

### Wisdom in Parenting

#### Proverbs 13

**Proverbs 13** - *“A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.*

*A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, but the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence. He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.*

*The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.*

*A righteous man hates lying, but a wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame.*

*Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.*

*There is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing, and one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches.*

*The ransom of a man’s life is his riches, but the poor does not hear rebuke.*

*The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.*

*By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom.*

*Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase.*

*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.*

*He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.*

*The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death.*

*Good understanding gains favor, but the way of the unfaithful is hard.*

*Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool lays open his folly.*

*A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful ambassador brings health.*

*Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored.*

*A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul, but it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.*

*He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.*

*Evil pursues sinners, but to the righteous, good shall be repaid.*

*A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.*

*Much food is in the fallow ground of the poor, and for lack of justice there is waste.*

*He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.*

*The righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul, but the stomach of the wicked shall be in want.”*

#### Background Notes

For background, let’s begin with verse 24. It always stirs up a lot of discussion! *“He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.”* First of all, notice what the proverb does **not** say. It does **not** say, “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” That is **not** a verse in the Bible! It has come down through the years from an old poem in the 17th century.

Remember, verse 24 is a proverb: a **general truth stated in general terms**. The main point of this proverb is that children must be disciplined, and if you don’t discipline your children, you don’t truly love them. All children are different,

and what works as discipline for one child does not necessarily work for another child. Notice that this proverb allows for physical punishment, but doesn't demand it.

Listen to another proverb in Proverbs 17:10: *"Rebuke is more effective for a wise man than a hundred blows for a fool."* With some children, all it takes is a stern rebuke, and with others even physical punishment doesn't work. For a rebellious teen, taking the car keys away is often the best discipline - and it makes for safer roads as well!

## Doctrinal Point

### The proverbs are wise advice for everyday living.

Verse 1: *"A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke."* This proverb teaches what we've just been saying about discipline. The implication is that a wise son will listen to rebuke - and that's all that's needed. But the rebellious, mocking son doesn't listen and needs stronger discipline.

Verse 2: *"A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, but the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence."* Once again we have the constant theme of the contrast between the righteous and the wicked in their motives, words, and rewards.

Verse 3: *"He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction."* Be careful what you say, even in a "sharing" time. What you say can benefit you, or it can be used against you.

Verse 4: *"The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich [or fat]."* The word "fat" that's used here in some translations is used in a good sense. It doesn't mean pounds and weight. Rather, it means "abundantly satisfied." Do you want to be abundantly satisfied in life? Then you must be diligent. Lazy people have great desires, but get little, because they will not work. This proverb applies to Christian service, too, doesn't it? Work hard. Be diligent, and you will be abundantly blessed!

Verse 5: *"A righteous man hates lying, but a wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame."* Righteous people not only tell the truth, but they hate lying - so much so, that people who lie are detestable and shameful. Don't associate with people who can't be honest and truthful.

Verse 6: *"Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless, but wickedness overthrows the sinner."* God has built this general moral principle into his moral universe. You are more safe and protected when you do the right thing. However, wrongdoing will eventually catch up with you, and bring you down.

Verse 7: *"There is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing; and one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches."* The overall point of this proverb is "Don't fake your economic status," as so many people try to do. Some poor folks like to make people think they have money, and some rich folks are always complaining that they have "no cash flow"! The point is: Don't flaunt or fake your status!

Verse 8: *“The ransom of a man’s life is his riches, but the poor does not hear rebuke.”* There are advantages to being poor. If you’re poor you don’t have to worry about being the target of theft or ransom payments. But if you’re rich, you may lose your life savings to robbery or paying ransom. (How many are glad you’re poor? *Laughter.*)

Verse 9: *“The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.”* Light and life go together in Scripture. Righteous people shine brightly and have joy, but the wicked walk in darkness.

Verse 10: *“By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom.”* When people can’t get along, you’ll find pride somewhere behind the scenes. And you will find wise counsel behind the scenes of those who exhibit pleasant and effective relationships.

Verse 11: *“Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase.”* Remember - this is a proverb: a general truth stated in general terms. And in general, with money, it can be “easy come, easy go” - as in gambling for example. How much better it is to earn and save your money, little by little, with honest hard work!

Verse 12: *“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.”* This proverb has a lot of practical application. Think of the heartache of a couple in love, when they have to postpone their marriage for some unexpected reason. But think of their joy when their desire is realized!

Verse 13: *“He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.”* Our attitude towards the Word of God is not only a matter of life and death, but it is a matter of life and debt - both now and later.

Verse 14: *“The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death.”* Following the wise teaching in the Bible is like turning to a living fountain. We are not only refreshed, but our lives are sustained and protected because we don’t turn aside to false streams and false hopes.

Verse 15: *“Good understanding-gains favor, but the way of the unfaithful is hard.”* A person with good understanding, and therefore wisdom, wins favor with both God and man, but the way of the unfaithful foolish lawbreaker is hard, and it doesn’t endure. Read the newspaper for everyday examples.

Verse 16: *“Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool lays open his folly.”* Once again, this is a point that is rightly belabored in the book of Proverbs. **A person’s conduct reveals their character!**

Verse 17: *“A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful ambassador brings health.”* There’s nothing worse than a messenger who doesn’t communicate the right message - or **purposely** doesn’t communicate it! How much better a faithful ambassador who communicates peace! This proverb has great application for the gospel message. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, *“Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ.”* Are we good ambassadors for Christ?

Verse 18: *“Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored.”* A person who refuses to be disciplined (including self-discipline) is on the road to poverty and shame, and maybe even prison. But a person who submits to discipline and appreciates the value of discipline is on the road to honor.

Verse 19: *“A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul, but it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.”* Fools never realize higher goals because they will not leave their misguided and evil pattern of life.

Verse 20: *“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.”* When I was a pre-teen, my father used to warn me about certain boys who were in the larger pack of boys in our neighborhood. “Don’t hang around with them,” he would say. ‘Play baseball with the good guys!’ 1 Corinthians 15:33 warns us, *“Do not be deceived. Evil company corrupts good habits.”*

Verse 21: *“Evil pursues sinners, but to the righteous, good shall be repaid.”* Remember - this is a proverb: it’s a **general truth** stated in **general** terms. Because it is a proverb, it doesn’t exclude cases like Job, or Christian persecution. Life may look difficult now for righteous people, but in the end, after the final judgment, they will be rewarded.

Verse 23: *“Much food is in the fallow ground of the poor, and for lack of justice there is waste.”* The point of this proverb is that most poor people, if protected from injustice, have no problem being productive and making ends meet. Lack of justice is the problem. So, welfare should not just be a give-away program, or people will become lazy. No! It should be a protection program so the poor can be productive - and in general they will be, if they’re protected from tyrants.

Verse 25: *“The righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul, but the stomach of the wicked shall be in want.”* This proverb reminds us of what the Lord promised his people in Matthew 6:33 – *“Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you.”* “All these things” refers to our basic needs.

The proverbs are wise advice for everyday living.

## Practical Application

### Think of your grandchildren!

Verse 22: *“A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.”* Good and righteous and wise people want the best for their children and grandchildren, and they don’t leave it to chance. In the Old Testament context, this referred to material possessions. The second half of the proverb seems to indicate that if the parents wanted the best for their children and grandchildren, God had ways of channeling even the wealth of the wicked to be use for these good purposes.

Now let’s think of this practical application in spiritual terms. What spiritual legacy are we passing on to our children and grandchildren? How will they remember us? Will they walk in our footsteps, following the Lord? Are we setting a good example? Are we communicating the faith message to them? Are we praying specifically for each child and grandchild?

### Think about your grandchildren!