



15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. 16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame. 17 He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit. 18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health. 19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment. 20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy. 21 There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief. 22 Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight. 23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness. (Prov 12:15-23)

This chapter of Proverbs is loosely divided into four parts: 1) verses 1-14 argues character matters; 2) verses 15-16 teach wisdom graces the ways of the righteous while the fool will only use that pitiful knowledge that is the meager crumbs of his own heart; 3) verses 17-23 tell us words have consequences and can be used as wounding swords or comforting oils; and 4) verses 24-28 demonstrate the victorious life of the wise laborer. Today, we will discuss verses 15-23.

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes How is this so? Remember, a fool does not listen to counsel, nor does he seek after knowledge. He is left with the paltry provisions of his own thoughts which are wild and unrefined by wisdom. Since he listens to no instruction, his only frame of reference is his own experiences and his own selfish thoughts. The fool can see no deficiency behind his own eyes, but only those before those eyes. To the hopeless fool, everyone else appears the fool. Not listening to the counsel of others, he has not the benefit of any other viewpoint but his own eyes. "... **but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise**. See how different the wise. The wise man realizes the smallness of his own mind. He seeks to enlarge his own thoughts with those of others of learning and seniority. What field commander would lead his army into combat without having scouts survey the enemy lines for depth and width? The wise fellow will consider all possibilities in solving a problem. Many minds are better than one mind closed in darkness.

A fool's wrath is presently known See how easily the ignorant and foolish are worked up to a feverish emotionalism by mob mentality. One of the great achievements (?) of Islam is that they keep their followers in wanton ignorance so that they may control them more easily. A fool, not being able to rationally consider other view points,

is quickly angered by the slightest perceived provocation. Our jails are full of such fellows. “. . . but a prudent man covereth shame.” There is no greater fool than one who runs immediately to his or her friends the moment a disagreement in the home arises. He may spread quickly bad rumors of wife or husband for revenge, only to regret later the sorry reputation he has made for himself. The wise person conceals personal misgivings about his friends and family for he knows that any slight on the name of a loved one or friend is a slight against his own good character and discretion.

He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness A good, old truth here. Out of the mouth come the treasures of the heart – be they of gold or of swamp water. Truth is always pure and clean, and of great value to the hearer. The truth from the mouth of a man is a direct reflection on his righteousness. “. . . but a false witness deceit.” Since deceit is in his heart, the fool speaks from that abundance of wickedness. *Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.* (Matt 15:17-20)

There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword Do we not know some others whose every word is like a stone against a friend. They see no good thing about their neighbors or associates. Instead of compliments to the lady of the house for a diligently prepared meal, they find the food too salty, or the salad too stale. When we see such a one coming, we quickly try to go another way. Their words wound and hurt. “. . . but the tongue of the wise is health.” In my many years of instructing military pilots, there is one principle of teaching I never neglected: at the end of a period of instruction, always begin the debriefing by complimenting the student on something that was performed well – then proceed with critical comments if applicable. If a lady’s face is in ruins, you may at least compliment her on her choice of dress. Find good things that are true to speak rather than injurious.

The lip of truth shall be established for ever. Contrary to modern philosophy, truth is immutable and unchanging. It is the mark of distinction of our glorious Savior. He spoke only truth, and He, too, is unchanging – *the same yesterday, today, and forever!* The mouth of the speaker of truth will be heard behind the gates of New Jerusalem. “. . . but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” If truth is eternal, a lie is the opposite – very brief. In fact, it does not even survive the mouth of its propagator.

Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil The good Seed of the Gospel fall into the heart and bear good fruit. The opposite is true of the seeds of briars and weeds of wickedness in the heart of the wicked. The seed of weeds can only produce more and multiple numbers of weeds. A heart filled with wickedness can only operate on the fuel of evil. “. . . but to the counsellors of peace is joy.” Those who advocate truth and peace have no snares of deceit of which to worry about tripping upon. The conscience of such counselors is full of comfort at duty well performed and faithfully executed. A good conscience is theirs, and that good conscience is a healing balm to their souls.

There shall no evil happen to the just. Perhaps you are remembering some tragic event that has occurred in the life of a good and Christian friend. You may say, “Well, that fellow was not protected from evil.” You have no basis to make such a determination due to the brevity and limits of your vision. That which may appear as tragic to us may result in the greatest good imaginable if we could only see the unseen hand of God working behind the veil of life. *And we know that all things work together*

for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28) “. . . but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.” That mischief is INTERNAL as well as external. The wicked take years of good health from their lives by the fevers of greed and hate they entertain in their hearts.

Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: The sins God calls an ‘abomination’ are few due to their utter egregiousness. Homosexuality is called an abomination before God because it disputes the Creative Model of God at Eden. It violates the very first Commandment God gave to mankind: *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it* (Gen 1:27-28) So, too, are lying lips an abomination because they refute the sound truth and doctrine provided in God’s Holy Word of unblemished Truth. “. . . but they that deal truly are his delight.” Truth speakers are in tune with God’s spiritual, and natural, law. An apple tree never lies by producing peaches. A chestnut never falls up when it is released by the branch. God loves truth, and His heart is warmed by hearing His people speaking only truth.

A prudent man concealeth knowledge. Would it be wise for a nation at war to publicly announce its troop movements and shipping routes? The wise will only trade in that knowledge that will be a timely benefit and never a creator of weakness. “. . . but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.” What else is available to the fool to proclaim? He has rejected knowledge and counsel of others; therefore he has nothing but foolishness in his heart to share. He never stumbles upon a wise and prudent thought even by accident.

Have you sought after wisdom and sound counsel? Have you stored these in your heart as treasures to be shared at the time of need?