

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 27]

Proverbs 26:1 [NIV] *“Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, honour is not fitting for a fool.”*

To promote a fool is inviting the damage that heavy rain could cause at harvest time.

In this present time in the Western world, through the tricks of publicity, many are influenced to idolise, vain and lack of wisdom people.

Ecclesiastes 10:5-7 [NIV] *“There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler: Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones. I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves.”*

The same mistake has been made by human rulers throughout human history, and continues today.

Proverbs 26:2 [NIV] *“Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.”*

An undeserved curse may land on us, but when the truth comes to light it will **not** rest on us, in the end will have **no** effect on our integrity.

Proverbs 26:3 [NIV] *“A whip for the horse, a halter for the donkey, and a rod for the backs of fools!”*

Every creature must be dealt with according to its nature. The careless fool will never be ruled by reason, only harsh correction will bring about a change of mind and direction. [**Psalms 32:8-9; Psalms 78:5-8**]

Isaiah 46:12-13 [NIV] *“Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness. I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendour to Israel.”*

Referring to the return of Jesus Christ and the correction that God will inflict on all who are stubborn-hearted. [Read of plagues and tribulations recorded in advance in the revelation given by Jesus Christ through the Apostle John.]

2 Peter 2:9-10 [King James] *“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”*

Many people are like this when it comes to submitting their lives to their Creator God today, as in every generation.

Proverbs 26:4-5 [NIV] *“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.”*

These two sayings would have invited a charge of inconsistency if they had not been given together.

It is foolish to try to reason with a fool who is unreasonable.

If we try to penetrate a fool’s mind we may be stooping to that person’s level if we try to answer them.

There are other situations where it is possible to expose the fool’s error, pride and folly.

Proverbs 26:6-7 [NIV] *“Like cutting off one’s feet or drinking violence is the sending of a message by the hand of a fool. Like a lame man’s legs that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.”*

A fool does **not** make a good messenger.

Matthew 7:6 [NIV] *“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.”*

We are not to entrust holy teaching to those who are unholy and do not fear their Creator God.

Revelation 22:15 [NIV] *“Outside are the dogs, those who practise magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practises falsehood.”*

Within scripture “*dogs*” denotes adherents to heathenism worship and specifically in **Deuteronomy 23:17-18** male prostitutes.

In the mouth of a fool [**Psalms 14:1**] a Proverb becomes as useless as a paralysed leg. Some people are so blinded by Satan [**2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9**] that they won’t get much wisdom from reading the Proverbs. Only those who want to be wise have the receptive attitude needed to value and use Proverbs.

If we have this desire to learn from the Creator God, He will respond and pour out His heart to us. [**Proverbs 1:23**]

Proverbs 26:8 [NIV] *“Like tying a stone in a sling is the giving of honour to a fool.”*

To give a fool a position of responsibility does **not** work if you are seeking to make them loyal and productive. The foolish dissenter’s new power may be the very thing they desire to manipulate the group. If the stone does **not** leave the sling when used it will only rebound and hurt the user.

Proverbs 26:9 [King James] *“As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.”*

Normally the first prick of a thorn alerts us to remove the thorn before it damages us. A drunk person may **not** feel the thorn so it will work its way into their flesh. Similarly a fool may **not** feel the sting of a Proverb because they do **not** see where it could apply to them. Instead the fool will only apply the Proverb to other people.

Proverbs 26:10 [King James] *“The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.”*

The Creator God will reward all people, both fools, sinners and the righteous.

2 Corinthians 5:10 [NIV] *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

This rewarding will be totally just, for the Creator God knows the very thoughts and motives behind every action. [**Psalms 139:23-24; Ecclesiastes 12:14**]

Proverbs 26:11 [NIV] *“As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.”*

Although disgusting to other people the fool delights in their foolishness.

2 Peter 2:20-22 [NIV] *“If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was*

passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: 'A dog returns to its vomit,' and, 'A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.'"

By our actions we show what is really our true character. If having been shown salvation we then turn our back on Jesus Christ and follow Him no longer we reveal our true nature. [**Hebrews 6:4-8; 1 John 2:19**]

Proverbs 26:12 [NIV] *"Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."*

Worldly wisdom can become a dangerous thing because it generates a false self-confidence. [**Jeremiah 4:22; Romans 1:22-25; 1 Corinthians 3:19-20; James 3:13-18**]

Worldly wisdom generates an attitude of conceit and pride.

Scripture warns us against this attitude of mind. [**Isaiah 5:21; Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 8:2; Galatians 6:1-5**]

Proverbs 26:13-16 [NIV] *"The sluggard says, 'There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!' As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth. The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly."*

If a person is **not** willing to work, they can find endless excuses to avoid it. But laziness can be more dangerous than a prowling lion. The less we do the less we want to do and the more useless we become. Set a concrete realistic goal, consider the steps to be taken to reach it and follow those steps. **Not** laying in bed in the mornings [**v14**] as if you are held there with hinges is a good start.

The sluggard has **no** idea that they are lazy. [**v16**]

Proverbs 26:17 [NIV] *"Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own."*

Seizing a dog by the ears is a good way to get bitten and interfering in arguments is a good way to get hurt. Many times both arguers will turn on you if you interfere. If you must become involved, try to wait until the arguers have stopped fighting and cooled off a bit. Only then can you help them mend their differences and their relationship.

All strife is forbidden in scripture. [**2 Timothy 2:14, 24**]

Philippians 2:3-4 [NIV] *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."*

This is a sure way to dampen the fire of strife between you and other people.

Proverbs 26:18-19 [NIV] *"Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbour and says, 'I was only joking!'"*

Proverbs, with its emphasis on the duty of forethought, does **not** countenance any escape-clauses, least of all the plea *"I meant no harm."*

Ephesians 5:4 [King James] *"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."*

The type of jesting that is mentioned in **Proverbs 26:18-19** is listed among what we would consider much worse sins towards other people.

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.”*

It is the whisperer or quarreller themselves, not as they would claim the truth, that feeds the fire of contention, for their minds refashion facts into fuel.

Proverbs 26:22 [Amplified Bible] *“The words of a whisperer or slanderer are as dainty morsels or words of sport to some but to others they are deadly wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body or of the victim’s nature.”*

[Proverbs 18:8; Romans 1:29-30; 2 Corinthians 12:20]

Any fire of contention is kept burning by whisperers and backbiters.

Proverbs 26:23-26 [NIV] *“Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart. A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbours deceit. Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart. His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.”*

A wicked mind disguises itself just like a clay pot covered with a silver-like glaze.

People with hate in their hearts may sound pleasant enough we should **not** believe what they say. **[Ezekiel 33:31-32; Matthew 7:21-23; Mark 7:6-8; Luke 6:46-49; Titus 1:16; 1 John 3:18]**

Jesus Christ condemned this type of hypocrisy. **[Matthew 23:27-28; Luke 12:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:1-2]**

Eventually these people will be exposed for what they really are. **[Ecclesiastes 12:14; 1 Corinthians 4:5]**

Proverbs 26:27 [NIV] *“If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.”*

This should be studied in the context of v26.

For insincerity of speech recoils on its perpetrator. When allowed to run its course, evil destroys itself. Violent people become victims of violence and liars become victims of their deceit. **Psalms 7:14-16; Proverbs 28:10]**

Proverbs 26:28 [NIV] *“A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.”*

There are two sorts of lies equally detestable. A slandering lie, the mischief of this everybody can see. A flattering lie, which secretly works ruin. A wise person will be more afraid of a flatterer than a slanderer.

Scripture warns against flattery. **[Job 32:21; Psalms 12:3; Proverbs 20:19; Proverbs 24:24; Proverbs 28:23; Proverbs 29:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:5]**

Proverbs 27:1 [NIV] *“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.”*

Scripture warns about boasting about our future plans for no-one can predict what will happen tomorrow.

James 4:13-16 [NIV] *“Now listen, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.”*

Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil."

Jesus Christ gives us a parable to illustrate such boasting. [**Luke 12:16-21**]

There are many things about human life that should prevent us from boasting about our future.

Job 8:8-10 – We can learn how to act by examples given to us in human history, but always remember that our life as physical human beings is but a “*shadow*” of our possible future eternal spirit life.

Ecclesiastes 8:7-8 – We have **no** power to extend our physical life.

Ecclesiastes 9:12 – Coming evils are unforeseen.

Ecclesiastes 11:5 – Life itself is a great mystery.

John 3:8 – There is **no** way we can experience the Holy Spirit through our physical senses.

Proverbs 27:2 [NIV] *“Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.”*

Jesus Christ’s teaching was the very opposite to that of most people.

Matthew 23:11-12 [NIV] *“The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*

This was directed towards the teachers of the law and Pharisees who boasted the perfect observance of the law, but also anyone who has the same elevated opinion of themselves. [**Matthew 20:25-28; Luke 18:9-14**]

Proverbs 27:3 [NIV] *“Stone is heavy and sand a burden, but provocation by a fool is heavier than both.”*

Human anger is foolish for it is detrimental to our spiritual growth.

James 1:19-21 [NIV] *“My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”*

Anger erupts when our egos are bruised, we are hurt because our opinions are **not** being heard, we should be angry when others are being hurt through injustice or we should never become angry when we fail to win an argument or when we feel offended or neglected. Selfish anger never helps anyone, and we are acting like a fool. [**Ecclesiastes 7:9**]

Proverbs 27:4 [NIV] *“Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?”*

The examples of human jealousy or envy within scripture all end up with bad situations developing.

Joseph’s brethren – **Genesis 37:4**.

Men of Ephraim – **Judges 8:1**.

King Saul – **1 Samuel 18:8**.

The labourers in the vineyard – **Matthew 20:12**.

The elder brother – **Luke 15:28**.

Jealousy is the product of envy or can be fuelled by envy which is forbidden in scripture. [Psalms 37:1; Proverbs 3:31; Proverbs 23:17; Proverbs 24:1-2; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 5:26; James 3:13-16]

Proverbs 27:5-6 [King James] *“Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”*

These verses are talking about frankness between friends.

Who would prefer a friend's words that wound us or an enemy's kisses? Anyone who considers the source knows which.

A friend is a person who has your best interests at heart, may have to give you unpleasant advice at times, but you know it is for your own good. An enemy, by contrast, may whisper sweet words that we want to hear but is sending us on our way to ruin. A friend's advice is always better, no matter how painful it is at first.

Proverbs 27:7 [Amplified Bible] *“He who is satiated with sensual pleasures loathes and treads underfoot a honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.”*

This Proverb is **not** about food but a parable about possessions.

It talks about the disposition we acquire by the level of comfort we choose to be content.

The poor have a better relish of their enjoyments, and are often more thankful for them, than the rich.

In like manner the proud and self-sufficient disdain the Gospel Message, while to the humble poor it is sweet to the soul.

Proverbs 27:8-10 [NIV] *“Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who strays from his home. Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel. Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you, better a neighbour nearby than a brother far away.”*

Every person has a place in society where they feel safe and comfortable, this kindred feeling applies to those who are near at hand and will help when needed. Among such neighbours there is a friend with whom we have a special close relationship that is more intimate than a brother or sister. It is to this special person we should place our entire confidence.

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.”*

Jesus Christ is the ultimate friend we should look to when in need and at all times seek to have an intimate relationship with Him. [Revelation 19:7-9]

Proverbs 27:11 [Amplified Bible] *“My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him who reproaches me as having failed in parental duty.”* [Proverbs 10:1; Proverbs 23:15, 24; Proverbs 29:3; Luke 15:23-24]

Children are a gift from the Creator God – Psalms 127:3.

Children are to be highly esteemed – Proverbs 17:6; Matthew 19:14.

Scriptural exhortations to children – Psalms 34:11; Proverbs 10:1; Proverbs 20:11; Proverbs 23:22; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Mark 7:10; Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20]

Proverbs 27:12 [NIV] *“The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.”*

This is a repeat of **Proverbs 22:3** just in case we ignored it the first time.

Proverbs 27:13 [NIV] *“Take the garment of one who puts up security for a stranger; hold it in pledge if he does it for a wayward woman.”*

This is a near repeat of **Proverbs 20:16** which should be studied with **Proverbs 6:1-5**.

Proverbs 27:14 [NIV] *“If a man loudly blesses his neighbour early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.”*

This is a reminder that it matters **not** only what we say, but **how, when** and **why** we say it.

Proverbs 27:15-16 [NIV] *“A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.”*

We are dealing with a person who is as unsteady as the wind, and as slippery as oil, someone you will never tie down. [**Proverbs 19:13; Proverbs 21:9; Proverbs 25:24**]

People nag because they think they are **not** getting their point through, but nagging hinders communication more than it helps. If you are truly concerned about other people, think of a more effective way to get through to them. Surprise them with words of patience and love and see what happens.

Proverbs 27:17 [NIV] *“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”*

There is a mental sharpness that comes from being with good people. A meeting of minds can help people see their ideas with new clarity, refine and shape them. This requires discussion partners who can challenge each other and stimulate thought. People who focus on the idea without involving their egos in the discussion. People who know how to attack a thought without attacking the person with that thought. [**Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**]

Proverbs 27:18 [King James] *“Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.”*

God has promised to reward a faithful servant.

When we look to the spiritual reward in the Kingdom of God, the created family of God, we see that teaching and ruling are the rewards of the faithful servant. [**Revelation 1:4-6; Revelation 5:9-10**]

Therefore to be a faithful servant of our Eternal Master Jesus Christ we have to be well versed in His Word and His life.

2 Timothy 2:15 [NIV] *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”*

Our only textbook will be the eternal [Holy Spirit inspired **2 Timothy 3:16**] Word of God, the Christian Bible.

If we are going to enjoy our job within the eternal created family of God, we should seek to be inspired by and enjoy studying God’s Word now.

Proverbs 27:19 [NIV] *“As water reflects a face, so a man’s heart reflects the man.”*

Just as water reflects our physical face, so in the mental and spiritual part of our life experience, the friends we choose reflect our attitude of life. This is one way in which we can acquire self-knowledge.

Proverbs 27:20 [Amplified Bible] “*Sheol [the grave or place of the dead] and Abaddon [the place of destruction] are never satisfied, so the lust of the eyes of man is never satisfied.*” [**Proverbs 30:16**]

For physical human beings, death is always present, so is the end of sin. Yet humans continue to lust after physical things they have **not** got. **The sinful human is always restless because of the lusting for more pleasures or material possessions.**

John 4:13-14 [NIV] “*Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’*”

Water depicts the Word of God, the Christian Bible. [**Ephesians 5:26**]

We are stabilised and satisfied in life as we study and apply God’s Word to our lives.

Philippians 4:11-13 [NIV] “*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*”

Our relationship with Jesus Christ can give us stability and contentment in life.

Proverbs 27:21 [NIV] “*The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.*”

We are tested as to our pride or our humility in the way we react to receiving praise.

Luke 6:26 [NIV] “*Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.*”

Being praised by other people puts us in a very dangerous position.

This Proverb may also indicate that our true character is revealed by what and who we ourselves praise.

People of high integrity are **not** swayed by praise, they are fully attuned to their inner convictions, and they do what they believe they should do whether or not they are praised for doing it.

Proverbs 27:22 [NIV] “*Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding him like grain with a pestle, you will not remove his folly from him.*”

This hardness of heart and a refusal to change or repent can take a grip on a person so that they cannot resist.

Proverbs 28:14 [NIV] “*Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.*”

The fearful awareness of the Creator God in our lives can help us avoid the hardening of spirit which is the result of Satan’s influence. [**Hebrews 3:13**]

Romans 3:10-12 [NIV] “*As it is written: ‘There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no-one who does good, not even one.’*”

Only if we seek to know the Creator God can this foolishness be taken away through understanding the very purpose of human life.

Proverbs 27:23-27 [NIV] *“Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure for ever, and a crown is not secure for all generations. When the hay is removed and new growth appears and the grass from the hills is gathered in, the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field. You will have plenty of goats’ milk to feed you and your family and to nourish your servant girls.”*

The original readers of Proverbs were part of community where agriculture was the basis of life, even in the towns.

But we can apply these verses to show the proper interplay of human work and God’s nature, which a sophisticated society like today, in the Western world, neglects at its peril.

Because of the shortness of human life and the uncertainty of our wealth we need to be all the more diligent in what we do with our lives. We should act with foresight, giving responsible attention to our homes, our families and our careers. Thinking ahead is a duty, **not** an option, for Christians.