



Proverbs - Chapter Thirteen

III Proverbs 10:1-22:16 - Wise Sayings of Solomon (continues)

Summary of Chapter Thirteen

The righteous hate lies. Hope deferred makes the heart sick. Whoever heeds reproof is honoured. Whoever spares the rod hates his son.

Introduction to Proverbs 13:1-6

Headed by the call to be a wise son in Proverbs 10:1, these proverbs also utilise a play on words (as did Proverbs 10:6-32) relating to both communication, i.e. listen in v.1, words in v.2, mouth and lips in v.3, and lying or falsehood (v.5), and eating/desire (v.2) with craves and richly supplied (v.4), in order to assure those who seek to guard their mouth (v.3) through righteousness (v.6) that such a path has mutually reinforcing benefits in both heart and actions.

The purpose of the section is integrated further by the repeated Hebrew *nepesh*, translated as desire (v.2), lives (v.3), and appetite, literally soul, twice in v.4. Guarding the mouth protects the heart from being further confirmed in violence (v.2) and: <<***The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence***>> (Proverbs 10:11), or sin (v.6), which overthrows a person and leads to ruin.

- ¹ A wise child loves discipline,
but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

Proverbs 13:1

A wise child loves discipline. The fact that Solomon delivered this proverb to his own son does not make it any less true. Children are wise to listen to the instruction from their parents.

A scoffer does not listen to rebuke. The scoffer is fool enough to reject all guidance and therefore never learns: <<*Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but those who hate to be rebuked are stupid*>> (Proverbs 12:1), and: <<*A fool despises a parent's instruction, but the one who heeds admonition is prudent*>> (Proverbs 15:5).

² From the fruit of their words good people eat good things,
but the desire of the treacherous is for wrongdoing.

Proverbs 13:2

From the fruit of their words good people eat good things. Wise and good speech brings blessings of many different kinds, including the blessing of prosperity: <<*From the fruit of the mouth one is filled with good things, and manual labour has its reward*>> (Proverbs 12:14).

The desire of the treacherous is for wrongdoing. Those who are unfaithful to God and his wisdom may find themselves supported by or through their evil, often violent acts.

³ Those who guard their mouths preserve their lives;
those who open wide their lips come to ruin.

Proverbs 13:3

Those who guard their mouths preserve their lives. Wise and good words can preserve life. This is true both in a moment of crisis and over a lifetime.

Those who open wide their lips come to ruin. To speak too much is usually to find trouble, leading to destruction. This is especially true of those whom David wrote about: <<*They utter lies to each other; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak*>> (Psalm 12:2). Wisdom will guard the mouth and the words it speaks. Adam Clarke commented, "How often have the foolish, headstrong, and wicked, forfeited their lives by the treasonable or blasphemous words they have spoken! The government of the tongue is a rare but useful talent." And again, "It has often been remarked that God has given us two EYES that we may SEE much; two EARS that we may HEAR much; but has given us but ONE tongue, and that fenced in with teeth, to indicate that though we hear and see much, we should speak but little."

Solomon later wrote: <<*Never be rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be quick to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few*>> (Ecclesiastes 5:2), thus reinforcing the point he is making here.

- 4 The appetite of the lazy craves, and gets nothing,
while the appetite of the diligent is richly supplied.

Proverbs 13:4

The appetite of the lazy craves, and gets nothing. It is not that the lazy man or woman lacks desire; they wish for many things. Yet they have nothing because they cannot or will not apply themselves to the work required to make desires into a reality: <<*The craving of the lazy person is fatal, for lazy hands refuse to labour. All day long the wicked covet, but the righteous give and do not hold back*>> (Proverbs 21:25-26).

The appetite of the diligent is richly supplied. Appetite in the NRSVA is literally 'soul.' As in most places in Proverbs, soul is used in the sense of 'life,' without so much reference to the non-material aspect of one's being, thus the intention here is probably 'appetite for life.' It is true that diligence in spiritual things leads to spiritual riches and blessing. Clarke observed, "We often hear many religious people expressing a desire to have more of the Divine life, and yet never get forward in it. How is this? The reason is, they desire, but do not stir themselves up to lay hold upon the Lord."

- 5 The righteous hate falsehood,
but the wicked act shamefully and disgracefully.

Proverbs 13:5

The righteous hate falsehood. The righteous man or woman does not prefer the truth and avoid the lie; they actually hate lying: <<*Truly I direct my steps by all your precepts; I hate every false way*>> (Psalm 119:128). Being godly, they have some of the love of the truth and hatred of the lie that God himself has.

The wicked act shamefully and disgracefully. The implication is that wicked men and women love to lie, and this makes them loathsome and repulsive to the righteous and to God. This will surely bring them to shame.

- 6 Righteousness guards one whose way is upright,
but sin overthrows the wicked.

Proverbs 13:6

Righteousness guards one whose way is upright. A blameless life - certainly not one free of sin, but a life of general righteousness and integrity - is honoured and blessed by God. It is both the righteousness of the blameless man or woman that guards, and the righteousness of God himself.

Sin overthrows the wicked. Even as the blameless man or woman's own righteousness guards them, so the sin of the sinner overthrows them: <<*The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them*>> (Proverbs 11:3), <<*The righteousness of the blameless keeps their ways straight, but the wicked fall by their own wickedness*>> (Proverbs 11:5), <<*But they did not listen or incline their ear, to turn from their wickedness and make no offerings to other gods*>> (Jeremiah 44:5). Deeds can reflect destiny.

Introduction to Proverbs 13:7-8

Things are not always as they seem. In particular, one may have money but live in fear because of the threats one faces. Verse 8 also looks back to v.1, since <<*gets no threats*>> translates the same Hebrew words as <<*does not listen to rebuke*>> in v.1. The poor man has little at risk, so threats of robbery or extortion do not concern him as they would the rich, but the poor man might also tend to brush off warnings and rebukes. The message is that life is sometimes paradoxical. The scoffer will not shut his mouth but will soon have nothing to put into it (vv.1-4); the man known to be rich is impoverished by paying off those who are constantly threatening him (vv.7-8).

- ⁷ Some pretend to be rich, yet have nothing;
others pretend to be poor, yet have great wealth.

Proverbs 13:7

Some pretend to be rich, yet have nothing. Material riches and wealth may be of little account for happiness in this world and especially in the world to come. One may work hard to make himself rich, yet find at the end of it all there is nothing: <<*For you say, "I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing." You do not realise that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked*>> (Revelation 3:17). Solomon wrote about these principles in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

Others pretend to be poor, yet have great wealth. There are those who willingly make themselves poor on a material level, and do so out of generosity to others or out of fixed spiritual priorities. Such ones have great riches in this life and in the life to come. The greatest occasion of anyone making himself poor yet gaining great riches through it was that of Jesus: <<*For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich*>> (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Paul also provides a good example of this in a disciple's life that was personally endured by him and his companions: <<*As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.'*>> See,

now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see – we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything>> (2 Corinthians 6:1-10).

⁸ Wealth is a ransom for a person's life,
but the poor get no threats.

Proverbs 13:8

Wealth is a ransom for a person's life. A man's life can be measured in many ways. One of those measurements - although by no means the best measurement - is his riches. In a time of crisis, a man's riches may well ransom his life.

The poor get no threats. Most commentators take this in a positive sense, with the idea that the poor will never find himself in the same trouble as the rich man who must ransom his life with his riches: <<**Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it**>> (Proverbs 15:16). Clarke observed, "Those who have riches have often much trouble with them; as they had much trouble to get them, so they have much trouble to keep them. In despotic countries, a rich man is often accused of some capital crime, and to save his life, though he may be quite innocent, is obliged to give up his riches; but the poor, in such countries, are put to no trouble." If taken in a negative sense, then here Solomon considered those whose poverty comes from their moral failings. Certainly not everyone who is poor is in that condition because of their unwillingness to hear rebuke, but some are. Their foolish rejection of wisdom leads them to poverty.

⁹ The light of the righteous rejoices,
but the lamp of the wicked goes out.

Proverbs 13:9

The light of the righteous rejoices. Righteousness - godliness as expressed in real life - is associated with light and with rejoicing. There is something wrong with the person who claims to be righteous yet rarely has evidence of light and rejoicing.

The lamp of the wicked goes out. Righteousness is associated with light, but the wicked with darkness: <<*Surely the light of the wicked is put out, and the flame of their fire does not shine*>> (Job 18:5), <<*But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what they stumble over*>> (Proverbs 4:18-19), <<*And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God*>> (John 3:19-21). The darkness conceived of here is one that is imposed by the judgement of a righteous God.

The images of light and lamp refer to a person's joy, energy, and visible success in life, all of which cause the righteous to rejoice, but for the wicked this will be put out. This may also imply the actual end of life and the lack of a future for the wicked: <<*for the evil have no future; the lamp of the wicked will go out*>> (Proverbs 24:20).

¹⁰ By insolence the heedless make strife,
but wisdom is with those who take advice.

Proverbs 13:10

The contrast of insolence and wisdom is similar to the warning against being 'right in his own eyes' rather than lining up with those who take advice: <<*Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to advice*>> (Proverbs 12:15).

By insolence the heedless make strife. Pride - excessive self-focus and self-regard - constantly generates strife. When people are focused on their own exaltation they will always attempt to advance themselves at the expense of others. Clarke noted, "Perhaps there is not a quarrel among individuals in private life, nor a war among nations, that does not proceed from pride and ambition. It was to destroy this spirit of pride, that Jesus was manifested in the extreme of humility and humiliation among men. The salvation of Christ is a deliverance from pride, and a being clothed with humility. As far as we are humble, so far we are saved."

Wisdom is with those who take advice. Those who listen to and receive the counsel of others walk in wisdom: <<*Then he commanded the men whom he sent, saying, 'Thus shall you say to all the Israelites, "Has such a thing ever happened since the day that the Israelites came up from the land of Egypt until this day? Consider it, take counsel, and speak out"'*>> (Judges 19:30), and: <<*Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous and they will gain in learning*>> (Proverbs 9:9).

- ¹¹ Wealth hastily gained will dwindle,
but those who gather little by little will increase it.

Proverbs 13:11

Wealth hastily gained will dwindle. The person who receives sudden wealth has not worked for it enough to understand its value and has not gained sufficient skill in managing it: <<*The faithful will abound with blessings, but one who is in a hurry to be rich will not go unpunished*>> (Proverbs 28:20). By contrast, Proverbs prefers diligent, patient, careful labour that will increase wealth over time.

Those who gather little by little will increase it. This happens with God's blessing on honest labour and in the practice of habits that normally earn, retain, and increase wealth.

- ¹² Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

Proverbs 13:12

Hope deferred makes the heart sick. The strength of hope sustains the heart; when hope's fulfilment is long delayed or deferred, it can make the heart sick.

Desire fulfilled is a tree of life. When hope's desire finally is fulfilled it brings long-sustained life. This principle is a reminder that although hope's delayed fulfilment may even make the heart sick, it is worth it to endure the sense of sickness for the goodness of the fulfilment when it comes: <<*Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God*>> (Revelation 2:7), and: <<*Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates*>> (Revelation 22:14).

- ¹³ Those who despise the word bring destruction on themselves,
but those who respect the commandment will be rewarded.

Proverbs 13:13

Those who despise the word bring destruction on themselves. This principle may be fulfilled through the direct judgement of God upon those who commit the terrible sin of despising his word, or by the natural consequences of such folly: <<*Because of having despised the word of the Lord and broken his commandment, such a person shall be utterly cut off and bear the guilt*>> (Numbers 15:31).

Those who respect the commandment will be rewarded. The one who not only understands and obeys but also properly respects and reverences God's word, i.e. respects the commandment, will be rewarded both in this life: <<*Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord hurried their slaves and livestock off to a secure place*>> (Exodus 9:20), and the life to come: <<*But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life*>> (Jude 20-21).

¹⁴ The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
so that one may avoid the snares of death.

Proverbs 13:14

The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life. God's word, the law of the wise, is a continual source of life for all who will receive it: <<*The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life*>> (Proverbs 10:11a).

So that one may avoid the snares of death. This is one way that God's word brings life. Understanding and obeying God's word will keep one away from many things that trap and destroy, both spiritual and material. It suggests that death acts like a hunter in the same way that Satan does: <<*Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour*>> (1 Peter 5:8).

¹⁵ Good sense wins favour,
but the way of the faithless is their ruin.

Proverbs 13:15

Good sense wins favour. This happens both from the blessing of God and simply from the way people relate and socialise with each other. Men and women of good understanding are more welcome among others in the way they deal with people.

The way of the faithless is their ruin. Those who reject wisdom and live lives unfaithful to God and man will find life hard: <<*They have dealt faithlessly with the Lord; for they have borne illegitimate children. Now the new moon shall devour them along with their fields*>> (Hosea 5:7), <<*But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death*>> (Revelation 21:8). They find many more obstacles and difficulties in their path, and receive less help from others along the way. Clarke commented, "Never was a truer saying; most sinners have more pain and difficulty to get their souls damned, than the righteous have, with all their cross-bearings, to get to the kingdom of heaven."

16 The clever do all things intelligently,
but the fool displays folly.

Proverbs 13:16

The clever do all things intelligently. The wise and prudent man or woman not only has knowledge, but they act with it. Wisdom is more than in their mind, it is in their life.

The fool displays folly. The folly of the fool is plain for the world to see: <<*Even when fools walk on the road, they lack sense, and show to everyone that they are fools*>> (Ecclesiastes 10:3). It is open before God and man. In Haman's case he displayed his folly with pride in front of his family: <<*Then he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh, and Haman recounted to them the splendour of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honoured him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the ministers of the king*>> (Esther 5:10b-11). Little did he realise that his own demise and death was imminent.

17 A bad messenger brings trouble,
but a faithful envoy, healing.

Proverbs 13:17

A bad messenger brings trouble. It could be often said that the wicked person falls into trouble, but this is even more so of the messenger, who has the responsibility to relay the message. This is a warning to those who are or wish to be messengers of God's truth: <<*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns'*>> (Isaiah 52:7), and: <<*Look! On the mountains the feet of one who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace! Celebrate your festivals, O Judah, fulfil your vows, for never again shall the wicked invade you; they are utterly cut off*>> (Nahum 1:15).

A faithful envoy, healing. An ambassador is a special kind of messenger, and those who are faithful in that duty bring goodness to others and to themselves: <<*Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest are faithful messengers to those who send them; they refresh the spirit of their masters*>> (Proverbs 25:13), <<*But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall*>> (Malachi 4:2). This is a blessing for those who are or wish to be ambassadors of God.

18 Poverty and disgrace are for the one who ignores instruction,
but one who heeds reproof is honoured.

Proverbs 13:18

Poverty and disgrace are for the one who ignores instruction. Everyone makes mistakes, but the man or woman who cannot be corrected will remain in their mistakes and never learn from them: <<*Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but those who hate to be rebuked are stupid*>> (Proverbs 12:1). This often leads to poverty and shame.

One who heeds reproof is honoured. A rebuke never feels good, but when it is properly regarded and learned from, the person will not repeat the same mistakes over and over again. Therefore, it is good to accept the rebukes of the wise: <<*Let the righteous strike me; let the faithful correct me*>> (Psalm 141:5a), <<*Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise rebuke to a listening ear*>> (Proverbs 25:12), and: <<*It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools*>> (Ecclesiastes 7:5). This leads to honour in this life and in the life yet to come:.

¹⁹ A desire realised is sweet to the soul,
but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.

Proverbs 13:19

A desire realised is sweet to the soul. When a person's desires are fulfilled - especially when they are accomplished through hard work, discipline, and sacrifice - this is sweet to the soul and brings great life satisfaction.

But to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools. The fool is so in love with his or her evil that they regard it as a terrible thing, **an abomination**, to depart from that evil. This shows that evil and folly are not surface problems; they are bound up deep within a person's being: <<*But after they had rest, they again did evil before you, and you abandoned them to the hands of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them*>> (Nehemiah 9:28a). Regular companions inevitably influence each other, for good or for ill.

The refusal to turn from evil is folly as to repent would bring forgiveness from the Lord: <<*yet when they turned and cried to you, you heard from heaven, and many times you rescued them according to your mercies*>> (Nehemiah 9:28b), and: <<*When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it*>> (Jonah 3:10).

²⁰ Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise,
but the companion of fools suffers harm.

Proverbs 13:20

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise. Good companions bring much good and wisdom to life. When a person chooses to associate with wise men and women, they too will gain in wisdom.

The companion of fools suffers harm. It is taken for granted that the companion of fools is a fool and will remain rooted in their folly. Their choice of companions proves their folly and shows their destiny: destruction. This was seen in Solomon's own son Rehoboam, who lost most of his kingdom for taking wrong advice from his friends: *<<But he rejected the advice that the older men gave him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and now attended him>>* (2 Chronicles 10:8). Derek Kidner quoted John Knox's translation of the Latin Vulgate: 'Fool he ends that fool befriends.' The apostle Paul wrote: *<<Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals'>>* (1 Corinthians 15:33).

²¹ Misfortune pursues sinners,
but prosperity rewards the righteous.

Proverbs 13:21

Misfortune pursues sinners. In their very nature, sinners will pursue evil. Yet it is also true that evil pursues sinners: *<<and now the Lord has brought it about, and has done as he said, because all of you sinned against the Lord and did not obey his voice. Therefore this thing has come upon you>>* (Jeremiah 40:3). The power of evil and the evil one desires to keep sinners in their grasp.

Prosperity rewards the righteous. The 'reward' of sinners is for evil to chase after them. God's righteous men and women have a much better destiny. Good shall be granted to them as they reap what they have sown as Paul declared in Galatians 6:7.

The promise that Jesus made should be recalled: *<<Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age – houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life'>>* (Mark 10:29-30). **Another of Jesus' promises should also be remembered:** *<<Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward>>* (Matthew 10:41-42).

Introduction to Proverbs 13:22-25

Walking with the wise (vv.20-21) includes prudence to care for children:

1. By providing a material inheritance that extends even to grandchildren (on inheritance in Israel, refer to Numbers 27:5-11 and Deuteronomy 21:15-17).
2. By providing moral discipline (v.24).

In thus seeking to provide, parents ought also to pursue justice (v.23), exhibiting their faith that the righteous will have enough to satisfy (v.25).

- ²² The good leave an inheritance to their children's children,
but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.

Proverbs 13:22

The good leave an inheritance to their children's children. The blessing on the life of a good man is great enough that, upon his death, he has enough to give an inheritance not only to his children, but to his grandchildren. This also shows the generosity of the good man. More importantly, the good man passes an inheritance to his children and grandchildren greater than material wealth. He gives something money cannot buy: the gift of a good parent and grandparent, and the example of goodness, and all the goodness entails. Clarke observed, "He files many a prayer in heaven in their behalf, and his good example and advices are remembered and quoted from generation to generation."

The sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous. The sinner may have wealth, and this may be a discouragement to the righteous. Yet confident in the judgements of God, the righteous know that all things are theirs and God can, if he wishes, transfer the wealth of the sinner to the righteous: <<*Then the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. So Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman*>> (Esther 8:2), fulfilling: <<*they may pile it up, but the just will wear it, and the innocent will divide the silver*>> (Job 27:17). Solomon also wrote: <<*For to the one who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner he gives the work of gathering and heaping, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a chasing after wind*>> (Ecclesiastes 2:26).

- ²³ The field of the poor may yield much food,
but it is swept away through injustice.

Proverbs 13:23

The field of the poor may yield much food. Most commentators understand this as a proverb in sympathy with the poor in both its first and second lines. In this

thinking, the fallow ground of the poor exists because of the lack of justice mentioned in the second line. Yet it is possible that the first line of this proverb rebukes those who are poor because of their lack of work or initiative. A wise man or woman might look at a piece of fallow ground and see much food that can be gained with hard work. Others may only see the hard work and a disruption to a lazy life. Clarke understood this as a rebuke of the lazy poor: “O, how much of the poverty of the poor arises from their own want of management! They have little or no economy, and no foresight. When they get any thing, they speedily spend it; and a feast and a famine make the chief varieties of their life.”

It is swept away through injustice. The second line of this proverb speaks clearly of things that are wasted because justice does not prevail. When hard work is justly rewarded and laziness is allowed its natural penalty there will be much less waste. The causes of poverty are complex: it can be caused by injustice and oppression, as here and in Proverbs 22:16, 28:3, and 28:15; by sloth, as in Proverbs 6:9-11 and 28:19; by God’s punishment on wickedness, as in Proverbs 10:2-3 and 13:25; or by his mysterious providence, for example: <<***The rich and the poor have this in common: the Lord is the maker of them all***>> (Proverbs 22:2).

²⁴ Those who spare the rod hate their children,
but those who love them are diligent to discipline them.

Proverbs 13:24

Physical discipline is a common theme in Proverbs, e.g. Proverbs 10:13, 17:10, 22:15, 23:13-24, and 29:15. It is viewed as an important part of the correction and training of a child, to teach him to avoid wrong behaviour, to embrace what is right, and to build godly character. Equally important, physical discipline is an expression of love for a child, while **those who spare the rod hate their children.** Taking into account all of the teaching of Proverbs, physical discipline of a child must never be severe and must always be exercised in love. This is confirmed by Hebrews 12:5-11.

Those who love them are diligent to discipline them. Proper discipline for a child comes from both wisdom and love. Such correction will be done promptly, reinforcing the connection between the correction and error of the child. Kidner commented, “Ephesians 6:4 warns against undue severity; but the obligation remains. Proverbs itself exalts the place of tenderness, constructiveness and example, in this relationship: see, e.g. 4:3, 4:4 and 4:11.”

²⁵ The righteous have enough to satisfy their appetite,
but the belly of the wicked is empty.

Proverbs 13:25

The righteous have enough to satisfy their appetite. This principle was even more treasured in ancient times, when only the relatively wealthy were able to eat as much as they pleased at a meal. God's blessing on the righteous man or woman is often so great that they have material abundance that does them good. Clarke noted, "It also speaks to having a soul that can be satisfied. His desires are all moderate; he is contented with his circumstances, and is pleased with the lot which God is pleased to send."

The belly of the wicked is empty. This may be because of the judgement of God upon the wicked: <<*The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked*>> (Proverbs 10:3), but it is also true that the wicked and foolish life creates its own scarcity. Clarke concluded, "The wicked, though he use all shifts and expedients to acquire earthly good, not sticking even at rapine and wrong, is frequently in real want, and always dissatisfied with his portion. A contented mind is a continual feast. At such feasts he eats not."