

Proverbs 19 – The Unhurried Pursuit

Anyone who has cared for an infant overnight knows we are not born patient. But it's not just in infancy that our impatience causes tension to arise in our lives.

Not being able to have everything we want or need when we want or need it is part of living in a sinful world. The Bible is full of people who didn't want to wait on God, and we are no different. When life comes up against us, it is hard to be patient. When decisions need to be made, our default is to hurry that process. We want the decision to be made in a way that suits our preferences, and we want the decision to be made now.

Waiting on the Lord is a choice we learn to make as Jesus works in our lives to give us His wisdom. Proverbs 19:2 points out that **impatience, or not waiting on God's wisdom, is a sin**. And don't miss the first part of the verse—even zeal apart from the knowledge and belief that God is at work is foolish. In other words, we can be passionate about a choice we are making, but if we don't wait for the Lord, that passionate choice is a sin. Good and heartfelt intentions are no substitute for the wisdom and will of God.

As individuals, we can certainly identify times we rushed ahead of the Lord to our detriment. It happens collectively, too. We see this play out often in church life when we push forward in ministry decisions that seem right to us, even though we haven't waited for the Lord to speak into the situation. In effect, we adopt an "If we build it, He will come" type of mentality. And that's backwards. Proverbs reminds us to never act hastily but to patiently wait to hear from God—in all things.

What is the connection between daily time with the Lord and patience in decision-making?

A. The Disadvantages of Poverty

¹Better the poor whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse. ²Desire without knowledge is not good—how much more will hasty feet miss the way! ³A person's own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the Lord.

Better is the poor who walks in his integrity: Solomon recognized that not all poverty is caused by moral failure or weakness. There are definitely poor people who walk in their integrity. We think about our lives in light of eternity. When it is all over down here, we will all be on equal footing with God. It is better to be a poor with God than a rich man without him. Often men look down on those whom God carries in his heart. Than one who is perverse in his lips, and is a fool: The Book of Proverbs recognizes the disadvantages of poverty but it also recognizes that being poor is not way the worst thing a person can be. It is worse to be a fool who speaks twisted, wicked things. Once again, a proverb correlates poverty with faithfulness and wealth with unfaithfulness.

It is not good for a soul to be without knowledge: When a person (a soul) has no wisdom (is without knowledge), it is never good. It may be common, but it is not good. Psalm 49:20 ***People who have wealth but lack understanding are like the beasts that perish.*** And he who sins hastens with his feet: Solomon listed a second thing that was not good –

the one who rushes toward sin (hastens with his feet). A man without knowledge does not consider his ways but rushes to fulfill his heart's desire. On this side of eternity, we struggle with sin, but we don't have to run towards it. We should be those who battle against sin, not run towards it.

The foolishness of a man twists his way: It is true that a fool is foolish because they are twisted, crooked. Yet it is also true that the foolish man finds his way more and more twisted. Foolishness leads to more twistedness. Life is filled with challenges and disappointments in their lives. Things do not go as planned, as they expect and wish. It is because of their ways. His heart frets against the LORD: God intended us to be at peace with Him, but because of rebellion (both inherited and chosen), we are in many ways against the LORD. The foolish man or woman has no peace in God; their heart frets against the LORD. They are angry and perhaps bitter against God for the challenges of life.

⁴ Wealth attracts many friends, but even the closest friend of the poor person deserts them. ⁵ A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will not go free.

Wealth makes many friends: When a person is wealthy, it draws many people to them in friendship. Yet these friendships may not be sincere or meaningful. We may see how strong men's love of money is, that they will love any man, how undeserving he is, if he has but a deal of money and is free with it, so that they may benefit from it. Wealth allows a man to give gifts, entertain others so that it appears that he has many friends who love him. Instead, they really love what he has and what they hope to get from him. Although a crowd, each one forms the friendship out of what he can gain, not for what he can give. The poor is separated from his friend: The wealthy man has advantages and draws many friends, but the poor man does not have these advantages. Their would-be friends find it easy to leave them.

A false witness will not go unpunished: The first idea in this proverb is in the court, it is essential that the false witness be punished. Justice depends upon it. This principle extends beyond the court of law into our daily life. God loves the truth and wants us to speak the truth. He who speaks lies will not escape. Among men, sometimes the false witness and liars escape the discovery and penalty of their sin. With God, he who speaks lies will not escape. Jesus said our every word would be held to account. [Matthew 12:36](#)

⁶ Many curry favor with a ruler, and everyone is the friend of one who gives gifts. ⁷ The poor are shunned by all their relatives— how much more do their friends avoid them! Though the poor pursue them with pleading, they are nowhere to be found.

Many curry favor with a ruler: Many seek favor from someone of high status and importance. Many people want their favor. There are advantages in having the favor of influential people. Even great men will humble themselves before ones with status. How much more should we humble ourselves for the favor of God who sovereignty is greater than any earthly prince. Every man is a friend to the one who gives gifts: Many people

who offer friendship out of selfish motives. They want the benefit of the favor of the nobility and the gifts that others may offer. [Galatians 6:9-10](#)

The poor are shunned by all their relatives— how much more do their friends avoid them! Though the poor pursue them, they are nowhere to be found. Men may not trample upon the poor and look at them with disdain. Even his own relations shy away from him, because he is needy and craving, and expects something from them, and because they look upon him as a mark against the family. All the brothers of the poor hate him: To be poor is often to be rejected by men, even by brothers and friends. What a contrast to Jesus, who Himself became poor to draw near to us in our poverty and need. [2 Corinthians 8:9](#)

B. Domestic Grievances

⁸The one who gets wisdom loves life; the one who cherishes understanding will soon prosper. ⁹A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will perish.

The one who gets wisdom loves life: The one who cherishes understanding will prosper. He who gets wisdom loves his own soul: The possession and pursuit of wisdom is so good and helpful to us that we can and should get wisdom simply out of self-interest. In so doing we love our own soul, our own life. He who keeps understanding will find good: Wisdom isn't just something to get; it is also something to keep. We find good when we keep understanding. We must take care to keep it when we get it.

A false witness will not go unpunished: This proverb were previously presented in [Proverbs 19:5](#). The repetition reminds us that this is an important principle. In the law court and in daily life, God wants us to be people of the truth and so He promised that a false witness will not go unpunished. He who speaks lies shall perish: This speaks to the certainty of God's justice towards those who lie.

¹⁰ It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury—how much worse for a slave/servant to rule over princes!

Luxury is not fitting for a fool: There are some wisdom-rejecting fools who enjoy luxury, but it doesn't seem right. It isn't fitting for a fool to live in luxury. A man that has no wisdom and grace has no right nor title to true joy. Those who do not delight in God do not delight in anything including managing their own lives. They only expose themselves. Delight is for a man of business, to refresh him when he is tired, but not for a fool who lives an idle life and abuses the things that he has. Much less for a servant to rule over princes: Solomon spoke according to the wisdom of the natural man, which places great trust in nobility and family lineage. This is one of the proverbs that the gospel and the new covenant turn on its head, where those who would be great should be as servants and not as princes. [Matthew 20:25-28](#).

¹¹ A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger: It isn't necessarily weakness or lack of courage that makes a man slow to anger. It may be wisdom. Discretion teaches us to

put it off responding until we have had time to think it through, and consider why the situation made us angry in the first place. We consider the facts of the situation and we weigh and balance them. His glory is to overlook a transgression: A wise man or woman knows that they have been forgiven for things they have done will extend the same grace to others.

¹² A king's rage is like the roar of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass. ¹³ A foolish child is a father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like the constant dripping of a leaky roof.

The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion: The roar of a lion is terrifying in itself, even without the knowledge that destruction will swiftly follow. The same is true for the wrath of a king or any other influential person. They are not like the rest of us. Their frowns are terrifying and their smiles comfortable. They should be careful to never frighten a good man from doing well by their disposition nor give encouragement to a wicked man. **Romans 13:3** His favor is like the dew on the grass: This means the king's favor is refreshing and life-giving; it also means that it is fleeting, as the dew on the grass. The favor of God is certainly refreshing and life-giving, but it is not fleeting, as if God were an impossible-to-please tyrant.

A foolish son is the ruin of his father: It is hurtful for any parent to have a foolish son or daughter. This may change from grief to ruin because grief can destroy the father's health and life, or as the father ruins himself to rescue the son. A son who will not go to school or work; takes no direction or advice, and leads a lewd, undisciplined life; spends everything he makes or wastes is proud and conceited. He is the disgrace, and is likely to be the ruin, of his family. The contentions of a wife are a continual dripping: This proverb of sympathy for a man's potential problem as a husband. A wife who fights and argues with her husband is like a continual dripping in at least three ways: (1) It is an always-present annoyance and trouble; (2) It wastes and destroys, eroding good and valuable things; and (3) It points to some underlying, more basic problem.

¹⁴ Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord. ¹⁵ Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless go hungry. ¹⁶ Whoever keeps commandments keeps their life, but whoever shows contempt for their ways will die.

Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers: There are good things a man may receive as an inheritance, including material things such as houses and riches. A man is blessed to have such things. A prudent wife is from the LORD: A gift beyond the inheritance one may receive from fathers is this gift from God – a prudent wife. A wife of wisdom, self-control, and appropriate living is a greater gift than houses and riches. A wife who is not careful and wise may waste whatever wealth a man has. Every man with a prudent, wise wife should give thanks to the LORD.

Laziness casts one into a deep sleep: There are many problems with laziness, and one of them is that it leads to more laziness, sending the lazy man into a deep sleep. There is no work to be done from a deep sleep. Laziness plunges him into a state of being so deep in sleep that he is totally unconscious of his situation. Unaware of his situation and

unable to arouse himself, he neglects his source of income. An idle person will suffer hunger: There is a great price to be paid from laziness, one of those prices is the hunger one suffers as one's needs are not met through hard work. The lazy man or woman puts themselves in a trap of sleep and hunger.

He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul: Obedience to the word and commandment of God is of real, practical benefit. Obedience guards and keeps the life and the soul of the wise man or woman who lives according to God's word. Those that make the effort to keep the commandments in everything, keep their souls secure and in peace. If we keep God's word, God's word will keep us from everything really hurtful. He who is careless of his ways will die: To abandon wisdom and live careless is to invite death. God gave His commandment to give us life and to keep us from death. Ecclesiastes 11:9 *You who are young, be happy while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.*

¹⁷ Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done. ¹⁸ Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death. ¹⁹ A hot-tempered person must pay the penalty; rescue them, and you will have to do it again. ²⁰ Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise. ²¹ Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD: When we give to the poor), we aren't wasting our money. It is like lending money to the LORD Himself. If a man gives all that he has to feed the poor and does not this love in his heart, it is nothing. **1 Corinthians 13**
³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. The Creator takes it upon himself to assume the indebtedness of the poor so he will repay the lender in full. He will pay back what he has given: God will never be in debt to any man. He will never be in a position where He owes anything as a matter of debt. Therefore, to lend to the LORD is to ensure blessing in return. **Isaiah 58:10-11**.

Chasten your son while there is hope: There is not an endless window of opportunity to chasten and discipline our children. Age and circumstances limit the opportunity for effective training, so it must be done while there is hope. There may come the time when you wish you had done much more to chasten your son or daughter. It is better that the child cry under healthy correction than that parents cry later because of neglected discipline. Do not set your heart on his destruction: To fail to chasten your son during the right season is actually work for his destruction. Many parents bring much destruction to their children through neglect, not outright abuse.

A man of great wrath will suffer punishment: Out of control anger brings many problems and costs. Among the fruit of the spirit is self-control (**Galatians 5:23**). Wisdom does not lead a person to be of great wrath. He punishes himself. Wounded pride and resentment leave him brooding and he suffers a self-inflicted punishment. For if you rescue him, you

will have to do it again: The person who can't control their anger will run into trouble again and again. To rescue them once isn't enough, because the problem is more in them than in the circumstances that they blame for their anger.

Listen to counsel and receive instruction: One of the first marks of wisdom is the openness to receive more wisdom. A teachable person, one who will listen to counsel and receive instruction, has already made progress on the path of wisdom. Those who are wise understand that they can live in peace. A worldly person at the end will be a fool, but godliness will prove wisdom. That you may be wise in your latter days: The bad effects of the rejection of wisdom may not be seen for many years. Yet in the latter days of a man or woman's life, it will be clear whether or not they learned wisdom's lessons and if they did listen to counsel.

There are many plans in a man's heart: It is in the nature of men (and women) to plan and prepare for the future. Some of the plans may be wise and some may be foolish, but there are many plans in a man's heart. Nevertheless, the LORD's counsel – that will stand: Man makes his plans, and he should. Yet every plan should be made with an appreciation of God's overall wisdom, work, and will. James would later explain this principle: *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."* (James 4:13-15)

²² What a person desires is unending love; better to be poor than a liar. ²³ The fear of the Lord leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble. ²⁴ A sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth! ²⁵ Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn prudence; rebuke the discerning, and they will gain knowledge. ²⁶ Whoever robs their father and drives out their mother is a child who brings shame and disgrace.

What is desired in a man is kindness: It is not that kindness is the highest or only virtue for the people of God. Yet, in many ways, it is the one most desired by others. A poor man is better than a liar: This proverb shows that kindness, though valuable, is not the only virtue. To be a man or woman of truth – and not a liar – is also of great value. This proverb reminds us that though we should pursue and value kindness, we should not treat it as the only valued virtue among God's people.

The fear of the Lord leads to life: Since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, it leads also to a wonderful life. If we want life, we should begin with honor, reverent awe and submission to God. He who has it will abide in satisfaction: When we have, and walk in, the fear of the Lord, it leads to a life of satisfaction. The world, the flesh, and the devil want to convince us that a life founded on fear of the Lord leads to misery, but the opposite is true. It brings satisfaction and keeps us from a future of evil. Will not be visited with evil: When one lives a life of reverence, the Lord provides a quality of life that cannot be disrupted by such evil.

A lazy man buries his hand in the bowl: Solomon pictured a lazy man sitting at his food, with his hand buried in his bowl of food. This is an exaggeration but it shows a person who begins a project but lacks the energy to complete it. And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again: In this exaggerated picture, the lazy man has so little energy and initiative that he won't even bring his hand from the bowl to his mouth. He won't even feed himself, but waits for the food to just drop into his mouth.

Strike a scoffer, and the simple will become wary: When an opponent of wisdom (a scoffer) is punished, others will learn. The more innocent (the simple) may learn from this. Pharaoh was better even though he suffered and should have learned a valuable lesson about God, he did not. In contrast, Jethro – Moses' father-in-law watched God's judgment on Pharaoh, and the Amalekites, was converted. [Exodus 18:9-12](#) Rebuke one who has understanding: The rebuke of the scoffer seems to do the scoffer no good, though it may benefit the simple. Yet when someone who values wisdom (one who has understanding) is corrected, he learns. He grows in his ability to discern knowledge. Here are three varieties of mind: scoffers have closed-empty minds; the simple mind— must be startled into attention, and open mind (understanding) - accepts even a painful truth.

He who mistreats his father and chases away his mother: The Bible commands honor your father and your mother ([Exodus 20:12](#)). This proverb considers the person who does the opposite. When the father and his household lies in ruin, the mother is left in a tragic situation without the provision and protection and of her husband. By ruining his father, the mother is a defenseless widow. Is a son who causes shame and brings reproach: One cannot disobey God and the standards of human society without paying a price. One price to be paid from the mistreatment of parents is to bring shame and reproach upon one's self.

²⁷ Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.

²⁸ A corrupt witness mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked gulps down evil.

²⁹ Penalties are prepared for mockers, and beatings for the backs of fools.

Cease listening to instruction: Solomon continued to give wisdom to his children, and here warned of the danger of ceasing to listen to instruction. And you will stray from the words of knowledge: This shows that attention and effort must continuously remain on the path of wisdom. If one stops listening to instruction, then they will stray from the words of knowledge. Without constant attention to wisdom human beings unconsciously stray from it. Even Solomon, the paragon of wisdom, strayed when he stopped listening to his own proverbs.

A disreputable witness scorns justice: The witness who is not committed to truth doesn't care about the workings of justice. Great harm comes upon society and its legal system when there is a lack of care and promotion of the truth and the disreputable/untruthful witness is not punished. The perjurers in the lawsuit against Naboth ([1 Kings. 21:10, 13](#)), illustrates the lying witnesses' lethal power. The mouth of the wicked devours iniquity:

The words of the wicked love evil so much that they devour it, as a hungry man devours food.

Judgments are prepared for scoffers: Those who reject wisdom with hostility will not escape penalty. Judgments are prepared for them. Judgments, not one, but many, not appointed only, but prepared a long time ago are now ready to be executed. Beatings for the backs of fools: Those who disregard wisdom will also have their penalty. Correction will come to them and sadly – the correction will do little good for them.