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Proverbs 17

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Proverbs 17.

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).

PROVERBS 0:0-0

- **Proverbs 17:1:** Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.

It is more enjoyable to be eating a sandwich in the peaceful company of a few friends who are all in harmony with each other than having a great feast in a five-star hotel amongst multitudes of people who are full of contention and strife.

- **Proverbs 17:2:** A servant who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.

A servant who does the right thing toward his master will be more favoured than the man's own son who is rebellious and brings shame to his father. The age old saying, "Blood is thicker than water", may not always be true, certainly according to this proverb it is not. The servant because of his faithfulness and loyalty is more favoured by the father than his own son, to such an extent that the servant will be given authority over the son and also share in the family inheritance. The father in this proverb is a just man because he does not favour his family simply because they are his family his favour goes toward whoever is honest, loyal and faithful to him. The father is no respecter of persons he judges on a person's behaviour not their birth position. Likewise, the following verses show that God will reward those in His global family according to their behaviour and works.

- If anyone builds on the foundation (which is Jesus Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

Note these verses are not about salvation since that is a free gift of God to all who believe the message of the bloodstained cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and by faith trust in Jesus righteousness and God's grace and not their own self-effort or religious works. The focus of these verses is upon rewards and loss.

- **Proverbs 17:3:** The crucible (fining pot in KJV) is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the LORD tests hearts.

When the LORD is testing the human heart, Solomon likens it to an extremely hot and fiery furnace that is used for refining silver and gold. This carries the idea that God's tests and trials are going to be painful. A good example of this is God's dealings with Israel they became so grossly corrupt God used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring His judgment upon them. The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah destroyed their city and took the people into captivity for the next seventy years. While in captivity God molded them like a master potter molds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again). Peter in his letter wrote:

- In this (the eternal inheritance) you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:6-7).

Peter is telling the exiled Jews scattered in Gentile countries and by extension all who are in Christ that we should rejoice in the truth that we are being kept by God through our faith in Christ and that our hope will be manifested at his return. Nevertheless, while we are on this side of eternity, we will all suffer various trials, hardships and troubles, which God will use to test the genuineness and reality of our faith. It is easy to praise and worship God when life is charmed, even many people of the secular world thank God when something good comes into their lives. The real test is when struggle, hardship and troubles come. When our love toward God is not destroyed during these seasons, we are storing up treasure in heaven. It is like a natural family, children do not turn against their parents simply because they suffer some kind of crisis (i.e., sickness, fire, floods, lack of income etc.), when a family is bonded by true love

nothing separates its members from that love, likewise those who know the love of God do not turn against Him simply because of hardships and troubles. They understand that God's love toward them is not dependent on the circumstance of life (Good or bad), but is manifested through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ's brutal and cruel death on the cross of Calvary. Tested faith is more precious than gold, this is because if it endures the test it leads to eternal life and everlasting glory. If our world's top scientist and medical practitioners could invent a pill that would give people eternal life the billionaires of this world would write out a cheque no-matter what the cost to buy as many as they could for their family and friends, and almost all the world would sell everything they had to purchase one. This is the high value Peter and the apostles placed on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To Peter and the faithful brothers and sisters who supported him there was nothing in this world more valuable for any man or woman to possess than the gift of eternal life. How sad it is that in some modern churches today this high value of eternal life has been, lost and replaced by a Gospel that focuses on a blessed, prosperous and successful life now in this mortal and corrupt world and messages that appeal to self, ego and pride. Especially when one considers what it cost God the Father and the high price his Son paid to purchase this gift of eternal life for all who would humbly accept by faith the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Proverbs 17:4:** An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue.

A person who lies and does wrong will listen to deceiving and dishonest plans that will work to their own advantage and greedy gain.

- **Proverbs 17:5:** Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

When a person mocks the poor, it is the same as standing before the throne of God and mocking Him. To rejoice at another person's troubles and hardships is a great offence before God and who do gloat over someone else troubles will not escape God's punishment. This scenario is commonly seen amongst those who envy others, those who are jealous of others and those who have been offended by others. Secretly gloating in the heart over another person's crisis or calamity does not escape the eyes of God and will not escape judgment accordingly.

- **Proverbs 17:6:** Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers.

Grandchildren are the crown of the aged for the following reasons: -

- They are from their own offspring.
- Grandchildren are a symbol of life, vitality, vigour, innocence, joy, happiness, laughter, simplicity and fun.
- Their youth, innocence and honesty are refreshing to an older person.
- They will carry on the family inheritance and name.
- They can enjoy their laughter and then hand them back to Mum and Dad.
- **Proverbs 17:7:** Fine (excellent in KJV) speech is not becoming to a fool; still less is false speech to a prince.

A foolish person (one with no wisdom or common sense) has no interest in listening to speeches that talk about God and His ways or that are focused upon teaching the right way and the good thing to do. In contrast to this a wise person with good sense has no interest in listening to crude and corrupt speeches and deceptive and dishonest talk.

- **Proverbs 17:8:** A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of the one who gives it; wherever he turns he prospers.

A bribe is like magic in the sense that it brings to pass whatever those who are offering the bribe desire. A common secular saying is, "Everyone has their price," this of course is not true of everyone, but it is true of many, this is why a bribe is like magic to those who have money to pay it.

- **Proverbs 17:9:** Whoever covers an offense (transgression in KJV) seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

When a friend of a group makes a mistake or a brother or sister of a church slip into a sin a friend will keep their fault secret and be loved for their discretion. They may ask the person if they can share it with someone they trust and know maybe able to help them, but they won't run around telling everyone. In contrast to this another person who knows of the mistake or the sin will immediately run to gossip and share it with everyone and by doing so will divide and separate friendships.

- **Proverbs 17:10:** A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.

A person without wisdom and good sense will not listen no matter how many times they corrected they continue on in their own foolishness. In contrast to this a person who has wisdom and insight will take notice of correction and respond accordingly.

- **Proverbs 17:11:** An evil man seeks only rebellion, and a cruel messenger will be sent against him.

Whoever is rebellious is rebellious against some form of authority. That authority will respond in punishing the rebellious person according to their level of rebellion. With a child it maybe a gentle smack given in love (not anger) or denial of some privilege, with a teenager perhaps grounding them or even prison depending upon the rebellion, but if the rebellion is against a king the cruel messenger sent against the rebellious person is probably coming with the news that they are going to be hung on the gallows or beheaded. The expression, "the cruel messenger" refers to the messenger who takes the message of punishment to the rebellious person and perhaps to the one who administers the punishment.

- **Proverbs 17:12:** Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs rather than a fool in his folly.

It is safer to come across a bear robbed of its cubs, than a person who lacks good sense while they are in an act of crime. This is probably because a bear will only attack in the moment if it feels it or its cubs are in danger. In contrast to this if a criminal cannot destroy the threat in the moment they are discovered, it is likely they will seek out the one who found them out and threaten them with blackmail or even worse kill them so they cannot witness against them.

- **Proverbs 17:13:** If anyone returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.

Trouble will always come to a person who does something harmful to someone who has done them good. This is most likely because whoever does harm to a person who has only done-good to them has no sense of appreciation or heartfelt compassion toward others and will therefore not only be constantly offending people and causing others hurt and harm, but will also be constantly doing the wrong thing and by their wickedness and cruel and unkind heart will forever be bringing trouble into their home.

- **Proverbs 17:14:** The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.

How true is this? Strife leads to more strife once an argument begins the strife will rapidly increase. A person with wisdom and good sense knows this and backs off from a quarrel before it escalates into verbal abuse or physical violence.

- **Proverbs 17:15:** He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.

Abomination: comes from the Hebrew word (*tow`ebah*) and means to utterly, abhor, loathe and detest, it carries the idea of being utterly disgusted with person or a thing (especially idolatry or an idol). Those who justify the wrong and harmful actions of a wicked person are an abomination to the LORD. An example of this scenario would be a parent or friend lying to justify the criminal actions of a son or a friend so they do not have to suffer the punishment due to them. Those who condemn someone who does what is right and good are also an abomination to the LORD, an example of this scenario would be a parent or friend lying and condemning someone who is innocent to protect their guilty child or friend from suffering the punishment due to them. The Bible tells us that God is no respecter of persons, meaning in judgment it matters not if a person is a prophet, a priest, a minister of the Gospel or an unbeliever God will judge them according to honest justice. If they cheat others for their own gain or abuse children etc., God will not favour them or pervert and twist justice when they stand before Him at judgment.

- **Proverbs 17:16:** Why should a fool have money in his hand to buy wisdom when he has no sense?

The King James Bible says:

- **Proverbs 17:16:** Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?

Solomon seems to be saying, there is no amount of money in the world that can make a fool wise because they do not appreciate it and have no desire to learn wisdom. Practically this could be expressed in the following way it is pointless for parents to give a teenage son or daughter money to go to university if they have no interest in learning wisdom. In this context the word fool refers to a man or woman who has no interest in gaining knowledge to improve their life.

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- **Proverbs 17:17:** A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

A true friend will love you even when you offend or hurt them, they may go through a time of anger and hurt, but they will forgive. The reason Solomon says a brother is born to adversity is because brothers disappoint and hurt each other, but because of the bond and unconditional love brothers have they will forgive. It is because of this deep bond and love that brothers have for each other that Solomon says they are born to hardship.

- **Proverbs 17:18:** One who lacks sense gives a pledge and puts up security in the presence of his neighbor.

This verse is about going guarantor for a person. Today such a person may go guarantor for a family member or friend's loan for a car or house mortgage. This verse is saying that only those who lack wisdom would commit themselves to being guarantor for another person especially in front of witnesses. This is because though the intention and motive of the guarantor is good and most likely stems from heartfelt compassion for the person asking them to be guarantor and the person asking the guarantor to make a pledge honestly intends to pay the loan unforeseen circumstance can happen that make it impossible for the person to pay their loan and then the guarantor is forced to pay it which will not only cause them enormous financial difficulty, but may even result in the loss of their family car or even the family home and ruin a person's integrity and reputation and in most cases destroys the relationship.

- **Proverbs 17:19:** Whoever loves transgression loves strife; he who makes his door high seeks destruction.

The King James Bible says:

- **Proverbs 17:19:** He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction. (Proverbs 17:19).

Transgression: comes from the Hebrew word (*pesha`*) and means rebellion, trespass, quarrel, offend, rebel it carries the idea of breaking away from right and just authority; a national, moral or religious revolt and to apostatize and sin.

Those who love transgression that loves strife: those who have a spiteful, malicious and vindictive spirit love arguing and slandering others which evidences by their actions and behaviour they love strife since arguing and slandering others will always create conflict.

He who exalts his gate seeks destruction: this expression carries the idea of prideful self-exaltation and arrogant haughtiness in the sense that one does all they can do to outshine their neighbour. They indulge in self-important showiness in a vain attempt to appear better and superior to others. The expression, "They seek destruction," carries the idea that whoever carries themselves loftily and scornfully seeks death because by their arrogant pride they make themselves loathsome and detestable both to mankind and to God. People who do wrong will always have strife, therefore if a person hated strife, they would forsake wrongdoing. If they continue in wrongdoing, they must also have an enjoyment (however twisted) for strife or they would forsake the wrong that they do. There are ego's that thrive on strife, contention and drama it gives self a sense (however perverted) of importance over others or amongst the group.

- **Proverbs 17:20:** A man of crooked heart does not discover good, and one with a dishonest tongue falls into calamity.

A man of crooked heart refers to a person with a deceitful and dishonest heart they cannot discover wisdom and what is good, because they have no truth dwelling within. Such people will always have calamity in their lives because they do not understand or know what is right or the good thing to do or say in any situation or circumstance.

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- **Proverbs 17:21:** He who sires a fool gets himself sorrow, and the father of a fool has no joy.

Parents, who give birth to a child that chooses foolishness and wrongdoing, sadly are going to be in sorrow and will not experience the joy that a child normally brings to their parent's life.

- **Proverbs 17:22:** A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Happiness, laughter and joy are healing to the mind, the heart and the body, but an extremely troubled mind and hurt heart brings depression, despair and even in severe cases physical illness and suicide.

- **Proverbs 17:23:** The wicked accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the ways of justice.

A deceitful and dishonest person will secretly accept a bribe and pervert justice and distort what is honest and true when doing so works to their own advantage and gain (this is an extreme offence to God), such people will be judged accordingly.

- **Proverbs 17:24:** The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.

Those who are discerning, perceptive wise, and show good judgment will find the best solution to any given problem. This is because when faced with a problem they set their mind to find out what is the right thing to do that will result in the best possible outcome for all people involved in any given circumstance and situation. In contrast to this good judgment, wisdom and finding the right and best thing to do is as far away from the foolish as the horizon is to those who want to touch it (an impossible thing to do).

- **Proverbs 17:25:** A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.

A son who lacks good sense brings grief and sorrow to his father and mother.

- **Proverbs 17:26:** To impose a fine (punish the just in the KJV) on a righteous man is not good, nor to strike the noble for their uprightness (equity in KJV).

The word equity means fairness, justice and impartiality. It goes without saying that it is wrong to speak against or punish someone who does what is right, fair, just and good. Perhaps you might wonder who would do such a thing, but it is exactly what happened to a man who lived his life to help the poor and who did only good to the less fortunate, and his name was the Lord Jesus Christ, if it happened to him, it is certain that it is happening to many other good people around the world.

- **Proverbs 17:27:** Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool (excellent in KJV) spirit is a man of understanding.

Those with knowledge do not flaunt or openly display it. In contrast to this those who are intellectually prideful will use their knowledge to show themselves superior to others. The expression, "Those who have and excellent spirit have understanding," means they have the insight and ability to clearly perceive and grasp the meaning and the nature of any given situation or circumstance.

- **Proverbs 17:28:** Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.

No-one can discern if a person is foolish or wise until they speak.

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.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
