

THE COMPASS AND THE CROSS

Living Out Proverbs in a World Full of Noise



DR. TIM W. GOULD

THE COMPASS AND THE CROSS

Finding Direction in a World of Distraction

Every day, countless voices call for our attention—news headlines, social media feeds, advertisements, and opinions at every turn. In all this noise, it is easy to lose sight of what truly matters.

In *The Compass and the Cross*, Dr. Tim W. Gould invites readers to pause, listen, and rediscover the timeless wisdom of Proverbs. Rooted in the life and teaching of Jesus, this book offers not just principles, but a pathway toward peace, clarity, and purpose.

Whether you are new to faith or longing to go deeper with God, this journey reveals how the cross of Christ shines as the truest guide, pointing us to a life anchored in truth and filled with hope.



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Introduction and Acknowledgement

This book is a little different from my previous ones. In the past, I would go through each verse, offering clarifications to help the reader. I'd outline the structure, define word usage, and add commentary where it felt helpful. But I've chosen not to do that with the book of Proverbs. I want you, the reader, to take this journey on your own.

Proverbs is a book I come back to again and again. Every time I read it, I walk away with something deeply personal. That's because this book is designed by our Heavenly Father to meet us right where we are—every day. Whatever the season or circumstance, Proverbs seems to speak directly into it. It gives direction, clarity, and often, the exact wisdom I didn't even know I needed.

So I've tried my best not to get in the way of that. I haven't filled these pages with heavy commentary or detailed explanations. Instead, like my previous books, I give a brief introduction at the start of each chapter—just enough to get the spiritual juices flowing. But I encourage you to take this journey from where *you* are. Let the words speak. Let them land in your “right now” life.

This book is titled *The Compass and the Cross* because that's what Proverbs becomes when you read it through the lens of Jesus. It's not just a guide to wise living—it's a road map pointing us straight to Christ. Each chapter reflects not only practical wisdom but glimpses of the One who fulfilled it perfectly. Jesus didn't just teach wisdom—He *embodied* it. And through Him, we see the true heart behind every proverb: not just behavior modification, but a transformed life.

This book is also set up as a daily read. There are many times I sit down with my Bible and don't quite know where to begin—maybe I just finished another book and feel a little stuck. That's when I turn to Proverbs. I check the day of the month and read the chapter that matches. With 31 chapters in

Proverbs, it's easy to jump right in. That's why the headings in this book are listed as Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, and so on—instead of Chapter 1, 2, 3, etc.

That said, however you choose to read this book is the *right* way. This is just the pattern that works for me, and I'm sharing it in case it's helpful.

For those who feel weird about writing in their Bible, this book can double as a journal. I often highlight or underline the verse that stands out to me, and if there's room in the margins, I'll jot down a quick note. Over time, those scribbles have become deeply meaningful—reminders of the struggles I faced and the ways the Lord brought me through. They've become little altars of remembrance.

So go ahead—grab a pen and a highlighter. Write in this book. Mark it up. Scribble your heart into the margins. Let it become a record of your walk with Jesus.

Lastly, I want to thank my wife, Myrt, for encouraging me to write this book. It was her idea to keep going with Proverbs, and if you enjoy it, please say a prayer of thanks for my amazing wife—my Proverbs 31 woman, without a doubt.

I also want to thank the team at Blue Letter Bible for their incredible, ongoing resource. If you haven't used it yet, do yourself a favor and check it out—it's a treasure trove for anyone studying God's Word. To all their contributors and staff: thank you personally from me.

Day 1

Book of Proverbs

Chapter 1

While living in California and going to elementary school, both of my parents worked full-time driving city buses. Since my brother and I were what's now known as "latch-key kids," I found a lot of freedom — or so I thought. One day, my brother asked if I wanted to "cut school." I said, "Sure." That started a cycle that lasted for years.

During that time, I used to skip school a lot. It was thrilling in a way — doing something I wasn't supposed to do. It was even more exciting to get away with it. I kept pushing the envelope until the day finally came when my parents found out. Let me tell you — my bottom was sore for quite a while! I wish I could say I learned my lesson then, but apparently, I was a slow learner. Every time I skipped school, I risked getting caught — and most of the time, I was.

Later in life, I paid the price for missing so much of the education I really needed to start out strong. There were multiple layers of consequences I'd come to understand only years later.

Have you ever ignored advice and later wished you had listened? Maybe a parent told you to stay away from certain friends, or a friend warned you about a bad deal. At the time, it felt like they were overreacting — until the consequences hit.

Proverbs 1 opens the book by introducing wisdom as a trusted voice. It explains why these sayings exist — not as old, dusty rules, but as time-tested guidance for making better choices, avoiding dangerous paths, and living with peace.

We live in a world overflowing with voices — influencers, friends, news, social media. Some of those voices lead to life and success, while others take

Day 1

us down a road we regret. Proverbs 1 helps us recognize which voices to follow and shows us how listening to wisdom can keep us safe.

In the bigger story of the Bible, wisdom isn't just an idea — it's a person. Jesus lived out this wisdom perfectly and still calls out to us today, offering the guidance and security our hearts truly need.

1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to discern the words of understanding; 3 to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness and justice and equity. 4 To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. 5 That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning. That the man of understanding may attain to sound counsels. 6 To understand a proverb, and a figure, the words of the wise, and their deep sayings.

7 The fear ***[respect, reverence, holiness]*** of God is the beginning of knowledge. But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.

Warning Against the Invitation of Sinful Man

8 My son, hear the instruction of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother. 9 For they shall be a garland of grace on your head, and chains about your neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent to them. 11 If they say, “Come with us, let us lay and wait for blood. Let us ambush the innocent without cause. 12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave, and whole, as those that go down into the pit. 13 We shall find all kinds of precious things. We shall fill our houses with spoil. 14 Cast your lot with us. We will all share one purse.” 15 My son, do not walk in the way with them. Refrain your foot from their path. 16 For their feet run to evil, they hurry to shed blood. 17 How useless to spread a net where every bird can see it. 18 And these lie wait for their own blood. They ambush their own lives. 19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain. It taketh away the life of the owners.

Day 1

Wisdom's Rebuke

20 Wisdom cries aloud in the street. She raises her voice in public places.
21 She cries at the top of the wall at the entrance of the gates, in the city, she utters her words:

22 “How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? How long will scoffers delight them in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge? 23 Turn at my rebuke. Behold, I will pour my spirit on you, I will make known my words to you. 24 Because I have called, and you have refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man has regarded it. 25 But you disregarded all my counsel, and do not accept my rebuke. 26 I also will laugh when your calamity arrives. I will mock when your fear comes. 27 When your fear comes like a storm, and your calamity comes as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish overtake you.

28 Then will they call upon me, but I will not answer. They will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me. 29 For they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of God, 30 They would not heed my counsel. They despised all my rebukes. 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own schemes. 32 For the backsliding of the simple shall kill them, and the complacency of fools shall destroy them. 33 But whoever listens to me shall live securely and shall be at ease, without fear of harm.

Day 2

Chapter 2

Think about the last time you really searched for something important — your car keys before work, your wallet before leaving the store, or a missing child's favorite toy before bedtime. When something matters, you don't stop until you find it. The truth is, we all search. We all dig. We all hunt.

The real question is: what are we really searching, hunting, and digging for?

Proverbs 2 talks about searching for wisdom with that same kind of intensity. It describes wisdom as something worth digging for — like hidden treasure — because finding it changes how we see life and protects us from destructive paths.

The problem is, we often chase after money, status, or relationships with more passion than we pursue wisdom. But Proverbs 2 reminds us that the right kind of understanding guards our hearts, guides our decisions, and keeps us from falling into lies or harmful influences.

If we take these words seriously, we'll start to learn what we should truly be searching for — the very thing that brings deeper joy, lasting peace, and greater purpose than we ever imagined.

The Bible later reveals that all true wisdom is found in Jesus — the one who not only teaches truth, but is truth. Seeking wisdom ultimately leads us closer to Him, the treasure worth more than anything else we could gain.

Moral Benefits of Wisdom

1 My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, 2 turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding-
- 3 indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, 4 and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, 5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

Day 2

6 For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. 7 He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, 8 for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.

9 Then you will understand what is right and just and fair--every good path. 10 For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. 11 Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.

12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, 13 who have left the straight paths to walk in dark ways, 14 who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, 15 whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways.

16 Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman, from the wayward woman with her seductive words, 17 who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. 18 Surely her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. 19 None who go to her return or attain the paths of life.

20 Thus you will walk in the ways of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous. 21 For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; 22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be torn from it.

Day 3

Chapter 3

Have you ever used GPS, only to ignore the directions because you thought you knew a better route — and then ended up lost or stuck in traffic? Trusting guidance can be hard when we think we’ve got it figured out. I’ll admit, I’ve done it plenty of times.

I mean, I *know* the way I want to go — and then that GPS voice chimes in, telling me to get off here or there. I stubbornly refuse, convinced I know better... only to later find out there was a collision, or construction, or some other delay the GPS was trying to help me avoid.

All my “brilliant” understanding of the route turns out to be useless as I sit in traffic, thumping the steering wheel, hoping to reach the next exit — which now feels like it’s 12 million miles away. *Sigh...* Letting go of control and actually trusting is tough sometimes.

Proverbs 3 urges us to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and not lean solely on our own understanding. It paints a picture of a life guided by God’s wisdom — a life marked by trust, generosity, humility, and moral integrity.

Our culture loves to celebrate self-reliance, but the truth is, we all have blind spots. And when we lean only on ourselves, we make mistakes — sometimes costly ones. Proverbs 3 offers the kind of steady guidance that can keep us on a straight path, even when the road ahead feels unclear.

Jesus invites us to follow Him in the same way Proverbs 3 calls us to trust the Lord — not just believing He exists, but actually leaning on His direction for every part of our lives.

He’s the reliable guide who never leads us astray. And trust me—He’s *way* more reliable than any GPS that will ever be conceived!

Day 3

Wisdom Bestows Well-Being

1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, 2 for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.

3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. 8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

9 Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, 12 because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

13 Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding,

14 for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her.

16 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.

17 Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed.

Day 3

19 By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place;

20 by his knowledge the watery depths were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.

21 My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion;

22 they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck.

23 Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble.

24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

25 Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,

26 for the LORD will be at your side and will keep your foot from being snared.

27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act.

28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you" — when you already have it with you.

29 Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you.

30 Do not accuse anyone for no reason--when they have done you no harm.

31 Do not envy the violent or choose any of their ways.

32 For the LORD detests the perverse but takes the upright into his confidence.

Day 3

33 The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous.

34 He mocks proud mockers but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.

35 The wise inherit honor, but fools get only shame.

Day 4

Chapter 4

Growing up with two professional drivers as parents was... let's just say, *educational*. Especially my mom. Every time we got in the car — and I mean *every single time* (I promise I'm not exaggerating) — she would go into full-blown “driver's ed instructor” mode.

She preached to my brother and me about everything: how to approach a traffic light, when to signal for a lane change, how to control your speed, and the proper following distance. She pointed out every road sign like she was giving a live tour: “That's a yield. Here's a merge. Never ignore this one.” Honestly, it was like riding with a human DMV manual.

One day at school — I was in the fourth grade — my teacher started talking about driving. Her boyfriend worked for the DMV, and she thought it'd be funny to give the class the *actual* written driving test just to see how clueless we were. She was cracking up grading the papers... until she got to mine. I was the only 9-year-old in the school to *pass* the DMV written exam. I guess all those car sermons paid off!

And to this day, I can honestly say her constant teaching helped me out. Sure, I've had a few fender benders over the years, but never because I wasn't paying attention. (Knock on wood!)

Think of a parent, mentor, or maybe even an overly vocal car passenger who's passed down some hard-earned wisdom — teaching you how to manage money, avoid toxic people, or just keep your head on straight. Usually, those lessons come from *their* mistakes, and they're just trying to save you from the same pain.

That's exactly how Proverbs 4 reads — like a loving parent sitting their kid down and saying, “Listen. Please don't ignore this stuff.” It urges us to hold tightly to wisdom and not let go. It describes two paths: the way of the righteous, which grows brighter like the morning sun, and the path of the wicked, which leads to stumbling and regret.

Day 4

Life is full of paths — and we're all walking one. The real question is: Where is yours leading?

Proverbs 4 reminds us that every choice we make is taking us somewhere. Wisdom is the compass that keeps us moving toward peace, purpose, and clarity — and away from chaos and regret.

Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*" He's not just offering advice — He's offering the actual path to walk. He *is* the road that leads to life.

So if the path you're on is pointing you toward Jesus, you're in a good place. If not... well, this is your friendly reminder to safely make a U-turn!

Get Wisdom at Any Cost

1 Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. 2 I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. 3 For I, too, was a son to my father, still tender, and cherished by my mother. 4 Then he taught me, and he said to me, "Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live. 5 Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. 6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. 7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. 8 Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you. 9 She will give you a garland to grace your head and present you with a glorious crown."

10 Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many. 11 I instruct you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. 12 When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble. 13 Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life. 14 Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers. 15 Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way. 16 For they cannot rest until they do evil; they are robbed of sleep till they make someone stumble. 17 They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.

Day 4

18 The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. 19 But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

20 My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. 21 Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; 22 for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body. 23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. 24 Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. 25 Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. 26 Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. 27 Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Day 6

Chapter 5

We've all heard stories of someone who had a pretty good life — a solid job, a family, a good reputation — and then they lost it all. Sometimes it's in the news. Sometimes it's someone we know. And sometimes... it hits closer to home.

The thing is, nobody wakes up one day and says, "*You know what? I think I'll ruin everything today.*" It usually starts small — a flirty text, a "harmless" conversation, a thought like, *It's not a big deal. I can handle this.* Yeah... famous last words.

Proverbs 5 doesn't beat around the bush. It talks straight about the pull of sexual temptation. It even admits that it feels good at first — exciting, even. But it also makes it crystal clear where it leads: pain, regret, and consequences that often hit harder than we ever expected.

In today's world, stuff like secret flings, casual hookups, and private messages are often brushed off as no big deal. "It's just fun." "Nobody's getting hurt." But reality tells a different story. People do get hurt. Trust gets broken. Families fall apart. And deep down, most of us know that.

Proverbs 5 isn't about being uptight or judgmental — it's about protecting what's actually worth protecting. It's about staying faithful, staying grounded, and staying on a path that brings peace, not wreckage.

And here's the good news: Even if you've messed up — whether it's a little or a lot — your story isn't over. Jesus doesn't just call us to do better — He offers *grace*, *healing*, and *a fresh start*. He doesn't show up with shame; He shows up with love, forgiveness, and a way forward.

So if you're feeling stuck, tempted, or like you've already blown it... you're not alone. And it's not too late. The road back might take some steps, but it's real. And it leads to life.

Day 6

Warning Against Adultery

1 My son, pay attention to my wisdom, turn your ear to my words of insight, 2 that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge. 3 For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; 4 but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. 6 She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know it.

7 Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say. 8 Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house, 9 lest you lose your honor to others and your dignity to one who is cruel, 10 lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich the house of another. 11 At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. 12 You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! 13 I would not obey my teachers or turn my ear to my instructors. 14 And I was soon in serious trouble in the assembly of God's people."

15 Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. 16 Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? 17 Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. 18 May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19 A loving doe, a graceful deer--may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love. 20 Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife? Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman?

21 For your ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all your paths. 22 The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast. 23 For lack of discipline they will die, led astray by their own great folly.

Day 6

Chapter 6

Imagine someone eagerly signing a contract without reading the fine print — only to find out later they’ve just agreed to pay someone else’s rent, water bill, and college tuition... for life. Or picture a guy who hits snooze one too many times, misses his job interview, forgets his laundry in the washer (again), and wonders why his life feels like it’s always stuck in neutral. He cries to others, “Why does life always give me the short end of the stick?”

Welcome to Proverbs 6 — where wisdom pulls no punches and doesn’t mind stepping on your toes if it’ll keep you from face-planting into disaster.

This chapter delivers a rapid-fire set of warnings: Don’t cosign debt recklessly. Don’t let laziness rob you blind. Don’t be the kind of person who’s always stirring up drama like it’s a competitive sport. And for the love of everything good and holy — don’t fall into the trap of seductive sin thinking you’ll be the one person who walks away unburned.

We’re still falling into the same old traps today — financial messes because we didn’t ask enough questions, wasted opportunities because the couch felt more inviting than our calling, and moral failures because we thought “just this once” wouldn’t matter. Proverbs 6 isn’t here to scold us — it’s here to wake us up. Sometimes with a slap. Sometimes with a smirk.

Proverbs says giving in to temptation is like holding fire to your chest and being shocked that you’re on fire. Shocker. It’s like breaking into a beehive with your bare hands and blaming the bees because you got stung. It’s foolish — not because temptation isn’t powerful, but because we act like we’re stronger than it.

The solution? Keep God in your sight, and you’ll keep wisdom in your sight. When you’re looking at Him, you’re far less likely to fall for smooth words, empty promises, or the idea that “this won’t cost me much.” Wisdom doesn’t just protect your wallet or your reputation — it guards your heart, your future, and your soul.

Day 6

Jesus invites us to walk in wisdom, not to spoil our fun, but to save our lives. And even when we've messed up — big or small — He doesn't leave us in our foolishness. He offers grace, course correction, and a better way forward. But Proverbs 6 is here to say: Let's avoid the fire if we can. Life's painful enough without adding more fuel to our own disaster.

So buckle up, pay attention, — because wisdom sometimes sounds like your friend who loves you enough to tell you the truth, even if it stings a little.

Warning Against Foolishness

1 My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, if you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, 2 you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth. 3 So do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands: Go—to the point of exhaustion-- and give your neighbor no rest! 4 Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. 5 Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler.

6 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! 7 It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, 8 yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

9 How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-- 11 and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.

12 A troublemaker and a villain, who goes about with a corrupt mouth, 13 who winks maliciously with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, 14 who plots evil with deceit in his heart--he always stirs up conflict. 15 Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.

16 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a

Day 6

heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

Warning Against Adultery

20 My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching. 21 Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. 22 When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. 23 For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life, 24 keeping you from your neighbor's wife, from the smooth talk of a wayward woman.

25 Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.

26 For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread, but another man's wife preys on your very life. 27 Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? 28 Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? 29 So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.

30 People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving. 31 Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. 32 But a man who commits adultery has no sense; whoever does so destroys himself. 33 Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away.

34 For jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge. 35 He will not accept any compensation; he will refuse a bribe, however great it is.

Day 7

Chapter 7

Think about those moments when you, or someone you may have known, ignored *every single* warning sign, like driving through a flooded road with giant barricades and flashing lights, because “it didn’t look that deep.” Or investing in a “guaranteed” get-rich-quick scheme that your grandma, your dog, and your bank account all told you was sketchy. Or entering a relationship that even strangers on the internet could see was a train wreck waiting to happen. The dangers were obvious, but somehow, desire or pride cranked the volume so high that wisdom got drowned out.

Proverbs 7 tells a vivid, and honestly, dramatic story of a young person walking straight into a trap. It’s not just a cautionary tale about physical temptation or one foolish night. It’s a parable about how **any** kind of temptation: lust, greed, compromise, pride, can hijack our judgment if we let it stroke our ego or play to our blind spots. I will admit, sadly, I have traveled this road in my life.

Yes, there’s a seductive woman in the story, and yes, she’s bold and persuasive. But let’s be honest, the real spotlight is on the **foolish young man** who walks into the situation like he’s strolling into a concert, unaware he’s the opening act for disaster. Many people read this and focus on “the woman,” but this is *not* a battle of the sexes. This is not “men vs. women.” This is **a warning for everyone** — male or female — because temptation is an equal-opportunity destroyer.

We live in a world that markets temptation like it’s on clearance: lust, greed, status, shortcuts, all wrapped in glitter and totally hiding the fine print. It’s not just that sin looks attractive; it looks exciting, fulfilling, even logical in the moment. That’s what makes it so dangerous. Proverbs 7 doesn’t just say, “Run away.” It says, “**Wake up before you walk in.**”

That’s why Solomon urges us to keep wisdom close — like, write-it-on-your-heart close. Not in a “maybe I’ll remember it later” kind of way, but in

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a “tattoo it on your soul” kind of way. When wisdom is *that* close, you’ll see through the smooth talk, the emotional bait, and the illusion of harmless fun.

Jesus offers more than just good advice. He gives the power to walk away, the clarity to see what’s really happening, and the grace to start again if we’ve already fallen for the trap. Staying close to Him is the surest way to avoid becoming another story that ends with, “...and then everything fell apart.”

So yes, Proverbs 7 is a warning. But it’s also a life-saving dose of reality, wrapped in storytelling that feels all too familiar. Listen, and learn, because if we’re honest, we’ve all played the fool at some point. I know I have. But wisdom is still calling... and she’s way better for your future than whatever’s waiting in the shadows.

Warning Against the Adulterous Woman

1 My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. 2 Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. 3 Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and to insight, "You are my relative." 5 They will keep you from the adulterous woman, from the wayward woman with her seductive words.

6 At the window of my house I looked down through the lattice. 7 I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who had no sense. 8 He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house 9 at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in.

10 Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. 11 (She is unruly and defiant, her feet never stay at home; 12 now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.) 13 She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said:

14 "Today I fulfilled my vows, and I have food from my fellowship offering at home. 15 So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have

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found you! 16 I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt. 17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. 18 Come, let's drink deeply of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love! 19 My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. 20 He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon."

21 With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. 22 All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose 23 till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life.

24 Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. 25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. 26 Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. 27 Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.

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Chapter 8

Picture this: You're walking down a busy street — earbuds in, coffee in hand, dodging someone on a scooter while glancing at your phone, trying not to trip over a dog. Meanwhile, a dozen voices are shouting at you: “Buy one, get one free!” “Vote for me!” “Subscribe to my channel!” “You’ll never believe what happened next...” It reminds me of going to the Farmers Market, or Canton First Monday, with my wife on the weekends!

It’s *loud*, it’s *chaotic*, and let’s be honest — it’s a lot. Now imagine one voice cutting through all of it, not flashy, not pushy, but clear. And instead of offering a discount, this voice offers you something completely different: **Actual, life-changing truth: if you’ll just stop long enough to listen.** That’s **Proverbs 8**.

In this chapter, **Wisdom is personified**. She’s not whispering in some distant cave or hiding behind a wall. She’s standing in public places, calling out to *everyone*. No exclusive club. No secret handshakes. Just straight-up wisdom for real life. If you’re willing to hear it.

She says what she offers is **better than silver or gold**, which might sound poetic until you realize she’s saying, “I’m more valuable than the thing you’re losing sleep trying to earn.”

And here’s the wild part: she’s not new on the scene. Proverbs 8 says Wisdom was there *before* the mountains, *before* the oceans. Basically, before Zillow prices got out of control! She was present at the beginning of creation, woven into how the world works. She is the voice, heart, and will of God.

The problem is, our world is full of noise, most of it’s trying to entertain, distract, or sell us something. So, it’s easy to miss the voice that matters most. Proverbs 8 is a wake-up call: **Wisdom is not hiding. She’s calling out.** The question is: Are we too distracted to hear her?

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Now, here's where it gets even deeper. When the New Testament talks about Jesus, it says He's the **Word** through whom all things were made (John 1:3). That means Jesus is the ultimate expression of **God's wisdom**, not just *talking* about life, but actually *offering* it. So if Wisdom in Proverbs 8 is the voice of God calling us to truth, then **Jesus is the living embodiment of that voice**, walking among us, full of grace and truth, still calling out today.

So next time you're scrolling through noise, standing in a crowd, or wondering what direction to take, remember: **Wisdom is still calling. And you don't need a subscription to listen. Inviting Jesus into your life is the first step on a path to wisdom.**

Wisdom's Call

1 Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? 2 At the highest point along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; 3 beside the gate leading into the city, at the entrance, she cries aloud: 4 "To you, O people, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind. 5 You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, set your hearts on it. 6 Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right. 7 My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness. 8 All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse. 9 To the discerning all of them are right; they are upright to those who have found knowledge. 10 Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, 11 for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

12 "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. 13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. 14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have insight, I have power. 15 By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just; 16 by me princes govern, and nobles—all who rule on earth. 17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. 18 With me are

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riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. 19 My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. 20 I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, 21 bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me and making their treasures full.

22 "The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; 23 I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. 24 When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water; 25 before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, 26 before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth. 27 I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, 28 when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, 29 when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. 30 Then I was constantly at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, 31 rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.

32 "Now then, my children, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. 33 Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it. 34 Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. 35 For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD. 36 But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death."

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Chapter 9

Every day, on the way to work, I, like most people, pass through intersection after intersection. Some are normal. Some are confusing. Some make you question your entire life's direction. And at each one, you've got choices: Left? Right? Straight ahead? Do I turn around and go back home because I forgot my coffee?

That's the picture Proverbs 9 gives us; not about traffic, but about life. This chapter sets up a dramatic scene: two houses, two hostesses, and two very different invitations.

On one side, you have Lady Wisdom. She's prepared a full banquet: meat, wine, a solid table. No gimmicks. She's calling out from the highest point in town, inviting anyone willing to grow, learn, and live.

On the other side, there's Lady Folly. She's loud, flashy, and full of empty promises. Her invitation sounds exciting, a little rebellious, maybe even fun, but the text doesn't sugarcoat the outcome: "Her guests are in the depths of the grave." (v.18)

So you've got two voices, two paths, one decision: Which way are you going to go? And right in the middle we get a reality check (verses 7–9).

It's as if the chapter pauses and says: "Before you pick your path, let's talk about how you respond when someone tries to help you choose wisely." Because here's the deal: A mocker hates correction. A wise person? They welcome it and they grow from it.

That's huge. It means your response to correction is like your spiritual GPS. It reveals which road you're already on. If every challenge or critique makes you defensive or angry... If you can't be taught or told anything... That's a flashing sign: *"Wrong way — turn back now!"*

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But if you're the kind of person who can receive correction, even if it stings a little, and actually grow from it, Proverbs says: *You're on the road to wisdom, and life.*

So Proverbs 9 isn't just about which path you choose; it's also about who you're becoming. Are you teachable or unteachable? Do you want wisdom, or just validation? Do you want to grow, or just be right?

Wisdom is calling out, not hiding, not playing hard to get. She's offering life, direction, and depth.

Folly is calling too, louder, flashier, but empty.

Every day, every choice, every conversation is an intersection. And verses 7–9 help us read the signs. So next time you find yourself at a crossroads, big or small, remember: There's always a right path and a wrong one. Wisdom is calling. And how you handle *correction* may tell you which path you're already on.

Jesus often talked about life with God like being invited to a big dinner party, not just a nice event, but a chance for real life, real joy, and real purpose. Saying “yes” to Him means choosing the table where you'll find peace, wisdom, and the kind of life that actually fills you up.

Invitations of Wisdom and Folly

1 Wisdom has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars. 2 She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. 3 She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city, 4 "Let all who are simple come to my house!" To those who have no sense she says, 5 "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. 6 Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight."

7 Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults; whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse. 8 Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the wise and they will love you. 9 Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.

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10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. 11 For through wisdom your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. 12 If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer.

13 Folly is an unruly woman; she is simple and knows nothing. 14 She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, 15 calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way, 16 "Let all who are simple come to my house!" To those who have no sense she says, 17 "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!" 18 But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead.

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Chapter 10

Think about how one small decision can change your entire day, like deciding to hit snooze one more time, and suddenly you're late, spilling your coffee, and brushing your teeth in the car. Or choosing to bite your tongue instead of firing off that “clever” comeback you'll regret by lunch.

Little choices add up fast. They build habits, shape character, and eventually tell the story of your life.

Proverbs 10 kicks off the Bible's ultimate checklist of everyday wisdom. It's rapid-fire truth: wise vs. foolish, righteous vs. wicked, helpful vs. harmful; like Twitter, but inspired by God and not full of internet drama.

This chapter (and the many that follow) reads kind of like **God's post-it notes for living well**. No fluff. No footnotes. Just **clear, bite-sized wisdom for real life**. I had a habit of actually reading these chapters daily and writing the one that spoke most to me that day on a post-it note and placing it on my computer as a reminder. (Then I ran out of room on my computer screen frame.)

The key idea? **Who you are tomorrow is shaped by the decisions you're making today** and what you say, how you act, and what you choose when no one's watching.

Jesus said that what's stored up in your heart will spill out of your mouth and show up in your actions. And He didn't mean that in a Hallmarky, feel-good way. He meant that the condition of your soul will eventually leak into your schedule, your texts, your relationships, and even your face.

So Proverbs 10 isn't just about “trying harder,” it's about living with wisdom that flows from a heart being changed by God. **It's practical, powerful, and way cheaper than therapy!**

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The Righteous Life Versus the Foolish Life

1 The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.

2 Ill-gotten treasures have no lasting value, but righteousness delivers from death.

3 The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

4 Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth.

5 He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

6 Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.

7 The name of the righteous is used in blessings, but the name of the wicked will rot.

8 The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

9 Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.

10 Whoever winks maliciously causes grief, and a chattering fool comes to ruin.

11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

12 Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.

13 Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of one who has no sense.

14 The wise store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin.

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15 The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor.

16 The wages of the righteous is life, but the earnings of the wicked are sin and death.

17 Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.

18 Whoever conceals hatred with lying lips and spreads slander is a fool.

19 Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.

20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value.

21 The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of sense.

22 The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, without painful toil for it.

23 A fool finds pleasure in wicked schemes, but a person of understanding delights in wisdom.

24 What the wicked dread will overtake them; what the righteous desire will be granted.

25 When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone, but the righteous stand firm forever.

26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so are sluggards to those who send them.

27 The fear of the LORD adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.

28 The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.

29 The way of the LORD is a refuge for the blameless, but it is the ruin of those who do evil.

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30 The righteous will never be uprooted, but the wicked will not remain in the land.

31 From the mouth of the righteous comes the fruit of wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be silenced.

32 The lips of the righteous know what finds favor, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.

Day 11

Chapter 11

We all admire people who are honest in business, loyal in friendships, and humble when they succeed, and let's be honest, we roll our eyes at people who lie, gossip, or treat life like one big bragging contest. Proverbs 11 helps us understand why: because what we do on the outside reveals what's going on inside. Character isn't just a good habit—it's a big deal to God.

This chapter lays it out clearly: honesty or dishonesty, generosity or selfishness, humility or pride. Pick your path, because they don't end in the same place. Proverbs doesn't beat around the bush. It basically says, "Live right or crash hard."

Take Proverbs 11:1 for example: "*The Lord detests dishonest scales.*" In today's terms, that's like saying God can't stand it when people rig the system, whether it's cheating customers or fudging the truth to make yourself look better. And let's be real, we've all "adjusted the scale" at some point. Maybe not in business, but maybe in relationships, arguments, or social media captions that were... let's say, *optimistically edited*.

But this isn't just about business ethics. This is about the weight of sin. We need to recognize our lives are out of balance from the start, and no amount of good behavior can even the scale. The world system tries all the time. But it often ends up trading one injustice for another. "They did this, so now we'll do that to balance it out." Round and round we go, still off-kilter, trading one bitterness for another.

Jesus does something better. He doesn't try to *rebalance* the scale. He *becomes* the weight that makes it right. He took all the sin, all the mess, and placed it on Himself. In return, He gave us His righteousness, His perfect record. Talk about a trade deal!

And now that the weight's been lifted, He says, "Go live right." Not by showing favoritism, not by cutting corners, and definitely not by trying to impress God with polished behavior. Just be real. Be honest. Be generous.

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Be humble. Remember the grace that was shown to you. Basically, live like someone who doesn't have to carry the weight anymore.

Because you don't. Jesus already did.

1 The LORD detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with him.

2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

4 Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

5 The righteousness of the blameless makes their paths straight, but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness.

6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires.

7 Hopes placed in mortals die with them; all the promise of their power comes to nothing.

8 The righteous person is rescued from trouble, and it falls on the wicked instead.

9 With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbors, but through knowledge the righteous escape.

10 When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices; when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.

11 Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.

12 Whoever derides their neighbor has no sense, but the one who has understanding holds their tongue.

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13 A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.

14 For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.

15 Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer, but whoever refuses to shake hands in pledge is safe.

16 A kindhearted woman gains honor, but ruthless men gain only wealth.

17 Those who are kind benefit themselves, but the cruel bring ruin on themselves.

18 A wicked person earns deceptive wages, but the one who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.

19 Truly the righteous attain life, but whoever pursues evil finds death.

20 The LORD detests those whose hearts are perverse, but he delights in those whose ways are blameless.

21 Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will go free.

22 Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

23 The desire of the righteous ends only in good, but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.

24 One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

25 A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

26 People curse the one who hoards grain, but they pray God's blessing on the one who is willing to sell.

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27 Whoever seeks good finds favor, but evil comes to one who searches for it.

28 Those who trust in their riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

29 Whoever brings ruin on their family will inherit only wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise.

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives.

31 If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner!

Day 12

Chapter 12

After my salvation experience, I started out very gung-ho for God. My heart felt free, my eyes were opened to all the darkness that had once ruled my life — and I wanted everyone to know. I told anyone who would listen... and even those who wouldn't.

One day, a dear friend pulled me aside and said, "Tim, you have a real fire in your heart for God. I can see you're on fire!"

I smiled, soaking in the compliment. Then he added, "You're like a flamethrower for God." Still smiling, I thought, *Wow, that sounds intense... but kind of awesome.*

Then he finished: "...but a flamethrower ignites and burns up everything around it. I think God would rather you be a laser beam." That's when the smile faded.

He went on, "Tim, your love for God is real, but in your passion, you're burning people with condemnation. You're blasting them with truth instead of letting God gently pierce their hearts like a laser; to convict them, not scorch them."

Ouch. That stung. But I got the message. And honestly, it changed me from that day on.

Ever had a friend tell you the truth you didn't want to hear? It stings. You might even want to argue, deny it, or ghost them for a week. But deep down, you know they're right and you're better for it.

That kind of honesty? It's rare. But it's also one of the greatest gifts someone can give you — truth that's loving, even when it's uncomfortable.

Proverbs 12 is full of this kind of wisdom. It talks about the value of speaking truth, working hard, loving correction (even if we'd rather get a compliment), and watching what comes out of our mouths. It's a chapter

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that says, “Look, if you want a life that lasts, learn to take truth seriously... even when it messes with your ego.”

The world today loves praise and avoids correction like it's a food allergy. We're quick to affirm, slow to challenge. But Proverbs reminds us: growth doesn't come from flattery. Growth comes from truth, discipline, and the humility to listen.

And no one did this better than Jesus. He spoke hard truths; not to shame people, but to heal them. He called out sin, not to condemn, but to set people free. His words were sometimes uncomfortable, but always aimed at life.

So the real question Proverbs 12 asks is: Do you want to feel good in the moment, or be wise for a lifetime?

1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.

2 Good people obtain favor from the LORD, but he condemns those who devise wicked schemes.

3 No one can be established through wickedness, but the righteous cannot be uprooted.

4 A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.

5 The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.

6 The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the speech of the upright rescues them.

7 The wicked are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous stands firm.

8 A person is praised according to their prudence, and one with a warped mind is despised.

Day 12

9 Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food.

10 The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.

11 Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies have no sense.

12 The wicked desire the stronghold of evildoers, but the root of the righteous endures.

13 Evildoers are trapped by their sinful talk, and so the innocent escape trouble.

14 From the fruit of their lips people are filled with good things, and the work of their hands brings them reward.

15 The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.

16 Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult.

17 An honest witness tells the truth, but a false witness tells lies.

18 The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

19 Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.

20 Deceit is in the hearts of those who plot evil, but those who promote peace have joy.

21 No harm overtakes the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble.

22 The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.

23 The prudent keep their knowledge to themselves, but a fool's heart blurts out folly.

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24 Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in forced labor.

25 Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.

26 The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

27 The lazy do not roast any game, but the diligent feed on the riches of the hunt.

28 In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.

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Chapter 13

Have you ever met someone who treats their paycheck like it's a game show prize? *"Spend it all now! Future me can deal with it later!"* Meanwhile, someone else is over there tracking expenses on a spreadsheet, meal-prepping like it's a religion, and already planning retirement at 27.

One ends up with peace and progress... the other ends up asking to borrow gas money... again.

I will be honest, I started out life as the first guy and lived with him way too long before this chapter finally took hold.

Proverbs 13 highlights the difference between the two: the one who thinks ahead, practices discipline, and listens to wise counsel; and the one who lives for the moment, ignores advice, and wonders why everything keeps falling apart.

This chapter hits on all kinds of everyday stuff: money, work ethic, parenting, friendships, and the power of your words. But the deeper message is this: your choices today shape your future. Wisdom adds up over time, and so does foolishness.

The world says, "Follow your feelings." Proverbs says, "Follow wisdom." Big difference.

Jesus echoed the same truth. He taught that a wise person builds their life on a solid foundation, not quick fixes, not shortcuts, and definitely not emotional impulse buys. When storms come (and they always do), it's the steady, faithful, intentional life that stands strong.

So Proverbs 13 isn't just a checklist of good advice. It's an invitation to live on purpose. To make daily decisions with tomorrow in mind. To build something, not just survive.

1 A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not respond to rebukes.

Day 13

2 From the fruit of their lips people enjoy good things, but the unfaithful have an appetite for violence.

3 Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.

4 A sluggard's appetite is never filled, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.

5 The righteous hate what is false, but the wicked make themselves a stench and bring shame on themselves.

6 Righteousness guards the person of integrity, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.

7 One person pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.

8 A person's riches may ransom their life, but the poor cannot respond to threatening rebukes.

9 The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.

10 Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

11 Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow.

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

13 Whoever scorns instruction will pay for it, but whoever respects a command is rewarded.

14 The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death.

Day 13

15 Good judgment wins favor, but the way of the unfaithful leads to their destruction.

16 All who are prudent act with knowledge, but fools expose their folly.

17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.

18 Whoever disregards discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.

19 A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but fools detest turning from evil.

20 Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.

21 Trouble pursues the sinner, but the righteous are rewarded with good things.

22 A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.

23 An unplowed field produces food for the poor, but injustice sweeps it away.

24 Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.

25 The righteous eat to their hearts' content, but the stomach of the wicked goes hungry.

Day 14

Chapter 14

Have you ever met someone who *looked* like they had it all figured out? The confident walk, the polished answers, maybe even a “Bible verse of the day” on their social media? But then you find out later their life was being held together with duct tape, drama, and denial? Yes, appearances can be deceiving.

Proverbs 14 opens with a gut-check in verse 12: *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death.”* That’s Bible-speak for, “You can be totally convinced you’re right and still be walking off a cliff.”

One of the main culprits? **Pride**. Pride builds this false wall of security. A kind of DIY fortress where we feel and think you are strong, independent, and untouchable. It whispers, “You’ve got this,” even when you don’t. It leads us to make bold claims, act like we’re in control, and boast about things we have no business bragging about, because deep down, we’re scared of not being in control at all.

Proverbs 14 digs into that. It contrasts the wise and the foolish, the diligent and the lazy, the truthful and the deceptive. It’s a warning against living for the moment, building on shaky ground, and trusting in ourselves instead of in God.

Our culture loves self-reliance: “Trust your gut,” “Do you,” “Fake it till you make it.” But Proverbs reminds us: *faking it* only works for so long. Eventually, storms come. The bill comes due. And when it does, pride collapses. But wisdom, God’s wisdom, builds a life that lasts.

Jesus said He is the narrow way that leads to life. Following Him isn’t about acting like you’ve got it all together. It’s about admitting you don’t, and trusting the One who does. His path may not be the most popular, but it’s the only one that leads to what actually matters: truth, peace, and eternity.

Day 14

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

2 Whoever fears the LORD walks uprightly, but those who despise him are devious in their ways.

3 A fool's mouth lashes out with pride, but the lips of the wise protect them.

4 Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox come abundant harvests.

5 An honest witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies.

6 The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none, but knowledge comes easily to the discerning.

7 Stay away from a fool, for you will not find knowledge on their lips.

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception.

9 Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.

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

11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish.

12 There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

13 Even in laughter the heart may ache, and rejoicing may end in grief.

14 The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways, and the good rewarded for theirs.

15 The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps.

Day 14

16 The wise fear the LORD and shun evil, but a fool is hotheaded and yet feels secure.

17 A quick-tempered person does foolish things, and the one who devises evil schemes is hated.

18 The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

19 Evildoers will bow down in the presence of the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

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

21 It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.

22 Do not those who plot evil go astray? But those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness.

23 All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

24 The wealth of the wise is their crown, but the folly of fools yields folly.

25 A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is deceitful.

26 Whoever fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge.

27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death.

28 A large population is a king's glory, but without subjects a prince is ruined.

29 Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.

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

Day 14

31 Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

32 When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous seek refuge in God.

33 Wisdom reposes in the heart of the discerning and even among fools she lets herself be known.

34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people.

35 A king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant arouses his fury.

Day 15

Chapter 15

Have you ever watched an argument deflate just because someone responded with a calm voice and a level head? It's like emotional judo. They don't fight harder; they just refuse to swing. On the flip side, one sarcastic comeback or raised eyebrow can throw gas on the fire and send Thanksgiving dinner into DEFCON 1.

The Lord is probably the only one who could count how many times my words have lit the fuse on a relational bomb, especially in my marriage. I may have meant well, but the wrong words at the wrong time have launched more unnecessary battles than I care to admit. Intent doesn't always matter when your tone comes in hot. Honestly, I find myself circling back to this chapter often. It is like spiritual carb-loading. This bread of truth - you can never eat too much of it.

Proverbs 15 opens with this gem: *"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."* It's not just about what you say — it's *how* you say it. Tone can either be a bridge or a bomb.

This chapter draws sharp contrasts: wisdom vs. foolishness, gentle words vs. cutting ones, the life of the righteous vs. the path of the wicked. But running through all of it is one simple truth: your words carry weight. They can build someone up or tear them down. They can bring calm or chaos. They can either reflect the wisdom of God — or the frustration of your ego.

And let's be honest, we live in a world where *harsh words are currency*. Whether it's social media rants, passive-aggressive emails, or group chat shade, people love the quick clapback. But Proverbs 15 shows us a better way, not weaker, not timid, but *wiser*. A way that doesn't just win the argument but *saves the relationship*.

Jesus modeled this perfectly. He spoke truth, but never used it as a weapon. He could shut down a Pharisee with a sentence, but He could also

Day 15

calm a storm with just a few words. He didn't shout people into the Kingdom. He invited them with grace and conviction.

Following Him means choosing our words carefully, not to impress, intimidate, or overpower, but to heal, encourage, and point others to truth. Because sometimes the most powerful thing you can say... is said gently.

1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

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

4 The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.

5 A fool spurns a parent's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.

6 The house of the righteous contains great treasure, but the income of the wicked brings ruin.

7 The lips of the wise spread knowledge, but the hearts of fools are not upright.

8 The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

9 The LORD detests the way of the wicked, but he loves those who pursue righteousness.

10 Stern discipline awaits anyone who leaves the path; the one who hates correction will die.

11 Death and Destruction lie open before the LORD--how much more do human hearts!

12 Mockers resent correction, so they avoid the wise.

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13 A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.

14 The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.

15 All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.

16 Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil.

17 Better a small serving of vegetables with love than a fattened calf with hatred.

18 A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.

19 The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.

20 A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.

21 Folly brings joy to one who has no sense, but whoever has understanding keeps a straight course.

22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

23 A person finds joy in giving an apt reply--and how good is a timely word!

24 The path of life leads upward for the prudent to keep them from going down to the realm of the dead.

25 The LORD tears down the house of the proud, but he sets the widow's boundary stones in place.

26 The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked, but gracious words are pure in his sight.

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27 The greedy bring ruin to their households, but the one who hates bribes will live.

28 The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.

29 The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

30 Light in a messenger's eyes brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.

31 Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise.

32 Those who disregard discipline despise themselves, but the one who heeds correction gains understanding.

33 Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor.

Day 16

Chapter 16

Ever made a “perfect” plan, only to watch it fall apart like a bad DIY project? Or maybe you thought things were headed for disaster... and somehow, they turned out better than you imagined. Life has a way of reminding us we’re not nearly as in control as we think.

Proverbs 16 is here to say: yep, that’s exactly how it works.

This chapter reminds us that we can plan, strategize, organize, and color-code our calendars all day long. But in the end, it's God who determines the outcome. Verse after verse paints a picture of how involved He really is — our words, our steps, our motives, even our promotions. None of it happens outside His hand.

And yet, most of us still live like we’re running the universe from our phones.

Planning isn’t the issue. It’s the pride that sneaks in with it. We start thinking, “I’ve got this,” until life throws a reality check our way — a flat tire, a lost job, or a child with an infected bug bite. Pride builds this illusion of control, but humility says, “God, I need You. Not just on Sundays, but in every spreadsheet, decision, and conversation.”

Proverbs 16 doesn’t say don’t make plans. It says make plans with open hands, surrendered to the One who sees the whole picture.

And that’s exactly how Jesus lived. He didn’t just include the Father in His plans — He aligned every step with the Father’s will. Even when that path led to the cross, He trusted that God’s plan was better. And because of His trust, we now have life.

So yes, make plans. Use wisdom. Think ahead. But hold those plans loosely. Because the goal isn’t just getting what we want, it’s learning to want what God wants, even if we can’t see the positive results or value right now.

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1 To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the proper answer of the tongue.

2 All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD.

3 Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.

4 The LORD works out everything to its proper end--even the wicked for a day of disaster.

5 The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

6 Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD evil is avoided.

7 When the LORD takes pleasure in anyone's way, he causes their enemies to make peace with them.

8 Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice.

9 In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.

10 The lips of a king speak as an oracle, and his mouth does not betray justice.

11 Honest scales and balances belong to the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making.

12 Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness.

13 Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value the one who speaks what is right.

14 A king's wrath is a messenger of death, but the wise will appease it.

Day 16

15 When a king's face brightens, it means life; his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.

16 How much better to get wisdom than gold, to get insight rather than silver!

17 The highway of the upright avoids evil; those who guard their ways preserve their lives.

18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. 19 Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.

20 Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD.

21 The wise in heart are called discerning, and gracious words promote instruction.

22 Prudence is a fountain of life to the prudent, but folly brings punishment to fools.

23 The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent, and their lips promote instruction.

24 Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

25 There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

26 The appetite of laborers works for them; their hunger drives them on.

27 A scoundrel plots evil, and on their lips it is like a scorching fire.

28 A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.

29 A violent person entices their neighbor and leads them down a path that is not good.

Day 16

30 Whoever winks with their eye is plotting perversity; whoever purses their lips is bent on evil.

31 Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained in the way of righteousness.

32 Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

Day 17

Chapter 17

I visited a good friend one day many years ago. He and his wife were best friends with my wife and me. We had planned to watch the Cowboy game after church. We always enjoyed going to their house. His wife was a stellar designer—their home looked like one of those model homes right out of a magazine.

But when we walked in that day, we could tell something was off. It was like a chill had settled into the air. Sitting in this “perfect” home, we could feel that all was not right in their world. The tension was thick and unmistakable. It became clear that our friends were in the middle of some kind of marital strife.

That moment has stayed with me — because it reminded me that peace isn’t found in appearances. A picture-perfect home doesn’t mean much if there’s no peace inside it.

Proverbs 17 starts with this: sometimes it’s better to have a dry crust of bread in peace than a feast in a house full of conflict. In other words, peace is greater than plenty.

This chapter zooms in on what really matters in life: peace, integrity, loyalty, and love. And it doesn’t just warn us about external issues like gossip, fighting, or injustice. It pushes us to check what’s happening *in our own hearts*, because a peaceful life starts with a peaceful posture. A wise response. A humble spirit. A heart that values the right things.

It’s easy to read Proverbs and think, “Oh yeah, *they* need to hear this.” But Proverbs 17 invites us to look inward and ask, “What’s the posture of *my* heart?” Am I stirring up conflict or working for peace? Am I holding grudges or extending grace? Am I loyal when it’s inconvenient, honest when it costs me, quiet when gossip tries to pull me in?

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Our culture chases comfort and wealth but often neglects peace and humility. We value the appearance of success, but Proverbs reminds us that real wealth is found in right relationships; and those start with a right heart.

Jesus modeled that perfectly. He didn't just teach peace, He *embodied* it. His heart was steady even when life around Him wasn't. He showed us how to forgive, how to love faithfully, and how to stay grounded in the Father's will even when others were picking fights or walking away.

So, as you read Proverbs 17, don't just look at what it says about the people around you. Let it speak to *you*. Let it challenge your heart posture. Because the real goal isn't just avoiding conflict — it's becoming the kind of person who carries peace wherever you go.

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

2 A prudent servant will rule over a disgraceful son and will share the inheritance as one of the family.

3 The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.

4 A wicked person listens to deceitful lips; a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.

5 Whoever mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.

6 Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.

7 Eloquent lips are unsuited to a godless fool--how much worse lying lips to a ruler!

8 A bribe is seen as a charm by the one who gives it; they think success will come at every turn.

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9 Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

10 A rebuke impresses a discerning person more than a hundred lashes a fool.

11 Evildoers foster rebellion against God; the messenger of death will be sent against them.

12 Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool bent on folly.

13 Evil will never leave the house of one who pays back evil for good.

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

15 Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent--the LORD detests them both.

16 Why should fools have money in hand to buy wisdom, when they are not able to understand it?

17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

18 One who has no sense shakes hands in pledge and puts up security for a neighbor.

19 Whoever loves a quarrel loves sin; whoever builds a high gate invites destruction.

20 One whose heart is corrupt does not prosper; one whose tongue is perverse falls into trouble.

21 To have a fool for a child brings grief; there is no joy for the parent of a godless fool.

22 A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

23 The wicked accept bribes in secret to pervert the course of justice.

Day 17

24 A discerning person keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth.

25 A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the mother who bore him.

26 If imposing a fine on the innocent is not good, surely to flog honest officials is not right.

27 The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.

28 Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.

Chapter 18

We've all seen how one careless comment can ruin a friendship and how the right words, spoken at just the right time, can bring healing. I'm sure you've had moments, like I have, where you saw the sting of pain in someone's eyes after you spoke too quickly and immediately regretted it. But the dart was thrown. The damage was done.

I'll admit, the deepest hurt I've ever felt was seeing my own words wound my wife, my best friend, my partner. I know she felt gut-punched by those thoughtlessly tossed words. And I felt it too; that sickening weight in my stomach and heart as I saw the damage unfold. In that moment, I wanted to crawl under a rock and just ask the Heavenly Father to stomp on it.

Words carry weight, more than we often realize.

Proverbs 18 zeroes in on this truth. It highlights the power of our words, the need for humility, and the value of wise counsel. One moment it's warning us about how foolishness leads to quarrels, and the next it's reminding us that "the tongue has the power of life and death." That's not just poetry, that's reality!

Whether it's face-to-face, in a text, or blasted out online, our words have consequences. Proverbs 18 urges us to slow down, listen more, and speak with intention. Because it's easy to sound wise when we're quiet... and just as easy to sound foolish when we're not.

This chapter also reminds us that a prideful heart isolates: "an unfriendly person pursues selfish ends" while humility draws us toward others and opens us up to godly wisdom. Wise people don't act like they have it all figured out. On the contrary, they ask for input. They value perspective. They know when to speak up and when to shut up.

All of that points us back to Jesus. His words were never careless. They brought life, healing, and truth. Whether He was comforting the broken, confronting hypocrisy, or calming a storm with just a phrase, His words

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always matched the heart of God. And as His followers, we're called to speak the same way. It may not be perfectly, but it can be purposefully.

So before you post, text, respond, or vent... pause. Ask yourself: "Are these words building up or tearing down? Are they helpful, or just loud?" Because at the end of the day, the goal isn't just to say something smart to promote yourself; it's to speak in a way that reflects the heart of Jesus.

1 An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels.

2 Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.

3 When wickedness comes, so does contempt, and with shame comes reproach.

4 The words of the mouth are deep waters, but the fountain of wisdom is a rushing stream.

5 It is not good to be partial to the wicked and so deprive the innocent of justice.

6 The lips of fools bring them strife, and their mouths invite a beating.

7 The mouths of fools are their undoing, and their lips are a snare to their very lives.

8 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts.

9 One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.

10 The name of the LORD is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

11 The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it a wall too high to scale.

Day 19

12 Before a downfall the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.

13 To answer before listening--that is folly and shame.

14 The human spirit can endure in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?

15 The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out.

16 A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great.

17 In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines.

18 Casting the lot settles disputes and keeps strong opponents apart.

19 A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city; disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.

20 From the fruit of their mouth a person's stomach is filled; with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied.

21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.

23 The poor plead for mercy, but the rich answer harshly.

24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Day 19

Chapter 19

I have another reflected question: Have you ever watched someone make one bad decision... and then double down with an even worse one? It's like ignoring the GPS because you *obviously* know better (we've talked about that already). And then, even after you realize you've messed up, you figure it's still a good idea to turn right *again*... even though the directions are basically yelling at you to turn left. Next thing you know, the sun is going down, the GPS is so mad she stops talking to you, and you're officially, hopelessly lost. Yup — I've had a few moments like that over the years.

Proverbs 19 feels like a guidebook for *not* being that person. It gently — and sometimes not-so-gently — calls us to slow down, wise up, and stop sprinting into walls.

This chapter is packed with wisdom, warnings, and a few reality checks. It talks about what happens when we rush ahead without thinking, when we ignore advice, or when we let our temper drive the bus. Spoiler alert: *it usually crashes*. Proverbs 19 asks us to look at our motives: Are we chasing wealth or character? Listening to wise voices or just doing our own thing? Are we reacting out of pride or walking with humility?

And then there's discipline. Nobody loves it. (If you do, maybe get that checked out.) But this chapter reminds us that discipline is *part* of wisdom — and ignoring it is like ignoring the warning light on your dashboard and hoping the low oil level, or low tire pressure just “fixes itself”.

Personally, I've had more moments than I'd like to admit where I didn't want wisdom — I just wanted a shortcut. I wanted quick results, not godly character. And, shocker, that didn't work out so great. Proverbs 19 reminds us that wisdom doesn't always *feel* urgent, but it always leads somewhere better.

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And like the chapters before, it speaks to the heart. It presses us to ask: Am I actually listening? Am I living like I trust God? Or am I just winging it and hoping He blesses the mess later?

Because here's the thing: when we reject wisdom, we're not just ignoring good advice — we're ignoring the One who created us, and the Author of that good advice. But when we lean into His correction, even when it stings, we find ourselves walking in step with the heart of God.

That's exactly how Jesus lived. He didn't chase status, comfort, or control. He didn't react in pride or panic. He listened, He trusted, and He obeyed — even when it led to the cross. His life was full of humility and wisdom. And because of that, we now have life, too.

So if Proverbs 19 could talk, it might say something like: “Don't be the guy who ignores the manual, crashes the car, and then blames the GPS.” Slow down. Listen. Choose wisdom over impulse. And don't just ask, “What should I do?” — ask, “Who am I becoming?”

1 Better the poor whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse.

2 Desire without knowledge is not good--how much more will hasty feet miss the way!

3 A person's own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the LORD.

4 Wealth attracts many friends, but even the closest friend of the poor person deserts them.

5 A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will not go free.

6 Many curry favor with a ruler, and everyone is the friend of one who gives gifts.

Day 19

7 The poor are shunned by all their relatives--how much more do their friends avoid them! Though the poor pursue them with pleading, they are nowhere to be found.

8 The one who gets wisdom loves life; the one who cherishes understanding will soon prosper.

9 A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will perish.

10 It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury--how much worse for a slave to rule over princes!

11 A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

12 A king's rage is like the roar of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass.

13 A foolish child is a father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like the constant dripping of a leaky roof.

14 Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

15 Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless go hungry.

16 Whoever keeps commandments keeps their life, but whoever shows contempt for their ways will die.

17 Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.

18 Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death.

19 A hot-tempered person must pay the penalty; rescue them, and you will have to do it again.

Day 19

20 Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.

21 Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

22 What a person desires is unfailing love; better to be poor than a liar.

23 The fear of the LORD leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble.

24 A sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth!

25 Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn prudence; rebuke the discerning, and they will gain knowledge.

26 Whoever robs their father and drives out their mother is a child who brings shame and disgrace.

27 Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.

28 A corrupt witness mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked gulps down evil.

29 Penalties are prepared for mockers, and beatings for the backs of fools.

Day 20

Chapter 20

We all know *that* person — the one who talks a big game, makes promises they can't keep, and always has a "great idea" they never follow through on. You smile, nod, and silently think, *Yeah, sure you will*. I have known some. Some were friends, some were employers. But then there's the other kind of person — the quiet, dependable type. They don't say much, but when they do? You listen. And when they say they'll do something, you don't doubt that it will be done. That's the kind of character Proverbs 20 is pointing us toward.

This chapter is a call to live with integrity — not just in public, but in private. It highlights the danger of empty words, quick decisions, and reckless behavior. And it reminds us that while people might only see the outside, God weighs the heart.

Character isn't built in a day. It's revealed over time — in what we say, how we act, and whether or not we follow through. Proverbs 20 isn't about perfection; it's about consistency. Are we living in a way that builds trust? Or are we slowly eroding it with shortcuts, half-truths, or selfish choices?

Let's be honest, keeping our word can be hard. Especially when the excitement fades and the follow-through gets inconvenient. Ear tickling has become a popular trend. Have you ever promised, "I will pray for you" and then just.... well... didn't? But wisdom doesn't chase quick wins or flashy moments. It's slow, steady, and solid. Like that friend who helps you move even when it's 104 degrees out and you *only* offered pizza as payment.

This chapter also reminds us not to live reactively — jumping to conclusions, seeking revenge, or trying to control outcomes. It points us to patience, restraint, and discernment. Why? Because God sees more than we do. He's not just looking at results — He's always looking at the heart behind them.

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And in all of this, Jesus is our model. He didn't make shallow promises. He didn't overpromise and underdeliver. He made bold declarations — about life, truth, peace, and salvation — and then backed up every single one with action. Even when it cost Him everything. He didn't just talk about love — He proved it.

So, if Proverbs 20 could talk to us over coffee, it might say: “Don't just talk a good game. Live the good game. Be the kind of person others can trust — because you trust the One who sees and knows it all.”

1 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

2 A king's wrath strikes terror like the roar of a lion; those who anger him forfeit their lives.

3 It is to one's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.

4 Sluggards do not plow in season; so at harvest time they look but find nothing.

5 The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.

6 Many claim to have unfailing love, but a faithful person who can find?

7 The righteous lead blameless lives; blessed are their children after them.

8 When a king sits on his throne to judge, he winnows out all evil with his eyes.

9 Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"?

10 Differing weights and differing measures--the LORD detests them both.

11 Even small children are known by their actions, so is their conduct really pure and upright?

Day 20

12 Ears that hear and eyes that see--the LORD has made them both.

13 Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare.

14 "It's no good, it's no good!" says the buyer--then goes off and boasts about the purchase.

15 Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel.

16 Take the garment of one who puts up security for a stranger; hold it in pledge if it is done for an outsider.

17 Food gained by fraud tastes sweet, but one ends up with a mouth full of gravel.

18 Plans are established by seeking advice; so if you wage war, obtain guidance.

19 A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much.

20 If someone curses their father or mother, their lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.

21 An inheritance claimed too soon will not be blessed at the end.

22 Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will avenge you.

23 The LORD detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please him.

24 A person's steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand their own way?

25 It is a trap to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider one's vows.

26 A wise king winnows out the wicked; he drives the threshing wheel over them.

Day 20

27 The human spirit is the lamp of the LORD that sheds light on one's inmost being.

28 Love and faithfulness keep a king safe; through love his throne is made secure.

29 The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old.

30 Blows and wounds scrub away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being.

Day 21

Chapter 21

I had a young boss many years ago who was clearly on a mission. He was talented, smart — and very aware of it. There was no one he wouldn't step on to climb the ladder of success. Everyone around him could see he was chasing something hard — platform, power, attention — but it was all smoke and mirrors. I watched him wear himself out trying to make a name for himself, and all I could think was, *“Wow, that looks exhausting.”*

Proverbs 21 shines a light on that kind of self-ambition — the kind that's driven more by ego than wisdom. It's the hustle that's more about *being seen* than *being right with God*. This chapter cuts through the noise and reminds us: **God isn't impressed by our performance — He cares about our posture.**

And let's be honest — we've all done it. We've all had those moments when we wanted to look better, sound wiser, or appear more important than we actually are. We wanted the credit. We wanted the win. But Proverbs 21 is like a holy gut-check: **You might be fooling people, but you're not fooling God.**

Verse after verse reminds us that God sees the **motives**, not just the moves. We can do the “right” things for the wrong reasons — and still miss the point entirely. And when self-ambition drives the train, it usually runs off the rails... dragging relationships, peace, and perspective down with it.

It also warns us about what happens when pride goes unchecked. Self-ambition often walks hand-in-hand with arrogance — and Proverbs 21 doesn't mince words about where that path leads. Spoiler: it's not somewhere you want to go.

Jesus, of course, lived the complete opposite way. He had every right to seek status, attention, and recognition — He *was* God in the flesh, after all — and yet He constantly chose the low road. He didn't promote Himself.

Day 21

He emptied Himself. No self-promotion, no manipulation. Just faithfulness, humility, and a heart fully aligned with the Father.

So Proverbs 21 challenges us: Are we chasing what *looks* good, or are we living in a way that *pleases* God? Are we building our brand, or building His kingdom? Are we seeking to impress... or seeking to obey?

At the end of the day, self-ambition may get you attention — but it won't get you the kind of peace, purpose, and joy that come from a heart aligned with God.

1 In the LORD's hand the king's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him.

2 A person may think their own ways are right, but the LORD weighs the heart.

3 To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart--the unplowed field of the wicked--produce sin.

5 The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.

6 A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.

7 The violence of the wicked will drag them away, for they refuse to do what is right.

8 The way of the guilty is devious, but the conduct of the innocent is upright.

9 Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

10 The wicked crave evil; their neighbors get no mercy from them.

Day 21

11 When a mocker is punished, the simple gain wisdom; by paying attention to the wise they get knowledge.

12 The Righteous One takes note of the house of the wicked and brings the wicked to ruin.

13 Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered.

14 A gift given in secret soothes anger, and a bribe concealed in the cloak pacifies great wrath.

15 When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.

16 Whoever strays from the path of prudence comes to rest in the company of the dead.

17 Whoever loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and olive oil will never be rich.

18 The wicked become a ransom for the righteous, and the unfaithful for the upright.

19 Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife.

20 The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down.

21 Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor.

22 One who is wise can go up against the city of the mighty and pull down the stronghold in which they trust.

23 Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.

24 The proud and arrogant person--"Mocker" is his name--behaves with insolent fury.

Day 21

25 The craving of a sluggard will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work.

26 All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing.

27 The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable--how much more so when brought with evil intent!

28 A false witness will perish, but a careful listener will testify successfully.

29 The wicked put up a bold front, but the upright give thought to their ways.

30 There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD.

31 The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD.

Day 22

Chapter 22

Some people inherit wealth; others inherit a good name. One can disappear overnight — the other lasts a lifetime.

Proverbs 22 reminds us that **character matters more than cash**. A good reputation, humility, and the fear of the Lord are worth more than all the riches in the world. This chapter doesn't just aim high spiritually — it gets practical too. How to raise kids. How to treat others. How to avoid traps that money and pride often bring.

In a world that's obsessed with fame and fortune, Proverbs 22 brings us back to something simpler — and stronger: live in a way that earns trust, honors God, and invests in what truly lasts.

Jesus is the perfect example. His name is honored above every other — not because of earthly power or wealth, but because of **His perfect character and sacrificial love**. He didn't build a brand; He gave His life. And because of that, His name carries the weight of eternity.

And here's where Proverbs takes a turn.

Starting in verse 17, the tone shifts. Up until now, the sayings have mostly stood on their own — short, punchy lines of wisdom. But here, we're introduced to something new: **“thirty sayings of the wise.”** It's a more structured section, almost like a curated collection of greatest hits — practical, time-tested insights for living wisely in everyday life. Think of it as wisdom with a little extra commentary and depth.

1 A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

2 Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.

3 The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.

Day 22

4 Humility is the fear of the LORD; its wages are riches and honor and life.

5 In the paths of the wicked are snares and pitfalls, but those who would preserve their life stay far from them.

6 Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

7 The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender.

8 Whoever sows injustice reaps calamity, and the rod they wield in fury will be broken.

9 The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.

10 Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.

11 One who loves a pure heart and who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend.

12 The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he frustrates the words of the unfaithful.

13 The sluggard says, "There's a lion outside! I'll be killed in the public square!"

14 The mouth of an adulterous woman is a deep pit; a man who is under the LORD's wrath falls into it.

15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away.

16 One who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and one who gives gifts to the rich--both come to poverty.

Thirty Sayings of the Wise

Saying 1

Day 22

17 Pay attention and turn your ear to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach, 18 for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips. 19 So that your trust may be in the LORD, I teach you today, even you. 20 Have I not written thirty sayings for you, sayings of counsel and knowledge, 21 teaching you to be honest and to speak the truth, so that you bring back truthful reports to those you serve?

Saying 2

22 Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, 23 for the LORD will take up their case and will exact life for life.

Saying 3

24 Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, 25 or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared.

Saying 4

26 Do not be one who shakes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; 27 if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you.

Saying 5

28 Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your ancestors.

Saying 6

29 Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank.

Day 23

Chapter 23

We've all been tempted to overindulge — like me and Mexican food: if you put it before me, I struggle to stop eating it. It's crazy! Whether it's food, drink, scrolling, or spending. It starts small: *just one more bite... one more click... one more purchase*. Next thing you know, you're full, broke, and wondering what just happened. The regret usually shows up right after the second slice of pie (or sometimes the third plate of tacos) or when the credit card bill hits.

Proverbs 23 is like a wise friend pulling us aside and saying, “Hey — just because the world keeps offering more doesn't mean you should keep taking it.” This chapter warns us against excess, envy, and the empty chase of temporary pleasures. The world says, “If it feels good, do it.” God says, “If it leads to peace, pursue it.”

The world is loud. It promises quick highs and instant gratification — eat this, buy that, drink more, live large, treat yourself. But the fine print? It rarely satisfies. Proverbs 23 pulls back the curtain and reminds us: **not everything that glitters is gold — and not everything that's pleasurable is profitable.**

Overindulgence leaves us craving more but enjoying less. Jesus, on the other hand, offers something radically different: *real fulfillment*. He doesn't hand us empty pleasure; He gives us eternal purpose. He calls Himself the **bread of life** and **living water** — meaning, when we come to Him, we're not just temporarily full... we're truly satisfied.

So, the question this chapter presses on us is simple but powerful: *Do I want what the world offers — or what Jesus offers?* One fades fast. The other lasts forever.

Day 23

Saying 7

1 When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you, 2 and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony. 3 Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive.

Saying 8

4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness. 5 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.

Saying 9

6 Do not eat the food of a begrudging host, do not crave his delicacies; 7 for he is the kind of person who is always thinking about the cost. "Eat and drink," he says to you, but his heart is not with you. 8 You will vomit up the little you have eaten and will have wasted your compliments.

Saying 10

9 Do not speak to fools, for they will scorn your prudent words.

Saying 11

10 Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless, 11 for their Defender is strong; he will take up their case against you.

Saying 12

12 Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.

Saying 13

13 Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. 14 Punish them with the rod and save them from death.

Day 23

Saying 14

15 My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad indeed; 16 my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.

Saying 15

17 Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD. 18 There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.

Saying 16

19 Listen, my son, and be wise, and set your heart on the right path: 20 Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, 21 for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

Saying 17

22 Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. 23 Buy the truth and do not sell it--wisdom, instruction and insight as well. 24 The father of a righteous child has great joy; a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in him. 25 May your father and mother rejoice; may she who gave you birth be joyful!

Saying 18

26 My son, give me your heart and let your eyes delight in my ways, 27 for an adulterous woman is a deep pit, and a wayward wife is a narrow well. 28 Like a bandit she lies in wait and multiplies the unfaithful among men.

Saying 19

29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? 30 Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. 31 Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! 32 In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. 33 Your

Day 23

eyes will see strange sights, and your mind will imagine confusing things. 34
You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. 35
"They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel
it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?"

Day 24

Chapter 24

Have you ever felt like quitting halfway through something — a project, a job, a tough conversation — only to find out that *pushing through* was the very thing that made it worth it? Maybe it was a workout that nearly broke you, a home repair you regretted starting (which would certainly include any kind of plumbing repair in your house), or just a season of life that felt like it would never end. Quitting felt easier, but perseverance turned out to be the key.

Proverbs 24 is a call to stay the course. It reminds us that wise preparation matters, that quitting too soon can cost us more than finishing would have, and that we shouldn't waste our energy envying those who seem to get ahead by cutting corners. (I have done both speaking of plumbing repairs, and shortcuts really don't pay off in the end!)

The truth is, **growth doesn't happen on the mountaintop — it happens in the valley and while striving to climb up the side.** It happens in the struggle. In the days we show up even when we don't feel like it. Proverbs 24 doesn't pretend life is easy — it just tells us it's worth enduring when we walk in wisdom.

This chapter also reminds us not to compare our path to the path of the wicked. They might look like they're winning — success, status, comfort — but Proverbs pulls back the curtain: that road doesn't end well. **Better to build slowly and solidly than sprint down a road that collapses beneath you.**

And again, Jesus is our perfect example. **He didn't quit when it got hard.** He endured rejection, betrayal, and the agony of the cross — *“for the joy set before Him.”* He knew the goal wasn't comfort — it was eternal life. For Him. For us. And because He didn't give up, *we have the strength to keep going, too!*

Day 24

Saying 20

1 Do not envy the wicked, do not desire their company; 2 for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble.

Saying 21

3 By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; 4 through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.

Saying 22

5 The wise prevail through great power, and those who have knowledge muster their strength. 6 Surely you need guidance to wage war, and victory is won through many advisers.

Saying 23

7 Wisdom is too high for fools; in the assembly at the gate they must not open their mouths.

Saying 24

8 Whoever plots evil will be known as a schemer. 9 The schemes of folly are sin, and people detest a mocker.

Saying 25

10 If you falter in a time of trouble, how small is your strength! 11 Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. 12 If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?

Saying 26

13 Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. 14 Know also that wisdom is like honey for you: If you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.

Day 24

Saying 27

15 Do not lurk like a thief near the house of the righteous, do not plunder their dwelling place; 16 for though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes.

Saying 28

17 Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice, 18 or the LORD will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from them.

Saying 29

19 Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked, 20 for the evildoer has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.

Saying 30

21 Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with rebellious officials, 22 for those two will send sudden destruction on them, and who knows what calamities they can bring?

Further Sayings of the Wise

23 These also are sayings of the wise: To show partiality in judging is not good:

24 Whoever says to the guilty, "You are innocent," will be cursed by peoples and denounced by nations. 25 But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come on them.

26 An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.

27 Put your outdoor work in order and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.

Day 24

28 Do not testify against your neighbor without cause--would you use your lips to mislead? 29 Do not say, "I'll do to them as they have done to me; I'll pay them back for what they did."

30 I went past the field of a sluggard, past the vineyard of someone who has no sense; 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 thief and scarcity like an armed man.

Day 25

Chapter 25

I hope I am not alone in this next question. Somehow, I think I won't be: Have you ever sent a text and immediately wished you could unsend it? Maybe it was a passive-aggressive jab you meant to soften, or a joke that landed more like a grenade. Or maybe you jumped into a conversation too soon and made things worse instead of better. We've all been there. Turns out, knowing *what* to say matters — but *when* and *how* you say it might matter even more.

Proverbs 25 is basically a masterclass in knowing when to speak up, when to stay quiet, and how to handle yourself with a little patience and humility. It's packed with wisdom about how we deal with people — especially in tricky or tense moments.

In a world where everything is fast: fast replies, fast opinions, fast judgment, Proverbs 25 slows us down. It reminds us that a well-timed word can be pure gold, but a rushed response can make a mess out of something that didn't need to be one.

This chapter also hits on how we carry ourselves — especially around authority or in conflict. Don't push your way to the front. Don't insert yourself into drama. Don't overstay your welcome (seriously, verse 17 literally says don't be at your neighbor's house too much or they'll hate you — the Bible is brutally honest sometimes).

At the heart of it all is wisdom, not just in what we say, but in how we show up. Are we humble? Patient? Willing to let God lead the timing instead of rushing to control everything ourselves?

And of course, the one who modeled this perfectly is Jesus. He never forced His way into influence. He didn't speak just to fill the silence. Every word had weight, and He knew exactly when to speak truth and when to stay silent. He wasn't in a hurry — He moved at the pace of love, with wisdom guiding every step.

Day 25

The same Spirit that filled Jesus is in us, too. So next time you're itching to fire off that reply or prove your point, take a breath. Ask God for wisdom. Let your words — or even your silence — be shaped by something deeper than just your emotions in the moment.

More Proverbs of Solomon

1 These are more proverbs of Solomon, compiled by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah:

2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings. 3 As the heavens are high and the earth is deep, so the hearts of kings are unsearchable.

4 Remove the dross from the silver, and a silversmith can produce a vessel; 5 remove wicked officials from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness.

6 Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among his great men; 7 it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here," than for him to humiliate you before his nobles.

What you have seen with your eyes 8 do not bring hastily to court, for what will you do in the end if your neighbor puts you to shame?

9 If you take your neighbor to court, do not betray another's confidence, 10 or the one who hears it may shame you and the charge against you will stand.

11 Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a ruling rightly given. 12 Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is the rebuke of a wise judge to a listening ear.

13 Like a snow-cooled drink at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to the one who sends him; he refreshes the spirit of his master. 14 Like clouds and wind without rain is one who boasts of gifts never given.

Day 25

15 Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.

16 If you find honey, eat just enough--too much of it, and you will vomit. 17 Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house--too much of you, and they will hate you.

18 Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is one who gives false testimony against a neighbor. 19 Like a broken tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in a time of trouble. 20 Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on a wound, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. 22 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

23 Like a north wind that brings unexpected rain is a sly tongue--which provokes a horrified look. 24 Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

25 Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land. 26 Like a muddied spring or a polluted well are the righteous who give way to the wicked.

27 It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to search out matters that are too deep. 28 Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.

Day 26

Chapter 26

We all know *that* person. The one who never takes responsibility, blames everyone else when things go sideways, and somehow manages to trip over the *exact* same mistake... again. And again. And again.

And let's be real — when we read Proverbs 26, it's way too easy to start mentally assigning verses to people we know. "Oh, that's totally Steve." "Verse 12? That's *so* my sister-in-law." But here's the thing: these verses weren't written so we could become spiritual critics. They're a mirror — not a magnifying glass. Proverbs, including this chapter, are most powerful when we stop looking around and start looking within.

Proverbs 26 puts the spotlight on foolishness — not the harmless kind, but the kind that keeps people stuck. It talks about laziness, dishonesty, pride, and repeating the same choices that lead to destruction. It even drops a pretty intense visual: a fool returning to their folly is like a dog going back to its vomit. Gross? Definitely. Accurate? Also yes.

But the point isn't to go on a fool hunt — it's to ask, "Where am I doing this?" Where am I repeating what I know doesn't work? Where am I deflecting blame or ignoring wisdom?

This chapter gets real personal, real fast — if we're willing to let it.

The good news? Wisdom is always calling. Change is always possible. But it starts with humility — being willing to admit where we've been foolish, and inviting God to help us break the cycle.

And that's exactly where Jesus steps in. He doesn't shame us into change — He sets us free with truth. Over and over, we see Him offer grace to people stuck in destructive patterns — not just to comfort them, but to call them into something better. And because of Him, we don't have to stay stuck.

Day 26

So read Proverbs 26 with a mirror, not a telescope. If something stings, let it. That's where growth starts.

Set 1

1 Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, honor is not fitting for a fool.

2 Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.

3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the backs of fools!

4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.

6 Sending a message by the hands of a fool is like cutting off one's feet or drinking poison.

7 Like the useless legs of one who is lame is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

8 Like tying a stone in a sling is the giving of honor to a fool.

9 Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

10 Like an archer who wounds at random is one who hires a fool or any passer-by.

11 As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly.

12 Do you see a person wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for them.

Set 2

13 A sluggard says, "There's a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!"

Day 26

14 As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed.

15 A sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.

16 A sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven people who answer discreetly.

Set 3

17 Like one who grabs a stray dog by the ears is someone who rushes into a quarrel not their own.

Set 4

18 Like a maniac shooting flaming arrows of death 19 is one who deceives their neighbor and says, "I was only joking!"

Set 5

20 Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.

21 As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife.

22 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts.

Set 6

23 Like a coating of silver dross on earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart.

24 Enemies disguise themselves with their lips, but in their hearts they harbor deceit.

25 Though their speech is charming, do not believe them, for seven abominations fill their hearts.

26 Their malice may be concealed by deception, but their wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.

Day 26

27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them.

28 A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Day 27

Chapter 27

There's a reason why car insurance is so expensive until you hit 25. It's not just some arbitrary age — it's backed by history and hard statistics. The highest unnatural death rates happen between ages 15 and 24. The second highest is between 25 and 44. Yet, if you're like most people (myself included back then), you probably thought you were made of rubber — like nothing bad could touch you. We all assumed “tomorrow” would always come.

But the truth is, God doesn't promise any of us a tomorrow. Life has a way of surprising us — sometimes in ways we never expect.

Proverbs 27 jumps right into this reality. It warns against bragging about tomorrow — about all the things we're sure we'll do “someday.” It calls us to humility and readiness, reminding us to focus on what needs to be done *today* instead of putting life on hold.

And it's not just about plans. This chapter also highlights the value of faithful friendship — the kind of friendship that doesn't just stroke your ego but tells you the truth, even when it stings. Proverbs 27 says wounds from a friend can be trusted. That's not always easy to hear, but it's necessary for growth.

Jesus taught us to pray for our daily bread and trust God with tomorrow. He showed us how to live with faithfulness in the present, not worrying about the future but fully embracing the work and relationships right in front of us.

So if you're the one who keeps putting off your relationship with Jesus, if you feel that tug from God right now, don't wait. Stop procrastinating. Don't be the sluggard we read about so often. Anytime your heart pulls you toward God — that is God telling you to step up *now*. Remember, He sees tomorrow — you don't.

1 Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.

Day 27

2 Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth; an outsider, and not your own lips.

3 Stone is heavy and sand a burden, but a fool's provocation is heavier than both.

4 Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?

5 Better is open rebuke than hidden love.

6 Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

7 One who is full loathes honey from the comb, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.

8 Like a bird that flees its nest is anyone who flees from home.

9 Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.

10 Do not forsake your friend or a friend of your family, and do not go to your relative's house when disaster strikes you--better a neighbor nearby than a relative far away.

11 Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart; then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt.

12 The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.

13 Take the garment of one who puts up security for a stranger; hold it in pledge if it is done for an outsider.

14 If anyone loudly blesses their neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.

15 A quarrelsome wife is like the dripping of a leaky roof in a rainstorm; 16 restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.

17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Day 27

18 The one who guards a fig tree will eat its fruit, and whoever protects their master will be honored.

19 As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart. 20 Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are human eyes.

21 The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but people are tested by their praise.

22 Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding them like grain with a pestle, you will not remove their folly from them.

23 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 your family and to nourish your female servants.

Day 28

Chapter 28

Ever tried to sleep with a guilty conscience? Your mind hits replay on everything you wish you could undo. Guilt doesn't sit quietly — it wears you down, steals your peace, and keeps you running even when no one's chasing you.

That's exactly where Proverbs 28 starts: *“The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.”* Guilt brings fear. Integrity brings confidence.

This chapter contrasts the cost of shortcuts and hidden sin with the peace that comes from honesty. It reminds us that living right might be harder in the moment — but it's worth it. There's no substitute for peace of mind.

But here's the catch: this isn't just a chapter to use as ammo against other people's bad behavior. Like all the Proverbs, it's most powerful when we turn the spotlight inward. Where have I taken the easy road? Where have I covered something instead of confessing it? Where do I need to trade guilt for integrity? Where have I taken a shortcut with honesty in order to get personal gain?

And here's where Jesus steps in — not just to point out the truth, but to set us free with it. He doesn't just forgive us for the places we've fallen short — He gives us the courage to start walking in the light. To stop running. To stop hiding. To live boldly and honestly, because we're not carrying shame anymore.

So if guilt has been weighing you down, Proverbs 28 is a lifeline. Integrity isn't about perfection — it's about walking in the open, with Jesus beside you. That's where freedom lives. Remember that guilt and condemnation come from the enemy — conviction and repentance come from God. One brings misery and torment, the other restoration and hope.

Day 28

1 The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. 2 When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a ruler with discernment and knowledge maintains order.

3 A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops.

4 Those who forsake instruction praise the wicked, but those who heed it resist them.

5 Evildoers do not understand what is right, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.

6 Better the poor whose walk is blameless than the rich whose ways are perverse.

7 A discerning son heeds instruction, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.

8 Whoever increases wealth by taking interest or profit from the poor amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.

9 If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable.

10 Whoever leads the upright along an evil path will fall into their own trap, but the blameless will receive a good inheritance.

11 The rich are wise in their own eyes; one who is poor and discerning sees how deluded they are.

12 When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding.

13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

14 Blessed is the one who always trembles before God, but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble.

Day 28

15 Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a helpless people.

16 A tyrannical ruler practices extortion, but one who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long reign.

17 Anyone tormented by the guilt of murder will seek refuge in the grave; let no one hold them back.

18 The one whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but the one whose ways are perverse will fall into the pit.

19 Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies will have their fill of poverty.

20 A faithful person will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.

21 To show partiality is not good--yet a person will do wrong for a piece of bread.

22 The stingy are eager to get rich and are unaware that poverty awaits them.

23 Whoever rebukes a person will in the end gain favor rather than one who has a flattering tongue.

24 Whoever robs their father or mother and says, "It's not wrong," is partner to one who destroys.

25 The greedy stir up conflict, but those who trust in the LORD will prosper.

26 Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.

27 Those who give to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses.

Day 28

28 When the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding; but when the wicked perish, the righteous thrive.

Chapter 29

You’ve probably seen what happens when someone in charge refuses to listen—whether it’s a boss, a parent, a politician, or even... you. When leaders ignore correction, the damage ripples out. Everyone around them feels it.

Proverbs 29 is a sharp reminder: leadership without humility leads to injustice, fear, and disorder. But when leaders welcome wisdom — when they listen, learn, and serve — everyone under them is blessed. Whether you’re leading a business, a family, a ministry, or just making daily decisions, your posture toward truth will shape the people around you.

And if you’re a follower of Jesus — *you* are in a leadership role. Every believer is called to lead by example, no matter the title (or lack of one). Because leadership isn’t a title to be gained — it’s a position that’s recognized. Titles are cheap. They won’t feed you or keep you warm at night. But *influence*? That’s real. That’s what lasts. From the “lowest” position to the “highest” office, influence is always within reach. How we use that influence reveals the kind of leader we really are.

Jesus showed us what true leadership looks like. He didn’t demand loyalty — He earned it through love. He led with truth, but never without grace. He challenged power without abusing it. He listened to the broken, elevated the humble, and laid down His life for those who didn’t even understand what He was doing for them. He didn’t come to be served — He came to serve.

So as you read Proverbs 29, don’t just think about politicians or CEOs. Ask yourself: *How am I using my influence? Do I lead with humility? Do I welcome correction, or resist it? Am I leading like Jesus — or just holding a position?*

Because in the kingdom of God, leadership isn’t about power — it’s about love, responsibility, and the courage to listen.

Day 29

1 Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.

2 When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.

3 A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.

4 By justice a king gives a country stability, but those who are greedy for bribes tear it down.

5 Those who flatter their neighbors are spreading nets for their feet.

6 Evildoers are snared by their own sin, but the righteous shout for joy and are glad.

7 The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

8 Mockers stir up a city, but the wise turn away anger.

9 If a wise person goes to court with a fool, the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace.

10 The bloodthirsty hate a person of integrity and seek to kill the upright.

11 Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end.

12 If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked.

13 The poor and the oppressor have this in common: The LORD gives sight to the eyes of both.

14 If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will be established forever.

15 A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom, but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother.

Day 29

16 When the wicked thrive, so does sin, but the righteous will see their downfall.

17 Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire.

18 Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction.

19 Servants cannot be corrected by mere words; though they understand, they will not respond.

20 Do you see someone who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for them.

21 A servant pampered from youth will turn out to be insolent.

22 An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.

23 Pride brings a person low, but the lowly in spirit gain honor.

24 The accomplices of thieves are their own enemies; they are put under oath and dare not testify.

25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

26 Many seek an audience with a ruler, but it is from the LORD that one gets justice.

27 The righteous detest the dishonest; the wicked detest the upright.

Day 30

Chapter 30

Proverbs 30 kicks off with Agur basically saying, *“Yeah, I don’t know much. Actually, I’m kind of clueless.”* Now, that’s not what you expect when someone’s dropping wisdom, right? Especially today, when everyone online sounds like they’re giving a PhD lecture on everything from politics to pineapple toppings on pizza. But here’s the thing: sometimes the smartest move is admitting you don’t have all the answers. Agur is basically the ancient version of, *“I have no idea what I’m doing, but I’m learning.”*

As you read through the chapter, you get this vibe that Agur is that quiet observer in the coffee shop, watching ants hustle and thinking, *“You know, those little guys have it figured out.”* He points out all these weird things about life and nature—stuff like ants storing food without a manager telling them what to do. Meanwhile, we humans are busy stressing over tweets and trying to predict the stock market.

Agur doesn’t just throw out wisdom like confetti; he’s reflecting on life, admitting life’s mysteries, and warning us not to get too full of ourselves. Because honestly, who hasn’t acted like a know-it-all at some point, only to realize later they were way off? This chapter is like a humble reminder that being arrogant is exhausting—and usually wrong.

He also talks about contentment, which, let’s be real, sounds like an ancient mic drop. He says, *“Give me neither poverty nor riches,”* because too much of either leads to trouble. In a world obsessed with “more, more, more,” this is a breath of fresh air. Imagine praying for “just enough” and actually meaning it. That’s the kind of peace Agur points us toward.

And then there’s Jesus—the ultimate example of this humble wisdom. He knew everything but never acted like a know-it-all. Instead, He served, listened, and depended completely on the Father. So if Jesus can walk around humble and still be the smartest person in the room, maybe we can chill out on pretending we have all the answers, too.

Day 30

Proverbs 30 invites us to stop pretending, start listening, and trust the One who really does have it all figured out—even when we don't.

Sayings of Agur

1 The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh--an inspired utterance.

This man's utterance to Ithiel: "I am weary, God, but I can prevail. 2 Surely I am only a brute, not a man; I do not have human understanding. 3 I have not learned wisdom, nor have I attained to the knowledge of the Holy One. 4 Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Whose hands have gathered up the wind? Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is the name of his son? Surely you know!

5 "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. 6 Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

7 "Two things I ask of you, LORD; do not refuse me before I die: 8 Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. 9 Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

10 "Do not slander a servant to their master, or they will curse you, and you will pay for it.

11 "There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers; 12 those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth; 13 those whose eyes are ever so haughty, whose glances are so disdainful; 14 those whose teeth are swords and whose jaws are set with knives to devour the poor from the earth and the needy from among mankind.

Day 30

15 "The leech has two daughters. 'Give! Give!' they cry.

"There are three things that are never satisfied, four that never say, 'Enough!': 16 the grave, the barren womb, land, which is never satisfied with water, and fire, which never says, 'Enough!'

17 "The eye that mocks a father, that scorns an aged mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.

18 "There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand: 19 the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a young woman.

20 "This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.'

21 "Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot bear up: 22 a servant who becomes king, a godless fool who gets plenty to eat, 23 a contemptible woman who gets married, and a servant who displaces her mistress.

24 "Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise: 25 Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer; 26 hyraxes are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags; 27 locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks; 28 a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings' palaces.

29 "There are three things that are stately in their stride, four that move with stately bearing: 30 a lion, mighty among beasts, who retreats before nothing; 31 a strutting rooster, a he-goat, and a king secure against revolt.

32 "If you play the fool and exalt yourself, or if you plan evil, clap your hand over your mouth! 33 For as churning cream produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife."

Day 31

Chapter 31

We all know someone whose quiet strength sticks with you long after they're gone. Proverbs 31 is like a wise mom's advice about a woman who's impressive—not because of fancy clothes or titles, but because she owns *all* of herself. She's a caregiver and a businesswoman, juggling both without guilt or apology.

What's amazing is that God chose to highlight a woman's worth in a culture that didn't value women much at all. That's a powerful reminder not to box people into society's limited roles—everyone has immense value in God's eyes.

Today, women are often told they have to pick one of the two: career success or home life. But this woman shows us the opposite: she embraces every talent God gave her—from running a household to making business deals—and she does it all with wisdom and grace.

Though focused on a woman, this chapter speaks to all of us. It calls us to live fully in every gift God's given, without ranking some as better than others. Whether you lead a team, mentor a friend, or care for your family, every role matters.

Jesus honored women who served faithfully and loved sacrificially, showing that true greatness is about embracing who God made us to be. So Proverbs 31 isn't just an old poem about a “perfect woman”—it's a call for all of us to use our gifts fully and joyfully.

If she had a modern job title, it'd be “Chief Everything Officer”—because juggling all those roles, with a smile (even when the Wi-Fi goes out), is nothing short of heroic.

Day 31

The Sayings of King Lemuel

1 The sayings of King Lemuel--an inspired utterance his mother taught him.

2 Listen, my son! Listen, son of my womb! Listen, my son, the answer to my prayers! 3 Do not spend your strength on women, your vigor on those who ruin kings.

4 It is not for kings, Lemuel--it is not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer, 5 lest they drink and forget what has been decreed, and deprive all the oppressed of their rights. 6 Let beer be for those who are perishing, wine for those who are in anguish! 7 Let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.

8 Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. 9 Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character

10 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

11 Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

12 She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

13 She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.

14 She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.

15 She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.

16 She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

17 She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.

18 She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.

19 In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.

20 She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

22 She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.

23 Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.

24 She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.

25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

27 She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

28 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:

29 "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."

30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

31 Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.