

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## PROVERBS 22-24

Here's a one sentence summary of the times in which we live. "The world today is drowning in information, but starving for wisdom."

Wisdom is not a vast memory. It's not just a mastery of concepts and facts. It's the discretion to use what I know beneficially. "Wisdom is not just knowing - but it's knowing what to do with what you know!"

Max Born was a friend of Albert Einstein, and himself a noted nuclear physicist. Just before he died, Max Born told German television, "I'd be happier if we had scientists with less brains and more wisdom."

Indeed! The need today is not more information. We need an epidemic of common sense and wisdom to break-out among our society's decision-makers. We need the kind of wisdom Solomon gives us in Proverbs...

Tonight we begin in chapter 22, "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold." In the end all a person has is their name. Any riches accumulated will be left behind.

But what a treasure to have a name that stands for what's good and godly – "a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches..."

Ted Williams played outfield for the Boston Red Sox, and never had less than a 300 batting average his whole career -

*until 1959.* That year Ted had a pinched nerve in his neck that caused him to hit just 254.

At the time Williams was the highest paid athlete in sports. When the 1960 season rolled around Boston wanted to sign Williams at his previous salary, but he refused. Ted said he didn't deserve to make the same salary. He demanded his pay be reduced 28%. He took a \$35,000 cut. Williams obviously valued his integrity above riches.

My mom use to always tell us, **“It takes a lifetime to build good reputation, but it takes only one night to tear it down.”** It's true.

In this life, no amount of money, or pleasure, or fame is of greater value than a **“good name.”** Protect - don't ruin - a good reputation.

Verse 2 **“The rich and the poor have this in common, the LORD is the maker of them all.”** Everybody puts their britches on one leg at a time.

The world we live in does afford advantages. Life plays favorites.

Some people are born rich, good-looking, and intelligent. Other people are born poor, and homely, and average. Yet natural advantages don't tell the whole story. God is the Creator of us all. Before God we're of equal worth. Through God we can overcome disadvantages and limitations.

**“A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.”** The wise man sees trouble brewing – financially, or spiritually, or physically - and

takes the necessary precaution.

**“By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches and honor and life.”**

People are born rich or poor. We're not responsible for where we start, but our attitude *toward ourselves* and *toward God* can ultimately over-ride any natural limitations. Attitude – not advantage – determines our destiny.

Verse 5 **“Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; he who guards his soul will be far from them.”** If you're **“on guard”** – if you live with your head up – you'll avoid a lot of traps and thorny places.

Verse 6 is for parents. **“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”** The phrase **“train up”** is from a Hebrew root word which refers to **“the roof of the mouth or the gums.”**

The word was used in different ways depending on its context...

At times it means **“to bring into submission.”** It's used to describe a ranch hand breaking or taming a wild horse. When the bit and bridle are inserted into the horse's mouth it becomes manageable and obedient.

There's another context in which the phrase is used. It also means **“to develop a thirst.”** When a baby was born the midwife would take grape extract and massage the infant's gums. This stimulated the baby's suckling reflex which made it easier for mom to nurse her infant.

Both definitions illustrate the effect a parent should have on a child.

Children are born with a wild, untamed, sinful nature. They're bucking, and kicking, and rebelling from the womb. The little barbarians have to be disciplined. In the NT, Ephesians 6, we're taught that a parent's job is to **insist on obedience** and **instill a respect** in the hearts of their children.

Obedience and respect is the bit and the bridle.

Like taming a wild stallion domesticating a child requires a loving and gentle - yet firm hand. A parent needs to be a skilled trainer. The goal is to curb the child's rebellion without breaking his spirit. You want to harness a kid's will and energy and ambition - and channel it in positive directions.

And one of the ways to do this is to create in our kids a thirst for God. We need to massage their spiritual gums and stimulate a hunger.

You massage faith into the heart of your kid through **"show and tell."**

Tell them about our courageous, loving, miracle-working Savior – then show them how exciting life is when we follow Him. Unleash Jesus!

Convince them by word and deed that Jesus is where they'll find joy.

Solomon tells us, **"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."** The second part of this verse is one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible. Many parents take verse 6 to mean if they get their children to church - and enroll them in Christian School - and read them Bible stories – the kids will turn out okay.

They place the emphasis is on the word **"way."** **"Train up a**

child in **the way** he should go.” But in the Hebrew the stress is on the word **“he.”**

Commentator Matthew Henry interprets this phrase, **“Train up a child according to his capabilities...”** A mom and dad need to fit their training to the personality and interests of their child. One-size-fits-all doesn't work in parenting. Our training needs to be tailored to the individuality of our child.

No child is born a blank slate. The moment a kid enters the world they already have inclinations and propensities. They come pre-programmed.

If your child is an artist don't force him to be athlete - if he's an athlete don't force him to be an artist. If she's strong willed use a strong hand. If she's more compliant, extra encouragement may be necessary.

Cookie-cutter approaches to parenting seldom work.

What was successful with a firstborn may not be right for the youngest. Study your child... then train him or her in the way *“that child”* should go!

Verse 7 **“The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”** If there's one financial strategy I would recommend it would be to *get out of debt, and stay out of debt.* You don't *need* new furniture, or a new SUV, or a Vacation condo. If you can't pay cash... don't buy it.

Debt sucks the joy out of life. It's bondage. **“The borrower is servant to the lender.”** When you're mortgaged to the hilt you can't change jobs, take a vacation, buy a home, give to the Lord as you'd like. What if God called you on a mission's trip? You're stuck. You can't go. There's no margin in your

finances. Every dollar you make goes to the Credit Union.

When you're heavily in debt you're enslaved to the lender.

But there is a cure for chronic debt... Granted, it's a tough pill to swallow and it takes a little while to work, but it's the only solution.

Here it is **“Deny your wants, and live at the level of your needs.”**

It's been said, **“If you're not in style chances are you're out of debt.”** To get out of debt might take driving a beater, or buying clothes at the thrift store, or bagging a lunch rather than eating out. **“But I deserve better... My friends can't see me in a clunker...”** That's our problem – its pride.

Here's the dilemma of most Americans. **“Because their *outgo* has exceeded their *income* - their *upkeep* is now their *downfall*.”**

Romans 13:8 sets the bar for all of us. **“Owe no man anything except to love one another...”** Start with items that don't appreciate. Pay off credit cards, and furniture, and cars. Get out of debt and stay out of debt.

Verse 8 **“He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow, and the rod of his anger will fail.”** A evil man's anger won't get him out of the trouble he's sowed.

**“He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; yes, strife and reproach will cease.”** To get rid of the grumbling, cast out the grumbler...

Paul told the Corinthians **“a little leaven leavens the whole**

lump."

When a church tolerates a chronic complainer or a divisive person it breeds discontent and division. Some people are like cancers. Once they're discovered they need to be cut out before they metastasize.

I heard of a conversation between two pastors. One of the pastor asked his friend how many people had God added to his church. The pastor replied, "None, but there have been a few blessed subtractions!"

There are times when it's best to ask someone to leave than it is to let them stay and infect the whole church with their bad attitude.

It's true, "One bad apple can spoil the whole bunch."

Verse 11 "He who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips, the king will be his friend. The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, but He overthrows the words of the faithless. The lazy man says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!" There's no lion in the streets. He just says there's a lion... the guy is *lying*... he's making excuses.

The lazy man looks for reasons to stay home rather than go to work.

"The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit; he who is abhorred by the LORD will fall there." Most women can out talk most men.

Females are the more articulate sex, and on the surface this is neither good nor bad... *unless there's evil in the heart of the woman*. A dirty girl is a danger. She can justify her



actions. She's good at casting blame.

She flirts, and uses enticing words, to lure a unsuspecting man into her trap. Her mouth is a deep pit. And once he falls it's difficult to escape.

Verse 15 **"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him."** Don't neglect to spank your kids.

I realize modern society frowns on the practice. Child experts advocate other forms of discipline... *and when it works I'll listen*. But all I see today are out-of-control kids, undisciplined, disrespectful, rebellious kids – who need a good spanking. **God ordained the rod for your child's bod!**

The Bible – the divine authority on good parenting – says to spank your child. Since the 1960s society has needed less **Spock** and more **spank**.

Yes, never spank your kids in anger.

Spank them only for defiance, not for child-like deficiencies – forgetfulness, or lack of coordination, or absent-mindedness.

Spank them only with a rod – not your hand. Use a neutral object – a belt, or a spoon. You want them to fear the rod, but welcome your hand.

And spank them only on the bottom – where God puts the padding.

But by all means, obey God's Word and spank your kids!

Once a mom had a plague she hung above the paddle she used when she spanked her kids. The plague read, **"I need**



Thee every hour."

The kids were never quite sure if it referred to the **Lord** or the **board**. At my house its been both. Every parent needs the Lord and the board.

"He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he who gives to the rich, will surely come to poverty. Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge; for it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; let them all be fixed upon your lips, so that your trust may be in the LORD; I have instructed you today, even you.

Verse 20 "Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge, that I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth, that you may answer words of truth to those who send to you?"

Do not rob the poor because he is poor, nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; for the LORD will plead their cause, and plunder the soul of those who plunder them. Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul." An angry man is trouble to the people around him. Stay away.

Verse 26 "Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge, one of those who is surety for debts..." Solomon says this over and over... Don't cosign on someone else's loan unless you can pay the loan.

"If you have nothing with which to pay, why should he take away your bed from under you?" If you can't pay you'll suffer for someone else's sin.

Verse 28 **“Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set.”** Don't fudge on your property lines. Keep the property pins in place.

Israel was granted land by family. The ancient landmarks went all the way back to the time of Joshua and Israel's conquest of Canaan. The allotment of land was not to be tampered with by future generations.

Of course, today leaders in the Middle East should take heed to this warning. Nations that would like to redraw the borders – the ancient landmarks - do so at their own peril. God will punish such action.

The chapter ends, **“Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men.”** This is why I love to watch Tiger Woods play golf. Not because I like Tiger per se or would care to meet him for lunch. I doubt we'd have much in common.

But I love to watch anyone who excels at what they do.

Whether it be a golfer, or musician, or painter, or carpenter, or tree trimmer. Excel at your work and the king will want to meet you.

Chapter 23 **“When you sit down to eat with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you; and put a knife to your throat If you are a man given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food.”**

Here's the warning... don't let the wealth of others breed discontent in you. It can happen! You're content with hamburger until your neighbors invite you over for steaks. You

like your furniture until you see their grouping. Your car was just fine, until you road in their new SUV.

Don't desire a friend's delicacies. As Paul said to Timothy, "Goodliness with contentment is great gain." Don't let something you didn't even know existed a few days ago rob you of your joy and contentment today.

"Do not overwork to be rich; because of your own understanding, cease! Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven."

Trust in material stuff and you set yourself up for disappointment. If your confidence is in money, you'll never have enough feel secure!

And one of two tragedies will occur in your life... Either you'll become a workaholic and work yourself into the ground. You'll have no time to enjoy life. Or the money you obtain will take wings and fly away. All it takes is one major illness – or an economic collapse - to wipe out a nest egg.

Put you hope in Jesus. He alone can make life worth living!

"Do not eat the bread of a miser, nor desire his delicacies; for as he thinks in his heart, so is he." This is a vital verse. It conveys the importance of our thoughts. A life is reflection of the thought-life.

"As a man thinks... so is he." This is why it's strategic to be selective.

*What you think and how you think* will determine the trajectory of your life. Be careful with what you entertain... and with what entertains you. Garbage in - garbage out...

Secular thoughts produce a secular life.

Think about godly things – and think from a godly perspective. Adopt a biblical outlook on life. Think God's thoughts and you'll be a godly person.

Verse 7 continues, **"Eat and drink!" he says to you, but his heart is not with you.**" A snob will invite you to eat – not because he's generous or wants to share. He just wants to save face. He hopes you'll say "No."

This is like the lunch appointment who offers to pick up the check, only because he knows you always do. Let him one time and he'll have a heart attack. Recognize this attitude when you see it and avoid this person...

Or **"The morsel you have eaten, you will vomit up, and waste your pleasant words."** This kind of generosity backfires. It's not worth it.

Verse 9 **"Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words. Do not remove the ancient landmark, nor enter the fields of the fatherless; for their Redeemer is mighty; He will plead their cause against you."** God Himself protects those who need protection.

Try to take advantage of an orphan and steal his inheritance. Slip out at night and move the pins that mark his property and God will defend him.

Of course, there's also a spiritual parallel. American society has been built on ancient landmarks. Our form of democracy was spawned by the principles which emerged from the Protestant Reformation. Christianity and the Bible are

responsible for the America that we know today.

Yet there're multiple movements afoot today that want to remove the ancient landmarks. They want to rewrite American history, and reinterpret our constitution. America was founded on *freedom of religion* not *freedom from religion*. It's separation of *church and state* – not *God and state*.

But as Solomon says, our “Redeemer is mighty,” and the person who messes with the landmarks can expect to ultimately answer to God.

Verse 12 “Apply your heart to instruction, and your ears to words of knowledge. Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.” Solomon is certainly not suggesting child abuse! The Hebrew word translated “beat” means “strike.” A better translated is “spank.”

“My son, if your heart is wise, my heart will rejoice - indeed, I myself; yes, my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak right things.

Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; for surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off.” In this life – in this fallen world - we're forced to deal with ironies and inconsistencies. Good is not always rewarded and evil punished.

It does pay to be good and godly. And the evil man will receive his punishment. But pay day doesn't always come in this life. Solomon says, “Surely there is a hereafter...” This life is not all there is...

There is a heaven and there is a hell. And eternity will be plenty of time for God to sort out these matters justly and mercifully.

In the words of the poet, at the moment it appears that “Right is forever on the scaffold and wrong is forever on the throne.” But one day soon that will be reversed. When King Jesus returns and reigns, “Wrong will be forever on the scaffold and right will be forever on the throne.”

Verse 19, “Hear, my son, and be wise; and guide your heart in the way.

Do not mix with winebibbers, or with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.” Notice, an addiction to Bud Light or Jack Daniels is in the same category as an addiction to BBQ ribs and strawberry shortcake.

Drunkenness, gluttony, and laziness are all three kissing cousins.

From here to the end, the chapter warns us his son about **women** and **wine**. Chapter 23 exposes the dangers of **wealth, wine, and women!**

Verse 22 “Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding. The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him.

Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her who bore you rejoice. My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.

Verse 27 “For a harlot is a deep pit, and a seductress is a narrow well..”

All forms of lust – pornography, adultery, casual sex, co-habitation, strip clubs, prostitution - is like a pit. It's easy to fall in, but difficult to get out!

In these next few verses Solomon is calling for his son to learn from his father's mistakes. Solomon had a lust for women. In defiance to God's law he multiplied wives – some 700 wives and 300 concubines. Some of his marriages were political conveniences, but lust was major motivation.

Solomon describes the harlot. He's thinking of a profession hooker, but his description also applies to the single woman who needs a man's attention, so she acts like a harlot to feed her own self-esteem...

“She also lies in wait as for a victim, and increases the unfaithful among men. Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause?” The man who falls for this woman ends up with terrible hurts that could've been avoided.

“Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Notice, the role alcohol plays in the sin of adultery. It's easier to forget solemn vows - and ignore people you're hurting – and the reputation you're ruining – once you're a little tipsy.

Solomon warns his son, “Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly...” The expression, “the wine when it is red...” is another way to say, “fermented wine.”



We're not talking about an O'Douls – this is a can of Sam Adams.

And notice Solomon even warns about the alcohol's appearance. It “sparkles in the cup” – “it swirls around smoothly.” Read these descriptions; then think of the beer commercials on TV.

It's all so deceptive. A camera zooms in on the mug. The beer dances, and splashes, and cascades from the bottle. It's like a refreshing waterfall.

The foam oozes over the lip of the mug – slides down the frosted glass. Then a drop-dead gorgeous girl picks up the mug and takes a drink.

It all looks fun, and exciting, and innocent – the ticket to happiness.

But read verse 32. **“At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.”** The camera doesn't show the hangover the next day - or the guy's head in the toilet as he heaves up his dinner - or the injured wife once she discovers his infidelity - or the angry kids who once trusted their dad, but now feel betrayed – or the child support payments, and financial ruin.

It all looks so innocent and victimless on TV. It's a deception.

Verse 33 continues to describe the effects of alcohol. **“Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: “They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten**

me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?" He's describing a man in a drunken stupor who doesn't realize the trouble he's in. All he cares about is seeking another drink.

Beware of the effects of alcohol. The NT may set the Christian free to drink in moderation, but our freedom doesn't change the potency of the alcohol. Exercising your freedom isn't worth getting bit or stung.

Chapter 24, "Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them; for their heart devises violence, and their lips talk of troublemaking.

Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong, yes, a man of knowledge increases strength; for by wise counsel you will wage your own war, and in a multitude of counselors there is safety. Wisdom is too lofty for a fool; he does not open his mouth in the gate."

The city gate was the ancient equivalent of a town hall or courthouse steps. It's where the leaders discussed problems and made decisions.

The fool is quick to speak when no one's around, but keeps his mouth shut in public for he fears he might be challenged or cross-examined.

"He who plots to do evil will be called a schemer. The devising of foolishness is sin, and the scoffer is an abomination to men.

If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small."

Tough times don't make us strong - they reveal the strength that was in us all along.

I like the old adage, "Christians are like tea bags. You don't know what's in them until they get put into hot water."

Verse 11 "Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter." There are people all around who are being drawn to death. The devil is luring them deeper into trouble.

They're going to hell in a hand basket. They're duped and they're dashing to destruction. It's up to us to grab them and share the truth!

In the little book of Jude we're told that with some folks we need to show compassion, but other people require **desperation evangelism.**

Jude 23 says, "But others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire..."

Verse 12 "If you say, "Surely we did not know this, "Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?" You can't excuse your sin by claiming ignorance. God holds every man responsible.

"My son, eat honey because it is good, and the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste; so shall the knowledge of wisdom be to your soul; if you have found it, there is a prospect, and your hope will not be cut off.

Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; do not plunder his resting place; for a righteous

**man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity.**” It’s not how many times you fall that matters as long as you get back up one more time.

The Christian God is the God of the second chance, and third chance, and multiple chances. There’s always one more chance for the person who’s alive and is willing to repent. There’re no limits on God’s grace.

In the 1975 Sugar Bowl, Alabama beat Penn State 13-6, but the Nittany Lions might've won the game if they had not had touchdown called back.

On a crucial play they were penalized for having 12 men on the field.

After the game, Coach Joe Paterno, was asked by a reporter to identify the guilty player, he refused. Paterno answered, **“It's only a game. And I have no intention of ever identifying the boy. He just made a mistake.”**

Never try to belittle your sins. Sin is serious. But God is just as gracious as the coach. The psalmist says God knows that we’re but dust! I believe there are times when we expect more out of ourselves than God does!

When a righteous man – a man who trusts God – falls, God picks him up. But when a wicked man - an unbeliever – falls, he lands with a thud!

Verse 17 **“Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him.”** Rejoice at your enemy’s calamity and God might help

him back up just to triumph over you!

“Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the wicked; for there will be no prospect for the evil man; the lamp of the wicked will be put out.” Don't worry. God will even the score on the final day of class.

“My son, fear the LORD and the king; do not associate with those given to change; for their calamity will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin those two can bring?” Be careful about those who promise change for change sake. Before you throw out the king make sure you know his replacement. The change could prove worse than his predecessor.

“These things also belong to the wise: it is not good to show partiality in judgment. He who says to the wicked, “You are righteous,” him the people will curse; nations will abhor him. But those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, and a good blessing will come upon them.” Don't gloss over the sins of the wicked. People respect impartial judgment.

Verse 26 “He who gives a right answer kisses the lips.” Have you ever tried to conduct business and gotten the proverbial run around. *Is there anyone here that can give me a straight answer?* Finally, someone comes to the rescue. You feel like kissing them on the lips.

Did you hear about the thief who charged into the bank, waving his gun, shouting, “I'm going to rob every man and I'm going to kiss every lady.”

One brave husband answered back, “*You might rob every man, but you're not going to kiss my wife!*” Suddenly he felt a

jab in the ribs. It was his wife. "George, now leave the man alone. He's trying to rob a bank."

Verse 27 is excellent advice for a young man, "Prepare your outside work, make it fit for yourself in the field; and afterward build your house."

Solomon is saying to his son, finish your education, and get established in your career *before* you start a family. Number one, rather than vague promises, it gives you're future wife an idea of the life she can expect.

And number two, starting out in a career requires long hours and hard work – a lifestyle that may not be compatible with a happy married life.

Verse 28 "Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, for would you deceive with your lips? Do not say, "I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."

Romans 12:19 is the NT echo, "Beloved do not avenge yourselves... for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

"I went by the field of the lazy man, and by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; and there it was, all overgrown with thorns; its surface was covered with nettles; its stone wall was broken down. When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction: a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest; so shall your poverty come like a prowler, and your need like an armed man."

A short season of laziness can put a man dangerously behind.

Just a nap here, a sick day there, a long lunch, or a week off without pay - “a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands...” Once you fall asleep on the job it doesn't take much for destruction to come.

It was Charlie McCarthy who quipped, “Hard work never killed anybody, but why take a chance?” It's a funny line, unless you think it's true. Don't be lazy. Christians should be known as industrious and hard-working.