

Prov. 19:1-2, 10, 28-29: Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in speech & is a fool. ² Desire without knowledge is not good, & whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way . . . ¹⁰ It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, much less for a slave to rule over princes . . . ²⁸ A worthless witness mocks at justice, & the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity. ²⁹ Condemnation is ready for scoffers, & beating for the backs of fools.

Intro: The book of Proverbs is a book that warns us against all types of sin & foolishness. Sin is lawlessness; disobeying God in thought, feeling, word, or action; failure to love God & others perfectly; failure to trust God; Anything we say, think, do, or feel that is not right in God's sight! Foolishness is not living life according to God's wisdom & knowledge & commands. Proverbs 19 warns us about the sin & foolishness of evil speech, acting without thinking, the misuse of money & authority, injustice, love of sin, & rebellion against God. God's wisdom & God's way is always best.

1. It's Better To Tell The Truth And Be Poor Than To Be Crooked And Rich

Prov. 19:1: Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in speech & is a fool.

God often takes what the world naturally desires & delights in & then says there's something better! The world naturally (the natural man) delights in money & health & power! But God's Word consistently reminds us that there are better things in life & in eternity than money & health & power! And if you are willing to sacrifice money & health & power in this life for God's better, we will get the better money, the better health, & the better power in the life to come!

- **There's something better than being totally physically healthy: Matt. 5:29-30:** If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out & throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. & if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off & throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

- **There's something better than having greatness & power: Prov. 12:9:** Better to be lowly & have a servant than to play the great man & lack bread.

- **There's something better than having great wealth: Prov. 3:13-14:** Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, & the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver & her profit better than gold. **[Ps. 73; Luke 16:19-30]**

It's better to tell the truth & be poor than to be crooked & rich: Prov. 19:1: Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in speech & is a fool.

People will do anything for money! God is more important than money! Walking with God & telling the truth is more important than money! Taxes; *Courageous* movie: Javier; **GOSPEL!**

Jesus, Who was rich beyond all splendor, for your sake, became poor & always walked in perfect integrity. No one ever spoke like Jesus! – perfect in speech & wisdom! Always told the truth – no matter what it cost Him!

God's wisdom & God's way is always best.

2. Don't Foolishly Act Before You Think

Prov. 19:2: Desire without knowledge is not good, & whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way . . .

Eric Lane: We see that the root of folly is zeal without knowledge, that is, desire or ambition which has not been submitted to instruction to discover whether it is a good desire & if so what is the best way of fulfilling it. The fool is too busy satisfying his desire to stop & study, listen or think. The result is he misses the way, like one who drives too fast down the [highway] & [misses his turn].

- **Prov. 21:5:** The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

- **Prov. 29:20:** Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him

- **Gibeonites: Jos. 9:13-14:** "These wineskins were new when we filled them, & behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey." So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD.

- Esau selling his birthright to Jacob; King Saul's unlawful sacrifice & rash oath.

Eric Lane: Time spent in study, thought, prayer, & taking [godly] advice is never wasted.

Have you made a rash decision & need to repent? Are you about to make a rash decision? Stop!

Jesus has all knowledge & always perfectly thought before He perfectly acted. Jesus is our Savior!

God's wisdom & God's way is always best.

3. Rich Fools And Ruling Slaves Are A Disaster In The Making

Prov. 19:10: It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, much less for a slave to rule over princes . . .

a. Fools can't handle money: "It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury" If a fool suddenly inherits or wins or somehow gets a lot of money, they don't have any self-control, so they are out of control with it & abuse it (they use it in an ungodly way) or they blow it all & lose it all very quickly. Not only do they not have self-control, they have no wisdom in how to be a good steward of the money.

Eric Lane: A fool cannot handle luxury; he doesn't know when to stop, makes himself drunk & sick, lazy & gluttonous & so on. It takes a wise man to use luxury in moderation & make it do good in his community.

In the way that you handle money, are you being self-controlled & are you acting godly & wisely?

b. Unqualified slaves should not be rulers over people: "much less for a slave to rule over princes" It takes certain skills, certain gifts, certain abilities to lead people well & be a ruler. Those who do not have those abilities will not make good rulers.

John Kitchen: The more horrible thing in this second line is "for a slave to rule over princes."

Suddenly being thrust into power leaves one unequipped to handle the unique pressures & responsibilities inherent in such a position. A “slave” takes orders, has no need to think for himself, & may not be accustomed to the rigors of strategic planning. The power surge of sudden elevation may make the lowly slave in to an intolerable tyrant.

- **Prov. 30:21-22:** Under three things the earth trembles; under four it cannot bear up: a slave when he becomes king

Are you content where God has placed you? Are you content with the gifts God has given you?

- **Jer. 45:5:** do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not . . .

Jesus, the richest of all, became the poorest of the poor & died on that cross so that you might be saved! Jesus the Prince of princes & King of kings became the slave of all & servant of all & died on that cross & rose up from the dead so that He might rule forever! Jesus is the slave Who became King! & He works in us so that we might be wise & have self-control with His money & so that we might grow in leadership & be content in the place of leadership (or not) that He’s given us!

4. Wicked Fools Do Unjustly And Delight To Gobble Down Sin

Prov. 19:28: A worthless witness mocks at justice, & the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.

a. Worthless witnesses are unjust: Worthless witnesses don’t know what really happened. Worthless witnesses lie. Worthless witnesses bend the truth, minimize the truth, distort the truth, deny the truth. Worthless witnesses don’t fear God. Worthless witnesses are unjust & unrighteous!

John Kitchen: The word [worthless or] rascally is the Hebrew word belial, & describes a man who is actively wicked . . . The word is used twenty-seven times in the O.T. & describes a person who has become so wicked & perverse that he is a liability to the community. Such a person tries to turn people from God, is sexually deviant, destructive in relationships, rebellious toward authority, &, as here, destructive with his lies. Eventually, “Belial” became a name for the embodiment of all wickedness, Satan himself (2 Cor. 6:15). Such a person makes “a mockery of justice.”

- **1 Ki. 21:9-13:** she wrote in the letters, "Proclaim a fast, & set Naboth at the head of the people. & set two worthless men opposite him, & let them bring a charge against him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out & stone him to death." & the men of his city, the elders & the leaders who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters that she had sent to them, they proclaimed a fast & set Naboth at the head of the people. & the two worthless men came in & sat opposite him. & the worthless men brought a charge against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God & the king." So they took him outside the city & stoned him to death with stones.

- **Acts 6:11-14:** Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." & they stirred up the people & the elders & the scribes, & they came upon him & seized him & brought him before the council, & they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place & the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place & will change the

customs that Moses delivered to us." **[Jesus' trial!]**

Are you a person who tells the truth? Are there any lies in your life you need to repent of?

b. The wicked feast on sin: "the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity" They drink it down! They devour it! They love to eat sin! The righteous taste & see that the Lord is good, but the wicked love the taste of sin! They love to lie! They love to see those suffer who they lie about. They love money! They love rebellion against God! They are like a drunk or an addict when it comes to sin – that can't get enough!

- **Thomas Watson:** It is worse to love sin than to commit it.

Beloved, are there any sins that you love? May God deliver us from the love of sin!

Jesus was given over to death through a court trial run by fools who mocked at justice. Jesus devoured righteousness, but He was counted our sin & iniquity so that we might be saved!

God's wisdom & God's way is always best.

5. Both Scoffers And Fools Will Be Punished

Prov. 19:29: Condemnation is ready for scoffers, & beating for the backs of fools.

God is going to punish the wicked – either directly by His hand or using others. Ultimately: in hell

John Kitchen: Scoffers are hardened, arrogant mockers who revile God & all authorities . . . [Condemnation] is always & only used of the punishments of God, even though they may at times be inflicted by human agents.

"& beating for the backs of fools": **Prov. 10:13:** a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense.

- **Prov. 14:3:** By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back,

- **Prov. 26:3:** A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, & a rod for the back of fools.

Jesus took our condemnation! Jesus took our beating!

Christ Jesus Poor And Lowly Came
With Pure Integrity His Aim
No Foolish Speech Or Sinful Shame
He'd Ever Utter, Do, Or Claim
Thought First Then Acted – Overcame
Rich Prince Of Kings – Poor Slave Became
Did Justice, Yet He'd Take Our Blame
Counted Sin – Condemned In Shame
Beaten Like A Fool They'd Maim

He Bore God's Curse And Wrath Aflame
He Died And Rose His Bride To Claim
He Died And Rose His Bride To Claim
So Now We Live – His Life Our Aim
To Walk In Wisdom As He Came
Give Him Honor, Praise, Acclaim
There's No One Like Him – Spread His Fame
All Wisdom's His – Oh! Praise His Name!
God's wisdom & God's way is always best.