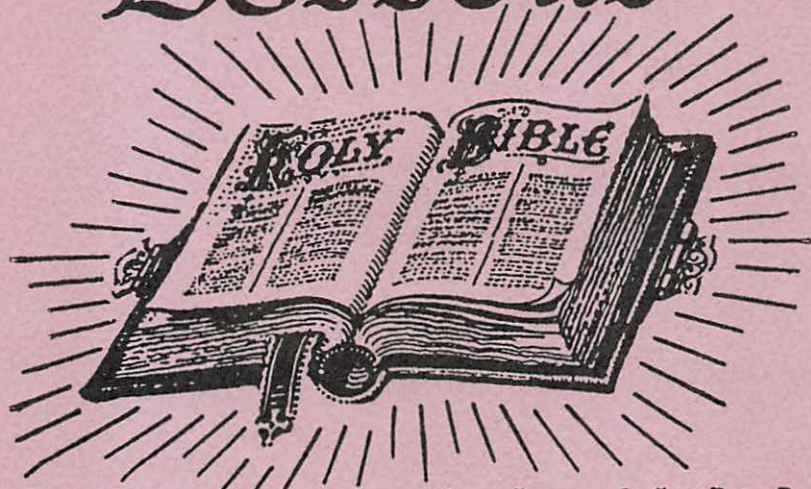


1995

Bible Lessons



**"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 26, No. 3
July, Aug., Sept.
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People
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THEME FOR THIRD QUARTER, 1994

We are inspired for the studies of this quarter to present a series of lessons from the book of Proverbs. The writings of this important part of the Bible cover a wide variety of subjects. We have chosen to include in this series of lessons subjects that are more prominent and mentioned the most frequently, each one being important and vital for our serious consideration. We sense the great burden and concern for the welfare of the souls of men in the counsels of this great book. Our prayer is that the Spirit of God will open the hearts of all who partake of these studies, that we may receive and take heed to the truths contained herein, and benefit from them for the sake of our eternity-bound souls. Many problems and woeful conditions in our world and society today would be corrected and solved if people would learn and follow the counsels of the book of Proverbs.

Since this series of lessons are basic teaching and are all with the same purpose and from the same author, Solomon, we will exclude the Lesson Background that we usually feature. We will lengthen the Word Definition part, and include the renderings of the various texts from the Hebrew Interlinear and Septuagint Greek translations. The Hebrew Scriptures were translated into the Greek language 350 years before Christ. It is the translation that the New Testament writers used in quoting from the Old Testament, and is a very valuable source of study and comparison. It is called the Septuagint, meaning seventy, because the king of Egypt had employed 70 scholars to do the great task of translating.

—Brother Leslie C. Busbee



JULY 3, 1994

TRUE WISDOM CONTRASTED WITH FOLLY

Proverbs 10:13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.

14 Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

Proverbs 11:12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his

neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.

Proverbs 12:8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.

15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Proverbs 13:14 The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Proverbs 14:6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

Proverbs 15:21 Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

Proverbs 16:16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.

21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.

Proverbs 17:2 A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?

24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

Proverbs 19:8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good.

Proverbs 21:20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

Proverbs 26:1 As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.

4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

Proverbs 27:22 Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

MEMORY VERSE: The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness. Proverbs 15:14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness, and a wise man observes and takes notice of the lessons of life while a fool walks in darkness and ignorance, not perceiving the truths that are given from God for the saving of his soul. (Ecclesiastes 2:13-14.)

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 10:13), "*Wisdom*": The ability to judge soundly and with keen perception to deal with facts, especially as they relate to life and conduct. It is knowledge and the capacity to make due use of that knowledge. It is perception of the best ends and the best means to arrive at such ends. It is keen discernment and accurate judgment. It is related to "sagacity," which is defined as keen perception and discernment; the ability to see what is relevant and significant. "*Understanding*": The power to understand. To understand means to grasp the meaning or the idea of; to comprehend. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for understanding means to separate or to distinguish, while the Greek word for understanding means to assemble or to put together. "*Rod*": A stick used for punishment or correction. The Septuagint says, "He that brings forth wisdom from his lips smites the fool with a rod." "*Void of understanding*": The Hebrew says, "lacks heart."

(Proverbs 10:14), "*Lay up knowledge*": A truly wise person is always watching for an addition to the treasure of wholesome knowledge that he is storing up in his heart to help enable him in reaching the righteous objective in pleasing God.

(Proverbs 11:12), "*Void of wisdom*": Here we have the Hebrew expression again: "lacking heart." Being void of wisdom keeps a person from having a wholesome desire for peace and well being with others.

(Proverbs 11:29), *"Inherits the wind"*: Will lose everything of any profit or value.

(Proverbs 14:6), *"Easy to him that understandeth"*: The stubbornness and rebellion in the heart of man dulls the comprehension of that which is good, but as a person yields to God in submission and obedience, the understanding of the right way comes swiftly.

(Proverbs 14:15), *"The simple believes every word"*: There is too much falsity and evil in the world for it to be safe to believe everything you hear. *"Looketh well to his going"*: The Hebrew says, "watches his steps."

(Proverbs 15:21), *"Destitute of wisdom"*: The Hebrew says again, "lacks heart."

(Proverbs 16:21), *"Shall be called prudent"*: The conduct of a wise person will command the respect of those who know him. *"sweetness of his lips"*: The Hebrew says simply, "The sweetness of the lips increases."

(Proverbs 17:16), *"No heart"*: No desire or holy purpose; no will or determination.

(Proverbs 17:24), *"Wisdom is before him that hath understanding"*: The Septuagint says, "The countenance of a wise man is sensible." *"The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth"*: Adam Clarke wisely comments: "Wisdom is within the sight and reach of every man: but he whose desires are scattered abroad, who is always aiming at impossible things, or is of an unsteady disposition, is not likely to find anything worthwhile."

(Proverbs 26:4), *"Answer not a fool according to his folly"*: Do not respond to a fool in the same spirit of strife and foolish indignation that he is operating under. Being unrighteously angry with an unrighteous man avails nothing.

(Proverbs 26:5), *"Answer a fool according to his folly"*: A fool's vanity and pride can be brought to shame if his own devices can be proven to be destructive of the profit and pleasure he is hoping to obtain therefrom. As long as a fool thinks well of himself and his doings he will never change for the better. Only when his foolish ways are made to appear destructive and unprofitable will he want to change. *"Wise in his own conceit"*: Wise in his own eyes.

(Proverbs 27:22), *"Bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle"*: A mortar is a very strong vessel in which substances

are pounded or rubbed with a pestle, which is a stout club, to grind them smaller or finer. The wheat refers to grits, or particles put in to aid the grinding process. This scripture states a sad but true state of a foolish person who rejects all counsel, takes heed to no calamity brought on by his foolish ways, and maintains his perverse practices in view of all their vanity and harm. Adam Clarke comments: "However you may try, by precept or example, or both, to instruct a stupid [foolish] man, your labour is lost; his foolishness cannot be separated from him."

QUESTIONS:

1. What keeps a wise person from suffering the rod of punishment?
2. How can a person keep from being a fool?
3. What will holding your peace keep you from?
4. What must we have to be commended of God?
5. Will one be tempted to reject counsel?
6. Why is it needful to be careful who you associate with?
7. Why is knowledge easy to an understanding heart?
8. Is it wise to be careful about believing what you hear?
9. What can be the result of a matter not handled wisely?
10. Why is it important to put one's whole heart into serving God?
11. Can a person be wise with a careless attitude?
12. Why is it not good to think yourself wise?
13. Why is it so hard to get a fool to give up his folly?
14. What will cause a fool to give up his folly?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I once noticed in the daily newspaper a list of the court proceedings. In the list was the lineup of a pitiful case of a young man who, as the old saying goes, literally "had the book thrown at him." Everything about his driving and the car he was driving that seemingly could be in violation was leveled against him. And with each charge was a worthy fine. Here are some of the charges: No driver's license, no tag, no inspection sticker, no insurance verification, reckless driving, running a stop sign, driving under the influence of alcohol, driving with an open container of alcohol, and other things. I read that and I felt so

sorry for the poor boy. And then the scripture came to my mind: "The rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding." How true this is! Every one of us is faced with this challenge today: Am I going to be wise or am I going to be a fool? To be a fool you do not have to do anything specific or special. Just follow your own inclinations and reject all counsel and advice. Do not let anyone tell you what to do. That is the sure route to becoming a fool. And remember: The rod is for the fool's back. If you are a fool, you are going to suffer for it. But you do not have to be a fool. You can seek wisdom and understanding from God with all your heart. You can put your whole heart into seeking God and doing His will and pleasure. You can exercise and discipline your heart and mind unto godliness. You can keep your life from sin and evil ways and practices. You can listen to the counsel of the Word of God and godly people. You can pray and seek faithfully the will of God in your life. You do not have to be a fool. Weigh these scriptures up that we have in our lesson. Ponder them well and take heed to them. The way of wisdom is by far superior and more profitable than the way of folly. Look around you and observe those who foolishly follow the flesh and the world. Mark those who are really serving God. Be wise and determined that your lot will not be that of a fool. If you will be wise, you will be greatly blessed and benefited, but if you allow folly to dictate to you your course in life, you will be sure to suffer for it.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One of the verses in our lesson that stands out vividly as a prophetic declaration of our time, and should be taken note of by all is, "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind:..." It seems that many think they can say and do what they will in their home to their companion or children, and everything is all right. Our younger generation has been taught that if something bothers you, you should let it be known. This has some validity in its proper place, but in expressing ourselves we should not unload by saying whatever comes to our mind. It is beneficial to deal with a situation, but it is folly to make accusations which will never be forgotten, even after the emotion of the disagreement is gone. We cannot have an unbridled tongue in the home and expect everything to be all right. We

cannot keep our home in a stir and expect it to give us the return of comfort which it is designed to do.

Sometimes nursing homes are the shelters of those who are inheriting the wind. Some people have alienated their spouses and relatives through a life of foolish actions, and now they have nothing; no family willing to take them in and provide the warmth of love. It is wisdom to always seek to make for peace in the home.

—Wayne Murphey



JULY 10, 1994

THE FEAR OF THE LORD AND RESPECT FOR HIS WORD

Proverbs 10:8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

27 The fear of the Lord longeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

Proverbs 13:13 Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

Proverbs 14:2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

26 In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

Proverbs 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

Proverbs 19:16 He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

23 The fear of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

Proverbs 20:22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.

Proverbs 22:4 By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

Proverbs 23:17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

18 For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

Proverbs 27:1 Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

Proverbs 28:4 They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.

7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

MEMORY VERSE: Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. Proverbs 29: 18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There should be in every heart a holy regard and love for the commandments and teachings of the Word of God. It is part of the real fear of God to respect and obey every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 10:8), "*A prating fool shall fall*": The Hebrew says, "The foolish of lips shall be thrust away."

(Proverbs 13:13), "One despising the Word ruins himself": (Hebrew), but "he that fears the commandment has health of soul." (Septuagint.)

(Proverbs 14:26), "In the fear of Jehovah is strong trust" (Hebrew), and "He leaves His children a support." (Septuagint.)

(14:27), "The commandment of the Lord is a fountain of life; and it causes men to turn aside from the snares of death." (Septuagint.) Fearing God brings us to a loving respect for His commandments. The commandments of God are a fountain of soul food and strength that gives us power to refuse the allurements of sin and thus escape the pitfalls of Satan.

(Proverbs 19:23), "The fear of the Lord is life to a man: and he shall lodge without fear in places where knowledge is not seen." (Septuagint.) This tells us that the fear of the Lord can so be the very life principle of a man within his heart that he can live right in the midst of evil influences triumphant and kept by the power of God without fear of failure.

(Proverbs 22:4), "The fear of the Lord is the offspring of wisdom, and wealth, and glory, and life." (Septuagint.)

(Proverbs 23:18), "For surely there is a hereafter, and your hope shall not be cut off." (Hebrew.)

(Proverbs 28:4), "They that forsake the law praise ungodliness; but they that love the law fortify themselves with a wall." (Septuagint.)

(28:7), "*Companion of riotous men*": The Hebrew says, "He who feeds gluttons." Gluttons refer to worthless people with loose morals and no standards.

(28:14), "*Fall into mischief*": Fall into evil.

(Proverbs 29:18), "*The people perish*": The Hebrew renders this phrase: "The people are loosened." This word "loosen" means to expose shame in nakedness, and to dismiss obedience and conformity to God's holiness. The Septuagint expresses it this way: "There shall be no interpreter to a sinful nation, but he that observes the law is blessed."

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible to have God's pleasure upon us when we do not esteem His Word as we should?
2. What kind of life does a person live who knows not the counsel and restraint of the fear of God and the respect of His commandments?
3. What will be the reward for those who reverence God and His Word?
4. What are some of the allurements of Satan to get people in his snares?
5. What kind of honour does one get who does not first humble himself?
6. What will cause us to depart from evil and seek to do good?
7. Why is the welfare and safety of our souls so important?
8. Why is it so important for us to be persuaded that there is a hereafter?
9. How important is God's law to Himself?
10. What kind of vision do people need to keep them from perishing?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

To really love and reverence God we must love and obey what He has spoken. His Word should be so sacred and dear to our

hearts that we will hasten and eagerly obey everything that He has commanded us without any drawback or complaint. The Word of God found in the Holy Bible is able to make us wise unto salvation. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:16-17 There is no commandment so strict, and there is no promise so great, but what can all be obeyed and believed with all joy and confidence. This can be to the one who receives in his heart the love and fear of God. He that believes in the great Jehovah, the God of eternity, and finds understanding of His loving nature and ways will find happiness indeed obeying His precious Word. But to the proud and lustful, the worldly and the rebellious, the ways of God are not desirable. They would rather have their sports and revelries, their excitement and pride, their treasures and their pleasures. To live in humility and quietness of spirit is distasteful to the earthly minded. To dress modestly and simply as a saint of God should, is not considered as desirable. It is because their pride has deceived them; and they count the vain things of earth that soon will perish, worthy of all their love and devotion. The worldly mind cares not for the restrictions and requirements of the Word of God. They want to live loose and not be bound with the bands and cords of Christ. They seek for pleasures passions, unmindful of the spiritual treasures that are revealed only to the pure in heart. Oh, let us fear the Lord and cultivate a reverence for His Word! It will pay off in eternal wealth and happiness to be enjoyed in that blessed world to come when all of this vain life of earth is forever passed away.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is one of the follies of humanity to say, "...I will recompense evil;..." Whenever you begin handling the instruments of revenge you will find that you are dealing with something beyond your ability to control. One theologian has said, "Revenge is like a boomerang. Although for a time it flies in the direction in which it is hurled, it takes a sudden curve, and, returning, hits your own head the heaviest blow of all." The Bible has some very

substantiating stories of what happens when a person is consumed with revenge. It has also been played out in life many times over. One story tells about a young man who had a falling out with a neighbor who was a farmer, so he surreptitiously sowed a prolific weed in the farmer's field. It wasn't long after this that he fell in love with the neighbor's daughter, married her, and inherited the field. He said for years he fought the weeds he had sown. If we will let the Lord handle revenge, we will be immune from any effects or responsibility that go with it.

Since the Lord has said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay..." Rom. 12:19, may it be far from any of us to be a thief by taking something that justly belongs to the Lord. —Wayne Murphey



JULY 17, 1994

**THE BLESSING OF HUMILITY CONTRASTED WITH THE
CURSE OF PRIDE**

Proverbs 11:2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

Proverbs 12:9 He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.

Proverbs 13:10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

Proverbs 14:3 In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

Proverbs 15:25 The Lord will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.

Proverbs 16:5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Proverbs 18:12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.

23 The poor useth entreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

Proverbs 21:4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

24 Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

Proverbs 22:4 By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

Proverbs 25:6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men:

7 For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

Proverbs 27:2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

Proverbs 28:25 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife; but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat.

MEMORY VERSE: A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. Proverbs 29:23.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off. Psalm 138:6. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Pride: Inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable feeling of superiority in ability, beauty, wealth, or rank; unholy and undue self-honour or respect; disdainful behaviour or treatment of others; show; purposeful display.

Humility, humble: The real meaning of the word means low and near the ground. It is the opposite of pride, thinking lowly of one's self.

(Proverbs 12:9), "Better is a man in dishonor serving himself, than one honoring himself and wanting bread." (Septuagint.) The various other translations in general agree with this. The Hebrew Interlinear reads: "Better is a despised one and a servant to him, than one honouring himself and lacking bread." Adam Clarke comments: "There are some who through pride of their birth, would rather starve than to put their hands to common labour. Though they be lords, how much to be preferred is the simple peasant, who supports himself and his family!"

(Proverbs 13:10), "Contention": Strife. "Well advised": The Hebrew says, "Those taking counsel."

(Proverbs 14:3), "*Rod of pride*": The mouth of a fool knows not how to direct his words in a way that will benefit his fellow man. His words become a rod that he smites his family with when irritated and displeased. The scripture here labels it a rod of pride.

(Proverbs 16:5), "*Abomination*": That which is disgusting, repulsive, and offensive. "*Though hand join in hand*": Regardless of how much ungodly people unite and work together to get their cause to prosper, their judgment is unaltered and the punishment is waiting for them at the end.

(16:18), "*Haughty*": Lofty, high-minded.

(16:19), "*Humble spirit with the lowly*": The Hebrew says, "Lowness of spirit with the poor." The terms: lowly, meek, humble, and poor, are all very closely related. "*Divide the spoil*": The spoil here refers to plunder; gain gotten by strife and force.

(Proverbs 18:23), "*Entreaties*": The Hebrew word means earnest prayer.

(Proverbs 21:4), "*Plowing of the wicked*": The Hebrew says, "The lamp of the wicked." The Septuagint reads thus: "A high-minded man is stout-hearted in his pride, and the lamp of the wicked is sin."

(21:24), "*Proud wrath*": The Hebrew says, "wrath of pride." The Septuagint reads: "A bold and self-willed and insolent man is called a pest; and he that remembers injuries is a transgressor." Insolent is defined as being haughty, overbearing, grossly disrespectful, and brutal in language or behaviour.

(Proverbs 28:25), "*Proud heart*": The Hebrew says, "Broad of soul," indicating selfishness and inconsideration of others. The Septuagint reads: "An unbelieving man judges rashly, but he that trusts in the Lord will act carefully."

QUESTIONS:

1. Is there very much pride in the world today?
2. Is there very much danger of pride entering our hearts?
3. What is the general outcome and result of pride?
4. What is the outcome and result of humility?
5. What must we do if we really want to be exalted in the acceptable way with God?
6. What is the Lord going to do with all the proud who refuse to humble themselves?

7. Who decides whether a person is going to be proud or humble?
8. Can I be humble if I purpose to be so and seek God for help?
9. What will help us to want to be humble?
10. Do we have any examples on record of people who were proud or humble? Who are some of them?
11. Who was the greatest example of humility that the world has ever known?
12. What did He do to show the way of humility?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We have before us in our lesson today the two contrary forces in the world. They are pride and humility. It is for us to be wise and to study these two ways of life. Weigh them up and then make up your mind which of the two you want to rule your life. As we look at pride and how foolish and destructive it is, and then as we look at humility and how blessed and beneficial it is, we are drawn to want to seek humility. But there are some things that we need to be aware of. Satan is back of pride. He is the instigator and the promoter of pride in the hearts of men, and he is sly, tricky, and cunning. He can put pride over on a person and sow its destructive seed in the heart and the person not realize it. So we have to really watch and be sincere before God if we are going to conquer pride and be humble. The scriptures in our lesson today will help build incentive and desire for humility. But we will find that pride is not that easy to overcome. Pride, in so many cases, is so deeply entrenched in the nature and the heart that without special consecration and determination and violent effort with the help of the Spirit of God, it will remain on the throne of the heart. Another dangerous thing about pride is that it is deceptive and hidden from view. A person can be proud and not be aware of the evil and harm the pride is doing. Here is where the fear of God comes in. When we realize how great and powerful God is, and how little and unworthy we are, it will help us to cast out our pride. Our lesson today will help us to seek with all of our hearts the humility that God is pleased with. If we will pray and mean it with all that we have within us that God will work and help us to be humble and to overcome pride, we can get help. Let us give God the freedom to search and try our

hearts to see if there is any pride down inside. Let us not pet it or allow it to tarry. Let us hate pride and spare no means in ridding our hearts from this defiling and detestible element. And do not get comfortable and relaxed about it. The danger of pride entering in is always there. We must constantly be on our guard against it. We will have to daily humble ourselves before God and before our fellow man if we are to keep low down in the dust of humility. God will help us, and if we can successfully master the art of humility as our blessed Saviour has shown, we can be happy now and forever with Him. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A proud person is often a noisy person. Our lesson says, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." But that is hard to do when you have pride. There is a feeling that just wants to burst out and make self and its accomplishments known.

A want ad appeared in a newspaper which read: "Wanted 3,000 frogs."

A farmer, on whose land was a millpond, replied to the ad, "Come with a truck. You'll need it. My pond is teeming with frogs."

How disappointed were the buyer and the farmer when, after diligent effort, they caught only three frogs!

Looking dejectedly at their catch, the farmer said, "From the noise they made, you'd have thought there were thousands of frogs in that pond."

Much bombastic boasting comes from the proud and arrogant. "...Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" Dan. 4:30. Or, "...God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Luke 18:11-12.

How different this is to those who have been truly great, such as John the Baptist who once said of Christ and himself, "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." John 1:27.

—Wayne Murphey

JULY 24, 1994

**TRUE TREASURES CONTRASTED
WITH VAIN EARTHLY WEALTH**

Proverbs 10:2 The treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.

22 The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Proverbs 11:4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

Proverbs 13:7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

Proverbs 15:6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

16 Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

Proverbs 16:8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.

16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Proverbs 18:11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

Proverbs 19:1 Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

Proverbs 20:15 There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

21 An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

2 The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

Proverbs 23:4 Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.

5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

Proverbs 28:11 The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

22 He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

MEMORY VERSE: Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. Proverbs 28:6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The true riches are spiritual blessings of salvation, hope, peace, quietness, love, happiness, and the favor of God. We should seek after these eternal treasures rather than the fleeting wealth of this present world that will soon pass away.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 10:22), "*Addeth no sorrow with it*": He adds not pain with it. (Hebrew.) The Septuagint puts it this way: "The blessing of the Lord is upon the head of the righteous; it enriches him, and grief of heart shall not be added to it."

(Proverbs 11:28), "*Flourish as a branch*": Flourish as a green leaf. (Hebrew.) The Septuagint says, "He that trusts in wealth shall fall; but he that helps righteous men shall rise."

(Proverbs 13:11), "Wealth gotten hastily with iniquity is diminished: but he that gathers for himself with godliness shall be increased." (Septuagint.)

(Proverbs 15:6), "*Revenues*": Gain or income.

(15:27), "*He that hateth gifts*": This refers to bribes. A bribe is defined as any undue or unlawful reward for anything against justice or right. The Septuagint is more bold in its expression: "A receiver of bribes destroys himself; but he that hates the receiving of bribes is safe."

(Proverbs 18:11), "*Strong city and a high wall in his own conceit*": The Hebrew says, "In his imagination." The Septuagint

is a little more descriptive: "The wealth of a rich man is a strong city, and its glory casts a broad shadow." Of course, this is greatly implied to be but temporary, soon to be taken down and destroyed.

(Proverbs 20:15), "*A precious jewel*": A rare vessel. (Hebrew.)

(Proverbs 23:4), "*Labor not to be rich*": The Septuagint says, "If thou art poor, measure not thyself with a rich man." It is folly to seek to be rich. Rich people are not to be envied or praised for their wealth.

(Proverbs 28:11), "*The poor searcheth him out*": The Septuagint says, "An intelligent poor man will condemn him."

QUESTIONS:

1. What is there about earthly riches and wealth that is such a temptation?
2. Why are riches so deceitful?
3. What are some of the treasures that money cannot buy?
4. Is it possible that a person can have riches and keep from trusting in them?
5. Is it very probable that one could have riches and not trust in them?
6. What curse is upon ill-gotten wealth?
7. What are some of the woes that accompany worldly wealth?
8. How can riches make wings and fly away?
9. What is usually at the root of every evil in the world?
10. How is a rich man's wealth his strong city? And how strong is it really?
11. How can we make sure that we do not get ensnared in the trap of worldly riches?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Many sad and woeful accounts fill the pages of life's history, recorded not always in books of men, but upon the pages of the books that will be opened at the judgment. One such story I heard years ago. It was about an old gentleman who was very wealthy with a great estate. He employed a young couple who took care of the house and grounds. He fixed it up in his will that

this young couple would get his beautiful home when he died. The young couple decided to hasten their good fortune. While the old man slept one night they crept into his room and deftly drove a nail into the back of his head. There was no blood and the hair hid the nail. The old man's corpse was not closely examined, and it was pronounced that he had died a natural death. He was buried and the estate was settled and the young couple was given the house and grounds just as the will stated. Several years went by and they were enjoying their lovely home. But it came to pass that a new road was being built that had to go through the cemetery where the old man was buried. As they were removing the coffins from the graves to carry them to a new site, a rattling was heard in the coffin of this old man. They opened the coffin and found the nail in his skull. A detective hid the skull under his coat and went to see the young couple. Suddenly while they were visiting, he jerked the skull out and showed it to them. The woman threw up her hands, saying, "Oh, it is found out!" This is just one instance, in the history of the world, of ill-gotten wealth. We have a sin-cursed world on our hands today that is stained with covetousness, the love of riches. The wealth of the world has captivated people. The sports, politics, leadership, homes, and all aspects of mortal society are plagued with the love of money. The true riches are ignored and unthought of. Oh, how we need to lift up our eyes beyond this fleeting world and behold the true treasures, the things above which are at the right hand of God in Christ, our Saviour! Flee the love of money, and follow after the eternal treasures of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity,..."

"It is possible for poverty to be found with integrity. We do not always see integrity leading to wealth. Circumstances may not open up an opportunity for attaining worldly prosperity. No one has a right to suppose that God will interfere to heap up riches for someone on account of his integrity. He may be upright, and yet it may please God that he shall also be poor.

"There is no more vulgar or false snobbishness than that which treats poverty as a vice, and assumes that a shady

character must be expected with shabby clothes. We sometime hear the expression, 'Poor but honest,' as though there were any natural antithesis (a contrast of ideas) between the two adjectives! It would be quite as just to think of an antithesis between wealth and uprightness. But experience shows that no one section of society holds a monopoly on virtue. Character and conduct are the essentials of life; all other things are but accidentals."

—Taken from writings by W. F. Adeney



JULY 31, 1994

DEATH AND LIFE IN THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

Proverbs 10:11 The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

31 The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.

Proverbs 12:18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

25 Heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

Proverbs 13:3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

Proverbs 16:24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

Proverbs 17:27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words.

Proverbs 17:28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

Proverbs 18:7 A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

Proverbs 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

Proverbs 26:22 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Proverbs 29:11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

MEMORY VERSE: Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. Proverbs 18:21.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Much good in one's life can be accomplished by proper and wise use of the tongue, while much harm and sorrow can be caused by an uncontrolled tongue.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 10:19), "*Wanteth not sin*": "Transgressions cease not." (Hebrew.) "By a multitude of words thou shalt not escape sin." (Septuagint.)

(10:21), "*Fools die for want of wisdom*": "Fools die in lack of heart." (Hebrew.)

(10:31), "*Shall be cut out*": Shall be cut off, consumed, destroyed.

(Proverbs 12:18), "There is a rash speaking like thrusts of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is healing." (Hebrew.) "Some wound as they speak, like swords; but the tongues of the wise heal." (Septuagint.)

(12:19), "The lips of truth are established forever; but a tongue of falsehood is only while I wink." (Hebrew.)

(Proverbs 13:3), "He who guards his mouth keeps his soul; he who opens wide his lips is ruin to him." (Hebrew.)

(Proverbs 15:2), "The tongue of the wise makes good knowledge, but a fool's mouth makes foolishness flow." (Hebrew.)

(15:4), "*Breach in the spirit*": Break or ruin in the spirit.

(Proverbs 16:28), "*Whisperer*": Talebearer or slanderer.

(Proverbs 17:28), "*Holdeth his peace*": Is silent.

(Proverbs 25:11), "*Apples of gold in pictures of silver*": This implies luscious, mellow, and ripe fruit, such as yellow Golden Delicious apples, in "settings of silver." (Hebrew.) This could be a crystal glass vessel or bowl, or a silver wire-woven basket. It is a beautiful sight, pleasing to the eye, and ravishing to the appetite, to see a beautiful container filled with luscious ripe fruit. So a wise and well-timed word of expression is pleasing and soothing to the spirit.

(Proverbs 26:22), "*Innermost parts of the belly*": "Chambers of the heart." (Hebrew.)

(Proverbs 29:11), "A fool brings out all of his spirit: but the wise, holding back, quiets it." (Hebrew.)

(Proverbs 18:21), "He who will truly love himself as he should and will love his tongue will keep his tongue from evil and misuse. Thus he will enjoy the fruits of a good conversation and will be blessed in his life." (Septuagint.)

QUESTIONS:

1. Is the power of speech a right, or is it a special benefit from God?
2. What decides whether the power of the tongue will be for life or death?
3. From our lesson, name some of the good things the tongue can do.
4. Name the harmful and destructive things the tongue can do.
5. Is there any danger in being talkative?
6. Is it an easy thing to control the tongue?
7. How can a man control his tongue successfully?
8. How is the tongue connected with the salvation of the soul?
9. How can keeping our tongue in control keep us from troubles?

10. What kind of world would it be if everyone kept his tongue in proper control?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God gave to man the power of speech. Man is able to communicate intelligently with his fellow creatures. What a wonderful blessing that is! But just like other abilities and blessings that God bestows upon his free moral agent creation, this power can bring a curse upon man through misuse and lack of understanding and wisdom. This subject of the lips and the tongue and its use and abuse is really the biggest and most mentioned subject in the book of Proverbs. It touches us all more than about anything else. This is because it is such a near at hand thing that we all have to handle and use in life. As we consider the various true statements and warnings in our lesson it should cause a great purpose and desire to spring up in our hearts. This desire should be to really control our tongues as it is pleasing in God's sight. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. We need to love and appreciate the blessing of the tongue. Above every lesson in life there is to learn, we need to learn this one; and that is, to control our tongue to the glory of the God who gave it to us. There is wonderful fruit that we will enjoy in life through the right use of the tongue. There are comforting and instructive words to be spoken. There are messages of truth to proclaim. There are challenging truths to be proclaimed before the multitudes. There are loving expressions to be bestowed upon weary and troubled hearts. All of this is accomplished through the tongue. But, oh, the cutting words and the scornful criticism that flows so many times! How harsh and unkind the tongue can be! Many a soul once did stand where an unbridled tongue got out of hand. Many a person's spirituality leaks out at the tongue. Where there should be praise there so often is complaint. Where there should be peace and good will there is strife. We should love our tongues and treat them better than we often do. We should not allow them to be the vessels of shame, but rather the means of life and help to others. Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Which will it be for you and for me?

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is nothing that can move a soul like words. Gifted orators have the ability to whip crowds into a frenzy. Unjust wars have been fought because of one person's craftily designed speeches. It was the power of the tongue that the Pharisees used to turn the crowd against Christ and condemn Him to the cross. Never underestimate the power of the tongue. It has the ability to triumph over another person and actually bring physical death to someone, but the greatest power is in the spiritual death it can cause the one who misuses it. People have lost their souls because rather than get the victory over their tongue, they allow their words to cause confusion and discord among their brethren.

On the brighter side, the tongue can be a real blessing. The power in properly spoken words can diffuse a riot. Just a small expression of appreciation can lift a soul out of despair, and joyously propel them down life's wearisome road. Of even more importance to ourselves, words that emanate from a clean heart are our passport to eternal life. —Wayne Murphey



AUGUST 7, 1994

WARNINGS AGAINST UNCONTROLLED ANGER AND WRATH

Proverbs 12:16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.

Proverbs 14:16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

17 He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.

29 He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

Proverbs 16:27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is a burning fire.

29 A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.

Proverbs 19:11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

19 A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.

Proverbs 22:8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

Proverbs 25:28 He that hath not rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

Proverbs 27:3 A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.

4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?

Proverbs 29:22 An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

MEMORY VERSE: He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. Proverbs 16:32.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God would have every one of us to control our spirits in the time when we are displeased and angry. Uncontrolled anger and wrath is disturbing, destructive, and dishonoring to God.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 12:16), "A fool's vexation is known in a day, but the astute covers shame." (Hebrew.) The word "astute" means cunning, crafty, and having shrewd discernment. The Septuagint

says, "A fool declares his wrath the sameday; but a prudent man hides his own disgrace. A person needs to learn to control his feelings and not be hasty to let his displeasure be known.

(Proverbs 14:17), "A passionate man acts inconsiderately; but a sensible man bears up under many things." (Septuagint.)

(14:29), "A man slow to wrath abounds in wisdom: but a man of impatient spirit is very foolish." (Septuagint.)

(Proverbs 15:1), "Anger slays even wise men; yet a submissive answer turns away wrath: but a grievous word stirs up anger."

(15:18), "A man of fury stirs up strife; but one long to anger calms fighting." (Hebrew.)

(Proverbs 16:29), A violent man enticeth his neighbor: So often a man who is plagued with an uncontrollable temper can put on a really good front before people that he desires to impress and get gain from. He will even put on a religious air and makes others think he is such a wonderful person. But in the seclusion of his own house he will abuse and rage against his own wife and family.

(Proverbs 19:11), "*Deferreth his anger*": Slows his anger." (Hebrew.)

(19:19), "The great of fury will bear a fine; for if you deliver him, then you must add again." (Hebrew.) Adam Clarke comments thus: "He who is of an irritable, fiery disposition, will necessarily get himself into many broils; and he that is surety (to pay his fine) is likely to be called upon again and again for the same friendly office."

(Proverbs 22:8), "*The rod of his anger shall fail*": The Septuagint reads in this phrase, "Shall full receive the punishment of his deeds." The sense of the text is that because of his wrongdoing all of his anger and indignant complaining will avail nothing. He still has to pay for his uncontrolled anger.

(22:24), "*Make no friendship with an angry man*": The Hebrew says, "Do not feed with a lord of anger." The Septuagint says, "Be not companion with." It is not wise to justify and go along with the ways of a hot-tempered person. There is a tendency to pick up his habits and end up like him or even worse. It is a proven fact that children that suffer under an abusive parent so often turn out to be abusive to their own children.

(Ephesians 4:26), "*Let not the sun go down upon your*

wrath": Do not allow your anger to cause you to do something that would displease God and cause the smile of His approval to cease from shining on you.

QUESTIONS:

1. What makes a person become angry?
2. Should a child be allowed to get away with tantrum fits and outbursts of anger?
3. Is it normal for us to become angry at something that displeases us?
4. Where does the danger lie in becoming angry?
5. Can uncontrolled anger become an overpowering habit?
6. Is there hope for a person who has not conquered his anger?
7. What must a person do to overcome an uncontrolled anger?
8. What does our lesson liken a man to who cannot control his own spirit?
9. Can a man's anger get him into trouble?
10. Can God use the wrath of an angry man to accomplish His work?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The wrath and anger of a man has been a problem ever since man fell into transgression. We see Cain becoming angry with his righteous brother Abel and in a fit of anger, while talking with him, he killed him. There was Baalam beating his faithful donkey in a fit of anger. There was even the great leader Moses who angrily struck the rock when he was supposed to speak to the rock. But he was angry, and that little uncontrolled action cost him his lot in the promised land. There was Samson and his anger with the Philistines. There was Saul and his murderous wrath and jealousy against David. And we are sure that all down through the history of mankind there have been foolish souls who did not get victory over their anger. We have the warning and counsel here in the book of Proverbs against this thing. There is no excuse for us to allow this unmanly and shameful practice to go on in our lives unchecked and not overcome. God can help us to overcome an uncontrolled anger. One will have to work at it

diligently and watch and pray with determination to never give up until that awful habit is defeated. It is a dominating thing. It is soul-damning and will bring a person down to torment in hell. Do not underestimate it or pet it. It is to be destroyed and completely overcome. God will help us, but we must press on against the powers of habit. Like many of the other habits that are hard to overcome it will not always be easy; but if we are determined to conquer, God will help us. We may have to make a public confession of our need. If we have been professing before the people and under cover acting shamefully in fits of uncontrolled passion and wrath, God wants us to come out openly and confess our need. As long as we are covering it up and acting like all is well, we will never get victory over it. It is natural for certain things to displease us. There are many things that we will feel real indignation against. But what to do about it is the question. Here we need the love and grace of God and the controlling power of the Holy Spirit, and He will help us if we want help. We can overcome anger and wrath and be patient and long suffering by the help and grace of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Carnal anger will get you in trouble every time. Some people are sleek with their words and can talk themselves out of the tight situations they get into, but sooner or later anger will be its possessor's ruin. It will continually get a person into unwanted situations.

According to the verse in our lesson, Ephesians 4:26, and in considering how Christ drove the money changers out of the temple, it seems that a certain type of wrath is in order. The ancient philosopher Aristotle said, "Anybody can become angry; that is easy, but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way—that is not within everybody's power and is not easy."

The only proper recipient of anger is sin. Otherwise the anger we have is carnal and not righteous anger. It is easy to misguide our anger toward the person and not the act of sin. This can be a great hindrance in helping souls find salvation. It is like the boy who was walking along the road and saw a very inviting pool of water. It was so irresistible that he jumped in for a swim,

but the water was colder and deeper than it looked. He was floundering and about to drown when a man came along and saw his struggles and heard his cries. The man immediately became indignant and told the boy he was very foolish, and asked what his mother would say if she knew he was swimming, and said he was of a good mind to report it to the authorities. The boy pleaded, "Save me now, sir, and read me the lecture afterward." If you can lead a person to God, there will be plenty of time to show them the folly of sin and the darkness of wicked deeds. For the most part, to always have a calmness of spirit is a safe guide.

—Wayne Murphey



AUGUST 14, 1994

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECEIVING COUNSEL AND INSTRUCTION

Proverbs 10:17 He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

Proverbs 11:14 Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Proverbs 12:1 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

Proverbs 13:1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

Proverbs 15:5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

10 Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.

12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.

22 Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.

32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

Proverbs 17:10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.

Proverbs 19:20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

21 There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.

25 Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

Proverbs 20:5 Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

18 Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.

Proverbs 21:11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

Proverbs 27:9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

MEMORY VERSE: Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured. Proverbs 13:18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Everyone needs counsel, instruction, and reproof along the way of life. It is wise and for our eternal good to be open and receptive to counsel and reproof, but we lay ourselves open to failure and eternal ruin if we disregard and refuse to give heed to the instruction that God sends to us.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 11:14), "They that have no guidance fall like leaves: but in much counsel there is safety." (Septuagint.)

(Proverbs 12: 1), "*Brutish*": Like an animal: having not good sense or feeling.

(Proverbs 15:5), "*Prudent*": Webster defines this to mean "capable of directing or conducting oneself wisely and with proper judgment; morally and intellectually disciplined or controlled."

(15:12), "An uninstructed person will not love those that reprove him; neither will he associate with the wise." (Septuagint.)

(15:22), "Purposes are frustrated without counsel: but by great counsellors they rise." (Hebrew.)

(15:31) "*Abideth*": Dwell permanently. (Hebrew.)

(Proverbs 19:25), "*Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware*": The Septuagint says, "When a pestilent character is scourged, a simple man is made wiser." It is wise to survey the ranks of history and view the terrible results of foolish and heedless people. The outcome of a life of folly is repeated over and over.

(Proverbs 27:9), "Oil and perfume give joy to the heart, and sweet is one's friend from the counsel of the soul." (Hebrew.) Counsel given from a close, loving friend is a sweet and uplifting influence for one's edification.

QUESTIONS:

1. What causes a person to be unwilling to receive counsel and advice?
2. Why does man need reproof?
3. What does God reprove us with?
4. Is it wise to be careful whose counsel you listen to?
5. How should you react to a person who attempts to counsel you?
6. Should you reject advice immediately, or should you wait and hold it before the Lord in prayer?
7. Is it possible for a person to have eternal life if he or she rejects the counsel of the Word of God?
8. Are there things to be seen and experienced in life that we can take counsel from?
9. Can the Holy Spirit communicate to us the counsel we need?
10. Will the Lord be able to counsel us if we are not fully yielded to Him?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Almost everything that we know in life, we have to learn. About the only thing we do not have to learn how to do is to cry. Everything else is learned, and the way we learn things is to be open to counsel and instruction. We would not even know what our name is if someone did not inform us. But as little children we learn little by little what life is all about. A little child is eager to learn how to walk and talk and do things. But there must be discipline and teachings employed by older ones for us to learn

the essentials of success and happiness. And here is where the problems begin. There is an inclination in every person to not want to take the counsel of others. The attitude just comes natural: "I don't need your advice; let me figure it out for myself." But that is a destructive attitude, an attitude that the teaching of the book of Proverbs is warning us against. "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Prov. 6:23. All along the way we are going to need instruction, reproof, correction, and discipline. If we will humble ourselves and recognize that we need counsel and be willing to weigh carefully and consider the counsel given, God will help us. Sometimes we get ideas of things we want to do, and if we are not careful we will get headstrong about it. Once I desired to help an individual that I thought was in need. I did not want them to know that I was the one bestowing them the favor, so I went to an older saint that I highly respected and loved. I asked them to help me in the matter. They said they would. But in a few days they came to me and counselled me not to do what I was thinking of doing. I had felt pretty strongly that the Lord wanted me to. They gave their reasons, and I accepted their counsel. I am glad that I did. Later the Lord made me to know that He was going to bless me as if I had done it, and He did. If you have a pastor or older Christian that you can counsel with, do be open to their words of instruction. Seek it from them. Ask for counsel and be willing to comply. It is the one who refuses to listen that is headed for trouble. The Lord wants to guide us all with His counsel, and afterward receive us to glory. (Psa. 73:24)

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"It is a 'wise son' who heareth his father's instruction. Already he is wise. Apart from all that he will gain by his teachableness, readiness to receive instruction is in itself an admirable feature of character; it is so more particularly in the young. In them it is positively essential to spiritual beauty and worth; and it goes a long way to constitute such worth.

"What should we think of the young captain who insisted on setting sail without any chart, trusting to his native cleverness to shun the shoals and rocks, and to make his way to port? We know what to judge concerning him, and what to prophesy

concerning his vessel; we are sure that the one is a fool, and the other will be a wreck. And what shall we think of youth when it resolves to sail forth on the great sea of life, disregarding the experiences of the wise, and trusting to its own sagacity? He that feareth not God's commandment, nor regards man's warning, is a candidate for contempt, and is a swift traveller on the road to ruin."

—Taken from writings by W. Clarkson



AUGUST 21, 1994

THE WAY OF LIFE AND THE WAY OF DEATH

Proverbs 10:17 He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

29 The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Proverbs 11:5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

26 The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.

28 In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

Proverbs 13:6 Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Proverbs 14:2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

Proverbs 15:9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

19 The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

Proverbs 16:2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.

9 A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps.

17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

Proverbs 20:24 Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?

Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts.

8 The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right.

16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

MEMORY VERSE: The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. Proverbs 15:24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Everyone has a way that he will go in this world. It is for us to choose to go the way that leads to life everlasting, and to turn away from the way that leads to eternal death.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

"(Proverbs 10:17), *Way*": Course of life or mode of action.

(10:29), "*Strength to the upright*": To take God's way of purity and humility gives a man strength to overcome all adversity and evil and to triumph unto success all the way to glory.

(Proverbs 11:5), "*The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way*": "The perfect man's righteousness makes his way straight." (Hebrew.) The word perfect means complete and entire, sound and without blemish or spot, undefiled. The Septuagint puts it this way: "Righteousness traces out blameless paths but ungodliness encounters unjust dealings."

(Proverbs 12:26), The Hebrew text says, "The righteous searches out his friend, but the way of the wicked misleads them." The general sense is that the righteous man lives a life that will manifest and bring to the knowledge of those around

him a better way of life, while the ungodly exerts a wrong influence.

(Proverbs 13:15), *"The way of transgressors is hard"*: "The way of traitors is continual." (Hebrew.) "The ways of scorers tend to destruction." (Septuagint.) The way of the ungodly affords no convenient place of escape. It is continual, ever worsening and making the heart harder and less apt to repent. Thus the way of sin tends ever to destruction, and only desperate and violent decision will save the lost traveller.

(Proverbs 14:2), *"He that is perverse in his ways despiseth him"*: "He that is going the wrong way lightly esteems the Lord." (Hebrew.)

(14:8), *"The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way"*: The wise in Christ know why they live and walk the way they do. Heaven's light has made clear to them their responsibility and the promised reward for their faithfulness. They are not in the least shadow of doubt of the value of their faith and integrity with God. *"The folly of fools is deceit"*: The ungodly are in the dark and deceived concerning the path they are taking. Satan sees to it that their minds are so blinded to the truth that they are not aware of the danger they are in.

(14:12), *"A way which seemeth right unto a man"*: The word "seemeth" is really an added word by the translators. The Hebrew says, "There is a way upright, or straight, before a man." This shows how easily we can be deceived and mistaken about the course of life we choose. It looks straight before us, and every excuse and reason for taking that path is so logical. But we need a higher power to enlighten and make known the hidden things of darkness. The way that looks so good and straight may in the end lead us into the paths of death. The Septuagint says, "The ends of it reach to the depth of hell."

(14:14), *"Filled with his own ways"*: The ungodly find not satisfaction in the condition of their souls, but are continually going in ways of pleasure and sinful enjoyments. *"A good man shall be satisfied from himself"*: A righteous man enjoys fellowship with God and the satisfaction that he is living that holy life that glorifies his Maker and benefits his fellow man.

(Proverbs 15:19), *"The way of the slothful as an hedge of thorns"*: The lazy man does not keep his way of life free from the clutter and weeds of strife and turmoil. This can be true both spiritually and naturally. It takes work and attentiveness to keep

a home and property in neat order just as it takes diligence to keep one's soul acceptable before God.

(Proverbs 16:2), "*Weights the spirits*": Measures out and tests the motives and attitudes.

(16:9), "*The Lord directeth his steps*": It is true that God's ways are much higher and better than the ways that we might plan out. How diligent we ought to be to seek God's way in everything!

(16:31), "*Hoary*": Grey.

(Proverbs 20:24) "*How can a man then understand his own way?*": Only through Holy Spirit conviction and enlightenment can we see the way that we should go.

(Proverbs 21:2), "*The Lord pondereth the hearts*": This is the same expression as that in 16:2, only this time the heart as well as the spirit is weighed and measured.

(21:8), "*The way of a man is froward and strange*": The Hebrew says, "Perverted is the way of a guilty man."

(Proverbs 15:24), "The thoughts of the wise are ways of life, that he might turn aside and escape from hell." (Septuagint.) "The path of life is upward to the prudent, that he may turn from hell below." (Hebrew.) If we are to escape the damnation of hell we are going to have to take the upward way of holiness.

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of warning does our lesson today present concerning our finding the way of life?
2. Whose way are we inclined to take as we journey through life?
3. Is it easy to see our way as wrong?
4. How can we know the way of righteousness?
5. In what ways is the way of life better than the way of death?
6. Is it possible for us to be in the way of death and not be aware of it?
7. Can the Lord make known His way to us?
8. What attitude and condition of heart must we be in to be able to see the way of life?
9. In what way is the way of righteousness a highway above?
10. How can we know that we are not on a "seem-right" way?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How serious is the subject of our lesson today! We are all taking a way in life. What way are we taking? That is the question that we should know the answer to. There is a downward way. Jesus called it the broad way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. (Matthew 7:13.) There is an upward way, and strait and difficult is the gate that opens to it. And narrow is that way that leads to life and few there be that find it! We have several clear and explicit warnings in our lesson. There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. The way that seems right to us is our own way. The prophet Isaiah stated that, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way...." Isaiah 53:6. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes. This is where the problem is, and this is where the devil deceives people. This is where he deceived mother Eve. He got her to looking at the forbidden fruit like it was desirable and all right, and that God was doing her wrong in keeping her from it. Oh, how Satan works to get his way looking good to us! He is the master of the art in painting his ways to look pretty to the flesh. But let us be warned, and let us be wise. Let us look and seek for the way of holiness that leads us above the contamination of this old wicked world. We want to escape from hell beneath. So let us take the upward way, the way of faith, purity, humility, righteousness, holiness, patience, and meekness. Let us be on our guard against the way that seems right in our own eyes. Where you are going depends on what way you are taking. If you want to go to heaven you must take the way that leads there. If we say we are going to heaven and are walking in the way of ungodliness, we are deceived. God's way is the best way, and it is the only way that leads to happiness, success, and eternal life. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath." This denotes that those who are wise have their sights on heavenly things, and conversely, those who are unwise have their treasures upon earthly things which lead to destruction. The apostle Paul put it this way, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those

things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Romans 6:21, 22.

One minister relates this happening. "Walking in the country, I went into a barn where I found a thresher at his work. I addressed him in the words of Solomon: 'In all labor there is profit.'

Leaning upon his flail, with much energy he answered, 'Sir, that is the truth, but there is one exception to it. I labored long in the service of sin, but I have got no profit by my labor.'

Then you know something of the Apostle's meaning when he asked, "What fruit," etc.'

"Thank God," said he, 'I do; and I also know that even "being made free from sin," etc.'

How valuable this simple faith in the Word of God! And true is the saying of a deceased writer, 'that piety found in a barn is better than the most splendid pleasures of a palace!'

—Wayne Murphey



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AUGUST 28, 1994

RIGHTEOUSNESS OPPOSED TO WICKEDNESS

Proverbs 10:6 Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

7 The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.

Proverbs 11:6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.

18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

Proverbs 12:10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

Proverbs 14:32 The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

Proverbs 15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

29 The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Proverbs 16:4 The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Proverbs 21:7 The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.

10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.

12 The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.

21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

29 A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.

Proverbs 28:1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

Proverbs 29:6 In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

MEMORY VERSE: Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs 14:34.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Those who will follow after righteousness will have the blessings and favor of God upon their hearts and lives, but those who yield to sin and transgression are in danger of eternal damnation and ruin.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 10:6), "*Violence*": Mistreatment and harm. The Septuagint says, "Untimely grief."

(10:7), "*The name of the wicked shall rot*": "The name of the ungodly man is extinguished." (Septuagint.)

(10:24), "The ungodly is engulfed in destruction; but the desire of the righteous is acceptable." (Septuagint.)

(Proverbs 11:6), "*In their own naughtiness*": "In their lust." (Hebrew.) "In their own destruction." (Septuagint.)

(11:18) "The wicked makes a wage of falsehood; but the one sowing righteousness has a reward of truth." (Hebrew.)

(11:23), "*The expectation of the wicked is wrath*": "The hope of the ungodly shall perish." (Septuagint.) All the wicked have to look forward to is the wrath and displeasure of God to cast them into outer darkness forever.

(11:31) "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" This is the Septuagint rendering of this verse. It is quoted thus in I Peter 4:18. Judgment must begin with the righteous. In bearing the cross, enduring the trials, and suffering for Jesus the godly are being brought to the judgment of God now. That is what the term "scarcely" refers to. That is part of the recompense that we will receive while in this present world. But the ungodly and the sinner will have to endure much of the same in this world and will be lost forever at the judgment. The righteous have a great

chance and opportunity to escape the judgment of God, but there is no way that those who remain ungodly will escape it.

(Proverbs 12:10), "A righteous man has pity for the lives of his cattle; but the bowels of the ungodly are unmerciful." (Septuagint.) The term "bowels" refers to the feelings and consideration that one should have, which the wicked disregard and allow to be cold and careless. Righteousness will cause a person to have a compassionate feeling for dumb animals. There is discipline to be administered at times, but there is never need to be cruel.

(Proverbs 14:32), "The wicked is thrust out in his evil doing, but the righteous has refuge in his death." (Hebrew.) The ungodly will be thrust out, cast out, and forever banished to the regions of darkness, away from all light, warmth, comfort, and rest. But for those who are saved there will be the angels of God to take them in and carry them to that paradise of rest.

(14:34), "*Sin is a reproach*": Disgrace and a shame. The Septuagint says, "Sins diminish tribes." Yes, sin ruins families and stops the flow of righteousness from generation to generation. It is bringing our nation into problems that are insurmountable and increasing all the time.

(Proverbs 16:4), "*Even the wicked for the day of evil*": The Lord reserves the wicked for the day of judgment to be punished. (II Peter 2:9.) He bears with the wicked and gives them every chance to repent and amend their ways, but the time comes when He lets His judgments fall upon them. They are still His even though they have refused to obey Him. They are His to dispose of according to His own will.

(Proverbs 21:7), "*The robbery of the wicked*": "The violence of the wicked." (Hebrew.) The Septuagint says, "Destruction shall lodge with the ungodly, for they refuse to do justly."

(21:10), "*His neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes*": A man can become so corrupt with evil that nothing pleases him outside of his own foolish notions, and this kind of bearing will draw the same reaction from his fellow man. The Septuagint says simply, "The soul of the ungodly shall not be pitied by any man."

(21:12), "*The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked*": A godly man views the life of the ungodly with mixed feelings of concern and understanding, knowing the future of such with a desire to help them. The Septuagint says, "A

righteous man understands the hearts of the ungodly: and despises the ungodly for their wickedness."

QUESTIONS:

1. Viewing the righteous and the wicked in the light of the scriptures in our lesson, what decision ought we to make?
2. What should be the feeling in our hearts for wickedness?
3. How should we feel about righteousness?
4. Is it needful to come to a definite decision about this?
5. What are some of the advantages listed of being righteous?
6. Is there any benefit and advantage in not being righteous?
7. What will cause a person to want to change from sin to righteousness?
8. Is it possible for an unrighteous person to not be aware of their true condition?
9. How can an unrighteous person become righteous?
10. Is it possible for us to love righteousness so much that we will seek for it with all of our hearts?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Righteousness, godliness, truth, holiness, purity, and judgment are all combined in pleasing God. God is greatly pleased with such. He hates sin and wrong because He is a God of right and justice. He wants His creation to be righteous and like Him. The sin and evil of mankind has always been a grief and pain to His heart. The evil and wickedness of His creation has stirred His wrath to pour out destruction many times. He is forbearing and merciful, but the time comes when the cup of His anger and indignation gets full and He pours it out. He destroyed the world in Noah's time with a flood because of the ungodliness of men. He poured out His wrath upon Sodom and Gomorrah because of their fierce wickedness and perverted ways. He loves and shows special favor to those who seek righteousness and the way that pleases Him. He wants to see that love for righteousness in a man. Even if a man falls short, if God can see a desire and a will to attain to righteousness He will be merciful and gracious. Righteousness brings a great reward of blessings.

Unrighteousness brings a great reward of destruction. It is just that simple. We must make up our minds which of these we will have in our lives.

Face up to the matter. Look at righteousness and wickedness right in the eye. View their state and what follows. Each one must make up their own mind. As we see the blessedness of righteousness and the curse of wickedness it will not be hard to decide what to do. Through the grace of God in Jesus Christ and His triumphant life we can attain unto the blessed state of true righteousness, the righteousness of faith. It will not be our own righteousness, but His righteousness, accounted to us as we believe and follow Him. And we can follow after righteousness and increase in His grace all along our life's journey and someday enter into that blessed world to come "wherein dwelleth righteousness." II Peter 3:13.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...the name of the wicked shall rot." Have you heard of many who named their child Judas, or Nero? You probably haven't, but it is not very uncommon to have a child named after someone who is admired. The names Judas, Nero, etc., have gone down in history and are known by many, but to state it similarly to the scripture, their names are held in contempt.

The most important ingredient to being favorably remembered after your death is character. Wealth is one of the first things to fade. It may gain you much favor in life, but unless the individual has something other than money when he dies, his name will simply go down as a statistic. Titles may gain you a spot in history, but titles alone won't put much of a shine to your name. It is remarkable how fair the verdict of history is. There are some people who try to rewrite present history because they have ulterior motives for putting certain slants on it, but eventually history generally shows a pretty clear picture. Someone involved in wickedness may deceive his contemporaries, but eventually his name will be despised.

Much could be said about how the righteous will be remembered, but while their names are spoken with fondness by those still upon the earth, the remembered will be enjoying the ultimate reward of heaven. This is that for which we are striving.

—Wayne Murphey

SEPTEMBER 4, 1994

THE BENEFIT OF DILIGENCE; CURSE OF SLOTHFULNESS

Proverbs 10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.

Proverbs 11:27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

Proverbs 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.

Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

Proverbs 15:19 The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

Proverbs 18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

Proverbs 19:15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

24 A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

Proverbs 21:5 The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.

25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

26 He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not.

Proverbs 22:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Proverbs 24:30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had

covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.

33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

Proverbs 27:23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

24 For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?

MEMORY VERSE: He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. Proverbs 10:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: A person will not prosper in anything if he is careless and slothful in his thoughts and habits. To be successful with God and in the Christian life one must be diligent in prayer and the daily care for his soul and in obeying the will of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 10:4), The Hebrew rendering of this is interesting: "He who deals with a lazy palm (or hand) becomes poor; but the hard worker's hand makes rich." The Hebrew word for "diligent" and "hard worker's" is an interesting word. It basically means incised or incisive. Incisive means cutting, and can be applied to the thought of piercing, penetrating, and separating. It can refer to a trench (as dug), gold (as mined and refined), and a threshing instrument (having sharp teeth). It can also mean, in a figurative sense, determination and eagerness. It is a very important word. It is translated "decision" in Joel 3:14, "multitudes in the valley of decision." It is translated "gold" in Proverbs 3:14, 8:10, 19, and 16:16. It is also translated as "sharp" in Isaiah 41:15, "sharp threshing instrument;" and as "threshing instrument" in Isaiah 28:27 and in Amos 1:3. The basic meaning back of this term "diligence" means that which gets the job well and successfully done and accomplished. The effort exerted, the instruments

used, and the resources employed to accomplish the work and responsibility that is given to us of God all is included in the meaning of the word "diligence."

(10:26), "*Vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes*": Adam Clarke comments well on this verse: "The acid softening and dissolving the alkali of the bone (or teeth), so as to impair their texture, and render them incapable of chewing; and as smoke affects the eyes, irritating their tender vessels, so as to give pain and prevent distinct vision; so the sluggard, the lounging, thriftless messenger, who never returns in time with the desired answer. "*Sluggard*": A lazy and indolent person, one who indulges in ease, avoiding labor and exertion.

(Proverbs 11:27), "One early seeking good seeks favor, but one pursuing evil, it shall come to him." (Hebrew.) Here "diligently" means to be up early at any task.

(Proverbs 12:24), "*Slothful*": Remiss ones. "Remiss" means to be negligent in the performance of one's work or duty; careless and inattentive.

(10:27), "*Roasteth not*": The real meaning in the Hebrew here means: "Does not go after and ensnare his prey." Not only will the slothful not attend to his game, but he will not work at ensnaring it in the first place. Here the word for "slothful" is "remiss" again. Let us look at this text in the Hebrew: "The remiss one does not start after his prey; but a hard working man's wealth is precious."

(Proverbs 15:19), "*As an hedge of thorns*": Adam Clarke comments well: "Because he is slothful, he imagines ten thousand difficulties in the way which cannot be surmounted; but they are all the creatures of his own imagination formed by his sloth." "*The way of the righteous is made plain*": The Hebrew says, "The path of the upright is exalted." The word "exalted" here refers to the mounding up as a turnpike or special road built up for swift travel.

(Proverbs 18:9), "*Great waster*": The Hebrew says, "Lord of destruction."

(Proverbs 19:24), "*Hideth his hand in his bosom*": The Hebrew says, "Hides his hand in the bowl or dish." Clarke comments: "Is too lazy to feed himself. If he dip his hand once in the dish, he is too lazy to put it in a second time. Through his excessive slothfulness, he would rather starve than put himself to the trouble to eat." This may seem unrealistic in the natural

realm of eating, but spiritually there are many slothful people who will not exert the earnest effort to get food to their souls.

(Proverbs 20:4), "*Will not plow by reason of the cold*": The Hebrew says, "Will not plow after the crop is gathered in the autumn." The meaning of the proverb is: The slothful man, under the pretence of unfavourable weather, neglects cultivating his land until the proper time is past." (Clarke.)

(Proverbs 21:5), "*Thoughts*": Plans.

(21:25-26), The Hebrew for these two verses is good: "The lust of the lazy man kills him, for his hands have refused to work. All the day long he lusts with lust, but the righteous gives and withholds not." How hard it is to break the habit of slothfulness!

(Proverbs 22:29), "*Mean men*": Obscure men.

(Proverbs 24:34), "*As one that travelleth*": Walking about.

(Proverbs 27:23-24), The Hebrew says, "For strength is not forever, nor the crown to generation and generation." The meaning is obvious. Do not take anything for granted. If you are going to enjoy the blessings of God, you are going to have to diligently apply yourself to obeying Him and doing His will.

QUESTIONS:

1. Is slothfulness a very big problem?
2. Is it possible for a man to be diligent in material matters and be slothful in spiritual responsibility?
3. What are some of the things that one must be diligent in doing if he is to be successful in the Lord?
4. Can a person be slothful in the necessary material responsibilities and not be affected in being diligent in the things of God?
5. Does it sound very likely that a slothful man will see himself and want to break this awful habit?
6. Where and when must this inclination of laziness be dealt with and conquered?
7. In what two ways can we neglect this great salvation?
8. Is there any chance for a slothful man to prosper in his soul?
9. What is the root of slothfulness?

10. What are some of the present problems in our society that have encouraged slothfulness?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

This subject of slothfulness reminds me of something I read some time ago that illustrates how severely a person can be in a slothful way. This was a story of a man who would not work, but he had needs. The people around him finally decided that he was not good for them, so they were going to take him to the graveyard and bury him as he was such a no-count fellow. They laid him in the wagon and started for the graveyard with him. Someone called out and said that he had a load of corn he would give him. The man raised up and asked, "Is it shelled?" Well, the answer was, "No." The man laid back down and said, "Drive on!" This sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? But we have lots of lazy people around, wanting a hand-out and aid from the government that they think owes it to them. People have been seen sitting by the road-side in their cars with a sign out, which says, "Will work for food." These very people have been offered work and they did not show up for work. Many years ago I was working in a lumber yard. The yard manager was needing some extra help, and they got a fellow who was needing work. He worked on the job for awhile and then excused himself and was found uptown sitting in the restaurant eating! A plumber told me that he hired a man to work for him, and while they were working this man suddenly said, "Why this is just plain old ordinary work!" And he walked off. This problem of sloth is one of the underlying causes of trouble in our society, and it is surely an underlying cause of the spiritual decline in many people's lives. To be spiritual and close to God requires diligence. The scriptures are plain on this. The diligent soul will abound with spiritual victory and wealth, while the careless and indifferent will famish and fail.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

An incident occurred in which a sheep rancher hired a man to tend his flock. The shepherd carelessly allowed the sheep to get away from him one by one. After three or four months he

sought out his employer and said, "You are going to have to get me more sheep to herd; I've run out of sheep." Needless to say, his termination was swiftly affected. Many people, in their own situations, are just as negligent and slothful, especially in spiritual matters.

The scriptures abound in exhortations to diligence. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:..." Matt. 26:41. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Prov. 4:23. "...Give diligence to make your calling and election sure..." II Peter 1:10. We must do as the prophecy of Christ says, "...I set my face like a flint,..." Isaiah 50:7.

A slothful person is not an innocent person. Prov. 26:14 says, "As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed." A person in this condition is not really asleep. He is aware of what is going on and yet rolls and tosses because he just does not want to rise and work. There are those in sin who are miserable by a consciousness of what they need to do, yet fold their hands and allow time and opportunity to pass them by. "...Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." II Peter 3:14.

—Wayne Murphey



SEPTEMBER 11, 1994

WOMEN: GODLY AND UNGODLY

Proverbs 11:16 A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches.

22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

Proverbs 12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

Proverbs 14:1 Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

Proverbs 18:22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.

Proverbs 19:13 A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.

14 House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the Lord.

Proverbs 21:9 It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.

19 It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Proverbs 22:14 The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.

Proverbs 23:26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

27 For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.

28 She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.

Proverbs 27:15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.

16 Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself.

Proverbs 30:20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.

Proverbs 31:10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

MEMORY VERSE: Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Proverbs 31:30.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: A godly woman who loves and obeys God with all purity and humility is a great and wonderful blessing in the earth. But a foolish and ungodly woman who lacks true wisdom and understanding is the cause of much trouble and sorrow.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 11:16), "*Gracious*": Kind, loving, helpful, generous, favourable, comforting. The Septuagint in this verse is really good: "A gracious wife brings glory to her husband: but a woman hating righteousness is a theme of dishonour."

(11:22), *"Without discretion"*: Turning off discretion and wisdom, not allowing it to have place in her life. She is so taken up with outward beauty she has no time for the real beauty of the soul. The Septuagint says, "As an ornament in a swine's snout, so is beauty to an ill-minded woman."

(Proverbs 12:4), *"A virtuous woman"*: A woman of virtue. "Virtue" from the Hebrew is a combination of qualities of force. This includes valor, strength, goodness, benefit, service, and faithfulness. *"Rottenness in his bones"*: The Septuagint reads: "As a worm in wood, so a bad woman destroys her husband."

(Proverbs 18:22), "He that has found a good wife has found favours, and has received gladness from God." (Septuagint.)

(Proverbs 19:13), *"Continual dropping"*: This and the "continual dropping in a very rainy day" in 27:15, refer to a leak in the roof. When it is raining and the drips are coming it is not the time to fix the roof. But when the storm is over and the roof quits leaking you forget about it. So it is with an unstable woman. When all is going well you do not anticipate any drip of contention until the next storm, and then the trouble starts all over again.

(19:14), Both the Septuagint and the Hebrew give a sense of comparison in this verse. The Hebrew says, "House and riches are the legacy (that which is inherited or handed down in a court of law) of fathers, but from Jehovah is a woman who acts prudently." The Septuagint agrees thus: "Fathers divide house and substance to their children: but a wife is suited to a man by the Lord." In other words, you don't inherit a wife like you inherit the estate from your parents. She is given as a precious gift to a faithful man by the loving Heavenly Father.

(Proverbs 21:19), *"Contentious and angry woman"*: The Septuagint says, "A quarrelsome, and talkative, and passionate woman."

(Proverbs 22:14), *"Strange woman"*: One who has turned aside from the true ways of God, a profane person foreign to holiness and righteousness.

(Proverbs 23:27), *"A deep ditch, a narrow pit"*: "A deep pit and a narrow well." (Hebrew.) Blessed is the person who will avoid the destructive snare of an ugly woman!

(23:28) *"Increaseth the transgressors"*: The word for "transgressors" in the Hebrew means treacherous, or that which is under cover and deceitful.

(Proverbs 27:16), The Hebrew reads: "He who hides her hides the wind, and his right hand meets oil." The wind is impossible to hold, and oil is slippery. So to try to cover up an angry man or woman is a useless endeavor.

(Proverbs 31:30), "*Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain*": The Septuagint really puts this well: "Charms are false, and woman's beauty is vain: for it is a wise woman that is blessed, and let her praise the fear of the Lord."

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is an ungodly woman such a dangerous pit?
2. What is a beautiful woman without the fear of God likened unto?
3. If a man is blessed with a really godly and dutiful wife, what should be his feelings and dealings toward her?
4. Is it a wise thing for a young girl to ponder and have serious thoughts about what kind of woman she will turn out to be?
5. By what means can a woman be the kind of woman that is praised of God?
6. Can a woman influence a man by her outward beauty?
7. By what kind of beauty should a woman seek to influence others?
8. Name some of the characteristics of a woman that would really make her desirable and of value to a wise man.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A woman who possesses outward beauty should be diligent to seek the inward beauty, also. To be beautiful in a natural way without the beauty of the soul is just as inconsistent as putting jewelry in a pig's nose. God has a reason for giving a woman outward beauty. A man enjoys the natural beauty of his wife, and it is a blessing to him. But the outward beauty and attraction alone are not the best bonding material for a happy married life together. There must be the inward beauty in both the man and the woman. But since the woman was made for the man, then there must be special diligence on her part to possess that inward beauty along with what outward beauty God has given her. This can be had in the woman through the grace of

God and the power of the Holy Spirit. A woman who is filled with the love of God and holiness from the Lord is truly beautiful even if her outward beauty may not be so outstanding. That inward beauty of faith, love, patience, kindness, and gentleness will clothe her with a charm that will make her beautiful regardless of the outward appearance. How sad that so many women are without that inward beauty! So much wickedness and evil flows in our world today because of the beauty of woman in the flesh being the sought after prize of the carnal and animal passions of men. And women who are carnal and fleshly minded are feeding this wickedness through the love of money and the beastly nature. We have the contrast before us between the godly and the ungodly woman. May there be this desire and resolve in the heart of every young maiden, to so yield to the Lord and let Him make her to be a woman that will be a blessing to her husband, her children, and to humanity everywhere!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Rebekah, in the old Testament, showed the qualities of a virtuous woman. When Abraham's servant was sent to find a wife for Isaac, and he met her at the well, she was pleasant in a reserved way. If she had had the attitude of many today, she would have told the servant to get his own drink when he asked for water. It is not recorded that she said anything until he had finished drinking. Some women would have already inquired about his identity, his purpose and his destination, by the time the water was poured. Instead, Rebekah quietly gave him to drink. Reserve and shamefacedness are qualities to be desired in a woman. Association with the loud, bold, forward and brazen woman brings heartache.

We find that Rebekah had compassion, even for the least of God's creation. Her offer to water the camels shows her concern for their welfare. No doubt the journey had been difficult and dusty for them. The virtuous woman has a tender heart. Some seem to think it makes them look capable to act hard, but it indicates a weakness of character.

Rebekah was willing to work. It seems quite a task to haul enough water for 10 camels, yet she freely offered to do so. A person who is industrious is a crown to her husband.

—Wayne Murphey

SEPTEMBER 18, 1994

**TRUTH AND HONESTY
WEIGHED AGAINST LIES AND DECEIT**

Proverbs 12:17 He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.

19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.

22 Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.

Proverbs 13:5 A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.

Proverbs 14:5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.

25 A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.

Proverbs 17:4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.

Proverbs 19:5 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.

22 The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.

Proverbs 20:10 Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord.

14 It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

17 Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.

Proverbs 25:14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

18 A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.

Proverbs 28:23 He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

Proverbs 29:5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.

MEMORY VERSE: A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape. Proverbs 19:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Falsehood and deceit are condemned and displeasing in the sight of the God of righteousness and truth. They who hide under falsehood and lies will be exposed to eternal shame at the last great judgment.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 12:17), "He who breathes faithfulness reveals righteousness, but a witness of falsehoods deceit." (Hebrew.) "A righteous man declares the open truth, but an unjust witness is deceitful." (Septuagint.)

(12:20), "*Imagine evil*": Plotting evil.

(Proverbs 14:5), "*Utter lies*": "Breathes lies." (Hebrew.) "Kindles falsehood." (Septuagint.)

(Proverbs 17:4), "*A naughty tongue*": "A tongue of evil desire." (Hebrew.) "A bad man hearkens to the tongue of transgressors: but a righteous man attends not to false lips." (Septuagint.)

(17:7), "*Becometh not*": Is not fitting. The Septuagint reads: "Faithful lips will not suit a fool; nor lying lips a just man."

(Proverbs 19:22), "The desire of a man is his mercy, and better to be poor than a man of a lie." (Hebrew.) The Septuagint says, "Mercy is a fruit to a man: and a poor man is better than a rich liar." Everyone has desires. We would not be normal creatures if we had no desires. God created us with desires. Having desires and enjoying their fulfillment helps make life sweet and rich. Fulfillment of just and legitimate desires are the acts of the mercy of God to us, but to lie or exercise deceit in obtaining the objects of our desires ruins their value. It is better to be poor with our desires unfulfilled than to have them gratified through falsehood.

(Proverbs 20:10), "*Divers weights, divers measures*": The Hebrew says, "A stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah—are hateful to Jehovah, even both of them." The Septuagint reads: "A large and small weight, and divers measures, are even both of them unclean before the Lord, and so is he that makes them." The system of weights and measures was, according to

the Jewish historian Josephus, invented by Cain, the wicked son of Adam. Such a system has given rise to many deceitful works of evil. False balances and deliberate inaccuracy in weights and measures are hateful to God.

(20:14), *"It is naught, it is naught"*: The Hebrew renders this verse: "Evill Evill says the buyer; but when left to himself, he boasts." Oh, how lies and deceit can enter into financial transactions. Products are degraded and run down by people who know better, but are trying to get the other man to feel constrained to come down on his price. Then when he gets his way he goes off and says, "I got that on a steal!" But the all-seeing eye of God is watching and weighing everything.

(Proverbs 28:23, 29:5), *"Flatter"*: The Hebrew word means "smooth." How smooth and innocent can seem the speech of a person who is out to deceive and get money dishonestly!

QUESTIONS:

1. Where does the temptation to lie or be dishonest come from?
2. Why does it not really pay to be dishonest?
3. Does a habitually dishonest person have the fear of God on his heart?
4. Should a person correct and make right the lies and deceit he has practiced?
5. Is there very much falsehood in the world today?
6. Will a person get away with bearing false witness?
7. Is it possible for a person to tell a lie and believe that what they are telling is true?
8. Is the truth hard to face up to at times?
9. Why would a person want to make lies their refuge?
10. Where shall all liars go?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I remember an incident that happened to us a number of years ago. A nicely dressed lady came to our door and said she was selling throw rugs that were made from Swedish yarn by her blind aunt. We believed what she said and bought two or three of them. She made her rounds of the neighborhood, but

some of the people got suspicious and called the sheriff. When she became aware of what they were doing she took out and left in a hurry. We found out later that those very rugs were on sale in local stores for a much lesser price than what she was offering them for. All that smooth talk about them being made from Swedish yarn by her blind aunt was a bunch of lies. This is just one instance of the world of dishonesty that we live in. I once heard a bunch of children being interviewed by the press, and they were asked if their parents lied at times. The children affirmed that they knew that their parents lied at certain times. When asked if politicians lied, they all with one accord declared that they did. So we live in a world that is held up and sheltered by lies and falsehood. But the great God of heaven is looking down and His eyes are beholding all the deceit that is being practiced under the sun. Lying can become a habit. One can lie and then have to tell another lie to cover up his first lie. Little children learn early to lie and this inclination must be dealt with severely and wisely. A child that gets away with lying will grow up with that kind of life. Satan is the author of all lies and falsehood. Jesus is the Truth of God brought down in the flesh. We do not have to resort to lies to get along in life. To tell the truth in one's heart is much better than to be supported by lies.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There may be instances when it is a little bit difficult to be honest, but it is a quality that everyone can possess. It was very well stated by a university professor who for years, before giving a test, would say, "I am giving two examinations—one in trigonometry and the other in honesty. I hope you will pass them both. If you must fail one, fail trigonometry. There are many good people in the world who can't pass trig, but there are no good people who cannot pass the examination of honesty."

"Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain." Although someone may pretend to be honest and upstanding, it doesn't take too long to discern their true state, and their words carry very little weight.

One pious looking Sunday School teacher taught a class of boys, and emphasized the fact that each one of them needed to

live a consistent Christian life, because God's watchful eye is upon all. He asked, "Why do you suppose that, when others see me, they think of me as a Christian?"

One boy, knowing that the teacher owed his father a debt which he refused to pay, and that he had enriched himself by shady business transactions, asked, "Sir, could it be that they don't know you?"

—Wayne Murphey



SEPTEMBER 25, 1994

PARENT AND CHILD RELATIONS

Proverbs 10:1 ...A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 15:5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

20 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

Proverbs 17:6 Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy.

25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.

Proverbs 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

26 He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

Proverbs 20:7 The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.

11 Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

15 My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.

22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

25 Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

Proverbs 28:24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

MEMORY VERSE: Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Parents have the God-given responsibility to discipline and guide their children into the fear of God by setting a good example and by teaching them daily of the Lord and His goodness. Children are responsible to listen to their parents and submit themselves to their correction and discipline.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Proverbs 10:1), "*Heaviness*": Grief and sorrow.

(Proverbs 13:24), "*Chastens him betimes*": Corrects him earnestly, diligently, searchingly, and painstakingly. The Septuagint says, "Carefully chastens him."

(Proverbs 19:18), "*Chasten*": Webster defines this: "To correct by punishment; to inflict pain upon for the purpose of reclaiming."

(19:26), "*Wasteth his father*": Assaults or abuses his father:

(Proverbs 20:7), "*Integrity*": Moral completeness and innocence.

(20:11), "Even by his acts a lad makes himself known, whether his work is clean or upright." (Hebrew.) The Septuagint reads: "A youth with a godly man will be restrained in his devices, and then his way will be straight."

(Proverbs 22:6), "*Train up a child*": The Hebrew says, "Narrow and initiate and discipline a child at the start of his way." Adam Clarke has some very wholesome words at this point: "When he comes to the opening of the way of life, being able to walk alone and to choose; stop at this entrance, and begin a series of instructions, how he is to conduct himself in every step he takes. Show him the duties, the dangers, and blessings of the path; give him directions how to perform the duties, how to escape the dangers, and how to secure the blessings, which all lie before him. Fix these on his mind by daily reminders, till their impression is become indelible; then lead him to practice by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, till each indelible impression becomes a strongly radicated habit. Beg incessantly the blessing of God on all this teaching and discipline; and then you have obeyed the injunction of the wisest of men. Nor is there any likelihood that such impressions shall ever be effaced, or that such habits shall ever be destroyed."

(22:15), "*Rod*": A stick to inflict pain for punishment.

(Proverbs 23:13-14), "*Beat*": To strike or hit.

(Proverbs 29:15), "*Left to himself*": The Hebrew says, "Sent off." When a parent refuses to discipline and correct his child he is sending his child off into the downward ways of death.

QUESTIONS:

1. Does the writer of Proverbs teach against whipping and chastising children as a mode of discipline?
2. Is this the modern way that our society believes?
3. Is strictness and the use of the rod for correction an important or necessary thing?
4. What will be the outcome of a child not corrected or disciplined?
5. What kind of love is it that will not allow a parent to whip or punish their child?

6. What kind of love will constrain a parent to use the rod on their child?
7. Does a child have some responsibility before God concerning discipline?
8. How should a child respond to the discipline of the parent?
9. What should be the main activity in dealing with children?
10. Will God help us with the great task of child raising?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Child raising and being a parent is a much more serious and important task than what many people comprehend. The writer of Proverbs presents it to us in its seriousness and also its value. What a blessing it is to have an obedient child who inclines his or her heart toward the things of God! It is a wonderful joy and pleasure to a person to see their child grow up and become a wise and godly person. But it is equally a weight of sorrow and grief to see any one of their children take the downward road to destruction. Therefore, this matter of raising children should be approached with much prayer and seeking God. It really is something to pray about. Most young people look forward to the day when they can be married and have a home of their own. But this will mean having children. Children are the fruits of marriage. It is a happy occasion to have little ones coming into the home. But the responsibility of raising those little ones up to love and serve their Maker is a great work! The scriptures in our lesson are very plain about the duties of parenthood. In our world today many darkened and deceived people have come to the conclusion that corporal punishment, that is, whipping and spanking, are not the thing. Oh, they are very outspoken about it. They think they are right. But it does not agree with the wisdom of the Word of God. Discipline must be administered in the right way for it to be effective. Mistakes will be made because we are human. But prayer and faith in the great love and grace of God will help parents and children through those difficult years of child training. And then, even at the very best, Satan has a way of taking advantage of children and ensnaring them even when

they come from a godly mother and father who have done their very level best to raise them up in the right way. Look earnestly to God and keep love and kindness in all your discipline and punishment. Pray with your children, seek God for wisdom and strength, and do your very best. God will help you!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Children can be an unequalled blessing. As they are properly trained, and as they respond to love and correction, it brings undiluted joy to the parent's heart. Sometimes it may not appear to be pure pleasure when the hard work of raising a child is burdening you down, but there is a goal to be invested in and enjoyed. It is like the saying, "A baby is a small member that makes love stronger, days shorter, nights longer, the bankroll smaller, the home happier, clothes shabbier, the past forgotten, and the future worth living for."

It is the parent's responsibility to put parameters around a child. Sometimes these parameters have to be enforced with the rod. It is easy to neglect a child by not keeping these rules enforced. Once a father took his son on his lap and told him a story about a little lamb that wiggled through a hole in the fence and got away from the sheep fold. After a while a wolf got after the lamb and almost caught him, but the shepherd found him, rescued him and took him back to the fold. The father was astounded when the boy asked, "Did they nail up the hole in the fence?" It is hard to know where to place the blame when a child goes wayward. It is only natural for children to look for weaknesses in rules. We as parents must always be sure that the fault doesn't lie in neglected parameters.

—Wayne Murphey



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