

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 15]

Proverbs 13:17 [NIV] *“A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.”*

For this to be understood we must consider this proverb on a spiritual level. The word “messenger” in Hebrew is “*malâk*” referring to ambassador, prophet or angel.

“*Falls*” is Hebrew “*nâphal*” meaning presents message in a negative way for it also means divides and causes a falling-away.

“*Trouble*” is Hebrew word “*ra*” meaning evil, adversity, calamity, sorrow and affliction.

“*Trustworthy*” is Hebrew word “*âman*” referring to a person who supports, fosters, is true and builds us up.

“*Envoy*” is Hebrew word “*tsâyr*” meaning a herald or messenger.

“*Healing*” is Hebrew word “*marpê*” meaning curative, remedy or deliverance.

The two messengers are judged by the results of the message they bring to people.

The messenger who brings a message that is false to the teaching of Jesus Christ, will in the end lead us into trouble if we follow them. This is a false message from Satan’s ministers.

The messenger who brings a message that is true to the teaching of Jesus Christ will bring to us deliverance from falsehood and a remedy for our sin-filled life, a message from God.

These two messengers may **not** be clearly distinguished at first sight, only the results of our activating their message will distinguish the spirit that is motivating their message.

2 Corinthians 11:10-15 [NIV] *“As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”*

One messenger or prophet is motivated by the spirit of Satan, but the other messenger or prophet [teacher] is empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1 John 4:1-3 [NIV] *“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognise the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.”*

We have in the world today many false prophets driven by spirits that are **not** faithful to the Creator God [called in scripture Satan and his demons]. The key to unveiling their false message is how they preach Jesus Christ.

Do they preach Jesus Christ as the Son of God who became a human being on earth for a period of time and who will return again as King of kings as well as our only Saviour?

Do they preach Jesus Christ as the **only** Head of the true Church of God, or do they make a human man to be the head of the Christian Church and able to forgive sins?

Do they preach Jesus Christ as our only Saviour from sin or only one of many other equal prophets who came into the world?

We follow One for true deliverance from sin and our only Saviour Jesus Christ, and Son of God.

Or do we follow any of the others, who are but human, and will only lead us into adversity, sorrow, affliction and eventually eternal death?

The choice is ours and ours alone. Don't allow anyone else force you into leading one or the other.

Just consider what the Word of God, the Christian Bible, tells us is the end outcome which we choose, life or eternal death!

Proverbs 13:18 [NIV] *“He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honoured.”*

This is telling us that we should welcome discipline from the Creator God for our own benefit and all who come in contact with us.

Criticism, a form of discipline, needs to be valued according to the character and motivation of the person giving it.

Hebrews 12:5-11 [NIV] *“And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: ‘My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.’ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”*

Discipline is **not** easy, it means we have to eradicate our personal pride and humble ourselves. But the end product is well worth all the pain involved.

Proverbs 13:19 [NIV] *“A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but fools detest turning from evil.”*

Whether what is longed for is good or bad depends on the nature of the desire, **not** all goals are worth pursuing.

When we set our heart on something, we may lose our ability to assess its real value. With our desire blinding our judgement we may proceed with an unwise relationship, a wasteful purchase or a poorly conceived plan.

The fool is a person who does **not** assess the spiritual value of what we desire. Will it help us to mature as a Christian and help us to serve others in their path to seek and find their Saviour?

This may seem very narrow in the choice of what we purchase or desire, but it is the only way to lasting fulfilment and joy in life.

Part of our fulfilling the command of Jesus Christ found in **Matthew 6:33**.

Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 [NIV] *“I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labour. Yet when I surveyed*

all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.”

Even Solomon learnt that desiring physical goods and experiences **cannot** bring us lasting fulfilment, eventually we have to realise they will soon become meaningless.

Proverbs 13:20 [NIV] *“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”*

Education by friendship is **not** always the best way.

Multitudes of people are brought to personal ruin by the bad company they keep.

There is a saying that *“a rotten apple spoils the whole barrel”* and it is applied to friendship with a good reason. Our friends and associates affect us, sometimes profoundly. We need to spend our time with people we would like to aspire to in good character.

When most people need advice they usually go first to their friends, but this is **not** always a good move.

Our friends are usually so much like us that they may **not** have any answers that we haven't already considered in our own minds.

Instead we should seek out older and wiser people to advise us.

Wise people who have experienced a lot of life and have also been successful in every aspect of life, especially the area we need to be advised on.

Such people will **not** be afraid to tell the truth, especially if they are people who have looked to God's Word, the Christian Bible, as the source of true wisdom.

Such people can help us to avoid the pitfalls that could be ahead.

Outside of such a decision we could suffer harm.

Proverbs 13:21 [King James] *“Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed.”*

When God pursues sinners He is sure to overtake them and reward them for their rebellion against His laws of love.

God also rewards those who follow His way of life as expressed in the teaching and life of His Son Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 13:22 [NIV] *“A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.”*

It is because a servant of God is **not** anxious about personal riches that they are able to leave a physical inheritance to their children and grandchildren.

But far more important a servant of God who has matured in Christian character can leave a priceless example for the two generations they will have contact with in their lives.

The sinner is always motivated by self-interest so they take **no** thought for the welfare of future generations, this is where God may step in to redress the balance.

Luke 12:13-21 [NIV] *“Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ Jesus replied, ‘Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?’ Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not*

consist in the abundance of his possessions.’ And he told them this parable: ‘The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’” But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God.”

Planning for retirement, preparing for life before death is wise, but neglecting life after death is disastrous. If we accumulate wealth only to benefit ourselves, with no concern for helping others, we will enter eternity empty-handed.

Philippians 4:11-13 [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

Contentment is part of Christian maturity, but is something we have to learn.

The secret of learning this contentment is in the last words of this quotation. If we are faithful to Jesus Christ and the work He has given to us in life, He will provide for all our needs, that fall within the area of our continual contentment.

Proverbs 28:8 [NIV] *“He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.”*

God redirecting wealth of a person who does **not** have the love and compassion for others that we all should express.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 [NIV] *“To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”*

Those who please God are people who look on each day as a gift from God, thanking Him for it and seeking to serve Him in it.

Proverbs 13:23 [King James] *“Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.”*

This proverb may be taken to mean two different things. a) The poor are often victims of injustice. A poor man’s soil may give abundant crops but unjust laws may rob him of his own produce. b) The word “judgement” Hebrew “*mishpât*” can mean “discretion.” [As translated in **Isaiah 28:26** in a similar context of good husbandry] which means that because of a lack of wisdom, he does **not** receive the full potential he could from the good soil.

It is **not** the size of our assets that matters but the wisdom applied to their use.

Proverbs 13:24 [NIV] *“He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”*

This proverb is expanded in **Hebrews 12:5-11** where it draws attention to the imperfect motives of human father.

All discipline must be done promptly and from the motive of love for the child.

The greatest responsibility that God gives to parents is to nurture and guide their children. Lack of discipline puts parents love in question, because it shows a lack of concern for the character development of the child.

Disciplining children when young averts long-term disaster.

Without discipline, children grow up with **no** clear understanding of right and wrong and with **little** direction to their lives.

Don't be afraid to discipline your children for it is an act of love.

Remember, however, your efforts **cannot** make your children wise, they can only encourage your children to seek Godly Wisdom above all else in their lives.

Proverbs 13:25 [King James] *“The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.”*

This proverb is **not** about physical food but spiritual food, God's Word. The wicked person is one whose life is wrong, heading in wrong direction [Hebrew “*râshâ*”] because of the lack of Godly Wisdom.

It is the misery of the wicked, that even their sensual appetites are always craving for more. The righteous feeds on God's Word, the Christian Bible, satisfying their soul [Hebrew “*nephesh*” meaning complete life] with the promises of the gospel message, and Jesus Christ, who is the Bread of Life. [John 6:32-35, 38, 50, 58]. This is why the wicked go hungry of the “*bread*” that satisfies the whole person.

Proverbs 14:1 [NIV] *“The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.”*

The Hebrew word translated “*wise*” is “*chokmâh*” meaning skilful wisdom [Proverbs 31:10-31]. The word “*house*” Hebrew “*bayith*” in the vast amount of cases is referring to the family in the building. So we are talking about family break-up that is the result of the foolish [Hebrew “*êvîyl*” meaning perverse or silly] woman's lack of wisdom.

The woman who has **no** fear of God, who is wilful and wasteful, and indulges her ease, will certainly ruin for her family.

Proverbs 14:2 [NIV] *“He whose walk is upright fears the LORD, but he whose ways are devious despises him.”*

This is about people's attitude towards the Creator God. One is of realism the other foolishly lacks realism and is foolish. [Psalm 14:1] The fear of God allows God to impart wisdom to a person [Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10] but the devious [Hebrew “*lâwz*” meaning perverse] will close their mind to being moulded or educated by the Creator God.

Every departure from God's path in life is a pitting of our will, and a backing of our own judgement against God's. A total contempt for the One who has given and sustains our life.

Proverbs 14:3 [NIV] *“A fool's talk brings a rod to his back, but the lips of the wise protect them.”*

The words we utter always come back to us in some form. It is the pride of the fool that brings the rod of correction to their back. [Proverbs 10:13; Proverbs 26:3]

Well-considered words can avoid the response of correction.

Proverbs 14:4 [NIV] *“Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest.”*

Where there are **no** oxen to cultivate the land, the food trough for the animals and food for the family will be lacking. This is talking about readiness to accept a mess to clear up from oxen, is the price for growth.

The only way to keep our lives free from other people's problems is to keep clear of other people. But if our life is empty of people, it is useless. Living only for ourselves causes our life to lose its meaning as a Christian.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

A living sacrifice is to use our time and substance to serve the needs of others. This is the **only** way we can truly express our thanks to God for all He has done for us in Jesus Christ His Son.

Proverbs 14:5 [NIV] *“A truthful witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies.”*

Applying this to Christianity, what type of witness does our life give as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Do we exhibit our faith in words and actions? Or do we give a false image of a Christian to all who know us and those we meet with on a day-to-day contact?

Remember that to lie in any circumstance is to be assisting Satan in his work of deception. [**John 8:44; Revelation 12:9**]

Proverbs 14:6 [NIV] *“The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none, but knowledge comes easily to the discerning.”*

We all know mockers, their personal pride causes them to scoff at every word of instruction and advice.

Such people will **never** find Godly Wisdom. To receive Godly Wisdom we have to be aware of our need and in humility ask God for it.

James 1:5-8 [NIV] *“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.”*

The Greek translated “double-minded” is “dis” meaning two and “psuchē” meaning spirit. That is the spirit of this world Satan [**2 Corinthians 4:4**] and the Holy Spirit of God.

The mocker is influenced by the spirit of this world, while the discerning person is influenced by God’s Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 14:7 [NIV] *“Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips.”*

It is wise to avoid a foolish person because too often we take on the character of people we spend a large amount of time with. Also as we have already seen there is **no** wisdom to be found in a fool’s mind or words.

Such an encounter would be empty of any value.

Proverbs 14:8 [King James] *“The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.”*

Every human being is on a journey in life. The wise person is one who fully understands the destination and how we make our way to that goal.

The fool has a false idea as to what life is for so will **never** find their way to the goal they haven’t got!

[Please download and study our article ‘Why Were You Born’ listed under the heading ‘The Delusion Of Evolution’]

Proverbs 14:9 [King James] *“Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.”*

Foolish and profane people consider sin a mere trifle. To be made light of rather than mourned over and repented of. In contrast the person who is seeking to live a life that is in harmony with the Creator God’s way of love, will find favour, Hebrew word “*râtsôwn*” meaning to be accepted and pardoned.

Proverbs 14:10 [NIV] *“Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no-one else can share its joy.”*

We do **not** know for example what stings the conscience of a rich sinner. Nor can the world know of the peace of mind and joy that is in the mind of a true justified Christian, even when outwardly they are suffering poverty and sickness.

Job 19:25-27 [NIV] *“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes, I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”*

Job knew of this after death experience could **not** be shared with anyone else.

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.”*

This also is a time when we will stand in isolation, a time others **cannot** share with us.

Proverbs 14:11 [NIV] *“The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish.”*

Sin has been the ruin of many great families, while righteousness often raises and strengthens even lowly families.

The Hebrew word translated “*destroyed*” is “*shâmad*” meaning to become desolate while the word translated “*flourish*” is “*pârach*” meaning to break forth with abundant blossom.

Proverbs 14:12 [NIV] *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”*

This proverb is repeated exactly in Proverbs 16:25 showing how important it is to Godly Wisdom.

The word translated “*right*” is “*yâshâr*” which is often a moral term, as in previous Proverbs. But in the context I think it’s other meanings of straight and convenient are a better translation, indicating a short cut to success as taken by those who are impatient of advice [**Proverbs 12:15**] or who wants to avoid hard work. [**Proverbs 15:19**]

If we are being offered easy choices this should make us take a closer second look.

The right choice often requires hard work and self-sacrifice.

Don’t be enticed by apparent short-cuts that seem to be right, they may end in death.

Eve was enticed by Satan to sin by being offered a short-cut to wisdom and becoming like the Creator God. [**Genesis 3:1-6**]