

Chapter 15

Verse 1: The practical advice that God’s Word gives is so helpful. The Hebrew word for “*gentle*” refers to something soft, tender, weak, or faint. We all have a difficult time answering when we have been irritated by some comment or barb. The gentle answer is not our first inclination. Pride and passion want to speak. Our hearts get attacked, and we desire to retaliate. This response adds fuel to the fire. We have two choices in the way we answer- harsh or gentle.

The Hebrew for “*harsh*” means “*grievous or labor.*” It refers to toil or some pang. The heart is quick to feel a pang and respond with grievous retaliation. How could the church, our families, and occupations thrive if we all learned to respond gently? Bridges says, “*We indulge in sarcasm as if we would rather lose a friend than miss the opportunity to score a point in an argument... gentle and healing words score a double victory- over ourselves and our brother.*”

I like the phrase “*turns away wrath.*” This is what I call the moment of impact. Usually, we get about two seconds before we respond to sarcasm or rude behavior. Your heart has to be prepared ahead of time, or you will be surprised and respond harshly. The Hebrew word for turn here is *shuwb*. This is a word you know really well in Greek or Hebrew; this is the word for *repent*- To turn away, turn, or turn back. This is a popular word in the OT and is translated in many different ways: cease, lay down, to call, bring back, averse, come again, refresh, fetch again, return to the starting point, deny, draw back, pay, pervert (e.g., change), and recall.

Evidently, Solomon had seen the power of *shuwb* as the soft answer turned away or turning back wrath. Oh Christian, I know what it feels like to retaliate. It feels so good to drive home a hard point and embarrass your attacker. Science has even shown that such a retaliatory comment releases endorphins that make us feel good. However, this is not the way of Christ. God allows to defend ourselves and to comment in return, but it must be with a soft reply that is filled with wisdom and seasoned with the Holy Spirit. Your answer may hurt, but let it be spoken with truth, in love. This verse keeps coming up in my life because I struggle so much with my answers to rude people. Paul often speaks in the NT about the tongue and our unity.

Col 4:6

6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

NIV

Illustration: Here is a perfect example of how we may use a soft answer to turn away wrath.

Judg. 8:1-3

Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, "Why have you treated us like this? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?" And they criticized him sharply. 2 But he answered them, "What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren't the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer? 3 God gave Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite leaders, into your hands. What was I able to do compared to you?" At this, their resentment against him subsided.

NIV

The Life Application Study Bible gives us these comments: "Ephraim's leaders felt left out because Gideon had not called them to join the battle, but had left them in a place to clean up the escaping Midianites (the gleanings), and so they angrily confronted him. Gideon assured the leaders of Ephraim that their accomplishment was even greater than his own clan's (Abizer). His diplomatic explanation pointed out that this rear guard had managed to capture the enemy's generals, thus cutting off the leaders from their army. Not every necessary job is a highly visible role of leadership. Much of the necessary labor of any effective enterprise is considered by many to be "dirty work," but such work is vital to getting any enormous task done. Engineers and millionaires may design and finance an elegant building, but it is the bricklayers who get the work done. Pride causes us to want recognition. Are you content to be God's bricklayer, or do you resent the work God has given you?"

Warren Wiersbe said that... "the Ephraimites were angry with Gideon because they were left out and did not share in the glory. Gideon tactfully gave them the *soft answer* that healed their wounds and prevented division. Better to do that than start another war."

Verse 2: This contrast brings about the difference between the wise and the foolish, teaching us when and how to speak. The Hebrew for "*commends*" means, "*to use a right.*" It refers to the wise man's knowledge. He has wisdom and knows how to dispense it. He knows when to dispense it. He is right in his timing and revelation. *The tongue of the wise controls his wisdom. His wisdom controls his tongue.*

Yatab is the word for *commends* (NIV) and refers to being accepted, aright, to be comely, find favor, be glad, make sweet, entreat, or benefit. HCSB says, "*makes*

knowledge attractive.” Not only does Solomon teach us about a soft answer but an answer timely given in the right way. We may translate this way... “*The tongue of a wise man knows when and how to speak wisdom.*” The wise person makes wisdom easy to receive.

The fool, on the other hand, gushes out stupidity. The Hebrew here for “*gushes*” is *naba`*. It is also translated “*belch.*” Can you believe that? Advice from a fool is like an untimely, inappropriate belch. He gushes out worthless information. Loud is not always correct or godly. Vocal people are often the biggest fools. *Naba`* also means to pour out, send forth, flow out, and abundantly utter.

Rules for sharing wisdom or words of advice: When, where, how!

1. **Time-** Make sure it’s the proper time. Are others there that should not there? Is it right to address this in front of family or friends? Are you in a rush? Is the other person in a rush? Are you prayed up or hungry? Did you just get home from a long trip or work? Timing is most important. One rule we have at my church is don’t irritate the pastor on Sunday morning before he preaches. Speak with a deacon or friend if you must, but our worship is more important than some silly irritant. Conflicts can wait until Monday.
2. **Turf-** Are you in the proper place? Should this be formal or informal... in an office setting, or casual? Are we on my turf or yours? Personal turf has power and influence associated with it. Many times people need an exit opportunity if necessary.
3. **Terms-** This puts you in control. If you force someone to talk to you on the wrong terms, they will not listen. You either. If it gets tense, you need a way to leave properly. The wise should be in control of the situation. Should others be present for accountability? Why are we meeting? Who is in charge? Do I have the right to speak into your life?

Verse 3: Bridges says, “God’s inspection of the universe is *minute, exact, and untiring.*” That’s awesome!!! His eyes are on the good and bad. He’s watching folks. And one day, the actions of man will be revealed. The eye, face, presence, or knowledge of God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. Nothing happens in the universe that God doesn’t see. God sees in the physical and spiritual worlds we live in congruently. Nothing escapes the knowledge of God.

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

“So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust

must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.”

NIV

1 Peter 3:10 (Where did Peter get this from ?)

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

NIV

***Ps 34:15-16**

15 The *eyes* of the Lord are on the righteous
and his *ears* are attentive to their cry;
16 the *face* of the Lord is against those who do evil,
to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

NIV

Ps 33:18-19

18 But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,
19 to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine.

NIV

2 Chron 16:9

9 For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."

NIV

Verse 4: The wisdom and tongue of the wise are compared to a wholesome tree. Healing is the greatest fruit of the heart and lips. To speak gently, softly, timely, and medicinally is a virtue from God Himself. This is a practice for which we should strive. “*Seasoned*” is such a descriptive word. The Hebrew word for “*healing*” refers to “*sound, remedy, wholesome, and yielding.*”

Colossians 4:6

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

NIV

We have already seen the glorious implications of the *tree of life*, but it is worth mentioning again. Solomon says that the tongue that heals is a tree of life. What a grand comparison. Did you ever consider the fact that your words can change eternity for another person? The tongue can speak words of life through the gospel and change the course of someone’s life. A healing tongue may give advice that causes a young woman to choose life and keep her baby. Proper counsel may keep a marriage together. The words of life may give a person the hope they need to continue living. The Hebrew word for *healing* is *marpe'*, which refers to health, wholesome, remedy, sound, or cure. Never forget, that as a Christian, you have eternal ability in your speech. Be a tree of life.

However, a perverted, vicious, or distorted tongue brings a *breach (sheber)* in the spirit (Lit. to fracture or ruin). A breach is a crushing, bruising, hurting, vexing, or crushing of the spirit. Which kind of tongue do you want to have? Words have power... use them well.

Verse 5: Our response to authority proves who we are as a person. Do we obey the authorities that God has set up in our lives, or do we spurn correction and authority? The word for “*spurns*” can be translated as blaspheme, provoke, abhor, or despise. It is strange how God disperses authority. Those who get it are lofty and some lowly. The response to authority speaks volumes about what kind of person you are. Do you listen *to your fathers; The father on earth, and the One in heaven? God doesn't* give authority to rebels. If you see a rebel with authority, the Devil gave it to him. The tongue that causes a breach (*sheber*, hurt, breaking, bruise, crashing, destruction or vexation) in the spirit is said to be perverse (*caleph*). What kind of tongue do you have? Note verses 31-33. Do you remember 3:11-12? Proverbs 12:1 says that the fool who does not listen is stupid.

Prov 10:21

20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver,
but the heart of the wicked is of little value.

NIV

Illustration: There seems to be a strand of rebellion in the heart of man that tells him to ignore good advice. Add a measure of pride to the rebellion and it creates a disaster.

I was cutting up a lemon one day and used a serrated knife, which slipped off the edge of the lime and cut my finger badly. A friend of mine came right behind me and picked up the same knife to cut off another slice of lime. I said, “That knife will not work on that lime, use a smooth edge knife so it will not slip.” She ignored me and cut her finger badly, too. She immediately said, “Why did I do that? You even told me what would happen. I’m so foolish.”

Yes, friends, we are just that foolish with the advice of God as well. The flesh within us makes us rebel, even against good advice meant for our well-being. Be humble, accept the correction.

Verse 6: It is unique that Solomon speaks of the “house or home” of the righteous and the income of the wicked. To the righteous, the home is of greater value. To the wicked, his income is more important. Even godly men get this reversed and put more emphasis on their income. Many rich people have lived without a wholesome home. The righteous go home to many treasures, financial and spiritual. The wicked man has trouble because of his income.

Prov 15:16

16 Better a little with the fear of the Lord
than great wealth with turmoil.

NIV

Prov 10:22

22 The blessing of the Lord brings wealth,
and he adds no trouble to it.

NIV

Prov 13:19

11 Dishonest money dwindles away,
but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.

NIV

The spiritual economy of success is based on righteousness, not craftiness. The dishonest man can get rich quickly, but he ends up in jail quicker. Can a person really enjoy money that is attached to trouble?

Prov 9:17-18

17 "Stolen water is sweet;
 food eaten in secret is delicious!"
 18 But little do they know that the dead are there,
 that her guests are in the depths of the grave.

NIV

Verse 7: The foolish are too busy with cleaning up the mess their lips make to have enough time to disperse knowledge. There's no doubt that what's in the heart will cross the lips. The foolish and wicked man has nothing in his heart but perversity; therefore, he really has nothing to say. If the heart is void of knowledge, please let the lips be still. I want you to see from verse 7, and other passages in scripture, that the eyes, lips, hands, and spirit, are all connected to the heart. The heart controls them all. What's in our hearts? The wise have hearts full of spiritual treasure. The fool's heart is full of dead men's bones.

Ps 5:8-9

8 Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness
 because of my enemies —
 make straight your way before me.
 9 Not a word from their mouth can be trusted;
 their heart is filled with destruction.
 Their throat is an open grave;
 with their tongue they speak deceit.

NIV

Ps 17:3

3 Though you probe my heart and examine me at night,
 though you test me, you will find nothing;
 I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.

NIV

Prov 10:8

8 The wise in heart accept commands,
 but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

NIV

Prov 12:23

23 A prudent man keeps his knowledge to himself,
 but the heart of fools blurts out folly.

Prov 15:14

14 The discerning heart seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.

NIV

Prov 15:28

28 The heart of the righteous weighs its answers,
but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.

NIV

Prov 27:19

19 As water reflects a face,
so a man's heart reflects the man.

NIV

Prov 26:24-25

24 A malicious man disguises himself with his lips,
but in his heart he harbors deceit.
25 Though his speech is charming, do not believe him,
for seven abominations fill his heart.

NIV

Verse 8: Solomon explained the modern religious person's problem thousands of years ago. Their sacrifices are all wrong. The wicked believe that works are what pleases God. Sacrifices are not accepted if God does not have our hearts. The righteous pray first, and then sacrifice. Many men will be separated from God for eternity because they miss the God of relationship by confusing their works with righteousness. God wants our hearts to be sincere. God is looking for surrendered worshippers, not sacrificing sinners. Our works before God are useless and filthy rags. The prayer of one dedicated Saint drawing near to God is worth more than a thousand rams. Our sincere fellowship is God's delight.

Prov 15:5

29 The Lord is far from the wicked
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

1 Sam 15:22-23

"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord?
To obey is better than sacrifice,

and to heed is better than the fat of rams.
 23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
 and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.
 Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
 he has rejected you as king."

NIV

Prov 21:3

3 To do what is right and just
 is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

NIV

Prov 21:27

27 The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable —
 how much more so when brought with evil intent!

NIV

Ps 51:16-17

16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
 you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
 a broken and contrite heart,
 O God, you will not despise.

NIV

Ec 5:1-3

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to
 offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

2 Do not be quick with your mouth,
 do not be hasty in your heart
 to utter anything before God.

God is in heaven
 and you are on earth,
 so let your words be few.

3 As a dream comes when there are many cares,
 so the speech of a fool when there are many words.

NIV

The last word in the Hebrew is particularly interesting to me. The word *delight* is quite special in its root. The word *delight* is *ratsown*, which is translated as

acceptable, delight, favor, or pleasure. The root from which delight comes is *ratsah*, which refers to an acceptable sacrifice. *Specifically, to satisfy a debt.* This means to approve, set consent upon, favor, pardon, or to reconcile oneself.

I think Solomon is using a play on words to show that God is favorable to the prayers of a genuine and righteous person and has no acceptance of the works, deeds, and false religion of the wicked. Jesus Christ was the last sacrifice, and it was totally sufficient. The only sacrifice that helps us enter eternity is the Lamb of Glory, Jesus.

Heb 9:12, 19-22

12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all *by his own blood*, having obtained eternal redemption... 19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place *by the blood of Jesus*, 20 *by a new and living way* opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,
NIV

Verse 9: Through the years I have enjoyed the pursuit of righteousness. The seed that God places in the new believer for purity, knowledge, and relationship with Jesus is unmistakable. The best part of this pursuit is that God is pleased when we seek after His knowledge and righteousness. The Lord is pleased to watch us strive for holiness and closeness to Him.

The Hebrew for “*pursue*” (*Radaph*) means “*put to flight or chase after.*” The Christian journey is simply a chasing after the holiness and righteousness of God. A genuine desire to be holy is a sure sign of salvation. The lost man does not pursue holiness. When a person tells me they are born again but they are not serious about holiness, I question their commitment to Jesus.

Rom 6:22-23

22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NIV

2 Cor 7:1

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

NIV

Eph 4:24

and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

NIV

Heb 12:14

14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

NIV

Verse 10: Bridges says, *“Do not mock Him with an empty show of repentance. Lord, let me know the smart of your rod rather than the eclipse of your love. Show me your love, and then do with me as you will.”* We must learn to love the discipline of the Lord and also learn the protective nature of correction. Those who hate discipline and correction will die. The word *'orach* is the word for path (HCSB) or way (KJV). This refers to a well-trodden path or caravan. This would be the manner of life or highway upon which the Christian travels. This is not the blacktop or mulch upon the path. Solomon speaks of a journey. Jesus actually calls Himself the *Way*.

There are two kinds of discipline. God will discipline us to bring about spiritual growth and to confirm we are His children through discipline. The second type of discipline is correction for leaving the path or way in which we should be walking. Just don't leave the path.

Heb 12:4-11

4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes

discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

NIV

Luke 9:62

62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

NIV

Gal 6:9-10

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

NIV

James 1:12

12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

NIV

Verse 11: Two of our greatest enemies are open to the eyes of the Lord. Jesus has defeated them. If our Father looks deeply into every recess and crevasse of the pit of hell and sees all, my friend, He surely knows the thoughts of our hearts. If Sheol (*The place of the dead*) and Hades are laid bare to the Father, the hearts of men must know they are as well. Even in the place of destruction, God loses no soul. He has complete control and knowledge of all the cracks and corners of the created universe.

We are not able, nor could we endure, a moment's look into the dark, unseen realms of punishment or Abaddon (The place of the perishing, Hades, destruction). Who can endure the pain and suffering of seeing the realms of the punished dead? Only the Almighty heart of God could stand to see the punishment of the wicked. Luke tells us in Chapter 16 of his gospel that there is a chasm between the bosom of Abraham (Paradise) and the fires of Hades. O, but for the grace of God, we would see into the destruction of man's soul and the punishment for rejecting

Jesus, which is an eternal grinding and punishment of the wicked. This is pure grace from God to keep these horrid sights from our view.

God knows our thoughts, motives, and location relentlessly. This grand thought should cause us pause and deep reflection concerning our deeds and actions prior to the event of sin. If God's view is omnipresent, surely He knows the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Matt 22:18

18 But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?"

NIV

1 Chron 28:9

9 "And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts.

NIV

1 Kings 8:39-40

39 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men), 40 so that they will fear you all the time they live in the land you gave our fathers.

NIV

Luke 16:15

15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

NIV

Prov 21:2

2 All a man's ways seem right to him,
but the Lord weighs the heart.

NIV

Ps 44:19

21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

KJV

Jer 17:9-10

9 The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?

10 "I the Lord search the heart
and examine the mind,
to reward a man according to his conduct,
according to what his deeds deserve."

NIV

Heb 4:12-13

12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword,
it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the
thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's
sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we
must give account.

NIV

Verse 12: The Hebrew word for *mock* is *interpreter*. It refers to one who repeats what has been spoken. An ambassador is a mocker, so to speak. He goes to another nation and repeats what the President says.

Bridges says, the *mock* has lied to himself for so long that he refuses to be brought down to a correct level. He thinks a friend who tells him the truth is his enemy.

Prov 9:8-9

8 Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you;
rebuke a wise man and he will love you.
9 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still;
teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.

NIV

Prov 21:24

24 The proud and arrogant man — "Mocker" is his name;
he behaves with overweening pride.

NIV

Prov 22:10

Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife;

quarrels and insults are ended.

NIV

Prov 24:9

9 The schemes of folly are sin,
and men detest a mocker.

NIV

Verse 13: The face of man tells the story. The face gives the heart away. There are days that the crushing blows of life bring heartache. Solomon knew there would be times in one's life that the joys of the soul would be hard to find. Solomon is being real and honest about the circumstances of life. Christians like to say, "Fake it until you make it." Some days, it is just hard to fake it. The Hebrew for *broken* is *nake'*. This refers to being smitten, stricken, or wounded. These are terrible emotions with which to deal. My prayer for all my sheep is that the Lord God will bring to them a merry heart so that their countenance will reflect the inner joy of peace that comes from assurance of Jesus' love and grace. We are so blessed.

Ps 42:5-6, 8,11,

5 Why are you downcast, O my soul?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and 6 my God.

8 By day the Lord directs his love,

at night his song is with me —

a prayer to the God of my life.

11 Why are you downcast, O my soul?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and my God.

NIV

"Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself" Anonymous.

A Judge in Boston awarded a young girl \$10,000 after being struck by a car. The accident left Mary Shafter unable to smile (7700, 2815). Just think of it, what a change it would be in our lives if we could not smile. We all must remember the

frustration we had during the Covid crisis when we could not see people's faces because of the masks we had to wear. We all learned the importance of the countenance. Seeing smiling faces is invaluable. I always get on to my congregation for looking so mean during church. One of my praise team members gifted me a tee shirt that said... "*Fix Yo Face*" on it. I loved it. I might need another shirt that says, "Fix Yo Heart." The heart can fix the face!

Verse 14: The heart likewise seeks its own cravings. The foolish man's heart seeks folly. The discerning man's heart seeks knowledge. *As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.*

Jeremiah 17:9

9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?
KJV

Proverbs 4:23

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.
KJV

In Acts chapter 4, Peter and John are arrested and interrogated by the religious rulers about a man whom they healed. All the people of Israel knew this man and were witnesses of his total healing. The undeniable healing was the seed of persecution for this new "religion" called Christianity. Acts 4:10, 14 says this man was made healthy or healed. The Greek word used in verse 11 is *therapeuo*. Our English word is *therapy*. The word for healthy in verse 10 is *hugies* (hue-gee-ace), which means whole, healthy, sound, well in body, and true in doctrine. The man was made whole. When I came to Christ, my mind, heart, and soul changed. I became established and strengthened in all my faculties. I was a new creature. The man Peter and John healed was too. Jesus fixes the entire person at salvation. What good would it be to just heal a body or a mind and leave the spirit unredeemed? God changes our "want tos."

Acts 4:9-11

9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

NIV

Jesus corrects the heart and the mind, and they fix the mouth. Salvation fixes ignorance. Salvation will make you an excellent student, discerning, and wise. The new mouth that comes with salvation will prove it. The foolish heart feeds on, or is a companion of foolishness. That's why his mouth spews stupidity and vile language.

Verse 15: The Christian can make a cheerful heart in the midst of trials. The lost and foolish cannot live with oppressed hearts. The saved man has a cheer and joy in the midst of trials. God's consolation is rich, and He is a very present help in time of need.

Hebrew: The word for affliction, *aniy*, (HCSB- Oppression, 6041 Strongs and 1652 TWOT) has many meanings and describes many forms of affliction through different verb forms. The basic meaning refers to being oppressed in various ways. To be taken into captivity and humbled by the enemy is oppression. In many cases, this word refers to the downcast because of physical disabilities. This refers to how Sarah made Hagar feel when she exiled her. Many times it refers to depression or anxiety, of which there is no shortage in our day. The humility of Christ is represented by His oppression and pain from becoming sin for us. *Aniy* describes what one does to their enemy. This is the description of how Joseph's ankles felt while they were in fetters. *Ani* sets forth what Egypt did to Israel while in captivity, and it represents those without land, food, and shelter. Many are depressed in mind and circumstances.

My point in revealing this word to you is that we may take to heart the admonition of the proverb. We have a choice how we will relate to our circumstances. Yes, I know it is extremely hard, but we must live as though Jesus is in control because He is. The word for *merry* is *towb*. The NIV says cheerful heart. This refers to a heart that is joyful, better, best, beautiful, kind, merry, loving, or pleasant. That's much better than a heart that is evil and depressed. Christians have a tendency to be depressed. We like to be martyrs and make all situations worse than they really are. Many times circumstances are terrible, but we need to be honest and know that God is disciplining us and is bringing humility to our hearts. A merry heart has a continual feast. The Hebrew word for feast refers to much drink and a banquet. He does make us lie down in green pastures and leads us to still waters.

Prov 17:22

22 A cheerful heart is good medicine,
but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

NIV

Ps 4:7-8

7 You have filled my heart with greater joy
than when their grain and new wine abound.

8 I will lie down and sleep in peace,
for you alone, O Lord,
make me dwell in safety.

NIV

Ps 19:8

8 The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.

NIV

Ps 25:17-18

17 The troubles of my heart have multiplied;
free me from my anguish.

18 Look upon my affliction and my distress
and take away all my sins.

NIV

Ps 27:13-14

13 I am still confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the Lord;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the Lord.

NIV

Prov 17:3

3 The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold,
but the Lord tests the heart.

NIV

Prov 22:11

He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious
will have the king for his friend.

NIV

Prov 27:19

19 As water reflects a face,
so a man's heart reflects the man.

NIV

Verse 16-17: The fear of the Lord, the love of friends and family is much better than riches, plenty, and comforts. Turmoil and hatred are two entities I had rather live without. A man can sit in a ten million dollar house and weep each night from loneliness and shame, while the poor man in a hovel can live in peace and have joy with his little accumulated treasures. Much is not always more, and never the road to happiness.

Ps 37:16-17

16 Better the little that the righteous have
than the wealth of many wicked;
17 for the power of the wicked will be broken,
but the Lord upholds the righteous.

NIV

Prov 16:8

8 Better a little with righteousness
than much gain with injustice.

NIV

I would say that these two scriptures are two of the most ignored truths in all of the Bible. Even for Christians, this truth has eluded us. No matter how many sermons we hear on the emptiness of wealth, we still believe the lie that wealth and plenty make a person happy. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul. What's more important: the spiritual or the physical?

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*- *“God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.”*

William Lyon Phelps (American author, critic, and scholar)- *“If happiness truly consisted in physical ease and freedom from care, then the happiest individual would not be either a man or a woman; it would be, I think, an American cow.”*

[“Money is] an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider of everything except happiness.

Wall Street Journal

Matt 6:24

24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and

Money.

NIV