

Proverbs 28 – Kingdom Prayers

Sin blinds us. It is as simple as that. It dulls our senses and our ability to see God's wisdom. Proverbs 28:5 teaches that sin blinds us to the brokenness and injustice all around us. To walk in God's everlasting wisdom every day, we need sight and understanding only the Spirit of God can give.

Of course, Proverbs 28:5 doesn't mean believers understand everything in this life-that is impossible in our humanity. Even though we have the Spirit of God living and moving within us, we are limited by our flesh. But when we choose to follow Jesus, it changes the way we see the world. We begin to see life with a vision for the kingdom of God.

Seeing life with a vision for God's kingdom changes the way we pray. When we turn our hearts and minds to seek His wisdom, our prayers begin to align with that wisdom (v. 9). The way we engage with broken people and places, then, is radically changed as we join with Jesus in His power to redeem all things.

It also radically changes the way we see ourselves as we pray. We no longer want to hide from God. Instead, we become honest about our sins (v. 13). We acknowledge our foolishness to the Lord, trusting Him completely for mercy and restoration. Sin blinds us to the needs around us and the need of our own sinful hearts, but wisdom opens our eyes to pray and act in accordance with God's will.

¹The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. ²When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a ruler with discernment and knowledge maintains order. ³A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops. ⁴Those who forsake instruction praise the wicked, but those who heed it resist them.

The wicked flee when no one pursues: This speaks of a confusion and fear that belong to the wicked, not to the godly and wise. This is both because they are under God's displeasure and because they lack the strength and courage of the Holy Spirit. The proverb implies that the wicked, prompted by a guilty conscience or a fear of judgment, become fearful and suspicious of everyone. God sends a faintness into the hearts of the wicked, and the sound of a shaken leaf frightens them. In arithmetic, of nothing comes nothing, yet they fear where no fear is.

The righteous are bold as a lion: God's righteous ones stand even when one comes against them, and with God's strength they are bold as a lion. The righteous man, like the lion, has no need to look over his shoulder. What is at his heels is not his past ([Numbers 32:23](#)) but his rearguard: God's goodness and mercy ([Psalm 23:6](#)).

Adam knew no fear until he became a guilty creature. But if guilt brings fear, the removal of guilt gives confidence.

Because of the transgression of a land, many are its princes: To have many princes – rulers, officials – is not seen as a blessing. This speaks of how a large, complex, and multi-layered government can be a curse to a people, sent because of the transgression of a land. As a result of the land's total break with the Lord they need a large bureaucracy to keep an eye on one another and/or none survives. **By a man of understanding and knowledge right will be prolonged:** Instead of many...princes, God blesses a land with a man of understanding and knowledge. Great and godly leaders can be a wonderful blessing to a nation.

A poor man who oppresses the poor: One might think that a poor man would have great sympathy for others who are poor, but this is not always the case. There are the poor who oppress the poor. The parable of the two debtors, [Matthew 18:23](#) shows that the poor oppressed the poor. The oppressing poor was delivered to the tormentors; and the forgiven debt charged to his amount, because he showed no mercy. The comparatively poor are often shockingly uncharitable and unfeeling towards the real poor. **Like a driving rain which leaves no food:** This destructive rain leaves the people hungry and without hope. So is the effect of a poor man who oppresses the poor.

Those who forsake the law praise the wicked: When the fundamental principles of justice are forsaken, it doesn't benefit the righteous. It gives benefit and praise to the wicked. **Those who forsake the law:** Without revelation, all is soon relative; and with moral relativity, nothing quite merits attack. **Praise the wicked:** Praising the wicked may mean calling them good, i.e., no longer able to discern good from evil. It is fearful to sin; more fearful to delight in sin; yet more to defend it.

Such as keep the law contend with them: Those who do honor and promote the rule of law will resist and oppose the wicked. They understand the principle the Apostle Paul would later explain in [Romans 13:1-7](#), that one reason God gives law and government to men is to restrain the wicked, to contend with them. This proverb presents only two paths: forsake the law or keep the law. The line dividing humanity is not racial, political or even religious, but spiritual. That line runs through every human heart.

⁵ Evildoers do not understand what is right, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully. ⁶ Better the poor whose walk is blameless than the rich whose ways are perverse. ⁷ A discerning son heeds instruction, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father. ⁸ Whoever increases wealth by taking interest or profit from the poor amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor. ⁹ If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable.

Evil men do not understand justice: There are those who are fundamentally evil or wicked, and simply do not understand justice. They do not understand the principles of justice and how they apply to themselves. Because their minds are naturally blind, and are further blinded by their own prejudices and passions, and by the god of this world, who rules in and over them. There are always those who believe justice is that which benefits them—otherwise it is not justice. **But those who seek the LORD understand**

all: The godly understand justice and much more. They seek the LORD, fear the LORD, and have His wisdom. Many things, dark to human reason, are simplified by humility.

Better is the poor who walks in his integrity: There are worse things than poverty, and to be a wicked man or woman who does not live in integrity is worse. This is an encouragement to the poor who often are despised. The verse only contrasts a poor man with integrity and a perverse rich man (see [Proverbs 19:1](#))—there are rich people with integrity, and there are poor people who are perverse. A rich man or woman who is twisted in their life before God or man is worse off than the godly poor person. We are defined more by our character than by our bank account or financial worth.

Perverse in his ways: Two ways: pretending to have virtue, but practicing evil; or covering his wickedness with good pretenses; or sometimes erring on one hand, and sometimes on the other, as wicked men commonly do. The double-dealing rich person first defrauds the poor and the humble and then covers his wrongdoing over by making himself appear righteous. Many will wish that they had lived and died in obscure poverty rather than having been entrusted with riches, which only made them boldly sin with a high hand against God and their own souls.

Whoever keeps the law is a discerning son: Obedience is a proof of wisdom. Those who claim to be discerning or wise yet live in fundamental disobedience show their foolishness. **A companion of gluttons shames his father**: One does not have to be filled with wicked appetites themselves to be a shame to their family; simply being a companion of such can embarrass the family. By identifying himself with those who waste all that is precious — life, food and instruction—the foolish puts to public shame his father.

One who increases his possessions by usury and extortion: There are some who become rich through economic violence. They charge high and unfair interest (usury) or they use their power to cheat and steal (extortion). In the Bible usury occurs ten times and refers to the charge for borrowed money, which practice in Biblical times came to about 30% of the amount borrowed. **Gathers it for him who will pity the poor**: God will not allow these oppressive criminals to have the last word. In the resolution of God's judgment, the wealth of the wicked is simply gathered for those who have love and pity for the poor.

One who turns away his ear from hearing the law: God wants us to always have an open and attentive ear towards His word (the law). To have no hunger for God's word or to pay no attention is a sign of spiritual sickness in the child of God. Many think, if they do not know their duty, they won't be held accountable for their transgressions. They avoid everything that is designed to enlighten them or give them knowledge. But this pretense will not benefit them because he will be treated as one who did know it, and disobeyed it. **Even his prayer is an abomination**: God is not bound to hear or honor the one who neglects His word. Before we would speak to God in prayer we must humbly and

attentively listen to His word, or our prayers may be an arrogant abomination. The prayer certainly will not be a proper prayer; someone who refuses to obey God will not pray according to God's will—he will pray for some physical thing, perhaps even making demands on God.

¹⁰ Whoever leads the upright along an evil path will fall into their own trap, but the blameless will receive a good inheritance. ¹¹ The rich are wise in their own eyes; one who is poor and discerning sees how deluded they are. ¹² When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding.

Whoever causes the upright to go astray in an evil way: There are those who take pleasure in causing the godly to go astray. It makes them feel better and perhaps superior to those who are upright. **He himself will fall into his own pit:** God has a way of protecting His upright, even if they seem to, or actually do, go astray for a time. God knows how to put the wicked in their place (his own pit) and He knows how to make sure that the blameless will inherit good. God does not leave the final word to the wicked man with his evil plans. The line shows that the wicked will be caught in their own devices; but it also shows that the righteous are corruptible—they can be led into morally bad conduct.

The rich man is wise in his own eyes: It is not unusual for a rich man to be proud, and to think himself wise. Other proverbs explain that wisdom often leads to wealth, but not every rich man has gained his wealth through wisdom. Although riches do not always bring wisdom, the rich man often pretends to have it and ascribes his success to his own wisdom and knowledge, though he may be manifestly simple and foolish.

The poor man who has understanding searches him out: The poor man with wisdom stands above the rich man with a fool's pride. That wise poor man may examine the rich man (searches him out), not the other way around. There are some lessons only poverty can teach, and one should never forget those lessons, even if they become wealthy. Yet the universe does not possess a more dignified character than the poor man who has discernment. Did not the incarnate Lord honor this station supremely by taking it on himself? To walk in his footsteps, in his spirit, is wisdom, honor, and happiness infinitely beyond what this poor world of vanity can afford. He sees him to be what indeed he is, a foolish and miserable man, notwithstanding all his riches, and discovers the folly of his words and actions.

When the righteous rejoice, there is great glory: When those who live with wisdom and righteousness rejoice because of the condition of their community, it is good for everyone. There is great glory. **When the wicked arise, men hide themselves:** Even wicked men don't want to be ruled by other wicked men. A culture may live off the inheritance of a previous righteous generation, but when the wicked arise those benefits and the freedoms righteousness brings will slowly diminish. The state of that nation is so shameful and dangerous, that wise and good men, who only are worthy of the name

of men, withdraw themselves, or run into corners and hidden places; partly out of grief and shame.

¹³ Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. ¹⁴ Blessed is the one who always trembles before God, but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble.

He who covers his sins will not prosper: Since Adam and Eve, human instinct leads us to cover our sins. Our conscience makes us ashamed of our sin and we don't want others to see it. We even think we can hide it from God. Yet, this natural instinct to cover sin doesn't benefit us. It prevents us from being real about our condition before God.

In a sermon on this proverb, Charles Spurgeon described some of the many ways men attempt to cover their sin – all of them in vain: Excuses and justifications; Secrecy; Lies; Schemes to evade responsibility; Time; Tears and Ceremonies or sacraments. Out of his sinful pride he pretends before God and people that he has no need to confess; instead, he deceives. God and man each conceal sin—God in free unbounded grace, man in shame and hypocrisy.

But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy: The path to receiving God's mercy is to confess and repent (forsake) our sin. This is the way to prosper spiritually and in life in general and receive God's mercy. Confession is to take God's side against sin. It is the lifting out of one thing after another from heart and life, and holding them for a moment before God, with the acknowledgment that it is our fault. The Biblical practice of confessing sin can free us from the heavy burdens (spiritual and physical, as in [James 5:16](#)) of unresolved sin, and it can remove hindrances to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a tragedy when the confession of sin is neglected or ignored among believers, and a cause of much spiritual weakness and hypocrisy. Confess the debt, and God will cross the book; he will draw the red lines of Christ's blood over the black lines of our sins, and cancel the handwriting that was against us.

Happy is the man who is always reverent: Sadly, reverence and happiness are not commonly associated together. The reverent man is often thought to be sour and unpleasant. Nevertheless, to the degree that one can be always reverent, he can be genuinely happy. In all times, companies, and conditions; not only in the time of great trouble, when even hypocrites will be afraid of sinning, but in times of outward peace and prosperity.

He who hardens his heart will fall into calamity: Here, reverence and hardness of heart are set as opposites. A man who hardens his heart will not be a truly reverent man, but he will fall into calamity either in this life or the life to come. When one hardens his heart his psyche can no longer feel, respond, and opt for a new direction. The hardened heart is fixed in unbelief and unbending defiance to God ([Exodus 7:3](#); [Psalm 95:8](#)); insensitive to admonition or reproof it cannot be moved to a new sphere of behavior. When that fear [reverent] is absent, courage is mere hardening of the heart,

recklessness, foolhardiness. The man who shuts his eyes to God, gathers himself up, and desperately plunges forward, is no hero; he is a fool, and without exception sooner or later lands himself in circumstances which break him; and brings those about him into suffering and catastrophe.

¹⁵ Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a helpless people. ¹⁶ A tyrannical ruler practices extortion, but one who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long reign.

Like a roaring lion and a charging bear: With these vivid images, Solomon described the effect of a wicked ruler over poor people. The wicked ruler treats those of low standing (poor people) with unpredictable, uncontrollable ferocity. He is dangerous toward them. Just like the lion frightens the poor beasts with his roaring, so that they have no power to stir, and then preys upon them with his teeth; and as the bear searches them out and tears them limb from limb: so do tyrants with their poor subjects.

A ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor: The foolish ruler (the one who lacks understanding) will oppress his people. His reign will be unhappy and insecure because of the foolish way he leads his people. The tyranny or oppression of a prince is in truth a manifest act and sign of great foolishness because it alienates from him the hearts of his people, in which his honor, and safety lie. No pity softens his heart. No principle of justice regulates his conduct. Complaint only provokes further unfair demands. Resistance awakens his unfeeling heart into fury. Helpless and miserable are the people whom divine anger has placed under his misrule.

He who hates covetousness will prolong his days: If a man is wise enough to hate greed, he will likely be wise in other responsibilities as a ruler. It is likely that his days as a ruler will be prolonged.

¹⁷ Anyone tormented by the guilt of murder will seek refuge in the grave; let no one hold them back. ¹⁸ The one whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but the one whose ways are perverse will fall into the pit. ¹⁹ Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies will have their fill of poverty.

A man burdened with bloodshed will flee into a pit: The man burdened with bloodshed has a guilty, anxious mind that clouds and confuses his thinking, and he ends up in a pit. Or, it may happen because God's curse is on the man burdened with bloodshed. Flee into a pit means he will be quickly destroyed, being pursued by Divine vengeance, and the horrors of a guilty conscience, and the avengers of blood.

Let no one help him: As the man guilty of bloodshed falls into the consequences of his own actions, let no one help him. Often it is best to let people suffer the consequences of their sins. Pity is misplaced here. The murderer, therefore, of his brother is his own murderer. Let God's law take its course. Yet we must not cast out his soul. Visiting the condemned cell is a special act of mercy which is to bring to the sinner under the

sentence of the law, the free forgiveness of the Gospel showing the over-abounding of grace beyond the abounding of sin.

Whoever walks blamelessly will be saved: This proverb probably does not have eternal salvation in mind; instead, the idea is being saved or rescued from the calamities and troubles of life. Especially under the old covenant, God's blessing and protection was upon those who walk blamelessly. **He who is perverse in his ways will suddenly fall:** The one who is twisted and crooked in his dealings can't expect God's blessing and protection. That crooked, twisted person should expect to suddenly fall one day.

He who tills his land will have plenty of bread: The reward of work is a harvest. The one who tills his land will enjoy the harvest that comes, and therefore have plenty of bread. **We are not to be lazy in business but fervent in spirit,** in this world and in all its concerns, the same is true of concerns of eternity! **But he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough:** The one who ignores his work to have a good time will not enjoy the fruit of the harvest the way the hard-working man will. Instead of plenty of bread, the lazy, frivolous man will have plenty of poverty. (Luke 15:13-17).

²⁰ A faithful person will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.

²¹ To show partiality is not good—yet a person will do wrong for a piece of bread. ²² The stingy are eager to get rich and are unaware that poverty awaits them.

²³ Whoever rebukes a person will in the end gain favor rather than one who has a flattering tongue. ²⁴ Whoever robs their father or mother and says, "It's not wrong," is partner to one who destroys. ²⁵ The greedy stir up conflict, but those who trust in the Lord will prosper. ²⁶ Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.

A faithful man will abound with blessings: This is true as a general principle; faithfulness and obedience to God's law brings blessings. It was especially true under the old covenant, where God promised blessings on the obedient and curses on the disobedient (Deuteronomy 27-28). The man who makes fidelity the master principle will be rewarded. **He who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished:** The one who hastens to be rich is almost always willing to cheat or compromise to gain wealth. God promises that this one will be punished, either in this life or the next. While not condemning possessions in themselves, Proverbs always rejects greed. It contrasts financial prudence, diligence, and generosity with the desire for quick and easy money.

To show partiality is not good: In the court of law and in our daily dealings with people, we should not show partiality. We should be those who do not favor or condemn others based on their race, class, nationality, or influence. **Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress:** Because justice and the opinion of others can be easily bought, we should determine that we will not be bribed for partiality and we should be aware that others may be easily bought.

A man with an evil eye hastens after riches: The stingy, ungenerous man will run after riches with the same energy that he will use to selfishly hold on to what he has. **And does not consider that poverty will come upon him**: Because God's blessing does not rest on the stingy, ungenerous man, poverty will come upon him– and he will not consider or expect it.

He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward: It may be necessary to rebuke a man, but it also invites his displeasure. Still, it should be done in confidence that when done well, the one who rebukes will find more favor afterward. **Than he who flatters with the tongue**: The one who rebukes may not be as welcomed as he who flatters, but the sacrificial service of he who rebukes will bring him into more favor than the one who always praises.

Whoever robs his father or his mother: There are some who have little conscience about stealing from their parents. Out of some sense of entitlement, they rob them and then say, it is no big deal. He who robs his parents is worse than a common robber; to the act of dishonesty and he adds ingratitude, cruelty, and disobedience. He may rationalize, 'eventually it all comes to me anyway'...or 'they can no longer manage their finances,' or 'as a family we own everything in common,' etc. **The same is companion to a destroyer**: Despite whatever sense of entitlement the thief may have, they are right next to a destroyer, someone who spreads and even loves destruction.

He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife: A proud man or woman is constantly causing strife because they want the attention and prominence. That doesn't agree with most people, so there is strife. Because he makes it his business to advance and please himself, and to hate and oppose all that stand in his way, and despises other men, and is very jealous of their honor, and impatient of the least offense. The greedy person's insatiable appetite brings him into conflict with others, for he violates social boundaries. Not content with his portion, he becomes disruptive and destructive. **He who trusts in the LORD shall be prospered**: To trust in the LORD is presented as a contrast to the proud heart. One should expect to be prospered, as they humbly trust God and forsake pride.

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool: There is a strong urge – promoted to us by the world, the flesh, and the devil – to trust our own heart and to “follow our heart” instead of humbly receiving our values, morals, and wisdom from God's word. Trusting in our own heart leads one to be a fool. For answers, values, and guidance we should not look within, but look to the Lord. To trust an impostor who has deceived us a hundred times or a traitor who has proved himself false to our most important interests is surely to deserve the name of fool. A fool's heart, is deceitful and desperately wicked, will surely deceive him.

Whoever walks wisely will be delivered: In contrast to trusting our own heart, we should instead give attention to walking wisely. Instead of operating on the basis of how

we feel, we should direct ourselves to wise living in what we do. We walk wisely when we distrust our own judgment, and seek the advice of others, and especially of God, as all truly wise men do, we will be delivered from dangers and mischiefs which fools bring upon themselves.

²⁷ Those who give to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses. ²⁸ When the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding; but when the wicked perish, the righteous thrive.

He who gives to the poor will not lack: God promises to bless the generous heart, and one way that generosity should be expressed is to give to the poor. Not getting but giving is the way to wealth. God will bless the bountiful man's stock and store, his barn and his basket; [Deuteronomy 15:10] his righteousness and his riches together shall endure forever. [Psalms 112:3]. **He who hides his eyes will have many curses**: God will not bless the one who ignores the troubles of the poor and needy. To hide the eyes means to refuse to see poverty. It is the sin of those who say they are too sensitive to visit the poor.

When the wicked arise, men hide themselves: When wicked men come to places of prominence and rule, it is bad for the community. Freedom and blessing to the community are much less present and in response, men hide themselves. **When they perish, the righteous increase**: When the wicked and their influence pass, the righteous increase, along with their influence. This is a blessing for a community or a nation. They who were righteous use their authority to encourage and promote righteousness, and to punish unrighteousness, whereby the number of wicked men is diminished, and the righteous are multiplied. When the righteous increase in number and power, the people come out of their hiding.