

KEY TEXT**Proverbs 19:16-23 (NKJV)**

Verse 16 – He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of his ways will die.

Verse 17- He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given.

Verse 18 – Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction.

Verse 19 – A man of great wrath will suffer punishment; For if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.

Verse 20- Listen to counsel and receive instruction, That you may be wise in your latter days.

Verse 21- There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the LORD'S counsel – that will stand.

Verse 22- What is desired in a man is kindness, And a poor man is better than a liar.

Verse 23- The fear of the LORD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.

INTRODUCTION

- 1. Why did you receive Christ?***
- 2. Handbook for the good life***

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

What is a "Proverb?"

A biblical proverb is a "short-saying that expresses a universal truth for practical, godly living."

"Proverb" from the Hebrew root word = "to be like"

The purpose of a Proverb is to present wisdom in a compact, lasting format.

TITLE

**THE
GOOD LIFE**



Outline:

1. What is the good life according to Proverbs?

2. How to have the good life?

3. "I AM THE LIFE" overturning our bad life

MAIN POINTS

(I) WHAT IS THE GOOD LIFE ACCORDING TO PROVERBS?

The world has its own yardsticks for defining the good life.

The Boomers and the Generation X define the good life as the 5 Cs:

- **Car**
- **Cash**
- **Career**
- **Credit Card**
- **Country Club**

Today, the millennials set their own benchmark for the good life which are as follows:

- **Experiences**
- **Values**
- **Purpose**
- **Budget-Friendliness**
- **Connections**
- **Having choices**
- **Eco-friendliness**
- **Diversity and Equality**
- **Recognition**
- **Healthy living**
- **Speed and convenience**

But God defines the good life in **Proverbs 19:23 as:**

“The fear of the LORD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.

The good life mentioned here is one that has:

LIFE

- **A great life – great in every way of happiness, prosperity and success**
- **A loving life, seeing good days – 1 Peter 3:10-12**
- **A rich, long and honoring life avoiding dysfunction and death (Proverbs 10:27; 14:27)**
- **The abundant life (John 10:10)**

SATISFACTION

“Abide in satisfaction”

- **THE LASTING SATISFACTION –**
- **one that has the peace of God and fulfilment (inside and out).**

DIVINE PROTECTION

“Will not be visited by harm” – Protected by God

SUMMARY

The biblical definition of the good life is one that is great; one that sees many good and loving days; one that is rich, long and honoring life which Jesus surmises as the **ABUNDANT LIFE; it is also a life that has a lasting satisfaction that implies the peace of God and fulfilment and one that is under the protection of God.**

(II). HOW TO HAVE THE GOOD LIFE?

1. LISTEN TO INSTRUCTION

Verse 16 – He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of his ways will die.

Do you care about yourself?

There is a way to live that brings happiness and success, and there is a way to live that will kill you.

The choice is yours.

The results are God's.

The consequences are certain.

Do you love or despise God's way for living your life?

If you keep God's commandment, you keep yourself from pain and trouble. If you despise God's ways, you commit suicide.

The Creator God did not give a command for how men should live to ruin their fun.

He gave commandment for them to maximize life.

It is the foolish and rebellious man that rejects His word that ruins their lives in many ways.

What is the commandment to keep your soul?

It is **ALL of God's commandments, no matter what part of life each may apply to (**Psalm 119:128**).**

“He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul...”-
The man who keeps God’s commandments is doing something very good for his **own soul.**

He is pursuing wisdom and all its benefits for **his life(Proverbs 4:4-9).**

“The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: He who keeps his way preserves his soul” (Proverbs 16:17).

“Whoever guards his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from troubles” (Proverbs 21:23).

How does a man despise his ways?

He **REJECTS** God's ways for the various aspects of his life.

What are the consequences?

When a man chooses his own way for a decision, rather than God's way, he chooses **DEATH**.

Verse 16b- But he who is careless of his ways will die.

Proverbs 16:25- "There is a way that seems right to a man, but it send is the way of death.

God's infallible revelation, the Bible, teaches men how to be happy and successful.

If they rebel against His wisdom, they bring on themselves dysfunction, pain, trouble, and eventually death.

E.g. # 1 - *Honoring parents*

E.g # 2 - *Faithfulness to spouse*

E.g. # 3 - *Biblical Parenting*

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E.g. # 4 - *Biblical work ethics of submission*

E.g. # 5 - *Biblical sound doctrine and church practice*

**Verse 20- Listen to counsel and receive instruction,
That you may be wise in your latter days.**

Are you wiser today than last year? Than ten years ago?

How wise will you be later in life?

A godly man has great desire to grow in wisdom.

And the way to increase wisdom is easy – you need to hear the counsel of wise men and accept their teaching.

You need to appreciate and apply instruction from others.

Today is your opportunity to change your **LATTER END.**

What you do today determines what you are tomorrow.

Consider your latter end, and receive instruction today.

What do you THINK of preaching?

What do you DO with preaching?

Hear and receive teaching so you might be wise....

another feature of the good life.

2. BE KIND TO THE POOR

Verse 17- He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given.

When we give to the **POOR, expressing our love and pity towards them, we are not wasting our money.**

It is like lending money to the LORD Himself.

"Their just and gracious Creator takes it upon Himself to assume their indebtedness, and so he will repay the lender in full.

God will never be in debt to any man. He will never be in a position where He owes anything as a matter of debt.

Therefore, "to lend to the Lord" is to ensure blessing in return.

God will certainly **PAY BACK WHAT we give in compassion to the poor.**

God promises that we will never be the loser for generous and compassionate giving.

Application: Kindness to the poor releases divine blessing which makes our life the good life.

3. BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILDREN'S LIVES AND DISCIPLINE THEM

Verse 18 – Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction.

There is a short window of time for teaching children obedience.

The short window is from age 2-6.

Do this parental work **“while there is still hope”.**

"It is far better that the child should cry under healthy correction than that parents should later cry under the bitter fruit to themselves and their children of neglected discipline."

To fail to "chasten your son" in the opportune season (2-6 years old) is to actually work for "his destruction" to their children through **NEGLECT, not outright abuse.**

"Psychologically healthy parents do not consciously desire to kill their children. But if they do not employ the God-given means of verbal reproof to prevent acts of folly and corporal punishment to prevent their repetition, they are in fact unwittingly party to the worst punishment, his death."

Two generations now have neglected chastening and youth today are haughty, selfish, lazy and rebellious and undisciplined compared to their chastened grandparents.

The folly of modern parenting is coming home to roost on their offspring.

If you want to spare yourself from a bad and painful life in the future, start disciplining and chastening your children.

If not, your life will be bitter when they grow up.

And it will be a life filled with **SHAME because you have left your child to his own.**

“A child left to himself bring shame to his mother” (Proverbs 29:15).

And it is a life of **GRIEF – “A foolish son is the grief of his mother” (Proverbs 10:1).**

4. AVOID FRIENDSHIP WITH THOSE WHO LACK SELF-CONTROL

Verse 19 – A man of great wrath will suffer punishment; For if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.

Out of control anger brings many problems and costs.

Among the fruit of the spirit is **SELF-CONTROL (Galatians 5:23) and wisdom does not lead a person to be of great wrath.**

The person who can't control their anger will run into trouble again and again.

To "rescue" them once isn't enough, because the problem is more **IN THEM than in the circumstances that they blame for their anger.**

So, if you are running with friends who lack self-control, you will also be implicated alongside with them, having to shoulder their **punishment too, thus making your life messy and problematic.**

And so, if you want the good life, choose your friends carefully.

You are who your friends are.

"Show me your friends, and I will show you you."

"Bad company ruins good morals." (1 Corinthians 15:33)

5. ACKNOWLEDGE THE RULE OF GOD

**Verse 21- There are many plans in a man's heart,
Nevertheless the LORD'S counsel – that will stand.**

**Solomon, the author of most of Proverbs, understood
the importance of sensible planning.**

**However, Solomon was wise enough to know that
human plans are never guaranteed to work out.**

**He observes here that **only God's intents are destined
to succeed.****

Likewise, James tells his readers not to be arrogant about their future plans.

He doesn't condemn planning but instead notes that it should be done in **GOD-HONORING HUMILITY.**

He counsels, "You ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.'" (James 4:15).

If you want the good life, acknowledge the rule of God.

This life is not your own. Allow Jesus into the driver seat of your life.

The good life requires you to “trust in the Lord”, “do good,” “delight yourself in the LORD”, and “Commit your way to the LORD” (Psalm 37:3-5).

6. EMBRACE KINDNESS AND INTEGRITY

Verse 22- What is desired in a man is kindness, And a poor man is better than a liar.

KINDNESS is grounded in divine character.

God is kind.

God's covenant love and faithfulness are expressed in God's kindness towards his people (Deut 7:9; Hosea 2:19).

**In the New Testament, God's work of salvation is the
EXPRESSION OF GOD'S KINDNESS.**

**Titus 3:4-5 – But when the kindness of God our Savior
and his love for humanity appeared, he saved us.....**

**It is the kindness of God which draws men and women
to repentance (Romans 2:4).**

**Kindness, therefore has to do with ACTIVE GOODNESS
AND BENEVOLENCE which seeks the welfare and benefit
of another.**

In the New Testament, believers are commanded to “be kind to one another” (Ephesians 4:32) and to “serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13).

Yet kindness is also the result of the ongoing presence and ongoing of the Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

It may be that as the Spirit prompts us to kindness and we respond with obedience, the fruit develops and grows.

“And a poor man is better than a liar.” = “Better to be poor than a liar.”

The liar is someone who practices deceit and spreads falsehood thus rendering themselves **untrustworthy and undependable.**

Their lies tear at the fabric of relationship, undermine confidence and betray trust.

If it is better to be poor than a liar, then being a liar is **MOST UNDESIRABLE, for who wants to be poor?**

What is desirable, therefore is **HONEST, TRUTHFULNESS AND INTEGRITY.**

7. FEAR THE LORD

Verse 23- The fear of the LORD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.

“The good life” = “a great life, with lasting satisfaction in your heart and avoiding the pain and trouble that afflict others.”

And Proverbs 19:23 shows us that the good life is possible.

How?

FEAR THE LORD.

“To fear the Lord” must become THE SUPREME PRINCIPLE OF LIFE in order to produce the sweet outcome of THE GOOD LIFE.

What is the fear of the Lord?

It is not *“being afraid or scared.”*

The Hebrew word for “fear” here is “*yirah*”. And in this context, “*yirah*” means:

- **REVERENCE.**

- **“Reverence” = “deep respect for someone or something”**

- **“ADMIRATION OR AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF GOD’S WORTH AND GLORY”.**

Verse 24 (ERV) – Respect the LORD and you will have a good life, one that is satisfying and free from trouble.

The case of Job as counterargument

Because we are in Christ, even though misfortune may hit us in our life, that does not negate the good life that we are having because God has the power to even use the apparent “bad part of our life” to make it into good.

God can transcend our misfortune into double fortunes; God can orchestrate the evil happenings of our life to become redeeming and useful for His kingdom and even for our character formation.

Above all, God can turn our ashes into beauty, our mourning into oil of gladness; despair into praise.

Only the God of the Bible can do that. No pain, no mess, no sin, no brokenness is final with God.

Resurrection is the last word and not death.

Such lot can only happen to those who **FEAR THE LORD.**

The ultimate good life is still the eternal life waiting for us in heaven.

(III). 'I AM THE LIFE' OVERTURNING THE BAD LIFE

Jesus declares in John 14:6 – I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

"I AM THE LIFE" – that is who Jesus is.

The word "life" here means **ETERNAL LIFE.**

Eternal life means "everlasting life".

That means if you believe in Jesus and you die, you will not end up in hell but in heaven. There you will enjoy everlasting life in the presence of God.

ETERNAL LIFE also means **"God's kind of life"** here on earth right now.

God's kind of life is the great life, the abundant life which Jesus wants to give us. You don't have to wait to die first in order to have eternal life. God wants you to have eternal life, God's kind of life right NOW.

Sadly, after the fall of Adam and Eve, man lost eternal life.

And we cannot have God's kind of life here on this earth.

Our inheritance from Adam and Eve is a **FALLEN LIFE, A SINFUL LIFE, A DEGENERATE LIFE – a BAD LIFE.**

Born with this sinful nature in a sinful and fallen world, we are all incapable of doing the right things.

And even if we do the right things, we are too fallen and sinful to offer a **perfect offering to appease the wrath of a holy God.**

If we want to be absolved from the wrath of God, we have to be perfect because God is perfect.

With this imperfection in us comes all the sins like

- **rejecting instruction from God and man**
- **unkindness and apathy to the poor and needy (selfishness)**
- **hatred to be chastened and to chasten**
- **lack of self-control**
- **Self-will and self rule**
- **no kindness and integrity in our lives**
- **no respect for God.**

And the CONSEQUENCE – A BAD LIFE.

And the trajectory of this earthly bad sinful life will land all human in the ultimate HELL – THE EPITOME OF A BAD LIFE.

Our life on this earth is doomed, hopeless, helpless and broken – all the traits of a BAD LIFE.

But then 2000 years ago, Jesus came declaring:

John 14:6 – I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

“I am the life” then became “I am the accursed one ”on the cross.

“Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” (Galatians 3:13).

**Jesus – the one whose name is “LIFE” became DEATH.
Jesus the one whose name is ‘ETERNAL LIFE’ became
THE ACCURSED LIFE HUNG ON THE CROSS. Jesus,
whose name is “LIFE” went to HELL for you and me so
that He can avert us from the eternal and ultimate bad
life – hell – a destination all human being will end up in
because of our sin.**

Jesus' life ended badly on the cross.

But the good news is THE BAD LIFE DID NOT HAVE THE LAST SAY.

Resurrection has the last say.

And this is our blessed hope – Because of Jesus' resurrection, He has planted His divine seed within us through the indwelling Holy Spirit within us – that has the propensity to grow into a tree of righteousness.

We have a new DNA, a new nature to disinherit the sinful nature from Adam and to reinherit the new nature from Jesus.

Jesus as God, has life within Himself.

As John noted, "In Him was life" and it was the Father who "granted the Son to have life in Himself" (John 1:4; 5:26).

This eternal life that Jesus possesses is something that He desires to give to us.

As He told Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25).

It is through Jesus that we human can receive eternal life.

There is no other way for people to receive this astounding gift. As Peter told the Jewish authorities, there is no salvation through any other name, "for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Jesus who is the **LIFE AND THE SOURCE OF THE GOOD LIFE wants to give us the **GOOD LIFE** right now.**

Through Him we learn what absolute truth is and if we believe in Him and is willing to cooperate with Him and surrender our lives to Him by obeying him, we can receive God's kind of life right now.

The reason why we are still having the bad life even after being born again for so long is because we fail to capture the vision of the cross.

We fail to see how THE GOOD LIFE became THE BAD LIFE on the cross for us.

We took for granted His death on the cross and we keep crucifying Jesus again and again on the cross through our rebelliousness and disobedience.

We reject His commandments and instruction and we live our own lives as a careless and disobedient Christian.

No wonder after being a Christian for so long, we are still in poverty, in sin and addiction.

To the degree we see how Jesus suffered by absorbing our bad sinful life on the cross, to that degree will we allow the new nature planted in us through the Holy Spirit to grow into a lifestyle of righteousness.

And the end of righteousness is the **good life – the great life, the abundant life, God's kind of life with peace, love, joy, faith, kindness and the fear of God.**

CONCLUSION

What kind of life are you having now? Are you having the good life which Jesus promises you? Or after being a Christian for so long, your life is still a bad one?

Nobody wants to continue having a bad life after he becomes a Christian.

But now we have seen how Jesus has given up His good life to be the bad life on the cross, we should come to the foot of the cross and make that divine exchange.

He ended His good life badly so that we can have the beginning of the good life through his atoning death.

Pray – “Jesus! Take this bad life away from me. I want your GOOD life. I exchange my bad life for your eternal life – God’s kind of life that is the abundant life, filled with lasting satisfaction and God’s protection.”