under His judgement. [**Psalms 139:1-5**] The Hebrew word translated “counsels” is “*tachbûlâh*” meaning management or plan which comes from a root word “*châbal*” which means to pervert or destroy by a pledge.

All this shows total self-interest on behalf of such a person.

A total contrast to the thoughts of the person who is guided by God’s Wisdom are “right” – Hebrew “*mishpât*” meaning a favourable verdict or decision.

**Proverbs 12:6** [King James] *“The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.”*

Very often the thoughts and words of a wicked person are like an ambush for other people they are dealing with, but the words of a person who knows God’s Wisdom can deliver them from the trap.

**Proverbs 12:7** [NIV] *“Wicked men are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous stands firm.”*

Another assurance that the instability of the wicked person, now and in the final judgement. In contrast God’s blessing will often extend to future generations of the Godly person.

**Proverbs 12:8** [NIV] *“A man is praised according to his wisdom, but men with warped minds are despised.”*

The wisdom that is in mind in this verse is the kind that Abigail displayed [**1 Samuel 25:2-31**]. Such application of humble wisdom brought Abigail the great respect of King David, and honour when after the death of her husband King David made her his wife. [Good move David!]

In contrast the inability of a person, devoid of Godly Wisdom, to think straight and make wise decisions, earns such a person disrespect.

**Proverbs 12:9** [NIV] *“Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food.”*

A person who is, as far as society is concerned, of humble standing. But is hard working enough to give employment to another person, is happier than a person who boasts in high birth and wears fine clothes but lacks the basics of life.

**Proverbs 12:10** [NIV] *“A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.”*

The fact that a righteous person is concerned with the welfare of their domestic animals, [**Genesis 1:27** – the word dominion includes welfare of these animals] shows they are considerate to all other human beings as well. The wicked person is only concerned with themselves and their own welfare.

**Proverbs 12:11** [NIV] *“He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.”*

Honest labour will bring solid achievement, but following “*get rich quick*” ideas are full of promises that do **not** arrive.

**Proverbs 12:12** [NIV] *“The wicked desire the plunder of evil men, but the root of the righteous flourishes.”*

The wealth that comes as a result of ungodly practices, for example of drug trafficking and pimps of prostitution, has a fascination to others without the influence of the Creator God in their lives. In contrast those who have, and live by, God’s Wisdom are rooted in a life that is eternal. Also the wicked can only look forward to harsh judgement from the Creator God.

**Proverbs 12:13** [NIV] *“An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk, but a righteous man escapes trouble.”*

For better or for worse our words give us away, reveal our true motives and character.

**Matthew 12:35-37** [NIV] *“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.”*

“Careless” refers to words which were **not** first considered the impact they will have on those who hear them.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** [NIV] *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

A major thing that we do “*while in the body*” is to talk!

Sinful talk can be twisting the facts to support our claims.

Such people are likely to be trapped by their own lies when the truth is revealed.

A person who always tells the truth, the facts plain and untarnished, gives an unshakeable defence.

If we find that we often have to defend our actions to others, maybe our honesty is less than it should be.

**Proverbs 12:14** [NIV] *“From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him.”*

Words can bring us a substantial return as deeds, for they establish relationships and implant ideas.

When we use our words aright, to teach the truth, as found in God’s Word the Christian Bible, or comfort others from same source, we in measure fulfil the reason for our being Christians, and the reason for being created as human beings. [**Philippians 2:4**]

**Proverbs 12:15** [NIV] *“The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.”*

**We show ourselves as wise when we listen to reason and test ourselves for prejudice.**

The person who always knows best may be the only person who is unconscious of their real name, a fool!

**Proverbs 12:16** [NIV] *“A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.”*

A foolish person is soon angry and is hasty in expressing it. As a result such a person is constantly in trouble because of their lack of self-control.

It is a kindness to ourselves to make light of insults and affronts. Such a positive response will achieve positive results. [**Proverbs 15:1**]

**Proverbs 12:17** [NIV] *“A truthful witness gives honest testimony, but a false witness tells lies.”*

It is good for all of us to dread and detest the sin of lying, for we are doing the work of Satan for him [**John 8:44**]. The true Christian follows the example of our Saviour Jesus Christ. [**John 14:6; John 17:17**]

**Words are the evidence of our real character.**

**Proverbs 12:18** [NIV] *“Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”*

The Hebrew word used for speaking is not positive. *“Pûwach”* means to lay a snare, to kindle a fire or to scoff. We are talking about whisperings and evil surmises, such words divide and destroy relationships. The Hebrew also contains the idea of rashness, almost to blurt out the words without thought.

In contrast words that are thought out first and controlled have great healing powers to any relationship that is under stress.

**Proverbs 12:19** [NIV] *“Truthful lips endure for ever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.”*

The simple idea being presented in this statement is that only truth is eternal.