

(Proverbs) ch.17:4 - 18:3

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being wise, humble, and kind, and warns against the dangers of gossip, mocking, rejoicing at calamity, and argument.

Duration: 59:09

Scripture: Proverbs 17:9-18

Topics: "Moral Guidance", "Overcoming Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of correction in revealing our true motives and desires in life. The speaker quotes Proverbs 17:11, which states that death will come as a cruel messenger to those who constantly stir up trouble. God uses various means, such as His word and sickness, to speak to those who rebel against Him, but some still refuse to listen. The sermon also discusses the power of anger and the need to overcome evil with good. Additionally, the speaker highlights the importance of speaking truth and avoiding lies, as they are unexpected from both a fool and a king.

Transcript

17, we were considering verse 4, where it says an evildoer listens to wicked lips. Now, we were just thinking a little bit about that, that it is not just speaking wicked things that makes a person guilty. It doesn't say here that an evildoer has wicked lips.

It says here that an evildoer listens to wicked lips. That means the person who is listening to gossip is as guilty as the person who is gossiping. And if the gossip has got wicked lips, then the one who listens to that gossip is called here an evildoer.

That's an evil action. And as we considered in our last study, supply meets demand, which means that because people find that in a certain home they are glad to listen to juicy gossip about others, they come to such homes. But they know also that in certain other homes they are not interested in such gossip and so they don't go to such homes.

So if you find lot of gossipers coming into your home, you can be pretty sure that there is something in your spirit that attracts them. Birds of a feather flock together and the gossip is supplying a demand that he senses in your spirit. That's why such a person is called an evildoer.

And it is a liar who pays attention to a destructive tongue. A person who is tearing another person to pieces with his tongue is paid attention to only by a person who is a liar, who is a deceiver himself, a hypocrite we can say. A liar is a hypocrite, one who is giving a false impression of being spiritual.

Verse 5, he who mocks the poor reproaches his maker. And that can apply to mocking a person for any infirmity that he has. Maybe the way a person walks, or the way a person talks, or the way a person conducts himself in some way that's maybe peculiar, maybe he's got an infirmity, maybe he's got a weakness, maybe he stammers, maybe he limps and somebody else sits and laughs at it.

Small children who have no wisdom doing that is one thing. But when parents who call themselves believers also laugh with their children at the infirmity of another person or at the poverty of another person. Poverty can be of money, poverty can be of speech or of grammar or so many things.

When we laugh at the poverty of another person in any area, we are actually reproaching his maker. Never forget that. That when we mock a person, we are mocking the person's maker.

And that's why a really God-fearing Christian will never mock another person. We have to be careful about children making fun of teachers and encouraging that type of thing. No, that's not healthy.

There's a little bit of a spirit of rebellion in that, which we've got to make sure we don't tolerate in our homes. This mocking others, particularly in areas where we ourselves are good. Usually we mock others in some area where we ourselves are good.

And he who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished. Now I'll tell you that in all of our flesh there dwells this evil thing. Not that we are happy when a misfortune falls upon somebody else, but we are not entirely sad.

That's a sad thing. We are not entirely sad when some misfortune happens to somebody else. That's how it is in the flesh.

We are very sad if it happens to us, but we are not entirely sad when it happens to someone else. And there is a little bit of that rejoicing in calamity spoken of here that dwells in our flesh. And we've got to be ruthless, because it says he who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.

Let me read you a verse in the book of Obadiah. One of those lesser known books in the Old Testament. Hosea, Jehovah, Lamas, Obadiah.

Obadiah verse 12. This is what God spoke to Edom. Edom was the descendant of Esau, brother of Jacob.

And he should have been concerned when he saw Israel suffering. But it says here, on that day, verse 11, you stood aloof on the day that strangers carried off his wealth. Some calamity happened to the Israelites and the Edomites just watched it and rejoiced.

And foreigners entered his gate and you also rejoiced in that and you gloated over your brother's day and the day of his misfortune. Do not gloat over your brother's day in the day of his misfortune. Because then it goes on to say how the Lord is going to punish you for that.

This being just a wee bit happy when things don't go well with somebody else. Particularly if that other person is someone with whom you don't have a very good relationship. If you have a very good relationship with someone, we'll never be unhappy when things don't go well.

But if there's just a little bit of a coldness, then you find that you can detect it when something goes wrong there and you're not rejoicing over it, but you're not entirely unhappy. The word of God says, do not rejoice when something unfortunate happens to someone else, calamity, because the punishment can come upon you. Verse six, I'll read this in the living Bible, in the good news Bible rather.

Old men are proud of their grandchildren. Now that's very clear. I think almost all grandfathers throughout the world are proud of their grandchildren.

In just as boys are proud of their fathers. Now, let me put that in another way and try to understand that verse. Let your son be proud of you, as grandfathers are proud of their children.

In other words, if you're a father, live in such a way that your son can be proud of you, that you're his father. Your daughter or your son can be proud of you, that you're his or her father, in the same way as grandparents are proud of their grandchildren. Think of that.

Think of being able to be such a father, or for that matter, such a mother, that there's no cause for reproach, that your children never have to be ashamed of their parents in any way. Verse seven, excellent speech is not fitting for a fool, much less are lying lips for a prince. Or as the living Bible says, truth from a rebel or lies from a king are both unexpected.

We know that a person who is foolish does not really have the ability to bring forth excellent speech. We know that. I mean, that's clear.

A man who doesn't have wisdom does not have the ability to speak for that which is excellent. But just as much as that is not possible, I mean, that's not fitting, equally, here is another thing which is quite unfitting, that a person who claims that Jesus Christ has made him a king and a priest, that he tells a lie in some situation. For a person who calls himself a king in the kingdom of God, a prince, for him to tell a lie, for him to give a false impression, for him to say something which is not truthful, for him to exaggerate something which is just another form of lying, that's quite unfitting, quite unfitting.

Verse eight, the Good News Bible reads, some people think a bribe works like magic. They believe it can do anything. There are many verses in the book of Proverbs about those who receive bribes, and in other portions of scripture too, that one should not receive a bribe.

But this is one of those very few, if not only verse, not the only verse, which refers to those who give bribes. It says, those, these people who give bribes think that a bribe works like magic, like a precious stone or a charm, and they believe that it can do anything. That's what they say in the world, money can do anything.

What they mean by money is a bribe. A bribe can do anything. That's exactly what the book of Proverbs says.

That's what the people in the world are like. They have a bribe in their hands, and it's like a magic stone. It can accomplish anything they want, and that is the mark of the people in the world.

But in the New Testament, Jesus taught us that God can do anything, and he who has faith in God can do anything. And that is the great conflict there is. Satan says money can do anything, and then God has his representatives, who are very few, very few, because many who claim to be his representatives also believe that money can do anything.

But there are a few among his representatives who believe that God can do anything. And that is a fantastic thing, to be one of those whom God can say, there's a man who proves that I can do anything, who does not depend on mammon like the people out there in the world. So that's the verse that speaks about those who give bribes.

Verse 9, He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends. Now we have considered that many times, that one of the clearest marks of love is that when you see a transgression, you want to cover it. You don't want to talk about it.

You see something in a brother. It's wrong. If at all you do speak, you go to that brother himself.

It says very clearly in Matthew 18.15, it's one of those commands of Jesus, which almost no believers obey at all. Very few believers, I think, in the whole world who obey that command, which says, if your brother sins against you, go and speak to him alone. Most believers go and talk about it to somebody else, to some other believer, some other brother or some other sister in the church.

They say, this person came to my house and did this or this person did that. Why don't you go to that person himself? Like Jesus said, you must do. One who is God-fearing will not repeat a matter.

It says, he who repeats a matter goes somewhere else and repeats that. He's either seeking self-pity or trying to justify himself or herself. Both are equally satanic and evil.

And on top of that, they're separating this brother, who may have been a good friend of that brother or this sister who may have been a good friend of that sister. You go and repeat something and you separate that. There we need wisdom.

There we need wisdom that we don't have to say everything that we know. We know something and we don't have to repeat it. Let it die with us.

Or let's do what it says in 1 John 5.16, if anyone sees his brother sin, what must he do? Let him ask God and God will give him life. That also hardly anybody does. Those are the two things the word of God says.

Go to him and speak to him privately, Matthew 18.15 or pray for him. If you can't speak to him, pray for him that God will forgive him and give him life. One of these two.

But to repeat it to somebody else is forbidden unless it is a sin which you want to help him from but you feel you can't help him and you go and speak to one of the elder brothers who have responsibility who can help that person. That's all. That is spoken with a good spirit to help that person.

Otherwise all repeating of matters to others is evil. Verse 10. A rebuke goes deeper into a wise man than a hundred blows into a fool.

Think of that. Think dear brothers and sisters as this the book of Proverbs speaks so much about this as one of the marks of wisdom. That is that this our attitude to rebuke and correction.

It's amazing how many times it comes in the book of Proverbs. A rebuke from God or a rebuke from a brother or rebuke from a father. And think this verse says that if I'm really a wise man when I get a rebuke that will have a far deeper effect on me.

Just a few words that I heard will have a far deeper effect on me than a person getting a hundred lashes on his back. Just think of a hundred lashes. One hundred lashes to frighten a person from stealing or they do these things in the Islamic countries nowadays public lashing.

And think that 100 lashes cannot teach a fool more than one word of rebuke can teach a wise man. That's a mark of a wise man that he's quick to respond to rebuke and correction. How is it children when your fathers correct you? Is one word of correction enough or 100 beatings don't accomplish it? That's the difference between a wise child and a foolish child.

What about a wife? Think if your husband points out something in you and you get so offended you won't speak to him for the next one week. Then you are a fool indeed. 100 lashes would be better.

That's a sad thing. God wants wise children, wise wives, wise brothers and sisters. Wisdom in our homes where a word of correction can really be taken seriously so that we grow wise.

Why do we get so offended? Because we think oh that person thinks so little of me. Well why should that bother us? Why not we humble ourselves and see if there's any truth in that word of correction or rebuke. Maybe there is.

If our interest is cleansing ourselves we'll be glad for correction. But if our interest is honor seeking then we get very offended and then we find that a word of correction actually exposes what we are really seeking in life. So correction is a very wonderful expositor of our real motives and desires in life.

Verse 11. Let me read that in the Good News Bible. Death will come like a cruel messenger to wicked people who are always stirring up trouble.

Yes that cruel messenger is death and a person who continues to create trouble and to rebel against God and do things which are contrary to his word. God will speak to him through his word first. God will speak to him through sickness.

God will speak to him through more sickness. He still doesn't listen. Death will be sent as a cruel messenger to those who are always stirring up trouble.

God loves those who seek for peace. Verse 12. Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs rather than a fool in his folly.

Think of that. Think of the way the Holy Spirit describes a man who is not wise. A fool in his folly.

What is it particularly referring to here? If you were to meet a bear in a jungle who has been robbed, a mother bear who has just been robbed of her newly born cubs, what sort of attitude do you expect to meet in that bear, in that mother bear? Fury, anger that will tear you to pieces. And it says a fool who loses his temper is like that but it's better to meet that bear than to face someone who calls himself a human being or calls herself a human being and behaves like that bear that's been robbed of her cubs. What are we usually robbed of that causes us to lose our temper? Our rights.

I have a right to be respected and to be honored. This person has robbed me of it and then I'm like this bear robbed of that which is most precious to me. The kingdom of God is not most precious.

My rights, my honor, my reputation. I've been robbed. Let a bear meet a man robbed.

A bear robbed of her cubs meet a man rather than a fool in his folly. You know, there's a saying in English that anger is temporary madness. It's true.

It's for a few moments the person's gone insane. Doesn't know what he's saying, doesn't know what he's doing. He behaves like an animal.

The word of God speaks much about anger. That's why Jesus spoke about our having victory over it. Matthew chapter 5 verse 13.

He who returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house. Now that's a terrible thing. Jesus taught us to return good for evil.

Overcome evil with good. You see evil has got tremendous power in the world and the only power greater than evil is not more evil but good. Good has got greater power than evil and if you want to overcome evil in a person, the only way to overcome it is by good.

We can try it any other way for six thousand years from the days of Cain. People have tried the other ways of evil and it's always, it's never succeeded. But good overcomes evil.

But think of this, where a person can be so bad that when somebody has treated him kindly that you return evil to him. And we can sit there and say, oh I'll never do such a horrible thing. Just wait a minute before you judge someone else.

Think dear brothers and sisters, have you had a kindness shown to you by someone? Maybe you take it for granted that that person should show you kindness and yet perhaps your spoken words which are not too kind concerning that person who has shown you some kindness at some time. What is that? That is returning evil for good. And it can happen in the brotherhood.

Returning evil for good. That person's only being good to you but you've said things which are not at all good and kind concerning that person. That's returning evil for good.

It says here, it says, terrible thing, evil will not depart from your house. Think of that brothers and sisters. Think that such a calamity can come upon, come upon us.

God forbid that it should ever happen. We reap what we sow. We throw it out like a boomerang, it comes back.

It's good to walk in humility and peace and rooted in goodness and think and let's examine our lives and see whether we have ever been or said that which is evil to people who have done some kindness for us, done something good. Usually it's because we've sat back and said, yeah, they've got to do that. After all, that's why the brothers and sisters are here for.

They've got to do that for me. That's terrible. May God save us from such a calamity.

Verse 14, the Good News Bible says, the start of an argument is like the first break in a dam. Stop it before it goes any further. Sometimes you read in the papers of a dam that burst and the waters flooded some village, drowned so many people but it didn't break all of a sudden.

It started with a little crack and the engineers and the people who are responsible for that dam never took it seriously. A little crack and it says here, the start of an argument and that argument can be between a

husband and a wife. You can sit there and it's just starting.

You know when the argument starts? With one sentence. With one sentence you've started an argument and blessed is the man or the woman who knows how to patch up that crack immediately. We are to avoid argument like we avoid hellfire or like we would avoid leprosy.

We've got to see that. We've got to hate arguments. Nobody ever got built up spiritually through arguments.

Not even through religious arguments on doctrinal matters. We speak the truth but we do not argue with anyone because the Holy Spirit has to open the man's blind eyes. It's not by argument and particularly in our homes, dear brothers and sisters.

The start of an argument is like a crack in the dam. Remember that next time when an argument begins in your home, that's a crack in the dam now. Now if you add to it, you're taking a chisel and hammer and making that hole bigger and then only death can come.

Like all dams when they burst bring death, the only result can be death. So let's take the Word of God seriously. Verse 15.

He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them are an abomination, alike an abomination to the Lord. That is where in judgment a person says this wicked person, he knows he's wicked but he just justifies him and he condemns the righteous because this person happens to be his special friend. You know and that can happen sometimes.

If we have not cleansed ourselves from partiality and we have got partiality, sometimes parents can be foolish like that. They can be partial towards some of their children and then they take sides with one of their children against their other child and that scar can affect that child for years as it grows up because of a foolish father or mother who had one favorite son who was good-looking or clever or smart or some worldly thing usually they are or maybe even one was spiritual and the father or mother is not wise enough to love a son who is not spiritual like the father who could love the prodigal son.

Think of that what a father he was think to be have no partiality towards our children that's a wonderful thing that's a godly nature even if one's converted one's utterly worldly no partiality that's godly they're my sons that's my son and that's my son there's no difference as far as i'm concerned i love them equally now that's godliness but there we can take sides or it can be in one when i think of this brother and that brother and i see there's a little difficulty i can take sides with this one that can happen in assemblies i take sides and that's the way an assembly is destroyed because i have not cleansed myself from partiality why do i take sides with this person and i can't see the error in him i only see the error in that person then this verse is applies justifying the wicked

and condemning the righteous because this person happens to be a little closer to me than that person and i haven't been godly enough to be righteous let me turn you to an old testament law in the book of exodus chapter 23 where god was very careful when the instructions he gave to israel to tell them to be righteous in their judgments exodus in chapter 23 it says here in verse 3 this is an amazing verse 2 you shall not follow a multitude in doing evil that means you think most of the brothers are taking the side of this man so i'll also take his side don't do that most of the brothers are carnal you be a spiritual man in every assembly most people are carnal very few are wise and godly and spiritual and free from partiality

all the sisters are taking that person's side or are against

that person so i'll stand with all the sisters don't be such a stupid idiot do not follow a multitude in doing evil nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude to seek numbers in order to pervert justice stand alone for the truth and verse 3 here's another great danger nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his dispute what does that mean that means here is a rich man and here is a poor man and you feel sorry for the poor man and you become partial you think that is godliness you know you think yeah god must be on the side of the poor so i'll take the side of the poor it's ungodliness god says don't take the side of that poor man seek for justice in the world they do that you see that out in the streets here if a scooterist knocks down a pedestrian who's

wrong who's wrong always the scooterists always even if it is 100 the pedestrians fault that's out in the world it's like that but we're not to be so stupid what is the reason for that justice on the streets because they say scooterist is richer this poor man's walking so he's poor so he must be right and that's the very thing god condemned in the old testament law is be careful that you don't take sides of the poor man just because he's poor that means you're ungodly god doesn't do that he's righteous at the same time the other side verse 6 you shall not pervert the justice due to your poor due to the poor man in the dispute the two sides that means don't take side of the side of the rich man just because he's rich and don't take the side of the poor man just because he's poor no to be just

for sin and they study bd and mth and all the other dds and doctrines of devils and everything else they study all that in order to deceive all the poor christians in this country no what's the use of money you can't get wisdom with money or with education with money simon magus came to peter and said give me money give money and said give me power that i can lead people to the baptism of the holy spirit and peter said your money perish with you you're in the bondage of iniquity no what's the use of money in the hand of a fool if he doesn't have a heart for wisdom there's no way of getting wisdom unless we have a heart for it we can't get it by money and a person who charges money for his services is a fool sure he's gathering other fools verse 17 now here is a verse which we can read and

it's a question of it i tell you the word of god really searches the thoughts and intents of the heart like it says in hebrews 4 how do you react to this verse when you read a verse like this a friend loves at all times and you say yeah that's how i know who my true friends are they love me at all times that shows you're a fool because you apply that verse to somebody else you apply that verse to see how other people love you and you say yeah that's the one who loves me at all times that's a real friend that one doesn't love me all the time that's not a real friend that's the mark of a fool that he doesn't read the word of god to see how does it apply to me he tries to find out from this how it should apply to other people and judges all the other people in the assembly to see who are my

real friends and who are the real brothers who stand by me a brother who is born for adversity i was in a difficult situation and that brother came and helped me what a fool and a spiritual idiot i am that i after all these years i still don't know how to apply the verse to myself the verse is for me the volume of the book it's not written about any other man under the sun it's written about me that if i am a friend do i love am i a brother born to help a person in adversity that's really a verse that searches us out because many people use it there are other places like this all of a sudden you come across a verse that really searches out the thoughts and intents of your heart and it's a verse that people we are not to use it to expect other people to treat us like this no but how we

are to behave towards others another translation of this verse reads like this the friend becomes a brother in the time of adversity the friend gets converted into a brother at the time of adversity meaning that through trial god brings believers closer to each other and their bonds of fellowship as brothers become closer verse 18 a man lacking in sense pledges and becomes surety in the presence of his neighbor this is another thing the book of prophets speaks about and that is to stand guarantee for another person somebody comes to you and says brother will you stand guarantee for me that if i don't pay up this debt which i'm buying a scooter or a house with you'll take care of that and you say well as a christian i've got to be loving and i go and stand guarantee for that person it says

here that is love without wisdom a man without sense think of that why do you want to go and get into debt like that so foolishly the bible says oh no man anything if that brother wants to be so stupid as to go and borrow money and get into debt don't you go and hold hands with him and be a guarantor and signing that debt certificate along with him to show love there's a fantastic amount of foolishness in many believers when it comes to this matter of money and they think it is love to go around helping people like this and giving and giving but they don't have any wisdom and they actually hinder god's work more than help tremendous amount of wisdom needed wisdom is the mother of love remember that that means if love is like a child and wisdom must guide the love as to which way it goes

so that it can do the right thing and there's a lot of love without wisdom and verse 19 let me read that in the good news bible to like sin is to like making trouble you know the bible speaks about jesus hating inequity how do we know whether instead of hating inequity we love inequity one mark is we go around making trouble don't be a brother who goes around creating confusion don't be a sister who goes around visiting other homes and creating confusion get out of that get a reputation for wisdom brothers and sisters particularly sisters because there can be tremendous amount of folly in this area going around creating confusion instead of seeking peace yeah see god for wisdom then those who make trouble are those who love to sin and the other part of that verse says he who raises his

door that is somebody trying to build a fancy house seeks his own destruction in other words one who exalts himself in some way boasting in some way if you brag making a show of your wealth you're asking for trouble and there's so much of that in the world today trying to make a show for vanity so many things purchased without any function to be fulfilled only for show or vanity you're asking for trouble verse 20 reads like this in the living bible an evil man is suspicious of everyone a crooked mind does not find anything good in anyone and if you find that your attitude is such that always you're a bit suspicious of every brother and every sister there's something wrong with that person and something wrong with that person this thing is wrong here that thing is wrong in the other

brother and that thing is wrong in the other sister there's one thing that that attitude shows very clearly what does that show that you yourself are a very evil brother if you can be called a brother or a sister if you can be called a sister an evil man says in the book of titus chapter 1 verse 15 that to the pure all things are pure but to the perverted everything is perverted you know what that means you see somebody doing something and you're suspicious you say yeah i know what his motive is in doing that you don't say it but you think it because you're an evil person in your thoughts you think yeah i know why he's doing that and then the other person does something else yeah i know why he's doing that that sister does something you say yes yes i know why that you're just there

judging and always it's back always it's suspicious there's nobody sincere except yourself in your eyes and that conceit is what robs people of the grace of god that they don't get grace in their time of need they're

defeated in sin and that's god shouting at them you're not getting grace because you're too proud and haughty you think you're the only sincere person and everybody else is insincere suspicious of this person suspicious of that person that's the mark of an evil person brothers and sisters that dwells in our flesh we can never think that someone does something with a good motive and therefore we suffer suffer when will we learn when will we learn to humble ourselves and get god's grace a suspicious person is evil man is suspicious of everyone and tumbles into constant trouble

he goes into trouble all the time yeah so let's learn to get rid of that habit why in the world do we want to judge another person like we've considered before almighty god himself has decided to judge a man only at the end of his life but if god can be patient to wait for a man to finish his life before judging him hoping that at least when he's 70 years old he may repent and then god can blot out all the 70 years of his sinful life but we are such impatient creatures we can't wait till a man finishes his life we got to judge him right now for this and that the other thing and the other thing that shows how ungodly we are if we are like that praise god we can cleanse ourselves from this ungodliness that dwells in our flesh so that we can be godly god is in any case the one who judges why

in the world do i have to suspect him of this is suspected of that and suspect the other person and be so evil myself he was perverted in his language the latter part of verse 20 falls into evil language our speech be careful of that perversion that comes into our language because of the suspicion that dwells in our hearts sometimes it can be so subtle the way we express it verse 21 he who begets a fool does so to his sorrow and the father of a fool has no joy we can apply it like this when a person calls himself a child of god and behaves like an absolute fool spiritually that brings no joy to our heavenly father it brings sorrow the father of a fool he's got sorrow there's no joy think of the sorrow there is in god's hearts when he sees so many people around the world calling themselves

as children and behaving in such ungodly ways yeah that's a challenge for us verse 22 a joyful heart is good medicine but a broken spirit dries up the bones and i want to read that in the living bible a cheerful heart does good like a medicine but a broken spirit makes one sick listen to that there are a lot of illnesses that can never be cured with pills and injections it can be cured by the joy of the lord a cheerful heart that rejoices in the lord that's not always suspicious not always judging other it's not always grumbling and complaining about this is thing this is not there that's not there and the other thing make your life miserable and you get sick in the body too a cheerful heart think to be like that so what if something's broken something's lost and something's gone why

should you lose your joy and get sick because of all these things if it's gone it's gone let it go if it's broken it's broken let it be broken all is corruptible on this earth i find somebody cheated you all right he cheated me of my money but he's not going to cheat me of my joy a cheerful heart otherwise i can have all types of ailments which any amount of pills and injections will never cure me and the good news bible it says there translates it like this being cheerful keeps you healthy that's really true i think even a doctor will tell you that and to be gloomy is actually slow death you know that to be gloomy and grumpy that is actually a slow form of committing suicide not this quick thing by putting your head under the train it's a slow thing over a long period of time you commit

suicide this gloomy everything is going bad brother that always miserable no our attitude affects our body let's learn to leave other people's business to themselves that's very often what makes us gloomy we get so occupied with what other people's businesses instead of worrying about our own salvation and we're so another thing that can make people gloomy is such a terrific love for material things oh something's broken

something's lost something's cheated my all my joy is gone brothers and sisters let's take the word of god seriously verse 23 says the mark of a wicked man is a wicked man receives a bribe from the bosom to pervert the ways of justice there it speaks about those who receive a bribe as we saw in verse 8 about those who give a bribe and the one who receives a bribe is

wicked because he perverts the way of justice we say well i've never taken any bribes maybe that's right but supposing somebody has done you a favor somebody has done you not a bribe somebody helped you very much maybe a brother in the church helped you very much at a time when you were in great need in your family practically or with money or something and then later on you find in some situation there's a bit of a brother and someone else a and b and you tend to take sides with a why because you got a bribe from him he helped you when you were in difficulty six months ago so you're on his side now you've been bribed to be ungodly it can be subtle this business of bribing i didn't look for it but the fact that somebody helped me and i take his side yeah there can be so much of it if we

look into our flesh there's much we can cleanse ourselves from in these areas verse 24 wisdom is in the presence of the one who has understanding but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth and we can look at it in a number of ways it's a very interesting verse that means um wisdom is right in front of you if you are a one who has got understanding that means you say my daily situation as a wife as a mother as a person in a place of work right in your presence means right in front of you that you have the opportunity to grow in wisdom in the daily situations of life but a foolish person his eyes are on the ends of the earth he says if i go to norway i can become wise or if i go to some other uh country there i can get wisdom or there in the midst of those godly brothers can be

some other part of india they think that only if you come to bangalore you'll get wisdom well they've just got to come and see all the fools that live in bangalore to know that you can live here and not get wisdom too sure no it's not a question of hearing and hearing and hearing so many people can hear and hear and hear never become wise but to a person who's got understanding he knows it wherever i am if god has arranged my circumstances my situation like this right in front of me today i have the opportunity to become wise in the circumstances of life and my eyes don't have to be to the ends of the earth we thank god for the opportunity this is a conference and i with others but i don't have this in order to become wise that is to that is to be a fool it's to have my eyes at the ends

of the earth and to think that's a way to become wise no right in my presence is wisdom in the evil that comes my way and i can overcome it with good i get wisdom and the temptations that come my way i seek god for grace to overcome them i get wisdom it's right in my presence but i can look a fool looks for it at now let me read that same verse in the living bible verse 24 wisdom is gives a slightly different meaning here it's also implied in that translation wisdom is the main pursuit of sensible men but a fool's goals are at the ends of the earth that means a sensible man his main goal in life is wisdom but a fool his goals are not his goal is not wisdom he's got things like comfort and money where can i get a little more comfort where can i make a little more money it's a marth of a

fool but a really sensible child of god who does not bring sorrow to his heavenly father his main goal in life is wisdom lord how can i get wisdom and the god says right in front of you where you are where you live right in your home you don't have to go anywhere you don't have to go to the ends of the earth right where you are in front of you in your daily situations you can be wise you can be wise seek me for grace god is the one who gives wisdom the good news bible translates that verse like this is good to look at this too so that we understand another shade of meaning in that verse an intelligent person aims at wisdom or wise

action wise action means wisdom in all our actions but a fool he starts off in many directions that's the mark of a fool he doesn't have a single goal he's into

this and into that and he's sitting on that committee and the other committee like so many evangelicals and they're trying to do this and that and the other thing instead of saying wisdom is the main thing i can do much more with wisdom and doing a little bit than a whole lot of things without wisdom paul said one thing i do paul didn't do 25 things otherwise he'd have wasted his life he said one thing i do and jesus said seek one thing first god's kingdom and his righteousness and that's the mark of a wise person he seeks with all his heart god's kingdom and his righteousness so let's take those exhortations seriously all those different shades of meaning in that verse it's a very profitable verse for us to meditate on verse 25 a foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her

who bore him and there we can ask ourselves how many parents are there who grieve over their unconverted children they should they should have sorrow even if their children are big in the world and got big jobs and there are many parents who will grieve when their children don't have a job mother so i hope my son will get a job what about your son getting converted and becoming spiritual yeah yeah that also if possible that is a foolish mother and a foolish father what's the use even if he gets a big job and a lot of money if he's unconverted or even if he's converted he's carnal worldly interested in worldly things not wholehearted oh that's a challenge to us as parents many of our children are not grown up most of us our children are small but we can keep that in mind as our children

are growing up that our burden will be that they will not only be converted but that they'll grow up in wisdom wisdom that will be a burden in our heart it will be a grief to the father and bitterness to the mother that he that the father and mother carry unitedly before god not blaming each other saying you're the cause of that you're the cause of that like adam and eve but united in their grief and sorrow seeking god for the conversion and for the children will be wholehearted that's a good thing for us to see god for verse 26 it is not good to fine the righteous nor to strike the noble for their uprightness we know that that's foolish to give a fine to a righteous person and to strike the noble person for being upright but that is the injustice that is found in this foolish world and

that is the injustice that jesus suffered they struck him the noble person on the face and they condemned him the righteous person to death and as long as we are in this world we must be willing to face the same injustice from a foolish world and don't be surprised when we face it we can seek for justice but sometimes it won't be given us and we just got to humble ourselves and follow in the footsteps of jesus and commit our cause to him who judges righteously and he will sort it all out in the final day verse 27 let me read that in the good news bible it says someone who is sure of himself does not talk all the time people who stay calm and quiet are the ones who have real insight and wisdom you know a talkative person is never a wise person that can be written as a there's no exception

to that rule not even one exception a person who is talkative always opening his mouth and saying something and passing an opinion there is no wisdom in them now that's all right with someone who's a spiritual baby sometimes spiritual babies are like that but we should grow up out of that very soon you see that sometimes with young brothers sometimes young sisters too always so talkative they've got so much to say so much to always talking always talking and ask yourself when you sit with other brothers or other sisters who is the one who talks the most among this crowd of young brothers or this crowd of young sisters and if you find you're the one always who talks the most then put your name down in the head of the list of fools in that fellowship number one at the top of the list are

you always talking the most you can never a time and you can keep your mouth shut no a wise person knows how to control himself he doesn't have to speak all the time he has knowledge he doesn't boast his knowledge and show that he knows this thing in the bible and that thing in the bible and the other thing in the bible he knows you know even in a meeting we don't have to share everything that we know in a meeting wisdom means to know what to speak not to show off our bible knowledge that is foolishness but to know what to share and when to keep quiet that is tremendous wisdom and yet there can be such a lust in a person that he wants to speak again and again and again because he thinks he's such an important person usually when they are very young and immature they're like that but we

must get out of that folly quickly and be wise particularly in private conversation don't be the one who dominates the conversation that you don't give a chance to other people to open their mouths verse 28 again speaking about the same topic even a fool even if you are a fool if you keep silent people may think you're a wise brother think of that that's uh anyway that's the first step to wisdom to yeah let me keep quiet when he closes his lips he's considered wise now many of us are very eager to say yeah i am foolish but then it says if you are foolish then why don't you keep your mouth shut a little bit why do you talk so much but you keep on talking talking talking i don't mean in the meeting it's the other way around sometimes the meeting that people don't share enough they're too

shy and quiet but in private conversation some of these sisters whom you think are so quiet oh if only you could meet them when they are in their own company boy you'd get quite a different opinion yeah think of that to be so foolish is to talk and talk and talk and talk so much say something edifying have a little more control over your tongue the word of god speaks much about that and if we acknowledge that we are fools and we continue to speak such a lot then we have to say that we are absolute hypocrites we don't really believe that we are fools because if we believed it we try to control our tongue a little more chapter 18 and verse 1 he who separates himself seeks his own desire he quarrels against all sound wisdom now there are two types of separation one is the separation that we

read in genesis chapter 1 god separated the light from the darkness and the other is the separation that you read in genesis 3 and genesis 4 where satan separated adam and eve and satan separated cain and abel one is godly one is satanic there is a separation which is godly 2nd corinthians 6 17 come out from among them be separate and touch not the unclean thing there is also a separation that's spoken off in the book of jude in verse 19 it says these are those who separate themselves and indian christianity is full of such people who have come out of some denomination separating themselves because they couldn't get along with somebody there they wanted to be the elders and don't ever be deceived that just because somebody came out of some dead denomination that he's interested in the

truth no he may be one who has separated himself according to jude 19 not according to 2nd corinthians 6 17 and those who separate themselves like that not through the leading of the holy spirit they are seeking their own something of their own they wanted some honor some position some title something which they didn't get they got offended they separated themselves of course they won't say that is the reason they'll say this is a doctrinal matter brother we have to stand for the truth in these days of compromise and all that we must not be such fools that we believe all these people who have separated themselves we got to see we got to sense what is the spirit in this man i've come across a lot of people like that myself who would like to have some fellowship with us in other parts of

the country and i can sense the spirit in this man is wrong something wrong in his spirit he separated himself with some other motive now be careful because the book of jude speaks about those who

separate themselves seeking their own and it says he quarrels against all sound wisdom he he's got a pretext for everything there's a reason why he says and he won't listen or the good news bible paraphrases like this people who do not get along with others are interested only in themselves if you're a person who cannot get along with others that clearly proves that you sit in yourself now that's a strong word and they will disagree with that which everybody else knows is right so we're not to think that everybody who separates themselves are necessarily spiritual verse 2 the good news bible

says a fool does not care whether he understands a thing or not all he wants to do is to show how clever he is and that is another mark of a fool he does not bother about whether this is according to uh the truth and according to wisdom he just wants to show how clever he is how much he knows of the scriptures how spiritual he is it's always the mark of a fool he opens his mouth to show how spiritual he is and thereby he shows he's a fool verse 3 again in the good news bible sin and shame go together you lose your honor and you will get scorn in its place when we sin and as a result of that shame contempt dishonor reproach comes we just got to say well i'm reaping what i've sown as a result of sin

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