

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

The wise woman is one that honors the LORD and seeks to do His will; chapter 31 will give a very clear picture of this type of woman. Such a woman will work hard and make choices that strengthen her family and home. The foolish woman does just the opposite. She has chosen to reject the LORD and His word, and her actions and choices weaken and destroy her family and home. The biggest impact of each of these women is her spiritual influence on the family.

Interesting note: The Hebrew for “buildeth” also makes reference to “obtaining children” for the home. This was especially important in Israel’s agrarian society.

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

This verse emphasizes the truth of the comment I made above. The person that lives an upright life, the wise person, fears the LORD with holy reverence. The perverse or foolish person lives a life in complete disregard of God and His word. God grants him the right to make that choice in this life, but the day is coming when he will bow and confess God Almighty as LORD.

Isaiah 45:22–23 “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”

Romans 14:11 “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”

Philippians 2:10–11 “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Ironsides: “To talk of reverence while obeying the dictates of a selfish, carnal nature is hypocrisy.”

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

I like the NIV: “A fool’s talk brings a rod to his back, but the lips of the wise protect them.”

The foolish person is prone to talking rashly without forethought of the possible consequences of what he says. The wise person controls his tongue and thinks before he speaks, protecting himself.

I am reminded of an old memory verse from James.

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

Proverbs 14:4 ¶ Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

Obviously, if you have no animal, your stable will stay clean and empty. If you possess an ox and take advantage of its strength, you will have to clean the stable; but you will profit greatly from all it allows you to do.

Application: One must be willing to work hard and deal with the mess that is necessary for making a profit.

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

A faithful witness is by definition one who is trustworthy and tells the truth. A false witness by definition tells lies.

It grieves me as I observe this truth on constant display by the governing authorities in America today. The ruling axiom seems to be say or do whatever it takes to accomplish one's agenda; forget the truth. Our court system is full of lawyers more focused on winning the case at all costs than on getting at the truth. One day they will face Almighty God, the righteous judge, before whom they will not be able to lie because He knows everything.

*Hebrews 4:12–13 "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but **all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.**"*

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

A scorner is one who despises religion in particular (according to Webster). Such a person may seek wisdom, but he will never find it because true wisdom is rooted in a reverence for God and the desire to follow His word. The person with understanding reverences the LORD and His word and will easily soak up knowledge that leads to wisdom and discernment.

Proverbs 14:7 ¶ Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not *in him* the lips of knowledge.

This is another proverb that addresses the importance of choosing our friends wisely. Solomon warns against fellowship with the foolish man whose speech reveals that he has no respect for God or His word.

Because of our sin nature and the attack of the forces of evil, it is more likely that he will pull you down before you pull him up the longer and closer your association with such a person. Scripture warns about this in several places.

Job 28:28 "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

2 Corinthians 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

Proverbs 14:8 ¶ The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way: but the folly of fools *is* deceit.

According to Webster, the prudent person is discreet and sensible. Such a person shows his wisdom by carefully considering his words and actions. Webster defines folly as "want of good sense" and "thoughtless procedure." Such a person is easily deceived even as he tries to deceive others.

Henry: "Christian prudence....*is to understand our own way*, not to be critics and busybodies in other men's matters, but to look well to ourselves and *ponder the path of our feet*, to understand the directions of our way, that we may observe them, the dangers of our way, that we may avoid them, the difficulties of our way, that we may break through them, and the advantages of our way, that we may improve them...."

Guzik: "This explains one reason why **folly** and **fools** can be popular. Their attraction is based on **deceit**, in the same way that the bait deceives the fish into ignoring the hook."

Proverbs 14:9 ¶ Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous *there is favour.*

This verse certainly reads a bit differently in each translation.

NIV: *"Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright."*

CJB: *"Guilt offerings make a mockery of fools; but among the upright there is good will."*

NLT: *"Fools make fun of guilt, but the godly acknowledge it and seek reconciliation."*

As I continued to think on it, I looked more at the contrast. The fool basically mocks the righteous person by flaunting his sin. In a God-fearing society (such as Solomon's), such action would bring him into disfavor among the people. The righteous man's actions show his reverence for the LORD and cause him to be favored among the people. It also seems to imply (through contrast) that the righteous person would respond to his sin with repentance, as indicated by the NLT.

Clarke: *"He that makes a sport of sinning, will find it no sport to suffer the vengeance of an eternal fire."*

Proverbs 14:10 ¶ The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

I think Solomon is saying that no one else can truly identify with another in their bitterness or their joy. We can try to empathize and sympathize, but we cannot really mirror their feelings.

Ironsides: *"How truly was this the case with our blessed Lord Himself! Who ever measured the depths of the anguish of His soul, or who can rightly estimate His joys? To such a High Priest we can go with our own heaviest sorrows; with Him we can share our inmost thoughts of exultation and delight."*

Proverbs 14:11 ¶ The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.

This immediately brought to mind when Jesus taught about the wise and foolish man.

Matthew 7:24–27 "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be

likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

The sayings of Jesus are the very word of God. Jesus reveals the key to the primary truth of Solomon's teaching. One who obeys God's word builds a strong spiritual house that can withstand the troubles one encounters in life. One who disregards God's commands in His word will have nothing to sustain him when the troubles of life confront him.

I liked Guzik's observation: "The **wicked man** boasts of his great **house** and looks down upon his **upright** neighbor who lives in only a **tent**. Yet the **tent of the upright** is more secure than the **house of the wicked**."

Proverbs 14:12 ¶ There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Another important truth. Without God and the wisdom and truth of His word to guide us, we are dependent on our own understanding. Such understanding is always influenced by the flesh and the world around us; it always leads to death and ruin. The world surrounds us with powerful deception and fleshly temptation that always lures us away from God and His word.

How many people are deceived by their own "wisdom"? Multitudes believe that there are many ways to heaven, but scripture declares that Jesus is the only way.

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Acts 4:10–12 "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole....Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Multitudes believe that their good works will get them to heaven. Scripture declares that only faith in Jesus as our Savior will get us to heaven.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Ephesians 2:8–9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Multitudes believe that the world exploded into being out of nothing. God’s word tells us that He created it.

Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Obviously, I could go on and on.

Scripture is also very clear that those that reject God and His gift of salvation will suffer eternal destruction out of God’s presence.

2 Thessalonians 1:7–9 “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power....”

Revelation 20:12 & 15 “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works....And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Proverbs 14:13 ¶ Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.

I think the NLT expressed it well: *“Laughter can conceal a heavy heart; when the laughter ends, the grief remains.”*

This truth is often evident at funeral homes and visitation times surrounding the death of a loved one. Memories that make us smile and laugh help ease the sorrow, but can’t take away the ache inside. How blessed we are as believers to know that all sorrow and grief associated with our life on this earth is but a tiny dot compared to the joy that we and born again loved ones will experience for eternity!

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

The backslider is one who turns away from God in disobedience. Most translations basically say that the backslider and the good man reap what they sow. I believe that is

true, but the KJV for the last part of the verse isn't that clear. The thing that stood out to me was the phrase "in heart." It made me think about how some people are different on the inside than what is on display outwardly. They think they are fooling everyone, but they can't fool the LORD. He knows what is in one's heart.

Psalm 94:11 "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man...."

Psalm 139:1–2 "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."

Acts 15:8 "And God, which knoweth the hearts...."

It reminded me of words from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, using an example of the lust of the eyes.

Matthew 5:27–28 "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

It's a sobering truth! It is so important that we guard our hearts.

Proverbs 4:23 "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Ironsides: "A backslider is one who has given up ground once taken for God. Many a soul gives up in heart long before it is seen in their life. The conscience becomes defiled and if self-judgment does not follow, the truth begins to lose its power over the heart. The sad result of a broken-down testimony soon follows until the backslider is living for himself. It is important, however, to distinguish carefully between backsliding and apostasy. The backslider is one who fails to carry out the truth of his profession into his life. The apostate, on the other hand, gives up the truth entirely, even denying the Lord; this proves his falseness, whatever his previous profession may have been."

Proverbs 14:15 ¶ The simple believeth every word: but the prudent *man* looketh well to his going.

The simple person is foolish and easily seduced; but the prudent, wise person listens carefully and carefully considers his choices. This truth has been repeated several times already in this book of wisdom.

We've been reminded over and over again that the foolish person has no fear or reverence of God, and the wise person reverences the LORD, using His word as the foundational truth from which he makes all choices. The wise person is able to discern the difference between the wisdom of men vs. the wisdom of God.

EBC Abridged: "The simpleton believes every word, probably because he hears what he wants to hear."

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

This is yet another reference to the fact that a wise man fears and reverences the LORD; and because of that fear and reverence, he chooses to avoid doing evil. The foolish man rejects the LORD and is full of anger that causes him to be reckless and overconfident.

Henry: "Holy fear is an excellent guard upon every holy thing, and against every thing that is unholy."

Proverbs 14:17 ¶ *He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*

This verse tells us that a hot-headed, quick tempered person makes foolish choices, and the person that plots evil against others is hated and considered odious.

Though the contrast is not stated, this would imply that the wise person is one with self-control that makes good choices that align with the word of God, and that a person of good will toward others is loved and respected.

Proverbs 14:18 ¶ The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

Again, the foolish person reaps what he sows; he reaps the consequences of his foolish actions. The prudent person is crowned or enclosed (from Hebrew for "crowned") and protected because of his ability to use discernment and make wise choices.

Proverbs 14:19 ¶ The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

Though stated as a truth, this is really more a prophecy. It is true that in a God-fearing society evil people are humbled before good, righteous people when judged. Sadly,

most governments in the world today have no fear or respect for God and evil persons are exalted. The truth of this verse will be most evident once Jesus takes His throne as King over the whole world in the millennium. The time is coming when every knee will bow before Almighty God and His Son, Jesus the Christ. Unbelievers will be made to worship before the feet of the body of believers.

Isaiah 45:22–23 “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”

Philippians 2:9–11 “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Revelation 3:9 “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.”

Proverbs 14:20 ¶ The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.

It is sad but true, that people are more often considered desirable as friends based on wealth rather than character. Even in the church, people are more naturally drawn toward the wealthy believer than the poor believer. Truth be known, the faith of many believers that we would consider “poor” is often richer and stronger than the faith of those that we see as wealthy. They have had to depend on the LORD for their needs and endured the fires of trial and testing from which they have emerged stronger and richer in faith.

I’m reminded of the warning words of Jesus to the Laodiceans who think they are rich and in need of nothing.

*Revelation 3:17–18 “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; **and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:** I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”*

Believer's Bible Commentary: "We should be interested in people for what we can do for them, not what we can get from them. In one sense the rich man has many friends, but in another sense he never knows how many true friends he has, that is, friends who love him for who he is rather than for what he has."

Proverbs 14:21 ¶ He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

I think that in context, the neighbor is referring to the poor person and that this verse is directly connected to the previous one. One who shows disrespect or contempt for a person just because he is poor is sinning; he is not acting in accordance with the word of God. The person that shows mercy and kindness to the poor will be blessed because his/her actions align with the word of God. God values the poor.

James 2:5 "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

Proverbs 14:22 ¶ Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.

Those that make plans to do evil err, they go astray from God's truth, from the way of blessing. Those that make plans to do good will benefit from their kindness and truth.

Henry re those that plan evil: "They think that by sinning with craft and contrivance, and carrying on their intrigues with more plot and artifice than others, they shall make a better hand of their sins than others do, and come off better. But they are mistaken. God's justice cannot be out-witted."

Proverbs 14:23 ¶ In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

In other words, hard work pays off. It made me think of the phrase, "Actions speak louder than words." You can talk about doing something all you want; but until you are ready to do the required work, you will make no progress toward your goal.

I also thought of the old saying, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." Again, this is so true. The one who talks about doing good but puts no effort into actually doing good will more likely find himself suffering the consequences of his laziness.

Proverbs 14:24 ¶ The crown of the wise *is* their riches: *but* the foolishness of fools *is* folly.

The root for the word “crown” was interesting; it stated, “to encircle (for attack or protection).” It made me think that the wise accumulate wealth by make choices that keep them in the protective circle of God’s will. The foolish, however, will disregard God’s will and expose his foolishness.

Ironsides: “Whether poor or wealthy in this world’s goods, the wise are always rich because they possess treasure that can never fade away.”

Proverbs 14:25 ¶ A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful *witness* speaketh lies.

The person who testifies only to the truth supports righteous judgment to protect and save the innocent and convict the guilty. A false witness can pervert judgment, resulting in harm to the innocent while letting the guilty go free.

Sad to say, the judicial system in America today is predominantly one that promotes winning at all costs without thought to righteous judgment. Those who are part of this system will one day face THE righteous Judge and be held accountable for their actions.

Revelation 20:12 “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

Hebrews 9:27 “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment....”

Henry: “A man of integrity will venture the displeasure of the greatest, to bring truth to light and rescue those who are injured by falsehood. A faithful minister, who truly witnesses for God against sin, is thereby instrumental to deliver souls from eternal death.”

Proverbs 14:26 ¶ In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

Proverbs 14:27 The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

The fear of the LORD gives one strong assurance of eternal life. His children will be sheltered and protected, safe from the snares that lead to eternal death—eternity devoid

of God's presence—because they have been taught to reverence God and obey His word.

Guzik: "One might think that **fear** always leads to a loss of **confidence**. But that isn't how it works with **the fear of the LORD**. Our honor, reverence, and sense of awe towards Him moves us from self-confidence and towards **strong confidence** in God's love and greatness."

Proverbs 14:28 ¶ In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.

Simply stated—A king's majesty is proportionate to the number of people subject to his rule. His power is dependent upon a large population. A sparse number of subjects leads to his ruin. People are needed to provide the goods and services needed for a prospering kingdom.

Thought-provoking application from Guzik: "Related to spiritual things and Christian ministry, the principle of this proverb shows the weakness of a worldly, humanistic view of ministry. It is of the carnal, worldly wisdom of kings to understand large crowds as the only *real* measure of success. We imagine that the Apostle Paul might rephrase this line: *In a multitude of people is a king's honor, but in love, faithfulness, and sacrificial service is an apostle's honor.* A **multitude of people** in ministry is never to be despised, but we should have a *greater* measure of success than that."

Proverbs 14:29 ¶ He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

My paraphrase—A wise man is slow to get angry, but a foolish man has lack of self control.

I am reminded of these verses from James.

James 1:19 "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Proverbs 14:30 ¶ A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.

Envy is indicative of a heart that is not content, that is filled with ill will toward others. Such a heart is not sound or whole. Envy is like a worm eating away at your heart that will eventually destroy you.

Again, I am reminded of the words of James, the brother of Jesus.

James 3:15–17 “This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

Proverbs 14:31 ¶ He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

One who treats a poor person cruelly or unjustly shows contempt for his Creator who made every person in His own image.

Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

One who shows mercy and kindness to the poor shows that he honors God, his Creator. God tells us over and over again in His word that we are to show kindness to those that are poor and needy. When we obey Him, we honor Him. I am sure Solomon was well aware of the words of Moses as recorded in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 15:7–11 “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.”

Jesus tells us in the New Testament that our actions to those that are poor and in need are accounted as having been done to Him. I know the context is in reference to those

that are accounted worthy to enter the millennial kingdom, but the principal stands since God never changes.

Matthew 25:34–40 “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Malachi 3:6 “For I am the LORD, I change not....”

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

When the wicked person that has rejected God dies, he is cast out of God’s presence forever. When the righteous person that reverences God and His word dies, he will find everlasting protection and refuge in the presence of the LORD.

Though not much is said in the Old Testament about life after death, we have the testimony of Job and David (regarding the death of his child) declaring their confidence in it. The last part of this verse only makes sense in light of that belief.

Job 19:25–27 “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”

2 Samuel 12:22–23 “And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

Proverbs 14:33 ¶ Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known.

There are different shades of meaning in the different translations. I think it is saying that wisdom abides in and comforts the heart of a man of discernment. Discernment is the ability to make right or wrong choices in light of God's word. I think the last part of the verse indicates that even fools can recognize wisdom in spite of their choice to reject it—though they would never admit it.

Ironsides: "The intelligence and insight of the man of understanding reveal the wisdom that is in his heart; while the senseless behavior of fools tells all too plainly what is within their hearts."

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

Almost, if not every government on earth ignores this truth. Righteousness is the key to a nation's honor. Righteousness is a reference to morality and justice. Morality and justice find their roots in the word of God, the only valid standard against which they can be measured or determined.

Sin, however, brings dishonor and shame to any people or nation.

Obviously, the reference to honor and dishonor are in the eyes of God and those that revere Him. In our world today, for instance, those that nations choose to honor are the ungodly, those that reject the LORD and His word. More and more, those that choose to honor the LORD are mocked by the nations and peoples of this world.

Ironsides: "Israel will ever be the great object-lesson for all people. When the Word of God was esteemed and His will honored, they prospered. When sin and neglect of God triumphed, they became a reproach. He was right who said, 'Israel is the pillar of salt to the nations, crying to all people, 'Remember!'"

Proverbs 14:35 ¶ The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.

The king delights in a wise servant that brings him honor—one that acts with intelligence and contributes to his success. He will direct his anger against the servant that brings him shame because of foolish behavior and incompetence.