

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 24]

Proverbs 22:1 [NIV] *“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.”*

A good reputation is worth far more than a well paid job. In any service or manufacturing industry to obtain a good reputation is worth a great deal of very expensive advertising of your service or product. I know this from personal experience where I did very little advertising but had a regular flow of new customers that had been told of my quality of work for a just price by my old customers.

In scripture the “*name*” is synonymous with the character of the person. [**1 Samuel 18:30; Ecclesiastes 7:1; Acts 6:3; Acts 10:22; Acts 16:1-2; Acts 22:12; 2 Corinthians 8:17-18; 3 John 12**]

[Please download and study our article ‘*What’s In A Name*’ listed under ‘*Youth*’]

Proverbs 22:2 [NIV] *“Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.”*

Divine providence has so ordered it that some are rich and others are poor in material wealth, but all are guilty before God of sin. [**Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8**]

All humans equally need the Grace of God. [**Proverbs 14:31; Job 31:13, 15**]

James 2:5 [NIV] *“Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?”*

It is easier for a poor person to have faith in the Creator God than a rich person who considers themselves to be self-sufficient. [**Revelation 3:17; Romans 10:12; Galatians 3:28**]

Proverbs 22:3 [NIV] *“A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.”*

Scripture gives blind optimism its correct name, **not** faith but folly. [**Proverbs 14:15-16; Proverbs 27:12; Proverbs 6:6-8; Proverbs 24:27; Luke 12:33-34**]

God has given humans a wonderful mind and a guidebook for life and He expects us to use both.

Proverbs 22:4 [NIV] *“Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honour and life.”*

This verse with its close connection between humility, the sense of dependence expressed in piety and the fear of God, sums up several of the main lessons that we find in the whole book of Proverbs. [**Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 18:4; Luke 14:11**]

Psalms 37:11 [Amplified Bible] *“But the meek [Hebrew “ânâv” meaning humble] in the end inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”*

Matthew 5:5 [NIV] *“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”*

“*Meek*” is Greek word “*praiis*” meaning humble. [**Luke 14:11**]

Where there is fear of the Creator God, there will be humility and much to be enjoyed by this attitude of mind and spirit, future spiritual riches and eternal life.

Proverbs 22:5 [Amplified Bible] *“Thorns and snares are in the way of the obstinate and wilful, he who guards himself will be far from them.”* [**Proverbs 13:15; Job 18:5-11; Psalms 9:15; Ecclesiastes 10:8; Isaiah 8:11-15**]

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

The training prescribed is literally *“according to his [the child’s] way,”* implying, it seems, respect for the child’s individuality and natural talents, though not for his self will, see **v5** or **Proverbs 14:12**.

The stress is on parental opportunity and duty, the Hebrew word translated “train” is “*chânak*” meaning dedicated discipline, following the example of our Heavenly Father. [**Hebrews 12:5-11**] The time to start training is in the young formative years, the result of such course correction will be seen in the adult. This training should include the very important spiritual knowledge of why humans have been given life and time.

Proverbs 22:7 [NIV] *“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”*

Just as the rich too often oppress the poor, so the borrower, with equal forced dependence, is under constant obligation to the person from whom they have borrowed.

This shows just how important it is for every person to keep out of debt. [**Exodus 22:14**]

The New Testament views borrowing in a very different way, from the viewpoint of the one who is lending to those in need.

Matthew 5:42 [NIV] *“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”*

This is in the context of loving even our enemies.

Luke 6:32-36 [NIV] *“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners’, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”*

This is an extension of the statutes found within the Old Covenant. [**Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:35-37; Deuteronomy 23:19-20**]

Proverbs 22:8 [Amplified Bible] *“He who sows iniquity will reap calamity and futility, and the rod of his wrath, with which he smites others, will fail.”*

The time will come when all who use their power or control over others to oppress them will end.

This Proverb is chiefly encouragement for all the oppressed, to help them remember that there will be a time when those who oppress them will reap their own oppression as a reward. [**Job 4:8; Hosea 8:7; Hosea 10:13; Galatians 6:7-9; Matthew 13:30**]

Proverbs 22:9 [NIV] *“A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.”*

The person who seeks to relieve the needs and miseries of others will be blessed themselves.

This is the answer to all who say they cannot afford to be generous to those in need. [**2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Luke 6:38; Isaiah 58:10-11**]

Proverbs 22:10 [Amplified Bible] *“Drive out the scoffer and contention will go out, yes strife and abuse will cease.”*

What any institution or fellowship needs at certain times is not new laws or reforms, but the expulsion of a member. [**Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:18-20**]

Disagreement and contention sometimes arise not from facts of a situation but from a person with a wrong attitude who is out to make mischief, expulsion is the **only** way to deal with such a situation.

Proverbs 22:11 [The Living Bible] *“He who values grace and truth is the King’s friend.”*

God will be the friend of a person in whose nature there is no guile, this is an honour that any human being may enjoy.

Proverbs 22:13 [Amplified Bible] *“The eyes of the Lord keep guard over knowledge and him who has it, but overthrows the words of the treacherous.”*

God will always guard the truth, His Word, the Christian Bible, and all who seek to know the truth. God will also confuse the thinking and lives of all who attack the truth or withhold it from others.

Romans 1:18-21 [NIV] *“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

Although people may believe there is a God, they refuse to commit their lives to Him, to love and serve Him.

James 2:19 [NIV] *“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that, and shudder.”*

The demons know there is a Creator God but refuse to be subject to Him.

Belief in a God is of **no** use unless we seek to have a relationship with Him, through accepting Jesus Christ as our needed Saviour. An intimate relationship that will continue on into eternity. [**John 17:3**]

Proverbs 22:13 [NIV] *“The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion outside!’ or, ‘I will be murdered in the streets!’”*

The subject of laziness is covered in other Proverbs. [**Proverbs 18:9; Proverbs 24:30; Proverbs 26:13-16; Proverbs 6:9-10; also Ecclesiastes 10:18**]

In the New Testament the subject is elevated to a spiritual level.

2 Thessalonians 3:11 [NIV] *“We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies.”*

Condemned by Paul in his letter to the church in Thessalonica, as a spiritual danger within the church.

Hebrews 6:12 [NIV] *“We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.”*

The lazy person may lose out on their inheritance with Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 5:8 [NIV] *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”*

The slothful person talks about a lion in the street but forgets that the “lion”, Satan’s influence within them, is their real danger. Their own physical slothfulness could cause their spiritual death, for it takes physical and mental effort to resist Satan’s temptations.

Proverbs 22:14 [NIV] *“The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; he who is under the LORD’s wrath will fall into it.”*

This subject is vividly covered in **Proverbs 2:16-22; Proverbs 5:3-23; Proverbs 7:1-27.**

What is added in this Proverb is that God in His wrath may allow a person to fall into this deadly pit, as a form of correction.

Romans 1:24-28 [NIV] *“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is for ever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. 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.”*

“God gave them over,” this was done by a loving God who does **not** want any humans to lose out on salvation. [**2 Peter 3:9**]

Proverbs 22:15 [NIV] *“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.”*

Young people do foolish and dangerous things simply because they **don’t** understand the consequences. Just as our Creator God trains and corrects us to make us better people, so parents must discipline their children to make them learn the difference between right and wrong. Words are not always enough in discipline, as with God’s correction limited pain given out of love needs to be involved. [**Hebrews 12:11; Proverbs 13:34; Proverbs 19:18; Proverbs 23:13-14; Psalms 89:32**]

The stern tone of discipline of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, is offset by the affection and love that the Creator God has for all humans. Many parents are reluctant to discipline their children at all, even more so now in this generation because of misguided human laws. Some parents fear they will forfeit their relationship, that their children will resent them, or they will stifle their children’s development.

But rightly given correction won’t kill children and may prevent them from foolish decisions that could kill them.

Key to correct discipline is not to do it out of anger or frustration but out of love for the child.

First, before any physical correction, talk quietly to the child explaining why you are about to give physical correction, ensuring it is because you love them deeply.

Next, administer physical correction telling the child it is to impress the foolishness of their actions on their minds to avoid future similar mistakes.

Finally, hug the child and confirm your love for them.

Such discipline could even save the child from eternal death.

Proverbs 22:16 [NIV] *“He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich, both come to poverty.”*

There seems to be a double condemnation of exploiting the poor and currying favour with the rich.

To understand this Proverb we need to meditate on it with –

Proverbs 22:22-23 [NIV] *“Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the LORD will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them.”*

This is a message of hope to people who must live and work under unjust authoritarian leaders.

It is also a warning to those who enjoy ruling with an iron hand and accepting bribes from people wanting their favours. True leadership through kindness is more effective and longer lasting than leadership by force.

In God’s eyes riches bring with them great responsibilities for us to use them wisely.

Proverbs 22:17-21 [NIV] *“Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach, for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips. So that your trust may be in the LORD, I teach you today, even you. Have I not written thirty sayings for you, sayings of counsel and knowledge, teaching you true and reliable words, so that you can give sound answers to him who sent you?”*

What is being taught in these verses is the right use of Proverbs and demands much of the reader, if it is **not** to remain for them just a string of platitudes.

It is a call to the reader to review their response to all scripture not just these Proverbs.

Do we read with alert concentration? [**verse 17**]

How much is retained and ready to apply and pass on to others? [**verse 18**]

Do we receive it in the spirit in which it is given by God, to deepen our trust in Him? [**verse 19**]

Does our study guide our future decisions? [**verse 20**]

Does our study strengthen our grasp of the truth as found throughout God’s Word, the Christian Bible? [**verse 21**]

Does our study prompt us to pass on this Godly Wisdom to other people? [**verse 21**]

Proverbs 22:24-25 [NIV] *“Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.”*

God has built into human nature a proclivity to become like the company we keep, this is how our character is formed. For us to become like our Creator God we have to walk with or have within us His spirit, the Holy Spirit. [**Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25; 1 Corinthians 3:16; John 16:8, 13; John 14:17**]

In contrast if we keep company a hot-tempered person we gradually become like them.

This warning is found throughout the Christian Bible. [**Exodus 23:2; Exodus 34:12; Psalms 1:1; Proverbs 4:14; 1 Corinthians 5:9, 11; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 2 John 10; 2 Peter 3:17**]

Proverbs 22:26-27 [NIV] *“Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you.”*

These verses are telling us to be very slow, if at all, accepting the liability for another person's debt.

Read also with these verses **Proverbs 6:1-5**.

Never make reckless promises.

Proverbs 22:28 [NIV] *“Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.”*

In ancient Israel as they entered into the Promised Land it was divided and the boundaries marked out for each tribe. [**Joshua chapters 13-21**]

Moses had already warned the people that when they reached the Promised Land they shouldn't cheat their neighbours by moving landmarks to give themselves more land and their neighbours less. [**Deuteronomy 19:14; Deuteronomy 27:17**]

Changing political boundaries so that one group of voters benefits and another loses is a modern example of moving boundary markers.

While greed is the most likely motive for such a sin, [**Proverbs 23:10-11**] here the stress is on its highhandedness.

Proverbs 22:29 [NIV] *“Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.”*

Anyone who puts his workmanship before his prospects towers above those in adjacent verses. Examples are found in God's Word, the Christian Bible, of such promotion.

Joseph – **Genesis 39:4-6; Genesis 41:39-43**.

Jeroboam – **1 Kings 12:28**.

Mordecai – **Esther 6:1-11**.

Daniel – **Daniel 2:46-49; Daniel 5:30-31; Daniel 6:1-3**.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – **Daniel 3:30**.

Christians – all those prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as King of Kings – **Luke 21:34-36**.