

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 26]

Proverbs 25:1-5 [NIV] *“These are more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah: It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings. As the heavens are high and the earth is deep, so the hearts of kings are unsearchable. Remove the dross from the silver, and out comes material for the silversmith; remove the wicked from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness.”*

Verse 2 appropriately opens King Hezekiah's collection of the Proverbs of Solomon that were inspired by the Holy Spirit [**1 Peter 1:20-21**], and prompted by Solomon's father King David. [**Proverbs 4:1-13, 20-23**]

Hezekiah's story is told in **2 Kings chapters 18-20; 2 Chronicles chapters 29-32** and **Isaiah chapters 36-39**.

Hezekiah was one of the few kings of Judah who honoured the Creator God.

For a king to administer the affairs of his people he must have an enquiring mind, be well aware of all that is happening in his realm.

Mystery has its place within the office of a ruler and he should know how to keep his counsel [**v3**] but also be well aware that mystery also shelters the worthless person and breeds corruption. [**v4-5**]

The charter for all kings and leaders is expanded in **Deuteronomy 17:14-20**, especially **v18-20**.

Proverbs 25:6-7 [NIV] *“Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men; it is better for him to say to you, ‘Come up here,’ than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman. What you have seen with your eyes”*

These verses need to be examined from both sides, the king should be careful of promoting a person who is seeking to exalt themselves. Also it is best if we do **not** seek to elevate ourselves in the presence of a ruler or leader.

Luke 14:7-11 [NIV] *“When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable: ‘When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honoured in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Jesus Christ expounded this Godly Wisdom in this parable. We should **not** seek honour for ourselves. It is better to quietly and faithfully accomplish the work that the Creator God has given us to do. As others notice the quality of our lives they will draw attention of our worth to those in authority.

Proverbs 25:8-10 [Amplified Bible] *“Rush not forth soon to quarrel before magistrates or elsewhere, lest you know not what to do in the end, when your neighbour has put you to shame. Argue your cause with your neighbour himself, discover not and disclose not another's secret; lest he who hears you revile you and bring shame upon you and your ill repute have no end.”*

What we are being told is that before we confront another person with a problem we have in what they have said, done or implied, first make sure that what you think is true, kind or necessary?

Also we must consider before any action the next two verses.

Proverbs 25:11-12 [Amplified Bible] *“A word fitly spoken and in due season is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. As an ear or nose ring of gold, or an ornament of fine gold, is a rise reprover to the ear that listens and obeys.”*

This whole simile has components that carry associations of attractiveness, value and craftsmanship. All of our conversations and actions towards other human beings should exhibit these characteristics.

Proverbs 25:13 [Amplified Bible] *“As the cold of snow, brought from the mountains in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to those who send him, for he refreshes the life of his masters.”*

It is often difficult to find people you can really trust.

A faithful employee is punctual, responsible, honest and hardworking. Such a person is invaluable as they take some of the pressure off their employer. [**Matthew 24:25; Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22; 1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18**]

Proverbs 25:14 [NIV] *“Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give.”*

We have all met with people like this in life, who boast more than they can do or provide.

Above all this applies to false teachers.

Jude 12 [NIV] *“These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm, shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted, twice dead.”*

People who win followers by promises that never materialise.

2 Peter 2:17-19 [NIV] *“These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity, for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.”*

Telling people what is pleasing to their human desires.

A person is a slave to whatever controls them. Many believe that freedom means doing anything we want to do. But no-one is ever free in that sense.

If we refuse to follow our Creator God, we will follow our own sinful desires and become enslaved to what our physical body desires. If we submit our lives to Jesus Christ, He will free us from the penalty of sin, and empower us to serve Him and grow in godly character through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a freedom that results in our ultimate good.

Our only valid boast is in what Jesus Christ chooses to do in and through us, for of ourselves we can do nothing of any lasting value. [**John 15:5; James 4:13-17**]

Proverbs 25:15 [NIV] *“Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.”*

This Proverb is talking about quiet persistence, refusing to be provoked. Be patient to bear a present hurt, be mild to speak without passion, for such persuasive language is the most effective way to prevail over a hardened mind. [**1 Peter 3:15-16; Luke 18:1-8; Proverbs 15:1; Proverbs 16:14, 32**]

Proverbs 25:16 [NIV] *“If you find honey, eat just enough, too much of it, and you will vomit.”*

There is a fatal difference between a healthy appetite and greed. This in the broader perspective is to know when to stop. [**Proverbs 23:1-2, 20; Luke 21:24; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Titus 2:2; 2 Peter 1:5-11; James 3:2**]

Proverbs 25:17 [NIV] *“Seldom set foot in your neighbour’s house, too much of you, and he will hate you.”*

This Proverb is about good manners that embody a consideration for people’s feelings and convenience.

Titus 2:3-5 [NIV] *“Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no-one will malign the word of God.”*

For a married woman the centre of her life is the home, where she can express Christian love to her husband and children.

Proverbs 25:18 [NIV] *“Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbour.”*

Words are an outcrop of character and a false witness is nothing but lies, and thus is the influence of Satan [**John 8:44**] in that person’s life. [**Exodus 20:16; Exodus 23:1; Proverbs 12:17; Proverbs 19:9**]

Proverbs 25:19 [Amplified Bible] *“Confidence in an unfaithful man in a time of trouble is like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint.”*

Scripture frequently tells us **not** to put our trust in human beings, it is misplaced because all humans are too self-centred, unlike our Creator God who is love, a love that is outgoing and self-sacrificing. This is vividly explained in Jesus Christ. [**1 John 4:8, 16; John 3:16; Romans 8:28-39**]

Warnings given in scripture concerning our trust in other human beings. [**Psalms 118:9; Isaiah 2:22; Jeremiah 17:5**]

Proverbs 25:20 [NIV] *“Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.”*

To pour acid on alkali is to destroy the specific qualities of both. A cheerful disposition is the last thing a depressed person needs, a sympathetic, listening ear is an essential medicine that will relieve the heavy heart. [**Romans 12:15**]

Such an attitude is showing a total lack of compassion and mercy. [**Matthew 25:43; Luke 16:20-21**]

Proverbs 25:21-22 [NIV] *“If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.”*

In these verses we have the best form of revenge, and God will reward us for taking this path to resolve disputes.

This form of retaliation which is approved by God is most effective and yet difficult to do.

“Burning coals” is referring to a coal furnace that melts the hardest of metals or mentally the hardest resistance in any rebel or enemy.

Romans 12:19-21 [NIV] *“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry,*

feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Paul quotes this Proverb in his teaching about taking revenge.

Matthew 5:44-45 [NIV] *“But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”*

By telling us to **not** retaliate, Jesus Christ keeps us from taking the law into our own hands.

By loving and praying for our enemies, we can overcome evil with good. We must trust the indwelling Holy Spirit to help us to show love to those we may not feel love. Such love is one of the “fruits” of the indwelling Holy Spirit. [**Galatians 5:22-23**]

Proverbs 25:23 [Amplified Bible] *“The north wind brings forth rain, so does a backbiting tongue bring forth an angry countenance.”*

Slanders would **not** be so readily spoken if they were **not** so readily listened to. [**Psalms 15:1-3; Psalms 50:16, 19-21; Jeremiah 9:4-6; Romans 1:28-32; 2 Corinthians 12:20-21**]

Proverbs 25:24 [Amplified Bible] *“It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop than to share a house with a disagreeing, quarrelsome and scolding woman.”*

This is a repeat of **Proverbs 21:9** and the same subject as **Proverbs 21:19; Proverbs 19:13-14**.

Proverbs 25:25 [NIV] *“Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.”*

A similar statement to **Proverbs 15:30**.

The ultimate Good News that comes from a far country [heaven] is what the Creator God has done for all humanity through Jesus Christ.

Matthew 5:6 [NIV] *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”*

God has promised to quench this thirst for all who turn to Him and allow Him to guide their lives. [**Isaiah 49:7-12; John 4:13-14; John 6:35; Revelation 7:13-17**]

Proverbs 25:26 [Amplified Bible] *“Like a muddied fountain and a polluted spring is a righteous man who yields, falls down and compromises his integrity before the wicked.”*

Here is stated the most telling comparison, since a good person’s defection imperils, or at best deprives, the many who have learnt to rely on them. The influence is still there but is flowing polluted and in the wrong direction.

Proverbs 25:27 [NIV] *“It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honourable to seek one’s own honour.”*

Dwelling on the honours we feel we deserve can only be harmful. It can make us bitter, angry and discouraged, and will not bring us the honours we think we deserve. [**Proverbs 17:19; Proverbs 25:6-7; Isaiah 14:13-14; Obadiah 3-4; Matthew 23:12; Mark 10:35-37**]

The motivation behind this desire to be honoured is pride, the attitude of mind that caused Lucifer to become Satan. [**Isaiah 14:12-15**]

We are warned strongly in scripture against allowing pride to become our downfall. [**Psalms 10:2; Psalms 75:6; Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 16:18; Proverbs 28:25; Habakkuk 2:4; 1 John 2:16**]

Proverbs 25:28 [NIV] *“Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.”*

Self-control limits us, to be sure, but it is necessary. An out-of-control life is open to all sorts of attacks from Satan and his demons as well as all evil people.

Think of self-control as a wall of defence around our lives. [**Romans 6:12; James 3:2**]