

# Proverbs 3:33-35

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/prov/prov-3/proverbs-333-35/>

*In the closing verses of Chapter 3, Solomon emphasizes the binary life paths available to us—wickedness or righteousness.*

The only two options we have in this life are wickedness or righteousness, folly or wisdom, madness or trust in God. We can choose to make our home in the *house of the wicked* or the *dwelling of the righteous*. We solidify the choice through each decision we make of who to trust, how to view life, and what actions to take. Which path we choose has significant impact on our fellowship with God.

This principle applies generally. Someone can benefit from living the principles of wisdom even without believing in Jesus. But for a believer in Jesus, living wisely leads to intimacy with God and the greatest experience available in this life (John 17:3). Living foolishly leads to squandering our inheritance (Hebrews 12:14-17). Believers who live foolishly will still get to heaven, because that is based on the work of Jesus (John 3:14-16).

Because God Himself is *righteous*, the decision believers make about how we align our lives (either with or against His ways) affects the way He relates to us. *The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked but He blesses the dwelling of the righteous*. Bad decisions have bad consequences. Israel repeatedly thought they were immune from adverse consequences because they were God's chosen people. They didn't listen to the prophets God sent to warn them otherwise (Acts 7:52). And they suffered the adverse consequences for this disobedience (Chronicles 9:1).

This principle of making a binary choice is set forth clearly in the Mosaic Law. Just before the Israelites enter the Promised Land, Moses describes the choice between life and death. And clearly, this choice will be made by the chosen people of God.

“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them” (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

The Apostle Paul, who was a student of the Old Testament, describes this principle to the Gentile believers in Rome, saying “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18). Paul goes on to describe God’s “wrath” as being manifested through God giving those who disobey over to be enslaved by their own passions. The progression is:

[God] gave them [those who disobey] up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, (Romans 1:24)

[God] gave them up to degrading passions. (Romans 1:26). Then finally,

[God] gave them over to a debased mind, (Romans 1:28)

In each case, the language indicates that at some point God removes His protective hand, and allows bad decisions to run their course. Unfortunately for us, at some point God lets us have what we desire, and we suffer the consequences.

God’s purpose is to warn us so that we don’t have to make this mistake (1 Corinthians 10:6). The reason Solomon has been so adamant to get our attention to heed these words and seek wisdom diligently is because the alternative has a severe adverse consequence.

There are repercussions or consequences for any choice we make. If we choose to be where God is, He *blesses* us by His presence, His voice, and His guidance. We gain the natural benefits of cause/effect, which God designed into Creation. If we choose a *house* of a different sort, we dissociate ourselves from reality and truth. And the consequence is *the curse of the Lord*. It will be a house of destruction and dysfunction. God will withdraw His hand, and let us have what we demand. God will turn us over to the masters we seek, who will then abuse and enslave. And that will be very bad. Solomon urges us to consider and make wise choices. Choices based on wisdom, rooted in trusting God.

Solomon’s use of the metaphor of a *house* or *home* shows that this decision is normally going one direction or the other. This is comforting, because if we seek wisdom, attempt to dwell in wisdom, and still make mistakes, we are still in the right house. We have time and opportunity to reset, repent, and restart. But if we are in the house of the wicked, our rationalizations (“I am better off now”) won’t redirect our path. As Proverbs exhorts, we need to see reality as it is.

Our decisions—our choices of who or what to trust, how to view things, and what actions to take—provide the structure under which we must live. It is the bed we will lie in. Our *dwelling* place. If we choose the way of the *wicked*, we make our home in foolishness. If we choose wisdom, we make our home in *righteousness*. This will lead to intimacy with God, and the greatest fulfillment of life.

Reality is that we reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7). If we choose to be a *scoffer*, we reap scoffing in God’s judgment, for *He scoffs at the scoffers*. Though we may try to take control and be the arbiter of justice ourselves, we are in actuality sowing seeds that will result in God’s justice, with our scoffing returning to ourselves.

Throughout the first three chapters, Solomon has been clear that what evil-doers intend to use as a weapon against others ends up being a weapon that harms themselves. Proud mockers reap mocking. Similarly, sowing scoffing reaps being scoffed at. The Hebrew word translated *scoffers* can also be translated “scorner” or “mocker.” It is to criticize harshly and with condescension. To taunt, ridicule, and tease. We have all probably seen this principle at work in our own experience. When someone mocks, the one they mock will generally be eager to return the favor. And although the one who mocks may feel powerful and in control, it is often the case that they are the ones looked at with more derision.

You can also see this principle throughout scripture. For example, Elijah returned the mocking of the prophets of Baal upon them. Ananias and Sapphira mocked God when they lied to the Holy Spirit and were disciplined by being slain. It is important to learn from the mistakes of others and to sow to wisdom and righteousness.

Conversely, while God returns scoffing to *scoffers*, *He gives grace to the afflicted*. The Hebrew word for *afflicted* is “anav,” which is often translated as “poor,” “meek,” “humble,” or “needy.” Humility is about seeing things as they truly are. And those who see the truth of “hebel” ([vapor/uncertainty](#); see [Ecclesiastes 1:2](#)) are the recipients of His *grace* or favor. The humble decide that uncertainty is a catalyst to trust in God (rather than try to replace God by attempting to control the uncontrollable).

Those who humble themselves by trusting in God often experience difficult circumstances, including the challenge of not being able to fathom God (Ecclesiastes 3:11). We are *afflicted* with imperfection (we need God, are “poor” without Him), but we can choose to use that as a catalyst for faith. If we do so, God will bless us. As 1 Peter says, speaking to believers:

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”  
(1 Peter 5:6-7)

The *afflicted* can also be those whom the *wicked* act upon; those who experience negative circumstances due to persecution. They experience adversity by no fault of their own, but choose to respond with wisdom, rather than reply foolishly. Someone who turns the other cheek and refuses to react (Matthew 5:39).

Likewise, *the wise inherit honor*. Honor is the natural consequence to the things God approves—which we can only discern and get to through *wisdom*. As Romans tells us, God will:

“RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.”  
(Romans 2:6-8)

The phrase “Render to each person according to his deeds” is quoted from Proverbs 24:12. It should not be surprising that the Apostle Paul was a student of Proverbs. In this passage, it is clear that if we make choices according to wisdom, and do wise deeds of service and goodness,

we are seeking to be honored by God. Which is what God desires. And if we do these things, our reward will be the experience of “eternal life.” Believing on Jesus is all that is necessary to receive the gift of eternal life, apart from deeds (John 3:14-16; Ephesians 2:8-9). However, to enjoy the full experience of eternal life requires obedience and “perseverance in doing good.” The ultimate reward is to be honored by God for being a faithful servant.

The other road is to be “selfishly ambitious” and not obey the truth. This leads to the indignation of God. It seems God will scoff at our rejection of His way for our own. And our reward will consist only of that which we sought on earth, which will all have been left behind.

Shame is that of which God does not approve, the terminal condition of those who are committed to perversion and foolishness. *Fools display dishonor* by refusing to align themselves with that which is truly honorable. They might be like those described in Philippians:

“...whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.”  
(Philippians 3:19)

These are the realities of the two general paths of life. And we get to choose which one we will align ourselves with. If we choose to be *wise*, we inherit *honor*, *grace*, and *blessing* from God. If we choose foolishness, we can expect to receive God’s *curse*, *scoff*, and *dishonor*.

### **Biblical Text**

**The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked,  
But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous.**

**34 Though He scoffs at the scoffers,  
Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.**

**35 The wise will inherit honor,  
But fools display dishonor.**