



How to Improve A Commuters' Quality of Life

FEBRUARY 10, 2014

It doesn't take long for the glamour of holding public office in DC to wear off – it is difficult to be away from your family, and the endless commuting can become emotionally and physically wearisome. And without vigilance, the allurements of the DC culture can be hazardous to one's lifestyle and good habits.

What then are some biblical and practical insights that can help you to not only maintain – but actually improve – your quality of life so it is increasingly pleasing to God? How can you not only stay on track – but also accelerate your godliness – given this DC lifestyle with all its disruptions, pressures, demands and temptations? Trust me, there is a way to live victoriously regardless!

In this study I will attempt to provide you with 9 considerations and principles from Proverbs that will keep you from derailing due to DC!

Read on my friend – and make plans to regularly participate in the Members Bible Study on Wednesday mornings at 8:00 in H324. You will always find warm encouragement, breakfast, and smiles from your fellow colleagues.

Weekly Bible Study During Session

Wednesday Mornings 8:00 AM Sharp. Capitol Building Family Room H324
Hot Breakfast Served.

Robert Aderholt, Alabama
Michele Bachmann, Minnesota
Spencer Bachus, Alabama
Marsha Blackburn, Tennessee
Jim Bridenstine, Oklahoma
Paul Brown, Georgia
John Campbell, California
Tony Cardenas, California
John Carter, Texas
Bill Cassidy, Louisiana
Howard Coble, North Carolina
Michael Conaway, Texas
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Rick Crawford, Arkansas
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Mary Fallin (Gov.), Oklahoma
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Trent Franks, Arizona
Scott Garrett, New Jersey
Louie Gohmert, Texas
Tom Graves, Georgia
Tim Griffin, Arkansas
Ralph Hall, Texas
Gregg Harper, Mississippi
George Holding, North Carolina
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Mark Meadows, North Carolina
Gary Miller, California
Jeff Miller, Florida
Randy Neugebauer, Texas
Allen Nunnelee, Mississippi
Steve Pearce, New Mexico
Mike Pence (Gov.), Indiana
Robert Pittenger, North Carolina
Mike Pompeo, Kansas
Bill Posey, Florida
Tom Price, Georgia
Reid Ribble, Wisconsin
Cathy McMorris Rogers, Washington
Austin Scott, Georgia
Tim Scott, South Carolina
Lamar Smith, Texas
Steve Southerland, Florida
Steve Stockman, Texas
Marlin Stutzman, Indiana
Glenn Thompson, Pennsylvania
Scott Tipton, Colorado
Tim Walberg, Michigan
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Lynn Westmorland, Georgia
Roger Williams, Texas
Joe Wilson, South Carolina
Rob Wittman, Virginia
Steve Womack, Arkansas
Rob Woodall, Georgia
Ted Yoho, Florida



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I. INTRODUCTION

The Book of Proverbs contains many an Aphorism (“a brief, brilliant statement of a principle”). Aphoristic communication is one of the most basic forms of instruction. In the ancient world, when books were few, institutions of learning rare, and peoples’ minds unpracticed in reasoning, the use of terse (that is to say, “effectively concise, penetrating, striking and arresting”) sentences was the most efficient means of inculcating moral, life-guiding precepts. It remains so today: for instance, *Don’t change doctors, change Senators!* serves to illustrate a current, pungent, political-issue-related aphoristic form of communication. The *small* statement arrests and influences the listener in a *huge* way. As you will see, aphorisms are a major way that the writer of Proverbs communicates wisdom.

Lest you conclude Proverbs to be *only* a collection of aphorisms it is not. It contain much noble language; commentator Charles Bridges eloquently summarizes the overall linguistic demeanor of it:

All the beauties of language, and all the force of eloquence are poured forth in the diversified form of earnest expostulation, insinuating tenderness, captivating argument, and sublime allegory, to win [one] to virtue and piety, and to fix him in a steady pursuit of his duties towards God and man.... Wisdom is therefore allegorized as a tree of life, yielding delicious shade, fruit, and protection to those that approach her branches; throwing the garland of honour around their shoulders, and decorating their heads with a graceful chaplet, more precious than rubies. She is a sage and eloquent monitor, lifting up her warning voice in the gates and in the squares of the city...

In a categorical, topical study of this book, what advice might God give leaders relative to having to travel all the time? When the battles and the commuting wear you out, what is Proverbs’ formula for maintaining and renewing strength? What follows are Solomonic insights – some aphoristic – into principles that afford the highest

quality of life no matter the circumstances! What follows are inviolate internal qualities all must practice no matter where one finds him or herself vocationally. Proverbs 15:24 best captures what we’re after here....

The path of life leads upward for the wise, that he may keep away from Sheol below.

Sheol is another name for Hell in the OT; it is a place of death, of no return (Job 7:9), darkness (Psa. 143:3) and torment (Isa. 14:11). Commuting to DC every week can become a hellish lifestyle! Unfortunately, many are those in DC who not only live there now, but whose destiny is even further beneath them. The Scriptures clearly and repeatedly teach that the unrepentant of self-pride, those characterized by wickedness and debauchery destine themselves to **Sheol**, Satan’s domain. By way of contrast, and much less gloomy, the preceding portion of this introductory Proverb indicates that the more one trusts and fears in God and walks in His ways – **the path of life** – the further one will **keep away** from **sheol**, or death in this present life.

The believer, at the point of justification (or salvation) is seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (cf. Eph. 2:6) where his or her citizenship already lies (cf. Phil. 3:20). Accordingly they are (adapted from Bridges, p. 214-5)....

Born from above; taught from above, and walking above, while living here on earth. Theirs is a soaring life indeed! These are the individuals whose souls mount, rise above, look aloft, and continually enter into the holiest, finding his or her resting place in the bosom of God. This is the transcendent life all yearn for! Not only is this out of the reach of carnal men, but beyond their comprehension (cf. Job 11:7-9).... The Children of God walk...with a holy loftiness above the debasing pleasure of earth.

Lest you think I don’t know what you go through, Danielle and I commute to DC every week of



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Session just like you do. So how do we *all* live a life that transcends the latent difficulties of DC?

**WHAT ARE THE PATHS OF LIFE
- IF YOU WILL WALK IN THEM -
THAT WILL LEAD YOU UPWARD IN WAYS
THAT TRANSCEND YOUR COMMUTE?**

**II. NINE WAYS TO INCREASE A
COMMUTER'S QUALITY OF LIFE**

A. BY FEARING THE LORD

The fear of the LORD prolongs life, But the years of the wicked will be shortened. (10:27)

The **fear of the LORD** is a major theme in Proverbs. It speaks of a reverential awe, admiration and submission to Him. Such is foundational for receiving instruction from those whom He has called out to instruct you (cf. Eph. 4:11-12; Rom. 10:15), the subsequent increase in spiritual knowledge and ensuing manifestation of wisdom. In both the sense of one's standing before God, and pragmatically, such an attitude of humility toward one's maker serves to **prolong life**. "The fear of the Lord is a state of mind in which one's own attitudes, volition, feelings, deeds, and goals are exchanged for God's" states a leading commentator. Such an attitude is illustrated in Psalm 42:1, "As the deer pants for water, so my soul longeth after Thee." Conversely, when one rejects Christ, their selfishness and habitual sins result in premature aging and physical tiredness; they reap what they sow. Other benefits of **fearing the LORD** as it pertains to one's sustained quality of life are discovered in the following. **Fearing the LORD...**

1. It Always Leads to Immediate or Eventual Victory over Habitual Sin

The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death (14:27).

A cavalier lifestyle is a stranglehold to personal energy. Not only is one's conscience affected, but the whole physical organism of the body! A **fountain of life** (an inviting similitude for a parched, fatigued individual) is reserved for those who walk in godliness – who **fear the Lord**.

2. It Leads to Sleep and Safety

The fear of the LORD leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil. (19:23)

Assuming all nutritional needs are satisfied (I will go into that at the end of this study), the state of the conscience affects one's ability to rest. It is a clear conscience and good physical rest that makes for consistently good energy and continual drive. Such a person will greatly out-produce a colleague who is lacking in the **fear of the Lord**. Such also makes one **untouched by evil**, i.e. the recipient of a heaven-sent form of protection, versus the less than noble who must always fend for themselves.

3. It Leads to Riches and Honor

The reward for humility and the fear of the LORD is riches, honor and life. (22:4)

Again, these self-evident sublime qualities of life stem from a reverential **fear of the LORD**. Summarily, to possess transcendent, perpetual energy while commuting as a lifestyle one must first **fear the Lord!** Like you, Danielle and I travel incessantly in our calling, birthing and growing ministries amongst Public Servants in state capitols, city and county governments, throughout our nation and the world. God gives us the energy to do this to the degree we **fear Him**. He will do the same for you my friend.



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B. BY COUNSELING WITH ONE'S PARENTS

My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you (3:1 & 2).

The truth of this Proverb must not be overlooked at any age in life. The Hebrew word for **teaching** as used in this context refers to Solomon's instruction of Rehoboam, his son. Notice the principle of a longer life – if one is respecting of the instruction of their father and mother (cf. 1:8). This promise is restated in the NT in Ephesians 6:1-3 wherein Paul speaks of honoring one's parents. While these passages primarily relate to the parent-child relationship, the adult legislator is nonetheless wise to remain in counseling contact with his or her folks. The biblical idea of **honoring** alludes to one's life-long attitude toward their parents. **Honoring** is a principle repeatedly mentioned in Proverbs in many different ways (1:8; 3:1; 4:1-4; 7:1-3; 10:1; 17:21; 19:13, 26; 28:24) and speaks to the high regard one should hold for those who brought them into this world with accompanying personal sacrifices that may have previously gone unnoticed. Proverbs 4:10-13 echoes this when it states, "Hear, my son, and accept my sayings [Solomon speaking to Rehoboam] and the years of your life will be many. I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths. When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; and if you run, you will not stumble. Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life." The benefits of cherishing one's parents and their wisdom are further elaborated on per the context of 3:8:

It will be healing to your body, And refreshment to your bones.

Contextually, to the one who counsels with parents and lives wisely, God gives physical well-being, a higher quality of life. In direct contrast is the

testimony of David, post Bathsheba. Prior to David's confession of his sin with her he said,

When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. (Psalm 32:3)

In a NT sense of this principle, Paul said that the reason some believers were sick or dead was due to their lack of obedience to God's law, in that believers partook of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy way. As a result, "many are weak and sick among you..." (1Cor. 11:30). Obedience versus disobedience to God's laws is sometimes directly related to physical life and death in both the Old and New Testaments (cf. Acts 5:9). It follows why then, that Solomon repeatedly expresses the importance of parental counsel and godly wisdom. "Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life" (4:13). And in 4:21-23: "Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and *health* to all their flesh" (emphasis mine). Spiritual health lends to physical health: there is no doubt a continual connection between them throughout Scripture.

C. BY FINDING AND GAINING UNDERSTANDING AND WISDOM

The prerequisites for wisdom per the Book of Proverbs, as contextualized with the remainder of Scripture (i.e. NT revelation) are first repentance and placing one's faith in Jesus Christ. Having done that, one will be submissive to Jesus' instructors, gain knowledge, have understanding and accordingly manifest wisdom. Note Proverbs 9:10 & 11 in this regard...

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your



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days will be multiplied, And years of life will be added to you.

Brought forward and illuminated by the light of the NT, the means by which one has **multiplied** days and **years of life added** are via first trusting in Christ for salvation. Read back into the meaning of Proverbs 3:13-18, notice the benefit for having done so....

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver And her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways; And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast.

The following sidebar summarizes of benefits and treasures, the quality of life that accrues to those who acquire salvation and resultant wisdom in Christ – even to those who commute for a living!

THE BENEFITS OF ACQUIRING WISDOM

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. Profitability and Gain | (14) |
| 2. Riches | (16b) |
| 3. Honor | (16b) |
| 4. Pleasantness | (17a) |
| 5. Peace | (17b) |
| 6. Life | (18a) |
| 7. Happiness | (18b) |

These seven characteristics are descriptive of the American dream. Fewer however seem to follow the biblical formula to obtain it! How about you? Especially note that these rewards: The Scriptures say they do not stem from His institution of government; they come from Him via personal

obedience to Him. States Solomon in Proverbs 8:35 & 36 as he personifies wisdom....

For he who finds me [wisdom] finds life and obtains favor from the LORD. But he who sins against me [wisdom] injures himself; all those who hate me love death.

It is the pursuit of wisdom that leads to a high-quality life no matter for your outward circumstances. What did Solomon ask of God in 1Kings 3:6-14? Not for a change in circumstances – rather for wisdom! The pursuit of wisdom must be above all else! In reward and grace, God over-abundantly blessed Solomon with all of the aforementioned as recorded in the sidebar! He will do the same in some portion for you too, if you first seek for His wisdom (Cf. Matthew 6:33).

Whereas Solomon personified wisdom in the above passage, in what follows he summarily refers to it as **the commandment**: “Whoever keeps the commandment keeps his life; he who despises his ways will die.” In essence Proverbs is, and contains, the application and implication of all of God’s moral law: The book is a summary judgment, a capsulation for finding favor and blessing with and from God. It follows that one should study Proverbs every day. Now, in further studying the relationship of wisdom to the quality of life, Proverbs 3:22 states:

So they [wisdom] will be life to your soul And adornment to your neck.

Wisdom **adorns** the life of the one who possesses it. Others will judge one’s personage and demeanor as beautiful, depicted here allegorically (def. “symbolic representation”) by its manifestation, existing so to speak, on **your neck**. The honorable will honor you for your pursuit of wisdom, and your life will be wreathed with beauty; draped as it were with the attributes of God.

D. BY ACCEPTING DISCIPLINE



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For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life. (6:23)

He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who ignores reproof goes astray. (10:17)

There is a severe discipline for him who forsakes the way; whoever hates reproof will die. (15:10)

The grand NT passage on God's discipline of His children is found in Hebrews 12:5-11; there is much value in meditating on this. Therein is the connection between discipline and the overall quality of one's life. Hebrews 12:11 states that discipline yields the "peaceful fruit of righteousness," which is an indisputable major component of the quality of one's life.

EVEN THOUGH YOUR LIFE IS HECTIC, OVERBOOKED, TIRING, AND FULL OF ENDLESS, EXTREMELY IMPORTANT BATTLES THAT RELATE TO THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY, DO YOU CONTINUE TO POSSESS THE PEACE OF MIND, ENERGY AND STAMINA FOR THE ONGOING BATTLE? YOU BETTER!

Being open to and welcoming legitimate discipline yields inner strength.

E. BY PURSUING RIGHTEOUSNESS

Ill-gotten gains do not profit, But righteousness delivers from death. (10:2)

The wages of the righteous is life, The income of the wicked, punishment. (10:16)

The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life. (16:17)

The picture of a **highway** is a depiction expressing the habitual course of the upright. When one strays from his or her "groove" they are less apt to **preserve** their present quality of **life**. The propensity to sin often occurs when a person gets out of his habits of industriousness. Good routines demand attention and concentration. In contrast, too much play time is not a good thing. (cf. Gen. 3:17-19; comp. 2Samuel 11:2). Proverbs 12:28 states, "In the way of righteousness is life, and in its *pathway* there is no death." States Hebrews 12:13 "make straight *paths* for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint..." Set your moral GPS unit to track in the direction of righteousness. Summarily:

He who pursues righteousness and loyalty finds life, righteousness and honor. (21:21)

In the NT Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said in the beatitudes, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be satisfied" (Mt. 5:6). Hungering and thirsting is the equivalent of **pursuing**. Further, notice both the construction of Proverbs 21:21 (above) and Matthew 5:6. **Satisfaction** in life is not borne from the pursuit of satisfaction. Rather, it is a consequence, or a by-product from the pursuit of another object of affection: **righteousness**. What God is saying to you here is this: If you do what is right while in office, He will give you satisfaction and energy while in office! Summarily, doing wrong will tire you out, while doing right will inure to you God's strength and invigoration!

BELOVED, YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE HAS MUCH MORE TO DO WITH THE CHOICES YOU MAKE THAN THE MILES YOU TRAVEL

F. BY EVANGELIZING THE LOST

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls. (11:30)



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The metaphoric phrase **tree of life** as it recurs in usage throughout Psalms and Proverbs refers to temporal spiritual nourishment, healing and refreshment (see the Bridges quote in the opening section). A righteous person becomes a giver of life to others, and when you serve to upgrade another's quality of life, your life is equally blessed. When the righteous evangelize, they help the sinner in the ultimate sense of his or her real need – delivering them from Hell to Heaven, facilitating in essence their gestation of the empowering Holy Spirit. What could be a greater gift to give to a fellow Member of the House or your family? 1Cor. 9:22 further unfolds this truth. Paul states regarding his own ministry methodology, “I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.” A wise believer need relate to and pursue all biblically-based means in attempting to bring others to Christ. **Winning souls** serves to manifest the **fruit of righteousness** in another's life! Such will invigorate and stimulate a higher quality of life like nothing else this side of heaven in both the life of the recipient and yours! There is nothing more energizing to your well being than to lead another to Christ!

G. BY CHECKING ONE'S SPEECH

The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. (13:3)

A person who is given to careful wording avoids much violence that will otherwise be aimed at themselves. States James in the NT, “the tongue...is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison...” (3:8). Therefore James counsels, “be quick to hear and slow to speak” (1:19). Cultivate the habit of being a person of few words (cf. Eccl. 5:2). Proverbs 10:8 underscores, “...a babbling fool will be ruined.” A sage of the past has said that God designed man with two ears and one mouth, suggesting one listen twice as much as they talk. Amen. Remember....

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. (18:21)

Secondly, one must be careful with email, a relatively new manifestation of one's **mouth**. Given the increases in hacking and privacy violations in our country, there are those who will exploit you speech in whatever ways they can. Such careful practices will serve to safeguard, **preserve** your present quality of **life**. What high-profile person these days hasn't had emails stolen and used out of context – and assigned motives – all in attempts to discredit? I know I have.

Lastly on the matter of one's **mouth**, everyone in the Capitol is sophisticated enough to know what I am about to say. Tone and body language often speak louder than words. Proverbs 15:4 says,

A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

From the heart, put a smile on your face whenever talking, especially on camera. What one says and how one says it can either **preserve** or **ruin** the quality of one's life rather quickly.

H. BY FORMING REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENTS

The fury of a king is like messengers of death, But a wise man will appease it. (16:14)

The vast power of ancient (and present) despotic Eastern Kings is here in view; life and death lie in the caprice of the sovereign ruler. His will is law; and the executioner performs his warrant without delay or trial. It is common **wisdom**, states Solomon, to attempt to **appease** or pacify such tyrannical **fury**. States Proverbs 20:2 with the same kind of ruler in view, “The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion; He who provokes him to anger forfeits his own life.” Thank God for our



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American Republic, our Representative Democracy, where there exists justice for all.

The aforementioned Proverbs underscore why it is noble for all of America's political leaders to pursue the development of Representative Democracies throughout the world. (Churchill quipped that Democracy is the worst form of government, save all the others). Such missions by our country to remove tyrannical, despotic, autocratic and aristocratic leaders and replace them with Republics can be justifiably extrapolated from these passages. Such national quests afford millions in those respective countries a higher quality of life than they have at present; non-dictatorial governments represent the best path to **appeasement**, which herein is said to be a **wise** pursuit. (It is historically impossible to **appease** tyrannical rulers short of replacing them by force). Such actions as well potentially open a country to missionaries who, with a just playing field, can faithfully spread the Gospel. Forming good governments is a path of life that leads upwards, in this case not so much for the reader, but for those in other countries.

I. BY DISCIPLINING YOUR CHILDREN

Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death. (19:18)

Proverbs 13:24 gives further clarification to disciplining a child: "He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him takes care to chastise him." Bad parenting will reduce the quality of both the child's and the parents' life. It is easy to spoil or create a rebellious child, if not both. In contrast, disciplining a child demands hard, consistent work. Proverbs is replete with the biblical formula for raising children. It not only involves corporal punishment (physical spanking when rebellion is present) (cf. 10:13; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13, 14; 29:15, 17) but huge and frequent doses of love and kindness. Discipline is necessary in parenting due to the latent Adamic sin nature, which is guaranteed upon delivery (cf. 1Cor. 15:22). This

corporal discipline must have the right motivation (Heb. 12:5-11) and the appropriate severity (Eph. 6:4). Keep in mind, the more lessons a child learns at home, the better their quality of life will be – and the parent's also. What an incredible joyful time we have with the grown children the older we get!

III. CONCLUSION

Your quality of life, your level of energy, has more to do with your spiritual life than your presenting physical circumstances. Such are not determined so much by the endless battles or the amount of traveling one must engage in to be a player in the legislature. Rather, quality and energy have much more to do with personal holiness and the pursuit of God and His principles – many of those related principles I have listed in this study. If you will commit to developing your spiritual life and abide by these principles you'll have more energy and a higher quality of life that you can possibly imagine! You will receive power from on High (cf. Acts 1:8)!

Having underscored the spiritual side of the quality of life, it is also important to be a good steward of your body, which Scripture calls "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1Cor. 6:19). Here are a few things that Danielle and I do to take care of our temples. The following tips might prove helpful to you....

- Drink Naked Juice's (not Odwalla's) *Green Machine* instead of soft drinks. Readily available, this product costs much more, but is full of fresh super foods for immune system maintenance.
- Mix and drink Brewer's Yeast *flakes* (not powder –yuk!) in juice. It is full of vitamin B for energy.
- Get the rest you need (most of the time).
- Do a full body weight training at least once a week; drink a protein shake within 20 minutes of the workout in order to build and maintain muscle mass.
- We take a three-week, 210-mile backpack trip on the John Muir Trail every year: huge are the benefits!

May God give you a great quality of life and energy for His service in the difficult task to which He has assigned you!