

Prov. 17:11-13, 16, 18-19: An evil man seeks only rebellion, & a cruel messenger will be sent against him. ¹² Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs rather than a fool in his folly. ¹³ If anyone returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house . . . ¹⁶ Why should a fool have money in his hand to buy wisdom when he has no sense? . . . ¹⁸ One who lacks sense gives a pledge & puts up security in the presence of his neighbor. ¹⁹ Whoever loves transgression loves strife; he who makes his door high seeks destruction.

Intro: God shows you how to live, in His world, in His book: the Bible. In the Bible there are many warnings against sin, evil, & foolishness. We see these warnings in Prov. 17: warnings against rebellion, foolishness, meanness, co-signing loans, & loving sin, pride, & division. The end of all this foolish, sinful living is destruction. By God's grace, we must trust God & live God's way by God's wisdom through God's power. He loves, He shows!

Living in God's world in God's way with God's wisdom will end well. Living foolishly will end badly.

1. Rebellion Is Evil

Prov. 17:11: An evil man seeks only rebellion, & a cruel messenger will be sent against him.

a. God hates rebellion: Webster's 1828: Open resistance to lawful authority. **1 Sam. 15:23:** For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.

- **Ps. 78:49:** He let loose on them his burning anger, wrath, indignation, & distress, a company of destroying angels

Consider some of the great rebellions & great judgments throughout God's Word: Adam & Eve; Cain & Able; Noah & the flood; tower of Babel; Israel's rebellions; End of the world; They never end well! **GOSPEL!**

b. Is this rebellion against God or government or church leaders or parents or teachers or employers? Yes!

- **Rom. 13:1-7:** Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, & those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, & those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, & you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed

The 5th Commandment: WLC 1:126: What is the general scope of the fifth commandment? A. The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals.

WLC 1:127: What is the honor that inferiors owe to their superiors? A. The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, & behavior; prayer & thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues & graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands & counsels, due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defense, & maintenance of their persons & authority according to their several ranks, & the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, & covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them & to their government.

WLC 1:128: What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors? A. The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, & rebellion against, their persons & places, in their lawful counsels, commands, & corrections; cursing, mocking, & all such [stubborn] & scandalous actions, as proves a shame & dishonor to them & their government.

c. Jesus is the only one who has ever lived who never rebelled: Jesus is the perfect, holy, sinless one who always trusted His Father & obeyed His Father perfectly! He was submissive to His Father in heaven! He was submissive to His parents! He was submissive to Rome & paid taxes! He's the only one who did not deserve the cruel messenger of

death & judgment to be sent against Him, but it was! God crushed His own Son in judgment because of your rebellion

2. Foolishness Is Deadly

Prov. 17:12: Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs rather than a fool in his folly.

A mother bear will do whatever it takes to protect her cubs: maul, claw, bite, maim, crush, eat, destroy! & if they are taken from her, she's ever more uncontrollably fierce! **2 Sam. 17:8:** Hushai said, "You know that your father and his men are mighty men, & that they are enraged, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field."

- **Hos. 13:8 [God]:** I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of her cubs; I will tear open their breast, & there I will devour them like a lion, as a wild beast would rip them open.

Foolishness is dangerous - deadly! Uncontrolled rage & anger is dangerous – Avoid! Avoid! Avoid! (Friends?)

- **Prov. 26:17:** Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears.

John Kitchen: Better is the man who watchfully observes the fool & steers a wide birth around him. There may be a more advantageous time to approach him, or perhaps, total avoidance will be the wisest choice. Carefully determine whether it is your responsibility to bring discipline to bear upon him before you engage him.

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3. Returning Evil For Good Is Sub-human And Will End In Destruction And God's Curse

Prov. 17:13: If anyone returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.

a. God condemns returning evil for evil: Rom. 12:17-21: Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

b. John Kitchen: To return evil for good is sub-human: Ps. 109:1-5: Be not silent, O God of my praise!² For wicked & deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues.³ They encircle me with words of hate, & attack me without cause.⁴ **In return for my love they accuse me,** but I give myself to prayer.⁵ **So they reward me evil for good, & hatred for my love.**

John Kitchen: This is, however, how Saul responded to David (1 Sam. 19:4), how David responded to Uriah (2 Sam. 11-12), & how Nabal responded to David (1 Sam. 25:21). God, therefore, promised David "the sword shall never depart from your house" (2 Sam. 12:10). [Adam; Young children to parents; Older children to aging parents]

c. As followers of Jesus, we are commanded to return good for evil: Matt. 5:43-48: You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor & hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies & pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil & on the good, & sends rain on the just & on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? & if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

d. Jesus is our great Savior & our perfect example: Jesus came to His own, but His own did not receive Him! He came loving like no one ever loved! Serving, healing, helping, like no one ever has – yet they killed Him!

- **About Judas: Ps. 109:8:** May his days be few; may another take his office! [Acts 1:20]

How have you treated Jesus? How are you treating Jesus? Don't return evil to Him for all the good He's done for you!

- **Eric Lane:** We belong to a race under a curse for ingratitude to God: **Rom. 1:21:** For although they knew God,

they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, & their foolish hearts were darkened. [Gratitude for Mercy; Salvation!]

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4. You Can't Buy Wisdom – You Need A Heart For It

Prov. 17:16: Why should a fool have money in his hand to buy wisdom when he has no sense?

Prov. 17:16 (NKJV): Why *is there* in the hand of a fool the purchase price of wisdom, Since *he has* no heart *for it*?

The most important things in life, money can't buy! You can't buy God, salvation (a new heart), or wisdom!

Simon of Samaria thought he could buy the power of the Holy Spirit: Acts 8:18-21: Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰ But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor lot in this matter, **for your heart is not right before God.**"

Charles Bridges: A young man will spend a large income at the university in the professed purchase of wisdom, & yet idle away all his time! Is not the price manifestly in the hand of a fool, who has no heart to the advantages?

5. Co-signing A Loan Is Foolish

Prov. 17:18: One who lacks sense gives a pledge & puts up security in the presence of his neighbor.

Prov. 11:15: Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm (Prov. 6:1-5)

Security – Surety: Oxford Dictionary: a person who takes responsibility for another's performance of an undertaking, for example their appearing in court or the payment of a debt.

It's like co-signing a loan: Federal Trade Commission: What do you do if a friend or relative asks you to co-sign a loan? Before you say yes, think about the obligations involved and how they may affect your own finances & creditworthiness. When you agree to co-sign a loan, you're taking a risk a lender won't take.

You are being asked to guarantee this debt. Think carefully before you do. If the borrower does not pay the debt, you will have to. Be sure you can afford to pay if you have to, & that you want to accept this responsibility. You may have to pay up to the full amount of the debt if the borrower does not pay. You may also have to pay late fees or collection costs, which increase this amount.

So Security or Surety is: I will put my name, my resources, my money behind you to support you & promise to pay up if you cannot pay up! "I stand up for him – I recommend him – I can speak for his good honor & character that he will pay his debt & if he doesn't, then I will pay the debt for him!"

Prov. 17:17-18: A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. ¹⁸ One who lacks sense gives a pledge and puts up security in the presence of his neighbor.

- **Duane Garrett:** [This proverb] implies that no one should get into legal entanglements & indebtedness in which circumstances are out of one's control.

- **Rom. 13:8:** Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

- **Prov. 11:15:** Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm.

- **Jesus put Himself up as security for not just a stranger but for His enemies!**

- **Charles Bridges:** But one exception we can never forget. The blessed Jesus, from His free grace – unsought, unasked – became surety – not for a friend, but for a stranger. He became One with us in nature, that He might be One with us in law. He took our place under the curse of the broken law. He put His soul to the fullest extent in our

soul's place; & then made our nature pay the debt, which all the angels of heaven could never have discharged. Oh! this was [suffering] indeed. Yea – sore broken was He under the stroke of His Father's hand. The Upholder of the universe was prostrate in the dust; His own creature strengthening His sinking frame. Had He hated [putting up security], He would have been [safe]; but we should have perished. Glory to His name! Though from all eternity He knew the bitterness of the suffering, instead of hating, He "rejoiced & delighted" in His work. His was no rash engagement. For it was the arrangement of the everlasting covenant. Every way it was lawful. There was an infinite treasure to discharge the liabilities. The claims of justice were fully satisfied. Sin was as thoroughly punished, as it was thoroughly pardoned. There was no injury, but rather direct benefit to the family of God. What then remains for us, but to fall down before this grace, & to spend our days, as we shall spend our eternity, in adoring this wondrous manifestation of Divine glory!

6. Loving Sin And Being Proud Causes Division And Destruction

Prov. 17:19: Whoever loves transgression loves strife; he who makes his door high seeks destruction.

If you love sin & transgression, then you love conflict, division, & causing trouble with others & between others. This is a warning against a quarrelsome spirit: this person is always looking for a fight – an argument – one who corrects, critiques, & challenges all the time. For every one positive thing, they say 10 negative things.

“He who makes his door high seeks destruction” basically speaks of pride & arrogance. [Runs off at the mouth; drives people away; makes his door & house elaborate & expensive; makes his door high, meaning great security]

Eric Lane: He can't have a conversation without it becoming an argument, [he can't have] a discussion without making it a controversy or a dispute without turning it into a lawsuit. The reason is pride which is what makes it sin. His high gate may be a metaphor for the permanent division from others which his quarrelsomeness raises up; or for his ostentation [excessive, vain display of wealth], which bolsters his case by a claim to superiority; or for his underlying paranoia which craves excessive security. Whichever it is, it stands for pride, & “pride” as we have been told, “goes before destruction” (16:18). The proud man sets himself apart & makes enemies. His display of riches & his state-of-the-art security system invite burglary. Pride is a challenge to man & God & [those who are proud will] suffer the consequences. [1 **Pet. 5:5:** God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.]

Prov. 6:16-19: There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: ¹⁷ **haughty eyes**, a lying tongue, & hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, ¹⁹ a false witness who breathes out lies, & **one who sows discord among brothers**.

Jesus Christ was & is the exact opposite of this! Phil. 2:3-11: Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. & being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him & bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven & on earth & under the earth, & every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
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Christ Jesus Is Holy And Never Rebelled
God's Wise, Perfect Messenger Only Excelled
He's God In The Flesh – With Men He Has Dwelled
All Evil And Foolishness He Has Expelled
Hates All Transgression And Truth Has Impelled
He Died On That Cross Where God's Presence Withheld
Forsaken And Crushed – In Anguish He Yelled

Then Rose From The Dead – New Life He Propelled
By Faith Alone Our Salvation Is Spelled
Now By His Spirit In Christ We Are Held
And In Us God's Wisdom And Righteousness Swelled
God's Laws And His Word And His Glory Upheld
All Because Christ In God's Wisdom Excelled!