

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

Solomon is saying that it is better to be honest and poor than it is to be a pompous, outspoken rich fool (one that has no respect for God).

Guzik quoting Bridges: "Often men put under their feet those whom God carries in his heart. Man honors the perverse for their riches and despises the poor because of their poverty."

Proverbs 19:2 ¶ *Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.*

Two things are identified as not good: 1) To lack knowledge and 2) to be quick to choose to sin. Lack of knowledge (ignorance) is a springboard for hasting to sin.

Clarke: "A child does nothing cautiously, because it is uninstructed; a savage is also rash and precipitate, till experience instructs him. A man who has not the knowledge of God is incautious, rash, headstrong, and precipitate: and hence he sinneth - he is continually missing the mark, and wounding his own soul."

Proverbs 19:3 ¶ *The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD.*

I think the NLT states it well: "*People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then are angry at the LORD.*"

This principle is so evident in our society. Bad things happen, and people always want to blame God for it rather than placing the responsibility where it properly belongs—on sin, sinners and/or self. It is because of sin that we do not live in a perfect world. Sin introduced the process of decay and deterioration in creation. People who choose to yield to their sin nature (because they have rejected God) are the perpetrators of bad things.

Proverbs 19:4 ¶ *Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.*

People who are rich have no lack of friends. Why? Primarily because people want to benefit from their relationship with them. The poor man has a hard time finding friends primarily because there is no seeming benefit to associating with him.

As Christians, we should mirror God's heart for those who are poor; we should be compassionate and merciful, ready to lend a helping hand.

Leviticus 25:35 "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee."

Deuteronomy 15:7–8 "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."

Deuteronomy 15:11 "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."

Psalms 41:1 "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble."

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

Zechariah 7:9–10 "Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."

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

A person that gives false testimony and tells lies will not go unpunished before the LORD. They may appear to be getting away with their wickedness in the here and now, but they won't. As recorded in Psalm 73, Asaph struggled with this very thing (the wicked prospering) until he realized what their end would be.

Psalms 73:17–19 "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors."

Proverbs 19:6 ¶ Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.

“Prince” is a reference to one of nobility and influence. There are many that beg for help from such people. And it is true that people like to receive gifts and look favorably upon those that gift them. Maybe the inference in this proverb is that the people who seek the favor of the person with power and influence often do so by giving them gifts.

Proverbs 19:7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth *them with words*, yet they are wanting to him.

Again—we have to remember that this is a general statement. The relatives of a poor man are likely to try to avoid him, so it’s not likely that he will be able to make friends of those that aren’t of his family. No matter how many overtures he makes to them, they ignore him.

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

The person that treasures his life seeks wisdom, understanding and discernment; such a person will find favor, pleasure and prosperity. Again, this is always true before the LORD because the wise person is seeking such wisdom in accordance with God’s word. It is not always true, however, before men because they have rejected the LORD and are prone to disrespect those that do.

Proverbs 19:9 ¶ A false witness shall not be unpunished, and *he that speaketh lies shall perish*.

This verse is basically the same as verse 5. The difference is in the ending. By specifically stating that the liar will perish reinforces the comments made pertaining to Asaph at verse 5. I am reminded that the LORD hates lying and scripture is specific concerning the fate of liars.

Proverbs 6:16–17 “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue,”

Revelation 21:8 “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Proverbs 19:10 ¶ Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes.

The Hebrew defines “delight” as luxury and pleasantness. “Seemly” refers to being fitting or suitable. So Solomon is saying it doesn’t seem right for a fool to live in luxury or for a slave to rule over leaders.

EBC Abridged: “In these reversals the fool only makes worse his bad qualities—boorishness, insensitivity, and lack of discipline—and the slave becomes arrogant and cruel.”

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

“Discretion” is a reference to wisdom and good sense. A person that is wise and sensible will choose patience over anger and acts with honor when willing to overlook a wrong done to him.

We who are Christians have the example of Jesus to follow. The fact that we have been forgiven so much at such great price should make us more merciful and patient toward others.

Proverbs 19:12 ¶ The king’s wrath *is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.*

My paraphrase: The king’s wrath is to be feared, but his favor is a blessing. Principle: Don’t do anything to incur the king’s wrath; treat him with respect and honor.

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

A foolish son (ungodly) causes his father (godly) great misery, sometimes leading to ruin. A wife that is always causing strife is as annoying as a leaking roof and its continual dripping. The focus in this verse is on a man that is cursed with an unhappy home.

Guzik: “A wife who often contends (fights, argues) with her husband is like a continual dripping in at least three ways.

- It is an always-present annoyance and trouble.
- It wastes and destroys, eroding good and valuable things.
- It points to some underlying, more basic problem.

Ironside: “How unhappy the home where both a foolish son and a contentious wife are found! They are very likely to be found together; for where the wife disputes her husband’s authority, siding with the children in opposition to his proper discipline, the effect on the home will be anything but good.”

Proverbs 19:14 ¶ House and riches *are* the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife *is* from the LORD.

This verse draws a contrast to the last part of the previous verse. A man can inherit a house or wealth from his parents (or other relatives); but an intelligent, wise wife is a gift from the LORD. She is a source of happiness and comfort to her husband as she takes care of home and family.

Trapp: “Nature makes a woman, election a wife; but to be prudent, wise, and virtuous is of the Lord. A good wife was one of the first real and royal gifts bestowed on Adam.”

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

One who is slothful or lazy is lethargic, like one who is in a trance; such a person will end up going hungry, being poor.

Ironside: “Laziness is trifling away opportunities that will never return. It is failing to appreciate the value of time.”

Henry: “Slothful people doze away their time, bury their talents, live a useless life, and are the unprofitable burdens of the earth; for any service they do when they are awake they might as well be always asleep.”

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

God gave His commandments to provide for man’s benefit and safety. To keep the LORD’s commandments is to safeguard one’s life and soul. The first commandment is to honor the LORD; it is key to being able to keep the following commandments. Those that seek to honor the LORD in faith and obedience have secured their eternal future in His presence. When you honor the LORD, you will also honor the authorities He has placed over you—especially your parents.

Proverbs 19:17 ¶ He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

This is yet another statement of the LORD's regard for those that are poor. The comments I made on verse 4 also apply here. What is added in this verse is that the LORD will reward you for your charity towards the poor.

Luke 6:38 "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

Luke 14:13–14 "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

1 John 3:17–18 "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

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

In other words, discipline and correct your child while he is young and more teachable, and don't let his crying sway you not to discipline him and let him get away with his sin.

Though more easily understood by the farmer, the truth of this comment by Henry is right on target. "It is easiest plucking up weeds as soon as they spring up, and the bullock that is designed for the yoke should be betimes accustomed to it." And another: "It is better that he should cry under thy rod than under the sword of the magistrate, or, which is more fearful, that of divine vengeance."

Ironside: ""The iron hand in the velvet glove" has long been the symbol of strict discipline administered in grace. To leave a child to himself is to display a cruel indifference to the fate of one committed to our care. To be heartless and unnecessarily severe in correcting him is the opposite extreme."

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

As I read through the different translations, Solomon seems to be saying that if a man that acts with great anger and rage is not punished and held accountable for his actions, it is highly unlikely that he will change his ways. Thankfully, we know that God can bring even the most ungodly to their knees before him in faith and repentance, e.g., King Manasseh.

2 Kings 21:11–12 “Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.”

2 Chronicles 33:11–13 “Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.”

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

The person that is willing to hear counsel and instruction with discernment and a desire to obey will prove wise in later years. We know that in context Solomon is referring to counsel and instruction based on the word of God.

Proverbs 19:21 ¶ There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

The Hebrew for “devices” makes references to thoughts, plans and purposes. Solomon is saying that despite the thoughts, plans and purposes of any person, the LORD’s plans and purposes will prevail in the end.

Ironside: “How vain the man who would dare to set himself in opposition to God’s wisdom and authority. Happy is he who, waiting on God for instruction, obeys implicitly His counsel, and therefore works for and with Him.”

Henry: “What comfort does this speak to all God's people, that all God's purposes, which we are sure are right and good, shall be accomplished in due time!”

Proverbs 19:22 ¶ The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.

Well, the various translations are certainly different on this verse. The Hebrew for “desire” includes a longing, satisfaction, greed and lust. “Kindness” makes reference to piety towards God, mercy, pity, reproach and (rarely) reproof. As I look at these definitions and try to put myself in Solomon’s shoes, I think he might be saying that a person’s desires are a mercy in that they help him identify whether he is acting with piety towards God or is deserving of reproach.

The last part of the verse seems disconnected to the first. Solomon is saying that it is better to be poor than to be a rich liar. Maybe the connection is to the fact that one’s desires can lead one to lie (cheat or steal) to become rich to attain what they want, but they are better off to remain poor and obedient to the LORD.

Ironside offers another perspective: “It is far better to be poor and frankly admit one’s inability to do what the heart might desire, than to promise largely and be proven untrustworthy. To be what you are, and not to pretend to be what you are not, is a sound principle.”

Proverbs 19:23 ¶ The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

Another general truth. One who fears and reverences the LORD and seeks to obey His word is more likely to live a life of contentment and security. Obviously, there are many in this world that the LORD allows to suffer persecution from the spiritual forces of evil; however, He promises to accomplish good through all that He allows to touch the lives of those that love Him. In the end, such a person will live a life of abundance, contentment and joy in the presence of the LORD for eternity. Anything we are allowed to suffer here will seem like nothing in comparison to the joy and wonders that await the child of God in eternity.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Romans 8:18 “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Proverbs 19:24 ¶ A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

“Bosom” in the Hebrew also refers to a dish. The NLT is quite clear: *“Some people are so lazy that they won’t even lift a finger to feed themselves.”*

Henry: “If the law be so that those that will not labour must not eat, he will rather starve than stir.”

Ironside makes a great application: “The Word of God is a feast for the soul. Unfortunately, many sluggards, with abundant opportunity to feed on its precious wisdom, are too indifferent to search and find its treasures for themselves.”

Proverbs 19:25 ¶ *Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.*

Solomon seems to be identifying the scorner (scoffer, mocker) with the simple (silly, foolish)—both of which have been identified throughout this book with those that have no fear or reverence of God. He seems to be saying that such a person responds to corporal punishment by acting even worse. However, the person that has understanding (discernment, intelligence) and reverences the LORD is wise. Such a person only needs reproof or rebuke to produce change.

Some commentators see three types of people in this verse—the scorner, the simple and the wise. In that case, they see the simple as benefitting from the punishment of the scorner.

Proverbs 19:26 ¶ *He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.*

“wasteth” = to ravage, oppress, rob, spoil, lay waste
The LORD commanded that one should honor his/her father and mother.

Exodus 20:12 “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”

A son (or daughter) that mistreats his parents causes them shame and disappointment—and I would add great sorrow.

Proverbs 19:27 ¶ *Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.*

Refusal to listen to wise instruction leads one to sin, to err from the words of knowledge—God’s word. You have to be knowledgeable of God’s word to learn what He expects of you.

Ironside: “Remember that what is opposed to the teaching of the unerring Word of God is directly from Satan. To dabble with it is to expose yourself to its powerful influence.”

Henry: “There is that which seems designed for instruction, but really tends to the destruction of young men. The factors for vice will undertake to teach them free thoughts and a fashionable conversation, how to palliate the sins they have a mind to and stop the mouth of their own consciences, how to get clear of the restraints of their education.” (Obviously, this applies to young women as well.)

Proverbs 19:28 ¶ An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.

I liked the NLT: “A corrupt witness makes a mockery of justice; the mouth of the wicked gulps down evil.” That is pretty self-explanatory and is sadly more and more in evidence in our courts and our culture today—not only in America, but throughout the world. We certainly live in the perilous times of which Paul warned Timothy.

*1 Timothy 4:1–2 “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; **Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron....**”*

*2 Timothy 3:1–4 “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, **trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God....**”*

Proverbs 19:29 ¶ Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools.

This is yet another general truth that assumes godly government. Again, scorers and fools refer to those that have no reverence for God. Justice requires that such be punished and held accountable for their wickedness. When the judicial system is administered by those who are themselves scorers and fools, justice is not to be found. Though they may seem to be getting away with their wickedness, the day is coming when the Righteous Judge will bring about justice and make all things right.

Romans 2:11–16 “For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.... In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

Revelation 20:11–12 “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 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.”

Thankfully, those that honor the LORD and follow Him in faith are not judged by our works according to the law. We stand before the Father justified (just as if I'd never sinned) in Jesus.

Galatians 2:16 “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”