

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

## Sunday Morning

Study 16

*Proverbs 14 - The Fear of the Lord*

# The Fear of the Lord

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word

**Objective** To define the "fear of the Lord" and to encourage the students to walk in it.

## Key Verses

Proverbs 14—Main Teaching Passage

Genesis 42:18

Leviticus 19:14,32

Exodus 1:17

Matthew 10:28

Exodus 9:29-31

2 Corinthians 7:1

Exodus 18:21

Exodus 20:20

**Memory Verse** - 2 Corinthians 7:1

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

## Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Proverbs 13:13.

Ask the students to make a list of things that find scary. Write their suggestions down on the board under the heading "FEAR" (might include spiders, snakes, scary movies, darkness etc.) Now next to the list write the word "GOD?" including the question mark next to it. Ask, "Should we fear God?"

Allow the students to discuss and then tell the class that in today's lesson we will see that fearing God is actually a positive thing and that the whole Bible encourages us to fear God.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

# BOOK

While we are continuing to study through the book of Proverbs, this chapter lends itself to a small study on the fear of God. Verses 2, 15-18, 26, 27, and even 35 (indirectly) talk about the fear of the Lord. In this chapter specifically, we see that fearing the Lord leads to many positive consequences. We will notice that fearing the Lord causes us to walk in uprightness (verse 2), showing that the fear of the Lord encourages us to good works and right living. In verses 15-19 we see that He who fears the Lord thinks about his actions before doing them and then chooses the path that departs from iniquity.

In verses 26-27, however, we see the strongest statement about the fear of the Lord. “In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence... the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life.” Unlike the fear of any other thing, the fear of the Lord does not make us uneasy or uncertain about what to do. Fearing God gives us direction and confidence, it allows us to move with assuredness that we are on the path that leads to life.

The term “fear of the Lord” or “fear of God” is used 23 times in Proverbs. It is directly associated with the wise choice in almost all of those uses. We have already read that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but Proverbs 15 will tell us that the fear of the Lord *is* the instruction of wisdom. Learning to fear the Lord is perhaps the greatest study that we can ever participate in. It is in knowing Him and fearing Him that we find life, wisdom, confidence, and safety.

# LOOK

When we read through the whole of Scripture we see over 300 times a version of the phrase “the fear of the Lord.” Over 300 times we are told that we should fear God. This however doesn’t seem to fit with our normal way of thinking about God. We think about Him as a friend or as a good, kind, and loving God. While all of those things are true, we cannot ignore this command from Scripture: we are supposed to fear God. The fear of God is not like the fear of the darkness or the fear of spiders or mice; those fears make us act irrationally. For example, a fully grown man might jump out of the way of a 2 inch mouse and shriek loud enough to wake the neighbors. The mouse could never hurt the person, and if they had no fear of the mouse they would never even move out of its way. The fear of the Lord however helps us to act with clarity. It helps us to know the right course of action and to do it. There many examples of people in the Scriptures being rewarded for fearing the Lord.

The interpretation/  
exegesis of the passage.  
What does this passage  
mean? How does this  
passage apply to my  
life?

# LOOK (Continued)

For example, in Genesis 42:18, Joseph wins his brothers' trust when he declares he is a God-fearing man. In Exodus 1:17 it was because the midwives feared God that they obeyed Him instead of the authorities by sparing the Hebrew babies. Pharaoh brought disaster on his nation because he did not fear God (Exodus 9:29-31). Moses chose leaders to help him on the basis that they feared God and wouldn't take bribes (Exodus 18:21) and told the Hebrews that God met with them in a terrifying display of his power so that they wouldn't sin (Exodus 20:20). The Mosaic Law cites fear of God as a reason to treat the disabled and elderly well (Leviticus 19:14, 32). And lest you think this is only an Old Testament idea, note that Jesus states this stronger than anyone in Matthew 10:28 when he says, "Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in Hell." And Paul says to work toward complete holiness because we fear God (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Our problem comes when we misunderstand what the word "fear" means. In our context, fear means "reverence" or to have a deep respect for. Because we have a deep respect for who God is and we hold His Word and His desires towards us in the highest honor, we are moved to love and obey. It is the same respect and reverence that we might have for a parent. We don't want to mess up and act foolishly because we know it will disappoint them. Or perhaps you could think about your school principal. We have a healthy *fear* of our school principal. We know that if we break the school's rules, we will have to face certain consequences, and so the fear of having to sit in the principal's office and have a meeting with them and our parents might cause us to do the right thing instead of making bad choices. While these analogies aren't perfect, they help us to get a better understanding of what it means to fear God.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

# TOOK

As a class, memorize 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Ask the class to think about how they would act if Jesus was actually standing next to them in their class. Would it make them behave differently?

**Pray:** Thank the Lord that His love toward us is promised and that His mercies are new every morning. Ask Him to help us walk with a healthy fear of Him, living in obedience and standing in truth.

**Parent Question:** Why should we "fear the Lord"?

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on Proverbs 14 by Matthew Henry

### [Pro 14:1](#)

Note,

1. A good wife is a great blessing to a family. By a fruitful wife a family is multiplied and replenished with children, and so built up. But by a prudent wife, one that is pious, industrious, and considerate, the affairs of the family are made to prosper, debts are paid, portions raised, provision made, the children well educated and maintained, and the family has comfort within doors and credit without; thus is the house built. She looks upon it as her own to take care of, though she knows it is her husband's to bear rule in, [Esth. 1:22](#).
- 2. Many a family is brought to ruin by ill housewifery, as well as by ill husbandry. A *foolish* woman, that has no fear of God nor regard to her business, that is wilful, and wasteful, and humoursome, that indulges her ease and appetite, and is all for jaunting and feasting, cards and the play-house, though she come to a plentiful estate, and to a family beforehand, she will impoverish and waste it, and will as certainly be the ruin of her house as if she *plucked it down with her hands*; and the husband himself, with all his care, can scarcely prevent it.

### [Pro 14:2](#)

Here are,

- 1. Grace and sin in their true colours. Grace reigning is a reverence of God, and gives honour to him who is infinitely great and high, and to whom all honour is due, than which what is more becoming or should be more pleasing to the rational creature? Sin reigning is no less than a contempt of God. In *this*, more than in any thing, sin appears exceedingly sinful, that it despises God, whom angels adore. Those that despise God's precepts, and will not be ruled by them, his promises, and will not accept of them, despise God himself and all his attributes.
- 2. Grace and sin in their true light. By this we may know a man that has grace, and the fear of God, reigning in him, *he walks in his uprightness*, he makes conscience of his actions, is faithful both to God and man, and every step he makes, as well as every step he takes, is by rule; here is one that honours God. But, on the contrary, *he that is perverse in his ways*, that wilfully follows his own appetites and passions, that is unjust and dishonest and contradicts his profession in his conversation, however he may pretend to devotion, he is a wicked man, and will be reckoned with as a despiser of God himself.

### [Pro 14:3](#)

See here,

1. A proud fool exposing himself. Where there is pride in the heart, and no wisdom in the head to suppress it, it commonly shows itself in the words: *In the mouth there is pride*, proud boasting, proud censuring, proud scorning, proud commanding and giving law; this is the *rod*, or branch, *of pride*; the word is used only here and [Isa. 11:1](#). It grows from that root of bitterness which is in the heart; it is a rod from that stem. The root must be plucked up, or we cannot conquer this branch, or it is meant of a smiting beating rod, a *rod of pride* which strikes others. The proud man with his tongue lays about him and deals blows at pleasure, but it will in the end be a rod to himself; the proud man shall come under an ignominious correction by the words of his own mouth, not cut as a soldier, but caned as a servant; and herein he will be beaten with his own rod, [Ps. 64:8](#).

- 2. A humble wise man saving himself and consulting his own good: *The lips of the wise shall preserve them* from doing that mischief to others which proud men do with their tongues, and from bringing that mischief on themselves which haughty scorers are often involved in.

### [Pro 14:4](#)

Note,

1. The neglect of husbandry is the way to poverty: *Where no oxen are*, to till the ground and tread out the corn, *the crib* is

empty, *is clean*; there is no straw for the cattle, and consequently no bread for the service of man. Scarcity is represented by *cleanness of teeth*, [Amos 4:6](#). *Where no oxen are* there is nothing to be done at the ground, and then nothing to be had out of it; *the crib indeed is clean* from dung, which pleases the neat and nice, that cannot endure husbandry because there is so much dirty work in it, and therefore will sell their oxen to keep the crib clean; but then not only the labour, but even the dung of the ox is wanted. This shows the folly of those who addict themselves to the pleasures of the country, but do not mind the business of it, who (as we say) keep more horses than kine, more dogs than swine; their families must needs suffer by it.

- 2. Those who take pains about their ground are likely to reap the profit of it. Those who keep that about them which is for use and service, not for state and show, more husbandmen than footmen, are likely to thrive. *Much increase is by the strength of the ox*; that is made for our service, and is profitable alive and dead.

#### [Pro 14:5](#)

In the administration of justice much depends upon the witnesses, and therefore it is necessary to the common good that witnesses be principled as they ought to be; for,

- 1. A witness that is conscientious will not dare to give in a testimony that is in the least untrue, nor, for good-will or ill-will, represent a thing otherwise than according to the best of his knowledge, whoever is pleased or displeased, and then judgment runs down like a river.
- 2. But a witness that will be bribed, and biassed, and browbeaten, *will utter lies* (and not stick nor startle at it), with as much readiness and assurance as if what he said were all true.

#### [Pro 14:6](#)

Note,

1. The reason why some people seek wisdom, and do not find it, is because they do not seek it from a right principle and in a right manner. They are scorers, and it is in scorn that they ask instruction, that they may ridicule what is told them and may cavil at it. Many put questions to Christ, tempting him, and that they might have whereof to accuse him, but they were never the wiser. No marvel if those who seek wisdom, as Simon Magus sought the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to serve their pride and covetousness, do not find it, for they seek amiss. Herod desired to see a miracle, but he was a scorer, and therefore it was denied him, [Lu. 23:8](#). Scorers speed not in prayer.
2. To those who understand aright, who *depart from evil* (for *that is understanding*), the *knowledge* of God and of his will *is easy*. The parables which harden scorers in their scorning, and make divine things more difficult to them, enlighten those who are willing to learn, and make the same things more plain, and intelligible, and familiar to them, [Mt. 13:11](#), 15, 16. The same word which to the scornful *is a savour of death unto death* to the humble and serious *is a savour of life unto life*. He *that understands*, so as to *depart from evil* (for *that is understanding*), to quit his prejudices, to lay aside all corrupt dispositions and affections, will easily apprehend instruction and receive the impressions of it.

#### [Pro 14:7](#)

See here,

- 1. How we may discern a fool and discover him, a wicked man, for he is *a foolish man*. If we *perceive not in him the lips of knowledge*, if we find there is no relish or savour of piety in his discourse, that his communication is all corrupt and corrupting, and nothing in it *good and to the use of edifying*, we may conclude the treasure is bad.
- 2. How we must decline such a one and depart from him: *Go from his presence*, for *thou perceivest* there is no good to be gotten by his company, but danger of getting hurt by it. Sometimes the only way we have of reproofing wicked discourse and witnessing against it is by leaving the company and going out of the hearing of it.

#### [Pro 14:8](#)

See here,

- 1. The good conduct of a wise and good man; he manages himself well. it is not the wisdom of the learned, which consists only in speculation, that is here recommended, but *the wisdom of the prudent*, which is practical, and is of use to direct our counsels and actions. Christian prudence consists in a right *understanding of our way*; for we are travellers, whose concern it is, not to spy wonders, but to get forward towards their journey's end. It *is to understand our own way*, not to be critics and busybodies in other men's matters, but to look well to ourselves and *ponder the path of our feet*, to understand the directions of our way, that we may observe them, the dangers of our way, that we may avoid them, the difficulties of our way, that we may break through them, and the advantages of our way, that we may improve them-to understand the rules we are to walk by and the ends we are to walk towards, and walk accordingly.

- 2. The bad conduct of a bad man; he puts a cheat upon himself. He does not rightly understand his way; he thinks he does, and so misses his way, and goes on in his mistake: *The folly of fools is deceit*; it cheats them into their own ruin. The folly of him that built on the sand was deceit.

[Pro 14:9](#)

See here,

1. How wicked people are hardened in their wickedness: they *make a mock at sin*. They make a laughing matter of the sins of others, making themselves and their companions merry with that for which they should mourn, and they make a light matter of their own sins, both when they are tempted to sin and when they have committed it; they *call evil good and good evil* ([Isa. 5:20](#)), turn it off with a jest, rush into sin ([Jer. 8:6](#)) and say they shall have peace though they go on. They care not what mischief they do by their sins, and laugh at those that tell them of it. They are advocates for sin, and are ingenious at framing excuses for it. *Fools make a mock at the sin-offering* (so some); those that make light of sin make light of Christ. Those are fools that make light of sin, for they make light of that which God complains of ([Amos 2:13](#)), which lay heavily upon Christ, and which they themselves will have other thoughts of shortly.
- 2. How good people are encouraged in their goodness: *Among the righteous there is favour*; if they in any thing offend, they presently repent and obtain the favour of God. They have a goodwill one to another; and among them, in their societies, there is mutual charity and compassion in cases of offences, and no mocking.

[Pro 14:10](#)

This agrees with [1 Co. 2:11](#), *What man knows the things of a man*, and the changes of his temper, *save the spirit of a man?*

- 1. Every man feels most from his own burden, especially that which is a burden upon the spirits, for that is commonly concealed and the sufferer keeps it to himself. We must not censure the griefs of others, for we know not what they feel; their stroke perhaps is heavier than their groaning.
- 2. Many enjoy a secret pleasure, especially in divine consolations, which others are not aware of, much less are sharers in; and, as the sorrows of a penitent, so the joys of a believer are such as a *stranger does not intermeddle with* and therefore is no competent judge of.

[Pro 14:11](#)

Note,

- 1. Sin is the ruin of great families: *The house of the wicked*, though built ever so strong and high, *shall be overthrown*, shall be brought to poverty and disgrace, and at length be extinct. His hope for heaven, the house on which he leans, shall not stand, but fail in the storm; the deluge that comes will sweep it away.
- 2. Righteousness is the rise and stability even of mean families: Even *the tabernacle of the upright*, though movable and despicable as a tent, *shall flourish*, in outward prosperity if Infinite Wisdom see good, at all events in graces and comfort, which are true riches and honours.

[Pro 14:12](#)

We have here an account of the way and end of a great many self-deluded souls.

- 1. Their way is seemingly fair: It *seems right* to themselves; they please themselves with a fancy that they are as they should be, that their opinions and practices are good, and such as will bear them out. The way of ignorance and carelessness, the way of worldliness and earthly-mindedness, the way of sensuality and flesh-pleasing, seem right to those that walk in them, much more the way of hypocrisy in religion, external performances, partial reformations, and blind zeal; this they imagine will bring them to heaven; they flatter themselves in their own eyes that all will be well at last.
- 2. Their end is really fearful, and the more so for their mistake: It is *the ways of death*, eternal death; their iniquity will certainly be their ruin, and they will perish with a lie in their right hand. Self-deceivers will prove in the end self-destroyers.

[Pro 14:13](#)

This shows the vanity of carnal mirth, and proves what Solomon said of laughter, that *it is mad*; for,

1. There is sadness under it. Sometimes when sinners are under convictions, or some great trouble, they dissemble their grief by a forced mirth, and put a good face on it, because they will not seem to yield: they cry not when he binds them. Nay, when men really are merry, yet at the same time there is some alloy or other to their mirth, something that casts a damp upon it, which all their gaiety cannot keep from their heart. Their consciences tell them they have no reason to be merry

([Hos. 9:1](#)); they cannot but see the vanity of it. Spiritual joy is seated in the soul; the joy of the hypocrite is but from the teeth outward. See [Jn. 16:22](#); [2 Co. 6:10](#).

2. There is worse after it: *The end of that mirth is heaviness*. It is soon over, like the crackling of thorns under a pot; and, if the conscience be awake, all sinful and profane mirth will be reflected upon with bitterness; if not, the heaviness will be so much the greater when *for all these things God shall bring the sinner into judgment*. The sorrows of the saints will end in everlasting joys ([Ps. 126:5](#)), but the laughter of fools will end in endless weeping and wailing.

#### [Pro 14:14](#)

Note,

1. The misery of sinners will be an eternal surfeit upon their sins: The *backslider in heart*, who for fear of suffering, or in hope of profit or pleasure, forsakes God and his duty, shall be *filled with his own ways*; God will give him enough of them. They would not leave their brutish lusts and passions, and therefore they shall stick by them, to their everlasting terror and torment. *He that is filthy shall be filthy still*. "Son, remember," shall *fill them with their own ways*, and set their sins in order before them. Backsliding begins in the heart; it is the evil heart of unbelief that departs from God; and of all sinners backsliders will have most terror when they reflect on *their own ways*, [Lu. 11:26](#).
2. The happiness of the saints will be an eternal satisfaction in their graces, as tokens of and qualifications for God's peculiar favour: *A good man shall be abundantly satisfied from himself*, from what God has wrought in him. He has *rejoicing in himself alone*, [Gal. 6:3](#). As sinners never think they have sin enough till it brings them to hell, so saints never think they have grace enough till it brings them to heaven.

#### [Pro 14:15](#)

Note,

- 1. It is folly to be credulous, to heed every flying report, to give ear to every man's story, though ever so improbable, to take things upon trust from common fame, to depend upon every man's profession of friendship and give credit to every one that will promise payment; those are *simple* who thus *believe every word*, forgetting that all men, in some sense, are liars in comparison with God, all whose words we are to believe with an implicit faith, for he cannot lie.
- 2. It is wisdom to be cautious: *The prudent man* will try before he trusts, will weigh both the credibility of the witness and the probability of the testimony, and then give judgment as the thing appears or suspend his judgment till it appears. *Prove all things, and believe not every spirit*.

#### [Pro 14:16](#)

Note,

- 1. Holy fear is an excellent guard upon every holy thing, and against every thing that is unholy. It is wisdom to depart *from evil*, from the evil of sin, and thereby from all other evil; and therefore it is wisdom to fear, that is, to be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy, to keep up a dread of God's wrath, to be afraid of coming near the borders of sin or dallying with the beginnings of it. A wise man, for fear of harm, keeps out of harm's way, and starts back in a fright when he finds himself entering into temptation.
- 2. Presumption is folly. He who, when he is warned of his danger, *rages and is confident*, furiously pushes on, cannot bear to be checked, bids defiance to the wrath and curse of God, and, fearless of danger, persists in his rebellion, makes bold with the occasions of sin, and plays upon the precipice, he is a fool, for he acts against his reason and his interest, and his ruin will quickly be the proof of his folly.

#### [Pro 14:17](#)

Note,

- 1. Passionate men are justly laughed at. Men who are peevish and touchy, and are *soon angry* upon every the least provocation, *deal foolishly*; they say and do that which is ridiculous, and so expose themselves to contempt; they themselves cannot but be ashamed of it when the heat is over. The consideration of this should engage those especially who are in reputation for wisdom and honour with the utmost care to bridle their passion.
- 2. Malicious men are justly dreaded and detested, for they are much more dangerous and mischievous to all societies: A *man of wicked devices*, who stifles his resentments till he has an opportunity of being revenged, and is secretly plotting how to wrong his neighbour and to do him an ill turn, as Cain to kill Abel, such a man as this is hated by all mankind. The character of an angry man is pitiable; through the surprise of a temptation he disturbs and disgraces himself, but it is soon over, and he is sorry for it. But that of a spiteful revengeful man is odious; there is no fence against him nor cure for him.



## [Pro 14:18](#)

Note,

- 1. Sin is the shame of sinners: *The simple*, who love simplicity, get nothing by it; they *inherit folly*. They have it *by inheritance*, so some. This corruption of nature is derived from our first parents, and all the calamities that attend it we have by kind; it was the inheritance they transmitted to their degenerate race, an hereditary disease. They are as fond of it as a man of his inheritance, hold it as fast, and are as loth to part with it. What they value themselves upon is really foolish; and what will be the issue of their simplicity but folly? They will for ever rue their own foolish choice.
- 2. Wisdom is the honour of the wise: *The prudent crown themselves with knowledge*, they look upon it as their brightest ornament, and there is nothing they are so ambitious of; they bind it to their heads as a crown, which they will by no means part with; they press towards the top and perfection of knowledge, which will crown their beginnings and progress. They shall have the praise of it; wise heads shall be respected as if they were crowned heads. They *crown knowledge* (so some read it); they are a credit to their profession. Wisdom is not only justified, but glorified, of all her children.

## [Pro 14:19](#)

That is,

- 1. The wicked are oftentimes impoverished and brought low, so that they are forced to beg, their wickedness having reduced them to straits; while good men, by the blessing of God, are enriched, and enabled to give, and do give, even to the evil; for where God grants life we must not deny a livelihood.
- 2. Sometimes God extorts, even from bad men, an acknowledgement of the excellency of God's people. The evil ought always to *bow before the good*, and sometimes they are made to do it and *to know that God has loved them*, [Rev. 3:9](#). They desire their favour ([Esth. 7:7](#)), their prayers, [2 Ki. 3:12](#).
- 3. There is a day coming when the upright shall have the dominion ([Ps. 49:14](#)), when the foolish virgins shall come begging to the wise for oil, and shall knock in vain at that gate of the Lord at which the righteous entered.

## [Pro 14:20](#)

This shows, not what should be, but what is the common way of the world-to be shy of the poor and fond of the rich.

- 1. Few will give countenance to those whom the world frowns upon, though otherwise worthy of respect: *The poor*, who should be pitied, and encouraged, and relieved, *is hated*, looked strange upon, and kept at a distance, *even by his own neighbour*, who, before he fell into disgrace, was intimate with him and pretended to have a kindness for him. Most are swallow-friends, that are gone in winter. It is good having God our friend, for he will not desert us when we are poor.
- 2. Every one will make court to those whom the world smiles upon, though otherwise unworthy: *The rich have many friends*, friends to their riches, in hope to get something out of them. There is little friendship in the world but what is governed by self-interest, which is no true friendship at all, nor what a wise man will either value himself on or put any confidence in. Those that make the world their God idolize those that have most of its good things, and seek their favour as if indeed they were Heaven's favourites.

## [Pro 14:21](#)

See here how men's character and condition are measured and judged of by their conduct towards their poor neighbours.

- 1. Those that look upon them with contempt have here assigned them a bad character, and their condition will be accordingly: *He that despises his neighbour* because he is low in the world, because he is of a mean extraction, rustic education, and makes but a mean figure, that thinks it below him to take notice of him, converse with him, or concern himself about him, and sets him with the dogs of his flock, *is a sinner*, is guilty of a sin, is in the way to worse, and shall be dealt with as a sinner; unhappy is he.
- 2. Those that look upon them with compassion are here said to be in a good condition, according to their character: *He that has mercy on the poor*, is ready to do all the good offices he can to him, and thereby puts an honour upon him, *happy is he*; he does that which is pleasing to God, which he himself will afterwards reflect upon with great satisfaction, for which the loins of the poor will bless him, and which will be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

## [Pro 14:22](#)

See here,

- 1. How miserably mistaken those are that not only do evil, but devise it: *Do they not err?* Yes, certainly they do; every one

knows it. They think that by sinning with craft and contrivance, and carrying on their intrigues with more plot and artifice than others, they shall make a better hand of their sins than others do, and come off better. But they are mistaken. God's justice cannot be out-witted. Those that devise evil against their neighbours greatly err, for it will certainly turn upon themselves and end in their own ruin, a fatal error!

2. How wisely those consult their own interest that not only do good but devise it: *Mercy and truth* shall be to them, not a reward of debt (they will own that they merit nothing), but a reward of mercy, mere mercy, mercy according to the promise, mercy and truth, to which God is pleased to make himself a debtor. Those that are so liberal as to devise liberal things, that seek opportunities of doing good, and contrive how to make their charity most extensive and most acceptable to those that need it, *by liberal things they shall stand*, [Isa. 32:8](#).

[Pro 14:23](#)

Note,

- 1. Working, without talking, will make men rich: *In all labour* of the head, or of the hand, *there is profit*; it will turn to some good account or other. Industrious people are generally thriving people, and where there is something done there is something to be had. *The stirring hand gets a penny*. It is good therefore to keep in business, and to keep in action, and what our hand finds to do to do it with all our might.
- 2. Talking, without working, will make men poor. Those that love to boast of their business and make a noise about it, and that waste their time in tittle-tattle, in telling and hearing new things, like the Athenians, and, under pretence of improving themselves by conversation, neglect the work of their place and day, they waste what they have, and the course they take *tends to penury*, and will end in it. It is true in the affairs of our souls; those that take pains in the service of God, that strive earnestly in prayer, will find profit in it. But if men's religion runs all out in talk and noise, and their praying is only the labour of the lips, they will be spiritually poor, and come to nothing.

[Pro 14:24](#)

Observe,

- 1. If men be wise and good, riches make them so much the more honourable and useful: *The crown of the wise is their riches*; their riches make them to be so much the more respected, and give them the more authority and influence upon others. Those that have wealth, and wisdom to use it, will have a great opportunity of honouring God and doing good in the world. *Wisdom is good without an inheritance*, but better *with* it.
- 2. If men be wicked and corrupt, their wealth will but the more expose them: *The foolishness of fools*, put them in what condition you will, *is folly*, and will show itself and shame them; if they have riches, they do mischief with them and are the more hardened in their foolish practices.

[Pro 14:25](#)

See here,

- 1. How much praise is due to a faithful witness: He *delivers the souls* of the innocent, who are falsely accused, and their good names, which are as dear to them as their lives. A man of integrity will venture the displeasure of the greatest, to bring truth to light and rescue those who are injured by falsehood. A faithful minister, who truly witnesses for God against sin, is thereby instrumental to deliver souls from eternal death.
- 2. How little regard is to be had to a false witness. He forges *lies*, and yet pours them out with the greatest assurance imaginable for the destruction of the innocent. It is therefore the interest of a nation by all means possible to detect and punish false-witness-bearing, yea, and lying in common conversation; for truth is the cement of society.

[Pro 14:26-27](#)

In these two verses we are invited and encouraged to live in the fear of God by the advantages which attend a religious life. The *fear of the Lord* is here put for all gracious principles, producing gracious practices.

- 1. Where this reigns it produces a holy security and serenity of mind. There is in it a *strong confidence*; it enables a man still to hold fast both his purity and his peace, whatever happens, and gives him boldness before God and the world. *I know that I shall be justified-None of these things move me*; such is the language of this confidence.
- 2. It entails a blessing upon posterity. The children of those that by faith make God their confidence shall be encouraged by the promise that God will be a God to believers and to their seed to flee to him as their refuge, and they shall find shelter in him. The children of religious parents often do the better for their parents' instructions and example and fare the better for their faith and prayers. *"Our fathers trusted in thee, therefore we will."*
- 3. It is an over-flowing ever-flowing spring of comfort and joy; it is a *fountain of life*, yielding constant pleasure and satisfaction to the soul, joys that are pure and fresh, are life to the soul, and quench its thirst, and can never be drawn dry; it is a *well of living water*, that is springing up to, and is the earnest of, eternal life.

- 4. It is a sovereign antidote against sin and temptation. Those that have a true relish of the pleasures of serious godliness will not be allured by the baits of sin to swallow its hook; they know where to obtain better things than any it can pretend to offer, and therefore it is easy to them *to depart from the snares of death* and to keep their foot from being taken in them.

[Pro 14:28](#)

Here are two maxims in politics, which carry their own evidence with them:-

1. That it is much for the honour of a king to have a populous kingdom; it is a sign that he rules well, since strangers are hereby invited to come and settle under his protection and his own subjects live comfortably; it is a sign that he and his kingdom are under the blessing of God, the effect of which is being fruitful and multiplying. It is his strength, and makes him considerable and formidable; happy is the king, the father of his country, who has his *quiver full of arrows*; he *shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with his enemy in the gate*, [Ps. 127:4](#), 5. It is therefore the wisdom of princes, by a mild and gentle government, by encouraging trade and husbandry, and by making all easy under them, to promote the increase of their people. And let all that wish well to the kingdom of Christ, and to his honour, do what they can in their places that many may be added to his church.
2. That when the people are lessened the prince is weakened: *In the want of people is the leanness of the prince* (so some read it); trade lies dead, the ground lies untilled, the army wants to be recruited, the navy to be manned, and all because there are not hands sufficient. See how much the honour and safety of kings depend upon their people, which is a reason why they should rule by love, and not with rigour. Princes are corrected by those judgments which abate the number of the people, as we find, [2 Sa. 24:13](#).

[Pro 14:29](#)

Note,

- 1. Meekness is wisdom. *He* rightly understands himself, and his duty and interest, the infirmities of human nature, and the constitution of human society, who *is slow to anger*, and knows how to excuse the faults of others as well as his own, how to adjourn his resentments, and moderate them, so as by no provocation to be put out of the possession of his own soul. A mild patient man is really to be accounted an intelligent man, one that learns of Christ, who is Wisdom itself.
- 2. Unbridled passion is folly proclaimed: *He that is hasty of spirit*, whose heart is tinder to every spark of provocation, that is all fire and tow, as we say, he thinks hereby to magnify himself and make those about stand in awe of him, whereas really he *exalts his own folly*; he makes it known, as that which is lifted up is visible to all, and he submits himself to it as to the government of one that is exalted.

[Pro 14:30](#)

The foregoing verse showed how much our reputation, this how much our health, depends on the good government of our passions and the preserving of the temper of the mind.

- 1. A healing spirit, made up of love and meekness, a hearty, friendly, cheerful disposition, is *the life of the flesh*; it contributes to a good constitution of body; people grow fat with good humour.
- 2. A fretful, envious, discontented spirit, is its own punishment; it consumes the flesh, preys upon the animal spirits, makes the countenance pale, and is the *rotteness of the bones*. Those that see the prosperity of others and are grieved, let them *gnash with their teeth and melt away*, [Ps. 112:10](#).
- Rumpatur, quisquis rumpitur invidia.
- Whoever bursts for envy, let him burst.

[Pro 14:31](#)

God is here pleased to interest himself more than one would imagine in the treatment given to the poor.

1. He reckons himself affronted in the injuries that are done them. Whosoever he be that wrongs a poor man, taking advantage against him because he is poor and cannot help himself, let him know that he puts an affront upon his Maker. God made him, and gave him his being, the same that is the author of our being; we have all one Father, one Maker; see how Job considered this, [Job 31:15](#). God made him poor, and appointed him his lot, so that, if we deal hardly with any because they are poor, we reflect upon God as dealing hardly with them in laying them low, that they might be trampled upon.
- 2. He reckons himself honoured in the kindnesses that are done them; he takes them as done to himself, and will show himself accordingly pleased with them. *I was hungry, and you gave me meat*. Those therefore that have any true honour for God will show it by compassion to the poor, whom he has undertaken in a special manner to protect and patronise.

[Pro 14:32](#)

Here is,

- 1. The desperate condition of a wicked man when he goes out of the world: He *is driven away in his wickedness*. He cleaves so closely to the world that he cannot find in his heart to leave it, but is driven away out of it; his soul is required, is forced from him, And sin cleaves so closely to him that it is inseparable; it goes with him into another world; he *is driven away in his wickedness*, dies in his sins, under the guilt and power of them, unjustified, unsanctified. His wickedness is the storm in which he is hurried away, as chaff before the wind, chased out of the world.
- 2. The comfortable condition of a godly man when he finishes his course: He *has hope in his death* of a happiness on the other side death, of better things in another world than ever he had in this. *The righteous* then have the grace of hope in them; though they have pain, and some dread of death, yet they have hope. They have before them the good hoped for, even the blessed hope which God, who cannot lie, has promised.

[Pro 14:33](#)

Observe,

1. Modesty is the badge of wisdom. He that is truly wise hides his treasure, so as not to boast of it ([Mt. 13:44](#)), though he does not hide his talent, so as not to trade with it. His *wisdom rests in his heart*; he digests what he knows, and has it ready to him, but does not unseasonably talk of it and make a noise with it. The heart is the seat of the affections, and there wisdom must rest in the practical love of it, and not swim in the head.
- 2. Openness and ostentation are a mark of folly. If fools have a little smattering of knowledge, they take all occasions, though very foreign, to produce it, and bring it in by head and shoulders. Or the folly that *is in the midst of fools is made known* by their forwardness to talk. Many a foolish man takes more pains to show his folly than a wise man thinks it worth his while to take to show his wisdom.

[Pro 14:34](#)

Note,

1. Justice, reigning in a nation, puts an honour upon it. A righteous administration of the government, impartial equity between man and man, public countenance given to religion, the general practice and profession of virtue, the protecting and preserving of virtuous men, charity and compassion to strangers (*alms* are sometimes called *righteousness*), these *exalt a nation*; they uphold the throne, elevate the people's minds, and qualify a nation for the favour of God, which will make them high, as a *holy nation*, [Deu. 26:19](#).
- 2. Vice, reigning in a nation, puts disgrace upon it: *Sin is a reproach to any city or kingdom*, and renders them despicable among their neighbours. The people of Israel were often instances of both parts of this observation; they were great when they were good, but when they forsook God all about them insulted them and trampled on them. It is therefore the interest and duty of princes to use their power for the suppression of vice and support of virtue.

[Pro 14:35](#)

This shows that in a well-ordered court and government smiles and favours are dispensed among those that are employed in public trusts according to their merits; Solomon lets them know he will go by that rule,

- 1. That those who behave themselves wisely shall be respected and preferred, whatever enemies they may have that seek to undermine them. No man's services shall be neglected to please a party or a favourite.

**2. That those who are selfish and false, who betray their country, oppress the poor, and sow discord, and thus *cause shame*, shall be displaced and banished the court, whatever friends they may make to speak for them.**