

PROVERBS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Proverbs chapter 28 as we continue our study through the Word of God and the book of Proverbs. Regarding the book of Proverbs and what we have, one writer wrote, “By God’s grace, the book of Proverbs enables each of us to have God’s insight on how to live lives that will glorify Him; how to build up others; and how to be at peace with ourselves. Following its precepts will bring success in business and in the home. Through heeding its advice, we can avoid those regrettable pitfalls that can make life so difficult. If we listen to God’s wisdom, we will experience joy and laughter rather than feeling the sorrow and despair that are so much a part of those who heed the ‘spirit of the age.’ Proverbs speaks to every area of life we will ever encounter. No stone is left unturned; no path not taken. The only issue in question is whether we will consider its ways and follow its advice.” May we listen to what the Lord has for us! With that said, let’s begin reading in Proverbs chapter 28 starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

PROVERBS 28**VERSE 1**

1. Why are the wicked on the run when no one pursues them? Because if you are breaking the law then your guilty conscience will cause you to look over your shoulder wondering if someone is watching you, always fearful you are going to get caught.

But for the righteous, we don't need to be afraid; in fact we should be bold for we know we have done nothing wrong. Does that mean we will not have problems? That is not what this is saying here. But those difficulties are coming not because of sin, but persecution for our faith.

2. J. Vernon McGee made these remarks regarding how we respond when we are guilty. He wrote,

I was speaking to a group of young people about sin, just sin in general. A young fellow and girl in the group were living together. I had never even mentioned that as a sin, but it was interesting to hear how that young man began to defend himself - it would have been amusing if it had not been so serious. When sin was being discussed, his conscience began to prick him, and then he began defending himself. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." No one had pointed a finger at him. I would not have known of his sin if he had kept quiet. The discussion was about sin, not his particular sin.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible Vol. III, p. 93

For the righteous, we don't have to defend ourselves because we already know that our righteousness is like filthy rags. Then how can we be so bold? Because it is not about our righteousness but His righteousness that He has placed in our lives when He took our sin! Paul made that very clear in II Corinthians 5:21 when he wrote, "**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**" We can be bold; we can be strong in the Lord as long as we are walking in obedience to Him. When we move off that course then our conscience is going to be very uncomfortable. Don't make excuses why you are doing something wrong, repent and get right!

VERSE 2

1. Make no mistake about it, when you have wicked rulers you tend to have anarchy in the nation, there is instability! A sad example of this is the Northern Kingdom of Israel. They did not have one good king, some were better than others, but they were not good. The result of that was lawlessness, wickedness. Look at their history, in a little over 200 years they had 19 Kings which puts the average time of their reign at ten years! But some did not last that long, Zechariah lasted 6 months and was assassinated by Shallum who reigned for 1 month and Menahem killed him. (See II Kings 15). You see, evil perpetuates evil and we can easily see that in this country today.

VERSE 3

1. Again, this is another sad picture. We see a poor man who is able to rise to a position of power, of wealth and many times when that happens they oppress the poor more than people from a higher social-economic status. I guess it goes to their head, with all that power and wealth they have forgotten where they have come from!

And the idea here is they are like a fierce rain that destroys the crops instead of helping them to grow, that is what they are doing towards those who have less! They are not helping them but destroying them.

VERSE 4

1. Why do those who forsake the Law of God praise the wicked? Because they are trying to justify themselves and if they can find someone who is doing what they are doing or worse, then they are comfortable in their sin!

The problem comes when the lights are turned on or as Solomon said, “**But such as keep the law contend with them.**” You see, when we stand up for righteousness the wicked does not like it because it exposes their sin. Why do you think they are coming down so hard upon Christians? They don’t like the light and they are trying to extinguish the light, but they can’t because the light we have is a reflection of Jesus and that light will never go out!

VERSE 5

1. Think about that. If you refuse to practice the Law you will not have the power to understand it. Why is that? It is simple, they can’t understand the things of God because they are spiritually discerned and their spirit is dead outside of Christ. They have refused to come to Jesus, the One who can free them from their sins and thus, they can’t understand why they are going to be judged for what they are doing because they see nothing wrong with it. But keep in mind that as you look at people, as you look at society, there is a very close link to morality and understanding the truths of God. As you move away from the truths of God then morality is lost. But as you cling to the truths of God, morality will flourish. Where do you think we stand in America today? You don’t have to guess, just look at our morality, it is in the garbage!

VERSE 6

1. Please do not come to the conclusion or assume that godliness leads to wealth or that wealthy people are necessarily godly. On the other end of the spectrum Solomon is not saying that poor people are holier than rich people. The idea here is that sometimes we have to choose between doing good and getting rich, we have to do what is right, what will honor God. And thus, it is better to be honest and poor than rich and obnoxious.

VERSE 7

1. A wise son is a discerning son, one who can discern between good and evil or right and wrong. Not only can he discern these things but he also walks in them. On the other end of the spectrum is the son who is not discerning and the people he is hanging out with are not only bringing him down but because of what he is doing he is bringing shame to his family! And not only can we bring shame to our earthly father, but by our actions we can also bring shame to our heavenly Father, we can give the enemies of God a chance to mock the God we say we love and serve!

VERSE 8

1. Many have amassed wealth through unjust ways, and in the end, they will lose it. And let me give you an example to show you how bad it is today with these high interest loans. A recent article by Jennifer Brown of the *Denver Post* highlights the case of one woman who was nearly eaten alive financially by a payday lender. Linda Medlock borrowed \$500 to make a mortgage payment on her home. Four years and \$8,000 later, she finally has that debt paid off! That \$500 loan cost her \$8,000! In Colorado, for instance, average annual interest rate for payday loans is 350 percent. The loans are not meant to be long term, however in many cases the financial burden can carry on for months, or even years, while the interest continues to rack up and cause serious financial problems for borrowers. That is what Solomon is saying here and it was wrong then and it is still wrong today!

VERSE 9

1. First of all if you disregard God's Word then your prayer is an abomination to the Lord because you will be asking for things that are wrong. Maybe you need to spend some time in His Word and get focused back on the things of God. Also, your sin can separate you from God in that your prayers will not be answered.

2. For the unbeliever, God is not obliged to answer the prayers of people who are not His children; those who have not been cleansed by the blood of Christ. And for those who are living in rebellion against God, it is hypocritical to then come before Him and ask of Him a certain request because you are in trouble. It is an abomination to Him.

Remember what we are told in Isaiah 59:1-2, "**Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.**"

Also, in Psalm 66:18 we read, "**If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.**" You see, this is not my opinion; it is what God has said. The only prayer He will respond to for the unsaved is the repentant prayer of a sinner asking Christ to cleanse him and forgive him of his sin. Yes God can and does answer other prayers of sinners but He is not obliged to, He is just gracious and merciful.

But once you ask Him to forgive you of your sins, once you repent and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, then you become a child of God, and He will answer your prayer according to His will, what is best for your life. As Peter said in I Peter 3:12, **“For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.”**

VERSE 10

1. I like this because Solomon is saying that they better not mess around with God’s people or you will pay, He will turn the tables on you and you will fall into the traps you have set for them. We see that example in Daniel chapter 6 as Daniel is thrown into the lion’s den by wicked men who tricked the King into doing something he should not have done. And God spared Daniel and that very pit that they meant for his demise they were thrown into and met their demise! God means what He says and says what He means!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 18:6, **“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”** Don’t mess with God’s kids! Don’t try to destroy their faith in Him for you will be held accountable for your actions!

2. The blameless, the believers will inherit the good things. Not only should we be leading others down that path of holiness in the Lord but we are not to be taken in by the enticing of the wicked to sin! We are an example to others and God will honor that in our lives!

VERSE 11

1. First of all it doesn't take riches to be wise. A poor man who knows the Word of God and applies it to his life is wiser than a rich man with all his degrees who doesn't. Richness and wisdom do not necessarily go hand-in-hand! I think that is obvious today!

VERSE 12

1. Why is there great rejoicing when the righteous are leading a nation, a company, a family and-so-on? Because of what is being done, good things, helpful things, things that will build up and not tear down. It doesn't mean that there will not be problems or difficult decisions that need to be made, but godly decisions will be made that will ultimately bless the people!

2. Why is there great fear, why do men hide themselves when the wicked are in power over a nation, a company, a family and-so-on? Because of what is being done, bad things, hurtful things that will tear down and destroy people's lives. Just look at this country and where we are at today! The wickedness that is being promoted! And the righteous are looked down upon and they are trying to be silenced!

VERSE 13

1. Let me start out by saying this. There is no blessing for the person who covers their sin! You can't hide them from God and you will feel the affects of doing that in your life physically, emotionally and spiritually speaking. David found this out firsthand. For almost a whole year he tried to cover his sin with Bathsheba and physically, emotionally, and spiritually he was devastated.

He said in Psalm 32:3-5, **“When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”**

Here is the wonderful news. God is ready with forgiveness if we will come to Him and confess our sins. His arms are open wide waiting for you to come to Him!

Now keep in mind that our sins have separated us from God. Our spirit is dead and we can't see God in our righteousness, we can't stand before Him. Thus, we need that judicial forgiveness that comes when we ask Christ to cleanse us and free us from the penalty of sins. Paul wrote in Hebrews 10:17, **“... ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’”**

You see, in the courts of God we have missed the mark of perfection; even one sin would keep us from His presence. Thus, we are guilty before God in a judicial sense or legally speaking and thus, as a righteous judge He must convict us, sentence us.

That is where Jesus comes in and He paid in full the penalty that was due for our sins and He gave to us His righteousness so that as the Father looks at us He no longer sees our righteousness but the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into our lives by faith! If you try to cover this sin then you are lost forever and you will get what you deserve as Paul said in Romans 6:23, **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Once we come to Christ our sin can break our fellowship with God, we can't lose our salvation. This is what we might call parental forgiveness, that is when we sin and we come before God and ask Him to forgive us, confessing our sins before Him and that helps to maintain our fellowship with Him. I John 1:9 says, "**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**"

So before we can receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior we must confess before Him that we are sinners, that is our nature, and ask Him to cleanse us from all our sins, to be our Lord and Savior of our life, to give us a new nature in Christ. When we do, at that moment, all of our sins are forgiven, cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more. That is where we are positionally speaking, cleansed as white as snow, our salvation is secure in Him because He has paid in full the penalty for our sins, the work is finished, salvation wise!

And I believe John is speaking of our fellowship with God here in I John 1:9, the sanctification process. You see, practically speaking we still sin and sin can break our fellowship with God, it can keep us away from Him. Listen again to what we read here in Proverbs 28:13 and on into verse 14, which tells us, "**He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Happy is the man who is always reverent, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.**"

As you study the different Kings of Judah and Israel you will see what happens as they harden their hearts to God, as they ignored their sin. I am sure you figured this out but as they did they moved farther away from God. Why? Because the light exposes their darkness and for them to continue in their sin they have to move away from the light, they have to move away from God. And in doing so they are walking in darkness. But our God is so gracious, He is so merciful that if we will confess our sin before Him, those sins we committed today, He will forgive, that fellowship won't be hindered!

Let me also say this regarding these words here in I John 1:9. The Greek word for **“confess”** is HOMOLOGEO, (hom-ol-og-eh'-o) and it is literally telling us that we are to say the same thing or we are to agree with God regarding sin, to hate sin and not to just hate it, but to avoid it, forsaking sin.

The problem comes when we don't agree with God and then we don't forsake the sin, and we break fellowship with God because of it. But notice what we need to do. We need to confess or agree with God regarding sin, forsake it. And God is faithful and just, He will forgive us of our sins. Not only that but He will also cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It is speaking of the sanctification process as God is molding and shaping our lives to be like Him! And the work that He has begun in us He will finish! May we keep our lives soft and pliable for the Lord to mold and shape us into the men and women He wants us to be as we allow the water of the Holy Spirit to keep us from being hard and dry before God!

VERSE 14

1. You look at the people who have hardened their hearts to the things of God, to His Word, and you can see the devastating results in their lives. Proverbs 29:1 says, “**He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.**”

People today are looking for happiness and Solomon is saying that if you want to find true happiness then you need to have a tender heart before the Lord, you have to respect Him, honor Him and that means you are not in rebellion against Him by doing things that are contrary to the Word of God. I hope that makes sense, happiness, contentment is found in doing what we were created for, bringing good pleasure unto our God!

VERSES 15-16

1. The picture here is of a tyrant, a leader out of control and he will do whatever he wants whenever he wants. And because of his actions he brings fear and devastation among his people.

Not only that, but a leader that lacks understanding will also trample over people to gain whatever he wants. He will enrich himself at all costs. How much better it is to be satisfied in what the Lord has given each of us than coveting that which is not ours and taking these things from others. That is not how God wants us to live out our lives but for the wicked, it is all about them!

VERSE 17

1. Here is a picture of a murderer on the run; he is a fugitive because of his actions. Justice must go forth and according to what God has said in His Word, the Civil Law that He gave to us, He said that if you killed a man, premeditated his murder, you were to be put to death. I realize that is hard for some to swallow but listen to what Genesis 9:6 has to say, **“Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.”**

Life is precious to God and if you kill a person intentionally, premeditated their murder; the penalty for that crime was death! Now what about a person who accidentally killed someone, what would happen to them? For the children of Israel they had a city of refuge that they could flee to. Today, there is no death penalty for the person who accidentally killed someone. But if you do not deal with those that murder people, if justice is not handed out, then anarchy will reign!

VERSE 18

1. Solomon is not saying that if we walk uprightly we will be saved in the life to come. He is talking about the life we are living out now, not eternal life. You see, if you walk uprightly you will be saved from the snares, the traps that this world has out there. Now in regards to eternal life, being saved is not based on what we have done but on what Jesus has done. We are saved by faith in Him not faith in what we have done. But what Solomon is saying is that we need to walk uprightly and as we do we will not have to worry about falling and failing in this life.

VERSE 19

1. The picture here is that if you don’t work you don’t eat. You see, the diligent farmer will have plenty while the lazy farmer will have very little!

VERSE 20

1. The idea here is this. A person who is honest, a person who does what is right and does not covet great wealth will be blessed, he will be rich! On the other hand, the person who is seeking to enrich himself, coveting riches, will find himself doing things that are not right and there are consequences for those actions, this person will be punished. Thus, may we do things in an upright manner because as we do we will be blessed by God! If you don't, if you gain things through dishonest means, those blessings you think you have gained will not satisfy and you will be punished for your actions.

VERSE 21

1. Be careful; don't sell your soul to the Devil for anything. And think about this. A judge who shows partiality would be guilty of injustice and yet a man will do this to obtain the smallest of things that in the end will not matter much at all!

VERSE 22

1. How many people rush after riches and to obtain these things they have to sacrifice their integrity, they have to do what is wrong to get it and they don't realize the cost of their actions. They will not get away with it and what they have done to obtain all that wealth will be swallowed up by their greed!

VERSE 23

1. We need to be honest with each other. Using flattering words when someone is in sin will not help them but only hurt them. We must rebuke in love, correct in love when needed with the idea of restoration and not destruction.

VERSE 24

1. Make no mistake about it; God is not deceived by our actions. What Solomon is speaking about here is a child who robs or steals from their parents and he likens them to robbers and murderers! Remember what Jesus said In Matthew 15:4-6, **“For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God”;** **then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.”**

Jesus rebuked them for circumventing the Law, putting a religious face on their sin. How sad when a person can steal from their parents and see nothing wrong with it. But again, you may get away with it with your parents but God sees what you are doing and He will hold you accountable for your actions!

VERSES 25-26

1. Make no mistake about it, you are a fool if you trust in your own heart, your own feelings, for God says our heart is desperately wicked, and we can't even know how wicked it is. We must trust in God's Word, and thus, if what we are doing goes against God's Word, I don't care how you feel, dismiss it, get rid of it, flee from it!

Jeremiah has this to say of what we are to glory in and it is not in us but it is in the Lord.

In Jeremiah 9:23-24 we are told, **“Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the LORD.”**

VERSE 27

1. I think that is pretty clear. God is for the poor, God is interested in the poor, and so should we. It is as Proverbs 19:17 says, **“He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given.”**

VERSE 28

1. We long for the day when righteousness will fill this land, but that day won't come until our Lord comes and sets up His kingdom here on this earth. But we do have the opportunity to live a life filled with good things if we could only get rid of the wicked. Do you know how that is done? By bringing them to Jesus and make no mistake about it, a family, a society that is centered in Christ will be righteous and you will not have to hide because of the atrocities that are being done, you can live your life in peace!

PROVERBS 29**VERSE 1**

1. Prior to the flood God said, “**... ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’**” Genesis 6:3. Then, as now, we see God’s patients, His longsuffering towards man. But there comes a point where you have rejected God for the last time, your ways are firmly established, and sudden destruction will come upon your life. Let me share this story with you from J. Vernon McGee. He wrote,

In Dallas, Texas, one night I was walking down the street with a friend. A big crowd was gathered around out in front of a theatre. There was a wrecked automobile there and, believe me, it was really in a sad condition. When I got back to the seminary, one of the students told us the story of that car. It had been driven by a high school student and his girlfriend. They had stopped to invite another girl to call her date and go out with them. She said, “No, I can’t go with you tonight,” but she asked them to come with her to a Bible class. They finally agreed to take her to her Bible class, but they would not go in with her. On the way over, this girl presented Christ to them. She told them that she had accepted Christ through the Bible class and that they needed Him, too. They just laughed, and let the girl out of the car. Five minutes later as they were speeding down the street, they were both killed instantly when they collided with another car.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible Vol. III, p. 96

Today is the day of salvation, don’t pass it up! Don’t harden your heart to God!

VERSE 2

1. Solomon deals with this a lot and I think he knows what he is talking about. When wicked people rule they do so by oppressing the people, the freedom people once had is gone and you end up in bondage to the government or the leader!

VERSE 3

1. It is hard to watch your children make foolish decisions, some that can be very destructive. You can read of the Prodigal Son in Luke chapter 15 as he squandered his father's money with lawless living. A lesson to learn!

VERSE 4

1. The idea here is that when a leader is just, righteous then the country will be strong. But, when leaders can be bought, when justice is perverted, the stability of the nation begins to come apart. I think we see that happening in our own nation today, the injustice that is going on and the instability that is occurring!

VERSE 5

1. Be careful in the words you speak because the flattery you use may be the very thing that trips you up and traps you. The way to avoid this is by not speaking like that! Speak the truth in love!

VERSE 6

1. I don't care what you think, sin is a trap, and once you get caught in its clutches it is hard to get out. Look at people today that have been trapped by pornography and it has destroyed their life. The solution to that problem is not to travel down the path.

And I love the comparison. The righteous have a song in their heart, they rejoice in life. Paul put it like this in Philippians 4:8-9, **“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”**

If you are lacking that joy, that peace, that song in your heart maybe it is because you are not meditating on that which is good, the things of God! We should be able to sing and shout for joy because of the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. No longer do we need to be in bondage to sin. The problem is that we can choose to be!

VERSE 7

1. We should care for the poor, help them as God has enabled us to.

VERSE 8

1. I am sure we have seen this played out and maybe we have played the part a time or two in our own lives. Solomon is saying that a fool will keep speaking his foolishness, causing all kinds of trouble, arousing tempers, agitating people, causing divisions. Not a good thing. On the other end of the spectrum is the wise person who knows what to say and when to say it to dispel anger and promote peace!

VERSE 9

1. Think about this for a minute. It doesn't matter what you say to a fool because they won't change their thoughts. There will be no peace that will come out of what is said.

VERSE 10

1. Why do the bloodthirsty hate the blameless? They hate the blameless because they expose their sin. On the other hand, the blameless love the sinner, hate the sin, and desire to see them saved. As Christians we must have that kind of heart attitude, care about a person's soul, where they will spend eternity, even though they may seek to destroy us.

VERSE 11

1. A fool has no self-control but just speaks his mind, which outside of Christ, is empty. You may be very intelligent, have all kinds of degrees, but by missing the simplicity of God because of your pride, you are a fool. And even as Christians we can speak foolishly. May we surrender the control of our life to the Spirit of God so that as we speak the words of God will come forth!

VERSE 12

1. That seems a little strange but what Solomon is saying is that the people of a ruler or a leader will reflect his character, either good or bad.

VERSE 13

1. In human society there is a great division between the poor and the oppressor. But God levels the playing field, for all will come before Him on a common level. God is not a respecter of people. Each of us has an equal opportunity to know Him and be adopted into His family through Jesus Christ. Salvation is a free gift, but not all will receive it into their life. The light of God is shining, are your eyes open?

VERSE 14

1. Once again we see that there are blessings for those who minister to the poor, who judge in truth. Now we only know of One who can do that and that is Jesus and thus, **“His throne will be established forever.”**

VERSE 15

1. Too often people feel that children are born good and it's their environment that makes them bad. Wrong! We are born sinners and without discipline, without training we would turn into unruly, uncontrollable, violent people. Maybe that is why we see so many problems in our nation today, there is no discipline.

Listen to this non-Christian report and what it has to say about not disciplining our children, the results. The article is called, “Surprising Reasons Why We Need to Discipline Children” and this is what they have to say,

What many parents who are reluctant to discipline children may not understand is how damaging it can be for a child to lack boundaries. Without discipline, children will be deficient in the following important life skills:

- They will lack self-control.
- They will not respect their parents or other authority figures.
- They will not know what is appropriate behavior.
- They will be willful, selfish, and generally unpleasant company.
- They will not have social skills that are important for making friends such as empathy, patience, and knowing how to share.
- They will be more likely to engage in negative behaviors that are harmful and even potentially dangerous for themselves as well as others.
- They will be unhappy.

- <http://childparenting.about.com/od/behaviordiscipline/a/Why-We-Need-To-Discipline-Children.htm>

VERSE 16

1. Today we can see all kinds of immorality coming out of the closet and being considered a normal part of life, an alternate lifestyle, while Christianity is moving into the closet. We are a society today that loves to flaunt its sin! But we need to remember two important facts here. Wickedness will have its end, it won't last forever. And as Christians, don't hide your light in a closet but let it shine brightly for all to see.

VERSE 17

1. If you let your children do what they want, rarely correcting them, you will not have peace in the home. I know at times the opposite seems to be true when you have to discipline them. It is not easy, and at times it may be a battle. But if you don't deal with it now, in the long run, you will have continual turmoil. If you deal with it now, peace will eventually come out of discipline. The importance of discipline!

VERSE 18

1. In I Samuel 3:1 we are told, "**Now the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation.**" I think Solomon is speaking of God's Word being opened up to the people and when that is cast aside people cast off their restraint, they do what they want, they run wild you might say!

We have cast off the Word of God in this country and look at the results. And this is not only true in the secular world, but also in the church, which is running wild, getting involved in all kinds of un-biblical activities - they are running to and fro not knowing where they are going, and they call it revival! You see, when God's Word is cast aside people will be drawn to their own sinful ways for they have no truth to guide them outside of God's Word. But for those who have God's Word, who apply God's Word to their lives, they are blessed!

VERSE 19

1. Sometimes words were not enough to correct a servant; you had to be a little tougher. We are servants of God and thus, when God speaks to us we need to not only listen but obey! We should allow God's Word to correct our lives because it is what is best for us!

2. Let me illustrate what can happen if we don't allow God to clean up our lives. We are told,

In August 1989, a major fire broke out under an elevated section of New Jersey's Interstate 78. The intense heat buckled parts of the highway and forced the closing of the East Coast artery. The governor said it was the worst transportation crisis in years.

An investigation brought to light a longstanding problem. It revealed that the fire broke out in a dump site in which construction debris had been collecting for many years. The owners of the site had been convicted of a multimillion dollar conspiracy to allow the illegal dumping of construction debris. But appeals in federal and state courts frustrated New Jersey's efforts to clean up the area. Not until the day after the fire did a state appeals court finally order the operator of the dump to stop accepting trash and begin clearing the site.

That fire tells a basic story of life. Most of our problems don't just happen. They are the result of a long series of bad decisions. Second Chronicles 36 illustrates this and reminds us that God will not allow His children to continue in sin. Even though He is longsuffering, His patience has a limit. If we don't correct the problem ourselves, we can be sure that He will discipline us.

Let's clean up the trash in our lives today.

- Mart De Haan

VERSE 20

1. Not a good thing. Solomon is saying that a fool has more hope than the person who speaks before he thinks!

VERSE 21

1. A servant who doesn't understand his position because he is being pampered will think he is a son and expect to be treated like one. He will forget his proper position.

VERSE 22

1. Again we see a picture of a person with no self-control. The angry man loves to stir up strife, contentions, conflict. The furious man loves to commit sin. Not a good group of people to hang out with!

VERSE 23

1. Listen to this story that gives us a proper perspective of what our position before God should be. We are told, "Professor Smith was climbing the Weisshorn. When near the top the guide stood aside to permit the traveler to have the honor of first reaching the top. Exhilarated by the view, forgetful of the fierce gale that was blowing, he sprang up and stood erect on the summit. The guide pulled him down, exclaiming, 'On your knees sir; you are not safe there except on your knees.' Life's summits, whether of knowledge, of love, or of worldly success, are full of perils."

The only place for us is on our knees before the Lord for if we rise up in pride, He will bring us down to the place we need to be! Pride does have a way of bringing us down as this story illustrates for us. We are told,

During the Battle of the Wilderness in the Civil War, Union general John Sedgwick was inspecting his troops. At one point he came to a parapet [walls], over which he gazed out in the direction of the enemy. His officers suggested that this was unwise and perhaps he ought to duck while passing the parapet. "Nonsense," snapped the general. "They couldn't hit an elephant at this dist--." A moment later Sedgwick fell to the ground, fatally wounded.

- Today in the Word, August 30, 1993

VERSE 24

1. When you align yourself with wicked people you will pervert your own character, speaking lies to protect them. Leviticus 5:1 says, "**If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter; if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.**"

VERSE 25

1. Too often people succumb to various kinds of peer pressure and it only brings them into bondage. Our security must be found in the Lord. God will deliver us from the fear of man! And how often people yield to human pressure and they commit evil or they don't do what is right. The saddest example to me is found in those that have gone to Hell because they were afraid of what their friends might say if they came to Jesus and trusted Him as Lord and Savior!

VERSE 26

1. Don't seek man's favor, but God's. Do what is right. If you want to see salvation or deliverance in a situation then do not look to man for deliverance, look to the Lord and see the salvation that He will bring!

VERSE 27

1. The world hates us for standing up for Christ, but we also see the sins of a sinner as distasteful to us, or at least we should. Light and darkness cannot mix! And think about it, if you put a straight stick next to a crooked one the straight stick will show how off the crooked one is. The same is true as we contrast the light and the darkness, believers with unbelievers!

May we not only walk in the light of Christ but may we shine the light of Christ to others as we live out our faith!