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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Proverbs 20.

(2015)

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Proverbs 20.

Topics.

- This chapter is full of a variety of various Proverbs.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Proverbs is a collection of Israelite wisdom literature, that has multiple authors, but most of it is attributed to King Solomon. Chapter one to nine gives readers a framework for understanding the rest of the book. The central concern of the book of Proverbs is practical wisdom for living. We are told that the beginning and essence of wisdom is the fear of the LORD (Prov. 1:7) (Prov. 9:10).

It contrasts the benefits of seeking wisdom and the pitfalls of living a foolish life. While the wicked stumble in deep darkness (Prov. 4:19), the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day ((Prov. 4:18). Individual proverbs date from between the tenth and sixth centuries B.C.

Kings and angels: the title king is often used throughout the book of Proverbs, it comes from the Hebrew word (*malak*) which can refer to the following four things: -

1. A royal king ascending to the throne of royalty and reigning from it.
2. A male sovereign (i.e., a man or boy who rules as a monarch over an independent state.
3. The chief, or the principal leader or ruler of a group (secular or religious).
4. A messenger or ambassador, especially of God, (i.e. an angel, a king, a prophet, a priest or a teacher).
5. The best, the strongest and the wisest of all.

It is interesting to notice in the first verse of proverbs (Prov. 1:1) the word king comes from the Hebrew word (*malak*) and the first mention of an angel in the Bible also comes from the Hebrew word (*malak*) (Gen. 16:7). This means when the title king is used in the book of Proverbs it carries the idea of a wise king that does good unless the context implies otherwise. For further information concerning angels see the title: -

- Angels (ON WEBSITE MENU).
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Proverbs 20

Proverbs 20:1 ----- ¹Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

Any priest who drank strong drink during his service in the temple was considered unclean. Today we would say he was unfit for service. Naturally drinking alcohol while serving in the temple or in any form of ministry would be extreme foolishness for obvious reasons and an offence to God, but outside of ministry and service in the church drinking alcohol is not a sin. David wrote: -

- You O LORD caused the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth ¹⁵and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart. (Psalm 104:14-15).

Many churches (especially in the past) have taught that drinking alcohol is a sin before God, but here David clearly shows that drinking alcohol is not forbidden, in fact according to David God made it for man to enjoy. The apostle Paul wrote: -

- Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart. (Ephes. 5:18-19).

Debauchery carries the idea of self-indulgence, immorality and shamelessness. Paul is not saying, "Do not drink at all, but do not drink to excess to be merry, but rather be merry in the Lord." The Bible does not teach total abstinence, nor does it teach that drinking alcohol is a sin, but it does warn against drinking an excess of alcohol many times for the following reasons: -

- It weakens the will and can lead to a lack of moral fortitude.
- It can be dangerous since it often leads to violence and drunken driving.
- It has the potential to lead to alcoholic addiction and destroy marriages and lives.
- It results in behavior that is often regretted when the drunken state of the mind sobers up and returns to normality.

Clearly excessive amounts of alcohol can lead to many sins, even the secular world understands this truth and that drunkenness can result in behavior that is often regretted the next day. For this reason it is obviously better to abstain altogether, nevertheless those who do drink in moderation cannot be accused of committing any sin.

Proverbs 20:2 ----- ²The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion; whoever provokes him to anger forfeits his life.

The anger of a king is an enormously fearful and dangerous thing, because he has great power over mighty armies and authority over all those in his kingdom. Out of wrath he can raise taxes or oppress the people to increase the treasures and riches of his kingdom, he has power to imprison people and even have them beheaded. Clearly the growling of a lion is a perfect description of the anger of a king since both are frightfully, fearful and powerful.

In contrast to this a king's favour brings great blessings and rewards since he owns all the treasures and riches of the kingdom and has full authority to do with it as he will. Added to this like a lion he has all the fierce power needed to protect those who are in his care.

Proverbs 20:3 ----- ³It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling.

Everyone who has the wisdom to avoid strife is worthy of respect and honour, but those who lack good sense will continue to meddle, quarrel and stir up even more contention and rivalry even though it has the potential to lead to bitter resentment and violent conflict.

Proverbs 20:4 ----- ⁴The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.

A lazy person who does not work and save will not only be unable to support themselves in the future, but will also be unable to provide for themselves on a daily basis because laziness makes a person lethargic, mentally dull, apathetic and tired. It robs those that are lazy of energy, of vitality, of motivation of self-motivation and of the desire to learn anything new and of any interest in doing something new. This is because if something looks as though it may involve effort and work a lazy person will do all they can to avoid it and by doing so will not only become more lethargic and apathetic, but also lazier. In the book of Proverbs it is written: -

- Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger. (Proverbs 19:15).

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians command brothers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness (2 Thess. 3:6) and gave them the command: "If anyone is not willing to work, let them not eat." (2 Thess. 3:10). These words of Paul clearly show that God does not expect brothers and sisters in Christ to burden their own families by giving financial aid or food to a brother who is lazy and for no good reason is unwilling to work.

Upon saying that it should be mentioned that this command does not apply to a person who is out of work, but is willing to work, nor does this principal apply to a person who for whatever reason is going through a period of overwhelming sorrow, deep depression or some other crisis in their life and because of these does not want to work.

Those in Christ suffering in any of these ways, is in desperate need of encouragement, comfort and compassion. This is because laziness is about attitude and choosing not to work when one is fully able to work and not about being unable to work. Though it is true that those who help the poor are storing up treasure in heaven God does not expect anyone to help a person who is unwilling to help themselves for the following three reasons: -

1. The monies most brothers and sisters can afford to give is very limited so it is better that their giving goes to those who desire to work, but for whatever reason cannot and are therefore poor and struggling through no fault of their own rather than to those who are choosing to be lazy and unwilling to work when they are fully able.
2. Those who are lazy and chose not to work for no-good reason will forever be a drain on the budget of others and the church.
3. When those who do desire to work, but for some reason are unable to work do overcome their troubles they in turn will work and give to others who lack.

In the book of Proverbs it is written: -

- Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. (Prov. 6:6).
- A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. (Prov. 10:4).
- The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labour." (Prov. 21:25).

Proverbs 20:5 -----⁵The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

The King James Bible says: -

- Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Like deep water: carries the idea that the purposes of a person's heart and mind are not easily discovered. This is true of those who are wicked and of those who are good. Since the English Standard Bible says, the purpose of a man's heart it could apply to good or bad purposes hidden in the heart while the King James Bible says, the counsel of a man's heart which would refer to the good counsel a wise a man had in his heart. People can be living amongst men who have theft, murder, rape, child abuse and all sorts of evil in their hearts without knowing it, but a person with understanding (which also embraces wisdom) will discover such things in the following ways: -

- By observing their interactions and relationship toward others and how they treat people.
- By asking questions and observing their manners, words and conversations.
- By diligent observation of their behaviour, deeds and actions.
- By carefully observing their body language, their faces and their countenances.

There are men and women who over the years have gained a vast amount of good and wise counsel in their hearts. Those who have understanding and wisdom will take every opportunity they have to draw such good counsel and wisdom out of such men and women. They will take every opportunity to have conversations with them and constantly ask questions and diligently listen when they are talking.

Proverbs 20:6 ----- ⁶Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?

The King James Bible says: -

- Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

It is easy to find people who exalt and boast of themselves and their own goodness, but extremely difficult to find someone who is consistently trustworthy, faithful and loyal, and displays a sense of responsibility, commitment and devotion to a promise, a person or a duty.

Proverbs 20:7 ----- ⁷The righteous who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him!

Children of a godly father and mother who do what is good and right and live honestly and show compassion, grace and forgiveness to their children will be blessed. However there is a temptation for Christian parents to feel that they have to appear to be perfect before their children for their children to grow up with a good Christian character. Parents who have this mindset are afraid to allow their children to see their faults so they live a false life before their children mistakenly believing they have to appear holy. But this is not living with integrity and honestly and children perceive the hypocrisy and will often rebel in their teenage years. If love and grace is the cement that holds the family together the faults that mum and dad may have will not ruin the character of the children, whereas living a pretend life of holiness before them most likely will.

Proverbs 20:8 ----- ⁸A king who sits on the throne of judgment winnows all evil with his eyes.

A king examines everything in order to remove the wicked and destructive influences from his kingdom. This principle applies to the heads of churches, religious organisations and governments; this is why God has ordained police forces and courts of law.

Proverbs 20:9 ----- ⁹Who can say, "I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin"?

The answer to this verse is, "No-one can say they are free from sin," the apostle John wrote: -

- If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10).

Since we are all descendants of our earthly father Adam we have all inherited a fallen corrupted body with sinful dysfunctions and aberrations. Not one of us can stand before God claiming we are sin-free. If we could attain to such a glorious state Christ died for no purpose.

This is why we are saved by faith and grace and not by self-effort, because no matter how hard we tried and how good we lived our life outwardly we would still be sinners inwardly. Some believe that if they do not do anything wrong outwardly they are righteous, but this is a deception, because sin still dwells within, it is what causes the wrong outward behaviour. Sinful outward behaviour is an act of sin which stems from its root which dwells within.

Proverbs 20:10 ----- ¹⁰Unequal weights and unequal measures are both alike an abomination to the LORD.

Unequal weights and measures cheat people out of what is rightfully theirs by deception this is why it is such an abomination to the LORD.

This principal can apply to any form of lie and deception that cheats others out of what is rightfully theirs.

Proverbs 20:11 ----- ¹¹Even a child makes himself known by his acts, by whether his conduct is pure and upright.

A child is known whether it is good or bad by its outward behaviour.

Proverbs 20:12 ----- ¹²The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the LORD has made them both.

There are idols made by man's hand carved in wood and stone that have ears that do not hear and eyes that do not see, but these ears and eyes are made not by the hand of man, but by the power of God and they hear every sound and see all the beauty of creation and should never be taken for granted. This verse can refer to the following two things: -

1. God's creation of the literal eyes and the ears of the human body.
2. God's creation of the spiritual senses of the body such as intuition and perception etc.

The ears and the eyes are the two senses by which knowledge and wisdom are conveyed to the mind, but the verse should not be limited to the ears and eyes only, but seen to embrace all other natural faculties and senses of the body such as perception, insight, discernment, intuition, instinct and insight. These are all wonders that God implanted in the human body at the creation of Adam.

Proverbs 20:13 ----- ¹³Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread.

Sleeping in every so often is not what is in focus here (this happens to most for various reasons), the idea carried here is that poverty will come to a lazy person who refuses to work, while abundance will come to those who are willing to work. For further information concerning a lazy person see the notes following verse four above.

Proverbs 20:14 ----- ¹⁴Bad, Bad," says the buyer, but when he goes away, then he boasts.

This carries the following two ideas: -

1. The buyer has negotiated a really good deal for themselves, but they do not want the seller to feel that they have been duped into selling something for far less than what the buyer would have been willing to pay, so the buyer puts on an act that they have been hard done by, but when out of the sight and the hearing of the seller they boast to their friends of the great bargain that they got.
2. The buyer is in the process of buying something they greatly desire and are excited about, so they put on an act that what is being sold is not really what they want to get a better price. The principal in this scenario is, if you want to get something that you really want at the lowest price never look over excited when negotiating with the seller.

Proverbs 20:15 ----- ¹⁵There is gold and abundance of costly stones, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

Men and women who speak with wisdom and knowledge that enhances a person's mental state and their joy and sense of well-being physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually; who speak of God and His plan of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ; who speak of God's love and grace; who speak of the path that leads a sinner to eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory are far more precious than the most valuable jewels, diamonds and gold this world has because these worldly things though joyful and beautiful for a moment will pass away.

A man wisely said, "I have never seen a Hurst transporting the coffin of a corpse with a trailer attached and full of the deceased person's material possessions." I myself live in a downstairs unit. When the man above me died, a tip truck was backed up to the balcony of his upstairs unit and all the possessions were thrown into the tray of the truck most of the items smashing into little pieces as they hit the

steel floor of the tray. These broken and worthless pieces were then taken to the smelly fires of the rubbish dump. These two simple examples clearly show the vanity of labouring and building our entire life solely on the temporary riches and things of this world and giving no thought or time to God.

NOTE: this does not mean it is wrong for Christians to be rich and wealthy, there are many men and women who have been very successful in their particular line of work, they do all their business deals honestly and with integrity and treat their staff justly and because of their success they have resources that are able to help others extend the Kingdom of God and help the poor. Money is not sinful or evil it can be used for good or for bad, to help the poor or to corrupt a king. It is the purpose it is used for that determines whether the money is good or bad, not the money itself.

Proverbs 20:16 ----- ¹⁶Take a man's garment when he has put up security for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for foreigners.

Here is wisdom, if a foreigner or stranger owes a person labour or money and promises to come back and do it or pay it, take a valued possession of theirs and hold it to make sure they return. This is wisdom because though the person may at the moment of promising to return to pay the debt have honest intentions to do so, other unexpected events of life can arise that the use as an excuse not to keep their promise.

Proverbs 20:17 ----- ¹⁷Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel.

Riches, wealth and possessions gained by dishonesty, lies and deception may bring instant gratification for a time, but will eventually rob of heartfelt joy, mental, contentment and peace in this life because of the fear of being found out. Added to this on the Day of Judgment dishonesty, lies and deception bring condemnation to the lake of fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total destruction and utter extinction). For further information concerning the lake of fire see the title: Lake of Fire in, Death (on website menu).

Proverbs 20:18 ----- ¹⁸Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war.

Only after listening to many wise counsellors and advisors should a king go to war. The principal of this proverb not only applies to kings and war, but every major decision a man or woman may have to make that will drastically affect their lives and the lives of others. The Proverb by extension is saying, "Establish everything by wise counsel and seek guidance for every purpose by consulting with others who are trusted, mature and have wisdom before acting on anything that has the potential to drastically change your life or affect the life of others.

Proverbs 20:19 ----- ¹⁹Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babbler.

This proverb is good advice to every man and woman on planet earth, if a person comes to you revealing secrets and gossiping about others be careful what you say to them, because they will excitedly and joyfully run to others to tell them what you have said. Such people cannot be trusted with anything their life revolves around drama and malicious gossip.

Proverbs 20:20 ----- ²⁰If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.

It is supposed here that the father and mother have raised their children in love and not abuse or violence since then it could be understood and justified that such a child would curse their parents. If a son or daughter speaks obscenities or blasphemous words about their mother or father or causes them unhappiness, harm or poverty they will be condemned to the lake of fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total destruction and utter extinction). For further information concerning the lake of fire see the title:

- Lake of Fire in, Death (on website menu).

Proverbs 20:21 ----- ²¹An inheritance gained hastily in the beginning will not be blessed in the end.

This verse carries the idea that wealth and riches received speedily and without effort are easily lost. Though this verse has in mind an inheritance the principal can refer to winning a multi-million dollar lottery, inheriting millions of dollars or having a gift or talent such as a singing voice that is recognised and overnight exalts the singer to instant global fame and riches and such like things.

Two reasons why riches hastily gained often bring long term misery would be: -

- Abundant wealth open doors to all sorts of temptations and indulgences that those who have not had to earn their wealth by honest and hard work have not learned to overcome.
- Those who have not had to work for their wealth often have a lack of appreciation for the riches that has come into their possession and this lack commonly results in a frivolous attitude toward it so it is easily misspent and squandered.

Proverbs 20:22 ----- ²²Do not say, "I will repay evil"; wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

Under the Old Testament law the mindset was: -

- If there is harm, you shall pay life for life, ²⁴eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (Exod. 21:23-25).
- If anyone injures his neighbour, as he has done it shall be done to him, ²⁰fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. (Lev. 24:19-20).
- Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. (Deut. 19:21).

Do not say, "I will repay evil," means do not harbour hatred, bitterness or resentment in the heart or seek revenge against someone who has offended or hurt you in any way, trust that the LORD will deliver you from such enemies and bring justice upon them if not in our time certainly on the Day of Judgment.

- Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' but I say to you, love your enemies that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven, because he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matt. 5:38-45).

At this present time the same events good and bad such as times of joy, laughter and happiness and hardships, troubles and sorrows symbolised by the rain and the sun fall upon both the wicked and the righteous. It could be said that we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace and when this day comes to an end justice will be served in that God will judge the wicked and reward the righteous.

NOTE: seeking revenge and seeking justice are two totally different things, to seek justice for a crime committed is the right and proper thing to do. If someone commits a crime they should be brought to justice through the right lawful channels. Revenge in contrast to seeking justice is about seeking to do harm from a spirit of bitterness and hatred toward another because of the hurt they have inflicted upon their victims.

Proverbs 20:23 ----- ²³Unequal weights are an abomination to the LORD, and false scales are not good.

Unequal weights and measures cheat people out of what is rightfully theirs by deception this is why it is such an abomination to the LORD. This principal can apply to any form of lie and deception that cheats others out of what is rightfully theirs.

Proverbs 20:24 ----- ²⁴A man's steps are from the LORD; how then can man understand his way?

Mankind is so far away from the LORD'S Knowledge and His Holiness that no man or woman can ever comprehend God. The following verses show that man cannot find out God's works upon earth: -

- God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecclesiastes. 3:11).
- Man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out. (Eccles. 8:17).
- The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. ¹²For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them. (Eccles. 9:11-12)

This means that no man or woman can find out the works of God upon the earth. The LORD has designed the universe this way so that no human whether righteous or wicked can find out their future or know what will happen to them tomorrow. The writer of Ecclesiastes concludes with the following two statements: -

1. Without God all is vanity (meaning brief, passing and meaningless), because the righteous and the wicked, the wise and the foolish all end up in the grave and are forgotten. (Eccles. 3:11).
2. The end of all wisdom is to fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man, because God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Eccles. 12:13-14).

Proverbs 20:25 ----- ²⁵It is a snare to say rashly, "It is holy," and to reflect only after making vows.

The words, "It is holy," in this context carry the idea of making a promise especially to God. The Proverb is saying that it is a dangerous trap to make a promise and then think about the consequences and ramifications afterwards. Many today may not understand the extreme seriousness of this since today we are daily bombarded with Politicians who lie, TV commercials that lie to sell their products and rulers in high place of authority who lie. It was not always like this, during the early generations especially amongst the faithful in God a man's word was his bond, it was his honour and most would rather sacrifice their life than break their word, this is why it was a trap to impulsively make a promise without considering the consequences and ramifications.

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

A wise king searches out the wicked in his kingdom and has them removed, imprisoned or killed according to their level of rebellion and wickedness. This principle applies to rulers of a nation, leaders of a church or a religious organization or community group if they want to survive and prosper the heads of each must seek out the wicked and rebellious who will not listen to good counsel and advice and have them removed from their church, religious organization or community group.

Proverbs 20:27 ----- ²⁷The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, (candle of the LORD in KJV) searching all his innermost parts (inward parts of the belly in KJV).

The word belly comes from the Hebrew word (*beten*) it refers to the belly, especially the womb; also the bosom or body of anything, it carries the idea of being born within the womb and from the body and therefore when used figuratively it embraces the spirit of man. The following verse shows that the spirit of man was firstly breathed into him by his Creator: -

- The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (Genesis 2:7).

The spirit of man embraces the entire life and every faculty of the body, the heart, the mind, the innermost being and the thoughts. It is often spoken of as the lamp and the candle within man, because it embraces all the faculties and senses of the body collectively such as: -

- The higher life of a human in contrast to the lower life within animals.
- The inmost heart, the rational mind and conscience.
- The powers of insight, consciousness, intellect and the ability to reason.

The candle and lamp of the LORD: is given to man as an inward light and guide it carries the idea of a clear and glorious light, set up in the innermost being of us all for our information and direction. It is said to be the lamp and candle of the LORD, because God breathed the spirit into us at the creation of Adam who is the earthly father of us all.

Man's spirit searches the thoughts, the intents, and the purposes of the heart which are the things only the spirit of the person and the Spirit of God knows. It is by this candle and lamp of man that we are able to look into our heart and the innermost recesses of it and examine our thoughts, motives and schemes and judge whether they are right or wrong. The candle of man also embraces the conscience which passes sentence on what is in us or has been done by us either excusing or accusing us (this of course is supposing the conscience has not been seared or hardened).

The apostle Paul wrote: -

- These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. Who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. 2:10-11).

God's Spirit also searches the thoughts, intents, and purposes of the heart and the things hidden deep within it and within the mind that only the person himself and God know. A candle and a lamp shine their rays of light into the darkest recesses of a room likewise God Spirit and His word shines the light of God into the darkest recesses of the heart and the mind testing all the inward secret thoughts, feelings and desires discerning not only the outward actions which are visible to others, but also the most inward thoughts and affections approving some and condemning others according to whether they agree with God Spirit and His word or disagree.

The author of Hebrews wrote: -

- The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb. 4:12).

The candle and lamp of God can also be seen as the word of God and that light that comes from the Father of light through divine revelation and through the Gospel of God's grace and salvation in Christ, which has shone out to all mankind like the rays of the sun beaming out in the most brilliant splendour and bringing life to earth.

Proverbs 20:28 ----- ²⁸Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king, and by steadfast love his throne is upheld.

A king who is not adulterous or promiscuous, but conscientious trustworthy, loyal and kind toward his people and his duty will be safe upon his throne and his reign will continue. This is why the King of the Christian faith and his Kingdom continues to grow from generation to generation worldwide. Though certain believers may not live a life style that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and some churches bring shame to the Christian faith the founder of it cannot be faulted. Even the most powerful religious leaders of his generation who desired and plotted to have him put to death searched to find fault with him, but eventually had to bring in false witnesses to testify against him, because they could find no fault.

Proverbs 20:29 ----- ²⁹The glory of young men is their strength, but the splendor of old men is their grey hair.

The honour of young men is their strength and the splendour of old men is their grey hair, this verse can be interpreted in two ways: -

1. Grey hair is the splendour of old men.
2. Grey hair is a sign of old age, but the actual splendour is the wisdom that the old have gained by living a godly life and doing right.

The second interpretation would appear to be closer to the truth since there are a lot of elderly godly and righteous men who have no hair at all, while there are a lot of older, and dishonest men who deny God that have grey hair. Another teaching contained in this verse is the truth that both the young and the old have their advantages, so neither of them should despise nor envy the other.

Proverbs 20:30 ----- ³⁰Blows that wound cleanse away evil; strokes make clean the innermost parts.

Gentle smacks given in love (not beatings given in anger) or discipline of an age appropriate kind that denies a child or person of privileges they enjoy over time will develop right attitudes in the heart. It is also written in the book of Proverbs: -

- Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. (chasteneth him in KJV) (Proverbs 13:24).

Those who refuse to discipline their children are as those who hate them. This is because without loving discipline a child is robbed from learning self-control and the right way to go. Permitting a child to indulge in whatever they wish to do and as they please will allow sinful habits to gather strength which will bring sorrow and misery to them and their parents later in life.

Whoever spares the rod hates their child: the reason Solomon says this so strongly is because he knows that a child without discipline will grow into a teenager that will fall into all sorts of trouble because they have not learned self-control, or to rule over their own emotions. The expression, "they hate their child," carries the idea that a parent does not care about their child's wellbeing or their future, because if they did they would take the time to discipline in love (not anger) and make the effort to correct and train their child in the right way and what, is good, proper and acceptable behaviour.

Spare the rod: is not about cruelly beating a child, even God is against that. Sparing the rod carries the idea of making the child aware that what they are doing is wrong. It only takes a gentle smack on the backside for a child to get the message and learn that whatever behaviour they were doing will bring them harm in the future. Obviously a gentle smack is not the only form of discipline that is effective. Many people have great success with other types of discipline. It is the principal that is important, not the method or what is used to carry it out. Today it is almost certain if a child was given the choice of a smack given in love (in contrast to anger) or have their iPad, computer or mobile phone taken off them for two days they would choose the smack.

To deny a child of some form of effective discipline is to ruin their lives, that is why Solomon says the parent who will not disciple their child hates their child, because love will always do what is best for another person, even if it is something we may not find easy to do. No parent likes to discipline their children, but they know that it is going to protect their child in the future and without correction the child is not going to learn self-control or what good and acceptable behaviour is.

Nine Aspects of Wisdom.

Wisdom embraces the following nine aspects: -

1. Having a clear thoughtful, rational, discerning, discriminating, sharp, and discreet mind.

2. Being cautious in character as opposed to being impulsive.
3. Being sensible and practical with the skills and talents that a person has.
4. Making choices that considers others and that will be fair and just.
5. Studying, reading and learning to acquire mental knowledge that helps in making right decisions for the present moment and for the future.
6. Being able to see the future danger of a decision, choice or action.
7. Having the ability to make good choices and decisions in the present moment that will end in the best result and a good outcome in the future.
8. Being able to perceive the end result or ramifications (good or bad) of the underlying message a speaker is teaching.
9. Wisdom will protect a person from making decisions and choices in the present moment that will lead to hurt or calamity in the future for themselves and for others.

End.