



24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. 25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. 26 He that laboureth laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him. 27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. 28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends. 29 A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good. 30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass. 31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. 32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. 33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD. (Prov 16:24-33)

Not only does our kindness and consideration come as a sweet balm to others, but is a healing medicine for our own souls as well. Love given away is truly love received in greater abundance. Love is one currency that multiplies itself to the giver when invested in others. If our cup is running over, the Great Vintner will continue to pour His Wine of Love into our vessels. Once we stop overflowing and try to contain all, He stops the supply and even that which we have will wither away either through self-consumption or evaporation. 24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. Do we not feel the presence of God when we have granted unmerited kindness to another?

25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Here is one of the Cardinal Verses of the Bible. It is perhaps the truth most ignored and least understood, for our ways always seem right to us and we may even convince ourselves that OUR ways are God's ways. Many cults and false religions are thus born of self-deceit and greed. This occurs because man, even professing Christians, refuses to surrender their old demented free wills for the Mind that was in Christ Jesus. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:* (Phil 2:5) Now if we take the Mind of Christ in the stead of our own wills, we have wills that conform to that of God and not our old free wills. If we persist in following the will of fallen man, we shall end up fallen into the pits of Hell.

26 He that laboureth laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him. Our labors are a natural imperative if we will eat and gain wealth. We do not regularly mow

our neighbor's lawns, or clean our neighbor's garage. I we will provide those things for which our appetite begs, we must labor. Therefore, labor in itself, is not necessarily Godly. It depends upon whose Mind we are obeying when we do our labors – our tongues or our Lord.

27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. Who is an ungodly man? Any man whose loyalty and faith is not fully in God. Without God, we are all hopeless and incorrigible sinners. Even those who are morally upright are yet sinners before God if they have reckoned their righteousness apart from His Way and His Law. *And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* (Gen 6:5)

28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends. This kind of whisperer is as plentiful, perhaps more so, in church than in secular society. Even pastors jockey for influence over the congregation by subtle episodes of backbiting. The man who appears friendly on the surface, but is adverse to anything that does not perfectly suit his taste; sows discord rather than confront the problem head-on. The persistent whispers and insinuation uttered behind the back of the one whom he considers his target have a desultory effect on the unity of the church. Such smooth and vicious tongues even destroy nations: *“A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and carries his banner openly. But the traitor moves amongst those within the gate freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself. For the traitor appears not a traitor; he speaks in accents familiar to his victims, and he wears their face and their arguments, he appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men. He rots the soul of a nation, he works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of the city, he infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist. A murderer is less to fear.”* - Marcus Tullius Cicero circa 44 B.C.

29 A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good. We should not only avoid provoking our children to anger, but our neighbors as well. Like love, the emotion of anger is contagious. It gradually changes the heart and fills it with hate over time. How we speak, and what, has great influence over the manner in which our words are received. If we scream at our friends, regardless of what we scream, they will respond in kind and feed the fountain of anger. Violent demeanor evokes a violent response from those around us. When I was assigned to Iran in the early 70's, I had been in country only a few weeks when I noticed the gas gage on my car approach empty. I was very near a large gasoline station which had about six isles for refueling. Each line had about six or seven cars backed up waiting for gas. I got in line behind a van. When I slowly worked my way up to the pump, the accustomed young attendant did not come out to fuel me. I got out and began to fuel my car. Suddenly, a young man came out from the station and jerked the pump out of my hand pointing to a Porsche in the adjacent line. I misunderstood his intention. I was angered because he had jerked the pump out of my hand and spoken to the Porsche adjacent in Farsi (Iranian language). Since the Iranians were quite adept at breaking into line, I thought the attendant was signaling for his friend in the Porsche to come over to my line and get gas. I asked the attendant in an angry voice, “What are you doing? I have been waiting more than twenty minutes in this line!” The gentleman in the Porsche (and he WAS a better gentleman than me) spoke in English, “Sir, what he is trying to tell you is – the fuel pump you are using is for **diesel** fuel only!” There was no hole for me to crawl into, so the attendant held up another line and allowed me to get my gas. What a rotten rogue I was that day. I still cringe to think about it!

30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass. The evil schemer does not open his eyes to the true situation. He excludes all other considerations in his devising of evil actions. No opinion gains any credibility in his mind but HIS. Once evil is conceived, then he begins a whisper and back-biting campaign to bring it to fruition.

31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. There is nothing so happy to behold as an elderly man or woman who have served their Lord and fellow men for the greater part of their lives. Their gray hair adds sanctity to their appearance. Whatever they say is full of wisdom and love.

32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. This verse hails back to a previous one: **He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.** (Prov 14:29) All physical strength is vain, and all victories of power are short-lived. The wise man, slow to anger, will yet be standing when the victorious Napoleon suffers his Waterloo. The spirit is the essence of action and behavior in man. If we are able to subdue our spirits – whether of hate, lust, or greed – we shall enjoy a greater victory than the arms of 10,000 knights on the field.

33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD. How ignorant of man to place any trust whatsoever on the casting of lots to determine the future. God is already in the future and mandates all of its cares and provisions. If a man has received no news from home, why rush two hundred miles to see if all is well when his wife is there standing by the phone? The same is true of those who place their trust in silly luck when God stands at the ready to order our lives for our best interest and makes provision for our futures? Have you, friend, placed your past burdens on His shoulders, left your present Way to His leading, and depended upon His sure knowledge and Providence for your future?