

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 25]

Proverbs 23:1-3, 6-8 [NIV] *“When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony. Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive.” ... “Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies; for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. ‘Eat and drink,’ he says to you, but his heart is not with you. You will vomit up the little you have eaten and will have wasted your compliments.”*

These verses are talking about restraining our physical appetites for food, drink or social status. Many rich people have attained their wealth by using other people for their own gain. Invitations to join them may **not** be what they seem on the surface, but they are a means by which they wish to profit by a false friendship with you.

To envy or agree to join the lifestyles of such people may distract us from the real purpose of the life we have received from our Creator God.

Luke 12:22-23, 29-31 [NIV] *“Then Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.’” ... “And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.”*

This is how we get our priorities right. [**Luke 21:34-36; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 Peter 4:2**]

Proverbs 23:4-5 [NIV] *“Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.”*

Wealth is no less elusive than social prestige, both of which can be lost overnight, both are limited to this short physical life. [**Ecclesiastes 2:11; Ecclesiastes 4:4, 8; John 6:27**]

Proverbs 23:9 [NIV] *“Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words.”*

The Hebrew indicates a direct attempt to give wisdom to a foolish person, **not** their hearing it indirectly. [**Proverbs 9:7; Proverbs 16:22; Proverbs 26:4; Matthew 7:6**]

Proverbs 23:10-11 [NIV] *“Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless, for their Defender is strong; he will take up their case against you.”*

A repeat of **Proverbs 22:28**, and a warning that God is the champion of the fatherless.

Defender or Redeemer [King James] originally was the near kinsman who must come to the rescue of one who had fallen on hard times. [**Leviticus 25:25; Ruth 3:12-13; Ruth 4:1-10**]

The term applied to the Creator God in many Old Testament scriptures. [**Genesis 48:16; Exodus 6:6; Job 19:25-27; and many times in Isaiah chapters 41-63**]

Proverbs 23:12-16 [NIV] *“Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge. Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death. My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.”*

These verses indicate that Godly Wisdom is **not** lightly received but is the result of strict discipline and schooling.

Not lightly picked up. [v12]

Not lightly imparted. [v13-14]

A child will not only survive this type of discipline but will survive because it is given.

If a parent's firmness is vital, so is the child's own choice [v15-16]. Also vital is the underlying warmth of affection to be discernable to the child.

Proverbs 23:22-25 [NIV] *"Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding. The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!"*

When we add these verses to the above it shows the parents' deep concern for their children's future, longing for it to be guided by Godly Wisdom.

Here we find the practical outcome of the fifth commandment. [**Exodus 20:12**]

Proverbs 23:17-18 [NIV] *"Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off."*

These verses expose the simultaneous admiration and resentment which make up envy, springing from an undue pre-occupation with oneself and with the present. [**Psalms 37:1; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 5:26**]

The Godly wise person has their hope set on the future. [**Psalms 62:5; Proverbs 24:14; Philippians 1:20; Romans 8:24; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 John 3:3; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 6:18-19; 1 Peter 1:3**]

Proverbs 23:19-21 [NIV] *"Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path. Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags."*

Revelry is the quickest path to rags. [**Proverbs 20:1; Ecclesiastes 10:17; Isaiah 5:11; Luke 21:24; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 5:18**]

Habakkuk 2:15 [NIV] *"Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbours, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies."*

Drunkenness can lead to perverted sexual sins. [**Genesis 9:20-24; Genesis 19:30-38**]

Proverbs 23:29-35 [NIV] *"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. 'They hit me,' you will say, 'but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?'"*

A vivid description of the state of a person who has lost control of their life by excess drinking of wine or spirits. Such excess can become an uncontrolled addiction like any other drug.

Proverbs 23:26-28 [NIV] *“My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways, for a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well. Like a bandit she lies in wait, and multiplies the unfaithful among men.”*

Unchastity may be romanticised, but the hard facts are faithfully given in these verses. Placed in the context of drunkenness, which can lead a person into deadly perverted sex.

Such perverted sex, any outside of marriage between a man and a woman, leads to a captivity in which there is **no** unaided escape. [v27] Prostitutes, both female and male, are ruthless [v28a] and cause social disruption [v28b].

Scripture is full of warnings against such perverted sex as it leads to other sins. [**Leviticus 19:29; Leviticus 21:10, 13-15; Deuteronomy 23:17-18; 1 Corinthians 6:15-19**]

God through the prophet Hosea points out that it is because of the lack of spiritual education by the church leaders that perverted sex and with it other sins are so prevalent in society. [**Hosea 4:1-19**]

Proverbs 24:1-2 [NIV] *“Do not envy wicked men, do not desire their company; for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble.”*

This is a similar Proverb to **Proverbs 23:17-18** but enlarging on the character of the wicked people who are obsessed with all that is negative.

Proverbs 24:3-4 [Amplified Bible] *“Through skilful and Godly Wisdom is a house, a life, a home, a family built, and by understanding it is established on a sound and good foundation. By knowledge shall the chambers of its every area be filled with all precious and pleasing riches.”*

This is a very positive outlook on life in complete contrast to that of the wicked as referred to in verses 1-2.

Proverbs 24:5-6 [NIV] *“A wise man has great power, and a man of knowledge increases strength; for waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers.”*

This is a repeat of what was covered in **Proverbs 21:22; Proverbs 11:14; Proverbs 20:18**.

Luke 14:25-33 [NIV] *“Large crowds were travelling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ‘If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.’”*

Jesus Christ tells all who would become His disciples to apply Godly Wisdom of counting the cost of becoming a follower of Him. A true Christian life will involve building character [tower] and being involved in a battle against our enemy, Satan and his demons. [**Ephesians 6:10-18**]

This is the great spiritual power that a true Christian has by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 24:7 [NIV] *“Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the assembly at the gate he has nothing to say.”*

When it comes to Godly Wisdom a fool is out of their element, mainly because of their attitude of mind. [**Psalms 14:1**] Therefore they have nothing of value to say in the “gate,” that is the place

where the city rulers sit in judgement. [Please download our article 'Ancient Israel's Legal System' listed under the main heading 'Judgement']

Proverbs 24:8-9 [Amplified Bible] *“He who plans to do evil will be called a mischief-maker, the plans of the foolish and the thought of foolishness are sin and the scoffer is an abomination to men.”*

Both sayings show that public opinion sooner or later condemn these attitudes. [**Proverbs 24:24; Isaiah 32:7; Jeremiah 18:12; Ezekiel 11:2; Micah 2:1; Matthew 15:19; Romans 1:21**]

Plotting to do evil can be as wrong as doing evil because what we think determines what we will do. [**Matthew 5:28; Luke 6:45**]

Left unchecked, wrong desires will lead us to sin.

Proverbs 24:10-12 [NIV] *“If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength! Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering towards slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?”*

We are warned in these verses not to be a quitter. This can happen when under exceptional strain, where do we get the strength we need to carry on?

Philippians 4:13 [NIV] *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

From the indwelling of Jesus Christ in our lives.

By **not** avoiding our Christ-given responsibilities. [**Matthew 28:18-20; Isaiah 6:8; Acts 1:8**]

If we plead ignorance of these responsibilities we are very unlikely to receive any rewards from Jesus Christ on our judgement day before His throne. [**Psalms 135:1-4; Matthew 25:31-46; Galatians 6:7; Ephesians 2:10**]

Proverbs 24:13-14 [NIV] *“Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul; if you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.”*

Just as honey is pleasurable, so can be our seeking Godly Wisdom when we realise the reward it brings with us in addition to the eternal life we receive by faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ. [**Romans 8:24; Romans 15:4; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 John 3:3; Colossians 1:21-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17**]

Proverbs 24:15-16 [NIV] *“Do not lie in wait like an outlaw against a righteous man’s house, do not raid his dwelling-place; for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.”*

This is talking about the God-given resilience of the righteous. This appeal is to the only thing that a wicked person considers, their own interests. Any seeming victory the wicked person may have is never permanent for they are fighting against the Creator God.

Proverbs 24:17-18 [NIV] *“Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the LORD will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him.”*

v18 shows that **v17** is **not** optional, for our gloating may well be a more punishable sin than all the guilt of our enemy.

2 Samuel 1:17 [NIV] *“David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan,”*

Saul had caused much trouble for David, but when he died, David composed a lament for the king and his son. David had every reason to hate Saul, but he chose **not** to.

Instead David chose to look at the good Saul had done and to ignore the times when Saul had attacked him. It takes courage and love to lay aside hatred and hurt and to respect the positive side of a person, especially an enemy.

Paul warns the Gentiles against boasting that God had called them and **not** the Jews for salvation at this time. [**Romans 11:18-21**]

To gloat over the misfortune of others is to make yourself the avenger, putting yourself in the place of the Creator God who alone is the real just judge of all humanity. [**Deuteronomy 32:35; Psalms 94:1; Romans 12:17-21; Hebrews 10:30**]

Proverbs 24:19-20 [NIV] *“Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of the wicked, for the evil man has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.”*

This Proverb is similar to **Proverbs 23:17-18** and **Proverbs 24:1**. Please see the comments expressed on these Proverbs.

Proverbs 24:21-22 [NIV] *“Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious, for those two will send sudden destruction upon them, and who knows what calamities they can bring?”*

This is another assurance that the wicked are essentially unenviable when they provoke the wrath of the Creator God or His earthly representative the king. We are talking about civic duties. [**Ezra 7:26; Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14**]

Proverbs 24:23-26 [NIV] *“These also are sayings of the wise: To show partiality in judging is not good: Whoever says to the guilty, ‘You are innocent’, peoples will curse him and nations denounce him. But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come upon them. An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.”*

Basic principles within true Godly Wisdom are expounded in these verses. Here is the key to right judgement on all levels, interpersonal or in government and leadership.

A kiss on the lips is symbolic of true friendship, the result of being honest in all our dealings with other people.

To cover the truth is condemned in God’s Word, the Christian Bible. [**Proverbs 17:15; Proverbs 28:4; Isaiah 5:20; Ezekiel 13:22; Malachi 2:17; Romans 1:32**]

Proverbs 24:27 [Amplified Bible] *“Put first things first. Prepare your work outside, and get it ready for yourself in the field and afterwards build your house and establish a home.”*

If a person invests their money in a house while their trade or business is lacking funds, they may lose their source of income and with it their home. It is possible to work hard and still lose everything if the timing is wrong or the resources to carry it out are not in place.

Proverbs 24:28 [NIV] *“Do not testify against your neighbour without cause, or use your lips to deceive.”*

This Proverb is aimed **not** at the mere busybody but at a false accuser, that is an abomination to the Creator God, [**Proverbs 6:19**] and against the Law of God. [**Deuteronomy 19:18-21**]

The subject is extensively covered in Proverbs [**Proverbs 6:19; Proverbs 12:17; Proverbs 14:5; Proverbs 14:25; Proverbs 19:5, 9; Proverbs 21:28; Proverbs 25:18**]

The reason behind God’s wrath against all false witness is that it is totally out of godly character [**Titus 1:2**] and is helping Satan with his deceitful work. [**John 8:44; Revelation 12:10; 2 Corinthians 4:4**]

Proverbs 24:29 [NIV] *“Do not say, ‘I’ll do to him as he has done to me; I’ll pay that man back for what he did.’”*

No human being is qualified to take revenge on what has been done to them for only the Creator God knows all the details and motives. [**1 Thessalonians 4:6; Psalms 94:1; Deuteronomy 32:35-36; Ezekiel 25:17; Micah 5:15; Nahum 1:2; Romans 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; Hebrews 10:30**]

Proverbs 24:30-34 [NIV] *“I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.”*

Genesis 2:15 [King James] *“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”*

From the very beginning of human existence, work has been part of God’s Plan to build godlike character in human beings, the “likeness” of **Genesis 1:26**. Both God the Father and Jesus Christ work. [**John 5:17**]

Please download and study the articles on this website under the main heading of “work” for a fuller understanding of why work is so important for human beings.

Scripture gives great importance to work [**Proverbs 14:23; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12**]

In the above Proverbs we see illustrated the lack of work and life of a sluggard, a person refusing to work, also the outcome of such a life, all humans need to observe and learn from such a useless life.

One of the curses of modern life in the “progressive” nations is that the state in supporting sluggards, is destroying their character building and the end result is very visible in the rebellious and violent nature of all who lack any work ethic. Crime has increased and drugs replace the pleasure that is found in a job well done. Sloth and self-indulgence are the bane of all that is good.