BIBLE GATEWAY Proverbs 26 :: NASB. ***Proverbs 26*** is a little different in that it deals with four specific topics. They are fools, sluggards, contentious actions, and those that hate another. All these characteristics are condemned in numerous passages in Proverbs, and they are highlighted in this chapter.

Verse 1 states,

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“Like snow in summer and like rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool.”
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In many parts of the world, snow is to be expected in the winter. In fact, many towns and businesses are dependent upon snow to bring in needed income. But snow in the summer would not only be very unusual but also strange and potentially destructive.

Snow, and the freezing temperatures, would kill many plants and damage herds of animals. Likewise, rain is needed to replenish the land and water the crops.

But rain occurring during harvest would be especially bad. Harvests of grain and other crops could be ruined by the rain. In both cases, the snow and the rain would be strange and unwelcome.

Yet, how does the first part of this proverb tie in with the second half where it states, ***“…so honor is not fitting for a fool”***? The Book of Proverbs includes countless verses describing the actions and attitudes of a fool. So, what are the similarities with the first part of the verse? First, giving honor to a person recognized as a fool would be strange.

This person’s actions and attitudes would hardly warrant positive recognition. If an honor was bestowed upon this person, it would demean the value of the honor that had been given to others before and after. The action would be unwelcome and unwanted by any righteous person.

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Verse 2 states,

> *“Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, so a curse without cause does not alight.”*

The first question that comes to mind is “Why would a person curse another person?” In the Old Testament, there were times when a

curse was called down on person or even a kingdom.

But in all these instances, the source of the curse was called down by the Lord God. In ***Numbers 22***, Balaam was asked by the princes of Moab to curse the children of Israel, but God directed ***him*** to curse the Moabites instead.

However, in this case, the subject of the anger and curse had done nothing to deserve it. The potential victim was innocent of the perceived wrong. In a case like that, what does the curse accomplish? The answer is nothing. It simply flies around aimlessly like a bird's flight.

But for the one that utters the curse, the consequences could be severe. Such a person would have to be filled with a deep rage that would demand vengeance. Yet, when there was no satisfaction the motives for the curse could very well turn on the person and destroy him.

Verses 3-12 contain a series of proverbs that describe a fool. Jesus gave a warning about someone calling another person a fool in *Matthew 5:22*

> *“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”*

Insults such as these come for anger and a desire to hurt and humiliate another with words. That attitude is completely contrary to the principles that form the basis of a Christian life.

But from verses 3-12, the qualities of a person described as a fool are obvious. This is a person unreliable in that he must be watched all the time. While today, a rod may not be used, this person is constantly corrected and disciplined.

This is a person that will not listen. He has a very high opinion of his own knowledge and wisdom, but, his statements and conclusions are folly. To try to reason with such a person is likewise folly. Another person will never succeed in explaining what is wrong with his logic.

Verse 11 is even more emphatic where it states,

> *“Like a dog that returns to its vomit Is a fool who repeats his folly.”*

There is no learning from experience.

Verse 6 ties in with verse 3, where it states,

> *"He cuts off his own feet and drinks violence who sends a message by the hand of a fool.”*

There is no “trusting” such a person to act responsibly, and anyone that decides to entrust a message to this person will regret his decision.

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The comment in verse 7 is almost brutal,

> *“Like the legs which are useless to the lame, so is a proverb in the mouth of fools.”*

Verse 9 adds another thought to this where it states,

> *“Like a thorn which falls into the hand of a drunkard, so is a proverb in the mouth of fools.”*

Words of wisdom simply do not flow from this person’s mouth. It is very much like a man claiming to be righteous and good but is found to be corrupt and heartless.

The point to all these proverbs concerning a fool, this that this is a man, or woman, has none of the attitudes and qualities of a person who loves and strives to please God. If that person continues this path, there is little hope for him.

But that does not mean that a change and salvation is impossible. Sometimes an event will occur that will cause a complete change in a person. When that happens, and that person finally becomes receptive to the words of others, the power of God’s Word is there.

Verses 12-16 describe the actions of a person described as a sluggard.

> *“The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!’ As the door turns on its hinges, so does the sluggard on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is weary of bringing it to his mouth again. The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can give a discreet answer.”*

While this person may have similar characteristics to the fool, the problem here is inaction. A person may be a fool, but that does not mean that this person is inactive or uninvolved. A sluggard may listen to others, and even agree to the wisdom of their words. But that is as far as his actions go. The New Testament teachings repeatedly stress that the Christian life is to be a life that is ACTIVE in serving the Lord.

James clearly states this in James 1: 22-24,

> *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of*

> *the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”*

James also writes in James 2:14-17,

> *“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus, also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*

A person can never gain salvation from works, but true Christian faith will motivate a person to actively apply Christian principles in loving and helping others, in praying for others, for reaching out to others, and living intentionally as a Child of God.

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Verse 13 states,

> “The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!’”

Fear is often the unstated reason why people are not actively living a Christ-like life. But what is the source of that fear? Ultimately, it is a lack of trust in God’s promises and that is based on an imperfect love for the Lord.

Verses 14-15 picture a person that is completely inactive regarding his/her responsibilities as a Christian. Becoming a Christian is not like joining club or association. Being a Christian is not going to work for a company as an employee and then quitting and getting a new job.

When a person becomes a Christian, that man or woman has declared his/her commitment to the Living God through His Son, Jesus Christ. There is not going back without the most severe consequences. There is no doing the minimum to get by.

There is no sitting back while others do the work and then trying to take credit. That is why the people are warned to count the cost of becoming a Christian. It is the most important decision a person can make

Verses 23-28 deal with hatred and contention. Both characteristics are condemned in the New Testament. James 4 states that pride leads to strife. Paul wrote in Galatians 5:19-21,

> *“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

The New Testament writers also warned that such people will come with flattering words or will appear to be friends while speaking slander against the person or the church. Proverbs 24-26 clearly describe such a person,

> *“He who hates disguises it with his lips, but he lays up deceit in his heart. When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart. Though his hatred covers itself with guile, his wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.”*

How many congregations have been damaged or even destroyed by contention and bad feelings, even hatred, between supposed Brothers in Christ?

Unity and peace do not come from compromise or ignoring a problem. Unity comes through love: love for the Father, love for Jesus Christ, and love form the brethren. Hatred and contention are the tools of the Devil and when individuals practice such things, they are not serving God or the Lord Jesus Christ.