



Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 17:16-28

16 Why should a fool have money in his hand to buy wisdom when he has no sense?

17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

18 One who lacks sense gives a pledge and puts up security in the presence of his neighbor.

19 Whoever loves transgression loves strife; he who makes his door high seeks destruction.

20 A man of crooked heart does not discover good, and one with a dishonest tongue falls into calamity.

21 He who sires a fool gets himself sorrow, and the father of a fool has no joy.

22 A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

23 The wicked accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the ways of justice.


24 The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.

25 A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.

26 To impose a fine on a righteous man is not good, nor to strike the noble for their uprightness.

27 Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

28 Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.



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DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 17:16-28

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When I read this passage, I thought, "All this is wonderful, and I know it's God's word, but it's kind of all over the place." Then I realized this was more a reflection of my own heart than what God is saying. He is advising us not to be foolish and ignore what He asks of us thus bringing grief to ourselves and our loved ones, but instead to be wise and follow His teachings and open our hearts to Him.

I have been on both sides of this particular coin. I have been a fool when I have followed my flesh, my own thoughts of what was right and what I should have or do. I have been wise when I paid attention to the Word and to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit. I still struggle, but God has been slowly bringing me toward wisdom. As 2 Peter 3:9 says, He is not truly slow but is being patient. I, being a human (and a pretty stubborn one at that), can only absorb so much at one time. He never pushes me farther than I can go, but He tirelessly works to bring me closer to His vision of what the perfect Pam Paine should look like, even though the job will not be finished in this lifetime.

I have suffered the pains of a crushed spirit (verse 22), but God always makes a way out of the deepest spiritual and emotional hole. Through His work in my life, I now have a joyful heart. I have been through some miserable times during events I never wanted to see – war, recession/depression, civil unrest, a pandemic, and the loss of my entire family to age, disease, and accident. Basically, all the things I heard about in my forebears' stories that I thought, "Man, I am so glad I didn't have to go through that" were the things I have lived through. As James 1:2-4 says, God uses trials and hard times to bring us closer to Him. I have experienced this when He was all I had. He got me through, even better than I hoped.

Verse 17 was truly brought home to me through a friend and brother at the church when I said how much I still mourn my family. He lovingly said, "Why not be thankful you had them in the first place rather than mourn their passing?" That gave me a new perspective. While I always will miss my family, I do not have to grieve incessantly. Through the words of my brother, I realized having joy in the life God has given me is not a selfish thing, but instead a testament to His grace. Not allowing joy into my life because I am mourning is sinful, because that is not accepting God's plan and the abundant gifts He has given me – salvation, restoration and a new family in Christ.

And of course, the last verse of this passage is a true gem: "Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent." I had to find out the hard way that the most intelligent thing a person can do



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sometimes is to say nothing, which will have the side benefit of not making that person (me, often) look foolish. I do love how the Bible is not only focused on the spiritual but also on the practical.

Questions:

1. Are you struggling with being foolish at times? Do you have some foolish habits that you cannot break? The [Re:generation](#) program can help you learn to live more as Jesus would have us do.
2. Do you feel isolated? Know that God loves you as if you were His only child, and He is willing to open up your world if you only turn to Him, even a little bit. Ask a godly friend or church elder for help.
3. In what ways has God improved you and brought you closer to wisdom? Give praise to Him and ask Him to open your heart even more to His ways.