

## **Proverbs 26: Where God's Word deals with the "Fool" and the "Sluggard".**

Proverbs and Proverbs 26 especially, have a lot to say about the fool. We think of a fool as someone who may be mentally retarded or has some strange quirk, but in God's economy, the fool is a person who does not accept God's free gift of total forgiveness, protection, and eternal life; in fact, they are either atheist or agnostics. The Hebrew word is the word **k<sup>e</sup>ciyl**, {kes-eel;} which means quite plainly, stupid. Overheard was an agnostic asking a fellow non-believer; "do you think God knows that we don't believe in Him?"

**Proverbs 26:1:** *Like snow in summer and like rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool.*

- **Just as snow is unexpected in the summer, \_\_\_\_\_ is always out of season for a \_\_\_\_\_, so the Word says, honor shouldn't be ascribed to non-believers. God finds that honoring an agnostic is about as enjoyable to him as rain is welcomed during the harvest by us.**

**Proverbs 26:2:** Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, so a curse without **cause** does not alight.

- **Just as the flitting Sparrow and the flight of the bug-catching swallow appear to be random; a Christian that is slandered without a \_\_\_\_\_; because of the godly walk that precedes them, the scandal will miss its intended victim.**

**Proverbs 26:3:** *A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools.*

- **An atheist is one who hopes that our Lord will do nothing to disturb his disbelief. God is not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. <sup>2nd Peter 3:9.</sup> The whip is used to get the horse's attention, and the bridle is to control stubbornness, our Lord would resort to both, even a \_\_\_\_\_ if it would save the eternal**

soul of a \_\_\_\_\_ but to do so would interfere with our free-will.

**Proverbs 26:4-5:** *Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him. <sup>[5]</sup> Answer a fool as his folly deserves, lest he be wise in his own eyes.*

➤ **It almost sounds like Scripture contradicts itself. On the one hand, we are cautioned not to \_\_\_\_\_ atheists when they confront us with their foolish arguments. Doing so may make us appear to be as asinine as they. But then verse 5 tells to be sure to answer their foolish arguments so that they don't think that they are wiser than the ambassadors of God or even God Himself. There is a human proverb that tells us to pick our arguments carefully; they are not all worthy to be won; which is what God's Word is cautioning Christians to do. Sometimes an ill-equipped Christian becomes a deterrent to atheists or agnostics in finding their way to the cross. A fool is a person who says he knows nothing about God, and when you agree with him, he becomes angry.**

**Compiler's note: before you attempt to argue biblical positions on hot topics such as "right to life", the death penalty, evolution, or homosexuality, be sure that you are, as 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15 puts it; properly . . . *prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.* <sup>[NIV]</sup> As an ambassador for Christ we must be sure that we rightly divide the Word of truth by the power of the Spirit of God that is within us. To meditate in God's word is to dialogue with ourselves concerning the great truths contained in it. On any subject, we must understand that the Word of God is infallibly correct. To understand and discover godly principles, we must continually study His Word, and have it in our thoughts night and day; that His indwelling Spirit may draw upon it, speak it to our minds, that we may correctly answer the challenge.**

**Proverbs 26:6-9:** *He cuts off his own feet, and drinks violence who sends a message by the hand of a fool. <sup>[7]</sup> Like the legs which hang down from the lame, so is a proverb in the mouth of fools. <sup>[8]</sup> Like one who binds a stone in a sling, so is he who gives honor to a fool. <sup>[9]</sup> Like a thorn which falls into the hand of a **drunkard**, So is a proverb in the mouth of fools.*

- **I have done it and perhaps you have also; when confronted by an agnostic acquaintance about a situation involving another; I have passed along for them a Bible passage or verse to be recited to that other party, in hopes of the recipients finding and applying some godly principles or gaining a godly perspective. It has always come back to bite me. It is kind of like giving another drink to a \_\_\_\_\_, the end results are 'gonna be a mess.'**

**Proverbs 26:10:** *Like an archer who wounds everyone, so is he who hires a **fool** or who hires those who pass by.*

- **An employer who hires a \_\_\_\_\_, someone who does not ascribe to godly principles, is as careless as an archer who shoots recklessly, hoping one arrow will hit the target. To say it another way; A master workman produces all things, but he who hires a fool is like a craftsman who hires those who are unskilled, hoping the finished product will be worthy.**

**The compiler of these proverbs now turns his attention to the Hypocrite.**

**Proverbs 26:11:** *Like a dog that returns to its vomit Is a **fool** who repeats his folly.*

- **As disgusting as it may be to think about this, Peter sees a need to bring it up when he is dealing with the subject of hypocrites in the church. 2 Peter 2:22: *They make these proverbs come true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and "A washed pig returns to the mud."* <sup>[NLT]</sup> Dr. McGee brings out a good point at this juncture; would a pig from the pigpen where the prodigal son**

ended up; what if it should it return with the son, would it be comfortable sleeping in a clean bed at the father's house? Eventually, the hypocrite will be found out. These "church pillars" may open the doors on Sunday, pray the loudest in calling out "Our Father," but spend the rest of the week behaving like orphans. It seems that these hypocrites have been starched and ironed, but none have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. Only an unsaved \_\_\_\_\_ would return to the ways of the World, following the path of our fallen nature. Rev. 22:14: "*Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.*" *We mature in the faith when . . . "we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church".*

**Proverbs 26:12:** *Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

➤ This was a problem that Jesus faced when contending with the religious leaders of His day. They saw themselves as \_\_\_\_\_; Jesus saw them as stumbling blocks to others, blind and un-teachable.

- ✓ **Matthew 23:27:** "*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.* [NASB]
- ✓ **Matthew 23:13:** "*How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you won't let others enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and you won't go in yourselves.* [NLT]
- ✓ **Matthew 23:15-16:** *Yes, how terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. For you cross land and sea to make one convert, and then you turn him into twice the son of hell as you yourselves are.* [16] "*Blind guides! How terrible it will be for you!* . . . [NLT]

**The cross-hairs move to the person who is too lazy to serve his Creator.**

**Proverbs 26:13:** *The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!"*

- **This almost sounds like an excuse that a six-year-old would make about why he shouldn't eat his green beans. The \_\_\_\_\_ or lazy person is full of excuses; they are slothful about everything that requires care and labor. This also applies to persons who are slothful in the duties of religion; they are quick to pontificate about why they needn't open their Bible or go to Church.**

**Proverbs 26:14:** *As the door turns on its hinges, So does the sluggard on his bed.*

- **The easiest way to make ends meet is to get off of our own. Having seen the slothful man in fear of work, here we find him in love with his ease. Laziness is the sad occasion of many spiritual diseases. In their own business or the business of others, as employees, they fail to move forward in the world and their flesh becomes \_\_\_\_\_ on which their lives are hung; moving through life, extending as little effort as possible. The wife of one sluggard called out to her lazy mate, "What are you doing?" He replied, "Nothing". To which she was quick to respond, "You did that yesterday!" He agreed, but advanced the discourse by saying, "I wasn't finished".**

**Proverbs 26:15:** *The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is weary of bringing it to his mouth again.*

- **This is a repeat of a proverb previously covered in chapter 19, verse 24, so to God's mind, its implications must be really important. This is obviously hyperbole, but it does have a spiritual application. The \_\_\_\_\_ is a man so lazy that even when he reaches down to his dish to gather nourishment, he is**

too lazy to bring his arm back to his mouth. For you and me, the Word of God is nourishment, and sadly, many "Christians" are too lazy to pick up their Bibles and give nourishment to their new nature, so that it can feed their soul.

Compiler's note: The Spirit of God that indwells each true Christian takes from the Word of God, the things of Jesus, and uses them to renew our flesh trained minds. John 16:14-15: *He will bring me glory by revealing to you whatever he receives from me. [15] All that the Father has is mine; this is what I mean when I say that the Spirit will reveal to you whatever he receives from me.* [NLT]

**Proverbs 26:16:** *The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can give a discreet answer.*

- The \_\_\_\_\_ is so lazy that he is ignorant of his own ignorance; and neither does the book ignore the liar, the meddler, the slanderer or the flatterer.

**Proverbs 26:17:** *Like one who takes a dog by the ears Is he who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him.*

- In this high-tech world in which we reside, it is easy to get involved via the internet, in a dispute that is not our own. I recently defended a patriotic view on one of the social media, and by doing so; I created a great deal of family \_\_\_\_\_. The lesson I learned; there is a fine line between remaining true to our faith and beliefs and having the discernment to know when to speak up. In this particular case, I should have known that the gospel would be an offense. Luke 7:23 tells us "*God blesses those who are not offended by Jesus*"; and I should have known that the devil wouldn't sit tight and ignore my defense.

**Proverbs 26:18-19:** Like a madman who throws Firebrands, arrows and death, [19] So is the man who deceives his neighbor, and says, "Was I not joking?"

- **Someone who tells a lie and then claims that they were only joking is akin to a \_\_\_\_\_ aimlessly shooting lethal weapons without concern for the results. Matthew Henry comments, "He that sins in jest, must repent in earnest, or his sin will be his ruin."**

**Proverbs 26:20:** *For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down.*

- **For a lack of fuel, the fire goes \_\_\_\_\_ similarly, when the gossip stops, \_\_\_\_\_ and quarrels quiet down.**

**Proverbs 26 21:** *Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.*

- **An argumentative person fuels a discord and puts families and societies into the flame. It is a contention that commonly \_\_\_\_\_s\_ the flames, and they are kept burning by slanderers and backbiters.**

**Proverbs 26:22:** *The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body.*

- **The words of a gossip are choice \_\_\_\_\_ that stimulates our old nature. People like to hear these choice demeaning tidbits, but for the true child of God, as we become more like Jesus, we should learn to pray for the individual rather than to gossip.**

**We have covered many types of people that surround us in our daily lives, now the compiler of these chapters again focuses on the hypocrite.**

**Proverbs 26:23:** *Like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross are burning lips and a wicked heart.*

- **The hypocrites disguise themselves, just like a cheap clay pot that can be \_\_\_\_\_ with a silver plate, now resembling a genuine valuable treasure. What Christian actors in the church prove is that there**

are genuine Christians and they try and imitate the real thing, apart from the Holy Spirit of God.

**Proverbs 26:24:** *He who hates disguises it with his lips, but he lays up deceit in his heart.*

- **The hypocrite is usually conscious of wrong-doings and sin, and yet has no desire to confess them to Christ and repent, so instead, \_\_\_\_\_ them in his speech while he hides the \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart by acting according to his perception of a new nature he does not possess. They do this for power, prestige, and position. Sadly, many church boards and church elders do not possess enough discernment to keep them out of the pulpit.**

**Proverbs 26:25:** *When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart.*

- **The number seven throughout Scripture pictures completeness; like seven days in a week or the seven churches of Revelation. Though the hypocrite pretends to be kind, acting out the new nature of a true Christian, his \_\_\_\_\_s\_ are full of every kind of evil.**

**Proverbs 26:26:** *Though his hatred covers itself with guile, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.*

- **During Old Testament times, when God spoke through His servants, the prophets, His Word in Amos 3:7 declares; *surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.* <sup>[NASB]</sup> Because Christ had not yet made a way, God's Spirit had not yet come to indwell all who will accept Him, and so communication between God and man was incomplete at best. But now through the forgiveness of our sin debt, through the blood offering of Christ, John the Apostle records these words of Jesus, *I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn't confide in his servants. Now you are my friends since I have told you everything the Father told me.* <sup>John</sup>**



15:15 [NLT] Jesus now confides in those who are fully submitted to Him, leaving the gospel of Luke open to report: ***"For nothing is hidden that shall not become evident, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light.*** Luke 8:17 [NASB]

I wrote all of that to illustrate this point: when an assembly is truly serving Him, then those who are Christian actors, whose \_\_\_\_\_ are covered over with cunning, they will be revealed and exposed for who they really are.

**Proverbs 26:27:** *He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will **come back** on him.*

- **What pains and efforts some people take in contriving schemes for personal advantage! But it is like digging a pit, in the end, it will \_\_\_\_\_ to bite them. Listen to the counsel of our Lord in Deut. 32:35: *I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it. In due time their feet will slip. Their day of disaster will arrive, and their destiny will overtake them.*** [NLT] Or the Words of Jesus as recorded by John in *Rev. 2:23: . . . **And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve.*** [NLT]

**Proverbs 26:28** *A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a **flattering** mouth works ruin.*

- **There are two sorts of lies equally detestable in God's sight. A slandering lie; the agenda of this is rarely hidden, and everybody who cares to can discern it. Then there is the \_\_\_\_\_ lie, which is more clandestine and can secretly ruin its intended victim. The Christian should be more afraid of a flatterer than of a slanderer since flattery plays to our old nature and pride.**