

Wisdom

Applying what God has said to my life and lifestyle.

Only when we go beyond studying these words and begin to apply these words to our daily lives that we come to know and understand just how practical and life enhancing God's Word can be.

Wisdom

- COMMUNITY LIVING
- ~~DILIGENCE AND SLOTH~~
- EMOTIONS
- FAMILY
- ~~FINANCIAL, MONEY, WEALTH AND POVERTY~~
- FRIENDSHIP
- GOD'S CHARACTER
- HOME / HOUSEHOLD
- HUMILITY AND PRIDE
- LIFE AND DEATH
- MOUTH AND SPEECH
- ~~RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER~~
- RULERS, KINGS, AUTHORITIES AND LEADERS
- SEXUAL STANDARDS
- THE TEACHABLE PERSON
- THE WISE CONTRASTED WITH THE FOOLISH

Knowledge: having facts – Knowledge alone is trivia

Believe

So What!?!?! How does this change my life and way of living?

Understanding: knowing how to use the facts I have – Understanding explains why the Knowledge I have is important and how they can work to my benefit

Trust

So What!?!?! How does this change my life and way of living?

Wisdom: I apply the facts and my understanding of them to accomplish something of value, to change my life and the way I live.

Walk by Faith

I actually apply God's truth to my life – thoughts, words and deeds. I act based on my confidence in God and what He says trusting Him for what I do not understand – yet...

Understanding: I see what God is saying in those verses and how the truth contained in them can impact me. I understand how what God has said applies to me and my life.

Knowledge: I know the Books of the Bible (trivia). I have memorized Bible verses. I know what God says...

All wisdom ultimately comes from God

Poetry such as that found in Proverbs and the Psalms presents some challenges when it comes to interpretation.

We take most narrative passages of Scripture literally but poetic passages use imagery and requires a more open-ended interpretation.

Hebrew poetry also uses a technique called parallelism, in which the same thing is said twice, either

- by using different words the second time or
- by saying it in a positive way in the first line and in a negative way in the second (or vice versa).

The thought expressed in the second part is basically the same as the first:

Words used to describe the first phrase may vary from the second but we can fall into error if we try to make each phrase its own theological statement. They convey one unified thought.

All wisdom ultimately comes from God

We cannot study a collection of sayings the same way we study the teachings of Jesus, the stories of the Old Testament, or the epistles of Paul.

Although some sections of Proverbs have grouped material around a main theme, most of this book consists of small groupings of sayings.

Many sayings stand alone, having little to do with surrounding verses.

This makes Proverbs a difficult book to study passage by passage.

Look for verses that explicitly address the same topics, even using the same phrases and words and then we try to arrive at the overarching principles.

For fun, select a proverb a day. Tape it onto a mirror or write it in your journal. Then try to live it out that day.

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01

Pick it – Learn it

- Pick a topic / subject that you least have a problem with.
- Pick a topic / subject that most struggle with.
 - Read all the proverb references listed for that subject.
- Each day go over the proverbs for one chapter on that list.
 - *Be sure to review the verses around your target verse !!*
 - Pick the one verse that spoke to you the most. Why?
 - Meditate on it. Memorize it...
 - Pick the one verse that spoke to you the least. Why?
 - Meditate on it. Memorize it...
 - *If the verse(s) doesn't hit the target, check other translations.*
 - If you across others proverbs (or other scriptures) about that topic / subject, add them to the list.

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02

As you dig into a verse...

- What does it say?
- Who does it describe?
- What does it mean?
- What did Jesus and others say about it in God's Word?
 - Are there examples of it in God's Word?
 - How does it impact me?
 - How do I put it to work for me in my life?
 - What should I start doing or stop doing"?
 - What can I expect?
- What can I expect if I don't put it to work in my life?

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The Book of Proverbs

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Bibliography

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Series: Old Testament Author: Ray C. Stedman Date: June 27, 1965
Title: Proverbs: That Men May Know Wisdom
- **Proverbs: Wisdom that Works**
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Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., Published by Crossway, 1300 Crescent Street, Wheaton Illinois 60187 ISBN-13: r8-1-58134-883-5 ISBN- 10: 1-58134-883-5 PDF ISBN: 978- 1-4335-3104-0 Mobipocket ISBN: 978-1-4335-3105-7 ePub ISBN: 978- 1-4335-3106-4. Copyright © 2012 by Raymond C. Ortlund Jr. All rights reserved.
- <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/topics/all.php>

- Achievement | Goals
- Adversity, Affliction — Being Afflicted
- Anger
- Animals
- Associations: Friends, Neighbors, Partners
- Authority | Authorities
- Blessings and Curses
- Broken Relationships | Personal Offenses
- Brother(s)
- Business, partnerships | relationships
- Business | Ethics
- Children
- Clothing
- Comfort | Troubled Heart
- Commendation — Praise - Flattery
- Community Living
- Companions & Friends
- Confession | Concealing
- Confidence Connections & Access
- Contentment Correction – Reproof
- Counselors - Advisors
- Covetousness and Envy
- Creation

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- Deliverance from evil
- Depression | Attitude | Discontentment
- Diet / Food / Honey
- Diligence and Sloth
- Discretion
- Distractions / Focus
- Drunkenness — Strong Drink
- Emotions
- Enemies
- Envy
- Etiquette
- Evil ones, the evil man, evil doers
- Eyes / Sees
- Faith — Fear— Fear of the Lord
- Faithfulness - Deviousness
- Family
- Farming
- Father | Fatherless
- Favor
- Financial: Borrowing | Lending - Surety
- Financial: Money — Giving, Savings, Waste
- Folly, Fools, Foolishness

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- Labor | Work
- Lacking sense
- Laughter
- Law
- Laziness | Slothfulness
- Leadership Liar
- Life
- Lifestyle
- Listening
- The Lord
- Love
- Loyalty
- Marriage
- Mentors | Teachers
- Mercy | Kindness
- Mockers
- Mother
- Mouth | Speech
- Nation
- Obedience
- Parents
- Peace

- Plans | Planning
- Poor, Poverty, Rich, Prosperity
- Priorities
- Promises, Protection and Deliverance
- Prudence
- Reputation
- Rescue from trouble
- Rebellion
- Relationships Between Parents and Children
- Reproof, Chastening and Correction
- The Righteous | The Evil, Their Rewards
- Rulers, Kings and Authority
- Security
- Servants, Workers
- Sons
- Safety
- Scorners
- Seduction
- Self -deceit
- Sexual Standards | Relations,

- Friendship
- Frowardness
- Generosity and Greed
- Gluttony and Drunkenness | Excess
- God's Commands
- God Hates / Loves | Judges
- God's control: Sovereignty
- Good Sense
- Gossip & Slander
- Graciousness
- Guidance
- Guilt
- Gullibility
- Happiness
- Haste
- Hatred
- Health & Longevity
- Hell
- Heart, the | Human Spirit | Innermost Person
- Holy
- Home
- Honesty

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- Honor & Reputation | Character
- Hope
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- Husband
- Hypocrisy
- Ill-gotten Gain
- Inexperience
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- Instruction
- Integrity
- Intimidation
- Jesting
- Joy
- Judgment
- Just
- Justice and Judgment
- Kings | Rulers | Authorities
- Knowledge, Wisdom, Understanding and Instruction

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- Simple
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- Sleep — Slothfulness — Laziness - Sluggards
- Snare | Traps
- Strength
- Strife
- Stubborn
- Success
- Those Not to be Trusted
- The Other Woman
- The Teachable Person
- Theft Trouble | Troublemaker, Contention, Conflict
- Truth | Lying — Deceit - Falsehood
- Understanding - Discernment
- Unity
- Upright
- Vanity
- Violence
- Virtuous Woman

- Wife, the Right Woman
- The Ways of God and of Man
- Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom
- Wealth
- Wicked
- Wife
- Wisdom, blessings of
- Wisdom, curse in neglecting
- Wisdom, personified
- Wisdom, seeking for | pre-eminence of
- Wisdom, source
- The Wise Contrasted With the Foolish
- Witness — Honest | Dishonest
- Women
- Youth

COMMUNITY LIVING

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Community Living

An unfriendly man pursues selfish ends; he defies all sound judgment” (Proverbs 18:1).

The Israelites' social structure was tribal, requiring that each person fulfill his or her role.

The Law, particularly the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, contained very specific instructions regarding how people were to act within their community.

Today's Western culture gives much more power to the individual.

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Community Living

1. Describe the neighborhood of your childhood years. In what ways was it a real community, and how was it not a community?

Do not withhold good from those who deserve it. when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, “Come back later; I’ll give it tomorrow”— when you now have it with you. Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you. Do not accuse a man for no reason—when he has done you no harm. (3:27—30)

Seldom set foot in your neighbor’s house—too much of you, and he will hate you. (25:17)

Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother’s house when disaster strikes you— better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away. (27:10)

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Community Living

Pro 3:27-28 NASB

(27) Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it. (28) Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you.

2. In what situations are we tempted to “withhold good” from our neighbors

How responsible do you feel for the welfare of those who live around you?

Pro 3:29 NASB

(29) Do not devise harm against your neighbor, While he lives securely beside you.

3. Is it really possible to live securely with your neighborhood? Why or why not?

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Community Living

Pro 25:17 *Let your foot rarely be in your neighbor's house, Or he will become weary of you and hate you.*

4. What does this tell us about the limits of community?
What guidelines, if any, do you use regarding the amount of contact you have with neighbors?

Pro 27:10 *Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, And do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother far away.*

5. What is the principle behind **27:10**?

Community Living

Proverbs 17:9 *He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.*

6. Does this mean that we ignore wrongdoing or deny problems between people? Explain.

Sometimes opposing parties—even close friends —cannot reach a conclusion that satisfies everyone.

Two people can perceive and remember an incident quite differently. No amount of arguing will change those perceptions.

In such cases, it is best to drop the matter rather than arguing for the sake of arguing.

Proverbs 17:9 *He who loves a quarrel loves sin; he who builds a high gate invites destruction.*

“Covers over” in **Proverbs 17:9** can simply mean “to forgive,” which is always appropriate.

Once a deed is done, it is pointless to refer back to it again and again.

Community Living

Proverbs 17:14 *Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.*

7. Recall some quarrels you've had or have witnessed between others.

At what point did the discussion turn into a quarrel?

What might a person do to prevent a dispute from breaking out?

One means of stopping something before it starts is the use of mediation in legal disputes.

Many people are staying out of the courtroom by settling matters early, with the help of a mediator, so that each side is heard and their interests are considered.

The best course is to quell disagreement even before a third party is needed.

What did Jesus say about settling a dispute?

Community Living

Pro 17:19 *He who loves a quarrel loves sin; he who builds a high gate invites destruction.*

Pro 17:19 *He who loves transgression loves strife; He who raises his door seeks destruction.*

8. Put “**He who loves a quarrel loves sin**” into your own words.

What kind of person would build a high gate?

Why would that invite destruction?

In a tribal community, a high gate would likely indicate that a person was uncharacteristically independent from others or had possessions he wished to protect.

The gate could be seen as a challenge, perhaps in the same way “drawing a line in the sand” can make the opposing party more, not less, aggressive.

In keeping with the parallel verse structure of Proverbs, this interpretation would go along with the first part of the verse, which tells us that quarrelsome people are, in effect, looking for trouble.

Community Living

***Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, or use your lips to deceive. Do not say, 'Til do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did.'* (24:28—29)**

What you have seen with your eyes do not bring hastily to court, for what will you do in the end if your neighbor puts you to shame? If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man's confidence, or he who hears it may shame you and you will never lose your bad reputation. (25:7—10)

9. In what ways are the principles in **24:28—29** and **25:7—10** being violated in today's world?

What example can Christians set in these areas?

Community Living

Read the following proverbs on friendship:

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity (Proverbs 17:17)

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. (Proverbs 27:6)

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel. (Pro 27:9)

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. (Pro 27:17)

10. Identify some distinctive qualities of a friend implied in these proverbs.

When have you seen these traits demonstrated between friends you know?

11. Why is the counsel of a friend so valuable?

12. What is the meaning of **27:6**?

Have you ever been "wounded by a friend in a good way?"

How did you receive it?

Community Living

Put Your Wisdom to Work

What character traits must we develop if we are to live as good friends and neighbors?

What can you do in the coming weeks to cultivate one or more of these traits?

DILIGENCE AND SLOTH

Diligence and Sloth

Most people are impressed by the gifted person who seems to succeed effortlessly at every endeavor.

There aren't many such people, however.

More common—and less acclaimed—are those who diligently go about their daily work, building their home lives, careers, and social contributions upon steady practice and productivity.

The book of Proverbs has much to say about the diligent life.

In the following passages, we encounter examples of those who gain much through diligence—or lose much through lack of it.

1. When have you worked steadily toward a goal for an extended period of time?

What was difficult about the process?

What were the rewards?

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The Book of Proverbs

Diligence and Sloth

Pro 24:30-34 NIV

I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; (31) thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. (32) I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: (33) A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— (34) and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.

Pro 27:23-27 NIV

Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; (24) for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations. (25) When the hay is removed and new growth appears and the grass from the hills is gathered in, (26) the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field. (27) You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed you and your family and to nourish your servant girls.

2. According to the writer(s) of these two accounts, what actions or attitudes determine the conditions of the two properties?

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The Book of Proverbs

Diligence and Sloth

Pro 24:30-31 NIV

(30) I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; (31) thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins.

3. When you walk into a home or business office that is chaotic, uncared for, and “overgrown”, what thoughts cross your mind?

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The Book of Proverbs

Diligence and Sloth

Being disordered is defined differently by different types of people.

Some people look disorganized, yet they are organized sufficiently for the kind of work they do, and they know where to find what they need.

Pro 27:23 Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds;

The most “orderly” people are not always the most healthy.

People differ in their standards of cleanliness, within a reasonable range.

But most people become less organized and take poorer care of themselves when they are upset, depressed, anxious, or simply too busy.

4. When your own living or working space is disordered, what does that sometimes indicate about your mental, emotional, or spiritual state?

How can diligent attention to some things ease our anxiety?

5. What is the condition of your “flocks” — your work and home life?

How do you take stock of these areas?

Each person should learn to read his or her own signs that daily life is getting out of control.

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The Book of Proverbs

Diligence and Sloth

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest — and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man. (Pro 6:6—11)

One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys. (Pro 18:9)
The lazy person does not plow in season; harvest comes, and there is nothing to be found. (Pro 20:4, NRSV)

6. What important aspect of life have these people ignored?

Some people who are “sluggards” are actually rebellious at heart.

They want the world on their own terms. They are the same people who often scoff at rules and thus end up in trouble.

We can lose a lot—both materially and spiritually—by not paying attention to the seasons of life.

Whether we miss planting time or an important deadline at work, we are hurting ourselves by refusing to fit into patterns larger than our own interests and schedules.

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Diligence and Sloth

Pro 6:10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—

7. How can laziness (“a little sleep”) be habit forming?

What measures have you taken / can you take to overcome habits of laziness?

8. How can laziness in our home or workplace be destructive.

What does it say to others about us, about our attitude towards God, and others, and ourselves?

What are some visible signs we can watch for?

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Diligence and Sloth

Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. (Pro 10:4)

All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty. (Pro 14:23)

The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty. (Pro 21:5)

Anyone who tills the land will have plenty of bread, but one who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty. (Pro 28:19, NRSV)

9. To what four other traits or behaviors is diligence compared in these verses?

Staying focused, working hard, planning, preparation...

To what do they lead?

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Diligence and Sloth

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10. Is all material poverty a result of laziness? Explain.

Be careful not to generalize or apply the points made in these verses in reverse.

The Proverbs states repeatedly that laziness leads to poverty, they do not say that all poverty is the result of laziness.

Many people are in need because of corrupt governmental organizations, natural disasters such as famine, or downward economic trends.

The Old Testament writers were also quick to cite many cases in which wealth was acquired through oppression and corruption.

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Diligence and Sloth

The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied. (13:4)

The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing. (21:25—26)

11. Why do you think people who work hard are able to find satisfaction in life?

What other positive results of diligence can you list?

12. Note the end result of the sluggard's longings in 21:25—26.

Why do you think people who crave so much are not willing to work toward those desires?

Put Your Wisdom to Work

Does diligence come easily to you? Why or why not?

What often keeps you from working toward fulfilling your desires and needs?

Diligence Laziness and Sloth

Pro 4:23 Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it *spring* the issues of life.

Pro 10:3-7 NKJV

- (3) The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to famish,
But He casts away the desire of the wicked.
- (4) He who has a slack hand becomes poor,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.
- (5) He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son;
He who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame.
- (6) Blessings *are* on the head of the righteous,
But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.
- (7) The memory of the righteous *is* blessed,
But the name of the wicked will rot.

Pro 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
So is the lazy man to those who send him.

Pro 11:27 He who diligently seeks good seeks [God's] favor, but he who searches after evil [popularity], evil shall come upon him.

Diligence Laziness and Sloth

Pro 12:11 He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread,
But he who follows frivolity is devoid of understanding.

Pro 12:24 The hand of the diligent will rule,
But the lazy *man* will be put to forced labor.

Pro 12:27 The lazy *man* does not roast what he took in hunting,
But diligence *is* man's precious possession.

Pro 13:11 Wealth *gained* by dishonesty will be diminished,
But he who gathers by labor will increase.

Pro 14:4 Where no oxen *are*, the trough *is* clean;
But much increase *comes* by the strength of an ox.

Pro 15:9 The way of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD,
But He loves him who follows righteousness.

Diligence Laziness and Sloth

Pro 16:25-26 NKJV

- (25) There is a way *that seems* right to a man,
But its end *is* the way of death.
- (26) The person who labors, labors for himself,
For his *hungry* mouth drives him *on*.

Pro 17:2 A wise servant will rule over a son who causes shame,
And will share an inheritance among the brothers.

Pro 19:15 Laziness casts *one* into a deep sleep,
And an idle person will suffer hunger.

Pro 19:24 A lazy *man* buries his hand in the bowl,
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

Pro 20:13 Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty;
Open your eyes, *and* you will be satisfied with bread.

Diligence Laziness and Sloth

Pro 21:17 He who loves pleasure *will be* a poor man;
He who loves wine and oil will not be rich.

Pro 22:13 The lazy *man* says, "*There is* a lion outside!
I shall be slain in the streets!"

Pro 22:29 Do you see a man *who* excels in his work?
He will stand before kings;
He will not stand before unknown *men*.

Pro 23:20-21 NKJV

(20) Do not mix with winebibbers,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;

(21) For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags.

Diligence Laziness and Sloth

Pro 24:9-10 NKJV

(9) The devising of foolishness *is* sin,
And the scoffer *is* an abomination to men.

(10) *If* you faint in the day of adversity,
Your strength *is* small.

Pro 24:27 Prepare your outside work,
Make it fit for yourself in the field;
And afterward build your house.

Pro 25:2 *It is* the glory of God to conceal a matter,
But the glory of kings *is* to search out a matter.

Pro 25:13 Like the cold of snow in time of harvest
Is a faithful messenger to those who send him,
For he refreshes the soul of his masters.

Pro 25:28 Whoever *has* no rule over his own spirit
Is like a city broken down, without walls.

Diligence Laziness and Sloth

Pro 26:13-19 NKJV

(13) The lazy *man* says, "*There is* a lion in the road!
A fierce lion *is* in the streets!"

(14) As a door turns on its hinges,
So *does* the lazy *man* on his bed.

(15) The lazy *man* buries his hand in the bowl;
It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.

(16) The lazy *man is* wiser in his own eyes
Than seven men who can answer sensibly.

Pro 27:18-19 NKJV

(18) Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit;
So he who waits on his master will be honored.

(19) As in water face *reflects* face,
So a man's heart *reveals* the man.

Pro 28:4 Those who forsake the law praise the wicked,
But such as keep the law contend with them.

Diligence Laziness and Sloth

Pro 28:13 He who covers his sins will not prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

Pro 29:6 By transgression an evil man is snared,
But the righteous sings and rejoices.

Pro 30:24-28 NKJV

(24) There are four *things which* are little on the earth,
But they *are* exceedingly wise:

(25) The ants *are* a people not strong,
Yet they prepare their food in the summer;

(26) The rock badgers are a feeble folk,
Yet they make their homes in the crags;

(27) The locusts have no king,
Yet they all advance in ranks;

(28) The spider skillfully grasps with its hands,
And it is in kings' palaces.

Diligence Laziness and Sloth

Pro 31:10-27 NKJV

- (10) Who can find a virtuous wife?
For her worth *is* far above rubies.
- (11) The heart of her husband safely trusts her;
So he will have no lack of gain.
- (12) She does him good and not evil
All the days of her life.
- (13) She seeks wool and flax,
And willingly works with her hands.
- (14) She is like the merchant ships,
She brings her food from afar.
- (15) She also rises while it is yet night,
And provides food for her household,
And a portion for her maidservants.
- (16) She considers a field and buys it;
From her profits she plants a vineyard.
- (17) She girds herself with strength,
And strengthens her arms.
- (18) She perceives that her merchandise *is* good,
And her lamp does not go out by night.

EMOTIONS

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Diligence Laziness and Sloth

Pro 31:10-27 NKJV

- (19) She stretches out her hands to the distaff,
And her hand holds the spindle.
- (20) She extends her hand to the poor,
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.
- (21) She is not afraid of snow for her household,
For all her household *is* clothed with scarlet.
- (22) She makes tapestry for herself;
Her clothing *is* fine linen and purple.
- (23) Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sits among the elders of the land.
- (24) She makes linen garments and sells *them*,
And supplies sashes for the merchants.
- (25) Strength and honor *are* her clothing;
She shall rejoice in time to come.
- (26) She opens her mouth with wisdom,
And on her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
- (27) She watches over the ways of her household,
And does not eat the bread of idleness.

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Emotions

Although the book of Proverbs speaks to us primarily about wisdom, we also find some candid references to the emotional side of being human.

Pro 15:30 Bright eyes encourage the heart; good news nourishes the body.

God is emotional and we were created in His image.

Emotion is part of humility.

Jesus did not stand aloof or walk around like some first century Mr. Spock, Jesus got involved – physically and emotionally.

“Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” (Isaiah 53:4).

What does ***Isaiah 53:4*** verse mean?

Does this mean we should no longer experience emotion?

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. Instead, we have one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet he never sinned.

How does ***Hebrews 4:15*** shed light on ***Isaiah 53:4*** ?

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Emotions

We see real and perfect emotion in Christ.

- He looked at the rich young man and **“loved him”** (*Mark 10:21*).
- He was **“moved with pity”** by the leper (*Mark 1:41*).
- He **“wept”** over Lazarus (*John 11:35*).
- He wailed over Jerusalem (*Luke 19:41*).
- He **“sighed”** over the deaf man (*Mark 7:34*).
- He also got angry. He was angry at the Pharisees. He **“looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart”** (*Mark 3:5*).
- When his own disciples wanted to shoo the children away, he was irritated, and he showed it (*Mark 10:14*).
- He was angrily offended at death when he stood at the grave of a friend (*John 11:33, 38*).
- He busted up the moneychangers in the temple (*John 2:13—17*), and the Bible says he made the whip himself (v. 15).
- He called people **“pigs”** (*Matthew 7:6*).
- He called people **“hypocrites”** (*Matthew 15:7*).
- He called people **“wolves”** (*Matthew 7:15*).

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Emotions

The Bible calls Jesus **“a man of sorrows”** (*Isaiah 53:3*).

He said, **“Now is my soul troubled”** (*John 12:27*), and **“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death”** (*Matthew 26:37, 38*).

He endured the cross for **“the joy that was set before him”** (*Hebrews 12:2*).

Jesus was anointed with **“the oil of gladness beyond his companions”** (*Psalms 45:7*).

“he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit” (*Luke 10:21*).

He told us he came: **“...that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full”** (*John 15:11*).

He came to give us the fullness of his joy.

Jesus lived for us, in our place, the perfect human life, with every emotion in close alignment with the heart of God.

In the book of Proverbs we have his wisdom for our emotions.

We need the emotional life of Christ, and he wants to give it to us.

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Emotions: Fear and Boldness

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Proverbs 9:10)

The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion. (Proverbs 28:1)

Why don't we typically “fear the Lord enough?”

When we are filled with spiritual wisdom, our goal changes: we want to be “fully pleasing to him”.

Col 1:9-10 ISV

(9) For this reason, since the day we heard about this, we have not stopped praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the full knowledge of God's will with respect to all spiritual wisdom and understanding, (10) so that you might live in a manner worthy of the Lord and be fully pleasing to him as you bear fruit while doing all kinds of good things and growing in the full knowledge of God.

To fear the Lord means his opinion is the only one that finally matters to our hearts.

Emotions: Anger and Restraint

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12)

The anger that is hatred “stirs up strife.”

The word translated “strife” has to do with judgments, opinions.

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Emotions: **Anger and Restraint**

*A man of wrath stirs up strife,
and one given to anger causes much transgression. (Pro 29:22)*

Wisdom asks, "Why should I feel intensely about that issue?"

Why does anybody need my opinion?
Why are we even talking about this?
Will it matter in eternity?

If not, why am I getting angry over it?

God wants to be stirred up in our hearts but over things that will **stir one another up to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)**.

Emotions: **Anger and Restraint**

*Good sense makes one slow to anger,
and it is his glory to overlook an offense. (Proverbs 19:11)*

Even if you are angry for good reason it is a glory to overlook a personal offense.

We have a higher standard than getting even.

Our standard is glory, because God is glorious.

He overlooks our offenses because of the cross.
He does not call us out to embarrass us.

There is more than one word in the Old Testament for "glory" and this word in **Proverbs 19:11** means "beauty."

This word is used to describe beautiful clothing (**Isaiah 52:1**), beautiful jewels (**Ezekiel 16:17**), a beautiful city (**Isaiah 28:1**), and the beauty of God himself (**1 Chr 29:11**).

He makes beautiful people who know how to ignore a slight.

They judge themselves instead.

Emotions: **Anger and Restraint**

Anger is a judging emotion.

Anger is our hearts feeling that something is wrong.

*Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding,
but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly. (Proverbs 14:29)*

Wisdom brings this judging emotion itself under judgment.

Fools unleash it 'without filtering it.

They exalt it.

They lift it up for everyone to see.

They expose their own folly.

You lose much more than your temper when you allow anger to run uncontrolled.

Emotions: **Anger and Restraint**

*Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city. (Pro 16:32)*

The wise rule their emotions with a nobility that outclasses world conquerors: "

Conquering a city is child's play compared with ruling the turbulent, demanding, upset world inside us.

The one is only the battle of a day.

The other is the conflict of a lifetime.

If you really believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come in final and inescapable judgment, you don't need to be anyone's judge but to judge yourself right now.

Emotions: Jealousy and Tranquility

***Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming,
but who can stand before jealousy? (Proverbs 27:4)***

Anger can be violent, but jealousy is worse.

Anger at its best is reacting against something that is wrong.

Jealousy is reacting against something that is right and good.

- Cain did not kill Abel because Abel had wronged him.
“Why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you” (1 John 3:12, 13).
- The Bible says it was out of envy that the enemies of Christ brought him down (***Matthew 27:18***).
- The early church was persecuted because of jealousy (***Acts 5:17-18; 13:45***).

When Christ, not Self, is who matters most to us, that frees us to be happy even when we are shoved aside, overlooked, passed by.

Emotions: Jealousy and Tranquility

***A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh,
but envy makes the bones rot. (Proverbs 14:30)***

Envy decays not only the soul but also the body.

That person you resent—does it irritate you when he succeeds, and would it make you happy to see him fall?

When you look at that person, is all you can see what is wrong with him and never what is right about him?

Emotions: Jealousy and Tranquility

***Fret not yourself because of evildoers,
and be not envious of the wicked,
for the evil man has no future;
the lamp of the wicked will be put out. (Pro 24:19, 20)***

If anyone is truly evil and successful — we don’t envy losers — that brightly shining, impressive, formidable, evil person will be snuffed out and will come to nothing under the judgment of Christ.

Can you think of one evil person in all of history who ended up with a life you want for yourself?

Why then do we fret?

Why do we burn up inside with envy?

Don’t you think God is wise enough to manage real life?

The world may live for today.

We are to live for God’s promised tomorrow.

Emotions: *Cheerfulness and the Gospel*

***All the days of the afflicted are evil,
but the cheerful of heart has a continual feast. (Proverbs 15:15)***

***A joyful heart is good medicine,
but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (Proverbs 17:22)***

***The light of the eyes rejoices the heart,
and good news refreshes the bones. (Proverbs 15:30)***

We have been told that we will finally be happy when we get our perfect little world assembled around us just the way we like it.

External things cannot satisfy an internal longing, but that is a good thing:

It means that when life is hard, even then a real cheerfulness can still treat us to a feast deep within.

That feast is the love of God for us in Christ.

Emotions: Managing Our Emotions

1. In what ways have emotions enhanced your life?

When have you wished you didn't have to deal with them?

Anxiety weighs down the human heart, but a good word cheers it up. (12:25, NRSV)

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. (13:12)

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. (14:30)

A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit. (15:13)

A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones. (17:22, NRSV)

2. According to these verses, our health is affected by our state of mind and heart.

Do you agree or disagree?

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Emotions: Managing Our Emotions

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. (13:12)

3. Deferred (**13:12**) means "postponed or delayed."

Relate an example of hope being deferred in your life or someone else's.

Anxiety weighs down the human heart, but a good word cheers it up. (12:25, NRSV)

4. To what extent do you think we can control the way we feel?

Explain. when, if ever, have you made the choice to offer a good word (**12:25**) or cultivate in yourself the peace and cheerfulness that contribute to good health?

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Emotions: Managing Our Emotions

Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy. (14:10)

5. Rewrite **14:10** in your own words, then back it up with a personal experience or observation.

Even in laughter the heart may ache, and joy may end in grief. (14:13)

6. If **14:13** is true, how can we know if a person is in pain?

What can we do to draw out the true feelings of others?

Like vinegar on a wound is one who sings songs to a heavy heart. Like a moth in clothing or a worm in wood, sorrow gnaws at the human heart. (25:20, NRSV)

7. In what ways do people sometimes "sing songs to a heavy heart"?

When have others responded to your pain in this way?

How did you feel?

8. What would you advise someone to do for a friend who is in pain or is grieving?

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Emotions: Managing Our Emotions

One who is quick-tempered acts foolishly, and the schemer is hated. (14:17, NRSV)

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared. (22:24—25)

9. Discuss some of the results of anger mentioned in these verses.

10. Why should we avoid associating with angry people?

Describe a time when you have been "ensnared" by someone's angry habits or seen others who were ensnared?

11. Why might anger make us more vulnerable to foolishness and sin?

What evidence have you seen of this?

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Emotions: Managing Our Emotions

Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs. (10:12)

Those who are hot-tempered stir up strife, but those who are slow to anger calm contention. (15:18. NRSV)

12. What qualities are good antidotes to anger (10:12; 15:18)?

How might you apply these qualities to a volatile situation?

13. The proverbs make observations about emotions more than they instruct us in managing them.

Why are proverbs so effective in offering practical help as opposed to a list of do's and don'ts?

Put Your Wisdom to Work

Which verses or passages from this study could be useful in helping a person recognize and accept his or her emotions?

Which verses or passages have you found helpful in managing your own emotions?

FINANCIAL: MONEY, WEALTH AND POVERTY

Financial: Money

Pro 10:22 The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it.

If you have a money problem, the answer is not money.

The answer is the Lord.

Your employer does not provide for you; God does.

If the blessing of the Lord makes rich. Our business is with him.

“The eyes of the LORD are in every place” (Proverbs 15:3).

Our business is always with God first, and he is the best business partner in the universe.

“He adds no sorrow.”

When you make money by the blessing of the Lord, you do not have to bend the rules, you can keep your promises, you do not have to overwork yourself, your conscience can stay clear, and you make enough money to share with others, which is joyful.

There is no sorrow in that.

Financial: Money

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

God has packed into this world vast potentialities for wealth creation.

Gen 2:11-12 NIV

(11)The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (12) (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.)

God put gold, fine gold, in the world before sin ever came along.

Financial: Money

“Some people, craving money, have . . . pierced themselves with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:10, NLT).

Our problem as human beings is not God withholding good from us.

Our problem is not his creation.

Our problem is that we look at God’s creation in all its splendor and we think, this is how I can stop feeling empty — I’ll make money.”

We bring our sadness to the creation and we say to it, “You are my happiness.”

We chase the creation rather than the creator who gave it all to us in the first place.

That idolatry is what adds sorrow to our lives.

If this is what God made, what better wealth must be in him?

“All things are yours” (1 Corinthians 3:21).

God made everything for you to draw your heart to him not to things.

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Financial: Money

God is not holding out. He is blessing us in every way that will not add sorrow to our lives.

But how does God bless us?

How does God actually put his money into our pockets?

Through the dignity of our own hard work.

A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. (Proverbs 10:4)

Poverty because of injustice is no disgrace, but laziness is.

God made us for good, hard work.

Our bodies thrive when they work.

Our emotions are satisfied when we strive toward a goal and reach it.

And when we have something to share with others as well, it really makes us happy.

That is true wealth.

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Financial: Money

God blesses through our hard work.

Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense. (Proverbs 12:11)

“He who follows worthless pursuits” can also be translated **“a person who chases fantasies” (NLT).**

“Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread.”

God made us to build something up, make it successful and use it not for self-glory but for the glory of God and the benefit of others.

That takes humility as we plow one furrow one day and then turn around and plow the next furrow the next day, back and forth, doggedly, ruggedly, faithfully.

How will the world be a better place because of what you do this week?

What “land” are you developing in practical ways that work?

Each week is a God-given tract of land, so to speak, and he is inviting us to make something of it.

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Financial: Money

Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it. (Pro 13:11)

Here is how God doesn’t provide — the lottery and all get-rich-quick schemes.

How does God get us ahead? “Little by little” by our patient, intelligent efforts over a lifetime — not by windfalls, but by handfals.

Mat 6:11 Give us today our daily bread.

God is building us the character that will not dwindle.

For God, it’s not about the money.

Little by little God is increasing us and preparing us to live forever and never dwindle.

God gives each of us exactly what he knows we need, and at the right time.

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Financial: Money

**Better is a little with the fear of the LORD
than great treasure and trouble with it.
Better is a dinner of herbs where love is
than a fattened ox and hatred with it. (Proverbs 15:16, 17)**

“**Better**” is the word that restores our natural envy and restlessness to a wiser, calmer perspective.

It is foolish to look at someone else’s life and think, “That is better than what I have.”

It is wise to look at what my own life would be without God’s watchful care and think, “This is better than what I would have had without God.”

“godliness with contentment. . . is great gain” (1 Tim 6:6)

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Financial: Money

We Make Money a Curse — and It’s Powerful

Proverbs alerts us to four dark powers that our hearts generate about money: **control, conflict, confusion, and corruption.**

CONTROL

***The people curse him who holds back grain,
but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it. (Pro 11:26)***

Some selfishly hoard grain, to drive up the price.

Grain was not a luxury in the ancient world, it was basic to their diet.

Holding back grain was a way to manipulate people at their point of real and daily need.

The righteous are willing to disadvantage themselves to benefit others.

The wicked are willing to disadvantage others to benefit themselves.

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Financial: Money

CONFLICT

***A greedy man stirs up strife,
but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched.
(Proverbs 28:25)***

The phrase translated “greedy” is literally ‘wide of appetite.’

An inner drivenness that overlooks boundaries and warning signs and limits.

A greedy person is unsatisfied with what he has so he foolishly overreaches and triggers conflict with others.

“You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel” (Jas 4:2)

Jesus did not come to take. He came to give.

If I trust God and His love to supply, I am not afraid to release what He has given to benefit others...

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Financial: Money

CONFUSION

***The wicked earns deceptive wages,
but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward. (Proverbs 11:18)***

The words for “deceptive wages” can also be translated “wages that are a lie.”

Selfishness tells us, “Get what you want. Then you’ll be happy.”
It is a lie meant to confuse us.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24).

Jesus true wisdom is counterintuitive; but it gets a sure reward, as the emphatic “truly, truly” attests.

Mat 19:29-30 NIV

(29) And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. (30) But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

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Financial: Money

CORRUPTION

***Unequal weights are an abomination to the Lord,
and false scales are not good. (Proverbs 20:23)***

“Unequal weights” are any kind of dishonesty, any kind of cheating or cutting corners or false advertising.

That is an “abomination” to the Lord. Strong language.

Dishonest practices are an “abomination”; moral corruption.

You might be sexually pure, but if you cheat people for money, your life is still an abomination in the sight of God.

Do you owe anyone money you are not repaying?

Do you have the relationship with God you think you have?

***“If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need”
(Ephesians 4:28, NLT).***

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Financial: Money

***Two things I ask of you:
deny them not to me before I die:
Remove far from me falsehood and lying;
give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the food that is needful for me,
lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?”
or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my
God. (Proverbs 30:7—9)***

This is the only prayer in the entire book of Proverbs.

Never to go broke, nor to get rich — because both are dangerous with temptation — but to live month-to-month in constant dependence on God and to do as much good with our money as we can.

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Financial: Money

***One gives freely, yet grows all the richer;
another withholds what he should give, and only
suffers want.***

***Whoever brings blessing will be enriched,
and one who waters will himself be watered. (Pro
11:24, 25)***

The reality is selfish people end up poor in every sense.

Openhanded people get richer and richer in all the ways that count.

The Hebrew word translated “one gives freely” can be more literally rendered “one who scatters,” like scattering seed, throwing it around freely and widely ‘without paying attention to where every little seed might fall.

Selfishness is poverty. Generosity is wealth.

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Financial: Money

***For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though
he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by
his poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)***

When Paul wrote this, he was raising money for the poor.

How does he motivate for generosity?

He does not appeal to our emotions with sob stories.

He does not order our wills with commands.

He shows us Jesus.

Our Savior was rich with Heaven. But he gave it up and came down into our poverty, so that we might become rich with him forever.

He lost, so that we could gain.

That is his wisdom, it is true wisdom, and it works.

Jesus was raised by the Father with a name above every name.

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Wealth and Poverty

The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it (10:22)

Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf. (11:28)

Wealth hastily gotten will dwindle, but those who gather little by little will increase it. (13:11, NRSV)

Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest. (14:4)

The wealth of the rich is their fortified city they imagine it an unscalable wall. (18:11)

Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle. (23:4-5)

The faithful will abound with blessings, but one who is in a hurry to be rich will not go unpunished The miser is in a hurry to get rich and does not know that loss is sure to come. (28:20,22, NRSV)

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Wealth and Poverty

1. Write down your own proverb about money.
2. What warnings about riches are found in these verses?
3. Taking all these verses together, what should our general attitude be toward acquiring money?

The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it (10:22)

4. According to 10:22, what's the advantage of gaining wealth through God's blessing?

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Wealth and Poverty

He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame. (13:18)

Whoever loves pleasure will suffer want; whoever loves wine and oil will not be rich. (21:17, NRSV)

He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty. (28:19)

5. Describe some attitudes that can lead to poverty.
What attitudes and/or habits do you struggle with regarding acquiring or keeping money?

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Wealth and Poverty

The field of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice. (13:23, NRSV)

The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends. (14:20)

The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. (22:7)

6. According to 13:23, 14:20, and 22:7, in what ways are poor people vulnerable in society?

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Wealth and Poverty

He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty.

Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the Lord will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them. (22:16, 22-23)

A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops.... He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor. (28:3,8)

7. What assurances for the poor do you find in these verses?
8. What warnings do you find in these verses for those who have the power to take advantage of the poor?
9. While wealthy people have natural advantages over poor people, many of them do not oppress the poor.

Give examples of wealth and righteous character working together for the good of others.

Wealth and Poverty

Put Your Wisdom to Work

Proverbs 15:16 “Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil.”

What turmoil has developed over the money you have or seek to acquire?

Wealth and Poverty

Some give freely, yet grow all the richer; others withhold what is due, and only suffer want. A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water. (11:24-25, NRSV)

He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God. (14:31)

If you close your ear to the cry of the poor, you will cry out and not be heard. (21:13, NRSV)

A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.... He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses. (28:25, 27)

10. What do these verses reveal about God's view of poor people?
11. In what ways are those with money responsible for those who have little?
12. When have you experienced the rewards of generosity or seen them in the lives of others?

FRIENDSHIP

Friendship

***There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
PROVERBS 18:24***

God is our Friend through Christ. Friendship began with God. The heart of God is friendship reaching out.

God, the great ***“I am” (Exodus 3:14)*** said, ***“I will be with you” (Exodus 3:12)***.

That is a friend. A friend is there for you, always...

Jesus said, ***“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15)***.

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Friendship

In the Old Testament, it was an honor to be called “the servant of the Lord.”

The prophets, for example, were the Lord’s servants (***Jeremiah 35:15***).

But it is an even higher honor to be the Lord’s friend.

“The LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Exodus 33:11).

Nobody else could get that close.

But now, because of Christ, God is befriending us, including us, drawing more and more people in.

Friendship began in Heaven, not on earth, and is coming down to earth through the gospel today.

The wisdom of Proverbs guides us into the strong friendships God is creating.

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Friendship

***Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love,
but a faithful man who can find? (Proverbs 20:6)***

***A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)***

A faithful friend who loves at all times—that person is rare.

“A faithful man who can find?”

A brother is stuck with you. A brother is obligated to be some kind of safety net. That is what family is for.

A friend chooses you.

When someone loves you at all times, good and bad, and they don’t have to but they choose to—that person is a friend.

The people of God ***“keep their promises even when it hurts” (Psalm 15:4, NLT)*** and ***“show themselves to be entirely trustworthy” (Titus 2:10, NLT)***.

When God gives you a friend like that, tested and true, cherish that friend. Never let him or her go.

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Friendship

“Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (John 13:1).

And not because we deserve it.

As soon as Peter denied Jesus that third time, the Lord turned and looked at him (***Luke 22:61***).

Peter had proclaimed his own steadfast love: “I’ll never deny you.” All the disciples did (***Matthew 26:35***).

And they all let him down.

When Peter saw the Lord looking right into his face at that moment of utter betrayal, he finally saw himself.

The King James Version says that our risen Lord is even now ***“touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15)***.

He does not despise us for our weakness. He is touched. That is how a friend feels.

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Friendship

***Iron sharpens iron
and one man sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17)***

This is also part of a true - a blunt honesty.

Pro 24:26 "Whoever gives an honest answer kisses the lips."

Real friendship is like sharpening the blade of a sword.

By ourselves we become dull and blunted and lose our edge.

Every one of us needs a friend who will not flatter us but will refine us.

These proverbs are not meant to unleash reckless mouthing-off and self-appointed critics who think you really need their opinions.

These proverbs are about a true friend in your life who is making you better by respectful confrontation.

"Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24).

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Friendship

A real friend will provoke you and challenge you. You will not agree with everything your friend says, but you will want to listen.

***Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy. (Proverbs 27:6)***

You cannot become wise without a Christian friend speaking into your life.

It can be painful. But the wounds of an honest friend are faithful to help you grow.

There is a difference between hurting someone and harming someone. When a friend wounds you, it hurts but never harms you.

There is a difference between someone being loved and someone feeling loved.

A true friend will inevitably hurt you with words that are respectful, true, and blunt. But, if you will receive it, you will grow in wisdom.

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Friendship

***Whoever covers an offense seeks love,
but he who repeats a matter separates close friends. (Pro 17:9)***

We disappoint our friends. We don't want to, but we do. There will always be offenses.

The wise person covers them with forgiveness, the way God does:

"Blessed is the one . . . whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1).

The word translated "repeats" means to mention the offense a second time.

A gossip can destroy a friendship that is close and has taken years to build through hard times.

The gossip, the nag, the finger-pointer intensifies the offense to the point of alienation.

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Friendship

God wants us to think carefully about what we say.

It doesn't matter if what we feel like saying is factually true.

Is it helpful?

Is it creating a better future?

What matters is the impact our words will have.

We are constantly creating the conditions we will be stuck with five minutes from now.

So how do we create the future we want?

By controlling what comes out of our mouths now...

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Friendship

***Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense,
but a man of understanding remains silent. (Pro 11:12)***

Here one person is in a power position, looking down on someone else, making him feel small.

A wise man knows that it is not enough to be right.

Even if we are right, God wants us to humble ourselves with restraint.

Don't answer every insult.

Silence can preserve a friendship, a partnership, a marriage, a church.

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Friendship

***Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house,
lest he have his fill of you and hate you. (Proverbs 25:17)***

Friends need time together, and friends need time not together.

We are all weak enough that it is wise to ask ourselves when enough is enough.

Benjamin Franklin said, "Guests, like fish, stink after three days."

When you visit leave so your host wants more.

It adds eagerness to our friendship

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Friendship

***A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city,
and quarreling is like the bars of a castle. (Proverbs 18:19)***

***The beginning of strife is like letting out water,
so quit before the quarrel breaks out. (Proverbs 1: 14)***

***Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out,
and quarreling and abuse will cease. (Proverbs 22:10)***

It is so hard to stop a fight once it starts.

No one ends up happy and satisfied.

Everyone feels injured and misunderstood.

Typically, we then retreat into the castles of our minds and we bolt the door so tightly, only God can get through.

Paul got right to the point: ***"Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?" (1 Corinthians 6:7).***

If we are willing to lose the argument. we might win the friend.

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Friendship

For some people, facts don't matter, truth doesn't matter, fairness doesn't matter, finding a win-win doesn't matter.

"Drive out a scoffer." But who is a "scoffer"?

***"Scoffer is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts
with arrogant pride" (Proverbs 21:24).***

A scoffer is above everybody else—or so he thinks.

He will not listen and fit in. So, drive him out—and everyone else will breathe a sigh of relief.

This is what elders are responsible to do in a church.

***"As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once
and then twice, have nothing more to do with him" (Tit 3:10).***

There comes a definite point when the troublemaker is shown the door.

If the elders chicken out, they then share in the sin and the destruction.

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Friendship

*Do not say, "I will repay evil";
wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you. (Proverbs 20:22)*

*Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper,
but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.
(Proverbs 28:13)*

*If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat,
and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink,
for you will heap burning coals on his head,
and the LORD will reward you. (Proverbs 25:21, 22)*

There is so much injury today, so much sin, so much brokenness.
The best revenge is love.

Whoever is mad at you — if you will relieve the pangs of his
hunger, you will increase the pangs of his conscience.

You might bring him to repentance.

You might save his very soul. Isn't that reward enough?

Friendship

Rom 12:19-21 ISV

*(19) Do not take revenge, dear friends, but leave room for
God's wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance belongs to me. I will
pay them back, declares the Lord." (20) But "if your enemy is
hungry, feed him. For if he is thirsty, give him a drink. If you
do this, you will pile burning coals on his head." (21) Do not
be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.*

Your hateful enemy expects you to be hateful in return. It's how the
world works.

Love will surprise that person in the same way Jesus keeps on
surprising us.

We treat him poorly, but he keeps on treating us like royalty,
and it melts our hearts.

If your former friend can be won back, the love of Christ is the only
way. Jesus' love is the only power in the universe that can change a
human heart

Friendship

*A man of many companions may come to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
(Proverbs 18:24)*

*Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his
life for his friends. (John 15:13)*

You might have many pseudo-friends who will let you down, even
when everything is on the line.

But you can also have one Super-Friend who sticks closer than a
brother.

When the Apostle Paul was put on trial before Caesar, all his friends
hightailed it. But it was okay with Paul. ***"The Lord stood by me and
strengthened me" (2 Timothy 4:17).***

Proverbs 18:24 is saying, real friends are not found in quantity but in
quality.

GOD'S CHARACTER

God's Character

We know that God loves all of us, but what kind of person really pleases him?

Discovering God's character traits, we can know better how to shape our own.

1. If you were going to describe God to someone who had little or no Christian training in his or her background, what general statements might you make?

God's Character

3. Put yourself in the place of the young man to whom this advice was given; he was probably part of the royal family at that time.

Perhaps he was looking forward to assuming a position of power in the kingdom of Israel.

What impression do you think this description of God would make on a young ruler-to-be?

God's Character

Pro 2:6-8 ISV

(6) For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

(7) He stores up sound wisdom for the upright and is a shield to those who walk in integrity — (8) guarding the paths of the just and protecting the way of his faithful ones.

2. List the general statements made in these verses about what God is like.

In what ways are these statements similar to or different from your response to question 1?

God's Character

By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew. (3:19—20)

4. In Proverbs 2:6 we read that God gives wisdom.

In 3:19—20, what form does God's wisdom take?

God's Character

The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good. (15:3)

The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the faithless. (22:12, NRSV)

- How do you respond to 15:3 and 22:12?
Are these words a source of comfort or dread to you?
- If “the eyes of the LORD are everywhere,” how might that influence our confidence in his judgment of people’s actions?

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God's Character

For the LORD detests a perverse man but takes the upright into his confidence. The LORD’S curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous. He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble. The wise inherit honor, but fools he holds up to shame. (3:32—35)

The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him. The Lord detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness.... The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him.... The Lord is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous. (15:8—9,26,29)

- According to these verses, which character traits should we avoid?

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God's Character

Pro 15:29 The LORD is far away from the wicked, but he hears the prayers of the righteous.

- Does it seem harsh to you that God would listen to one person’s prayer and not to another’s?
What is your reaction to God’s different responses to people in these verses?

In the Old Testament, at a time when people did not have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, people could only be judged by the character they displayed.

Wickedness in the Old Testament denoted moral fallenness and active opposition to God,

Whereas righteousness came from the Hebrew word meaning “straight” or “right”

- How do you think God’s actions in these verses relate to the Christian doctrines of sin and forgiveness?

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God's Character

Since Christ came, we have learned that wickedness (sin) is not merely action, but a spiritual state that leads us to act in opposition to God’s goodness and justice.

Therefore, all people are sinners, and all have equal access to God’s forgiveness and grace through repentance and faith in Christ.

Rom 3:21-24 ISV

(21) But now, apart from the Law, God's righteousness is revealed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets — (22) God's righteousness through the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah—for all who believe. For there is no distinction among people, (23) since all have sinned and continue to fall short of God's glory. (24) By his grace they are justified freely through the redemption that is in the Messiah Jesus,

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God's Character

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. (6:16—19)

The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.... The Lord detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose ways are blameless. (11:1,20)

The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful. (12:22)

One who justifies the wicked and one who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD. (17:15, (NRSV)

10. What are the recurrent themes in these verses?
11. What forms do unjust scales and lying lips take in our world today?
12. What do we learn about God from the things he hates?
What do we learn from those things he loves or delights in?

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God's Character

Put Your Wisdom to Work

Make a list of your personal "hates" as well as the things you love.

What do these lists say about you?

I Hate...

I Love...

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HOME / HOUSEHOLD

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Home / Household

Wisdom For the Home

Most families need help when it comes to cultivating a healthy home life.

Advice abounds but we can spare ourselves many problems if we build our homes upon a few basic Biblical principles.

*Train up a child in the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

PROVERBS 22:6.

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Home / Household

1. Reflect on the following questions privately, then share your answers with the group, if you wish.

What aspects of your home life as a child contributed to a healthy lifestyle?

What aspects of your home life were destructive?

Home / Household

Pro 5:15-23 ISV

Drink water from your own cistern, and fresh water from your own well. (16) Should your springs flow outside, or streams of water in the street? (17) They should be for you alone and not for strangers who are with you. (18) Let your fountain be blessed and enjoy the wife of your youth. (19) Like a loving deer, a beautiful doe, let her breasts satisfy you all the time. Be constantly intoxicated by her love. (20) Why should you be intoxicated by an adulteress, my son, and embrace the bosom of a foreign woman? (21) Indeed, what a man does is always in the LORD's presence, and he weighs all his paths. (22) The wicked person's iniquities will capture him, and he will be held with the cords of his sin. (23) He will die for lack of discipline, and he goes astray because of his great folly.

2. This passage follows the warnings against adultery.
 “Cistern” in verse 15 refers to the marriage relationship.
 In what ways is the husband warned and encouraged in this passage?

Home / Household

It is easier to focus on the don'ts of marriage than on the do's.

When we concentrate on not having an affair or not getting interested in someone other than our spouse, we often neglect learning how to cultivate love within the marriage.

There are ways in which to cultivate the pleasure husbands and wives should find in one another.

3. How might a married couple seek to stay “captivated” by each other?

Home / Household

4. **Proverbs 19:14 “houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.”**

How do you think God is involved in our search for a mate, prudent or otherwise?

What can we do to help the process along?

Home / Household

Pro 31:10-31 ISV

- (10) *Who can find a capable wife? Her value far exceeds the finest jewels.*
(11) *Her husband has full confidence in her; as a result, he lacks nothing of value.*
(12) *She will bring good to him—never evil—every day of her life.*
(13) *She seeks out wool and flax, working with eager hands.*
(14) *She is like a seagoing ship that brings her food from far away.*
(15) *She rises while it is still night, preparing meals for her family and providing for her women servants.*
(16) *She evaluates a field and purchases it; from the proceeds she plants a vineyard.*
(17) *She clothes herself with fortitude, and fortifies her arms with strength.*
(18) *She is confident that her profits are sufficient. Her lamp does not go out at night.*
(19) *She works with her own hands on her clothes—her hands work the sewing spindle.*
(20) *She reaches out to the poor, opening her hands to those in need.*

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5. Why do you suppose there isn't a chapter in Proverbs on the "husband of noble character"?
What qualities in this chapter do you think could also apply to husbands?
6. The woman described in chapter 31 is capable at home and out in the business world.
What kind of freedom must she have been given in order to do all she has accomplished?
What kind of encouragement and teaching must she have received?

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Home / Household

Pro 31:10-31 ISV

- (21) *She is unafraid of winter's effect on her household, because all of them are warmly clothed.*
(22) *She creates her own bedding, using fine linen and violet cloth.*
(23) *Her husband is well known; he sits among the leaders of the land.*
(24) *She designs and sells linen garments, supplying accessories to clothiers.*
(25) *Strength and dignity are her garments; she smiles about the future.*
(26) *She speaks wisely, teaching with gracious love.*
(27) *She looks discretely to the affairs of her household, and she is never lazy.*
(28) *Her children stand up and encourage her, as does her husband, who praises her:*
(29) *"Many women have done wonderful things," he says, "but you surpass all of them!"*
(30) *Charm is deceitful and beauty fades; but a woman who fears the LORD will be praised.*
(31) *Reward her for her work—let her actions result in public praise.*

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Husbands and Wives Growing in Wisdom Toward One Another

*An excellent wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain. (Proverbs 31:10-11)*

The climax of the book of Proverbs is a poem in praise of the ideal woman (**31:10—31**).

She is a role model.

The phrase "**an excellent wife**" is, translated more literally, "a woman of strength."

The Septuagint reads "**a manly woman.**"

The ideal woman is strong.

She works hard, she makes money, she is kind to the poor, she is fearless about the future, she enhances her husband's reputation, she speaks with wisdom — all this and more.

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Husbands and Wives Growing in Wisdom Toward One Another

31:17 sums it up: *“She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong.”*

In her strength she is not competing with her husband.

She is not going through an identity crisis over sexual politics.

She is giving herself away to her family and her community with wholehearted selflessness.

She has high standards, and she sticks to them.

A woman of this quality is rare:

*“An excellent wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.”*

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Husbands and Wives Growing in Wisdom Toward One Another

31:11, *“[Her husband] will have no lack of gain.”*

the word translated “gain” is “loot, plunder, the spoils of war.”

This woman is not living in a perfect environment where life is a breeze.

She is living in the real world, but she is up to the challenge.

Her husband trusts her. He feels honored to be her husband.

This woman that God gave him is his greatest earthly treasure.

The only person this husband trusts more than his wife is Jesus Christ himself.

She has won a deep place in his heart and her husband cherishes her.

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Husbands and Wives Growing in Wisdom Toward One Another

Some women might be feeling,

“My standards have not been that high. I haven’t gotten through to my husband at that level. I don’t feel strong. I fell defeated.”

God sees you as the ideal woman for your husband — or your husband-to-be.

God sees you as a precious gift, under Christ.

God values you.

God’s strong affirmation of you is where you get new strength to keep growing into more and more personal excellence.

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The Book of Proverbs

Husbands and Wives Growing in Wisdom Toward One Another

Some men might be feeling,

“I haven’t trusted and valued and affirmed my wife as she deserves.”

We have the related English word “**husbandry**,” that is, cultivation.

When the word “**husband**” is used as a verb, it means to cultivate.

If you are a husband your job is to cultivate and nurture your bride.

Your lifetime impact on your wife should be that her life opens up more and more, and she is enabled to become all that God wants her to be.

A husband does that by encouraging her.

*Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:*

*“Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.”*

*Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*

*Give her the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the gates. (31:28—31)*

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Husbands and Wives Growing in Wisdom Toward One Another

*Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her: (31:28)*

Her children rise up, they stand up, and they speak respectfully to their mom.

They tell her why they esteem her, why they admire her as a woman of God. They learned to do so from dad: **"... he praises her"** (31:28)

The key word in these verses is **"praise."**

It appears three times in these verses.

A husband cultivates his wife by setting a high tone of praise in the home.

- No putdowns. No fault-finding. No insults. Not even neutral silence.
- But rather bright, positive, life-giving praise.

The picture here is of the wise woman giving herself to her family and to others, and she is receiving praise from her husband and children at home and from her community "in the gates."

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Husbands and Wives Growing in Wisdom Toward One Another

God wants to fill our homes and our churches with this beautiful wisdom, where men are not passive but overtly cultivating the excellence of their wives, and those women are thriving.

"Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all."

How does your wife excel? Tell her.

Tell her in front of the children.

If you cannot think of any way in which your wife excels and truly deserves to be praised, then that is your fault, because God called you to husband her into excellence.

Is your wife becoming magnificent because she married you?

The word "excellently" in verse 29 is the same word translated "excellent" in verse 10.

God wants to see your wife become more and more capable because of your influence in her life.

And he wants to hear you and your kids cheering her on all the way.

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Husbands and Wives Growing in Wisdom Toward One Another

How you see God will inevitably show up in how you treat your family.

You can fake it at work. but you cannot fake it at home.

How you really see God — not what you're supposed to believe about God but what you really believe — will show up in how you treat your spouse.

If your concept of God is beneath who he really is, then you will have unworthy thoughts about your wife and unworthy words to her. And the problem is not her.

If you cannot bring yourself to praise your wife the reason is how you see Christ.

If you have no passion for him, it's because you do not see in him mighty passion for you and a mighty salvation for you and a glorious future for you.

The truth is, the Lord Jesus Christ is a glorious Savior.

See him in his grace and glory toward you, rejoicing over you with all his mighty heart. It will change how you treat your wife—and more.

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7. What responses does she receive from her community?
her husband?
her children?

In what ways is this woman an example to her children?
How is she an encouragement to her husband?

Her husband's seat was at the city gate (**Proverbs 31:23**) showing his social eminence.

The city gates were places for judgments and business transactions as well as conversation..

"A woman's performance of her tasks determined the failure or success of the family Jews believed that a man could rise to a place among the leaders of Israel only if his wife were wise and talented"

(The Bible Almanac, Nashville: Nelson, 1980, p. 412).

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Home / Household

Proverbs 12:4

***“A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown,
but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.”***

8. In what ways can a husband or wife bring disgrace and ruin to their home?

What effects does the quality of the parents’ marriage relationship have on home life in general?

Children Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Parents

***A wise son makes a glad father,
but a foolish man despises his mother. (Proverbs 15:20)***

***If one curses his father or his mother,
his lamp will be put out in utter darkness. (Proverbs
20:20)***

***Let your father and mother be glad;
let her who bore you rejoice. (Proverbs 23:25)***

Every one has a dad and a mom so God is speaking to all of us here.

How can we grow in wisdom toward our parents?

The key words in 15:20 and 20:20 are **“despises”** and **“curses.”**

Those words are the opposite of wisdom.

Children Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Parents

What is the way of wisdom?

The fifth commandment: ***“Honor your father and your mother”*** (***Exodus 20:12***).

And that command not to despise, not to curse, but to honor our parents — that command applies to us all our life long, even after we grow up and leave home.

To **“despise”** our parents is to treat them as worthless.

To **“curse”** our parents does not mean to swear at them but, like “despise,” to treat them as beneath us.

And to **“honor”** our parents is to treat them as weighty and worthy, just because they are our parents.

They do not have to earn our respect; we owe it to them.

The burden is not on them but on us — according to the Word of God.

God says, even if you do think your parents are dumb, you still owe them respect.

Children Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Parents

How can all of us fulfill our obligation to honor our parents?

We do not have to agree with them.

We do not even have to stay close to them. Sometimes a little distance helps.

We can honor them by thanking them.

We can stop blaming them for their failures and thank them for their successes.

Even if your parents were not Christians, if they taught you right from wrong with the understanding they had, they did their job.

Thank them.

Let them know they made an impact that you appreciate now.

Children Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Parents

We can honor them by imitating them if they were Christians.

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God... and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).

It does not say, “Imitate their style.” The style is passé.

The faith endures—or at least it deserves to.

Parents should live out the Christian faith in the home.

Jesus Christ is to be loved and the Bible revered.

Children are expected to live as Christians.

The cause of Christ should be the defining center of the home.

If we run short of money, we still tithed because Christ comes first. That is the faith.

Don’t let that faith die. Keep it burning for a new generation.”

We can honor our Christian parents by reproducing in our wishy-washy times an all-out Christian faith.

And our parents will rejoice over us, even as the styles change.

The Book of Proverbs

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Parents Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Children

***Train up a child in the way he should go:
even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Pro 22:6)***

We have only a few years with our kids but they are a life-shaping opportunity.

It might feel as though these high-commitment, child-rearing years will never end. But they will, and all too soon.

Your child has an eternal destiny.

God has called you to train up your child to go to Heaven.

That is ultimately “the way he should go.”

The Book of Proverbs

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Parents Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Children

***Train up a child in the way he should go:
even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Pro 22:6)***

The word translated “train up” means “dedicate.”

The Hebrew word translated “train up” is related to an Arabic verb that was used of rubbing the palate of a newborn child with a date mixture, to get the child to suck.

It means to accustom a child to a taste and to motivate the child to take it in.

Dedicate your child to Christ.

Do not raise your child for the American Dream. Warn your child against the American Dream. it is an easy way to Hell.

Your parental role is to raise your child to be gung-ho for Christ.

The best way for you to influence your child in that way is for you to be a dedicated Christian yourself.

The Book of Proverbs

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Parents Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Children

***Train up a child in the way he should go:
even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Pro 22:6)***

Children sense hypocrisy immediately.

But they also know sincerity.

If you want your children to be passionate for Christ, let them see that passion in you.

You dedicate your child to Christ by dedicating yourself to Christ so enthusiastically that your child tastes how good it is and wants more.

The Book of Proverbs

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Parents Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Children

*Train up a child in the way he should go:
even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Pro 22:6)*

One of the great injustices we do to our young people is to ask them to be conservative.

Christianity is not conservative, but revolutionary.

We must teach the young to be revolutionaries, revolutionaries against the status quo for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As our children enter young adulthood especially, they learn to love that revolutionary spirit and passion and boldness.

What a joy, as a parent, to be the one to give it to them, for the sake of Jesus Christ!

The Book of Proverbs

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Parents Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Children

*Folly is bound up in the heart of a child.
but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. (Pro 22:15)*

This word “**folly**” means “**the willful refusal to make moral choices.**”

This folly is your child’s natural heart that does not want to grow up and enter adulthood with its moral demands.

That folly is deep inside a child’s heart.

In our world today we no longer object to it.

It used to be that boys became men by age twenty-one.

But today there are men who are still boys.

They don’t know what they want, they don’t make money, they don’t get married, they don’t have kids, they don’t buy a house, they don’t know what they believe, they don’t contribute to the community.

The Book of Proverbs

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Parents Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Children

God calls boys into adulthood, even before they feel ready:

- Joshua was Moses’ assistant from his youth (**Nu 11:28**).
- God called Samuel into the ministry when he was a boy (**1 Sa 3**).
- David was anointed king as a young man (**1 Sa 16**).
- Josiah, the reformer king, was eight years old when he began to rule (**2 Ki 22, 23**).
- Daniel was a young man when he stood up to Babylonian culture (**Dan 1**).
- Timothy was young enough to be called “my child” by Paul but was entrusted with the responsibility to lead the church into the post-apostolic era (**1 Tim 4:12, 2 Tim 2:1**).

The Book of Proverbs

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Parents Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Children

God calls boys into adulthood, even before they feel ready:

- John Quincy Adams was appointed by Congress as diplomatic secretary to the Court of Catherine the Great of Russia when he was fourteen years old.

A year later he traveled unaccompanied for six months from St. Petersburg to Paris, stopping along the way in Stockholm to negotiate trade between the U.S. and Sweden.

- David Farragut went to sea at age ten, fought in the War of 1812 at age eleven, and by age twelve rose to the rank of captain and commanded a captured British ship.
- Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached his first sermon at age fifteen, pastored a church at sixteen, and at nineteen was preaching to crowds of 5,000 people in London.

The Book of Proverbs

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Parents Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Children

Pro_13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Pro_22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Pro_23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. 14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Pro_29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Our children have immaturity in their hearts, but they also have greatness in Christ.

We help them out of the immaturity and into the greatness with the rod of discipline.

It is hard to read the Bible and get the impression that children should never be spanked.

But, some kids need only a stare to melt their hearts.

Yet every child needs coaching and punishments and rewards that help them grow up and become men and women of destiny.

The Book of Proverbs

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Home / Household

Pro 23:13-25 ISV

(13) Don't withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with a rod, he won't die. (14) Punish him with a rod, and you will rescue his soul from Sheol. (15) My son, if your heart is wise, my own heart will greatly rejoice. (16) My innermost being will be glad when your lips speak what is right. (17) Never let yourself envy sinners; instead, remain in fear of the LORD every day, (18) for there is surely a future life, and what you hope for will not be cut off. (19) Listen, my son, and be wise, commit yourself to live God's way. (20) Don't associate with heavy drinkers or dine with gluttons, (21) because drunks and gluttons tend to become poor, and drowsiness will clothe them in rags. (22) Listen to the one who fathered you, and don't despise your mother in her old age. (23) Purchase truth, but don't sell it; store up wisdom, instruction, and understanding. (24) The father of a righteous person will greatly rejoice; whoever fathers a wise son will be glad because of him. (25) Let your father and mother rejoice; make the one who gave birth to you happy.

9. What principles for child rearing do you find in these verses?

10. Contrast parental responsibilities in these verses with the responsibilities of children.

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Parents Growing in Wisdom Toward Their Children

In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge. (Proverbs 14:26)

The greatest legacy we can leave our kids is how to find refuge in God when everything is on the line.

Inevitably life gets harder than we ever dreamed it would be.

At moments of intense anguish, when godly parents bow down and trust Christ, they are teaching their children how to draw strength from God in suffering.

Those kids in their day will also find a refuge in God when they suffer, as inevitably they will.

A man who was dying of cancer and suffering intensely was visited by a church member in the hospital who asked him gently and plainly, "My brother, would you like to die?" The dying man said, "No, this might be the greatest day of my life."

Whatever else that man left to his family, that is a great legacy of faith!

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All of Us Growing in Wisdom from the Lord

'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.' it is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. (Hebrews 12:5—7)

Everything depends on how we see God.

When we suffer, it is easy to see God as harsh and demanding and brutal.

- Suffering feels like rejection.
- It feels like abandonment.
- It feels like loss.

The truth is, God is treating us as sons. God is leading us into maturity and wisdom and greatness.

The Book of Proverbs

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All of Us Growing in Wisdom from the Lord

Some things in our lives we urgently need to lose.

They are way too precious to us.

By losing our false prizes and gaining Christ, we enter into One who is worthy to be prized and will never be taken from us. Christ himself suffered. He was a perfect son of God, and even he learned the hard way (**Hebrews 5:8**).

Can that be unacceptable to you and me?

Whatever else God is doing in your life today, however painful it may be, if you are in Christ, God is not forsaking you, God is not dismissing you, God is not hostile toward you.

He is treating you as a son, a beloved son in whom he is well pleased, for the sake of Christ his Son.

His fatherly heart is drawing you in and taking you deeper because he treasures you and rejoices over you and understands you and has a magnificent future for you.

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Home / Household

Pro 22:6 *Train a child in the way appropriate for him, and when he becomes older, he will not turn from it.*

11. Do you agree with **Proverbs 22:6**?

How can parents respond if a child does turn away from the way in which he or she was trained?

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Home / Household

Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs. (10:12)

The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down. (14:1)

Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife. (17:1)

12. How have you seen **Proverbs 10:12** put into practice?

13. What character traits or habits are destructive to home life?

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Home / Household

Put Your Wisdom to Work

What aspect of home life is most frustrating to you?

What can you do to cultivate a healthy atmosphere in the home?

Discuss any insights or words of advice in the proverbs studied so far that might be helpful.

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Brother(s)

- PRO 17:17
- PRO 18:19
- PRO 19:7
- PRO 27:10

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Correction - Reproof

- PRO 10:17
- PRO 13:24
- PRO 15:10
- PRO 15:32
- PRO 20:30
- PRO 23:13
- PRO 26:1
- PRO 26:3
- PRO 29:15

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Children

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 1:8-9 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 17:6 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 23:10-11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 3:12 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 17:17 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 23:13-16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 4:1-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 17:21 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 23:22 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 5:16 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 17:25 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 23:24-25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 5:18 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 18:19 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 27:8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 6:20-23 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 19:13-14 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 27:10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 10:1 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 19:18 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 28:7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 11:29 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 19:26-27 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 28:24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 13:1 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 20:7 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 29:3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 13:22-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 20:11 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 29:15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 14:26 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 20:20 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 29:17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 15:5 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 22:6 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 29:21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 15:20 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 22:15 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 30:17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 17:2 | <input type="checkbox"/> PRO 22:28 | |

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Father / Fatherless

- PRO 4:1-4
- PRO 4:11
- PRO 5:1
- PRO 6:1
- PRO 6:20
- PRO 10:1
- PRO 13:1
- PRO 17:6
- PRO 17:25
- PRO 19:13-14
- PRO 22:28
- PRO 23:10-11
- PRO 23:22-25
- PRO 28:24
- PRO 29:3

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Husband

- PRO 5:15-16
- PRO 12:4
- PRO 31:23
- PRO 31:28

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Parents

- PRO 4:3
- PRO 13:24
- PRO 14:1
- PRO 17:6
- PRO 17:25
- PRO 19:18
- PRO 20:7
- PRO 20:10
- PRO 22:6
- PRO 23:13-14
- PRO 28:7
- PRO 28:24
- PRO 29:15
- PRO 29:17
- PRO 30:11
- PRO 30:17

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Mother

- PRO 4:3
- PRO 6:20
- PRO 10:1
- PRO 23:22-25
- PRO 28:24
- PRO 29:15
- PRO 31:2

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Relationships Between Parents and Children

- PRO 4:1-13
- PRO 5:1-2
- PRO 5:7
- PRO 6:20-24
- PRO 7:1-5
- PRO 13:1
- PRO 15:5
- PRO 23:22
- PRO 28:7
- PRO 28:24
- PRO 29:3
- PRO 30:11
- PRO 30:17

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Sons

- PRO 4:1
- PRO 10:1
- PRO 10:5
- PRO 15:20
- PRO 17:2
- PRO 17:6
- PRO 17:25
- PRO 19:13
- PRO 19:18
- PRO 19:26
- PRO 28:7
- PRO 29:17
- PRO 19:27
- PRO 31:28

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HUMILITY AND PRIDE

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Wife, the Right Woman

- PRO 5:15-19
- PRO 11:16
- PRO 11:22
- PRO 12:4
- PRO 14:1
- PRO 18:22
- PRO 19:13-14
- PRO 21:9
- PRO 21:19
- PRO 25:24
- PRO 27:15-16
- PRO 30:18-19
- PRO 31:10-31

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Humility and Pride

The upward growth trajectory for a Christian requires humility.

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14).

“God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

“Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:4).

“Exalt that which is low, and bring low that which is exalted” (Ezekiel 21:26).

“Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low” (Isaiah 40:4).

The irony is, pride humiliates us, and humility honors us.

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Humility and Pride

What Is Humility?

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Pro 9:10)

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

The fear of the Lord is not the spirit of our times.

Self-esteem is the spirit of our times.

The conventional wisdom of our times is that self-regard is how we become well-adjusted and successful: but if you lack self-esteem, you are on the road to underachieving and maybe even a life of crime. But it isn't true.

The Bible is not saying there is no place for a sense of personal worth. But that does not; it must not come first.

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Humility and Pride

Proverbs takes us to another place for our starting point in wisdom.

*“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”
Pro 9:10*

He comes first — not Self but Christ.

He is our most urgent need and the key to our future.

Let your heart be melted by the grace of Christ.

That is humility

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Humility and Pride

Blessed is the one who fears the LORD always, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity. (Proverbs 28:14)

The Hebrew word for “fears” in this proverb is different from the word in “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.*”
Pro 9:10

This word in **28:14** is more intense.

It means to tremble, to shiver, to shake. To be afraid.

Fearing the Lord is the opposite of a hard heart.

It is the opposite of a flippant, blasé, unserious heart.

The irony here is the word “blessed,” basically means “Congratulations!”

Congratulations to the one who takes God seriously – always..

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Humility and Pride

The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 15:33)

Before destruction a man's heart is haughty; but humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 18:12)

One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor. (Proverbs 29:23)

These proverbs summarize the message of the whole Bible:

- humility must come before honor is received,
- the cross must be experienced before the crown is awarded.

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Humility and Pride

The Bible says, in the book of Daniel, that the Most High God gave King Nebuchadnezzar glory and majesty.

But then it says, ***“When his heart was lifted up ... so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down” (Daniel 5:20).***

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)

The Hebrew words translated “**pride**” and “**haughty**” in **Prov 16:18** both have to do with height, with being lifted up.

The word translated “**destruction**” means a breaking, like a bone being shattered.

It is painful.

It hurts when our egotistical dreams are broken and our proud self-images are shattered.

But God isn't in them so it's a healing blow.

Humility and Pride

Humility is the safest place for every one of us.

It is also the place of blessing.

We need to be deliberate about this, because we do not naturally see our pride:

Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered. (Prov 28:26)

There are those who are clean in their own eyes but are not washed of their filth. (Proverbs 30:12)

All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit. (Proverbs 16:2)

Pride feels normal.

We trust in our own minds.

We feel innocent.

We feel more sinned against than sinning.

Humility and Pride

But what matters is not how we feel but where we are going:

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. (Proverbs 14:12)

We are not alarmed by ourselves.

But God is telling us, we need to pay attention.

We need to follow God's Word more than our own internal thought world.

God's Word is a more reliable guide away from death and toward life than our own intuitions.

God's Word warns us away from death that feels like life and toward life that sometimes feels like death.

Humility before God's Word is a matter of life and death.

Humility matters.

Humility and Pride

Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reverses the commandment will be rewarded. (Proverbs 13:13)

Humility reveres the Word of God, but pride despises it.

Wherever you turn in the Bible, “God has a blessing for you there.”

You may have to say,

“I don't understand this yet, but I will not despise it. I will not dismiss it as irrelevant or meant for some other time or place. The Bible is God speaking to me, every word of it.

I will swallow the Word whole, including the hard parts, out of reverence for him.”

He will reward that humility with understanding.

Humility and Pride

The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. (Proverbs 15:31)

Humility listens to life-giving reproof.

Reproof is correction.

Wise reproof is not abuse, it is life-giving.

We don't like being corrected.

But we need to say to a trusted faithful friend, "Help me see myself. How can I improve?"

If you are not in any relationship where you trust anyone enough to open up like that and then really listen, there is a reason.

The reason is not that you cannot find someone good enough for you; the reason is your pride.

Humbly listening to trusted correction is essential to entering into the community of the wise.

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The Book of Proverbs

Humility and Pride

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

Humility confesses and forsakes sin.

We would rather save face, but it is freeing to confess our sins.

Jas_5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

When we confess and forsake our sins, we obtain mercy.

Let's never confess one another's sins and create a shaming environment.

"Thank God we're not like those others.... ***(Luke 18:11)***

Let's confess our own sins and forsake them.

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The Book of Proverbs

Humility and Pride

Do you know who ends up in Hell?

Everyone who sincerely believes he deserves Heaven.

Do you know who ends up in Heaven?

Everyone who sincerely believes he deserves Hell but is saying to Jesus, "Be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Spiritual pride tends to speak of other persons' sins with bitterness or with laughter and an air of contempt.

Christian humility rather tends either to be silent about these problems or to speak of them with grief and pity.

Spiritual pride is very apt to suspect others,

Christian humility is most guarded about himself. He is never more suspicious of anything else than he is of his own heart.

The proud person is apt to find fault with other believers, that they are low in grace, and to be quick to note their deficiencies.

The humble Christian sees so much in his own heart that needs cleaning up that he is not apt to be very busy with other hearts.

He esteems others better than himself.

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The Book of Proverbs

Humility and Pride

Though [Christ Jesus] was in the form of God, [he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6—11)

Humility began in Heaven.

The Son of God revealed it.

We lift ourselves up.

The Son of God stepped down.

Nothing is too good for us. Nothing was too low for the Son of God.

We make ourselves big deals.

The Son of God made himself nothing.

We measure out our obedience one inch at a time. to keep control.

The Son of God became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, for you and me.

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The Book of Proverbs

Humility and Pride

True good works are done in the "meekness [humility] of wisdom."

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. James 3:13

(6) But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:6-7 NASB

It is possible to be a servant and also a leader!
It is possible to be both humble and wise.

Jesus was both a servant and a leader, both humble and wise (*Mt 23:11; Mk 10:45*).

Wisdom is always wise for two reasons:

Wisdom comes from fearing the Lord, something arrogance cannot do (*Proverbs 9:10*).

The Hebrew meaning of wisdom is "skill" -- and experience shows that the most skillful leaders are the most humble.

When you lead today (and everyone leads somewhere),
plan to lead with the humility of wisdom.

Humility and Pride

We make ourselves big deals. The Son of God made himself nothing.

We measure out our obedience one inch at a time. to keep control.

The Son of God became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, for you and me.

And this humble God loves us proud sinners.

He even wants to share his glory with us, and on terms of grace.

The only price we pay is the loss of foolish ego. What a liberation!

After humility, there is honor. After the cross comes a crown.

God will keep to his own way.

So enter in. Risk your everything on God's faithful promise. He will be true to you...

LIFE AND DEATH

Life and Death

In the path of righteousness is life. PROVERBS 12:28

The words "life" and "live" occur around 56 times in Proverbs. The words "death" and "die" around 20 times.

When we say that something is "a matter of life and death," we mean that it matters above all else.

Wisdom sees death as not just the physical event of a moment:

Wisdom sees death as a whole realm, a domain of human existence, in conflict with life.

To the book of Proverbs, death is both an event and a state beyond that event.

The realm of death is called "sheol".

Life and Death

Death is encroaching on life right now in the forms of sickness, aging, suffering, fear, guilt, anxiety, confusion, boredom, all as a result of sin and unrighteousness it causes.

Real life, abundant life, is the vitality only God can give.

We receive it as we press the gospel into our hearts by faith.

“Fear not, I am ... the living one” (Revelation 1:1),

We stray into the territory of death every day.

In the book of Proverbs God is counseling us, alerting us to where death lurks.

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Life and Death

Solomon warns his son against sexual sin, because as he says, ***“The dead are there” (Proverbs 9:18).***

There is a hell before Hell.

But there is also a heaven before Heaven.

Jesus said, came ***that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10: 10).***

Jesus said, ***“Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19).***

This is what God wants for every one of us today is to die less and live more through Christ.

He alone can set our consciences free from regret and dread and all forms of heart-death. Life pours out of our Lord Jesus Christ freely to those who will receive it.

What do we need to do to receive this new life?

Do we receive it before, after or because we believe in Jesus?

You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you.

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Life and Death

***In the path of righteousness is life,
and in its pathway there is no death. (Proverbs 12:28)***

***There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death. (Prov 14: 12; 16:25)***

***Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit,
but righteousness delivers from death. (Prov 10:2)***

***Whoever keeps the commandment keeps his life;
he who despises his ways will die. (Proverbs 19:16)***

The key metaphor here is “path,” “way” and “end.”

Everyone is on a journey. There is a road, and there is a destination.

Where are we going with our lives?

We can choose our own path, but we cannot choose our own consequences, our own destination.

Which path do we choose?

“In the path of righteousness [only] is life.”

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Life and Death

What is righteousness?

Is righteousness legalism? A list of Do’s and Don’ts?

***The wage of the righteous leads to life,
the gain of the wicked to sin. (Proverbs 10:16)***

Is that a legalistic pay- as-you-go plan?

Moses tells us, ***“A full and fair weight you shall have” (Deuteronomy 25:15).*** If the weight says 16 ounces and it is 16 ounces, no one is cheating.

The weight is full and fair, because it’s true to what 16 ounces really are as an objective reality.

And the word translated “fair” is our word “righteous.”

A righteous weight represents the true standard, the reality.

A righteous person sees a standard outside himself, he sees outside himself what a human being should be, and he acknowledges that the standard is Christ.

A righteous person bows down before Christ and says, I want to be true not to myself but to you.”

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Life and Death

It is not unusual for us to see and conform to a moral order outside ourselves.

We change our view of what is acceptable and unacceptable all the time depending on who we are with, where we live, what is socially acceptable and what is not.

Society controls how we dress, the “toys” we have and want and more. We are constantly adjusting to a standard.

We are being taught in our world today to see ourselves as our own moral authority moving through a series of life episodes and making decisions on the fly in terms of personal cost-benefit.

We are being taught that there is no moral order out there to take into account other than to fit in...

According to Proverbs, that pathway leads into more and more death. Righteousness is becoming truer to Christ, because in his path is life. The gospel says that Christ is the standard to which we should adjust. Not some abstract ethical ideal, but a person, Jesus Christ.

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Life and Death

Is this conforming to Christ, is ‘righteousness’ just another form of legalism?

Legalism is obeying God with a wrong motive — to earn points on his scorecard.

Proverbs is not teaching us that a high-quality life is something we earn by obeying God.

We are **“not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14)**. Then,

“Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?” (Romans 6:15).

Does rejecting legalism and coming under grace make sin no big deal anymore?

Does grace make obedience a non-urgent side issue? An option?

“When you were slaves of sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. And what gain did that bring you? Things that now make you ashamed for their end is death. But now... you have gains that lead to holiness and the end is eternal life” (Ro 6:20-22).

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Life and Death

Never think that the further we move from God, the more freedom we gain.

When we hear that whisper in our hearts saying, “You want to be free. So be careful. Don’t give too much of yourself to God”

The instant that thought creeps in, we must stop and ask,

“Where did that come from? What is the hidden motive behind that thought? If I follow that path, where will it take me — into more life or into more death?”

There are many paths to choose from, but every one of them has consequences.

Do we want to stay slaves of sin?

The law of God cannot get us off that deadly path, but the grace of God will not leave us there.

The Book of Proverbs

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Life and Death

If you have had your bellyful of sin and you feel wounded, if it seems like nobody cares anymore and your heart is broken

It is because you are experiencing the bitter aftertaste of death.

Jesus does not say to you, “I told you so.” Rather He says,

Mat_11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

There is nothing degrading or shaming in Christ.

If we will come to him, he accepts us as we are, he loves us into obedience, and we find by experience that obeying him really is the path of life.

The Book of Proverbs

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Life and Death

Too often we are not enslaved to God.

We are enslaved to ourselves in our pettiness and futility.

Deep inside us is not one whole integrated self but rather a committee of competing selves.

There they are, sitting around a board room inside our heads — the work self, the married self, the parent self, the secret self, the dating self, whatever.

Our different selves sit around this big table, each one shouting out its demands and staking its claims and fearful of being overlooked.

When the committee votes, it is rarely unanimous.

If you are divided and frustrated like that, if you are not wholehearted for Christ, you are dying more than you have to.

“Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit” (Psalm 32:2).

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Life and Death

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

***The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life.
that one may turn away from the snares of death. (Pro 13:14)***

“The fear of the LORD” is internal, private, personal.

“The teaching of the wise” is external, public, shared.

We need both to satisfy our thirst at the overflowing, ever-fresh, reviving “fountain of life.”

The Book of Proverbs

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Life and Death

Two dangers.

Our own hearts saying, “I’ve heard all this before.”

Theologically aware people can become arrogant and not even notice it.

Life is not in theology; life is in Christ.

He is not a concept. He is a living person.

Treat him that way and he will keep us from the snare of theological pride, which is death.

Let’s also be careful to keep our churches in hyper-focus on the gospel—good news for bad people through the finished work of Christ on the cross.

There is only one fountain of life (singular), and there are many snares of death (plural).

The fountain is Christ.

The Book of Proverbs

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Life and Death

***A gentle tongue is a tree of life,
but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. (Proverbs 15:4)***

***The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and whoever captures souls is wise. (Proverbs 11:30)***

Can people in our broken world re-experience the tree of life from the Garden of Eden?

It can happen through, of all things, words:

“A gentle tongue [word] is a tree of life.”

“A gentle tongue” can also be translated “a healing tongue.”

Perverse words are powerful. Wise words are more powerful.
They break a person’s spirit. They soothe and heal.

Jas 3:10-12 KJV

***(10) Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.
My brethren, these things ought not so to be. (11) Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?
(12) Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.***

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Life and Death

***"Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven" (Matthew 9:2),
"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in
Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1),
"I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5),
and many more.***

These are the divine words that heal the perverse words that
have broken our spirits.

These are the words Christ wants people to hear through us.

***Pro 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that
winneth souls is wise.***

It is not our mission merely to tell people how sinful they are but
how life-giving Christ is. That is healing.

**It is not our mission to prove people wrong but to win
them to Christ.**

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Life and Death

***My son, eat honey, for it is good,
and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste.
Know that wisdom is such to your soul;
if you find it, there will be a future,
and your hope will not be cut off. (Proverbs 24:13, 14)***

Your soul has senses too.

God's wisdom is sweet to your deepest self.

You cannot enjoy his wisdom just by looking at it.

You enjoy it by taking it and chewing on it and swallowing it
—feeding on God's Words and joy go together.

The pleasures the Lord gives do not wear out.

They are your future, the proverb says, and your hope cannot be
cut off. In fact, enjoying Christ personally is your only sweet
future.

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Life and Death

***He who is often reprov'd, yet stiffens his neck,
will suddenly be broken beyond healing. (Proverbs 29:1)***

When God rebukes us, he is calling us away from death back into life and
pleasure in Christ.

He is long suffering, He puts up with allot.

But, if we continue to stubbornly refuse and refuse and refuse, then
every beat of our heart is more and more and more rebellion against a
God of love -- and His patience will end.

His patience ended toward whole cultures: Sodom, Gomorrah , the
Amorites, etc. as well as with rebellious individuals and churches.

If we are not willing to believe Him today, are we thinking that God is
somehow obligated to wait until we feel like we're good and ready?

How can we assume that tomorrow God will still be holding the door
open for us?

God is pleading with every one of us right now to choose life?

***2Co 6:2 For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the
day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now.
Today is the day of salvation.***

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MOUTH AND SPEECH

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Mouth / Speech

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me."

Not so! A Lie! A Lie! False !!!

Words have far more power than sticks and stones.

Never think that if we speak,

"Oh well, It's only words. It's not like I'm really doing anything."

Words penetrate to the heart.

God invested in mankind the ability to choose and use words, - just like He does...

You might be able to teach an animal to recognize a few sounds, but you can't carry on a conversation with an animal,

No deep thoughts only demands

Words mark us as human created in the image of God.

God uses words.

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Mouth / Speech

Like God, we use words to create trust and form relationships and build community.

Unlike God, we also use words to destroy trust and break relationships and divide community.

Like God, we use words for one heart to touch another heart at a deep level.

Unlike God, we use words for one heart to break another heart at a deep level.

Much of the strife in our families and offices and dorms and churches and nations is because of foolish words.

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Mouth / Speech

The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. Proverbs 16:1

A defendant is presumed to be innocent until he is proven guilty.

The Romans put it this way,

"The burden of proof is on he who declares, not on he who denies."

Presumption in this a legal system protects individual rights,

In the spiritual realm presumption is not advised.

We devise and imagine many scenarios about many things that HAVE NOT happened, usually in the negative.

What we think about usually determines what we say and how we respond.

Dwell on God's promises, His faithfulness, His words and our mouths will speak His ways, not our vain imaginations.

[Act 4:25](#) [\[Ps2\]](#) [Rom 1:21](#) [2Co 10:5](#)

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Mouth / Speech

Jas 4:13-17 NASB

(13) Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." (14) Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. (15) Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." (16) But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. (17) Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Man can plan, but God has the final say (**Proverbs 16:1**).

Whether our plans for today are simple or complex, we need to submit to God.

Invite Him to guide your steps along the way according to His will.

Whether you shall live to reach home today or not depends absolutely upon God's will. Charles H. Spurgeon

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Mouth / Speech

We usually underestimate the importance of our words.

Adultery is perceived in most Bible-believing churches as a serious sin. And it is.

It is extremely rare that adultery will send a whole church into a complete meltdown.

Gossip, by contrast, is often perceived as a little sin.

But, it has destroyed many churches.

Sadly, gossip can even be perceived as some kind of need:

“I have to get all this out. I have to tell somebody or I’ll burst !”

The Book of Proverbs

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Mouth / Speech

As Americans, we have the right of free speech.

In our political culture we have the right to blurt out whatever we feel.

But when we become Christians, we enter a whole new culture where we surrender that right.

We stop blurting out whatever we feel.

We bring our words under the judgment of God’s Word.

***“A fool gives full vent to his spirit,
but a wise man quietly holds it back” (Proverbs 29:11).***

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! (Js 3:5)

It only takes two people to split a church !!

One to start spreading the fiery negativity, and
Another not to confront that behavior as the sin that it is.

The Book of Proverbs

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Mouth / Speech

The Bible simply changes the subject by giving us something better to talk about.

Three times the risen Jesus greeted his disciples this way:

“Peace be with you” (John 20:19, 21, 26).

If our tongues will come under the control of his peace, our churches will be safe places, sanctuaries for repentant sinners.

No one has the right to disturb that peace.

It is sacred. It is blood-bought.

The Book of Proverbs

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Mouth / Speech

One of the commentaries on the book of Proverbs lists around 90 proverbs counseling us about how to speak.

The book of Proverbs has more to say about our words than anything else it addresses in our lives — more than money, sex, or family.

Do you suppose that reflects on the importance of the words we chose to use and wisdom in our lives?

One body of research reports that the average American speaks about 700 times per day.

If that number sounds high to you, cut it in half to 350 times per day.

If it still sounds high, cut it in half again to 175 times a day.

Other than breathe what else do we chose to do 175 times a day?

Our many words matter.

“Glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Proverbs says, “That starts with your tongue.”

The Book of Proverbs

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Mouth / Speech

There is gold and abundance of costly stones, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel. (Proverbs 21:15)

Our words are more than puffs of air coming up through our vocal cords.

Our words have moral status in the sight of God.

That "**the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel**" means that knowledgeable, informed, intelligent words are rare and valuable in God's eyes.

We know what it is like to be listening to someone and it is obvious they do not know what they are talking about.

We also know what it is like to fall silent whenever a certain person speaks, because whatever that person has to say is wise and helpful and almost a work of art.

That high quality of speech is precious to God.

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Mouth / Speech

Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD. (Pro 12:22)

Lying might not bother us that much.

Husbands and 'wives lie to each other.

Advertisers lie.

Politicians lie.

"It is just the way things have to be done sometimes — but even that is a lie.

Lying is repulsive to God.

It may not make our skin crawl, but it really bothers God.

Jesus said the devil is **'a liar and the father of lies'** (Jn 8:44)

True, sincere, honest words bind us together in community.

True words make love and trust and intimacy possible.

False words conceal us from one another, even as we might go on faking community, role-playing community outwardly while something else is really going on in our hearts.

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Mouth / Speech

Speaking lies is only half the problem.

Listening to lies, gossip, flippant denigration — is a serious moral issue too.

An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue. (Pro 17:4)

Listening to lies is itself lying. Listeners are involved.

God wants us to know that just standing there and listening, tolerating the evil, shares in the evil.

We lie to ourselves that we are not involved because we are only listening.

Be careful what you listen to.

♪♪♪ "Be careful little ears what you hear ..." ♪♪♪

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Mouth / Speech

A person can become a "garbage collector."

Someone in the group becomes the one to whom disgruntled people go, because that person will listen and sympathize and be a shoulder to cry on and a rallying point for complaints and a hero to those with hurt feelings.

That listener becomes a bigger problem in the group than the talkers.

If a person approaches you and starts criticizing someone else, you smile and interrupt and say,

"Ah...Time out. I don't need or want to be involved in this. But the person you're talking about is right over there on the other side of the room. Let's you and I go right now and you tell that person to his face what you're telling me behind his back, okay? Let's see if we can get this straightened out..."

Handle problems and issues while they are small, before they have a chance to spread and grow.

If we will have the courage to obey God at the moment of temptation, our churches will be safe places where people never have to wonder what is really going on, and they can relax and enjoy themselves and grow in Christ.

Mouth / Speech

The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels: they go down into the inner parts of the body. (Pro 18:8)

Admit it.

We love gossip.

- We love supposedly secret inside information about other people.
- We love controversy.
- We find it delicious.
- We love to think we know something that others do not know - and we love to tell them so.

It is a delicacy — to our corrupt hearts.

We gulp these words down with relish.

But the contagion goes down into us and makes a deep impression and leaves us even sicker than we were before.

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Mouth / Speech

*Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
Open your mouth! judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy. (Prov 31:8, 9)*

Do you speak up when others are put down?

Or do you just stand there and listen in sinful silence as the blast of gossip and slander hits you in the face?

God says, “**Open your mouth.**”

With every unkind word that goes unchallenged, a reputation dies.

Our words matter - not just to us but far more to God.

Every word we speak and every word we hear are always spoken right in God’s face....

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Mouth / Speech

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue. (Pro 18:21)
"On the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Mat 12:36).*

Words do not even have to be intentional to be deadly; they just need to be careless:

*There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Prov 12:18)*

In English we speak about “**cutting remarks.**”

It happens in an outburst of rash words, reckless words, unthinking words, just blurting out whatever we might be thinking ‘without filtering it ‘wisely.

We need to see in our rash words razor blades flying out of our mouths right into the body of the other person.

Those wounds and scars remain long after the words have faded away.

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Mouth / Speech

What you permit, you promote.

Pro 12:18 A rash speaker is like piercings of a sword, And the tongue of the wise is healing.

The tongue of the wise cares more about soothing an injury than winning an argument.

Time does not heal all wounds.

Three simple words that bring healing: “I am sorry.”

Ignoring injuries does not make them go away.

Wise words can and do bring healing.

Saying the humble, honest, beautiful things that need to be said is step one toward powerful healing.

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Mouth / Speech

**Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down,
but a good word makes him glad. (Proverbs 12:25)**

Sometimes we are of two minds.

We trust God, but we don't really trust God.

In times like that we need a good word from outside ourselves, a stabilizing word of hope from another Christian.

We can speak good words into each other's hearts.

The message we speak, because it is the truth, might not be that the problem is going away: but the message can always be, "God is with you."

**Heb 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness;
and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath
said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**

As that good and gladdening word spreads around among us, we are emboldened to do for Christ what we would never attempt alone.

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Mouth / Speech

We need to want every word we speak to be a blessing making people glad in Christ.

When a whole church does that together it starts feeling like revival.

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life. (Pro 10:11)

The lips of the righteous feed many. (Pro 10:21)

The word "feed" means "shepherd," the way a shepherd tends and guides and protects and feeds his flock of sheep.

There is enough in Christ for us and enough for us to also refresh others.

It is our words that open his fountain and spread his table for many others.

**Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word out of your mouth go forth, but what
is good unto the needful building up, that it may give grace to
the hearers;**

God has called all of his people to this powerful privilege.

It means we all must take responsibility to breathe life into everyone around us by our words of encouragement.

Mouth / Speech

Our 'Words: Practical Limitations

**In all toil there is profit,
but mere talk tends only to poverty. (Prov 14:23)**

"Mere talk" / "empty words" can be boastful or defeatist or just plain lazy.

Dreaming can be the first step toward a better future.

But dreaming without working is no future, because words cannot substitute for deeds.

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Mouth / Speech

**If you say, "Behold, we did not know this,"
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? (Pro
24:12)**

Our excuses do not impress God:

God holds us responsible to be our brother's keeper.

Who is suffering among the people you know, someone you can help, and what are you doing about it?

Or are you just talking about it, or even looking the other way?

When deeds are required, words are empty, and God is not fooled.

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Mouth / Speech

**Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life;
he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. (Pro 13:3)**

Jesus was the only person in all of history who never spoke an unguarded, self-indulgent word.

He never opened his lips in a wrong way, not once, ever.

He never spoke when silence was better, and

Every word he did speak was perfect.

Even his enemies said,

“No one ever spoke like this man!” (John 7:46).

The Bible calls him the Word (**John 1:1, 14**),

He represents everything that needs to be said,
the only thing that needs to be said.

The Book of Proverbs

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Mouth / Speech

You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you. (1 Peter 1:23—25)

I was born mortal by the natural process; it is only a matter of time until I die.

I have also been reborn immortal by sheer miracle; it will never end.

The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to put new life in our hearts and new words in our mouths.

God’s Word remains; it will keep on giving new life; it always will.

It will go deeper and deeper into you.

And it will be reflected to others by your words spreading new life to many other people with an eternal impact.

The Book of Proverbs

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Mouth / Speech

**The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21).**

Spoken words were a serious matter when they were the only means of communicating and making legal agreements.

Now words are everywhere—on billboards, in magazines and books, and over the airwaves.

Their potential for “life and death” has multiplied, so we must learn to use them carefully.

1. Describe a situation in which you recognized or experienced the positive or negative power words can have.

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Mouth / Speech

**A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor,
but a man of understanding holds his tongue.
A gossip betrays a confidence,
but a trustworthy man keeps a secret (11:12—13)
A lying tongue hates those it hurts,
and a flattering mouth works ruin. (26:28)**

2. What kind of person is particularly hurtful to others?
What defines a lie?

What kind of behavior or speech can alert us that someone is a liar or a gossip?

3. Why would “understanding” (**11:12**) prevent a person from deriding another person?

Are we as quick to criticize others when we know more about their situation?

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Mouth / Speech

***He who conceals his hatred has lying lips,
and whoever spreads slander is a fool. (10:18)***

***A lying tongue hates those it hurts,
and a flattering mouth works ruin. (26:28)***

4. To what is deception related?
Turning this idea around, how are love and honesty related?

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Mouth / Speech

***The wise in heart are called discerning,
and pleasant words promote instruction. (16:21)***

***A man of knowledge uses words with restraint,
and a man of understanding is even-tempered. (17:27)***

5. What qualities make our speech beneficial to others?

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Mouth / Speech

***Proverbs 18:7 "A fool's mouth is his undoing,
and his lips are a snare to his soul"***

Others, not only the one speaking, can be undone by a person's words.

***Pro 17:7 Not comely for a fool is a lip of excellency,
Much less for a noble a lip of falsehood.***

A key factor in inappropriate speech is arrogance.

The more we know, the more we become aware of all that we don't know.

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Mouth / Speech

***With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbor,
but through knowledge the righteous escape. (11:9)***

***A perverse man stirs up dissension,
and a gossip separates close friends. (16:28)***

6. List some ways in which we can destroy others with our words.

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Mouth / Speech

***Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow
is the man who gives false testimony against his
neighbor. (25:18)***

7. In what situations are people most likely to lie about someone else?
What values or attitudes in our culture might make false testimony an attractive option?

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Mouth / Speech

***Without wood a fire goes out:
without gossip a quarrel dies down. (26:20)***

8. Have you been in situations that demonstrated this principle?

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Mouth / Speech

***Reckless words pierce like a sword,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
Truthful lips endure forever,
but a lying tongue lasts only a moment. (12:18—19)***
***Pleasant words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. (16:24)***

9. Recall situations in which a person's words have had a healing effect on you.
What types of things did he or she say?
What was the speaker's tone of voice or body language?

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Mouth / Speech

***A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.
The tongue of the wise commends knowledge,
but the mouth of the fool gushes folly. (15:1—2)***

10. Why is a gentle answer so effective when dealing with an angry person?

A “gentle answer” does not necessarily mean a soft tone of voice. When used in a certain way, even a soft tone can be intimidating.

“Gentle” refers to an attitude and a demeanor that demonstrate respect for the other person.

A gentle person genuinely listens and doesn't try to overpower through volume, physical appearance, or emotional manipulation.

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Mouth / Speech

*The lips of the righteous know what is fitting,
but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.
(10:32)*

*A man finds joy in giving an apt reply
—and how good is a timely word! (15:23)*

- 11. Recall a time when something you said was not “apt” or “fitting”.
Why was the statement inappropriate for the situation?
- 12. What qualities characterize speech that is appropriate to a situation?

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Mouth / Speech

A false witness will perish, and whoever listens to him will be destroyed forever. (21:28)

- 13. Who are “false witnesses”?
How can we avoid listening to them?

According to Hebrew Law (Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Leviticus), the innocence or guilt of a person accused of a crime was determined by the testimony of witnesses, as weighed by a judge (there were no juries).

Justice could be perverted quite easily by a witness or witnesses who lied when giving evidence.

However, the principle of truth telling is applicable to contexts other than a courtroom.

Gossip and slander exchanged at a dinner table or in the grocery store can cause serious damage to others, thus denying them justice and right treatment from their neighbors.

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Mouth / Speech

Put Your Wisdom to Work

*“Gold there is, and rubies in abundance,
but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel” (Pro 20:15)*

Have you ever encountered a person whose words had rare value and relevance?

What was striking about that persons manner or character?

This week, note the pattern and content of your own speech and what it reveals about you.

- Do you speak recklessly or without knowing all the facts?
- Do you gossip?

What can you do to improve the way you use words?

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RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER

**Righteousness - Unrighteousness - Sin
Doing right – Not doing right – Doing Wrong**

**Wickedness -Evil
Trespasses – Iniquity
Commission - Omission**

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Sin

There are nine different Greek words in the N.T., which present sin in its various aspects,

1. **hamartia**, the missing of a mark or aim
2. **hamartema**, the outcomes of missing of a mark or aim
3. **parakoe**, the inattentiveness or disobedience to a voice; failing to listen
4. **anomia**, the non-observance of a law; contempt of or violation of law, lawlessness; one who acts contrary to law.
5. **paranomia**, going beyond the limits which the law lays down
6. **parabasis**, the overpassing or transgressing of a line; to violate a limit
7. **paraptoma**, falling alongside where one should have stood upright; a fall beside, a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness; a fault, a mistake, an offence, neglect, error
8. **agnoema**, the doing through ignorance of something wrong which one should have known about
9. **hettema**. Becoming diminished; to decrease; in the ethical sense - coming short of duty, a fault

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Righteous Character

In today's culture the word righteous is most often used when referring to a person who is self-righteous — proud, hypocritical, and pompous.

The biblical definition is much different.

We don't find many verses in Proverbs that explain what it means to be righteous.

But from these wise sayings, we can glean observations about certain outcomes in life and how they are related to righteous character.

1. Define righteous based on what you know from the Bible as well as your own experiences and observations.

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Righteousness

G1343 δικαιοσύνη dikaiousunē

Thayer Definition:

- 1) in a broad sense: state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God
 - 1a) the doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain a state approved of God
 - 1b) integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting
- 2) in a narrower sense, justice or the virtue which gives each his due

A Related Word by Thayer's/Strong's Number: from G1342

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Righteous Character

The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful. (12:5)

A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel. (12:10)

The righteous hate falsehood, but the wicked act shamefully and disgracefully. (13:5, NRSV)

The mind of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil. (15:28, NRSV)

The righteous give without sparing. (21:26)

The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. (28:1, NRSV)

2. List several other characteristics of the righteous described in the above verses.

When have you seen examples of these character qualities in people you know?

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Righteous Character

The righteous hate falsehood, but the wicked act shamefully and disgracefully. (13:5, NRSV)

3. A righteous person hates falsehood. In what ways can we stand for truth and against falsehood?
4. What specific goals and priorities do you see demonstrated by the righteous and the wicked people you know?

Try to come up with specific examples.

For instance, revenge on a family member may be the burning goal for one person.

“Deceitful advice” often comes to us in the workplace from people who have their own ladder climbing in mind, even if at the expense of others.

A father whose plans are “just” would be careful not to favor one child over another — through special financial provisions, for example.

A neighbor who is “righteous” would be interested in the comfort not only of herself but of others living nearby, even if this meant adjusting her own tolerance for noisy children or next-door residences not quite as attractive as her own.

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Righteous Character

The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. (28:1, NRSV)

5. Proverbs 28:1 gives a perfect description of paranoia. Why do you think a righteous person can be as “bold as a lion”?
When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever.... The righteous will never be uprooted, but the wicked will not remain in the land. (10:25, 30)
No one finds security by wickedness, but the root of the righteous will never be moved. (12:3, NRSV)
6. How do you think righteousness provides for stability?
7. Think of people you know who are not stable. To what do you attribute their problems?
8. What “righteous” character qualities can add stability to your daily life, work, and ministry?

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Righteous Character

The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot. (10:7)

The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out. (13:9)

The righteous walk in integrity—happy are the children who follow them! (20:7, NRSV)

9. Note the legacy of living uprightly. In what ways can righteous living bless our children here and now? in the future?
10. What effect do memories of our loved ones have on us? What difference does it make to survivors if the deceased has been a righteous or a wicked person?

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Righteous Character

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan. (29:2, NRSV)

11. Give some examples of 29:2 from a current newspaper or magazine.
12. What impact do the righteous have on society as a whole?

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Righteous Character

*What the wicked dread will come upon them,
but the desire of the righteous will be granted. (10:24, NRSV)*

*An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk,
but a righteous man escapes trouble. (12:13)*

*No harm befalls the righteous,
but the wicked have their fill of trouble. (12:2 1)*

*Misfortune pursues the sinner,
but prosperity is the reward of the righteous. (13:21)*

*The righteous eat to their hearts' content,
but the stomach of the wicked goes hungry (13:25)*

*In the house of the righteous there is much treasure,
but trouble befalls the income of the wicked. (15:6, Norse)*

13. A proverb, by nature, is a generalization.

What evidence have you seen that the above proverbs are not true in every situation?

14. How do you think righteousness adds to prosperity (13:21), rescues us from trouble (12:13), and brings us what we desire (10:24)?

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Righteous Character

Put Your Wisdom to Work

What characteristics of righteousness found in this study's passages would you like to build up in your own life?

List some practical ways you can do this.

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PRO 1:10-19	PRO 13:17-18	PRO 18:10	PRO 25:13
PRO 1:25-28	PRO 13:21-22	PRO 18:12	PRO 25:26-27
PRO 2:7-22	PRO 13:25	PRO 19:1-2	PRO 26:1
PRO 3:3-4	PRO 14:2	PRO 19:5	PRO 26:8
PRO 3:9	PRO 14:9	PRO 19:9	PRO 26:10
PRO 3:13-18	PRO 14:11	PRO 19:16	PRO 26:26-27
PRO 3:31-35	PRO 14:14	PRO 20:3	PRO 26:27
PRO 4:7-9	PRO 14:17	PRO 20:7	PRO 27:2
PRO 4:14-19	PRO 14:19	PRO 20:11	PRO 27:12
PRO 5:22-23	PRO 14:22	PRO 20:29-30	PRO 27:18
PRO 6:12-15	PRO 14:28	PRO 21:3	PRO 28:1-2
PRO 8:8	PRO 14:31-35	PRO 21:7	PRO 28:4-6
PRO 8:11-12	PRO 15:3	PRO 21:10	PRO 28:10
PRO 8:18	PRO 15:6	PRO 21:12	PRO 28:12
PRO 9:9	PRO 15:8-9	PRO 21:15-18	PRO 28:14
PRO 10:1-32	PRO 15:25-29	PRO 21:21	PRO 28:17-18
PRO 11:1-32	PRO 15:33	PRO 21:26-29	PRO 28:22 -23
PRO 12:2-3	PRO 16:4-5	PRO 22:1	PRO 28:28
PRO 12:5-14	PRO 16:13	PRO 22:4	PRO 29:2
PRO 12:21-22	PRO 16:27-31	PRO 22:8	PRO 29:6-7
PRO 12:26	PRO 17:5-6	PRO 23:17-18	PRO 29:10
PRO 12:28	PRO 17:11-13	PRO 24:8	PRO 29:16-17
PRO 13:2-6	PRO 17:20	PRO 24:15-22	PRO 29:23
PRO 13:9	PRO 17:28	PRO 25:2	PRO 29:27
PRO 13:15	PRO 18:3	PRO 25:6-7	PRO 31:25-31

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RULERS, KINGS, AUTHORITIES AND LEADERS

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

What do kings and their courts (advisors) have to do with legislative bodies and political parties?

How do the wise words given to Old Testament rulers in a theocracy relate to leaders today in a democracy?

How about leaders and managers in the workplace?

How about leaders in the church?

Basic ideas about justice, the responsibility of those who have power, and the general well-being of others remain constant though governments and leaders change.

1. If you had the power to change some area of law, economy, or social welfare, what kind of guidance would you seek?
From whom?
Where would you go to receive this guidance?

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

Where there is no guidance, a nation falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. (11:14, NRSV)

3. **Proverbs 11:14** states that a nation needs guidance.

Why does “an abundance of counselors” provide safety?

A quick look at the U.S. Cabinet and a list of the president’s advisors gives us an idea of the number of areas our leaders influence through their decisions.

On any given day, a wise leader – whether church, business, or government - will talk with experts in economics, education, the environment, health and medicine, computer systems, religion, and so on.

Why is talking to advisors from many different backgrounds and experiences a good thing to do?

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people. (14:34)

When a land rebels it has many rulers; but with an intelligent ruler there is lasting order. (28:2, NRSV)

2. According to these verses, what qualities and assets contribute to a healthy nation?

What evidences of sins disgrace do you see in the United States and in other nations?

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

When a land rebels it has many rulers; but with an intelligent ruler there is lasting order. (28:2, NRSV)

4. In what ways can a land “rebel” (28:2)?

Why might a country’s government or any organization break down into factions that do not function well together?

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

Pro 31:1-9 ISV

(1) *The words of King Lemuel—a pronouncement with which his mother encouraged him. (2) No, my son! No, my son whom I conceived! No, my son to whom I gave birth!*

(3) *Never devote all your energy to sex, or dedicate your life to destroying kings. (4) It is not for kings, Lemuel—Not for kings to drink wine or for rulers to desire liquor. (5) Otherwise, they may drink and forget what has been ordained, perverting justice for all the oppressed. (6) Give liquor to someone who is perishing, and wine to someone who is deeply depressed. (7) Let him drink, forget his poverty, and remember his troubles no more. (8) Speak for those who cannot speak; seek justice for all those on the verge of destruction. (9) Speak up, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and oppressed.*

5. This passage describes the advice King Lemuel received from his mother.

Why does his mother think it right that the king restrict himself from engaging in certain activities and habits?

Do you agree or disagree with her? Why?

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

It is an abomination to kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness. (16:12, NRSV)

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases. (21:1)

A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor; but one who hates unjust gain will enjoy a long life. (28:16, NRSV)

By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down. (29:4)

If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked (29:12)

If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure. (29:14)

Many seek the favor of a ruler, but it is from the Lord that one gets justice. (29:26, NRSV)

7. According to these verses, what moral qualities should a king have?

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

Pro 31:8-9 ISV

(8) Speak for those who cannot speak; seek justice for all those on the verge of destruction. (9) Speak up, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and oppressed.

6. What does she emphasize in her closing statements (*verses 8—9*)?

Why would a king (or anyone in power) be tempted to overlook the poor and others who cannot speak up for their needs and rights?

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

Pro 11:14 A nation falls through a lack of guidance, but victory comes through the counsel of many.

Just as many counselors offer protection (*Proverbs 11:14*), the right counselors can make all the difference.

(1 Kings 12:8): “But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him.”

Taking the advice that was undoubtedly closer to his own viewpoint — and rejecting the wisdom of men who had served his father for years — led to a permanent split in the nation.

Having the right counsel is worthless, if you don't listen to and consider their advice...

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down. (29:4)

If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked (29:12)

8. Against what is a leader warned in **29:4,12**?
In what ways do political leaders listen to lies?
How might they avoid this?

Rulers, Kings and Authority

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases. (21:1)

Many seek the favor of a ruler, but it is from the Lord that one gets justice. (29:26, NRSV)

10. Who ultimately can take charge of affairs — both personal and global — according to **21:1 and 29:26**?

Rulers, Kings and Authority

A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor; but one who hates unjust gain will enjoy a long life. (28:16, NRSV)

If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure. (29:14)

9. What attitudes are linked with definite rewards.

Rulers, Kings and Authority

11. Why do you think God does not take charge more often, but instead allows leaders to make their own choices as the rest of us depend upon them?

Considering that God only appointed a king for his people after they had rejected his leadership (**1 Samuel 8**), do you think governments came into existence only because humans are rebellious toward God and demand some kind of intermediary control or might there have been some other reason.

If there was some other reason, what do you think that reason might have been?

Rulers, Kings and Authority

Once God set up a system of human government, he authorized its power and charged it with responsibility.

This is most clearly laid out in **Romans 13**.

Our ultimate obedience is to God (**Acts 5:27—29**).

It is clear that leaders and governments are themselves often in rebellion and under God's judgment (see especially the prophecies of **Amos** and **Jeremiah**).

Many biblical passages indicate that governments and leaders whether just or rebellious are part of God's plan —

In most cases, the people get exactly what they ask for and deserve...

Rather than complain and resist, we should be repenting as individuals and as peoples.

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Rulers, Kings and Authority

Put Your Wisdom to Work

What have you found to be encouraging in this study on rulers and nations?

What have you found to be worrisome or discouraging? Why?

What steps can you take this week to begin developing the habit of praying for those who are in government leadership?

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SEXUAL STANDARDS

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Sexual Standards

The book of Proverbs does not provide a comprehensive study on all aspects of life, although it includes most issues of interest to us.

Where sexuality is concerned, the only real mention in Proverbs has to do with adultery and prostitution.

Yet there is plenty of material on these subjects to help us explore important principles of sexual behavior.

1. What guidelines for sexual behavior do most people you know follow?

Traditional – Biblical – Social – Personal ???

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Sexual Standards

Read **PROVERBS 7:6-23**

2. How did the youth in this story set himself up for trouble?
What parallels do you see in your own life or in the experiences of people you know?
3. What various means of persuasion did the woman use to seduce the young man?
4. What might a person say or do today in order to seduce someone?
What might be some effective responses to these tactics?

Sexual Standards

Read **PROVERBS 5:1-14**.

5. In what ways are some people today similar to the adulteress in their speech? in their approach to life?
6. What does a person stand to lose by getting mixed up in adultery?
7. Have you witnessed (or experienced) these kinds of losses?

Sexual Standards

Pro 6:25-29 ISV

(25) Do not focus on her beauty in your mind, nor allow her to take you prisoner with her flirting eyes, (26) because the price of a whore is a loaf of bread, and an adulterous woman stalks a man's precious life. (27) Can a man scoop fire into his bosom without burning his clothes? (28) Can a man walk on hot coals without scorching his feet? (29) So also is it with someone who has sex with his neighbor's wife; anyone touching her will not remain unpunished.

Pro 6:32-35 ISV

(32) Whoever commits adultery with a woman is out of his mind; by doing so he corrupts his own soul. (33) He will receive a beating and dishonor, and his shame won't disappear, (34) because jealousy incites a strong man's rage, and he will show no mercy when it's time for revenge. (35) He will not consider any payment, nor will he be willing to accept it, no matter how large the bribe.

Sexual Standards

8. What happens to the quality of life of someone who thoughtlessly gives him- or herself away sexually?

Pro 6:27-29 ISV

(27) Can a man scoop fire into his bosom without burning his clothes? (28) Can a man walk on hot coals without scorching his feet? (29) So also is it with someone who has sex with his neighbor's wife; anyone touching her will not remain unpunished.

9. The warnings in verses 27 through 29 are quite vivid.
Why are people willing to play with fire when it comes to sex?
10. List some ways in which we get burned as a result of unprincipled sexual behavior.

Sexual Standards

Pro 5:20 *Why should you be intoxicated by an adulteress, my son, and embrace the bosom of a foreign woman?*

11. Why be captivated by someone who's looking for extramarital sex?
Why embrace another person's husband or wife?
What answers do people often give to these questions?

Sexual Standards

Put Your Wisdom to Work

When are you most vulnerable to sexual temptation?
What principles for a healthy approach to sex have you found in these passages?

THE TEACHABLE PERSON

The Teachable Person

As babies and small children, we must master hundreds of skills, acquire huge amounts of information, and keep in memory all the bits and pieces.

This requires a certain amount of openness and eagerness to learn from others.

Many people get to an age where they feel they no longer need instruction.

In our families, our churches, and our workplaces, we encounter those who can't change their opinions, take advice, or admit when they are wrong or need help.

1. Think of a person you know who excels in his or her field of work.

What does he or she do in order to keep growing and learning?

The Teachable Person

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. (11:2)

Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. (13:10)

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

A person's pride will bring humiliation, but one who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor. (29:23, NRSV)

- 2 Why is a humble person usually a good learner?
- 3 Describe a time, if any, when you have seen pride result in disgrace.
- 4 In what ways does pride get in the way of learning or hinder progress of any kind?

The Teachable Person

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck. (1:8—9)

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding ... then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. (2:1—2,5)

Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. (23:22)

5. Where do we first learn to listen, obey, accept boundaries, and master skills?
In this age of day care and public education, the importance of consistency in discipline and teaching between the various caretakers cannot be overemphasized.
6. How could a child's refusal to listen and learn lead to problems in adulthood? What examples of this have you seen?

The Teachable Person

He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray. (10:17)

A mocker resents correction; he will not consult the wise. (15:12)

He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding. (15:31—32)

Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers. (16:20)

7. Describe the outcomes of the two different attitudes toward correction found in these verses.
8. Proverbs 15:31 describes a person who is comfortable around wise people.
What types of people are threatened by or uncomfortable around people of wisdom and good character?
In which category do you see yourself?
9. How can we determine whether or not a person is open to correction or advice? What signals might that person give?

The Teachable Person

Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance. (1:5)

Happy is the one who listens to me [Wisdom], watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord; but those who miss me injure themselves; all who hate me love death. (8:34—36, NRSV)

10. The speaker in Proverbs 8:34—36 is Wisdom personified.
How do we know the person mentioned here is serious about hearing what Wisdom has to say?

The Teachable Person

He who answers before listening—that is his folly and his shame. (18:13)

11. Have you ever been in conversation with the kind of person described in 18:13? If so, what was it like? Do you consider yourself a good listener? Why?

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The Teachable Person

Put Your Wisdom to Work

What stands in your way most often when it comes to being teachable, accepting criticism, and fully listening to others?

What steps can you take to improve your teachability?

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The Teachable Person

Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge. (19:27)

12. Why should listening to instruction and wisdom be an ongoing process?

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THE WISE CONTRASTED WITH THE FOOLISH

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The Wise Contrasted With the Foolish

The word fool in biblical literature did not refer to one who was lacking in intellectual ability.

The foolish as described in Proverbs have serious flaws in their character.

1. As a child, were you ever taught the characteristics of wisdom and/or foolishness?
If so, what were you taught about them?
If not, what do you wish you had been taught?
What character trait was emphasized to you as a child?
What character trait is most important to you now?
In others? In yourself?

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The Wise Contrasted With the Foolish

The fear of the Logo is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. (1:7)

The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice. (12:15)

A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth. (17:24)

A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions. (18:2)

2. Describe in your own words the relationship between our attitude toward God and how wise we become.
3. Contrast the fools and the wise man's views of wisdom and learning.
What examples do you see of both outlooks in your circles of family, friends, and coworkers?

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The Wise Contrasted With the Foolish

A scoffer who is rebuked will only hate you; the wise, when rebuked, will love you. Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous and they will gain in learning. (9:8—9, NRSV)

An intelligent mind acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. (18:15 NRSV)

Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, who will only despise the wisdom of your words. (23:9, NRSV)

4. What actions or speech usually indicate to you that a person is willing to accept correction or advice?
5. In what ways have you resisted correction?
How have you seen others resist it?
When are you best able and willing to hear criticism?

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The Wise Contrasted With the Foolish

The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin. (10:8)

A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction. (16:23)

A fool's lips bring strife, and a fool's mouth invites a flogging. The mouths of fools are their ruin, and their lips a snare to themselves. (18:6—7, NRSV)

6. What picture comes to mind as you read 10:8?
Have you ever known or worked with a "chatterer"?
How did he or she affect your work environment and relationships?

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The Wise Contrasted With the Foolish

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. (10:11, NRSV)

7. Based on 10:11, in what ways can speech be related to violence?
In what ways have you been violated by someone's speech?
What can we do to guard against violating others by what we say?
8. Contrast the effects of a wise person's speech and a fool's speech.

The Wise Contrasted With the Foolish

The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, so that one may avoid the snares of death. (13:14, NRSV)

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools suffers harm. (13:20, NRSV)

The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception. Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright (14:8—9)

The wise are cautious and turn away from evil, but the fool throws off restraint and is careless. (14:16, NRSV)

9. What is the fool's response to evil?
In what ways have you seen foolish people connected to evil activities?
10. How does the wise person's approach to life protect him or her from evil?
11. What positive effects does a wise person have on those around him or her?
12. Describe a time, if any, when you have seen "companion of fools" come to harm.

The Wise Contrasted With the Foolish

Put Your Wisdom to Work

What signs of wisdom and foolishness do you find in the following areas?

- your outlook on life
- your response to connection
- your speech
- the general quality of your life

What choices can you make that will replace foolishness with wise living?