

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 22]

Proverbs 20:1 [King James] *“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”*

The warnings against drunkenness are many in God’s Word, the Christian Bible. As this Proverb states, we can be led astray by the misuse of alcohol.

Proverbs 23:29-30 is a very descriptive picture of the result of excess alcohol. [**Luke 21:34; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 5:18**]

Scripture also tells us that the right use of alcohol is physically beneficial to any human being.

1 Timothy 5:23 [NIV] *“Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.”*

Wine is valuable for good digestion of food.

Proverbs 31:6-7 [King James] *“Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.”*

The elderly person is assisted in physical ways by a small portion of strong drink to relieve the pains of a body that is wearing out.

Luke 10:34 [NIV] *“He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.”*

Wine is a good natural antiseptic.

Jesus Christ drank wine [**Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34**] and used the drinking of wine at a meal to be an often reminder of the sacrifice He made for all humanity. [**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**]

Ecclesiastes 10:16-17 [Amplified Bible] There is a proper time for the drinking of alcohol and feasting.

Proverbs 20:2 [NIV] *“A king’s wrath is like the roar of a lion; he who angers him forfeits his life.”*

A respect for those in authority is showing wisdom, by **not** provoking them to use their authoritative power.

How much more foolish then is it to provoke the wrath of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ, our eventual eternal judge?

Proverbs 20:3 [NIV] *“It is to a man’s honour to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.”*

To engage in quarrels is the greatest of follies. Yield, and even give up just demands, for the sake of peace.

Hebrews 12:14 [NIV] *“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no-one will see the Lord.”*

Peace is something we have to work at.

Romans 12:18 [NIV] *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

Make every personal effort to keep the peace and avoid strife.

Proverbs 20:4 [King James] *“The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.”*

This has a wide range of applications.

If we don't study we will fail the exam.

If we don't save we will **not** have any money to cover any unexpected financial needs.

Our Creator God wants us to anticipate future needs and to prepare for them. We cannot expect God to come to our rescue when we cause our own problems through lack of planning and action.

God has promised to provide all our physical needs [**Matthew 6:33**] but He also expects us to be responsible.

Proverbs 20:5 [King James] *“Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.”*

Though many able of giving wise counsel may remain silent yet a person who is discerning may be able to draw wisdom from them.

This can also mean that a discerning person can bring light to the deepest intentions of another person in spite of them putting up a deceiving façade.

Proverbs 20:6 [King James] *“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?”*

Many boast of their loyalty, but it is hard to find a person who will under all circumstances be absolutely trustworthy. [**1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Hebrews 3:5-6**]

James 2:14-17 [NIV] *“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”*

A person may boast that they have faith but it is only by their actions that their faith is proved to be true.

Proverbs 20:7 [King James] *“The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.”*

The greatest legacy that a father can leave for his children is the example of his integrity. The constant moral soundness, honesty and faithfulness to his promises.

Proverbs 20:8 [NIV] *“When a king sits on his throne to judge, he winnows out all evil with his eyes.”*

This ability, which is the application of Godly Wisdom, was the request that King Solomon made to God at the very beginning of his reign. [**1 Kings 3:9**]

Only Jesus Christ can be the perfectly fair judge. [**Isaiah 11:1-4**]

Proverbs 20:9 [NIV] *“Who can say, ‘I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin’?”*

No-one is without sin. [**Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23**]

Through God's Grace we can say we are less sinful than we used to be, but this is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. [**Isaiah 53:6**]

1 John 1:8-10 [NIV] *"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives."*

If God has forgiven us for our sins because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ being a substitute for our deserved death, why must we continue to confess our sins to God?

- a) We then agree with God that our sin truly is sin.
- b) Ensures that in **not** concealing our sins from God we are not concealing them from ourselves.
- c) Recognise our tendency to sin and constantly relying on His power to overcome sins. [**1 John 3:9**]

Proverbs 20:10 [NIV] *"Differing weights and differing measures, the LORD detests them both."*

The same subject of this Proverb is covered in **Proverbs 11:1; Proverbs 20:23; Deuteronomy 25:13-16**.

Why is God so angry against all who deal in false weights and measures?

Because such people are committing lies and that means they are allowing the spirit of Satan to influence their lives and are doing his work of deception for him. [**John 8:44; Revelation 12:9**]

1 Timothy 6:10 [King James] *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*

When the love of money causes us to use false weights and measures we can see how it leads to more sins.

Proverbs 20:11 [NIV] *"Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right."*

An important verse, revealing God's interest in children as such, **not** only as adults in the making.

Parents should continually observe their children so that they may guide them into the right direction in life. [**Proverbs 22:6; Proverbs 13:24; Hebrews 12:5-11**]

If we fail to guide the child in this way we are failing to show any love for that child.

Proverbs 20:12 [NIV] *"Ears that hear and eyes that see, the LORD has made them both."*

The implication is that what the ear listens to and what the eye rests upon, should be right and pleasing to our Creator God who gave them both to us.

The Hebrew word translated "hear" is "shâma" meaning to hear with the intention of obeying, and "see" is "rââh" meaning to consider and approve of what we are looking at.

Isaiah 6:9-10 [NIV] *"He said, 'Go and tell this people: 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.'"*

For the vast majority of people at this time it is **not** God's intention that they understand what God is doing through Jesus Christ and what His Word, the Christian Bible, is telling them.

These people will be given their chance of salvation, through Jesus Christ, in their resurrection at the time of the “*great white throne*” judgement. [**Revelation 20:11-13**]

Both now and in this future resurrection, salvation is **only** through God’s mercy as shown to us in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. [**Ephesians 2:1-10**]

Proverbs 20:13 [NIV] *“Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare.”*

This Proverb is continuing the theme of indolence as already addressed in **Proverbs 6:4, 9-10; Proverbs 10:5** and expanded in **Proverbs 23:21**.

This type of person is the end product of handouts by those who have worked hard to have excess to give to others.

Such an attitude of mind is seen in those who have made state welfare a way of life and it destroys any moral character they may have had before they depended on this way of life.

God has solved the problem of those who have made themselves poor by slothfulness or by bad decisions in a very different way.

If a person does not work then they should not eat, this is a great incentive to seek work. [**2 Thessalonians 3:10-12**]

But there is a second but more lasting solution found in the statutes of the Old Testament.

Leviticus 25:39-40 [NIV] *“If one of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave. He is to be treated as a hired worker or a temporary resident among you; he is to work for you until the Year of Jubilee.”*

This is a form of slavery, but with compassion and very practical outcome.

The person who has bankrupted their life is put in close contact with the successful person who has taken them into their family, so they can learn how to avoid making the same mistakes that brought them to poverty.

Deuteronomy 15:12-14 [NIV] *“If a fellow Hebrew, a man or woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing-floor and your winepress. Give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you.”*

At the end of this six year experience and training these people go free with all that is needed to start a new, successful life.

Such a solution has to be linked to an agricultural-based society where every family owns enough land to feed themselves. [Please download and study our articles under the main heading ‘Agriculture’]

Proverbs 20:14 [NIV] *“‘It’s no good, it’s no good!’ says the buyer; then off he goes and boasts about his purchase.”*

This is a warning to the inexperienced businessman, that there are some who are out to cheat you and will lie in order to do it.

This Proverb can also have a spiritual warning for us not to be deceived into selling our spiritual inheritance cheaply. [**Hebrews 12:16-17**]

Proverbs 20:15 [NIV] *“Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel.”*

This is an extension of the Godly Wisdom found in **Proverbs 3:14-15; Proverbs 8:10-11**.

Don't allow what is attractive to the eye, sparkling jewels, deceiving us into ignoring what has true value, the Godly Wisdom that we receive by spoken or written words of God, in the Christian Bible.

If we really believed the truth expressed in this Proverb, we would value the Word of God in a way it deserves and all that this world can offer us would lose its tempting influence.

Proverbs 20:16 [Amplified Bible] *“The judge tells the creditor, take his garment who is security for a stranger, and hold him in pledge when he is security for foreigners.”*

The twin **Proverb** is **27:13**. Such a person is a bad risk!

It is with great vigour that Proverbs warns us against giving unlimited liability as it is a form of gambling.

When the creditor is unknown some security must be taken.

Also read **Proverbs 6:1; Proverbs 11:15; Proverbs 17:18; Proverbs 22:26**.

Proverbs 20:17 [King James] *“Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.”*

If our life is being sustained by deceit, we will end up with what is far from nourishing.

The wicked are full of deceit, their words – **Psalms 36:3**, their counsels – **Proverbs 12:5**; their kisses – **Proverbs 27:6**; their houses – **Jeremiah 5:27**, their hearts – **Mark 7:22**.

All sin is deceitful by nature – **Romans 7:11; 1 Timothy 2:14; 2 Timothy 3:13; Titus 3:3; Hebrews 3:13**.

Once again Proverbs seeks to encourage us to focus on the end of our present actions.

Whether we believe it or not, we will be judged at the end of our life by what we do and think during those few short years.

Proverbs 20:18 [NIV] *“Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance.”*

The war that every human being wages is against evil, a spiritual war.

Ephesians 6:10-12 [NIV] *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*

Without spiritual counsel from God's Word, the Christian Bible, and spiritual strength from the indwelling Holy Spirit, we leave ourselves completely open to destruction. [**1 Peter 5:8**]

1 John 5:18-19 [NIV] *“We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”*

This is the only way we can be protected in this spiritual battle that most people have, perhaps without knowing it, already lost.

Proverbs 20:19 [King James] *“He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.”*

The Hebrew word translated “*flattereth*” is “*pâthâh*” meaning entice, persuade, delude, deceive.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-5 [NIV] “*For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:*”

No true Christian would ever use flattery to entice others to become Christians.

Jesus Christ was very open to all who sought to become His disciples that it would **not** be an easy life. [**Matthew 10:34; John 16:2; Matthew 10:21-23; John 17:14-16; Luke 14:26-27**]

Flattery is condemned often in God’s Word, the Christian Bible. [**Job 32:21; Psalms 5:9; Psalms 12:3; Proverbs 26:28; Proverbs 28:23; Proverbs 29:5**]

Proverbs 20:20 [King James] “*Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.*”

The modern habit is to evaluate the person rather than the office, that is to be respectful to one’s master or faithful to one’s partner if they evoke such a response, **not** because it is owed to them in their position.

The Old Testament law instilled the opposite attitude from childhood [**Exodus 20:12**] and the New Testament supports it. [**Ephesians 6:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:2; Mark 7:10-13**]

The Hebrew words translated “*obscure*” – “*tyshôwn*” meaning black, and “*darkness*” – “*chôshek*” meaning destructive death.

The scriptures relate darkness to punishment. [**Job 18:5; Matthew 8:11-12; 2 Peter 2:17; Jude 6**]

The scriptures also relate darkness to spiritual ignorance. [**Isaiah 9:2; Micah 3:6; Matthew 6:23; John 1:5; John 3:19; Romans 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:4**]

Proverbs 20:21 [King James] “*An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.*”

Why should an inheritance **not** in the end be a blessing? Simply what we have received without hard work to earn it will not be valued, so will **not** be wisely used.

Such riches can also give us a false sense of security. [**1 Timothy 6:7; Luke 12:15-21; Revelation 3:17-19**]

Proverbs 20:22 [NIV] “*Do not say, ‘I’ll pay you back for this wrong!’ Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.*”

Any form of retaliation is forbidden by the Creator God. [**Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 24:29; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Peter 3:8-12**]

Proverbs 20:23 [NIV] “*The LORD detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please him.*”

It is easy to cheat if we think that no-one else is looking, we forget that our Creator God is always well aware of what we are doing, even our thoughts and motives. [**Psalms 139:1-16**]

Dishonesty affects the very core of a person. It makes them untrustworthy and untrusting. Even the smallest portion of dishonesty contains enough poison of deceit to kill our spiritual life. [**Deuteronomy 25:13; Proverbs 11:1; Proverbs 20:14; Proverbs 21:6**]

Proverbs 20:24 [NIV] *“A man’s steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand his own way?”*

Our Creator God has a purpose in mind for every human being, but gives us the choice to be led by Him in that path of life or to reject Him. [**Psalms 37:23; Psalms 147:11**]

Many scriptures encourage us to look to Divine guidance in our life, the study of Proverbs is part of that Divine guidance.

[**Psalms 23:2; Psalms 25:9; Psalms 32:8; Psalms 48:14; Psalms 73:24; Isaiah 30:21; Isaiah 42:16; Luke 1:79; John 16:13**]

We are often confused by the events around us, but in hindsight we may see the Hand of the Creator God at work. We should trust God that He knows what He is doing in our lives. [**Psalms 119:133**]

Proverbs 20:25 [Amplified Bible] *“It is a snare to a man to utter a vow of consecration rashly, and not until afterwards inquire whether he can fulfil it.”* [**Ecclesiastes 5:1-7**]

We must **never** be impulsive in the promises we make to other human beings, but more so to our Creator God.

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 [NIV] *“Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words. When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfil your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfil it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the [temple] messenger, ‘My vow was a mistake.’ Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God.”*

We need to count the cost of what we are about to decide. [**Luke 14:26-30**]

Proverbs 20:26 [NIV] *“A wise king winnows out the wicked; he drives the threshing wheel over them.”*

This Proverb needs to be considered with **Proverbs 20:8** and **Proverbs 20:28** so that the whole aspect of strong but fair government is shown. We cannot just apply one Proverb in isolation.

Proverbs 20:27 [New Jerusalem Bible] *“The human spirit is the lamp of Yahweh searching the deepest self.”*

The “*human spirit*” is the life principle which God breathes into a human being after forming the body in the womb.

Genesis 2:7 [King James] *“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”*

This was the pattern for all human beings since Adam.

Job 32:8 [New Jerusalem Bible] *“There is, you see, a spirit residing in humanity, the breath of God conferring intelligence.”*

Only in humans, not animals.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 [NIV] *“and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.”*

This is what happens at our physical death. [**Acts 7:59**]

1 Corinthians 2:11 [NIV] *“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”*

Spiritual principles are understood only when the Holy Spirit enters the human spirit. [**1 Corinthians 2:11**]

This is one part of the human that science **cannot** understand because it **cannot** be seen or measured being spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:16 [NIV] *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”*

This can only happen through the active use of prayer and study of God’s Word, the Christian Bible. [**1 Thessalonians 5:23**]

James 2:26 [NIV] *“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”*

This is true both physically [**Ecclesiastes 12:7**] and spiritually. [**1 Corinthians 2:11**]

Proverbs 20:28 [Amplified Bible] *“Loving kindness and mercy, truth and faithfulness preserve the king, and his throne is upheld by the people’s loyalty.”*

The severity of **v26** is not enough, the essential pledged love of those who are in covenant with Him must be added. To fully understand this Proverb we have to lift it to the spiritual level with Jesus Christ being the King and Christians His people.

Matthew 26:26-28 [NIV] *“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”*

By His sacrificial blood Jesus Christ ratified the love covenant and extended mercy to all humans.

Proverbs 20:29 [Amplified Bible] *“The glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is their grey head, suggesting wisdom and experience.”*

Both young and old have their advantages, so let neither despise or envy the other. This is a Proverb to lift the reader above the unfruitful attitudes of envy, impatience and contempt which the old and the young may adopt towards each other. [**Ecclesiastes 12:1, 5; Isaiah 46:4; Titus 2:2-3**]

Proverbs 20:30 [Amplified Bible] *“Blows that wound cleanse away evil, and strokes for correction reach to the inner parts.”*

Severe rebukes sometimes do a great deal of good. But such is the corruption of human nature that we loathe to be rebuked for our sins, we tend to blame others or circumstances for our sinful actions. [**Genesis 3:10-13**]

If God uses severe afflictions to purify our hearts and fit us for His service, we have cause to be thankful because it shows His love for us. [**Hebrews 12:4-11; Proverbs 3:11-12**]

Isaiah 53:4-5 [King James] *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*

The paradox of what Jesus Christ, who was without sin, [**Hebrews 4:15**] took on Himself all the harsh correction that was due to us because of our sins, so we could be healed. [**Job 5:17; Job 23:10; Psalms 119:67; John 15:2; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Revelation 7:14**]