

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 19]

Proverbs 17:1 [NIV] *“Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.”*

One of the Parables of Jesus Christ expands on this Proverb. [**Luke 12:15-21**]

Our lives have been given to us to develop character.

Genesis 1:26-27 [King James] *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”*

Every human being is created in the image of God [Hebrew means shadow, a recognisable image of the real], but **not** in the likeness [Hebrew means character, one for one with the Creator God.]

We are given human existence to develop this character with the assistance of the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit. [**Galatians 5:22-25**]

Please download and study our article ‘*Why Were You Born?*’ listed under ‘*Life*’ for an explanation of this subject.

It is only when we get our priorities right that we can experience this peace, [**Matthew 6:31-33**] not having to worry about all we need to live, if not what we may desire to possess.

The causes of strife are listed in God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

Hatred – **Proverbs 10:12**; Pride – **Proverbs 13:10**; Contentious spirit – **Proverbs 26:21**; Anger – **Proverbs 29:22**; Foolish questions – **1 Timothy 6:4**; Envy – **James 3:16**.

We are also shown how to avoid strife – **Proverbs 3:30**; **Proverbs 17:14**; **Proverbs 20:3**; **Proverbs 25:8**; **Proverbs 26:17**; **Philippians 2:3**; **2 Timothy 2:14**; **2 Timothy 2:24**.

Proverbs 17:2 [NIV] *“A wise servant will rule over a disgraceful son, and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.”*

Privilege can be an obstacle in the minds of those who are blessed in this way.

Judah and the Jews are privileged to have been given the Old Covenant as a way to have a relationship with the Creator God, [**Romans 3:1-2**] God’s children under the Old Covenant.

Yet because they do **not** accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Good News that He brought from the Father, the gentiles who accept Jesus Christ will be first in the Kingdom of God. [**Matthew 8:11-12**]

Proverbs 17:3 [NIV] *“The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.”*

Fiery trials in life can be constructive if we accept them in the right way.

James 1:2-4 [NIV] *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

It is under the pressure of trials in our lives that our true character is revealed.

God goes even deeper in revealing our true character by being able to see what motivates the things we say and do in life. [**Jeremiah 17:10; Jeremiah 23:44; Romans 8:27**]

Proverbs 17:4 [NIV] *“A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue.”*

If we reject evil words or the malicious statements they will as far as we are concerned die.

The end of liars is stated in **Revelation 21:8; Revelation 22:15**. If we are influenced by them we are joining them, and will end up in the same situation.

All such people are under the influence of Satan. [**John 8:44**]

Proverbs 17:5 [NIV] *“He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.”*

To grow into this monster a person has only to remain long enough as a spoilt child.

2 Timothy 3:1-4 [NIV] *“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”*

Prophetic description of the last days just before the return of Jesus Christ. Like the Proverb a world without the fear of the Creator God will sink to this rebellious and ungrateful society.

Romans 1:28-32 [NIV] *“Furthermore, since they did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practise them.”*

Because leaders, both secular and religious, have suppressed the truth [**v18**] by **not** preaching the truth and by being bad examples themselves. How true this is in this generation.

Proverbs 17:6 [NIV] *“Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.”*

This can only happen if the grandparents are a God-fearing example to their children and grandchildren.

Today because of a wrongly based society, the vast majority of family are broken up by having to move into areas where there is employment. Grandparents are seldom seen by the young grandchildren so can have little influence on their maturing. [**Micah 7:6-7; Isaiah 3:4-5**]

This is **not** the type of society God intended. In God’s model nation, ancient Israel, the society was based on agriculture where each family owned land large enough to sustain the extended family in food and clothing. In such an environment children and grandchildren walked side by side with parents and grandparents.

Please download and study our articles on ‘Agriculture’ for a glimpse of what the new world could be like after the return of Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 17:7 [NIV] *“Arrogant lips are unsuited to a fool, how much worse lying lips to a ruler!”*

A prince or leader is a person whom others should be able to look up to and follow as an example.

It only takes one lie to destroy that relationship. This is why there is such a bad relationship between political leaders and the people today, what they promise are proved to be lies.

The word translated “arrogant” is Hebrew word “yether” meaning to exceed, plentiful, abundant and eloquent.

A leader may be a good speaker but if it is based on lies it is the depth of foolishness. [**Leviticus 19:11; Colossians 3:9**]

Proverbs 17:8 [NIV] “A bribe is a charm to the one who gives it; wherever he turns, he succeeds.”

This Proverb describes the briber’s confidence in the versatile usefulness of his tool, “money talks.” Bribes may get people what they want, but The Bible clearly condemns using them. [**Exodus 23:8; Proverbs 17:23; Isaiah 1:23; Isaiah 5:23; Amos 5:12**]

Proverbs 17:9 [NIV] “He who covers over an offence promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.”

We should be willing to forgive others’ sins against us. Covering over offences is necessary to any relationship.

It is tempting, especially in an argument, to bring up all the mistakes the other person has made. As we grow to be like Jesus Christ, we will acquire God’s ability to forget the confessed sins of the past.

This Proverb shows an additional reason for having full control over our tongue. [**James 1:26; 1 Peter 3:10**]

Proverbs 17:10 [NIV] “A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool.”

A gentle reproof will enter, **not** only into the mind but into the heart of a wise person, prompting them to change.

It may take very painful correction before a fool [**Psalms 14:1**] will take any notice of their foolishness.

Proverbs 17:11 [NIV] “An evil man is bent only on rebellion; a merciless official will be sent against him.”

The Hebrew word translated “evil” is “ra” from a root word describing a person who is good for nothing and intent on breaking up anything that is good. Same word is used in conjunction with Satan and all he is seeking to do. Such a person’s attitude is so evil that God will hand them over to Satan for very powerful correction. [**1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:20**]

Proverbs 17:12 [Living Bible] “It is safer to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool caught in his folly.”

One of the most dangerous situations to find yourself in is to be in between a bear and her cubs.

Yet to expose a fool in their folly can cause them to become very angry and violent, for you have hurt their pride and self-esteem.

Proverbs 17:13 [NIV] “If a man pays back evil for good, evil will never leave his house.”

What we are considering is ingratitude.

Ingratitude towards God – **Luke 17:17-18; Romans 1:21; Ezekiel 16:17-18; Nehemiah 9:24-26.**

Ingratitude towards other human beings – **Genesis 40:23; Judges 8:35; 1 Samuel 25:21; Ecclesiastes 9:15.**

In all of these examples those who were ungrateful were corrected by God, that we may learn to be thankful. [**Psalms 100:4; Psalms 107:22; Colossians 1:12; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 2:7; Ephesians 5:20**]

When we fully realise the great love and mercy that God has for us, and that all our efforts at righteousness will only earn us eternal death because of our sins. [**Romans 6:23; Isaiah 64:6**] Our natural response should be to lay down our life for God to use, for this is the **only** way we can really show our gratitude for Him.

Romans 12:1-2 [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. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

This allows the Holy Spirit to mould us into a being that God will desire to share eternity with.

Proverbs 17:14 [NIV] *“Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.”*

A small difference between two people can if **not** checked at the beginning grow into strife that is beyond our control. A wise person will be well aware of this and act quickly. [**Proverbs 20:3; Philippians 2:3; 2 Timothy 2:14; 2 Timothy 2:24**]

Proverbs 17:15 [King James] *“He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.”*

In the corrupt world we see this happening especially among leaders and politicians.

The Creator God hates this attitude of mind and will in the end judge all who act in this way.

Isaiah 5:20 [NIV] *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”*

When people are **not** careful to observe the distinction between good and evil, destruction soon follows.

Malachi 2:7-8, 17 [NIV] *“‘For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction, because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,’ says the LORD Almighty.” ... “You have wearied the LORD with your words. ‘How have we wearied him?’ you ask. By saying, ‘All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them’ or ‘Where is the God of justice?’”*

It is the leaders, secular and spiritual, who have **not** spoken out against this corruption that God blames. [**Romans 1:32**]

Proverbs 17:16 [NIV] *“Of what use is money in the hand of a fool, since he has no desire to get wisdom?”*

Wisdom is **not** for sale to a fool, they cannot buy a packet of wisdom from the supermarket.

Godly Wisdom is of **no** use to a fool because they do **not** have will or mind to learn from wisdom, therefore it is of **no** value to them.

Isaiah 55:1 [NIV] *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”*

The key word in this statement is “*thirsty*”.

If we are thirsty for Godly Wisdom then God gives it to us freely.

Matthew 13:44 [NIV] *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”*

Godly Wisdom is part of our pathway into the Kingdom of God, the created family of God.

If we are to receive Godly Wisdom, or a place in the Kingdom of God, we have to be willing to sacrifice everything and work hard to receive them.

Digging up a treasure is like digging for the deep meaning of the words used in scripture and to apply the principles of effective study of God's Word, the Christian Bible.

Isaiah 28:10 [King James] *“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:”*

This is what we are doing in this study of Proverbs, allowing other scriptures to illuminate the particular scripture we are studying.

Also we are digging out the meaning and background of the words used in scriptures that we are studying, with help of Bible Concordances and Dictionaries.

Proverbs 17:17 [NIV] *“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”*

What kind of friend are you?

There is a vast difference between knowing someone well and being a true friend. The greatest experience of genuine friendship is loyalty, being available to help in times of distress or personal struggles.

John 15:13-16 [NIV] *“Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

The greatest and most perfect friendship we can develop is with our Saviour Jesus Christ, who will be there at all times to help, comfort and encourage.

James 2:23 [King James] *“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”*

The active faith that Abraham had in God, makes him a good example of our friendship with Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 17:18 [NIV] *“A man lacking in judgment strikes hands in pledge and puts up security for his neighbour.”*

This is **not** talking about our helping a friend in need, but a blind guarantee which may lead the recipient into rash decisions and bring both to ruin.

[Study **Proverbs 6:1-5** again for a full understanding of this subject]

Proverbs 17:19 [NIV] *“He who loves a quarrel loves sin; he who builds a high gate invites destruction.”*

The first part of this Proverb is talking about a person who has a contentious nature.

Proverbs 26:20-21 [King James] *“Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.”*

Strife is the end product of both gossip and contentious nature.

The second part of the Proverb is talking about a person who is living beyond their means or is seeking self-exaltation as a result of their pride. [**Proverbs 25:6-7; Matthew 23:12**]

This self-exaltation and pride was the downfall of Satan. [**Isaiah 14:13-14; Ezekiel 28:11-17**]

In the same way such an attitude of mind can lead to our downfall.

Proverbs 17:20 [NIV] *“A man of perverse heart does not prosper; he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble.”*

The Hebrew word translated “*perverse*” is “*iqqêsh*” meaning crooked, hence false attitude of mind.

Where we find this word in scripture it is often linked with stubborn rebellion, as in example of Eve and Adam in Genesis chapter three.

Many people have paid a high price also for an unbridled tongue. [**James 1:26; James 3:5-8**]

Proverbs 17:21 [NIV] *“To have a fool for a son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool.”*

With this Proverb we need to ask the question what was lacking in the parental training that caused this child to become a fool?

Proverbs 22:6 [NIV] *“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”*

Parental training is essential for a child to have wisdom when they become adult.

The husband and father in a family unit is ultimately responsible for the family including the training of the children. [**Ephesians 5:23; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6**]

In too many families the husband and father are **not** part of the family unit or have very little time to spend teaching the children because of pressures of work.

The result of the lack of male influence is foolish children who are wild and disobedient to any authority.

To teach and discipline children is to follow the example of the Creator God and how He deals with His potential spiritual children. [**Hebrews 12:5-11**]

Proverbs 17:22 [NIV] *“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.”*

One of the fruits of the indwelling and active Holy Spirit is joy, an inner joy that is not dependent on circumstances.

Such a joy in a Christian should reflect in their cheerfulness in life.

Cheerfulness is to –

Greet all we meet with welcoming words that are heartfelt.

Give others words of encouragement.

Show enthusiasm for the task at hand.

Always have a positive outlook on the future.

Such people are welcome as pain-relieving medicine.

John 16:33 [King James] *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”*

With this positive Good News of what Jesus Christ has done for all humanity, we have plenty to be cheerful about.

Proverbs 17:23 [King James] *“A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.”*

This Proverb can be taken in two ways, either receiving or giving a bribe, both are to be condemned.

A wicked person is ready to part with their money in the form of a bribe so they may **not** suffer for their crimes. Or a crooked judge may accept a bribe so that a guilty person goes free. Both are a perversion of justice. [Exodus 23:8; Isaiah 1:23; Isaiah 5:23; Acts 8:18]

Proverbs 17:24 [NIV] *“A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool’s eyes wander to the ends of the earth.”*

A prudent person keeps Godly Wisdom that is the Word of God, the Christian Bible, continually before their eyes, by daily study and meditation.

We then align our goals in life with God’s Will for us as human beings, to have the same loving character as He has.

Wisdom, honesty, patience and love may **not** feel exciting goals, but they will determine our eternal future.

The foolish person has big dreams and chases fantasies which have **no** basis for hope beyond this human life, making them very limited in time.

Proverbs 17:25 [NIV] *“A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him.”*

Foolish children despise the authority of their father and the tenderness of their mother, so bring grief and sadness to their parents. [Proverbs 10:1; Proverbs 29:16]

In the end it is the child who brings grief and sadness in their own lives.

Proverbs 17:26 [Amplified Bible] *“Also to punish or fine the righteous is not good, nor to smite the noble for their uprightness.”* [Deuteronomy 24:17; Ecclesiastes 3:16; Ecclesiastes 10:20; Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:17]

As this Proverb begins with “also” may indicate it was one paired with another such as **Proverbs 18:5**.

Proverbs 17:27-28 [NIV] *“A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.”*

The simple message once again is think before you speak, very important to an active Christian.

James 1:26 [NIV] *“If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.”*

One way to judge the purity of our Christian life.

1 Peter 3:10 [NIV] *“For, ‘Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.’”*

If as a Christian we pause to think before we speak we are less likely to say things that are **not** based on love. [Matthew 12:36-37]

The benefits of keeping quiet –

It is the best policy if we have nothing worthwhile to say.

It allows us the opportunity to listen and learn.

It gives us something in common with those who do have greater Godly Wisdom.

Make sure we pause to think and listen so that when we do speak we will have something worthwhile to say.