



15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD. 16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? 17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. 18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend. 19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction. 20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief. 21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy. 22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. 23 A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment. 24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. 25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. 26 Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity. 27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. 28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding. (Prov 17:15-28)

There is remarkable application to the decadence and decline in morality current in the social order today revealed in this text from Proverbs 17. The opening verse is closely related to the concluding verse of Romans 1:32 - *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* In this verse from Romans, Paul makes reference to the besetting sins typical of a decadent society but, especially to the sin of homosexuality which is such a cherished and respectable sin of the reprobate political world. The stark truth revealed in Romans 1:32 is that we must not settle into an attitude of "live-and-let-live" where sin is concerned. We cannot tolerate sin that demoralizes and devastates the Creation model of the family that God set in motion in His first institution of marriage in the Garden at Eden.

To condone and approve is the same as committing the sin itself. In other words, you cannot condone homosexuality without becoming guilty of homosexuality in the eyes of God. Please examine the opening verse of the text above from Proverbs 17: **15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.** I will add that all sins of the flesh are serious breaches of the Law of God, but homosexuality is a particularly egregious sin. Another egregious sin is to label that which is good, evil, and that which is evil, good. We are doing this with accelerating frequency in our modern day. The atmosphere of “political correctness” has closed too many mouths of righteousness and has led to the modification of thought through the indoctrination of our youth to evil. We must heed the counsel of the prophet Isaiah: ***Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*** (Isaiah 5:20)

16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? Wisdom cannot be purchased with money. Of what profit is the expense paid for wisdom for which the heart of a fool is not prepared to receive. Wisdom must be cherished to gain admittance to the secret chambers of the heart. It will come by no other means. Instead of expending money for wisdom, wisdom brings wealth. ***The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.*** (Prov 14:24) Solomon acquired great wealth – not because he began with a desire for wealth but a desire for wisdom. ***Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great? And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.*** (2 Chron 1:9-12)

17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Here we see an advancing hierarchy of dependability and loyalty. A friend will remain a loving friend even when we have made fools of ourselves and deserve no love. But a brother is even closer than that amazing measure of love – he is born to share your adversities. Who can have a better friend than a true brother? Is it possible? By all means, it is! Quoted many times in these devotions is the verse from Proverbs 18:24 - ***A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*** (Prov 18:24) Jesus Christ is that Friend that sticks closer than a brother. A little known and less preached principle of love and friendship is that it MUST be reciprocated. We may not assume that God simply loves all, willy-nilly, and will overlook unrepented sins. God loves those who reciprocate His love.

18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend. A man who lacks wisdom will make decisions based on his own lack of knowledge and not based on the counsel of a wise friend that is readily available for consultation. He is prideful without cause. Pride and arrogance are a terrible shortcoming in any person but, especially those for whom there is no evidence of sense to recommend their pride.

19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction. Strife is a means of getting advantage over others without a just

cause. Those in society who wish to press their disadvantages of birth, race, or sex demonstrate and even riot based on their often false claims of being disadvantaged. There are most generally proper means of addressing real, or even imagined grievances, short of strife and insurrection. The man who makes a fortress of his own home is often the one whose gates are first to be fallen.

20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief. It is clear that mischief builds with increasing intensity. If the heart is continually prone to opposition and disobedience, the tongue will reveal those putrid possessions of the heart in the devil's own language. If we run about speaking the devil's language, we will soon find ourselves surrounded by other devils who understand that perversity.

21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy. The children of a father reflect either credibly our shamefully upon him. What joy can a man take in a son that is an impious and blundering fool? Of course every coin has two sides: *The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.* (Prov 23:24)

22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. God is the Great Physician, and He knew well the truth that medical science has only recently learned about how one's outlook on life influences health. If gloom and sorrow inhabit the heart the heart could be compared to a beautiful home in which a wretched hermit has lived for twenty years in his darkness and solitude. Instead of presenting a happy appearance, the home will take on the gloom and isolation of the hermit. I hope none of our friends have a 'hermit heart'.

23 A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment. In the time of this Proverb, men secreted their valuables in a fold of their garments. A gift given from that secret stash as a bribe perverts justice and judgment. Does it not happen daily in our once just and lawful American politics?

24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. The wisdom of every action are readily considered before the man of understanding. But the eyes of the fool are so unstable that he cannot see for his distance from wisdom – as far as the east is from the west is wisdom to his mind.

25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. This is simply a reinforcement of many previous proverbs. God teaches through a repetitive statement of truth. When we find meanings repeated often, we should take heed that God considers these points very worthy of our remembering. Not only is a father grieved by a foolish son, but the mother who bore him only receives an ungrateful bitterness from the fool that she has suffered to bear. Fools are also known to be ingrates!

26 Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity. This refers not only to our personal governance, but to the fealty we owe to those in authority over us. It is just as bad to punish the righteous when we are in a position to do so as it is to fail in our obligations to the constituted government.

27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Very true it is that a man of great knowledge does not feel the need to go about impressing others by dropping long and sophisticated vocabulary. A man

of knowledge realizes the value of words that impart knowledge. He will not “*cast his pearls before swine.*” *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.* (Matt 7:6) A wealthy man is usually much more conscious of his spending than a poor man who has just received a tax refund – he may go out and waste the whole on things unnecessary. A man who understands wisdom also understands much about human character. He looks for the best in others and often finds it. He is therefore cheerful and presents an agreeable personality.

28 *Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.* Though never a member of any church, I believe Abe Lincoln must have understood Scripture better than most clergymen, especially those of the modern cut. Even a fool can have one acorn of wisdom if he is able to keep his mouth shut. Abe Lincoln paraphrased this Proverb when he said; “*It is better to remain silent, and be thought a fool, than to speak out and remove all doubt.*” Of course, how much more rewarding to be a person of wisdom who, when he speaks, is as coins of gold that can be used to purchase many valuable things in life.