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The Path of Righteousness

13: 1-6

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.



There are two **paths** that we can take in this life, **the path of wisdom and righteousness**, or **the path of folly and rebellion**. **A wise son accepts his father's discipline; but a mocker refuses to listen to rebuke (13:1 Hebrew)**. This **proverb** provides a comparison between **wisdom** and **foolishness**, here represented by one **its** more extreme forms, **the mocker**. There is no verb in the first colon, but the idea is certainly that **the son** is **wise** because **he** is open to **his father's discipline**. Thus, **he** is not likely to repeat the same sinful behavior. However, **a mocker** is someone who resists correction. Indeed, the very act of **mocking** is a way of attacking those who might offer advice. **The mocker** refuses to admit wrongdoing; and as a result, cannot tolerate the rebuke that points out **his** mistakes. Accordingly, **the mocker** cannot make any corrections.

The proverb begins by commenting on the consequences of speech. **From the fruit of their mouth people enjoy good things**. A similar statement is made in **12:14: From the fruit of their lips people are filled with good things, and the work of their hands brings them reward (12:14)**. The assumption is that

the speech is wise and helpful, and as a result the speaker enjoys good things. **Good** advice brings rewards to the one who gives it. The second colon contrasts negative with positive **but the desire of the treacherous is violence (13:2 Hebrew)**. Here, **the treacherous** would prefer to hurt others with **their** words.²⁶⁰

Those who control their tongue will have a long life (13:3a Hebrew). Being careful about what one **says** helps keep **him** out of trouble (**14:3** and **21:23**). So, this **proverb** fits in with the teaching on using **words** sparingly (**10;14, 12:18, 13:16, and 17:27-28**). It makes a comparison between infrequent **speech** with longwindedness. It is not that **wise people** never **speak**, but **they** choose **their words** very carefully. **James**, the half-brother of **Yeshua**, has much to say about **the tongue (James 3:1-12)**. **But those who speak rashly will come to ruin (13:3b Hebrew)**. Talking too much leads to all kinds of problems. By **his** reckless **words**, **he** makes promises **he** cannot keep, divulges private information, offends or misrepresents. People learn not to depend on what **he** says and do not want to be around **him**.²⁶¹

Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper (13:4 NLT). The contrast drawn between **laziness** and **hard work** is one of the best attested in the book of **Proverbs (to see link click [Be - Don't be Lazy](#))**. Both **the lazybones** and **the hard worker** have desires, but the desires of **the lazy person** go unfulfilled, presumably because they are unwilling to work toward **their** goals. On the other hand, **hardworking people** have **their** desires met. It is important to note that **proverbs** are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal. **Solomon** would certainly be thinking of legitimate, godly desires since **hardworking people** are those who are **wise**, while **laziness** is the epitome of **folly**.

The righteous hate a false word, which would be **a word** that misrepresents reality in some fashion (**13:5a**). For instance, a false word could misrepresent some past event, or it could make a promise that was never intended to keep. **But the wicked**, then, would **bring disgrace and shame** by destroying the reputations of **others** by uttering **false words (13:5b Hebrew)**.

Godliness protects the path of the righteous of the TaNaKh, but wickedness undermines the sinner (13:6 Hebrew). Again, we have a **proverb** that contrasts two distinct **paths**, **the path** of **righteousness** and **the path** of **wickedness**. There is a further contrast between the innocent, obviously on **the path** of **the wise** and **sinner**s, obviously on **the path** of **fools**. The verbs contrast

the consequences in store for **those** traveling on the two different **paths**. **The righteous** are **protected**, and **the sinners** are misled. **The proverb** thus expresses a general principle that needs to be filled out, based on the broader teaching of **the book**.²⁶²

Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **the wisest path** to follow in life is **Your narrow path**. **Your path** will bring great joy and peace for all eternity (**John 10:10b-c**). There are only two pathways in life. **Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow is the gate and difficult the way that leads to life, and those who find it are few (Matthew 7:13-14)**. As we set our feet on **the right path**, prayer is like the guard rails that will keep our feet moving forward. Reverent praise sets our worship in the right direction. When we sit in **God's** presence, meditating on **His** attributes, **God** lifts our hearts above our fears and in love **He** invites us to cast our burdens on **Him**. **The right path** includes to humble ourselves by confessing our sins, grounding ourselves in Scripture and clinging to the character of **Messiah**. Then when we passionately plead for **God's** help and **wisdom He** will answer, giving **wisdom** and comfort. In **Messiah's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen