

Proverbs 20; More Wisdom on Living a Godly Life.

Even If you have not yet received Jesus as Lord of your life, you can still benefit from the profound wisdom contained in these passages.

Proverbs 20:1: *Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and **whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.***

- **I don't think this passage needs any further elaboration, we all know a horror story about the effect from the abuse of alcohol on our homes, society, children, and jobs. What is important is, as we have already learned, wisdom comes from our Lord and His Word affirms that a drunk is not _____.**

Proverbs 20:2: *The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion; He who provokes him to anger forfeits his own life.*

- **We have covered a similar passage in a previous chapter. It is applicable to us in America only when we think of it in spiritual terms. Our Lord Jesus is King, "the _____ of the tribe of Judah", do we really want to incur His wrath? Paul warns us not to upset His Spirit, which resides in us if we are truly born again. Ephes. 4:30: and *do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* ^[NASB]**

Proverbs 20:3: *Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel.*

- **When we harbor vengefulness and _____, we are the ones that suffer most. The only folks that we, as Christ' ambassador's, should be trying to get even with, are the ones who have helped us, not the ones who have hurt us.**

Should they not repent, our Father, will deal with them in due time. Romans 12:19: *Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord.* [NLT]

Proverbs 20:4: *The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, so he begs during the harvest and has nothing.*

➤ This proverb speaks to procrastination; if you do not know much about crop farming, it may seem like it has little application. The best time to plow is in the _____ after you have harvested the previous year's crops. The reason is that the freezing and thawing of the soil will act as a natural cultivator, breaking the clods and making the field as though you labored hard, hoeing and harrowing. Dr. McGee offers this anecdote; "the _____ or lazy person is like the man with a leaky roof. He doesn't fix it when it is raining because he doesn't want to get wet, but when it is not raining, well, then it doesn't need fixing since it is not now leaking."

Proverbs 20:5: *A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out.*

➤ I have several friends, and perhaps you do also, who are more than capable of sharing wise counsel, yet they remain silent for various reasons. Often in conversation, by using the Word of God, we will be able to _____ it out and be blessed by it.

Proverbs 20:6: Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man?

- There is a human principle that is applicable to all Christians; we must under promise and over deliver. "It is hard to find those that have done and will do more good than they speak." ^{MHC} Our Lord Jesus is _____ and we, as His ambassador's must be trustworthy also.

Proverbs 20:7: *A righteous man who walks in his integrity-- How blessed are his sons after him.*

- Proverbs 20, verse 6, spoke of the virtue of loyalty, while verse 7 addresses _____. A godly person is not preoccupied with contriving what he will do next, or covering his tracks from past deeds, as do those who live a life of deceit. The families of the righteous person are _____ by the attributes of Christ being displayed in the lives of the parents.

Proverbs 20:8: *A king who sits on the throne of justice disperses all evil with his eyes.*

- There is only one Righteous King who sits on the throne of true justice and that is our Lord Jesus; who watches out for the upright protecting them from all _____ and the schemes of the evil one. Psalm 33:18-19: *But the Lord watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love. ^[19] He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. ^[NLT] The New Testament confirms this principle in 1st Peter 3:12: *The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.*" ^[NLT]*

Proverbs 20:9: *Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin"?*

- **Actually no one, apart from the propitiation of Christ, whose work on the cross has paid the price for our ongoing _____ debt. We have within each of us a rebellious human spirit. Those who have been born again and baptized by His Spirit are in the process of being made holy, we are better than we were thanks to the course correction of the Spirit of God, who is in the process of renewing our minds. Romans 12:2 explains this; “*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect*”. ^[NASB] Will you notice it is an ongoing work!**

Proverbs 20:10: ***Differing** weights and differing measures, both of them are abominable to the Lord.*

- _____ weights and measures of course reflect integrity in business. As Christ’ ambassadors, we are on duty 24/7. God expects from his children, honesty in all aspects of our lives. A few years back, when meat was custom ordered and packaged, many jokes were made about the butcher’s thumb on the scale to falsely increase its weight, dishonestly. Some comic has even accused Jesus of having His “thumb on the scale” when he fed 5,000, with just a few fish and five loaves; other offenses including healing the sick without a medical degree and turning water to wine without a liquor license. Boy that Jesus, what a reprobate.

Proverbs 20:11: *It is by his deeds that a lad distinguishes himself, if his conduct is **pure** and right.*

➤ Even children are known by the way they act, whether their conduct is _____ and right. Most often the quality of our parenting skills are reflected in the behavior of our children. In the same manner, the integrity of Christ is reflected in our deeds, as His ambassadors. Paul writes in 2nd Corinthians 5:20 concerning his witness, that which is applicable to all who are called by His name. *We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!"* [NLT]

Proverbs 20:12: *The hearing ear and the seeing eye, The Lord has made both of them.*

➤ Please pardon me, if for a moment we digress into the ongoing argument between the theory of evolution in opposition to that of an Intelligent Designer. The Bible says that God is the creator and designer of both the ear and the eye. Evolutionist say that they evolved over time by positive mutations. The being with a mutation that is helpful will prosper and reproduce overtop of those being without.

The following argument is a paraphrase of an article by Ken Ham.

✓ When we examine a partly functional eye, we discover, that should the retinal photosensitive cells alone, develop by mutation, without millions of parallel nerve fibers connecting it to the brain, or without the optic center processing millions of pulses of light, how would it be of any value to the recipient. Or how could it develop without any optical image processor in the brain, or without the rich blood supply to the retina? Each part would have little if any value. Such *independent* structures would have not

aided the survival of the species. Separately, such parts would not have any theoretical reason to exist (no benefit to life)! So if there were not multiple, interdependent, or codependent systems, why would they have so clearly passed the mutation on to the next generations? Or did they blindly improve by random chaos to create a sighted being, as the evolutionist would have us believe?

- ✓ Consider the pupil of the eye, it could not be a positive mutation if the retina did not *exist at exactly the same moment*—what mechanism would ever cause them to "get together"; since they would neither have any correlation to each other, nor would they be of help to the survival of the creature who bore them, especially since they would not survive separately?

Consider this:

- ✓ If the focal distance and a workable shape of the eye did not "come about" at the necessary distance from the photoreceptors in the retina, the eye nerves would neither have a reason to exist nor to even connect to the brain.

If the bag of fluid which forms the lens did not appear in the eye at the same time as photoreceptors regardless of the distance it would be useless to the individual's success. If the retinal nerves network did not "exist" exactly at the same moment as the sclera (dense fibrous opaque white outer covering of the eyeball) and the part covered by the transparent cornea, iris and the pupil did, then the eye wouldn't see. The uncovered retinal nerves, not bathed in fluid, not protected from sunlight and air, would clearly either die from exposure or scar over and have no value-- as they are exquisitely fragile.

I submit to you that both the _____ and our hearing came about by intelligent design. ***Our Lord made both of them.***

Proverbs 20:13: *Do not love sleep, lest you become poor; open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with food.*

- If you recall, when Adam rebelled, part of the curse was that from that day on, we were to earn our living by the “sweat of our brow,” we are to labor for our _____. Some lean on the prophetic word as an excuse not to labor, “since they are depending on God’s provision as they wait for Jesus return.” The apostle Paul addressed this in 2nd Thessalonians 3:10: *For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat.* [NASB] It is a great error and abuse of religion, to make it a cloak for idleness, or for that matter any other sin. The bond-servant who waits for the coming of his Lord should be working as our Lord has commanded. As some wise person has already stated, “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” The mind of man is a busy thing; if it is not employed in doing good, it will end up doing evil.

Proverbs 20:14 *“Bad, bad,” says the buyer; but when he goes his way, then he boasts.*

- Does our Lord know His creation, or what? He is addressing the old human nature in the marketplace, “bargain hunting”. It is like the picture of a real-estate broker negotiating on behalf of his buyer, pointing out all of the flaws in the property that he can identify; playing both sides, he chisels the seller with “_____, _____, and then _____ing_ to the victorious buyer , what a great bargain they just purchased! Isn’t the unredeemed casual Christian, with one foot in the world and the other attempting to stand in the kingdom the same? When we receive the Baptism by Christ’

Spirit and begin to mature in Him, our vacillation will cease. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:14; *Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit.*

Proverbs 20:15: *There is gold, and an abundance of jewels; but the lips of knowledge are a more precious thing.*

- Our sense of value does seem to be backwards! Where, movie stars and sports icons share what seems to be an infinite _____ of money and popularity, compared to the pittance earned by those who will use their _____ and God-given skills, to improve the standard of living for all of us, our children, as well as earth's future generations.

Proverbs 20:16: *Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; and for foreigners, hold him in pledge.*

- There is a bit of a translation problem here relative to the meaning and intent of the passage. The Hebrew word for **stranger** is the word **zuwr**, {zoor;} implying, to turn away from something *profane*, like an adulterous relationship. Couple that with the Hebrew word for **foreigner** or **nokriy**, {nok-ree;} which in various degrees and applications is translated as foreign, non-relative, and adulterous. In my opinion, the NIV more correctly renders the passage in this manner; ^[16] *Take the garment of one who puts up security for a stranger; hold it in pledge if he does it for a wayward woman.* ^[NIV] My understanding would be that we should exercise great care when we entangle ourselves with people of low moral character, withhold collateral for _____ from those

who would disregard godly standards, placing no confidence in them.

Proverbs 20:17: *Bread obtained by **falsehood** is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.*

➤ **Wealth gotten by _____ may seem sweet, for the unsaved, un-renewed mind takes pleasure in the success of treachery and devious schemes; but in the end, God's justice will be served. We will not get by with it; God will hold each of us accountable. Paul writes in Romans 12:2: *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think . . .* [NLT] If we still find ourselves thinking that way, he writes in Ephes. 4:22, **we are to throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception.** [NLT] Especially since; "Our old sinful selves' were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. . ." Romans 6:6 [NLT]**

Proverbs 20:18: *Prepare plans by consultation and make war by **wise** guidance.*

➤ **This proverb seems to be apropos to our generation. It appears that wars are now being fought in the political arena for personal gain at the expense of our soldiers. Back in the early '70s, John Wayne produced a video at his own expense, for distribution to our government. This video presented the Generals and Admirals, almost begging the politicians to allow them, with their experience, to fight this war. Instead, it was fought in the back rooms of Congress and millions of innocent citizens of Vietnam and Laos died at the hands of their communist victors. The politicians did not fight the Vietnam**

War by the _____ guidance of its military officers; rather, it was lost in the game of political advantage.

Compiler's note: In my personal opinion, and by that same political agenda, in the current wars of Iraq and Afghanistan; military decisions are being made by the politicians, thereby trivializing consultation of the generals who actually serve in the war theater.

Proverbs 20:19: *He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not **associate** with a **gossip**.*

- Notice the Group of equivalents that God's Word places the _____ in! **Romans 1:29:** *Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, fighting, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.* Solomon advises his son, and by proxy, God warns us, have nothing to do with them, do not _____ with a gossip.

Proverbs 20:20: *He who **curse**s his father or his mother, his lamp will go out in time of darkness.*

- There is an axiom that says, "If you can't say something nice about someone, then say nothing at all." This obviously ties back to the previous verse, concerning gossips, but in this case, it can be far more damaging. Even though some parents are worthy of a _____ing_; as a child of God, we must leave that to our heavenly Father.

Proverbs 20:21: *An inheritance **gained** hurriedly at the beginning, will not be blessed in the end.*

- Solomon did not realize that the prophetic fulfillment of this proverb would be through his son and

successor, Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the son of Naamah "the Ammonitess," a well-known Ammonitish princess (1st Kings 14:21; 2nd Chron. 12:13). He was forty-one years old when he ascended the throne, and he reigned seventeen years (B.C. 975-958). At Solomon's death and the assenting of the throne by Rehoboam, the people assembled at Shechem and demanded from their new king, an alleviation of their burdens of high taxation. He heard their demands for relief (1st Kings 12:4); and like the proverb states, Rehoboam _____ and inheritance that he had not labored for, so he handled it carelessly. After three days, having consulted with a younger generation of courtiers that had grown up around him, instead of following the advice of elders, he answered the people haughtily (1st Kings 12:6-15). (1st Kings 12:14-15) and *followed the counsel of his younger advisers. He told the people, "My father was harsh on you, but I'll be even harsher! My father used whips on you, but I'll use scorpions!"* [15] *So the king paid no attention to the people's demands. As a result, Israel was torn in two, with 10 tribes on one side and only two remaining true to the throne of David.*

Proverbs 20:22: *Do not say, "I will repay evil"; Wait for the Lord, and He will save you.*

➤ There is an axiom that states, repetition is the mother of knowledge, and our Lord must believe this since He has stated this principle several times in the books of the Proverbs. Romans 12:19: *Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord.* [NLT] Part of our sanctification [renewing of our flesh trained mind], is allowing our Lord the latitude to judge and _____ indefensible actions against us.

Proverbs 20:23: *Differing weights are an **abomination** to the Lord, and a false scale is not good.*

- **We covered this proverb back in 20:10 and in chapter 11, so it must be a real important behavioral change for those who are ambassadors of Christ. For a person who assumes the name of Christ, (a *Christ-ian*), the deception of using a false measure is an _____ to our God. It was an integral, as well as obligatory part of the Law. Its' principle transcends "salvation by Grace." *Deut. 25:13-14: "You must use accurate scales when you weigh out merchandise, ^[14] and you must use full and honest measures. ^[NLT]***

Proverbs 20:24: *Man's steps are ordained by the **Lord**; how then can man understand His way?*

- **A deist would argue that God made the earth and all that is within and now He sits up in heaven, watching it like he is looking at some giant ethereal television, as the world and its human inhabitants develop. Their theology fly's in the face of this proverb, which clearly states that our _____, is directly involved in our individual lives, as we walk out our sanctification (the renewing of our minds – Romans 12:2).**

Proverbs 20:25: *It is a snare for a man to say rashly, "It is **holy!**" and after the **vows to make inquiry.***

- **What comes to mind is Paul in Berea. Having presented the Gospel, rather than make a rash decision, declaring Paul's teaching _____, they first went and checked out the proclaimed truth in the available scrolls. Acts 17:11: *Now these [Berean's] were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so. ^[NASB]* Just because some preacher (including this one) says it's so, doesn't mean that it really is. Be**

like the *noble-minded* Berean's; opening your Bible, allowing room for God's Spirit to verify all doctrine, by His Word.

Proverbs 20:26: *A wise king winnows the wicked and drives the threshing wheel over them.*

Again, this would have little meaning to us here in the United States, unless we think of our King, Jesus! Ezekiel writes of Sodom and Gomorrah's notoriety, in Ezekiel 16:49-50: "*Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy, [having an abundance they squandered it on themselves] and committed abominations before Me.*

➤ Our tendency is to think of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah as only of a sexual nature. God's word records it as _____ [pride], selfish and committed an _____ by ignoring God's authority and sharing the blessings received. Look at Romans 1:28-32; *And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ^[29] *being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ^[30] slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ^[31] without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful ^[32] and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.* What happens to a human when God takes His restraints off? Our old nature rules and we yield our mind toward wickedness and depravity.*

➤ But more to the point of the proverb, as with Sodom, Ezekiel 16:50 says that *when God saw this, He removed them,* analogous to a king winnowing the wicked and depraved, then running a thrashing _____ over them.

Proverbs 20:27: *The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of his being.*

- **Will you take special notice that the spirit of a man is only the _____ of the Lord, not the light itself? The Spirit-filled person is only a vessel that contains the *Living Word*. Oil (that which powers the lamp), in Scripture, is generally symbolic of the Holy Spirit; remember the 10 virgins? Five were wise and had oil for their lamps and five were foolish and were shut out.**

Proverbs 20:28: *Loyalty and truth preserve the king, and he upholds his throne by righteousness.*

- **We may have elected our presidents, but behind the curtain, it was God who has allowed them, along with the kings of the earth to hold their positions of power. Daniel 4:17: *For this has been decreed by the messengers; it is commanded by the holy ones. The purpose of this decree is that the whole world may understand that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses—even to the lowliest of humans.*" [NLT] Because of human depravity, only one King will rule upon the earth, His kingdom will be _____d_ forever, and that will be King Jesus who *upholds his throne by righteousness.***

Proverbs 20:29 *The glory of young men is their strength, and the honor of old men is their gray hair.*

- **As my hair has turned _____ and is now falling out, I find that the only _____ a man can truly lay claim to in this life, is when he can glory in the strength and knowledge of God that we have imparted to our children. After having parented them in accordance with the Word, we must remember that God has also made them free-willed individuals, they must freely make correct choices, just as we have had to make.**

Proverbs 20:30: *Stripes that wound, scour away evil, and strokes reach the innermost parts.*

Have you ever noticed that we rarely ever change our behavior by positive conditioning: Usually it takes a severe rebuke or trial to bring about a change in our behavior that pleases our Maker? Sometimes God uses severe afflictions, to purify our hearts and make us fit us for his service. James expresses it like this: *Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. [3] For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. [4] So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.* James 1:2-4 [NLT]

When you repent of your sins and ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit, He changes our old nature and, in its place, He gives us a new set of attributes that are like those that He originally created in Adam. After Adam rebelled, no human apart from Jesus was ever born with that heavenly nature. Up until the time we receive the propitiation of Christ and are baptized with His Spirit, all of our knowledge about the world that surrounds us comes from our five senses. Our mind is flesh trained and is in discord with the characteristic of our new godly nature. So God's spirit begins a process of restoration, renewing our mind to bring it into an agreement with those attributes that form our new nature, the Fruit of His Spirit. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things, there is no law.* Galatians 5:22-23 [NASB]

So James can honestly say: "Count it all Joy" as our Lord brings about trials and situations that in turn bring about "sanctification", enabling us to be set apart as ambassadors of Christ and His kingdom. Romans 12:2: *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.* [NLT]

