

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 17]

Proverbs 15:12 [NIV] *“A mocker resents correction; he will not consult the wise.”*

“Mocker” the Hebrew word “*lûwts*” means to make a mouth at, scoff, have in derision.

This is the attitude of a person who does **not** believe there is a Creator God and hence **no** time of judgement.

Such a person will consider it to be beneath them to consult with a person with Godly Wisdom.

Such a person is blinding themselves to the true condition of their spiritual life. [**Revelation 3:17**]

Even with this blinded attitude to reality, Jesus Christ wants to help them. [**Revelation 3:19-20**]

Proverbs 15:13 [King James] *“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.”*

The heart stands for the thoughts and attitude of a person. The Hebrew word translated “merry” is “*sâmêach*” meaning blithe, gleeful and rejoicing.

Obviously a time when everything is going fine in life.

“Sorrow” is Hebrew word “*atstsebeth*” meaning wounded from a root word meaning worry, hurt and pain.

The Hebrew word translated “broken” is “*nâkâ*” meaning stricken or afflicted. This is **not** negative when we consider other similar scriptures.

Psalms 51:17 [King James] *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”*

A proud spirit broken, Hebrew “*shâbar*” meaning to break open, to bring forth a new birth.

Such an attitude of mind is very pleasing to God.

The contrite, or humble heart and mind is also pleasing to our Creator God as it makes us open to His guidance. [**Isaiah 57:15; Isaiah 66:2**]

All such changes are in the atmosphere of sorrow or pain.

Proverbs 15:14 [NIV] *“The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.”*

A wise person seeks to gain more knowledge, thus growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. [**2 Peter 3:18**]

“Seeks” is the Hebrew word “*bâqash*” a very active word meaning to strive after, search out and procure.

“Feeds” is the Hebrew word “*rââh*” meaning to graze, nibble at like sheep, a very low-key approach.

Proverbs 15:15 [NIV] *“All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.”*

Verse 13 shows that our prevailing attitude of mind colours our whole personality.

This Proverb shows that it also colours our whole experience.

The Hebrew word translated “cheerful” is different to that in **v13**. “*Towb*” means bountiful, gracious, pleasant. The result of a serious **not** blithe attitude to life and the troubles we meet with. [**2 Timothy 4:6-8**]

The Hebrew word translated “feast” is “*mishteh*” meaning an extended banquet that goes on and on.

We **cannot** always choose what happens to us, but we **can** choose our attitude towards each situation. The secret to a cheerful heart is to fill our minds with thoughts that are pure and lovely. [**Philippians 4:8**]

Be sure we control all that we allow to enter our minds, for it will influence our attitude to life.

Proverbs 15:16-17 [NIV] “*Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil. Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred.*”

This is talking about our priorities, are they spiritual or temporal?

Wealth may bring us physical comfort but it is often accompanied with worry.

Poverty with contentment can bring us peace of mind.

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.*”

We take **no** physical things with us when we die except righteousness and our character.

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 something we have to learn and the key to this is our relationship with our Saviour Jesus Christ, whom Paul is referring to in this statement as “*him*.”

John 14:27 [NIV] “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*”

This peace of mind comes from the indwelling and working of the Holy Spirit in us. **v26**

Proverbs 15:18 [NIV] “*A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.*”

This Proverb is reminding us that **all** quarrels depend on people far more than on subject matter.

Matthew 5:9 [NIV] “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*”

The peacemaker brings to a quarrel an atmosphere in which dissension dies a natural death.

A patient person is one who is slow to become angry that not only prevents strife but appeases it, if kindled.

Proverbs 15:19 [NIV] *“The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.”*

The sluggard is contrasted with the upright or straightforward is a little unexpected.

There is however an element of dishonesty in laziness in a sluggard trying to sidestep the facts and their share of any work or load.

In the end the path of the sluggard is more difficult because of their way of life invites problems that the upright person doesn't have to face. [**Proverbs 4:25-27; Proverbs 20:4; Proverbs 24:30-34**]

The upright's path is like a wide road built on a firm foundation, so in the end a far easier way of life.

Proverbs 15:20 [NIV] *“A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.”*

This Proverb is similar to **Proverbs 10:1** without the ties of other people we can live perhaps a less painful life but immeasurably poorer in quality.

The family is the ideal unit in which we can mature as Christians by building loving relationships which will involve humility and sacrifice of all involved. Applying Godly Wisdom is a major part of building a right loving relationship.

Those who treat aged parents with contempt or neglect are showing themselves to be foolish.

Proverbs 15:21 [NIV] *“Folly delights a man who lacks judgment, but a man of understanding keeps a straight course.”*

“Folly” is the Hebrew word “*ivveleth*” meaning silliness or foolishness that is lacking “*judgement*” the Hebrew word “*lêb*” referring to feelings, kindness or intellect.

What may be called a “*practical joke*” too often does **not** consider the effect it will have on the other person involved. Such action can hurt deeply.

A person who has Godly Wisdom will think well before they open their mouth or act.

Proverbs 15:22 [NIV] *“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”*

We always need to seek all the advice we can from those who are experienced in what we are considering to do. It is fatally easy to shut out disquieting voices. [**Proverbs 20:18; Proverbs 24:6**]

People can, because of tunnel vision, be locked into one way of thinking and acting, closing their minds to any new options.

We need to be open to new ideas but we need to weigh suggested changes against the Godly Wisdom found in the Christian Bible. Our plans will then be stronger and more likely to succeed.

Proverbs 15:23 [NIV] *“A man finds joy in giving an apt reply, and how good is a timely word!”*

Words are a major part of our lives and we have many warnings in the Christian Bible about the misuse of words.

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.”*

A careless word is one that is uttered without forethought as to how it will be received by others.

John 8:44 [NIV] *“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*

Lies are the misuse of words and a major way in which Satan deceives this whole world. [**Revelation 12:9**]

This misuse of words started at the very beginning of human existence. [**Genesis 3:1-5**]

Titus 1:2 [NIV] *“a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,”*

All our hope for the future is founded on this short statement, which is in total contrast to the very character of Satan and all who misuse words and lie.

Proverbs 15:24 [RSV] *“The wise man’s path leads upward to life, that he may avoid Sheol beneath.”*

“*Sheol*” is the place of the dead, in many ways this can apply to the spiritual dead [**Romans 8:6; John 5:24; 1 John 3:14**], as well as physical death. Neither of these refer to the final “*second*” death from which there is **no** way back.

The physical dead can look forward to a resurrection.

The spiritual dead can change path through repentance and forgiveness.

Colossians 3:1-10 [NIV] *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”*

This is the way in life that will lead to our entry into the Kingdom of God at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth.

“*For you died*” is explained by Paul in **Romans 6:1-18**.

Proverbs 15:25 [NIV] *“The LORD tears down the proud man’s house but he keeps the widow’s boundaries intact.”*

Remember “*house*” in scripture mostly means family. A proud man is a poor example as head of the family to all his children and grandchildren.

The boundaries of the widow refer to the land and property that she inherited. [**Deuteronomy 19:14**]

A good example of God fulfilling this promise can be read in **1 Kings 21:1-29** where even Ahab the King of Samaria was **not** above the protection of a widow by God.

It is the nature of self-important proud people to take advantage of the weak, for example widows who have lost the support of their husbands.

Luke 20:46-47 [NIV] *“Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the market-places and have the most important seats in the synagogues and*

the places of honour at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

The scribes were like the modern-day solicitors who at times do **not** uphold the rights of widows but make life difficult for them.

Proverbs 15:26 [NIV] *"The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him."*

The Hebrew word translated "*thoughts*" is "*machāshebeth*" meaning conceived plans, or cunning purposes.

The same conceived plans of the "*pure*" Hebrew "*tâhôr*" meaning morally clean or fair are pleasing to the Creator God.

What we plan to do whether good or evil are judged by God even before they are executed.

Proverbs 15:27 [NIV] *"A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live."*

A covetous greed for gain of more and more prestige or physical possessions often tempts people into projects that lead to ruin for the family. [**Ephesians 5:5**]

Bribes in whatever form they come can confuse those who would otherwise judge fairly or make wise decisions [**Ecclesiastes 7:7**].

We hear of bribes being given to judges, police officers and witnesses.

Bribes are given to hurt those who tell the truth and to help those who oppose it.

Any person who is involved in extortion or takes a bribe is a fool, no matter how wise they thought they were beforehand.

It is said that "*everyone has a price*" but any true Christian **cannot** be bought at any price.

Proverbs 15:28 [NIV] *"The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil."*

The righteous person considers well the effect their words will have on those who receive them.

When the matter in discussion is of a spiritual nature we need to have taken action on the command a Christian has from the Creator God about our readiness.

1 Peter 3:15 [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,"*

We should always be ready and able to give in a gentle and respectful manner when asked about our faith and our lifestyle, or our Christian perspective.

Can others see your hope in Christ and are you able, from the Christian Bible, to explain the basis of that hope?

Without this knowledge and understanding brought to us by the work of the Holy Spirit in us [**John 16:13; John 14:26**] other people **cannot** understand our hope because it is spiritually discerned [**1 Corinthians 2:10-11**]

The wicked **don't** consider the impact of their words on others because they do **not** care what the impact does to others.

Proverbs 15:29 [NIV] *“The LORD is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous.”*

When we consider this Proverb we must remember that the Creator God is in a spirit world where time and distance do **not** exist. [**Psalms 139:1-16**]

The distance of God mentioned is talking about God’s response to the requests being made by human beings in prayer.

The Hebrew word translated “far” is “*râchôq*” that comes from a root word meaning removed in relationship. [**Isaiah 59:1-2**]

Remember it is **only** through Jesus Christ’s sacrifice that we can have a relationship with God the Father, for **only** then are our sins removed and the barrier they made between us and God.

Proverbs 15:30 [NIV] *“A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.”*

In harmony with New Testament thought.

The best Good News is that which Jesus Christ brought from God the Father and the reason for the existence of human beings.

This Good News will bring joy to all who understand it and make it central to their life.

Isaiah 52:7-10 [NIV] *“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’ Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.”*

This Good News from God was foretold by Isaiah including the extension in the predicted return of Jesus Christ. This is something we can really rejoice in, and have hope in.

Proverbs 15:31-33 [NIV] *“He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding. The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honour.”*

These are three Proverbs on teachability.

Like all things of eternal value, Godly Wisdom does **not** come to us easily. Involved in the process is unflattering correction [**v31**], but it is life-giving. Arduous discipline is required [**v32**] but this will bring us into the company of other wise people. [**v31**]

If we ignore this challenge we become unteachable and in this we will only harm ourselves. [**v32**]

We are shown the gateway to all Godly Wisdom, the awe and trembling respect towards our Creator God. [**v33**]

Only with this humble dependency on our Creator God will we be honoured to be counted among the Godly Wise.

The fear of the Creator God will prompt us to search His Word, the Christian Bible [**2 Timothy 3:16-17**] and follow the lead of the indwelling Holy Spirit. [**John 16:13; Galatians 5:25**]