

**June 30**

**Scriptures:** Read Proverbs 12

**Key Verse:** “In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.”  
(Proverbs 12:28)

## **Overview**

Proverbs 12 deals with contrasts in conduct between several opposing pairs: the righteous man and the wicked man, the virtuous woman and the one who brings shame to her husband, the industrious man and the slothful man, the wise man and the foolish man. The one who loves and heeds the counsel and reproof of wisdom is wise. He is one who loves knowledge and is described as a good man who obtains favour from the Lord (12:1-2). Those who hate reproof are stupid; they are the fools who think going their own way is right and disregard the way of the Lord. Fools live out their days without having understanding or without growing as a person. Rather than using their minds and wills with integrity, they use their resources to devise wickedness, and are thus despised and condemned by God.

The excellent wife brings honour to her husband. The term translated as “excellent” has a fuller meaning; it literally means “a woman of valour”. In other places, the word is used to describe a good soldier. To hold the fort or maintain the order and peace of the household takes many excellent qualities which are described further in 31:10-31. Among them are wisdom, strength, and virtue, which serve her well in being a godly influence in her home and in fulfilling her domestic duties. However, the foolish wife, who brings shame to her husband, is like “rottenness in his bones”, which continues to rot like a cancer until he collapses. Her entire household will collapse, but “the house of the righteous will stand” (12:7). When the people of God are firmly rooted in Him and established in His Word, they may sway a little during the storms of life, but nothing can uproot them. The wicked, however, are blown away like chaff in the wind (12:3).

The righteous are kindhearted, not only to man but also to their animals, which they treat with concern for their well-being (cf. Deut. 25:4). They know that God is the Creator of all things, and therefore they, like the Lord, show tender mercies to animals and show even more love to their fellow man (Matt. 6:26). The wicked, however, who do not fear God, have no regard or respect for any of God’s creatures, be it man or animal. They are so depraved that what they think to be tender mercies to their animals are in fact cruelties (12:10).

Yet another contrast in conduct is drawn between the wise, hard worker and the foolish, lazy man. The wise man may have to do some menial tasks himself and thereby be lightly esteemed, yet he still has managed his finances well enough to have at least one servant, and since he works the land, he will have sufficient food to eat. On the other hand, the fool who is too proud and lazy to do lowly jobs would rather go hungry. He is “devoid of understanding”, for he does not work hard but “follows frivolity”, such as dreaming up get-rich-quick schemes and hoping to get lucky by finding buried treasure or, in today’s terms, by winning the lottery. The fool’s hopes, however, will perish (12:7). He will end up being the servant to the one who works diligently (12:24).

A final dominant contrast is shown between the truthful dealings of the righteous man and the deceitful and lies of the wicked. The wicked will be ensnared by his lies, but because of the truth that the righteous man speaks, he will come through trouble and the Lord will delight in Him. His words bring health and satisfaction, and he will have peace and joy and be established forever, unlike the man with the lying tongue, whose words are like a sword and who will be gone like a vapour (12:17-22). Considering the contrasts, one does wisely to follow Solomon's advice and choose his friends carefully, since they can have either a good or an adverse influence. Let us be careful to not be pulled down or led astray by the wicked. Let us rather be filled with wisdom, that we might be stronger and have a positive influence on others, directing them toward the way of righteousness through Jesus.

### **Prayer**

We praise You today, oh Lord, for the practical wisdom You have revealed to us in Your Word. Who better than You, our Creator, knows how we should live in order to have a fulfilling and abundant life? We re-commit ourselves today to follow Your Word more fully.