

The Proverbs

Lesson 22

Proverbs 19

INTEGRITY/PERVERSE

Proverbs 19:1 Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool.

Integrity supersedes all other human characteristics and includes honesty and strong moral principles. In this case, integrity is guided by the principles included in God's Word and not the customs and norms of society.

KNOWLEDGE/HASTE

Proverbs 19:2 Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, and he who makes haste with his feet errs.

The original says, "it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge." When we speak of a person, we think of his body, soul and spirit. This verse is directed at the soul without regard to the body and spirit. The soul needs knowledge, specifically the knowledge of the LORD. The soul was created to decide either to be in a relationship with the LORD or to reject Him. The soul who makes a decision without knowledge is like a person who runs into a battlefield without knowing the location of the enemy. The result is deadly in most cases. Caution should be used in all endeavors and the obtaining of knowledge should precede any decision.

SUBVERT/RAGE

Proverbs 19:3 The foolishness of man subverts his way, and his heart rages against the LORD.

We must remember that in the proverbs "foolishness" means wickedness. God has His divine way for man to operate in this world and then there is the way that man wishes to function. God's way is righteous, man's way is foolish. When a man attempts something and fails, he often blames the LORD for his misfortune. The fool expects the LORD to bless his endeavors and fails to seek the LORD's will and His desire where success is assured.

WEALTH/POOR

Proverbs 19:4 Wealth adds many friends, but a poor man is separated from his friend.

When wealth is the connection between friends, the friendships are artificial. Poverty will separate a once wealthy man from his acquaintances who had masqueraded as friends.

FALSE/LIES

Proverbs 19:5 A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will not escape.

When a man perjures himself in court, his lie will eventually be discovered. It would be better not to testify than to lie on the witness stand.

GENEROUS/GIFTS

Proverbs 19:6 Many will entreat the favor of a generous man, and every man is a friend to him who gives gifts.

As in Proverbs 19:4, wealth and generosity lures many artificial friends into one's circle. However, when the wealth and generosity are gone, the friends will disappear.

BROTHERS/FRIENDS

Proverbs 19:7 All the brothers of a poor man hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him! He pursues *them with* words, *but* they are gone.

If a poor man becomes a continual beggar, both family and friends will dread his presence. Many will run and ultimately hide from him.

SOUL/UNDERSTANDING

Proverbs 19:8 He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who keeps understanding will find good.

Wisdom and understanding work together to ease the burdens of the soul. When the soul finds contentment, it loves the wisdom and understanding that provide the comfort.

FALSE/LIES

Proverbs 19:9 A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will perish.

In this verse, Solomon repeats the theme of 19:5. Liars will ultimately pay for their sin.

FOOL/PRINCE

Proverbs 19:10 Luxury is not fitting for a fool; much less for a slave to rule over princes.

The fineries of royalty are awkward for the prince who is a fool. Fools are not respected; fools are absent of character; fools are void of integrity. In desperation, foolish princes often turn to their servants and ministers for counsel; thus the slaves become indispensable to royalty as long as their counsel is correct. However, the slave can never take the place of the prince, at least not in countries where a bloodline is required to sit on the throne.

ANGER/TRANSGRESSION

Proverbs 19:11 A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression.

Sins abound in this world! Sinful actions can foster anger in just about everyone. A man of discretion will not allow his anger to flare into a raging fire. Rather, the man of anger will find a way to rise above the sin of another and handle it appropriately. To his glory, he will not be drawn into the sin and tempted to sin in his response.

WRATH/FAVOR

Proverbs 19:12 The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass.

Not all kings have the discretion mentioned by Solomon in this proverb but that is not to say that a king sins when he shows his wrath or favor. The king's decisions may seem like the dreaded "roaring of a lion" to those who anger him. The king's decisions may seem like the wonderful "dew on the grass" to those who please the king. It makes no difference whether the king is wicked or righteous, the roar of the king is dreaded. Such is the case with the LORD. His judgment will come upon those who reject Him like the "roaring of a lion, but his favor" will be like the "dew on the grass."

DESTRUCTION/CONTENTION

Proverbs 19:13 A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.

Nothing in this world can be more draining on a father and husband than a foolish son and a contentious wife. The son destroys the integrity of the family in the eyes of the community; the wife destroys the peace within the walls of the home.

HOUSE/WIFE

Proverbs 19:14 House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

A father who has done well in life will leave an inheritance to his children. In Solomon's day, the father passed to his oldest son the house and all the wealth including the cattle, land, furnishings, servants and the rest of the family. It was the responsibility of the oldest to care for the widow as well as the siblings and their wives and children along with all the employees. Leaving an inheritance was a good thing! However, better than leaving an inheritance was the presence of a prudent wife who completed what was needed each day, prepared for the tasks of tomorrow and set aside resources for needs in the future. The wife of a husband either added to his success or drained his resources. Those fortunate enough to obtain a prudent wife could truly say they had received a blessing from the LORD.

LAZINESS/IDLE

Proverbs 19:15 Laziness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle man will suffer hunger.

Laziness renders a man useless. Regardless of the intensity of the pains of hunger within, he will always remain useless.

KEEPS/CARELESS

Proverbs 19:16 He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, *but* he who is careless of his ways will die.

We should always keep in mind that, if we keep the commandments of the LORD, the LORD will always keep us. The carelessness of those who fail to keep the commandments of the LORD will lead to eternal death.

GRACIOUS/REPAY

Proverbs 19:17 He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.

As a general rule, poor people are poor because they continue to do what poor people do, no matter how much money they earn in a lifetime. In other words, poor people remain poor because of how they use and waste the resources that come to them. Nevertheless, there are a few poor people in this world who neither waste what comes to them nor ask for help in any situation. When we see these people stumble, and are gracious to them, helping them get along in life, making their road a little easier to travel, we will always be blessed by the LORD.

HOPE/DEATH

Proverbs 19:18 Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.

The key to understanding this proverb is found in the words “while there is hope.” As long as the child is alive, “there is hope.” Solomon uses other proverbs to address this same theme. In Proverbs 13:24 Solomon says, “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.” Proverbs 23:13 “Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you beat him with the rod, he will not die.” Children must be trained while they are young. Wrong actions must be explained and punished early; right behavior must be encouraged and rewarded.

RESCUE/AGAIN

Proverbs 19:19 A man of great anger shall bear the penalty, for if you rescue *him*, you will only have to do it again.

“Great anger”, when spewed on others, ultimately carries some form of consequences. This proverb is not a warning to the man of “great anger”; rather, it is a warning to the person who tries to rescue the man of “great anger” from the penalty of his actions. If a person does not learn by hearing and alter his actions, then that person must bear the consequences that come with those actions. To help a person who has made a mistake is one thing; to help a person of great anger who continues to make mistakes is another. Therefore, let the person of great anger pay for his own sin without intervention.

COUNSEL/WISE

Proverbs 19:20 Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.

Perhaps this proverb is a continuation of the previous two verses. If a child will listen to the counsel of his parents, he will not find himself in danger of death. If a child develops great anger, a parent can rescue that child only a few times before the consequences of the anger dictate that the parents cannot rescue the child anymore. If the child will “listen to counsel and accept discipline” at an early age, it will affect the rest of his life in a positive way.

PLANS/COUNSEL

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but the counsel of the LORD, it will stand.

The counsel of the LORD cannot be changed; His desires and laws stand eternal. Regardless of the plans of man, any desire will fail that is in opposition to the counsel of the LORD.

KINDNESS/LIAR

Proverbs 19:22 What is desirable in a man is his kindness, and *it is* better to be a poor man than a liar.

What is the desire of the LORD? The LORD expects those who belong to Him to be kind. If wealth gets in the way of kindness, then it is better to be poor. True kindness is rarely associated with a lie. Lies are told in order to obtain something, many times wealth. It is better not to be a liar, not to be wealthy and to live a life of showing kindness to all.

LIFE/EVIL

Proverbs 19:23 The fear of the LORD *leads* to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.

In Solomon's proverbs, the word “fear” means worship. Truly the worship “of the LORD *leads* to life” without worry and the threat of evil intervention.

HAND/DISH

Proverbs 19:24 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish, *and* will not even bring it back to his mouth.

Here Solomon states a proverb that exemplifies the epitome of a sluggard. It is a picture of a man who is so lazy that he will not even feed himself!

SHREWD/REPROVE

Proverbs 19:25 Strike a scoffer and the naive may become shrewd, but reprove one who has understanding and he will gain knowledge.

The innocent person who tries to correct a scoffer will learn a quick lesson because of the reaction he receives in response to his attempt. Hopefully, the innocent will soon learn that correcting a wise person is more effective and fulfilling than addressing a scoffer.

SHAMEFUL/DISGRACEFUL

Proverbs 19:26 He who assaults *his* father *and* drives *his* mother away is a shameful and disgraceful son.

The original uses the word “wastes” instead of “assaults”. The original makes good sense because a son will be able to cast his mother out of the house only when the father has passed away and the son has inherited the estate. In Solomon’s day, the wife did not become the heir of the estate; rather, the oldest son inherited everything and became responsible for the livelihood of the wife, siblings, servants, animals and the management of the land and other resources. Wasting his father’s estate and casting his mother into poverty constituted a great shame and disgrace on the son.

DISCIPLINE/WORDS

Proverbs 19:27 Cease listening, my son, to discipline, *and you will* stray from the words of knowledge.

The son who stops learning, thinks he knows it all, and fails to continue to train in new areas will soon become obsolete and foolish in his ways. One such example is the man who fails to continue to study and adhere to the Word of God.

JUSTICE/INIQUITY

Proverbs 19:28 A rascally witness makes a mockery of justice, and the mouth of the wicked spreads iniquity.

“Rascally” usually refers to a playfully mischievous person; however, in this case it refers to an unscrupulous, dishonest person whom we would consider a scoundrel. Why? Solomon is describing a person who makes a joke out of true and honest justice. Such people are scoundrels. How do they make a joke of justice? With the words of their mouths! They are the wicked people who spread sin by transgressing the boundaries of true justice. They are the worst of sinners who eagerly indulge in every opportunity to advance sin.

JUDGMENT/BLOWS

Proverbs 19:29 Judgments are prepared for scoffers, and blows for the back of fools.

This theme has already been seen in Proverbs 10:13, “On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding” and Proverbs 18:6, “A fool’s lips bring strife, and his mouth calls for blows.” People who adhere to the characteristics of these proverbs should be avoided; mere association can bring blows to the innocent people who befriend such people. The laws of the land will ultimately bring punishment to the wicked.