

### Wisdom in The Home

#### Proverbs 19:1-14

**Proverbs 19:1-14** - *“Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than a fool who is perverse in his lips. Also it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge, and he sins who hastens with his feet. The foolishness of a man twists his way, and his heart frets against the LORD. Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend. A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies will not escape. Many entreat the favor of the nobility, and every man is a friend to one who gives gifts. All the brothers of the poor hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him! He may pursue them with words, yet they abandon him. He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who has understanding will find good. A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish. Luxury is not fitting for a fool, much less for a servant to rule over princes. The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression. The king’s wrath is like the roaring of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass. A foolish son is the ruin of his father, and the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping. Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.”*

#### Background Notes

For background notes, let’s consider how the proverb of verse 7 is worded. *“All the brothers of the poor hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him! He may pursue them with words, yet they abandon him.”*

We’ve said more than once that a proverb is “a **general** truth stated in **general** terms.” In verse 7, the general truth is that both relatives and friends avoid a poor person. It’s generally true that when he calls to his relatives and so-called friends, they disappear and are nowhere to be found. Proverbs is telling us that this is the social norm in life, and we would have to agree, even though it is not right. Some of us may have experienced the sad truth of this proverb.

Another point to consider about this proverb is that it uses *hyperbole* to express this general truth that relatives and friends avoid the poor. Hyperbole is a figure of speech or exaggeration that is purposely used to get across your point. “I told you a million times to bring your Bibles to Sunday school.” Is that a lie? No, it’s hyperbole. It’s an acceptable figure of speech that is used in our culture today and in Bible times as well.

The Bible uses hyperbole in a number of different places. For example, about the Midianites in Gideon’s time: *“Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their*

*camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.*” (Judges 7:12). Were there **literally** as many Midianite camels in the valley as the number of grains of sand on the seashore? Of course not! But it’s not a lie. It’s just hyperbole – an acceptable figure of speech.

Needless to say, hyperbole is used in the book of Proverbs as we see in the beginning of Proverbs 19:7: *“All the brothers of the poor hate him.”* That’s hyperbole - purposeful exaggeration to get across the general truth that both friends and relatives tend to avoid the poor.

So proverbs are general truths stated in general terms, and at times, a proverb will use hyperbole to state the general truth.

## **Doctrinal Point**

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

Verse 1: *“Better is the poor man who walks in his integrity than a fool who is perverse in his lips.”* Don’t ever try to get rich by twisting the truth, or by dishonest means - and that includes everything from selling your car to filling out your income tax forms! It’s better to be honest and end up poor, because God says that you are a fool if you twist the truth.

Verse 2: *“Also it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge, and he sins who hastens with his feet.”* The expression “Haste makes waste” certainly captures the truth of the second part of this proverb. But how does that relate to the first part of the proverb? I think the New International Version gives the complete sense of this proverb: *“It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.”*

In other words, being zealous for a good cause, like serving the Lord, is good, but zeal without knowledge or discretion, or caution and right timing can be destructive. In Romans 10:2 the apostle Paul said that Israel had enthusiasm for God, but *“not according to knowledge.”* It was misdirected zeal. The image of a bull in a china shop and the resulting damage might be an illustration, but it actually falls far short of the terrible long-term damage that can be caused by even one zealous religious fanatic.

Verse 3: *“The foolishness of a man twists his way, and his heart frets against the LORD.”* Even when it’s a foolish person’s own folly that gets him into trouble and problems, he actually has the audacity to blame his troubles on the Lord! Many times people blame their problems on God. This is not only true of unbelievers, but often of believers as well. Remember - Adam blamed the God in the Garden of Eden by saying *“the woman You gave me caused me to sin”* (Genesis 3:12)! I know a Christian man who divorced his wife to marry another woman, and actually said that it was in the sovereign will of God. What a twisted and blasphemous excuse for sin!

The Bible teaches that in hell, unbelievers will blame God forever. In Matthew 8:12 Jesus said that in hell there will be *“weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* The term *“gnashing of teeth”* implies anger directed against God.

Verse 4: *“Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend.”* This proverb is very similar to the one we read in Proverbs 14:20: *“The poor man is hated even by his own neighbor, but the rich has many friends.”* It’s easy to win friends and influence people when we have money, but if you’re poor many people don’t want the embarrassment of associating with you. Unfortunately, this works in foreign missions as well. The (so-called) “rice Christians” tend to disappear when missionaries no longer dispense money or favors to people who claim to be Christians.

Verse 5: *“A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies will not escape.”* “Wait a minute,” you may say. “I know lots of exceptions to that proverb. People have even gotten away with lying in court!” What’s the answer? There are two answers:

1. This is a proverb, a general truth stated in general terms, and **in general** liars are caught in their lies and shown to be liars.
2. Eventually, at the final judgment, no liar will escape.

Verse 6: *“Many entreat the favor of the nobility, and every man is a friend to one who gives gifts.”* This proverb is stating a truth that can be rightly or wrongly applied. Trying to become friends with the rich for selfish reasons is wrong. However, becoming friends with the rich to lead them to the Lord, or to help them direct their money to good causes for the glory of God is not wrong.

Verse 8: *“He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who keeps understanding will find good.”* This proverb is not encouraging vanity or narcissism. If we’re really concerned about the wellbeing of our souls, we will seek wisdom and understanding. Where do we find it? In the Word of God!

Verse 9: *“A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish.”* This proverb is the same as the proverb in verse 5, except for the last word - *“perish.”* In this proverb, “perish” emphasizes the eternal destiny of false witnesses and liars, if they do not come to the Lord for salvation.

Verse 10: *“Luxury is not fitting for a fool, much less for a servant to rule over princes.”* This proverb is not against poor people becoming wealthy, or against democratic government, or servants becoming rulers. The point is that misfits in society can spell disaster. A fool doesn’t know how to act with or handle newfound wealth, nor does a slave who is suddenly in a position of authority know how to lead wisely. Arrogance and cruelty will almost surely follow.

Verse 11: *“The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.”* Are you a hot head? Do you get bent out of shape easily? Or do you have enough patience to keep your cool, even when insulted and

wronged? This proverb is not saying that wrongdoers shouldn't be brought to justice, or that sin should be swept under the rug, but from God's perspective, how you handle wrongs against you can be to your glory – or to your shame.

Verse 12: *“The king’s wrath is like the roaring of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass.”* This proverb is wise advice for both a king and his subjects. In present-day application, it’s wise advice for a person in authority, and for a person under authority. For the person in authority, it should result in kindness. Kindness is as refreshing as the dew that benefits the soil. For the person under authority, it should result in proper submission and tact. After all, you don’t want to become the focus of a roaring lion.

## Practical Application

### Know the key for a happy home!

Verses 13-14: *“A foolish son is the ruin of his father, and the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping. Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.”*

In verse 13 we see two things that will result in an unhappy home:

1. Foolish children. Children who refuse to submit to authority, and have little or no appreciation for the Lord.
2. A quarrelsome wife. She is like a constant dripping of water - and if you've ever had a dripping faucet or a leaky showerhead, you know that constant dripping quickly becomes very annoying and aggravating.

So what's the key for a happy home? Is it lots of money, or a big house? Obviously not! The key for a happy home is a wise, understanding and godly wife and mother. She will have a great positive effect on the children. She can keep the family from falling apart. She is a major player in the happiness of the home. She is truly a gift from the Lord!

We can be thankful if we inherit houses and money (v14), but wealth is not the key to a happy home. Young believers, do you want a happy home life? If you're looking forward to marriage and family, remember the vital key for a happy home!