

TEXT — 12:1-9

1. Whoso loveth correction loveth knowledge;
But he that hateth reproof is brutish.
2. A good man shall obtain favor of Jehovah;
But a man of wicked devices will he condemn.
3. A man shall not be established by wickedness;
But the root of the righteous shall not be moved.
4. A worthy woman is the crown of her husband;
But she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.
5. The thoughts of the righteous are just;
But the counsels of the wicked are deceit.
6. The words of the wicked are of lying in wait for blood;
But the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.
7. The wicked are overcome, and are not;
But the house of the righteous shall stand.
8. A man shall be commended according to his wisdom;
But he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.
9. Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant;
Than he that honoreth himself, and lacketh bread.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 12:1-9

1. What is the meaning of "loving correction" when Heb. 12:11 says no chastening for the moment seems joyous but grievous (v. 1)?
2. In what sense is one "Brutish" who hates reproof (v. 1)?
3. Among the things that a person might seek, where should obtaining the favor of God rank (v. 2)?
4. Cite some example of people of wicked devices whom God condemned (v. 2)?
5. Apply both parts of v. 3 to David and his contemporaries.
6. According to v. 4 how can a wife affect her husband and his situation in life?
7. Are "thoughts" and "counsels" in v. 5 the same or different? Comment.
8. In what two different ways can the tongue be used (v. 6)?
9. Think of people of your own acquaintance whom you respect for their wisdom (v. 8).
10. What verse in this chapter is similar to v. 7?

11. Think of people of your own acquaintance who are despised because of their perverse heart (v. 8).
12. What does the Bible say about honoring and exalting yourself (v. 9)?

PARAPHRASE OF 12:1-9

1. To learn, you must want to be taught. To refuse reproof is stupid.
2. The Lord blesses good men and condemns the wicked.
3. Wickedness never brings real success; only the godly have that.
4. A worthy wife is her husband's joy and crown; the other kind corrodes his strength and tears down everything he does.
5. A good man's mind is filled with honest thoughts; an evil man's mind is crammed with lies.
6. The wicked accuse; the godly defend.
7. The wicked shall perish; the godly shall stand.
8. Everyone admires a man with good sense, but a man with a warped mind is despised.
9. It is better to get your hands dirty--and eat--than to be to proud to work and starve.

COMMENTS ON 12:1-9

V. 1. This 12th chapter is another entire chapter with two statements per verse, usually contrasting statements and usually a contrast between the righteous and the wicked (as in vs. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 20, 21, 22). This verse connects correction and knowledge, showing that we learn through correction. The new worker has everything explained at first; he remembers most of the instructions, but he makes a mistake; the foreman re-shows him the part he had forgotten, and he now knows how to do it. The major league hires batting coaches to help players with their batting (often through correcting something about their present stance, holding the bat, or swing). Yes, correction here means rebuke (see the last statement of the verse). On "brutish" Pulpit Commentary says: "Insensible to higher aspirations, to regret for the past and hope of amendment, as a brute beast." A sad fact: more people hate reproof than love correction (John 3: 19-21; I Kings 22:8; Amos 5:10).

V. 2. A "good" man obtains God's favor, so does a righteous man (Gen. 7:1), and so does a wise man (Prov. 8:35). Rom. 5:7 draws a distinction between a "good" man and a "righteous" man. Righteousness has to do with doing right rather than wrong; goodness has to do with whether one is good to others or not. A man of wicked devices is neither right nor good. The first goal of life should be to obtain God's favor. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, and a host of others did--and we can. Ahab, Jezebel, Judas Iscariot, Ananias and Sapphira didn't--and many today don't.

V. 3. Compare this verse with v. 7 and Prov. 10:25. A tree is something that is "established"; it is there from year to year. So are the righteous, but the wicked are often cut off (Psa. 37:1,2). Saul and his house lost out through disobedience (I Sam. 15:23). David's house was established through obedience (II Sam. 7:12-16). Wickedness may prosper for the moment but not forever (consider Ananias and Sapphira of Acts 5:1-10 and Haman of Esth. 5:11, 12; 7:8).

V. 4. "Pulpit Commentary:" "A virtuous woman--one whose portrait is beautifully traced in Prov. 31. The term is applied to Ruth in Ruth 3:11...As a crown to her husband, she is an honor to him, adorns and beautifies his life." But there are wives who make their husbands ashamed (maybe by over-spending, maybe their neglect of the house or the children, maybe by their excessive talking, maybe by their immoral conduct, etc.).

V. 5. Everyone has thoughts. The righteous person's thoughts reflect righteous thinking ("just"), but wicked people's thoughts ("counsels expressed in advice") are "deceit" and not sincere.

V. 6. This verse seems to be related to the previous verse. The "Thoughts" of people are put into "words" in which the wicked are out to overthrow, but the righteous are out to deliver. Jezebel used "deceit" and "words" to overthrow Naboth (I Kings 21:7-14). See Prov. 1:10-13 also.

V. 7. Similar in message to v. 3. In v. 6 the wicked were out to overthrow others; in this verse they themselves are overthrown, and the righteous who in v. 6 were out to deliver others are in this verse themselves established. Read the New Testament account of this (Matt. 7:24-27).

V. 8. "David behaved himself wisely, and Saul set him over the men of war" (I Sam. 18:5). A wise person will be looked to

for leadership among the relatives, in the community, at work, and in the church. While the righteous and the wise are held in high respect, the wicked are despised (I Sam. 25:17).

V. 9. Instead of "hath a servant", some versions say "Serving himself" ("Septuagint"); "Tills for himself" ("American Bible Union version") "amplified" speaks of working for his own support. "Pulpit Commentary": "it is wiser to look after one's own business and provide for one's own necessities, even if thereby he meets with contempt and detraction, than to be in real want, all the time assuming the airs of a rich and prosperous man."

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 12:1-9

1. What is the result of loving correction (v. 1)?
2. How is one "brutish" who hates reproof (v. 1)?
3. What is the careful distinction between a "righteous" person and a "good" person (v. 2)?
4. What should be one's first goal in life (v. 2)?
5. Who were some in the Bible who were not established because of wickedness (v. 3)?
6. Who were some who were established because of righteousness (v. 3)?
7. What chapter contains extended material on the virtuous woman (v. 4)?
8. How can a wife be a crown to her husband (v. 4)?
9. How can she make him ashamed (v. 4)?
10. How are vs. 5, 6 related?
11. How are vs. 6, 7 related?
12. How did David's case illustrate v. 8?
13. What do some other versions give for "hath a servant" in v. 9?

TEXT — 12:10-19

10. A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast;
But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.
11. He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread;
But he that followeth after vain persons is void of understanding.
12. The wicked desireth the net of evil men;
But the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.

13. In the transgression of the lips is a snare to the evil man;
But the righteous shall come out of trouble.
14. A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his
mouth;
And the doings of a man's hands shall be rendered unto
him.
15. The way of a fool is right in his own eyes;
But he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel.
16. A fool's vexation is presently known;
But a prudent man concealeth shame.
17. He that uttereth truth showeth forth righteousness;
But a false witness, deceit.
18. There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a
sword;
But the tongue of the wise is health.
19. The lip of truth shall be established for ever;
But a lying tongue is but for a moment.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 12:10-19

1. Does v. 10 teach that a person's righteousness will include the way he treats his animals?
2. What is meant by the "tender mercies of the wicked" (v. 10)?
3. Who are "vain persons" in v. 11?
4. Give the meaning of v. 12 by rewriting in it your own words.
5. Cite Bible instances of the righteous coming out of trouble (v. 10).
6. Cite Bible instances of the doings of men's hands being rendered to them (v. 14).
7. What thought-connection is there between the two statements in v. 15?
8. Is all vexation wrong (v. 16)?
9. In what other Bible passages are both "truth" and "righteousness" found (v. 17)?
10. In v. 18 rash speech is contrasted with what kind of speech?
11. There is a saying that "truth crushed to the ground will again" (v. 19).
12. How can v. 19 be a comfort when one has been misrepresented?

PARAPHRASE OF 12:10-19

10. A good man is concerned for the welfare of his animals, but even the kindness of godless men is cruel.
11. Hard work means prosperity; only a food idles away his time.
12. Crooks are jealous of each other's loot, while good men long to help each other.
13. Lies will get any man into trouble, but honesty is its own defense.
14. Telling the truth gives a man great satisfaction, and hard work returns many blessings to him.
15. A fool thinks he needs no advice, but a wise man listens to others.
16. A fool is quick-tempered; a wise man stays cool when insulted.
17. A good man is known by his truthfulness; a false man by deceit and lies.
18. Some people like to make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise soothe and heal.
19. Truth stands the test of time; lies are soon exposed.

COMMENTS ON 12:10-19

V. 10. A proverb for farmers, some of whom can be very cruel to their animals. Children should be taught not to torture nor abuse animals. As a child I learned:

Be kind to your animal,
 For it cannot complain;
 Be thoughtful when
 Using the whip or the rein.

“Clarke:” “One principal characteristic of a holy man is mercy; cruelty is unknown to him, and his benevolence extends to the meanest of the brute creation. Pity rules the heart of a pious man; he can do nothing that is cruel. He considers what is best for the comfort, ease, health and life of the beast that serves him;” “Pulpit Commentary”: “God enacted that the rest of the sabbath should extend to the domestic animals (Exo. 20:10); that a man should help the overburdened beast even of his enemy (Exo. 23:5); that the unequal strength of the ox and ass should not be yoked together in the plough (Deut. 22:10); that the ox should not be muzzled when he was treading out the corn

(Deut. 25:4); that the sitting bird should not be taken from her little brood (Deut. 22:6), nor a kid seethed in its mothers' milk (Exo. 23:19). God was concerned over both man and animals in Nineveh's threatened destruction (Jon. 4:11)." There seems to be irony in speaking of the "tender mercies" of the wicked as it labels them as "cruel". All that some people know is cruelty but no tenderness.

V. 11. Prov. 28:19 is much like this verse. "Plenty" is the expected pay-off of work. The implication is that one who joins "vain fellows" (non-workers in this contrast) lacks understanding and will come to poverty. The elder son in the parable had plenty of bread, but the prodigal son who ran with useless people came to want (Luke 15:11-14, 17, 25, 26).

V. 12. The wicked (thieves, embezzlers, kidnappers, cheaters, etc.) desire and try to obtain by evil ways, but they are usually caught and end up with nothing while the righteous (who honestly work for what they have) are fruitful in their honest labors (Psa. 1:3, 4).

V. 13. The "net of evil" men desired by the wicked in order to get dishonest gain here becomes a "snare" in which one himself is taken. A liar's memory is not always good enough to keep him from contradicting himself and thus getting himself into trouble (Prov. 18:7), but the truthful, forthright speech of the righteous brings them out of difficulties.

V. 14. Compare Prov. 13:2 for a similar statement. One who has answered kindly is satisfied with the peace that results (Prov. 15:1). A good man's "doings" will also bring him blessings (Luke 6:38; Prov. 31:28-31).

V. 15. A fool knows little, actually not enough to know that he might be wrong, actually too little to seek out the advice of one who does know. Both testaments tell us not to be wise in our own eyes (Prov. 3:7, Rom. 12:16). A wise man can (and will) be warned, but a fool will go on his own way, not seeing his error, and will suffer for it (Prov. 22:3; 27:12).

V. 16. A writer has said: "A foolish man, if he is vexed, insulted, or slighted, has no idea of controlling himself or checking the expression of his aroused feelings; he...at once...makes his vexation known." The wise man keeps a cool head and copes with the problem rather than cursing. Prov. 29:11 is a companion verse: "A fool uttereth all his anger; But a wise man keepeth it back and stilleth it."

V. 17. Truth and righteousness are properly associated

together (I Kings 3:6; Isa. 48:1; Zech. 8:8). Christians are to have their loins girt about with the "truth" and are to have on the breastplate of "righteousness" (Eph. 6:14). One speaks truth who has an eye to righteousness, but one who is untrue utters deceit (Prov. 14:5). We are commended before God by speaking right words but condemned before Him by speaking wrong words (Matt. 12:37).

V. 18. A double contrast: "Speaketh rashly" vs. "tongue of the wise" and "like the piercings of a sword" vs. "health". Rashness is always opposed to reason, for in rashness one speaks or acts before he thinks or beyond his thinking. Such a tongue can be like a destructive, cutting sword (Psa. 59:7; 64:3). Who hasn't sometime been cut (even cut down) by the thoughtless words of others? And yet speech can perk one up (Prov. 12:25), actually build one up. "Edify" means to "build up", and speech can be edifying (Eph. 4:29).

V. 19. It is always right to speak the truth instead of lying, and in the long run it is profitable to have told the truth, for most lies are ultimately found out. Never misrepresent anybody or anything, and if misrepresented by others, remember and take comfort from the fact that in time the truth will be known. Men may have killed Jesus as if evil, but God raised Him as His own Son (Acts 2:23, 24).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 12:10-19

1. According to v. 10 what two ways can a person treat animals?
2. Show from the Scriptures that God in His laws was concerned about animals (v. 10).
3. Who are the "vain persons" in v. 11?
4. What well known person in one of Jesus' parables followed vain persons and ended up with nothing (v. 11)?
5. Instead of honest work how do wicked people try to obtain things (v. 12)?
6. What is the double message of v. 13?
7. What will both a good man's words and his doings do for him (v. 14)?
8. What is right in the eyes of a fool (v. 15)?
9. What does a fool not seek nor heed (v. 15)?
10. How does a fool make his vexation known (v. 16)?
11. Eph. 6:14 speaks of being girt with and having on the breastplate of

12. What is rashness contrasted with (v. 17)?
13. A wicked tongue is likened to a in v. 18.
14. What does "edify" mean (v. 18)?
15. We know misrepresentation is not right. Show from v. 19 that it is also not wise.

TEXT — 12:20-28

20. Deceit is in the heart of them that devise evil;
But to the counsellors of peace is joy.
21. There shall be no mischief happen to the righteous;
But the wicked shall be filled with evil.
22. Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah;
But they that deal truly are his delight.
23. A prudent man concealeth knowledge;
But the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.
24. The hand of the diligent shall bear rule;
But the slothful shall be put under taskwork.
25. Heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop;
But a good word maketh it glad.
26. The righteous is a guide to his neighbor;
But the way of the wicked causeth them to err.
27. The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in
hunting;
But the precious substance of men is to the diligent.
28. In the way of righteousness is life;
And in the pathway thereof is no death.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 12:20-28

1. How many stated and implied truths can you find in v. 20?
2. What is the meaning of "mischief" in v. 21?
3. What is the meaning of "evil" in v. 21?
4. Why does it matter what God thinks of our speech (v. 22)?
5. Cite two contrasts in v. 22.
6. Why would a prudent man "conceal" knowledge (v. 22)?
7. Cite three contrasts in v. 23.
8. What is a "sloth" from which our word "slothful" comes (v. 24)?
9. Find two contrasts in v. 25.

10. If the righteous was a guide to his neighbor in Old Testament times, how is this even more true in New Testament times (v. 26)?
11. By extension could v. 27 be used against killing for sport (v. 27)?
12. Cite other passages besides v. 28 that connect righteousness with life.

COMMENTS ON 12:20-28

V. 20. Deceit in the hearts of those who devise evil is contrasted with the joy that is in the hearts of those whose counsel toward peace. Those who devise evil will do anything (lie, cheat, etc.) in order to accomplish their ends. Those who counsel peace have the good feeling of joy.

V. 21. "Mischief" and "evil" here both mean calamity or difficulty. Other passages using "evil" in this way: Amos 3:6; Eccl. 12:1. Had Jonah obeyed God, he would not have had the nightmarish experience he did (Jon. 1:1-2:6).

V. 22. Strong verses against lying: Prov. 6:17; Col. 3:9; Rev. 21:8; 22:15. God is for truth-telling (Eph. 4:25) and for sincerity (John 1:47).

V. 23. A triple contrast: "prudent" vs. "fools"; "conceal-eth" vs. "proclaimeth"; and "knowledge" vs. "foolishness." Why would a prudent man conceal knowledge? "He is not wont to utter unadvisedly what he knows but waits for fitting opportunity, either from humility or wise caution" ("Pulpit Commentary"). In contrast "a foolish man cannot help exposing the stupid ideas that arise in his mind" (Pulpit Commentary").

V. 24. The diligent bear rule in the community, in business, in the church, etc. See these two classes in the Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:12-24). Before Esau and Jacob were born, God predicted that the elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob) (Gen. 25:23). Jacob was diligent (aggressive to get ahead, and he used every opportunity and every means at his disposal to do so), but Heb. 12:16 calls Esau a "profane" person, who "for one mess of meat sold his own birthright". What is God's evaluation of diligence and indolence? "I love Jacob; but Esau I hated" (Mal. 1:2, 3).

V. 25. While a person's own grief can make his heart heavy, a good word from someone else can cheer it up (Isa. 50:4; Prov. 12:18). Prov. 15:13 treats both conditions of the heart.

V. 26. Here are two kinds of neighbors: a true neighbor (one who is a guide) and a bad neighbor (one who causes another to err). The second greatest commandment in the law of Moses and one also found in the new covenant: love your neighbor (Matt. 22:36-39; Rom. 13:8). The law of love is to help one another (Gal. 6:2; 5:13); nor will love work injury to a neighbor (Rom. 13:10).

V. 27. The slothful man may kill game, bring it home, lay it down, and not bother to roast it so that it might be eaten. Not so with the diligent to whom everything acquired is "precious" (valuable). Some people will never get ahead because of not taking care of what they have; others get ahead by taking care of everything they have.

V. 28. Often the Hebrew poets restated the same thought in different words, such as here. This form emphasizes the fact that righetousness leads to life, not to death--a fact often taught in the Bible (Psa. 37:9, 11, 18, 29).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 12:20-28

1. What do devisers-of-evil employ to accomplish their ends (v. 20)?
2. What emotion do counselors of peace receive (v. 20)?
3. Prove that "mischief" and "evil" sometimes mean "difficulties" in the Bible (v. 21.)?
4. What is God's reaction to lying lips (v. 22)?
5. What is the triple contrast in v. 23?
6. What causes a prudent man to "conceal" knowledge (v. 23)?
7. What class gets elevated to ruling (v. 24)?
8. What twin brothers exemplify the two sides of v. 24?
9. What should we do when we find people with heavy hearts (v. 25)?
10. What contrast toward neighbors is found in v. 26?
11. Who does not roast what he shoots (v. 27)?
12. What common practice in Hebrew poetry is observed in v. 28?

NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 12

"Wicked"--

"A man of wicked devices will he condemn" (v. 2).

"A man shall not be established by wickedness (v. 3).

"The counsels of the wicked are deceit" (v. 5).

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

"The words of the wicked are of lying in wait for blood" (v. 6).

"The wicked are overthrown, and are not" (v. 7).

"The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel" (v. 10).

"The wicked desire the net of evil men" (v. 12).

"The wicked shall be filled with evil" (v. 21).

"The way of the wicked causeth them to err" (v. 26).

"Righteous"--

"A good man shall obtain favor of Jehovah" (v. 2).

"The root of the righteous shall not be moved" (v. 3).

"The thoughts of the righteous are just" (v. 5).

"The mouth of the upright shall deliver them" (v. 6).

"The house of the righteous shall stand" (v. 7).

"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast" (v. 10).

"The root of the righteous yieldeth fruit" (v. 12).

"The righteous shall come out of trouble" (v. 13).

"There shall be no mischief happen to the righteous" (v. 21).

"The righteous is a guide to his neighbor" (v. 26).

"In the way of righteousness is life: And in the pathway thereof is no death" (v. 28).

"Speech"--

"The words of the wicked are of lying in wait for blood; But the mouth of the upright shall deliver them" (v. 6).

"In the transgression of the lips is a snare to the evil man" (v. 13).

"A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth" (v. 14).

"He that uttereth truth showeth forth righteousness; But a false witness deceit" (v. 17).

"There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a sword; But the tongue of the wise healeth" (v. 18).

"The lip of truth shall be established for ever; But a lying tongue is but for a moment" (v. 19).

"Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah" (v. 22).

"The heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness" (v. 23).

"A good word maketh it glad" (v. 25).

"Fools"--

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes" (v. 15).

"A fool's vexation is presently known" (v. 16).

"The heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness" (v. 23).

CHAPTER 12

"Wisdom"--

- "Whoso loveth correction loveth knowledge" (v. 1).
- "A man shall be commended according to his wisdom" (v. 8).
- "He that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel" (v. 15).
- "A prudent man concealeth shame" (v. 16).
- "The tongue of the wise is health" (v. 18).
- "A prudent man concealeth knowledge" (v. 23).

"Deceit"--

- "The counsels of the wicked are deceit" (v. 5).
- "A false witness, deceit" (v. 17).
- "A lying tongue is but for a moment" (v. 19).
- "Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah" (v. 22).
- "The way of the wicked causeth them to err" (v. 26).

"Favor"--

- "A good man shall obtain favor of Jehovah" (v. 2).
- "A man shall be commended according to his wisdom" (v. 8).
- "Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant, Than he that honoreth himself, and lacketh bread" (v. 9).

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

FOOLS DISREGARD WISDOM

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (1:7). "A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent" (15:5). Such a person will turn his back on the very instruction that would make something of him. He pays no attention to what others try to tell him. He goes on his way, not realizing he has turned his back upon sound counsel. 24:7 puts it so briefly, but so correctly. "Wisdom is too high for a fool."

12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." We have all seen living demonstrations of this. We may not always see fit to do everything that everybody tries to get us to do, but we should give sensible consideration to those things we are told. Probably most things we can accept, and we should.

10:8 continues, "The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall." And 29:9 says, "If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest." In this last passage, you will notice the usual responses given by fools to the wise efforts of others in their behalf—they will either get angry (rage) or make fun (laugh). Wisdom is too high for fools, but they don't know it.