

# The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

## [Part 28]

**Proverbs 28:1** [NIV] *“The wicked man flees though no-one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.”*

The Hebrew translated “bold” is “bâtach” and is better translated “confident” or “trusting”.

A person who is straightforward, righteous in their lives are like a lion who does **not** look back over its shoulder.

What is their rearguard is God’s goodness, love and mercy. [**Psalms 23:6**]

**Proverbs 28:2** [NIV] *“When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a man of understanding and knowledge maintains order.”*

“Many rulers” means that each person’s selfishness is affecting others. The selfish employee who steals from the company who employs them, the drunk driver makes roads unsafe, the selfish adulterous spouse who breaks up families.

When people live with little or no concern for others they are ruling others’ lives and moral rot contaminates the whole nation.

For a society to endure it needs wise and informed leaders who give a moral example for others to follow.

**Proverbs 28:3** [Amplified Bible] *“A poor man who oppresses the poor is like sweeping rain which leaves no food, plundering them of their last morsels.”*

This is the bitter betrayal by one who should have a fellow feeling. [**Matthew 18:23-30; Luke 10:30-32**]

**Proverbs 28:4** [NIV] *“Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law resist them.”*

Without the revelation of God’s moral standards, all is soon relative and nothing quite merits moral correction.

The tyrant is accepted because they get things done.

The pervert is accepted because their condition is interesting.

The full sequence of this rejection of the Creator God and His moral code is described in **Romans 1:18-32**.

**Proverbs 28:5** [NIV] *“Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.”*

Because justice is part of the Creator God’s character, a person who follows God treats others justly.

The beginning of justice is concern for what is happening to other people. A Christian **cannot** be indifferent to the suffering of others because God is not. We certainly must not contribute to human suffering through selfish practices. [**Psalms 119:97-108; 2 Timothy 2:7**]

**Proverbs 28:6** [Amplified Bible] *“Better is the poor who walks in his integrity, than he who wilfully goes in double and wrong ways, though he be rich.”*

What do we value most in life, the physical pleasures of this world that will only last a lifetime or the joy of a deep relationship with our Creator God that can last for eternity?

The problem that most face in making this choice is that one is visible and can be experienced through our physical senses now, while the other is yet unseen and is dependent on faith in an unseen God. [1 Timothy 6:3-10]

**Proverbs 28:7** [NIV] *“He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.”*

This Proverb is a distilled version of **Proverbs 23:19-25; Proverbs 17:21, 25; Proverbs 19:13**

**Proverbs 28:8** [Amplified Bible] *“He who by charging excessive interest and by unjust efforts to get gain increases his material possession, gathers it for him to spend who is kind and generous to the poor.”* [Proverbs 13:22; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Jeremiah 22:13; James 5:1-5]

**Proverbs 28:9** [NIV] *“If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable.”*

God does **not** listen to our prayers if we intend to go back to our sinful ways as soon as we get off of our knees. Religious exercises may be a sop to our corrupted conscience but will **not** be accepted by our Creator God. [1 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:15]

**Psalms 66:16-20** [NIV] *“Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!”*

If we fear God and seek to obey His Words, the Christian Bible, He will hear our prayers and express His great love for us.

**Proverbs 28:10** [NIV] *“He who leads the upright along an evil path will fall into his own trap, but the blameless will receive a good inheritance.”*

The corruption of others attracted some of Jesus Christ’s strongest words. [Matthew 5:19; Matthew 18:5-7; Matthew 23:13]

Motivation for false teaching varies.

Pride in your own opinions – **Colossians 2:18**.

A desire to dominate – **2 Timothy 3:1-6**.

A readiness to use other people for their own profit – **2 Peter 2:15; 18**.

**Proverbs 28:11** [NIV] *“A rich man may be wise in his own eyes, but a poor man who has discernment sees through him.”*

God’s searching gaze, as prayed for in **Psalms 139:23-24**, may have to reach a person in the unwelcome form of a contemptuous appraising stare of one whom they regard as an inferior.

Three things are implied in this Proverb: a) wisdom is **no** respecter of rank; b) complacency is **no** symptom of wisdom; c) a person’s peers are **not** always our best judges.

Conceit is warned against in many scriptures. [**Proverbs 3:7; Proverbs 26:5, 12; Isaiah 5:21; Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 8:2; Galatians 6:2**] Don't be jealous of the rich, money may be all they ever have.

**Proverbs 28:12** [NIV] *“When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to power, men go into hiding.”*

This theme recurs in **Proverbs 28:28** and **Proverbs 29:2; Proverbs 11:10-11**.

**All too often the wrong people are in positions of power.**

**Ecclesiastes 10:7** [NIV] *“I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves.”*

Power can change a person who was willing to serve others into a tyrant who will oppress those they rule over. [**Proverbs 30:21-22**]

**Proverbs 28:13** [NIV] *“He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”*

**Sin concealed is sin retained.**

When we conceal our sins we are acting like a fool, for the Creator God already knows all about them. [**Psalms 139:1-5**]

Only when we confess our sins to the Creator God and ask for forgiveness can we ever have peace of mind and hope for the future. [**Isaiah 59:1-2; Isaiah 1:18-20; Isaiah 43:25**]

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

To fear the Creator God means to look on Him in great awe and deep respect, willingly submitting to His Word, the Christian Bible.

Always remember that the Creator God, being the source of all life, gave us life. He sustains our life and our future life is totally in His hands. [**John 1:1-4, 14; John 14:6; Colossians 1:15-17; Acts 4:10-12**]

**Philippians 2:12-16** [NIV] *“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life, in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour for nothing.”*

This is our part that we must play out in order to have a future after physical death.

**Proverbs 28:15-16** [NIV] *“Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked man ruling over a helpless people. A tyrannical ruler lacks judgment, but he who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long life.”*

The reproach of such a person is implicit in the comparison with wild beasts. A tyrant is in God's eyes acting like a subhuman who is devoid of the human spirit. [**Job 32:8; Daniel 4:24-37**]

**Luke 22:24-26** [NIV] *“Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.’”*

The total contrast as to how a disciple of Jesus Christ should rule.

**Proverbs 28:17** [NIV] *“A man tormented by the guilt of murder will be a fugitive till death; let no-one support him.”*

A sinner’s conscience will drive them either into guilt that leads to repentance or to the eternal death because of the refusal to confess their sins and repent.

It is **no** act of kindness to try to make such a person feel better about what they have done, for the more guilt they feel, the more likely they will turn to the Creator God to seek forgiveness and repent of their sins.

If we interfere with the natural consequences of their act we may make it easier for them to continue to sin. [**1 John 5:16-17**]

**Proverbs 28:18** [NIV] *“He whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but he whose ways are perverse will suddenly fall.”*

If we have nothing to hide we have nothing to fear. This is a companion Proverb with **Proverbs 10:9**.

Those who live a false and dishonest life are never at peace because of the continual fear of being exposed.

**Proverbs 28:19** [Amplified Bible] *“He that cultivates his land shall have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless people and pursuits will have poverty enough.”*

There are many warnings concerning associations with evil or worthless people. [**Exodus 23:2, 33; Exodus 34:12; Psalms 1:1; Proverbs 1:10-16; Proverbs 4:14; Proverbs 22:24; Proverbs 24:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5:9, 11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16; 2 John 10-11**]

**Proverbs 28:20, 22** [NIV] *“A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.” ... “A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him.”*

These Proverbs are talking about priorities. Those who put their own ambition and greed first will fail and in some way come to a bad end, perhaps because in their hurry they have used dishonest methods.

Those who are even more set on wealth, have **not** even time to contemplate their spiritual poverty until it is too late. [**Proverbs 15:27; Ecclesiastes 5:10; 1 Timothy 6:10; James 5:3; Revelation 3:17-18**]

By contrast the trustworthy person will reap the rewards of their honest work.

**Proverbs 28:21** [NIV] *“To show partiality is not good, yet a man will do wrong for a piece of bread.”*

This Proverb is dealing with corruption in the law courts like **Proverbs 18:5** and **Proverbs 24:23**, where it shows there must be absolute impartiality. What is frightening about this Proverb is what even a small bribe will do.

**Proverbs 28:23** [King James] *“He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.”*

It is interesting that the word “*afterwards*” is included, indicating that it takes time for the wise rebuke to sink into the mind of the person receiving it, while flattery has an instant result. Only after reflection will the value of the wise rebuke dawn.

**Proverbs 28:24** [NIV] *“He who robs his father or mother and says, ‘It’s not wrong’, he is partner to him who destroys.”*

The Old Testament has some very harsh statements about ungrateful children. [**Exodus 21:15; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18, 20-21; Proverbs 30:17**]

What lies behind these laws and statutes?

**If we fail to respect our physical parents we will become inclined to disrespect our Heavenly Father.**

**Ephesians 6:1-3** [NIV] *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honour your father and mother’, which is the first commandment with a promise, ‘that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.’”*

Respect towards our physical parents is essential for our eternal life that will only be out of humble respect towards our Heavenly Father, the Creator God. [**1 Timothy 5:4, 8**]

**Proverbs 28:25-26** [NIV] *“A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper. He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.”*

Many are ashamed to acknowledge their trust in Jesus Christ now but He will **not** own them on the day of judgement. But all who put their trust in Jesus Christ now will prosper spiritually by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. [**Matthew 6:19-34**]

Trust in God is a theme throughout scripture. [**Psalms 37:3, 5; Psalms 115:11; Psalms 118:8; Proverbs 3:5; Isaiah 26:4; Isaiah 50:10; Psalms 31:19; Psalms 32:10; Psalms 34:22; Psalms 125:1**]

**Proverbs 28:27** [NIV] *“He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.”*

The same theme is found in **Proverbs 11:24-26; Proverbs 22:9; Deuteronomy 15:7; Psalms 41:1; Proverbs 14:21; Proverbs 19:17; Matthew 19:21; Galatians 2:10.**

**Amos 8:11-13** [NIV] *“‘The days are coming,’ declares the Sovereign LORD, ‘when I will send a famine through the land, not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD. Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it. In that day the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst.’”*

This is referring to the spiritual poor that Christians should also be concerned about their welfare.

**2 Chronicles 15:3-4** [Amplified Bible] *“Now for a long time Israel was without the true God, without a teaching priest and without law. But when they in their trouble turned to the Lord God of Israel, and in desperation earnestly sought Him, He was found by them.”*

This could be said of most people worldwide who do **not** know the true God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**1 Timothy 6:3-5** [NIV] *“If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”*

Even some so-called Christian churches preach a false gospel message that is centred on health and wealth, not seeking to bring about repentance and a humble obedience to the Creator God.

**Proverbs 28:28** [NIV] *“When the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding; but when the wicked perish, the righteous thrive.”*

This is a comparison Proverb to **Proverbs 28:12; Proverbs 29:2; Proverbs 11:10.**

**Proverbs 29:1** [NIV] *“A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed, without remedy.”*

For the good of the many the Creator God has set a limit on how long He will wait for a person to come to humble repentance, once they have been called for their day of salvation, [**John 6:44**].

**Jeremiah 15:6** [Amplified Bible] *“You have rejected and forsaken Me, says the Lord, you keep going in reverse. Therefore I have stretched out My hand against you and destroyed you. I am weary of relenting concerning your punishment.”*

**What is behind this hardness of heart or backsliding?**

Religious indifference – **Matthew 24:12.**

Loss of spiritual enthusiasm – **Hebrews 10:38; Revelation 2:4.**

Influence of this society – **2 Peter 2:20-22.**

Lack of strong religious leadership – **Exodus 32:1, 8.**

Association with false satanic religions – **1 Kings 11:4.**

Shallowness of conviction – **Luke 8:13.**

Emptiness of life – **Luke 11:24-26.**

Lack of spiritual insight – **John 6:63-64, 66.**

Love of this world – **2 Timothy 4:10.**

If we find ourselves making any of the mistakes listed above and continue to do so then our eternal life is in great danger.

**Proverbs 29:2** [NIV] *“When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.”*

This has already been covered by previous Proverbs, see **Proverbs 28:28.**

**Proverbs 29:3** [NIV] *“A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.”*

Godly Wisdom can protect us from those who, under the influence of Satan, want to destroy our chance to be among those who will be the chaste bride of Jesus Christ. [**Revelation 19:7-9**]

This choice between Godly Wisdom depicted as a woman [**Proverbs 3:13-18**] and the false human wisdom also depicted as a woman, but an adulteress woman. [**Proverbs 2:16; Proverbs 5:3-6**]

To commit physical or spiritual adultery is to squander the gift from the Creator God, that is beyond price, the life of His only Son, Jesus Christ. [**2 Peter 2:18-19; 1 Corinthians 6:16-20**]

**Proverbs 29:4, 14** [NIV] *“By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.” ... “If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure.”*

**A country’s stability is dependent on the judgement of its leaders.**

**Psalms 2:10-12** [NIV] *“Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”*

Every leader in the judgements they make should be aware that they are also being judged as to how they conduct the office they have been given.

**2 Chronicles 19:5-7** [NIV] *“He appointed judges in the land, in each of the fortified cities of Judah. He told them, ‘Consider carefully what you do, because you are not judging for man but for the LORD, who is with you whenever you give a verdict. Now let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery.’”*

Only when this is happening will there be stability within the government and the nation. [**Psalms 2:10-11; Proverbs 20:28**]

**Proverbs 29:5** [NIV] *“Whoever flatters his neighbour is spreading a net for his feet.”*

Flattery puts people off their guard which betrays them into foolish conduct. [**Job 32:21; Psalms 12:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:5**]

**Acts 12:21-23** [NIV] *“On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, ‘This is the voice of a god, not of a man.’ Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.”*

Accepting this flattery cost King Herod his life. This is how dangerous flattery can be to a ruler.

**Proverbs 29:6** [NIV] *“An evil man is snared by his own sin, but a righteous one can sing and be glad.”*

Sin is like a snare because it is easier to fall into it than to extract yourself from it.

The righteous rejoice, **not** because the wicked have fallen into a snare but because they are able to see sin as a snare and avoid its clutches. [**Ecclesiastes 10:8; Isaiah 8:13-15**]

It is the blindness of sinners that cause them to fall into a snare that they have set themselves. [**Job 18:5-11**]

**Proverbs 29:7** [NIV] *“The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.”*

Care for the unprivileged is widely promoted in Proverbs and we are strongly reminded that both rich and poor are on the same level in the eyes of the Creator God. [**Proverbs 22:2**]

One fine example of this concern is Job. [**Job 29:12-16**]

**Proverbs 29:8** [Amplified Bible] *“Scoffers set a city afire inflaming the minds of the people, but wise men turn wrath away.”*

The scornful mock at things that are sacred and serious in life.

People who are true Christians with Godly Wisdom seek to turn away the justified wrath of the Creator God.

A fine example of this attitude is Stephen. [**Acts 7:59-60**]

We all should apply peaceable wisdom to any situation that is inflaming other people. [**James 3:13-18**]

**Proverbs 29:9** [Amplified Bible] *“If a wise man has an argument with a foolish man, the fool only rages or laughs and there is no rest.”*

There is no sense in arguing with a foolish person, for they cannot be objective, and the result will be a lot of noise and no solution.

The reason is that a fool has no standards to judge by not believing in the Creator God and His Word, the Christian Bible. [**Psalms 14:1**]

**Proverbs 29:10** [Amplified Bible] *“The bloodthirsty hate the blameless, but the upright care for and seek to save his life.”*

This hatred is condemned by the Creator God. [**1 John 2:9; 1 John 3:15; 1 John 4:20-21**]

Examples of this hatred –

Esau – **Genesis 27:41**.

Joseph’s brothers – **Genesis 37:4**.

Haman – **Esther 3:5-6**.

Herodias – **Mark 6:18-19**.

The Jews – **Acts 23:12**.

Before we became Christians – **Titus 3:3**.

Examples of seeking to save others’ lives – **Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3; Matthew 4:19; 1 Corinthians 9:19-20; James 5:20; Jude 23**.

**Proverbs 29:11** [NIV] *“A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.”*

This is about controlling our thoughts, self-restraint or lack of it.

One way to recognise a foolish person is their lack of control of their tongue. [**Proverbs 12:23; Proverbs 15:2; Ecclesiastes 5:3; Ecclesiastes 10:3; 2 Timothy 3:9**]