

# Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

## BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 20:1-15

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**1** Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

**2** The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion; whoever provokes him to anger forfeits his life.

**3** It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling.

**4** The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.

**5** The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

**6** Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?

**7** The righteous who walks in his integrity— blessed are his children after him!

**8** A king who sits on the throne of judgment winnows all evil with his eyes.

**9** Who can say, "I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin"?

**10** Unequal weights and unequal measures are both alike an abomination to the Lord.

**11** Even a child makes himself known by his acts, by whether his conduct is pure and upright.

**12** The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both.

**13** Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread.

**14** "Bad, bad," says the buyer, but when he goes away, then he boasts.


**15** There is gold and abundance of costly stones, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

## DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 20:1-15

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AUTHOR: KELLY PALLO

How often, as children, did we utter the phrase, "When I grow up. . ."? I remember making declarations of future homes, spouses, travel plans, but especially career goals. I wanted to be a marine biologist, a geologist, a singer, a writer, or a chaplain in the Army. There were some days that I wished only to be a Toys R' Us kid and to never grow



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up; but nonetheless, I did grow up to have several children who love to make declarations of their own. I have lost count of the number of future jobs my children will have. Will any one of them really become a police officer, teacher, fireman, zoologist, or chef? We don't know what future God has for them, but we do often remind them of two things. First is: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11). And second is that the way to that future is lined with hard work. (This is usually followed by a groan from the seven-year-old)

The Proverbs are littered with the wisdom of work. Proverbs 13:4, "The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied." Proverbs 12:11, "Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense." Proverbs 6:6-8, "Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest." These are just a few Proverbs leading up to Proverbs 20:13, "Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread."

How often we toil in the daily work of the world without working in our relationships with the Father. The bread that we often see in the Word is referring back to the manna that God supplied the Israelites as they wandered the desert, but now that bread for us is His Word. The manna that was gifted to them each day was not just tiny loaves of bread lying on the ground; they, in fact, had to collect it, work with it, bake it, and bless it before they consumed the substance. It took hard work for the manna to turn into food. They were given the provision of the Lord, but it took work to turn it into something they could use for sustenance.

We, too, are called in Matthew 4:4 to not live by bread alone. Our manna is the Word of God and we have to daily rise and do the "hard work of heart work" to grow in our relationship to him. We are called to work that manna, allow time for it to grow within our hearts and for the Holy Spirit to use it in our lives. We cannot sleep, as Proverbs 20 tells us, we must be diligent in our pursuit of the Lord because regardless of the plans we have for our lives, God has a greater plan and a greater reward awaiting for us. It won't always be easy, we will suffer some, and it will be difficult at times, but when we realize that our dreams for ourselves are nothing compared to the plans of God, the unending joy that comes is the sweetest.

## Questions:

1. Do you get your sustenance from God's Word? Why or why not?
2. What verse is your favorite? Do you have it memorized?
3. What is the hardest heart work you have had to work with God to complete? Or are you still working?