

Proverbs 13:1–6

Fruitful Words and Fruitful Work

Monday, March 24, 2025 • Read Proverbs 13:1–6

Questions from the Scripture text: What does a wise son do (v1a)? But what doesn't the scoffer do (v1b)? By what may a man eat well (v2a)? Upon what does the soul of the unfaithful feed (v2b)? Who preserves his life (v3a)? Who opens wide his lips (v3b)? What does the soul of the lazy man desire (v4a)? What does he have? What happens to the soul of the diligent (v4b)? What does the righteous man hate (v5a)? What is the wicked man (v5b)? What happens to him? What guards the man whose way is blameless (v6a)? What does wickedness do (v6b)?

How does a man image God? Proverbs 13:1–6 looks forward to the sermon in this week's midweek meeting. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **one way a man images God is by fruitfulness in words and work.**

Like the two sections that made up the halves of chapter 12, our passage begins with a restatement of the importance of teachability (v1), pointing us back to the teaching of the first several families. The passage concludes similarly to those sections, emphasizing the difference in outcomes between the righteous and the wicked (v6).

Just as in the first part of each half of ch12, our passage deals primarily with wise speech (v2, 3, 5). The remaining verse (v4) ties our passage backward to the sections on diligence from ch12, and forward to the next section in ch13, which treats the subject of wealth.

Although men at the time focused upon the work of their hands to put food on the table, v2 teaches us that when a man bears good fruit from his mouth, he will not ordinarily lack. The imbalance of the verb reminds us that, in order for good fruit to come from our mouth, we must first feed upon that which is good. The unfaithful is unable to produce good fruit from his mouth because of what he has been feeding upon: violence. When it comes to what will overflow from our mouths, truly "you are what you eat."

v3 describes the mouth in the language of the city gate. If there is not a man guarding the gate, and making sure it only opens for that which is safe, the city will be in trouble. Good gate-keeping saves lives. That suggests the question, dear reader: is the gate of your mouth guarded? Or, does your mouth open wide and let just anything out? How much destruction can come by way of an unguarded mouth!

v5 adds the engagement of the affection, to the employment of the will, in the guarding of the mouth. We have heard that YHWH hates lying (cf. 12:22). Now, we are taught that it is not enough merely to avoid lying. We must positively hate what the Lord hates. The righteous man hates lying. Either you must hate lying (v5a), or you will find yourself hateful (v5b). Dear reader, why would you risk making yourself hateful to the Lord? Flee lying!

Finally, coming back to v4, we see the poverty of the lazy and the wealth of the diligent. But notice what is impoverished and what is enriched: the soul. We were created in God's image, created to work. In order for our eternal soul to be fulfilled, it must be imaging Him Who created it for Himself. Laziness unhumans a man.

Just as we ought to be guarding our mouths like a city gate, so the Lord makes righteousness to guard a man. We know, of course, that this righteousness comes first as a right standing with God, which a man can only have in Christ. And those who are in Christ are then made to be more and more like Christ, so that they are overthrown neither by the guilt, nor the effects, of their sin. The Lord conform you to Christ, dear reader, both in the area of your words and of your work.

With what have you been supplying your heart, in order for your mouth to bear good fruit? What are some situations in which you ought to be setting a guard over your mouth? How is it evident to you that you hate lying?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for creating us in Your image, so that we might be fruitful in our words and our work. Grant that, by the grace of Christ, we would image You well, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP15 "Within Your Tent, Who Will Reside" or TPH400 "Gracious Spirit, Dwell with Me"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Proverbs 13 verses 1 through 6. These are God's words. A wise son heeds his father's instruction. But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke. A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth. But the soul of the Unfaithful feeds on violence. He who guards his mouth preserves his life.

But he who opens wide as lips. Shall have destruction. The soul of a lazy man. Desires, and as nothing? But the soul of the diligent. Shall be made rich.

A righteous man hates lying. But a wicked man is Lonesome. Then comes to shame. Righteousness guards him, whose way is blameless? But wickedness. Overthrows. The center. Amen. So far, the reading of gods inspired don't and Aaron tort. Although chapter 13 isn't quite the same in format as chapter 12.

yeah, it still deals with primarily the same content. The first small section in chapter 13 deals. primarily with the wise use of the tongue with wise use of words. And then the next longer section otherwise use not so much of work in this case, but moving on to the very closely related, area of life, wise use of wealth.

And so, in verses one through six, really verses one through five. Verse six is more. Of a transition verse from the one section to the other. But in our passage, the focus is especially on the wise use. Of the mouth. There is. One verse, verse 4, that picks up the thread of.

Work from chapter 12 and? Points forward. to the thread of. The use of wealth. In the next part of chapter 13, and so? There is a kind of pulling together synthesizing of the different sections in verse four. Which looks backward to work in chapter 12 and forward to wealth in the rest of chapter 13.

But this is primarily for how we use our words. How we use our words is such an important part of true biblical wisdom. How we use our words is such an important part. Of fearing Yahweh and knowing the Holy One. because? he has created us in His image.

We are the only creatures who communicate ourselves, our identity, our purpose, our plans, our desires. Opinions about things we communicate ourselves or communicate ourselves, especially through words and. Therefore. Since it's such a big part of being made in God's image. We are not surprised that it's such a big part of.

That it's such a big part of. Walking in wisdom or on the other hand, the way we often? walk sinfully and wickedly. As in the area of our. And so we're again reminded at the beginning of this section, just as we were at the beginning of each of the sections in chapter 12.

Of our need for wisdom. A wise son heeds his father's instruction, and so there are these aspects of living wisely, which bring us either to a blessed end or a cursed end, and if we are left to ourselves, we will. Walk and Folly, not wisdom, wickedness, not righteousness, and we will come to destruction, not blessing and death, not life.

And so. We are constantly reminded because we constantly need to be reminded. Of the necessity of having a humble, teachable heart. A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke. And here you have the wise father. Or the idealized father to? his children, the Holy Spirit, reminding us again.

not just teaching us things that we need to be taught, but reminding us that we need to be taught so that we will. Renew our attention. And our affection and our submission. And so, in verses two through five, we have especially the. Of the mouth. A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth.

there is a Temptation, to work on what we would call education or skills training, depending on what vocation you are aiming at what? Day job you are aiming at or hoping for. In order to be able to put food on the table. There's a temptation to focus on that over against wisdom of character and godliness.

And yet, a big part of. being a productive and fruitful man, a responsible man who is able to provide for himself and care for his family. Is especially. ungodly character. The wise man, the man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, and what this means is he needs to feed upon wisdom, he needs to heed that father's instruction he needs to listen to rebuke.

What you feed your soul upon enables you to speak in a wise and godly manner, and you see that in the slight imbalance in theme. A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, but the soul of the Unfaithful feeds on violence, and so there's a question for you.

What is your soul feeding on? Is this right now? What your soul feeds on you feed upon the word of God? You feed. Upon the truth of God so that the fruit of your mouth is good. Does others good, and it is a means? By which the Lord provides for you.

And then. Verse 3, it's not just important to store up your heart with good things so that out of your mouth can come good things, but you should guard your mouth. The mouth in verse 3 as described, like a citygate, and there are. There's a city gate in the first half of verse three.

There's a city gate in the second half of verse three. The first City Gate has a guard who opens the gate when something should come in or go out. And then he closes the gate when there isn't supposed to be things going in and out. 3 doesn't have a guard.

The gates are always wide open. So, anything can come in. And in this case, sadly, anything can come out. He who guards his mouth. Preserves his life. Oh, what harm can be done to others and yourself by just letting whatever comes out of your mouth come out? Rather, we should have.

Our conscience, our will. Operated by a new nature in the Lord Jesus by the spirit, exercising that wonderful fruit of self-control and guarding, keeping the gate shut and only opening it intentionally. When something authorized and proper to come out of our mouth? Is ready to come out. And then we open it up.

You might think of. Your your mouth as having? You know, one of those pulley systems with the, with the crank and the cable for? Raising the gate, we would be slow to speak if internally. We only opened our mouth when we had cranked it open, and we're ready with some good thing.

To come out. Very helpful, I think. Image from the Holy Spirit here in verse 3. we'll come to verse 4 in a moment. Like, I said, it pulls forward backwards to work and forwards to well, but then verse 5, a righteous man hates lying. It's not just that he doesn't like.

Lying is from the devil. Lying is the opposite of the character of God. He hates the lie. And he hates it. Of course, most of all in himself. Because he wants to love the Lord with all that he is, and especially with his words to God and to others.

A righteous man hates lying. But a wicked man is loathsome and comes to shame. He's hated and hateful. And it's not primarily. Hey, Ted and hateful to men. Although that is true, remember what we just heard? Not too many verses ago in chapter 12 and verses verse 22, lying lips are an Abomination to.

Yahweh. His loathsome to Yahweh. And so there's this Choice presented in verse 5. Either you hate what Yahweh hates. Or, you will be one whom Yahweh hates. Those are the only two kinds of people there are at the end. Yes, we have remaining fleshliness left in us and. therefore, there there is an extent to which and occasions upon which we are failing to do this.

But at the end when the Saints are perfectly Sanctified and the reprobate have lost all access and opportunity for common Grace, there will only be those who hate with a perfect hatred. Whatever Yahweh hates like, we hear at the end of Psalm 139. there only be those who hate with the perfect hatred.

Whatever y'all may hates and those who are hated by God. Upon whom God has shown a common Grace goodness as he does to all of his creatures. So there's a sense in which you could even now say that he loves them and is good to them. but. that common Grace that opportunity for goodness is gone, and it has given way to his wrath and all that he is in all of his glory is properly, rightly, justly praise worthily bent against them.

This already. Is how the Lord is toward lie. And in the last day. When the Liars are cast into the Lake of Fire. As Revelation says, Liars go to hell. And the last day when the Liars are cast into the Lake of Fire, it will not just be the lying that God hates.

But the Liars. And there is a sense in which that's already true. God's Wrath is already revealed against all the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men. They walk as children of Wrath. Ephesians 2 says and Sons of Disobedience and this is one of the most extraordinary things about the gospel.

Is, because although we were by Nature children of Wrath and under the hatred of God, yet for the elect, there is an electing and redeeming love that is determined. To bring everyone whom he will save. Out from under his hatred. And into? favorable love of everything that is good first by counting us good in Jesus.

So that we are the objects of his love as those who are counted good and then constituting us good, making us to be good, like Jesus, so that more and more our character and our conduct is that which God loves. And that's what we would love if we are Christians.

And amazingly. The Lord Jesus, who knew no sin? And knew nothing but the favor and approval of his father, the approval of God, his whole Earthly life. God made him to be sin so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. And all of the hatred of God was poured out upon Christ, even as God loved his son.

Yet, with respect to us and our sin. The hatred of God was poured out upon him. At the cross. Not at all interrupting the love of God for his son. Never did the father love the son more? Than when he was doing that. That's a hard concept. And yet, a wonderful and true one.

So, verse 5 reminds us. That not only should we not lie? We should hate it. We don't. We will be those who God hates whom God hates a wicked man as loathsome. That's why he comes to shame. So that deals primarily with. The wise use of the tongue, the wise use of words, and then.

Verse 4. holding the button of this passage in place on the coat of the Book of Proverbs has a thread that goes backwards into chapter 12 and forwards into the next part of chapter 13. Soul of a lazy man desires and has nothing. But the soul of the diligent.

Shall be made Rich, so very similar to verse 2. in Dynamic that the Lord gives satisfaction, especially to those who are Imaging him. Whether it's Imaging him with our words, verse two, or Imaging him in our work and diligence, verse four. And so, verse 6 gives. Of the outcomes of wise words.

Ultimately, the outcome of all wisdom righteousness guards him, whose way is blameless? That if we are? blameless. Our character and conduct. It can only be because we were first righteous if we are. Godly in character. It can only come from the Life of Christ in us, which means it can only be if we were right with God in Christ already.

And so, if your way is blameless, righteousness guards your way. Or if your way is blameless, righteousness guards you being right with God means only that which God has designed for your good can happen to you can come into your life. You think again of that that creaking crank cable on the gate?

The creaking crank cable. On the Gate of God's Providence righteousness guards. Him, whose way is blameless, but wickedness overthrows The Sinner. His own wickedness runs in Russia's. The gate gets through, goes over the walls. And overthrows him like a city is overthrown. Wickedness is not something you get away with.

You know, the flesh thinks about getting away with wickedness. But that's so foolish, because wickedness is like the invading horde that comes to destroy everything. We don't want to be free to be Wicked. We want to be guarded. By righteousness. Amen. May the Lord grant to us to live according to this wisdom.

Our gracious Gardener, Heavenly father. Thank you for instructing us as your own dear children and make us to be. Those wise sons that take to heart what you say? Especially so that we will feed our souls on proper things and guard our mouths so that only good words would come out and only when and how they should come out.

And give us that diligence of life in which we image you in our work. Make us to hate what you hate as Those whom you have loved in Jesus. Through whom we ask it. Amen.