



PROVERBS 14:1-19

LESSON: THERE IS A WAY THAT SEEMS RIGHT—

September 27, 2026

SYNOPSIS: Key Points:

- Coming from ¹**Proverbs 13** emphasized the value of wisdom, diligence, and righteous living, while **Proverbs 14** highlights the contrast between the wise and the foolish, showing the consequences of moral choices.
- **Chapter 13** often presents wisdom as guidance to follow, whereas **Chapter 14** frequently illustrates the results of following or ignoring wisdom.
- **Chapter 13** leans toward practical life advice (work, speech, wealth), while **Chapter 14** integrates ethical and spiritual dimensions, including justice, mercy, and fear of the Lord.

LESSON: I. PROVERBS 14:1-3

14:1 Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

The Wise Woman who Builds vs The Foolish Woman who Plucketh it Down. The wise woman by her counsel and personal example, leads her household in the way that is right and consequently builds up her house.

"But the foolish" (woman) pulls down her household with her own hands. The contrast is ultimately between the constructive nature of wisdom, and the destructive nature of folly. *"Pulling it down with her hands"* is a metaphor. It really means by her own actions she destroy the foundation of her home—her speech *"The tongue is a fire...setting the course of one's life on fire"* (James 3:5-6); quarrelsome; her mood, her disrespect, her neglect or laziness; her spending, her decision making that harm the stability of the house etc... The *"house"* symbolizes the family, its stability, the relationships within, and values. The foolish woman symbolizes someone who lacks wisdom and without wisdom, the home becomes a fragile state, like walking on egg shells; like a house on sand, easily destroyed by life's trials. We can also look at the house as our temple, not just a physical building. The one where the Spirit of the living God dwells in. Are we building it or tearing it down by our words, disrespect, not taking care of it like God intended us to do? Are we bearing fruit?

This Scripture opens with *"Every wise woman..."* meaning her character is rooted in Wisdom. *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom..."* (Proverbs 9:10). Her stature seems strong because she's been building upon a strong foundation! You can only see how strong the foundation is when encountering storms and trials. Wisdom prepared her for a better outcome, than for the foolish. We build on the solid Rock (foundation) of Christ. Proverbs 24:3 says *"By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established."* A wise woman uses her understanding to foster love, peace, and growth within her family. Matthew 7:24 says *"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."*

14:2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him. The Upright Fear The Lord vs The Perverse Despise The Lord. ²He who walks upright

¹ <https://www.bing.com/search?q=coming+from+Proverbs+13+to+Proverbs+14&pc=GD01&form=GDAVST&ptag=3601>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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does so because he fears the Lord; and his holy conversation is evidence that he is influenced by religious motives. The outward conduct shows what's inward. So, *"he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him"* (the Lord). A man is evil in his actions because he has cast off the fear of God; and such wickedness is a proof that he has lost all reverence for God, and don't care to please Him. This draws a clear line: upright, God-fearing living honors the Lord, and yields safety, while devious living shows contempt for Him and leads to ruin.

14:3 In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

The Mouth of The Foolish vs The Lips of The Wise. ³Speech is a powerful tool that can either lead to protection or punishment, depending on whether it is wise or foolish. Words out of your mouth have the power to build up or tear down. Therefore, out of the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride, not discipline. Prideful speech often leads to conflict and punishment. The **rod** represented discipline for wrongdoing, and pride was recognized as a path to ruin. The **fool's speech** revealed a heart unwilling to receive wisdom, bringing consequences upon himself.

But *"the lips of the wise shall preserve them"* The wise man gives the soft answer that turns away wrath; being is swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. The wise man speaks with restraint, truth, and discernment. Their words preserve them from needless conflicts, shame, and the destructive results of rash speech. Such wisdom begins with reverence for the LORD, and is shown in their speech as a reflection of a heart aligned with God's Will and Way.

II. PROVERBS 14:4

14:4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox. Okay, there's no oxen, no animal requiring feeding, Why? - the crib (manger) is empty, symbolizing the feeding trough where the oxen sustains nourishment. Though its clean and unused it reveals the absence of a working strong animal. And why is all this important? The ox's labor makes possible cultivation and increased yield. The empty manger is a clean manger clean stable, but it would be indeed foolish for a man to kill his oxen to ensure a clean crib, and no profit coming in for an abundant harvest.

⁴Oxen can be difficult animals for a farmer. One must work long hours, care for animals, and deny self many things, but labor also has its rewards. The oxen allows a man to increase his efforts and ultimately to enjoy a larger reward for efforts exhausted. The wise farmer knows that he needs oxen (strong farm animals) to plough his fields. Without oxen, the harvest would be poor, he cannot produce the needed crops.

Some church members are easy to look after. They are polite and friendly, and everyone likes them. However, they do few things for God's work. Other church members act like the oxen. Such church members may ask difficult questions. They have many problems. Sometimes, they make serious errors. They are difficult to look after. However, we must learn to appreciate these members too. Sometimes, they will achieve great things for God. Peter was like this – (see Mark 8:31-33, Matthew 26:74 and Galatians 2:11-14). We might not choose these church members, but God chose them for his work. There is value in hard work.

III. PROVERBS 14:5-9

14:5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies. A Faithful Witness vs A False Witness. ⁵A person might say nice things. He might be very clever. Many people might want

² <https://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-2.htm>

³ <https://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-3.htm>

⁴ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>

⁵ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>

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to hear his words. However, if his words are lies, then he cannot help us. One must make a choice to be a faithful witness or a false witness. Honest words can really help us. Don't be like the one who continuously call wolf, spilling lies, and you can never get the truth from them. A false witness is committed to the declaration of that which is untrue. The faithful witness will not lie, for he's committed to that which is true. *"God resists the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble"* (James 4:6b).

14:6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth. Wisdom vs Knowledge. The scorner (one who ridicules) sought for wisdom but he finds it not, thereby he is disqualified from the possession of wisdom, because he rejects correction. He treats truth with scorn and cannot gain the understanding he claims to seek. His problem is moral and spiritual, not intellectual. A teachable spirit is essential to gain wisdom. ⁶A man who insults other people cannot discover wisdom. Knowledge is not difficult to find. It's everywhere. The Bible will teach God's knowledge, while many other people will just tell us their knowledge. Perhaps the scorner insults honest people, so he cannot hear their honest words, or perhaps he insults everyone, and only listens to his own ideas. We must regularly come to God for His wisdom!

14:7 Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge. So, what you need to do is go from the presence of a foolish man; get away. Why do you insist on arguing with a foolish man? For ⁷A fool is someone who hates God's wisdom. You cannot learn from this man, because he himself has learned nothing from God, and you will not perceive or gain knowledge from his lips. Proverbs 13:20 says *"Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm"* (NIV). The meaning:

- Wise company helps you grow.
Elijah's relationship with Elisha and Paul's care for Timothy show how godly guidance shaped those who received it.
- Foolish friends bring pain, trouble, and bad choices.
Nabal, a fool who had a conflict with David. He refused to provide provisions to David and his men, but his wife Abigail, a wise woman intercedes in the conflict before David could destroy them, and before her husband Nabal knew what he had truly done to provoke this.
- Who you spend time with shapes your life and future.

14:8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit. Wisdom of The Prudent vs Folly of The Fools. The prudent (sensible; careful) are guided by wisdom and understand wisdom's way. He's not trying to find his way, but he knows his way because of the wisdom that comes from God! A sensible person is cautious. He uses his understanding to make good plans. He thinks carefully and he obtains advice. His decisions are good and patient. However, a fool thinks that his decisions are right within himself because he hates God's wisdom. There arise evil thoughts and lies. He trusts only in his own lies, and suffers as a result.

14:9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour. The Fools vs the Righteous. The word *"Mock"* means to make light of. *"Anything goes"* is the motto. They jest about anything, even their need to be atoned for their sin; calling evil good and good evil. They deny their need to repent, but sin is not to be mocked, it is to be dealt with. Galatians 6:7 says *"Be not deceived,*

⁶ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>

⁷ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” We see this in our society today. Sin is being made to look as if it is the best thing to do. You see only a fool would keep practicing sin, but they have not a clue that God gives favor to the righteous (those in right standing with God) who make better choices because of a relationship with Christ. They will enjoy the rich recompense of faithfulness!

IV. PROVERBS 14:10-14

14:10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy. What A Heart really Knows vs What A Stranger Knows. Every heart has its own joys and bitterness that no one else can share. “*Bitterness*” refers to deep personal sorrow or grief that is often hidden. “*A stranger*” (one who is outside of one's intimate circle) does not “*intermeddle*” meaning share in, partake of, or fully understand another person's inner emotional experience; only the Lord Jesus Christ can. This joy I have the world didn't give it to me, the world didn't give it, and the world can't take it away! We try to sympathize with other people. We try to share their joys and sorrows (sad feelings). Our efforts are kind and good, but we cannot really understand their feelings. ⁸While we may not fully grasp another's inner experiences, we are called to show empathy and compassion, supporting one another in both sorrow and joy.

14:11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. Many contrasts in this verse: 1. The Wicked vs The Upright. 2. The House vs The Tabernacle. 3. Overthrown vs Flourishing.

- ⁹The Illusion of Security

The “house” of the wicked may appear strong and secure, but without a foundation in God, it is destined for destruction. True security is found in righteousness.

- Temporary vs. Eternal

The “tent” of the upright may seem temporary and fragile, yet it is blessed by God and will flourish. Our focus should be on eternal values rather than temporary appearances.

- Divine Justice

God's justice ensures that the wicked will face destruction, while the upright will experience His blessings. This should encourage us to live righteously.

- Legacy and Influence

Consider the legacy you are building. A life built on wickedness will not stand, but a life of righteousness will leave a lasting, positive impact.

- Trust in God's Timing

The flourishing of the upright may not be immediate, but trust in God's timing and His promises for those who live according to His will.

¹⁰The wicked man might be rich. He might live in a wealthy house (great tabernacle). The good man might be poor. He might only live in a poor tent. Other people might think that a wicked man is really good. They might see his wealth. They might even suppose that God is pleased with that man. But God knows the truth. When God acts as judge, God will not care about a man's wealth especially

⁸ <https://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-10.htm>

⁹ <https://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-11.htm>

¹⁰ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>

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when he trusted in the temporary (that's built on sinking sand) more than the Eternal God. God will still punish the wicked man. The wicked man might not even know who destroyed his house or why he lost his wealth. It's God's doing. We should be mindful of what we allow to take root in our hearts. Seek God's help to transform bitterness into joy through His grace!

14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. The Way Which Seem Right vs The Way Of Death. Many people think they're right and can be completely wrong, I've been in that place plenty of times. The path taken seemed right in my own eyes, but in the end, it led another way. This Scripture predicts the end is death/destruction. Why? Because when you trust in your own judgment and not in God's wisdom, it has the wrong leader leading. God who is all knowing will always lead you in a place you were always prepared for. An illustration: our way to glory is but one way—

John 14:6 Jesus is the Way, Truth, and Life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me!

Matthew 6:33 Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 7:13-14 Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life, and only a few find it.

14:13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. Laughter vs Heaviness. Even in laughter they felt no lasting satisfaction; their hearts were not at rest. Other people didn't know this. They thought they were happy when they laughed. Laughter is a God given gift (like medicine), but it's also a concealer. A smiling face can cover private pain, but God knows our true feelings, and sees the ache, and offers comfort! The laughter of the wicked "will be turned to mourning" if repentance is refused (James 4:9-10). "...the end of that mirth is heaviness" refers to the hidden sorrow that often accompanies the temporary nature of worldly joy which eventually give way to heaviness or grief!

14:14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself. A Backslider vs A Good Man. The backslider in heart refers to someone who has turned away from their previous commitment to God. Backsliding starts long before outward collapse. ...shall be filled with his own ways suggests that a person who turns away from God will experience the consequences of their actions, for it will be from the results of their own choices. ¹¹A backslider's heart may not show outward signs immediately, but their internal rebellion will eventually manifest in their actions and consequences. However, ...A good man shall be satisfied; rewarded for his ways. This is not merely about outward actions, but reflects an inward commitment to God. Regularly examine your heart and motives. Are you truly aligned with God's will, or are you drifting away internally? Even when it seems like the wicked prosper, remember that God sees and will reward the good man in due time.

V. PROVERBS 14:15-19

14:15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going. The Simple vs The Prudent. ¹²The characteristic of a "simple" person, often understood as someone

¹¹ <https://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-14.htm>

¹² <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>
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who is naive or lacking discernment. In biblical context, simplicity is not merely about lack of intelligence but a lack of spiritual and moral insight. The simple person is easily swayed and accepts information without critical evaluation. ¹³Unlike a fool, a simple person does not hate God. You can teach a simple person. He can learn to do good things. Or he can learn to do evil things. He believes anything that you tell him. You can teach a wise person too. However, you cannot teach him to do evil deeds, because he is sensible. He thinks carefully about you, and whether you are correct. In contrast, "the prudent" man exercises caution and discernment echoed in Proverbs 22:3, where the prudent see danger and take refuge. The prudent man is not easily deceived because he evaluates and tests what he hears against the truth of God's Word. This reflects the biblical call to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16). **"Looketh well to his going or considers well where he is going"** suggests that he's assured of himself; has a deliberate and thoughtful approach to life, and aligns with God's will.

14:16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. A Wise Man Fear vs The Fool Rage. ¹⁴A wise person respects God, but a fool hates God. The fool thinks that he himself is always right. A fool will not learn from anyone else. He is angry if someone tries to correct him. He loves to do evil actions, and feels secure as he plunges ahead with reckless confidence because of his confidence and sureness in himself.

14:17 He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated. An Angry Man Acts Foolishly vs A Hated Man Of Wicked Devices. ¹⁵Solomon contrasts two different types of people. At first I thought this was about one man, but ¹⁶think of it like this: *"A hasty runner runs fast, and a careful runner runs slow."* Each clause describes a different runner, not the same one. The first person is quick. In a moment, he becomes very angry. He has a terrible temper. He does not think about his actions. He does evil things so quickly that he cannot think first; he's rash; he reacts impulsively without considering the consequences of his actions by acting foolishly. A quick example would be Cain killing Able; even Moses (hitting the rock instead of speaking to it). The second person is slow; methodical. He takes his time to make his evil plans. He thinks about them carefully as he plots evil. **"Wicked devies"** means deliberate, harmful schemes or plans with malicious intent. It is planned out with intent to harm because of the festering hatred within. A quick example would be Haman plotting against Mordecai to kill the whole Jewish race.

14:18 The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge. The Simple Inherit Folly vs The Prudent Crowned With Knowledge. We've talked about the Simple and the Prudent in verse 15, now we're concerned about the inheritance; the outcome of each. ¹⁷The term **"simple"** in this context refers to those who are naive or lack discernment, a lack of wisdom or understanding, which can lead to poor decision-making. Being simple or naive can lead to inheriting folly. How is folly inherited? The concept of inheritance implies that folly is not just a temporary state but a lasting condition that is passed down or acquired over time. This is where

¹³ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>

¹⁴ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>

¹⁵ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>

¹⁶ <https://www.bing.com/search?q=in%20Proverbs%2014%3A17%20we%27re%20talking%20about%20one%20man%2C%20not%20two&q&n&form=QBRE&sp=1&ghc=1&lq=0&pq=in%20proverbs%2014%3A17%20we%27re%20talking%20about%20one%20man%2C%20not%20two&sc=9-54&sk=&cvid=680368856BC472E8BBB593CB7DFB785>

¹⁷ <https://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-18.htm>

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where folly, or foolishness, is the natural outcome for those who do not seek wisdom.

Therefore, wisdom must be actively pursued (Proverbs 2:1-6) and that neglecting it leads to negative consequences (Proverbs 1:32). ¹⁸If a simple man learns to do evil deeds, then he becomes a fool. When he is simple, he does not choose to be evil. He does evil things because he is not wise. He does evil things by mistake. When he becomes a fool, the same person hates God. Now, the man loves to do evil actions. He refuses to learn good things. We should help simple people to believe in God. Then they can become wise. Then their reward will be knowledge.

A “**prudent**” man exercises caution and discernment, sees danger and takes refuge, and is not easily deceived. Prudence leads to being “crowned with knowledge.” suggests that knowledge is not only a reward, but also a mark of honor and authority. This imagery of a crown indicates that knowledge elevates and distinguishes the prudent, much like a crown distinguishes a king. The connection between wisdom and honor is a recurring theme in Proverbs. The biblical principle that those who seek and apply wisdom will be blessed and honored (Proverbs 8:12-21). As a king receives a crown, so they will receive knowledge. Other people will see their knowledge and respect them. Proverbs 3:35 says, “*The wise inherit honor, but fools are held up to shame.*”

14:19 The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. The Evil Bow Before The Good and The Wicked at The Gates of The Righteous. “*Evil men must give honour to good men. Wicked people must be humble, when they approach a good man.*” This is not our experience today, but Solomon is describing what will happen. Really, a good man is important. He is even more important than a famous person, or a king. People should respect him. A good example is where Haman had to give honor to Mordecai as ordered by the king, as Haman lead the king’s horse Mordecai was riding on while Haman shouted Praise for him through the city.

SUMMARY:

What seems right? **1**Wisdom will build, but Folly will tear it down, for you see a wise woman strengthens her household by godly choices, while a foolish woman dismantles hers. **2**Upright living shows reverence for the LORD, while crooked schemes reveal contempt. **3**And proud, reckless talk invites painful consequences, but careful words shield the wise (**14:1–3**).

4An empty manger is clean and the farmer has no working oxen to bring in the profit for an abundant harvest. Hard work brings fruitful labor. ¹⁹A farmer who kept no oxen avoided the expense labor of caring for them, but he also lacked the means for greater cultivation. Hard work has to be put forth for the harvest (**14:4**).

¹⁸ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/proverbs10-22-lbw.htm#proverbs14>

¹⁹ <https://biblehub.com/proverbs/14-4.htm>

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5God is a God of truth, and as we are made in His image, we are called to reflect His character. A faithful (honest) witness will not lie; but a false (dishonest witness will utter lies. **6**And when the scorner or mocker seek wisdom, it's not found, yet discerning hearts receive knowledge with ease. **7**Don't argue with a foolish man, just go from his presence when you discern nothing reliable is coming from his mouth. **8**Make no mistake, a prudent (cautious and sensible) man evaluates the path; while fools deceive themselves. **9**Fools jest and mock about everything, even their need to be atoned for their sin, and denying their need to repent, but the righteous flourish because of God's favor **(14:5-9)**.

10The heart knows his own bitterness; and a stranger or outsider cannot share or partake with his joy. Private joys and sorrows are known only to each person. Without God the stranger can never experience the joy like another whose going through the same difficulty they're going through, but with a different attitude. Only God gives that joy. **11**The house of the wicked collapses, while the tabernacle of the righteous flourish. **12**There is a way; path which seemed right unto a man; right in my own eyes, but in the end, it led another way. This Scripture predicts the end is death/destruction. Why? Because when you trust in your own judgment and not in God's wisdom, it has the wrong leader leading. **13**Even our laughter can mask our pain; and eventually joy can swing; give way to heaviness or grief. **14**The one who turns back in his heart; someone who has known the truth but has chosen to deviate from it will be filled with his own ways. But a good man will be satisfied with his. **(14:10-14)**.

15The gullible simple person accepts every word, but the prudent test each step. **16**The wise man shuns evil; but of course, fools charge ahead. **17**An angry hot-tempered man acts impulsively and foolishly, and the man who carefully schemes and plots is hated. The difference between the angry man is that he may regret his actions, but the man of wicked devices has no remorse in what he did. **18**The simple naïve person inherit folly that's passed down or acquired over time, but the prudent is crowned with knowledge. **19**Ultimately evil kneels; bow down before good and the wicked bow down at the gates of the righteous, so that righteousness ultimately rule **(14:15-19)**.

APPLICATION:

Remember the warning: Being impulsive and having malice in your heart lead to harm, while patience and integrity will lead to peace and respect.

