

SIMPLE STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES

PROVERBS

LEADER'S STUDY GUIDE



Proverbs 18:4

*“The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters,
and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.”*

Dr. Stanford E. Murrell

Dedication

Proverbs 16:31

*“The hoary head is a crown of glory,
if it be found in the way of righteousness.”*

This study of Proverbs is dedicated to the grateful memory of my father, Stanford William Murrell, who loved this book of wisdom. My father instilled in me an early respect for the *Scriptures* and a deep and abiding love for Jesus Christ. For that, I am eternally grateful.

A Brief Biography of Solomon

Extracted in Part from

Smith's Bible Dictionary

Early Life and Ascension to the Throne

Solomon was the child of David's old age, the last born of all his sons.

- *1 Chronicles 3:5 And these were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, four, of Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel:*

Because of his heart's desire to cease from being a violent and bloody "man of war" David decided to give to the new-born infant the name of Solomon (Shelomoth, the peaceful one). Nathan, with a marked reference to the meaning of the king's own name (David, the darling, the beloved one), calls the infant Jedidiah (Jedid'yah), that is, "the darling of the Lord".

- *2 Samuel 12:24 And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him. 25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.*

Solomon was placed under the care of Nathan from his earliest infancy. At first, there was no distinct movement to make Solomon the political heir to the throne. Absalom was still the king's favorite son. Absalom was looked on by the people as the destined successor. 2 Samuel 14:13; 15:1-6.

- David loved his son in exile. *2 Samuel 13:37 But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day.*
- David mourned his son in death. *2 Samuel 18:33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*
- Many people were ready to crown Absalom the king. *2 Samuel 15:1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. 2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. 3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. 4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! 5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. 6 And on this manner*

did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

The death of Absalom when Solomon was about ten years old left the heirship to the throne vacant. David pledged his word in secret to Bath-sheba that he, and no other, should be the heir. She was compelled to remind him of this promise.

- *1 Kings 1:13 Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? Why then doth Adonijah reign?*

The words which were spoken somewhat later express, doubtless, the purpose which guided him throughout.

- *1 Chronicles 28:9 And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.*
- *1 Chronicles 28:20 And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.*

David was determined that the life of Solomon should not be as his own had been, one of hardships and wars, dark crimes and passionate repentance, but, from first to last, be pure, blameless, peaceful, fulfilling the ideal of glory and of righteousness after which he himself had vainly striven. The glorious visions of Psalms 72:1 may be looked on as the prophetic expansion of these hopes of his old age. *A Psalm for Solomon. Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.*

So far, all was well. Apparently David's influence over his Solomon's character was one exclusively for good. Bath-sheba too would have a positive influence upon Solomon's character and his understanding of a godly woman as per the words of Proverbs 31:1. *The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.*

Under these influences the boy grew up. At the age of ten or eleven he must have passed through the revolt of Absalom, and shared his father's exile.

- *2 Samuel 15:16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house.*

Solomon would be taught all that priests or Levites or prophets had to teach. When David was old and feeble, Adonijah, Solomon's older brother attempted to gain possession of the throne; but he was defeated, and Solomon went down to Gihon and was proclaimed and anointed king. A few months more and Solomon found himself, by his father's death, the sole occupant of the throne. The position to which he succeeded was unique. Never before, and never after,

did the kingdom of Israel take its place among the great monarchies of the East. Large treasures, accumulated through many years, were at his disposal.

Personal Appearance

Of Solomon's personal appearance we have no direct description, as we have of the earlier kings. There are, however, materials for filling up the gap. Whatever higher mystic meaning may be latent in Psalms 45, or the Song of Songs, we are all but compelled to think of them as having had at least a historical starting-point. They tell of one who was, in the eyes of the men of his own time, "*fairer than the children of men*," the face "*bright, and ruddy*" as his father's, Song of Solomon 5:10; 1 Samuel 17:42, bushy locks, dark as the raven's wing, yet not without a golden glow, the eyes soft as "*the eyes of cloves*," the "*countenance as Lebanon excellent as the cedars*," "*the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely*." Song of Solomon 5:9-16.

Add to this all gifts of a noble, far-reaching intellect large and ready sympathies, a playful and genial humor, the lips "*full of grace*," and the soul "*anointed*" as "*with the oil of gladness*," Psalms 45:1, and we may form some notion of what the king was like in that dawn of his golden prime.

Reign

All the data for a continuous history that we have of Solomon's reign are —

- The duration of the reign, forty years, BC 1015-975. 1 Kings 11:4
- The commencement of the temple in the fourth, its completion in the eleventh, year of his reign. 1 Kings 6:1, 37, 38
- The commencement of his own palace in the seventh, its completion in the twentieth, year. 1 Kings 7:1; 2 Chronicles 8:1
- The conquest of Hamath-zobah, and the consequent foundation of cities in the region of north Palestine after the twentieth year. 2 Chronicles 8:1-6.

Foreign Policy

Egypt

The first act of the foreign policy of the new reign must have been to most Israelites a very startling one. He made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, by marrying his daughter 1 Kings 3:1. The immediate results were probably favorable enough. The new queen brought with her as a dowry the frontier city of Gezer. But the ultimate issue of alliance showed that it was hollow and impolitic.

Tyre

The alliance with the Phoenician king rested on a somewhat different footing. It had been a part of David's policy from the beginning of his reign. Hiram had been "ever a lover of David." As soon as he heard of Solomon's accession he sent ambassadors to salute him. A correspondence passed between the two kings, which ended in a treaty of commerce. The opening of Joppa as a port created a new coasting-trade, and the materials from Tyre were conveyed to that city on floats, and thence to Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 2:16. In return for these exports, the Phoenicians were only too glad to receive the corn and oil of Solomon's territory. The results of the alliance did not end here. Now, for the first time in the history of the Jews, they entered on a career as a commercial people.

The foregoing were the two most important to Babylon alliances. The absence of any reference to Babylon and Assyria, and the fact that the Euphrates was recognized as the boundary of Solomon's kingdom, 2 Chronicles 9:26, suggests the inference that the Mesopotamian monarchies were at this time comparatively feeble. Other neighboring nations were content to pay annual tribute in the form of gifts. 2 Chronicles 9:28. The survey of the influence exercised by Solomon on surrounding nations would be incomplete if we were to pass over that which was more directly personal the fame of his glory and his wisdom. Wherever the ships of Tarshish went, they carried with them the report, losing nothing in its passage, of what their crews had seen and heard. The journey of the queen of Sheba, though from its circumstances the most conspicuous, did not stand alone.

Internal History

The first prominent scene in Solomon's reign is one which presents his character in its noblest aspect. God in a vision having offered him the choice of good things he would have, he chose wisdom in preference to riches or honor or long life. The wisdom asked for was given in large measure, and took a varied range. The wide world of nature, animate and inanimate, the lives and characters of men, lay before him, and he took cognizance of all but the highest wisdom was that wanted for the highest work, for governing and guiding, and the historian hastens to give an illustration of it. The pattern-instance is, in all its circumstances, thoroughly Oriental. 1 Kings 3:16-28.

In reference to the king's finances, the first impression of the facts given us is that of abounding plenty. Large quantities of the precious metals were imported from Ophir and Tarshish. 1 Kings 9:28. All the kings and princes of the subject provinces paid tribute in the form of gifts, in money and in kind, "at a fixed rate year by year." 1 Kings 10:25. Monopolies of trade contributed to the king's treasury. 1 Kings 10:28, 29. The total amount thus brought into the treasury in gold, exclusive of all payments in kind, amounted to 666 talents. 1 Kings 10:14.

It was hardly possible, however, that any financial system could bear the strain of the king's passion for magnificence. The cost of the temple was, it is true, provided for by David's savings and the offerings of the people; but even while that was building, yet more when it was finished one structure followed on another with ruinous rapidity. All the equipment of his court, the "apparel" of his servants was on the same scale. A body-guard attended him, "threescore valiant men," tallest and handsomest of the sons of Israel. Forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen made up the measure of his magnificence. 1 Kings 4:26. As the treasury became empty, taxes multiplied and monopolies became more irksome. A description of the temple erected by Solomon is given elsewhere. After seven years and the work was completed and the day came to which all Israelites looked back as the culminating glory of their nation.

We cannot ignore the fact that even now there were some darker shades in the picture. He reduced the "strangers" in the land, the remnant of the Canaanite races, to the state of helots, and made their life "bitter with all hard bondage." One hundred and fifty-three thousand, with wives and children in proportion, were torn from their homes and sent off to the quarries and the forests of Lebanon.

- *1 Kings 5:15 And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;*
- *2 Chronicles 2:17 And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred. 18 And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a work.*

Tragically, the king soon fell from the loftiest height of his religious life to the lowest depth. Before long the priests and prophets had to grieve over rival temples to Molech, Chemosh, Ashtaroth and forms of ritual not idolatrous only, but cruel, dark, impure. This evil came as the penalty of another.

- *1 Kings 11:1 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; 2 Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it*

came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

Solomon gave himself to "strange women." He found himself involved in a fascination which led to the worship of strange gods. Something there was perhaps in his very "largeness of heart," so far in advance of the traditional knowledge of his age, rising to higher and wider thoughts of God, which predisposed him to it. In recognizing what was true in other forms of faith, he might lose his horror at what was false. With this there may have mingled political motives. He may have hoped, by a policy of toleration, to conciliate neighboring princes, to attract larger traffic. But probably also there was another influence less commonly taken into account. The widespread belief of the East in the magic arts of Solomon is not, it is believed, without its foundation of truth. Disasters followed before long as the natural consequence of what was politically a blunder as well as religiously a sin.

His Literary Works

Little remains out of the songs, proverbs, treatises, of which the historian speaks. *1 Kings 4:32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. 33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.*

Excerpts only are given from the three thousand proverbs. Of the thousand and five songs we know absolutely nothing. His books represent the three stages of his life. The Song of Songs brings before us the brightness of his -youth. Then comes in the book of Proverbs, the stage of practical, prudential thought. The poet has become the philosopher, the mystic has passed into the moralist; but the man passed through both stages without being permanently the better for either. They were to him but phases of his life which he had known and exhausted (Ecclesiastes 1; 2).

PROVERBS

Human Author: Solomon
Divine Author: God the Holy Spirit
Date: c. 1000 BC
Theme: The Value of Wisdom
General Statistics: 31 chapters, 915 verses
Number of Proverbs: c. 900

PROVERBS 1

Introduction to the Proverbs Ecclesiastes 12:8 - 14

“Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. 9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. 10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. 11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. 12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. 13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

Not wanting others to experience the vanities of life that he endured Solomon set forth these Proverbs.

**Division One
The Purpose of Proverbs
1:1-1:7**

1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;

1:1 Solomon spoke 3000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32).

2 To know wisdom [skillfulness] and instruction [discipline]; to perceive [make clear] the words of understanding [intelligence];

1:2 to know wisdom. There are two ways to know wisdom. One is experientially whereby a person treads the thorny path of life and discovers the bitterness of departing from God. But there is another way to learn wisdom and that is by accepting the Word of God as divine revelation and living by it thereby avoiding the perils and pitfalls of sin. Psalms 17:4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. Those who act in accordance with the book of Proverbs shall be able to say at the end of life, “[I have] behaved myself wisely, in a perfect way.”

3 To receive the instruction of wisdom [understanding through bereavement], justice [right behavior], and judgment [decisions], and equity [principles of moral integrity];

4 To give subtilty [understanding of craftiness] to the simple, to the young man knowledge [information of a sound nature] and discretion [thoughtfulness].

Ten Marks of a Well-rounded Personality

- Skillful, able to use knowledge in a correct manner
- Disciplined
- Discerning
- Teachable
- Righteous in conduct
- Able to judge between two things that differ
- Moral integrity
- Wise
- Knowledgeable
- Thoughtful

5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

1:5 increase learning. 2 Timothy 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

1:6 dark sayings. The most obscure texts become understandable when the Holy Spirit illuminates the mind.

“Open my eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready my God, Thy will to see,
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!"

Clara H. Scott, 1895

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

1:7 fear of the Lord. To fear the Lord is to understand with awe His righteousness, majesty and power.

1:7 despise wisdom.

Five Despisers of Wisdom

- Cain Genesis 4:6-8
- Hophni and Phinehas 1 Samuel 2:12
- Nabal 1 Samuel 25:25
- Rehoboam 1 Kings 12:12
- The Athenians Acts 17:18, 32

1:7. but fools. Science speaks of exact knowledge. There is never any conflict between Scripture and true science for all knowledge comes from God. What is in conflict is when the wild guesses of philosophers, evolutionists and biologists dismiss God from His creation. That is foolishness of the highest order.

**Division Two
Proverbs for Young People
1:8-9:18**

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

Five who Received Instruction

- The Rechabites Jeremiah 35:18,19
- Samuel 1 Samuel 1:28
- Jesus Christ Luke 2:51
- Paul Acts 9; 26: 19
- Timothy 2 Timothy 1:5

Under the Law and under grace children are to obey their parents for to do so reflects a willingness to obey God.

Law. *Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*

Grace. *Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

9 For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

1: 9 an ornament. To listen to one's father and to respect one's mother are the ornaments of grace upon the character of a child of God. When parental authority is cast aside disrespect to God is sure to follow and when brought into the church it manifests itself in apostasy. 2 *Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholly, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

10 My son, if sinners entice [appeal to] thee, consent thou not.

1:10 consent not. Redemption brings personal responsibility for holiness. While sanctification is a work of sovereign grace in the heart (Heb. 13:12) the individual is not exempt from a measure of self sanctification. *1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*

Five who Would not Consent to Evil

• Joseph	Genesis 39:9-10
• An unknown prophet	1 Kings 13:8-9
• Jehoshaphat	1 Kings 22:49
• Joash	2 Chronicles 24:2
• Jesus	Hebrews 4:14-16

11 If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood [i.e. to maim or murder], let us lurk privily for the innocent [unsuspecting] 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 precious substance [wealth], we shall fill our houses with spoil [valuables]:

14 Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:

15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

1:15 walk not. The only way to be safe in life is not to walk in the path of sin. Foolishly do some young people think they can expose themselves to evil and not be caught up in it. Some believe they can change the bad behavior of their friends. The testimony of time is that evil will overcome good.

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Alexander Pope

16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

18 And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily [secretly] for their own lives.

1:17-18. the net. In the day of moral and spiritual breakdown only self can be blamed for the Word of God has cast a light on the way warning against the treachery of the evil which men do. Nevertheless, like a bird that ignores a net in plain sight so is many a person who ignores the light of God's Word.

19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

1:10-19 my son. Young people are warned in two areas. In Proverbs 1: 10-12 Evil companionships are forbidden and in Proverbs 1:13-19 covetousness, which is idolatry, is shown to produce tragedy. Though sinners may entice or appeal to the natural lust patterns of the heart the divine counsel is still, “*Come out from among them, and be ye separate*” (2 Corinthians 6:17).

1:19 greedy of gain. What are you willing to do for \$10,000,000? Two-thirds of Americans polled would agree to at least one, some to several of the following:

- would abandon their entire family (25%)
- would abandon their church (25%)
- would become prostitutes for a week or more (23%)
- would give up their American citizenship (16%)
- would leave their spouses (16%)
- would withhold testimony and let a murderer go free (10%)
- would kill a stranger (7%)
- would put their children up for adoption (3%)

(James Patterson and Peter Kim, *The Day America Told the Truth*)

20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth [raises] her voice in the streets:

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse [streets], in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

1:20-23 wisdom crieth. Wisdom is personified in the Proverbs as one seeking to turn the steps of individuals from folly and ignorance. Wisdom is not ashamed to cry out in public places to arrest the attention of those who pass by. In the places of trade, at the gates of justice, wherever there is a crowd, wisdom will plead her cause. More often than not she is met with indifference while some are openly scornful.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought [nothing] all my counsel, and would none [did not want] of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish [pain and sorrow] cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

32 For the turning [refusal to listen] away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

1:24-33 I will not answer. When wisdom is rejected there are dire natural consequences which include the following.

- Fear
- Sudden destruction
- Distress
- Anguish
- Unanswered prayer
- No knowledge of what to do
- Lack of help from God
- A just reward

In like manner when the gospel is rejected then, *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Galatians 6:7-8)*. Those who say, “No” to God will discover the time will come when He will say, “No” to them in their hour of need. Therefore, *“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:15, 17)*.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 1

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 1

1. In what two ways can a person gain knowledge and wisdom?

Answer

There are two ways to know wisdom. One is experiential whereby a person treads the thorny path of life and discovers the bitterness of departing from God. But there is another way to learn wisdom and that is by accepting the Word of God as divine revelation and living by it.

2. What are ten characteristics of a well rounded personality?

Answer.

- Skillful, able to use knowledge in a correct manner
- Disciplined
- Discerning
- Teachable
- Righteous in conduct
- Able to judge between two things that differ
- Moral integrity
- Wise
- Knowledgeable
- Thoughtful

3. Who is responsible for a person's holiness of life?

Answer.

While sanctification is a work of sovereign grace in the heart (Heb. 13:12) the individual is not exempt from a measure of self sanctification. 1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

4. What twin sins are young people warned about in Proverbs 1:10-12 and in Proverbs 1:13-19?

Answer.

In Proverbs 1: 10-12 evil companionships are forbidden and in Proverbs 1:13-19 covetousness,

5. Of what is wisdom not ashamed to do?

Answer.

Wisdom is not ashamed to cry out in public places to arrest the attention of those who pass by.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Have you found the appeals of sin persuasive in your own experience in life? Give an example of the logic of evil.
2. Besides experience and revelation are there any other methods of receiving knowledge?
3. In the work of sanctification is the Christian to be active or passive?
4. Do you believe there is a Natural Law that guides the conduct of all people everywhere? Defend your position with at least three arguments.
5. Do you know of individuals who scorn wisdom? Give at least one example.

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 1: 5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 1: 10-14.

Seven Recruiting Techniques of Sin

1. There is a general appeal, “Come with us.”
2. There is a bold invitation to violence. “Let us lay wait for blood.”
3. There is a sense of ease. “Let us lurk privately for the innocent [unsuspecting] without cause.”
4. There is a sense of empowerment, with life and death at stake. “Let us swallow them up alive as the grave.”
5. There will be monetary reward. “We shall find all precious substance.”
6. There is an invested self interest. “We shall fill our houses with spoil.”
7. There is strength in unity. “Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse.”

Proverbs 1:19. greedy of gain.

Doctrine of Covetousness

1. Covetousness is an inordinate longing to possess what others own. The Scriptures forbid the coveting of certain items.
 - ❖ A neighbor's house
 - ❖ Another man's wife
 - ❖ Another person's servants
 - ❖ Another person's possessions
 - *Exodus 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*
 - *Deuteronomy 5:21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.*
2. Covetousness breeds great sins.
 - Covetousness caused the children of Israel to take by force what did not belong to them. *Micah 2:2 And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.*
 - Covetousness led Eve to plunge herself into everlasting shame when she desired the forbidden fruit. *Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*
 - Covetousness led Lot into an environment for moral failure by setting himself up in the place of temptation. *Genesis 13:10-13 10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.13 But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.*
 - Because of covetousness Laban determined to give Rebecca to be the wife of Isaac. *Genesis 24:29-30 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. 30 And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. Etc.*

- Because of covetousness Laban determined to deceive Jacob into serving him for seven years for Rachel *Genesis 29:15-30 And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?* Etc.
- Not wanting to pay Jacob a just wage Laban deceived Jacob in his earnings due to a covetous heart. *Genesis 31:7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.*
- Years later and still covetous Laban tried to defraud Jacob of his flocks and herds. *Genesis 30:35-43 And he removed that day the he goats that were rings raked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons.* etc.
- Despite having been the victim of a covetous heart Jacob was not innocent of the same transgression. .
 - Jacob defrauded Esau of the family blessing. *Genesis 27:6 –29 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, etc.*
 - Coveting the birthright of Esau Jacob slyly negotiated for it. *Genesis 25:31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.*
- Coveting money more than righteousness Balaam sold his prophetic office. *2 Peter 2:15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;* cf. *Numbers 22.*
- The personal sin of covetousness can have a direct influence on the welfare of others. When Achan hid forbidden treasure in his tent he brought military defeat to the nation of Israel. *Joshua 7:20-21 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: 21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.*
- The sons of Eli coveted the best portion of the animal sacrifices designed to be offered to the Lord and took the flesh of the sacrifice. *1 Samuel 2:13-17 And the priests' custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh hook of three teeth in his hand; 14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh hook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. 15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. 16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him,*

Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. 17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

- With a lust for money the sons of Samuel accepted bribes. *1 Samuel 8:3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.*
- Enjoying military success and wanting to keep the spoils of war Saul sinned against the Lord in sparing a national enemy in the person of Agag. *1 Samuel 15:8-9 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.*
- Coveting the wife of Uriah the Hittite, David took Bath-sheba for himself. *2 Samuel 11:2-5 And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. 3 And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? 4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. 5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.*
- Ahab, king of Israel, coveted the vineyard of Naboth to the point that his death was order to acquire the desired property. *1 Kings 21:2-3 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. 3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. Cf. 21:4-16*
- Gehazi, the servant of Elisha coveted the gifts that the prophet of God refused. In a desperate attempt to have something that was not his Gehazi thought he found a way to take costly garments from Naaman. *2 Kings 5:20-27 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. 21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? 22 And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. 23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. 24 And when he came to the*

tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. 25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. 26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? 27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

- Some Jews were covetous of money reflected in the way they gained money from their brethren during days of hardship after returning from the Babylonian exile. They extracted usury from their brethren. *Nehemiah 5:1 And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews.*
- Some covetous Jews refused to pay the ministers their due. *Nehemiah 13:10 And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field.*
- The post-Exilic Jews displayed a spirit of covetousness when the people built fine houses while the house of the Lord lay waste. *Haggai 1:4-9 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. 9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? Saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.*
- Many people followed Jesus merely for the loaves and fish He could produce by way of a miracle. *John 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*
- Certainly the money-changers in the temple were filled with covetousness as they found an easy way to make money off of God's people. *Matthew 21:12-13 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*
- Coveting his riches more than his soul a particular Young Man who had come to Jesus seeking the way of salvation lost both his money and his soul. *Matthew 19:16-22 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the*

commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

- Coveting the possessions of time the rich fool of Christ's parable neglected the state of his soul. *Luke 12:15-21 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*
- Loving money more than the Master, Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. *Matthew 26:15-16 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.*
- One reason why the Pharisees opposed the ministry of Christ was because He condemned their covetousness. *Luke 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.*
- Simon Magus coveted the power of the apostles by trying to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit *Acts 8:18-23 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*
- Certain sorcerers filed complaints against Paul and Silas when they saw their illicit resources drying up. They had been exploiting a demon-possessed girl. *Acts 16:19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,*

- Demetrius, motivated by money, raised a riot against Paul and Silas when the gospel was preached. *Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Acts 19:27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.*
- Festus, in love with money, hoped for a bribe from Paul. *Acts 24:26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.*
- Demas in forsaking Paul for love of the world. *2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

3. The divine prohibition against covetousness caused Paul to understand the essence of his own particular failure.

- *Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

4. Love can be manifested to others when the heart is not covetous.

- *Romans 13:9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

5. There is a type of covetousness that is without sin.

- The believer is to desire spiritual gifts. *1 Corinthians 12:31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*
- The believer is to desire to prophesy. *1 Corinthians 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.*

PROVERBS 2

For the hungry heart in search of the Eternal One the secret is revealed of how to find fellowship. It is a right condition of the soul more than an intellectual capacity that is needed. When the proper conditions are met and the proper spirit is displayed the promise is given, knowledge of God shall be enjoyed.

1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

2:1 if. The word “if” introduces something that is potential. There is so much positive potential in the spiritual journey in grace. But there is also much tragedy for the power and mystery of sin wars against the soul. The word “if” also sets forth hope. There is a holy prize to receive which Wisdom declares will be realized if gospel terms are met.

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

2:1-4 My son, if.

Gospel Terms for Finding God

- Receive the Word of God
- Hide the commandments of God in the heart
- Incline the spiritual ear unto wisdom
- Diligently seek to understand the words of wisdom
- Cry after knowledge
- Plead and pray for understanding
- Value wisdom by seeking her as silver and searching for wisdom as a treasure.

As a unit these gospel terms indicate an engaged heart in seeking after wisdom. The soul must be seriously engaged for the Lord is interested in those who sincerely and passionately desire a relationship with Him. Superficiality will avail nothing in the spiritual realm.

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear [reverence] of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

2:5 then. When shall the soul learn to fear God and find knowledge of Him? When

- spiritual eyes have searched the Word of God for wisdom and
- spiritual hearts have received the engrafted word which is able to save the soul and
- spiritual ears have listened to what God is saying and
- spiritual voices have prayed and cried out for wisdom and
- spiritual backs have bent and labored and toiled after wisdom.

6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

2:6 the LORD giveth. God gives wisdom as a reward to the heart that will meet the divine conditions. Oh Christian, let the search begin immediately and do not rest until you close with the One who loved you and gave His Son to die for you. Proverbs 8:17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Note. The word “LORD” when found in capital letters in the Authorized Version refers to the Tetragrammaton (Gk. “word with four letters”) which is spelled (in the Hebrew alphabet): י (yod) ה (heh) ו (vav) ה (heh) or יהוה (YHWH). It is the distinctive personal name of the God of Israel and is used 6,823 times in the Old Testament.

In Judaism, the Tetragrammaton is the ineffable [unspoken] name of God, and is therefore not to be read aloud. In the reading aloud of the Scripture or in prayer, it is replaced with Adonai (Lord).

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler [defense] to them that walk uprightly.

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

2: 6-8 He.

What God will Do

- He will give wisdom.
- He will lay up sound judgment for the righteous.
- He will be a defense.
- He will keep the paths of judgments.
- He will preserve the way of His saints.

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

2:12 evil man. The evil man is the Natural Man of Scripture who walks in the pride and wisdom of his own heart and exists independently of God. Such a life style appears attractive but to follow the Natural Man is to “leave the paths of righteousness” and to “walk in the ways of darkness.”

13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

2:13 the ways of darkness. There is intellectual darkness whereby the fool says in his heart, “there is no God.” There is moral darkness which says, “eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you may die.” There is social darkness whereby the rules and restraints of society are cast aside for every perversion of the imagination. There is spiritual darkness leading to the eternal darkness of the second death.

14 Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness [perverseness] of the wicked;

2:14 rejoice to do evil. When unholy passions are allowed to be manifested unbridled there is a delightful abandonment of reason to sin. Sin offers an emotional exhilarating experience and thus it becomes a spiritual opium for the soul which will find itself addicted to the principle of pleasure. The apostle Paul speaks of those “*who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them*” (*Romans 1:32*).

15 Whose ways are crooked, and they [are] froward [perverse] in their paths:

2:10-15

Six Distinguishing Marks of an Evil Man

- He speaks froward or perverse things
- He leaves the paths of righteousness
- He walks in the paths of darkness
- He rejoices to do evil
- He delights in others who do evil
- His ways are crooked

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

2:16 strange woman. The Strange Woman is the Lustful Woman who seeks to destroy morality and virtue. She is loose in her conduct, vulgar in her language, and energetic in her wicked imagination. The Strange Woman has abandoned herself to impure pleasures and soul destroying passions.

17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

2:17 which forsaketh.

**Two Protecting Barriers of Virtue
which Must be Broken
in Order to Sin**

- Childhood teachings of right and wrong
- A covenant relation with God

18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

2:16 the strange woman.

**Five Distinguishing Marks of
the Strange Woman**

- She flatters with her lips
- She forsakes her youthful upbringing
- She forgets the covenant of her God
- She opens her house to death
- She walks the broad path to destruction

19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

2:19 return again. Once virtue has been violated, once honor has been lost it cannot be obtained again. The righteous recognize this truth and mourn over it as David when he said, “*my sin is ever before me*” (Psa. 51:3).

2:19 take they hold. No one has ever taken hold of the portals of heaven by embracing the philosophy and lifestyle of hell.

20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.

2:10-20

A Fourfold Divine Design of Wisdom

- To deliver from the Evil Man
- To deliver from the Strange Woman
- To walk in the way of good individuals
- To keep the paths of the righteous

21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect [blameless] shall remain in it.

2:21 the land. The Land of Promise. While Solomon may have been thinking of a temporal land called Palestine the principle is still true for the Land of Eternal Promise. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Only the upright shall dwell there. Only those who are perfect in Christ shall remain in it. The gospel call is for self examination to see who is in the sphere of saving faith manifested by a holy life, for the wicked shall be cut off and the transgressor shall be rooted out.

22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 2

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 2

1. List seven gospel terms for finding God.

Answer.

- Receive the Word of God
- Hide the commandments of God in the heart
- Incline the spiritual ear unto wisdom
- Diligently seek to understand the words of wisdom
- Cry after knowledge
- Plead and pray for understanding
- Value wisdom by seeking her as silver and searching for wisdom as a treasure.

2. State five gifts of divine grace.

Answer.

- He will give wisdom.
- He will lay up sound judgment for the righteous.
- He will be a defense.
- He will keep the paths of judgments.
- He will preserve the way of His saints.

3. Define Tetragrammaton and what is its significance?

Answer.

The word “LORD” when found in capital letters in the Authorized Version refers to the Tetragrammaton (Gk. “word with four letters”), which is spelled (in the Hebrew alphabet): ’ (yod) ה (heh) ו (vav) ה (heh) or יהה י (YHWH).

4. Give six distinguishing marks of the evil man.

Answer.

- He speaks foward or perverse things
- He leaves the paths of righteousness
- He walks in the paths of darkness
- He rejoices to do evil
- He delights in others who do evil
- His ways are crooked

5. Provide five distinguishing marks of the Strange Woman.

Answer.

- She flatters with her lips
- She forsakes her youthful upbringing
- She forgets the covenant of her God
- She opens her house to death
- She walks the broad path to destruction

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you know a wise person? Do they manifest the distinguishing marks set forth in Scripture?
2. What experience, if any have you had with a Strange Woman? Are women equally inclined to sexual sins as men?
3. Should Christians honor the Jewish belief in practice of having a sacred name for God that is too holy to be uttered? Why or why not?
4. Comment on the inability to regain virtue once it has been violated.
5. Why do so many men and women abandon their childhood training and break covenant with God during their teenage and early years? What is the attraction of the world, the flesh and the devil that it can effectively and successfully appeal to so many?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 2: 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 2:8. preserveth.

Five Examples of Saints being Preserved

- Noah Genesis 6-8
- Lot and his family Genesis 19
- Joseph Genesis 37-41
- David 1 Samuel 18
- Peter Acts 12

Proverbs 2:17. the covenant of her God.

Nine Covenants of Scripture

- **The Eternal Covenant of Grace.** *Hebrews 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.* This eternal covenant of grace was established before time began whereby God the Father gave to God the Son souls for redemption. In this everlasting covenant the Fall was anticipated and a way of salvation provided. The end result of this eternal covenant is that individuals can have peace with God and peace from God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **The Covenant of Eden.** *Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* The Covenant of Eden was a covenant of works whereby man was to have dominion over the earth and enjoy the labor of his hands with one exception. He was not to eat of the Tree of Life upon the pain and penalty of death. Obedience to the will of God brought life, disobedience brought judgment.
- **God Made a Covenant with Adam.** *Genesis 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. 16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* In his covenant man, woman, serpent and the whole earth was judged but then a grand promise of redemption was given.
- **God Made a Covenant with Noah.** *Genesis 8:20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. 22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.* *Genesis 9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. 2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and*

upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. 3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. 4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. 5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. 6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. In this covenant capital punishment was instituted as well as the judicial power of the state (Gen 9:5-6). The promise of redemption was reaffirmed through the line of Shem (Gen. 9:26).

- **God Made a Covenant with Abraham.** *Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed* (see also Gen. 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8). In the covenant made with Abraham God promised to give him a land, a descendant and a blessing of his name. In him (through Christ) all the families of the earth were to be blessed (Gal 3:16; John 8:56-58). God has honored His word. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all look to Abraham as establishing their beliefs.
- **God Made a Covenant with Moses,** Ex 20:1-31:18. Working through the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob God gave to national Israel in particular and to mankind in general a social (Ex. 21:1; 24:11), moral (Ex 20:1-26); and religious (Ex 24:12-31:18) codex to live by called the Law. By divine design this covenant served as a ministry of 'condemnation' and 'death' (2 Cor 3:7-9) in order to lead the transgressor to the only Saviour of the soul, Jesus Christ.
- **God Made a Covenant with Israel Regarding the Land of Palestine.** *Deuteronomy 30:1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: 5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. 7 And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. 8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. 9 And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: 10 If thou*

shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. One of the ironies of the modern era is that the term Palestine is associated more with the Arabs than the Jews. However, the original and true Palestinians of covenant were the Jews. According to the terms of the original covenant Israel was to possess the land in gospel obedience. Disobedience would bring dispersion. However, a return to the land would be enjoyed based upon repentance (Deut. 30:2-5) with national prosperity to be known (Deut. 30:9).

- **God Made a Covenant with David.** 2 Sam 7:4-17, 1 Chr 17:4-15. In this covenant the line of David was established as the Messianic line. It was confirmed by divine oath in Ps 89:30-37 and renewed to Mary in Luke 1:31-33. Christ is declared to be the fulfillment of this covenant as He came into the world as Sovereign, Saviour and King of kings (Acts 1:6; Rev 19:16; 20:4-6).
- **God Made a New Covenant with the Church,** Jer 31:31-33; Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Luke 22:20; Heb 8:8-12—In the provisions of this covenant God would write His commandments upon the hearts of His people who would be to Him a kingdom of priests based upon the finished redemption of Christ. The work of Christ at Calvary secures blessings for the New Testament expression of the church, flowing from the Abrahamic covenant (Gal 3:13-20). The ultimate fulfillment of all the other covenants are included in the provisions of the New Covenant.

PROVERBS 3

1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

3:1 let thine heart keep. This is far more than obedience to gospel duty. A heart of loving devotion to duty is needed. Of Ezra it was said that he “prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:10). Love is the true spring of Christian service. John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Nine Ways to Enhance a Love for the Bible

- Read the Bible daily.
- Memorize passages from the Word.
- Share what you are learning with others.
- Carry a copy of the New Testament with you at all times.
- Engage in holy conversations with others about what they are learning.
- Meditate on a specific Scripture or concept.
- Listen to others read the Bible while driving or working.
- Remember how unique the Bible is, it is God-breathed.
- Read good commentaries and religious works concerning the Bible

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3:2

Two Rewards for the Righteous

- Length of days and long life
- Peace of heart

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

3:3 mercy. A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death. “But I don’t ask for justice,” the mother explained. “I plead for mercy.” “But your son does not deserve mercy,” Napoleon replied. “Sir”, the woman cried, “it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for.” “Well, then,” the emperor said, “I will have mercy.” And he spared the woman’s son.

3:3 truth. *Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:* A truth spoken without love and mercy becomes acrimonious, judgmental and mean-spirited from such most will turn away. Sometimes getting to the truth is a challenge for language can be manipulated to convey a meaning far from the truth. A ship captain one day recorded in the ship's log, "First-mate drunk today." It was a true statement, but was the first incident where the mate had been drunk while on duty. The mate pleaded with the captain to amend the statement, but the captain refused, saying it was a true statement. The next time the First-mate was in charge of the ship, he recorded in the log, "Captain sober today."

3:3 bind them. Some devout Jews took this literally in the form of a phylactery. A phylactery was a strip of parchment with four passages of Scripture written upon it: Deuteronomy 11:13-22; 6:4-9; Exodus 13:11-16, 1-10. Each strip was rolled up, tied with the white hairs of a calf's or a cow's tail, and placed in one of the compartments of a small box. During prayer these phylacteries were worn by the male Israelites firmly attached with leather straps to the forehead between the eyebrows, and on the left arm, so as to be near the heart. This practice regarding the origin of which only this much is certain, that it was in existence in our Lord's time as per Matthew 23:5 (*The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*).

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding [good success] in the sight of God and man.

3:4 shalt thou find. When mercy and truth are united in love there will be favor and success in two directions, with God and man. Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

3:5 trust. To trust in someone is to put their complete confidence in them. When Jonathan Edwards, the great pastor and theologian died unexpectedly from a smallpox vaccination, his wife wrote these words, "What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod, and lay our hands on our mouths! The Lord has done it...But my God lives; and he has my heart...We are all given to God."

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

3:6 he shall direct. One of the greatest truths a Christian can discover is that God has a perfect plan for life. While the eternal decree of God cannot be violated, the known will of God may, and that is where the heartache and sorrow begins.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

3:7 in thine own eyes. “Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself one way or the other at all” (William Temple, “Christ in His Church”).

3:7 depart from evil. 2 Timothy 2:19 *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

3:8

Two Rewards of Humility and Righteousness

- Physical and spiritual strength
- Freshness of energy

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

3:9 thy substance. In the Old Testament economy the law required the giving of the tithe. Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. The New Testament pattern of giving is established in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

3:10 filled with plenty. God is the greatest giver. Though the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof He delights to give to those who honor Him. God will never be in debt to anyone.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

3:11-12 chastening. One of Job's friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, said the same. Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: While in some cases there is retributive justice and thus punishment, there is also the principle of responsible behavior.

As a good and loving parent will discipline a child so God will bring order out of the chaos of sin in the soul because He deals with His own as children. *Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

**Seven Characteristics
of Divine Chastening
Hebrews 12:7-11**

- Chastening is not to be despised or resisted.
- The purpose is to bring order out of the chaos caused by sin in the soul.
- The basis is that of an intimate relationship between the Creator and His children.
- Chastening does not last forever.
- The objective of chastening is holiness of life and a home in heaven.
- Chastening is not pleasurable to God to have to correct His own.
- Chastening is not joyous to receive but will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise [profit] of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

3:13-18

Seven By-products of Wisdom

- Wisdom brings happiness.
- Wisdom is more valuable than silver, gold or rubies.
- Wisdom has no comparison in worth for by it kingdoms are established or lost and eternal life is gained or given up.
- Wisdom can lengthen a life span.
- Wisdom produces honor.
- Wisdom is pleasant.
- Wisdom produces peace.

19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

3:19-20

What God has done with Wisdom

- Founded the earth
- Fixed the boundaries of heaven
- Broken up the seas
- Established the cycle of precipitation

While the Scriptures reveal what God has done by wisdom the greater mystery is how God did it. *Ex nihilo* is a Latin term meaning "out of nothing". It is often used in conjunction with the term creation, as in *creatio ex nihilo*, meaning "creation out of nothing". The creationistic argument contends that God created the universe from nothing for only God, not matter is eternal. Scriptural support for this position is found in the following verses.

- *Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.*
- *Psalms 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*
- *John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*
- *Romans 4:17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*
- *1 Corinthians 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:*
- *Hebrews 11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

3:21 let not them depart. "It is not enough that one hold the truth, if the truth holds not him." Truth and righteousness must control the heart to guide the life.

22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.

23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

3:21-24

The Person who has Wisdom

- Can enjoy a quality as well as a quantity of life.
- Can display grace and nobility of soul.
- Can walk in safety.
- Will not stumble.
- Will not be afraid.
- Will enjoy restful nights.

25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.

3:25 be not afraid.

What Not to Fear

• Do not fear man.	Matthew 10:28
• Do not fear false gods	Judges 6:10; 1 Samuel 17:36
• Do not fear the reproach of others	Isaiah 51:7
• Do not fear sudden danger	Proverbs 3:25
• Do not fear the violent end of the wicked	Proverbs 3:25
• Do not fear persecution	Revelation 2:10
• Do not fear difficult circumstances of life	Matthew 14:27

26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

3:26 the LORD shall be. It is possible to live life as a practical atheist though one may not be a professing atheist. Practical atheism is manifested when thoughts are independent of God and there is no God consciousness. In contrast the wise person, the righteous person will put no confidence in the flesh but will trust the Lord to establish the content of speech and the conduct of life.

27 Withhold not good from them [owners] to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

3:27-28 to whom it is due. One of the characteristics of the Last Days is breaking covenants. 2 *Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholly, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers ...*

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

3:29 evil. The word “evil” suggests “harmful activity.” The giving of the mind to imaginative ways of hurting others in any form is forbidden.

30 Strive [struggle] not with a man without cause [reason], if he have done thee no harm.

3:30 strive not.

Six Reasons to Cease from Striving

- Anger begets anger.
- The heart of the wicked is more clever and more imaginative in the art of retaliation than the heart of a good person.
- The wicked will enlist others in their sphere of operation.
- God has called the Christian to peace
- No ultimate good comes from emotional distress and verbal conflict.
- Time is to be redeemed not squandered on what cannot be changed.

31 Envy thou not the oppressor [man of violence], and choose none of his ways.

32 For the froward [perverse] is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.

33 The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion [reward] of fools.

3:31-35

Eight Reasons not to Envy the Wicked

- The ways of the wicked are noticed by and abhorred by the Lord.
- God will share spiritual secrets or insights with the righteous.
- God will curse the wicked.
- God will bless righteous.

- God will scorn the scorners
- God will give grace to the humble.
- God will give glory to the wise.
- God will give shame to fools.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 3

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 3

1. What are nine ways to enhance a love for the Bible?

Answer.

- Read the Bible daily.
- Memorize passages from the Word.
- Share what you are learning with others.
- Carry a copy of the New Testament with you at all times.
- Engage in holy conversations with others about what they are learning.
- Meditate on a specific Scripture or concept.
- Listen to others read the Bible while driving or working.
- Remember how unique the Bible is, it is God-breathed.
- Read good commentaries and religious works concerning the Bible

2. List seven characteristics of divine chastening.

Answer.

- Chastening is not to be despised or resisted.
- The purpose is to bring order out of the chaos caused by sin in the soul.
- The basis is that of an intimate relationship between the Creator and His children.
- Chastening does not last forever.
- The objective of chastening is holiness of life and a home in heaven.
- Chastening is not pleasurable to God to have to correct His own.
- Chastening is not joyous to receive but will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

3. Define and explain the term, "Ex nihilo."

Answer.

Ex nihilo is a Latin term meaning "out of nothing". It is often used in conjunction with the term creation, as in *creatio ex nihilo*, meaning "creation out of nothing". The creationistic argument contends that God created the universe from nothing for only God, not matter is eternal.

4. Provide six reasons to not strive with others.

Answer.

- Anger begets anger.
- The heart of the wicked is more clever and more imaginative in the art of retaliation than the heart of a good person.
- The wicked will enlist others in their sphere of operation.
- God has called the Christian to peace

- No ultimate good comes from emotional distress and verbal conflict.
- Time is to be redeemed not squandered on what cannot be changed.

5. Why should the Christian never envy the wicked?

Answer.

- The ways of the wicked are noticed by and abhorred by the Lord.
- God will share spiritual secrets or insights with the righteous.
- God will curse the wicked.
- God will bless righteous.
- God will scorn the scorners
- God will give grace to the humble.
- God will give glory to the wise.
- God will give shame to fools.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you believe in the theory of evolution? Do you believe in the theory of theistic evolution whereby God used the evolutionary process to produce the species? Defend your answer.
2. Have you entered into a covenant relationship with God?
3. Have you ever devised evil against someone?
4. Do you honor your debts? Do you pay your bills on time?
5. Have you ever secretly envied the wicked for the way they seem to prosper? How did you handle the moment?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 3: 5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 3:3. mercy.

Doctrine of Mercy

1. Mercy (Hebrew *hesed*, "kindness"; Greek. *eleos*, "compassion") is a form of love determined by the state or condition of its objects.
2. A person who needs mercy is one who is suffering and while they may be unworthy or ill-deserving still receives great kindness and compassion.
3. Christians are to show mercy and grace towards all people.
 - *Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*
 - *Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*
 - *James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*
4. God delights to show mercy.
 - *God showed mercy to Joseph. Genesis 39:21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*
 - *God showed mercy to the Exodus Generation. Exodus 15:13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.*
 - *God shows mercy to those who love Him. Exodus 20:6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*
5. To visibly remind the people of this attribute, a special Ark of the Covenant was located in the most holy place on top of which was a mercy seat. There, once a year on the Day of Atonement blood was sprinkled so mercy could be shown by the forgiveness of sins.
 - *Exodus 25:17 And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18 And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20 And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. :21 And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy*

seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

6. Based upon gospel obedience God will be inclined to have mercy.

- *Deuteronomy 7:12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers:*
- *Psalms 25:10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

7. In time of warfare mercy can be shown to an enemy for favors rendered.

- *Judges 1:24 And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will shew thee mercy.*

8. God made a covenant that mercy would not depart from the house of David as it had in the house of Saul.

- *2 Samuel 7:15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.*
- *1 Kings 3:6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.*

9. Only the true Lord God shows mercy. The gods of human imagination are petty and jealous and mean spirited.

- *1 Kings 8:23 And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart:*

10. The mercy of God is inexhaustible.

- *1 Chronicles 16:34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.*

11. It is good to sing of the mercies of the Lord.

- *Ezra 3:11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.*

“I will sing of the mercies
of the LORD for ever:
I will sing, I will sing
I will sing of the mercies
of the LORD for ever:
I will sing of the mercies
of the LORD.

With my mouth will I make known
Thy faithfulness, Thy faithfulness
With my mouth will I make known
Thy faithfulness to all generations.

I will sing of the mercies
of the LORD for ever:
I will sing of the mercies
of the LORD”.

- *Psalms 59:16 But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble.*
- *Psalms 59:17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defense, and the God of my mercy.*

12. In the midst of great tribulation the mercy of God is present.

- *Ezra 9:9 For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.*

13. In the hour of prayer the mercy of God can and should be appealed to.

- *Nehemiah 1:5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: ...11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.*
- *Psalms 4:1 A Psalm of David. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*

14. Remembering the mercy of God is an act of worship.

- *Psalms 5:7 But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.*
- *1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

15. Unless God has mercy upon poor sinners all shall be consumed.

- *Psalms 6:2 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.*
- *Psalms 25:7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.*

16. While few men will have mercy upon their enemies God might.

- *Psalms 9:13 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:*
- *Psalms 25:16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.*

17. Those who know the integrity and character of God can rest upon His mercy.

- *Psalms 13:5 But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*

18. Truly, the Christian can proclaim the mercy of God to others.

- *Psalms 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*
- *2 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

19. God is looking for individuals who fear Him in order to show mercy to them.

- *Psalms 33:18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;*

20. The mercy of God is incomprehensible.

- *Psalms 36:5 Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.*

21. Those who receive mercy are to show mercy by charitable giving.

- *Psalms 37:21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.*

22. Those who sincerely repent of sin can hope to find mercy with the Lord.

- *Psalms 51:1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

“Come, every soul by sin oppressed;
There’s mercy with the Lord,
And He will surely give you rest
By trusting in His Word.
Only trust Him, only trust Him,
Only trust Him now;
He will save you, He will save you,
He will save you now.”

John H. Stockton

23. Sometimes, in the dark night of the soul the mercy of God seems to be distant.

- *Psalms 77:8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?*
- *Isaiah 54:8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.*

24. The mercy of God is united to truth.

- *Psalms 85:10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

25. God is more willing to show mercy to sinners than they are willing to sin.

- *Psalms 86:5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

26. There is no sin too great for the grace and mercy of God..

- *Psalms 86:13 For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*

27. The mercy of God is to be affirmed and praised.

- *Psalms 86:15 But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*

28. Though the righteous stumble into sin the mercy of God is present to sustain the soul from everlasting ruin.

- *Psalms 94:18 When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.*

29. The mercy of God cannot be exhausted nor can it ever end.

- *Psalms 100:5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*
- *Psalms 103:17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;*
- *Psalms 106:1 Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

30. One generation is responsible for teaching the next generation about the mercy of God. It is an endless refrain.

- *Psalms 136:11 And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever: 12 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever. 13 To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever: 14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever: 15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever. 16 To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever. 17 To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever: 18 And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever: 19 Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever: 20 And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever: 21 And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever: 22 Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever. 23 Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever: 24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever. 25 Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever. 26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

31. Christians are never to stop showing mercy to the most undeserving.

- *Proverbs 3:3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:*

32. Personal happiness is a noble emotion that results from showing mercy.

- *Proverbs 14:21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.*

33. Special mercy is to be extended to the poor.

- *Proverbs 14:31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.*

34. By showing mercy with a tender heart of compassion and kindness men depart from evil.

- *Proverbs 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.*

35. A government is stabilized when the official policy is to manifest mercy and truth.

- *Proverbs 20:28 Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.*

36. There is a quality to life as well as a quantity when mercy is manifested.

- *Proverbs 21:21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.*

37. Any attempt to hide sin will negate the mercy of God.

- *Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

38. When sin reaches a saturation point God will either move in ultimate judgment against His people or He will remember they are but flesh and will show mercy.

- *Isaiah 49:10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.*

39. The goodness and mercy of God is designed to elicit praise, thanksgiving and worship.

- *Isaiah 49:13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.*

40. The earth will be removed and the universe will be destroyed before the mercy of God is exhausted.

- *Isaiah 54:10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.*

41. Those who are sorry for sin and will forsake it have hope that God will extend mercy to the soul.

- *Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

42. The attribute of divine mercy is united to God as a keeper of covenants.

- *Daniel 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;*
- *Luke 1:72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;*

43. Sometimes in His wrath God warns that His mercy will be withdrawn apart from gospel repentance.

- *Hosea 1:6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.*

44. As God has mercy upon individuals so He has mercy upon nations.

- *Hosea 1:7 But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.*

“O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain;
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood,
From sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life!

America! America!
May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness,
And every gain divine.

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears!

America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self control,
Thy liberty in law."

Katharine Lee Bates
1859-1929

- *Luke 1:54 He hath holpen [helped] his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;*

45. Sin can cause God's mercy to be forfeited.

- *Jonah 2:8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.*

46. God has revealed to mankind what is required of him for righteousness.

- *Micah 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

47. God does not stay angry with His creation for ever for He delights to show mercy.

- *Micah 7:18 Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.*

48. Let the voice of the church cry out to God for mercy and a renewal of spiritual work.

- *Habakkuk 3:2 O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.*

49. During the days of His humiliation Jesus showed much mercy to sinners for this is why He came into the world.

- *Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

50. No one who ever cried out for mercy was sent away with out.

- Two blind men cried for mercy and were healed. *Matthew 9:27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.*
- A grieving mother cried for mercy and grace was granted. *Matthew 15:22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*
- A bereaved father pleaded for mercy for his son and the son was cured. *Matthew 17:15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*

51. In the strongest terms possible Jesus denounced the religious leaders of Israel for not showing mercy.

- *Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

52. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is mercy.

- *Luke 1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,*

53. The concept of showing mercy is not simply a nice idea, it is a royal command.

- *Luke 10:37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

54. In hell there is no mercy shown to those in torment.

- *Luke 16:24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*

55. The exercising of mercy is a divine prerogative of God's sovereignty. God is under no obligation to show mercy to anyone.

- *Romans 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy....18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

56. By showing mercy God makes known the spiritual riches of His glory.

- *Romans 9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*

57. In His sovereignty God can bypass one generation while pouring out abounding mercy upon another. One generation must endure depression and a world war while another enjoys showers of blessings.

- *Romans 11:30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:*
- *1 Peter 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

58. The mercy of God is displayed in glory against the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

- *Romans 11:32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*

59. The ability to show mercy in superabundance is recognized as a spiritual gift.

- *Romans 12:8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

60. The mercy of God is extended to Gentiles as well as Jews for it is universal in scope.

- *Romans 15:9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.*

61. The mercy of God gives strength for spiritual service.

- *2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;*

62. Christians should seek to bestow the blessing of mercy upon others of like mind and faith.

- *Galatians 6:16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*

63. The mercy of God is united to the love of God.

- *Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

64. The mercy of God is manifested in a variety of ways.

- In salvation. *1 Timothy 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*
- In physical healing. *Philippians 2:27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.*
- Through material prosperity. *2 Timothy 1:16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:*
- Grace on the day of ultimate judgment. *2 Timothy 1:18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.*
- Upon those who have endured extreme hardships. *James 5:11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

65. No one will ever be saved apart from God's mercy.

- *Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

66. Because God is a God of great grace we come to Him in order to obtain mercy. The mind is to be engaged in this specific prayer request.

- *Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

67. Where the law of God is despised mercy will be denied.

- *Hebrews 10:28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:*
- *James 2:13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*

68. Mercy is united with the wisdom that is from above.

- *James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

69. Let every believer never stop looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- *Jude 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

3:6 he shall direct.

Doctrine of Divine Guidance

1. The Christian should live life believing in the sovereign God who rules in the affairs of His creation. Throughout Scripture God declares that He will perform specific acts in the affairs of men.
 - *Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*
 - *Genesis 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*
 - *Genesis 7:4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.*
 - *Genesis 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.*
 - *2 Kings 21:4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.*
2. Hundreds of time the phrase “I will” is found in the Bible.
3. Since the will of God is supreme a person is wise to seek the Lord even though His will is not always easy to discern.
4. The search for the divine will is encouraged and commanded in Scripture.
 - *Psalms 27:8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.*
 - *Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*
5. In order to seek the Lord in an acceptable manner the right preparation is needed.
 - First, a person must be properly related to God in order to know His will for the prayers that are most acceptable to God are the prayers that are according to His will. On this point not everyone agrees. Dr. John R. Rice taught that God hears and answers the prayers of the heathen. In contrast former President Jimmy Carter created a

national fervor when he answered “No” to a question as to whether or not God would hear the prayers of a Jewish person who denied Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. While the debate rages the voice of God has been heard saying of Christ, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him.” Jesus told Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again.” To know the will of God one must be properly related to Him.

- Second, a person must not have any unconfessed sin in the heart. Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.
- Third, prayer is to be offered in the name of the Son to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. *Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*
- Fourth, faith is to be present when the will of the Father is sought.
 - There must be faith that God exists.
 - There must be faith that God is listening.
 - There must be faith that God will answer prayer.

Preparation to meet with God is important. Why would the Lord agree to meet with someone who is not properly related to Him, hostile to His Son and in doubt of the Lord’s very existence?

6. Once the will of the Lord is sought in an appropriate manner the next issue is how to recognize the divine response. One simple way is the correlation between what is asked for and what comes to pass. “I asked, He answered” is a good way to know the God who is there.
7. It should be recognized that God does use a variety of different methods to manifest His will. In Acts 11 the story is told of how Peter came to know the will of God concerning treatment of the Gentiles. Peter recorded how he found divine guidance in a variety of ways.
 - **Divine guidance comes through prayer.** *Acts 11:5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:*
 - **Divine guidance comes through meditation.** *Acts 11:6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.*
 - **Divine guidance comes through the word of God.** *Acts 11:7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.*
 - **Divine guidance comes through providential circumstances.** *Acts 11:11-14 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was,*

sent from Caesarea unto me. 12 And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: 13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

- **Divine guidance comes through Scripture memorization.** *Acts 11:16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*
- **Divine guidance comes through the prompting of the Holy Spirit.** *Acts 11:12 And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:*
- **Divine guidance comes through the testimony of others.** *Acts 11:13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*
- **Divine guidance comes through visual confirmation.** *Acts 11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.*

8. God the Father is as anxious to make His will known as believers are to know His will and to follow it. However, once known, the will of the Lord must be obeyed lest the Holy Spirit be grieved, hardened and quenched.
9. In many matters the will of the Lord has been clearly revealed.
 - **It is the will of God to save souls.** *2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. To pray for the salvation of souls is pleasing to the Lord.*
 - **It is the will of God that the saints be holy.** *1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*
 - **It is the will of God that Christians be a thankful people.** *1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*
 - **It is the will of God that some believers bear witness to a lost world through pain and suffering.** *1 Peter 2:13-15 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. 15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

- **It is the will of God that sins be confessed and repented of.** *Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

10. At the end of time it will be discovered that those who seek and do the will of the Lord shall live forever and ever. *1 John 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*

PROVERBS 4

1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

3 For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

4:3 only beloved. Solomon would have had an older sibling but the child died as a consequence of the sins of his parents. *2 Samuel 12:15 “And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. 16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. 17 And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. 18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died...”*

4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

4:4 He taught me.

What a Parent Can and Cannot Do

“I gave you life,
but I cannot live it for you.

I can teach you things
but I cannot make you learn.

I can give you directions
but I cannot always be there to lead you.

I can allow you freedom
but I cannot account for it.

I can take you to church
but I cannot make you believe.
I can teach you right from wrong
but I can't always decide for you.

I can buy you beautiful clothes
but I cannot make you lovely inside.

I can offer you advice
but I cannot accept it for you.

I can give you love
but I cannot force it upon you.

I can teach you to be a friend
but I cannot make you one.

I can teach you to share
but I cannot make you unselfish.

I can teach you respect
but I can't force you to show honor.

I can grieve about your report card
but I cannot doubt your teachers.

I can advise you about friends
but I cannot choose them for you.

I can teach you about sex
but I cannot keep you pure.

I can tell you the facts of life
but I can't build your reputation.

I can tell you about drink
but I can't say NO for you.
I can warn you about drugs
but I can't prevent you from using them.

I can tell you about lofty goals,
but I can't achieve them for you.

I can teach you kindness
but I can't force you to be gracious.

I can warn you about sins
but I cannot make your morals
I can love you as a daughter or son
but I cannot place you in God's Family.

I can pray for you
but I cannot make you walk with God.
I can teach you about Jesus
but I cannot make HIM your Saviour.

I can teach you to OBEY
but I cannot make Jesus Your Lord.
I can tell you how to live
but I cannot give you Eternal Life."

Source unknown

5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

4:5 Get wisdom. Knowledge is not enough. Right application of right doctrine at the right time constitutes true wisdom. Solomon was knowledgeable but for all of his brilliance he committed the most atrocious of sins for his wives turned his heart from the Lord. *1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.*

6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

8 Exalt her, and she shall promote [reward] thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened [hindered]; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

13 Take fast hold [firm grip] of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

4:6-13 she shall.

The Rewards of Wisdom

- Wisdom will preserve the heart
- Wisdom will reward the soul
- Wisdom will bring honor
- Wisdom will bring grace
- Wisdom will bring glory
- Wisdom will bring deliverance
- Wisdom will bring long life
- Wisdom will bring certainty of direction
- Wisdom will bring stability of action
- Wisdom brings life

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.
15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

4:14-15

Six Exhortations to Stay Away from Sin

- Enter not into the path of evil
- Go not in the way of evil men
- Avoid it
- Pass not by it
- Turn from it
- Pass away

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

4:14-17

Why the Path of the Wicked Should be Avoided

- The wicked mean to hurt others.
- The wicked have nervous energy.
- The wicked are driven by a spirit they do not understand.
- The wicked are not content until their passions are satisfied.
- The wicked find meaning and substance to life only in inflicting pain, brutality and violence.

18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

4:18 shining light. God the Holy Spirit can and will illuminate a situation through His Word to give individuals insight and thus divine guidance.

Four who Received Spiritual Guidance

- Jacob Genesis 32:24-32
- Nathaniel John 1:46-51
- The Ethiopian Acts 8:27-39
- Devout Christians Acts 26:18

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

4:19

The Way of the Wicked

- The way of Cain Jude 1:11
- The way of Balaam 2 Peter 2:15
- The way of Ananias and Sapphira
Acts 5: 3

4:19 as darkness.

Those who Walked in Darkness

- Korah Numbers 16:16-19
- Ahab 1 Kings 16:31
- Babylon Isaiah 47:11
- Jews Romans 11:25
- Gentiles Romans 1:21-2

20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence [care]; for out of it are the issues of life.

4:23 Keep thy heart. In Scripture the heart (Heb. mostly leb; Gk. kardia). is the essence of life, the seat of emotions and the center of the soul. *Psalms 40:8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*

24 Put away from thee a foward [deceitful] mouth, and perverse [devious] lips put far from thee.

25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

26 Ponder [watch] the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

4:24 put away. Sin affects a person's speech, viewpoint and sense of direction in life. A great battle wages whether to have a body dedicated to God's purpose and pleasure or a body given over to worldly passions. *Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Someone has said, “The extent of redemption reaches to my body. The result of redemption: my body should be a temple, not a garage. The purpose of redemption: glorify God in my body.”

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 4

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 4

1. What constitutes true wisdom?

Answer.

Right application of right doctrine at the right time constitutes true wisdom.

2. List ten rewards of wisdom.

Answer.

- Wisdom will preserve the heart
- Wisdom will reward the soul
- Wisdom will bring honor
- Wisdom will bring grace
- Wisdom will bring glory
- Wisdom will bring deliverance
- Wisdom will bring long life
- Wisdom will bring certainty of direction
- Wisdom will bring stability of action
- Wisdom brings life

3. Provide four examples of individuals being given spiritual light.

Answer.

- Jacob Genesis 32:24-32
- Nathaniel John 1:46-51
- The Ethiopian Acts 8:27-39
- Devout Christians Acts 26:18

4. Why should the way of the wicked be avoided?

Answer.

- The wicked mean to hurt others.
- The wicked have nervous energy.
- The wicked are driven by a spirit they do not understand.
- The wicked are not content until their passions are satisfied.
- The wicked find meaning and substance to life only in inflicting pain, brutality and violence.

5. What areas does sin affect in a person?

Answer.

Sin affects a person's speech, viewpoint and sense of direction in life.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. What is the difference between speaking in platitudes and speaking in proverbs?
2. Would you consider yourself a wise person? Why or why not? What Christian figure would you consider to be an individual with wisdom?
3. How did Solomon become so wicked with so much Bible doctrine in his soul and understanding of life? What does his example teach?
4. Do you really believe that wisdom will do all that is claimed for it? Why or why not?
5. What are some practical ways you have committed yourself to in order to guard your own heart?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 4: 7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 4:23. Keep thy heart.

**Twelve Steps to
Keeping One's Heart**

1. Determine the value of the heart.
 - *Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*
2. Fear God.
 - *Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
3. Dedicate your whole body and soul to the Lord.
 - *Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

4. Make a list of standards you would like to honor.

- *2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate , saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*
- *Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

5. Make a covenant with thy eyes to meditate on pure and holy matters.

- *Job 31:1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?*
- *Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

6. Memorize the Word of God.

- *Psalms 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

7. Find someone to be accountable to.

- *Ecclesiastes 4:9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.*
- *James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

8. Make no provision for evil.

- *Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*

9. Seek the counsel of others.

- *Proverbs 11:14 Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

10. Guard against and mortify the first motions of sin in the soul.

- *Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

11. Remember the consequences for abandoning the heart to the works of the flesh.

- *1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

12. Remember the example of Joseph who said in his hour of temptation, *how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? (Genesis 39:9).*

PROVERBS 5

1 My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:
2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.

5:1 attend unto my wisdom. If a Christian young person makes a choice to go into moral sin it is usually not for lack of information or warning but out of a dark, deliberate rebellious heart.

3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:

5:3 lips. The thoughts of the immoral woman can appear reasonable in their seduction. The world's philosophy is that, "If it feels good, do it." The wicked say, "It is my body and I can do with it what I want" or, "You only go around once in life so get all the gusto you can get." What the slogans setting forth a philosophy of life do not show, is that these so called truths lead to death and Sheol.

5:3 a strange woman. There were to be no harlots in the congregation of Israel, the covenanted people of God. The strange woman then was a "stranger" or "foreigner" who came into the camp of God to seduce the men of God.

Of course a woman from within Israel who did became immoral would also be classified as a "stranger" for she would have forsaken her covenant relationship with God and been placed, spiritually speaking, "outside the camp." She would have become a stranger to her God.

4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

5:4 wormwood, (Heb. *la`ana*; Grk. *apsinthos* meaning, undrinkable) refers to a well known but bitter plant. Affliction, remorse, and punitive suffering is associated with this word.

- *Deuteronomy 29:18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;*
- *Jeremiah 9:15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.*
- *Amos 5:7 Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth,*

5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell [sheol].

5:5 sheol. The Old Testament word for the grave or the sphere of the dead was “sheol”. In the New Testament the word is “hades” meaning “the unseen world.”

The Fourfold Fate of the Strange Woman

- Bitterness
- Painful destruction
- Certainty of death
- Eternal destruction

6 Lest thou shouldest ponder [reflect] the path of life, her ways are moveable [unstable], that thou canst not know them.

5:6 let thou should ponder. If a young person bothered to reflect ahead of time what might be the outcome of succumbing to the seductive charms of the strange woman, the answer is this: such a woman is unstable and unknowable.

5:6 her ways are moveable. The only certainty about a wicked woman is her mind will constantly change which means she is not dependable. Flightiness in a woman can be a charming characteristic until commitment and stability is desired.

7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.

5:7 Hear me. Wisdom lifts her voice to cry, to plead, to beg as it were much as the prophets lifted their voice in earnest as did Christ and the apostle Paul. There is a pathos in the divine narrative that is humbling in nature as divine grace and mercy pleads with sinners not to sin and if they do to return. Listen to Christ, *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water* (John 7:37-38).

8 Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh [near] the door of her house:

5:8

How to Remain Morally Pure

- Remove self from the presence of any immoral woman no matter how young or old she may be.
- Do not be in the same home or room alone with an immoral woman.

9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel:

10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger [an alien];

11 And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed [wasted],

5: 9-11

**What will Happen when
Moral Purity is Lost**

- Personal honor will be given away to those who have no honor.
- The best years of life will be given to those who will cruelly use them for selfish purposes.
- Time and resources better invested in gospel work will be squandered to paying the wages of sin.
- Sin will be served and there will be no spiritual harvest in the work of the Savior.
- The soul will mourn and the body will become wasted, for sin dispels the strength of body, soul and spirit.

12 And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;

13 And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

14 I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

5: 12-14

**What the Soul will Say to itself when
Moral Innocence is Gone**

- “I have hated instruction.”
- “My heart has despised correction.”
- “I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers.”
- “I have not listened to those God sent to give me instruction.”
- “I was almost totally consumed by evil.”

15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

17 Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.

18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished [exhilarated] always with her love.

5:15-19

Commandments for Moral Purity for Young Men

- Drink waters out of thine own cistern. This means to share love only with your wife.
- Let thy fountains be only thine own. Do not have sex with just anyone. Reserve the pleasures of intimacy for marriage. Do not share love indiscriminately with strangers.
- Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you.
- Rejoice in the wife of your youth. Let her breasts be satisfying and her love be captivating.

20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

5:20 why. To the question of “why” there is no logical or rational answer in the context of sin. Sin is and shall remain a great mystery. The best that can be done is give compelling arguments not to do wrong in the sight of God and to self.

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

5:22

The Nature of Addiction

- The only one who can make a person an addict is themselves.
- Sin begets sin as righteousness begets righteousness. There is a spiritual law of sowing and reaping. *Galatians 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

23 He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

5:23

Four Certainties Regarding Sin

- Those who practice sin shall die not only a physical death but a spiritual one as well.
- Those who practice sin shall die without having learned the way of truth or righteousness.
- Those who practice sin shall die foolishly.
- Those who practice sin shall go astray from the path of righteousness never to return.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 5

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 5

1. Define the strange woman of Proverbs.

Answer.

The strange woman was a “stranger” or “foreigner” who came into the camp of God to seduce the men of God. Of course a woman from within Israel who became immoral would also be classified as a “stranger” for she would have forsaken her covenant relationship with God.

2. What is wormwood?

Answer.

Wormwood refers to a well known but bitter plant. Affliction, remorse, and punitive suffering is associated with this word.

3. What will happen when moral purity is lost?

Answer.

When moral purity is lost the following is certain.

- Personal honor will be given away to those who have no honor.
- The best years of life will be given to those who will cruelly use them for selfish purposes.
- Time and resources better invested in gospel work will be squandered to paying the wages of sin.
- Sin will be served and there will be no spiritual harvest in the work of the Savior.
- The soul will mourn and the body will become wasted for sin dispels the strength of body, soul and spirit.

4. How will the soul speak to itself when sin is committed?

Answer.

In addition to self loathing the soul speaks to itself following sin and says the following.

- “I have hated instruction.”
- “My heart has despised correction.”
- “I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers.”
- “I have not listened to those God sent to give me instruction.”
- “I was almost totally consumed by evil.”

5. List four certainties associated with sin.

Answer.

- Those who practice sin shall die not only a physical death but a spiritual one as well.
- Those who practice sin shall die without having learned the way of truth or righteousness.
- Those who practice sin shall die foolishly.
- Those who practice sin shall go astray from the path of righteousness never to return.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Despite centuries of negative examples and biblical teaching the sins of one generation are practiced by the next. Do you think that any one generation is worse than another? How would you argue that belief?
2. How can concerned parents protect their children from the philosophy of the world, the flesh and the devil?
3. In your journey of grace do you talk to yourself? Is self talk a biblical concept to be practiced? Why or why not?
4. Have you been addicted to some sinful habit of which you are ashamed? Do you know of someone who is addicted? What help did you find? What help can others find with addictive habits?
5. Discuss some of the signs of addiction. Do you discern a pattern despite the particular addiction?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 5: 21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 5:5. sheol.

Doctrine of Sheol

1. Sheol was viewed as an underground region.

- *Numbers 16:30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD....33 They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.*

- *Amos 9:2 Though they dig into hell [sheol], thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down:*

2. Sheol was a dark, shadowy and gloomy sphere of existence where disembodied souls had a conscious but dreary and inactive subsistence.
 - *2 Samuel 22:6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;*
 - *Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*
3. According to the Old Testament, both the righteous and unrighteous entered sheol at death.
 - *Genesis 37:35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave [sheol] unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.*
 - *Psalms 9:17 The wicked shall be turned into hell [sheol], and all the nations that forget God.*
 - *Isaiah 38:10 I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave [sheol]: I am deprived of the residue of my years.*
4. Sheol was a place where punishment was received and rewards were given.
5. Sheol is represented in Scripture as having an insatiable appetite.
 - *Isaiah 5:14 Therefore hell [sheol] hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.*
 - *Habakkuk 2:5 Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell [sheol], and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:*
6. Despite its darkness and uncertainties God was thought to be present in sheol.
 - *Psalms 139:8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell [sheol], behold, thou art there.*
7. Sheol is known to God for even in the hour of death the people of God are provided for by Him while those who have lived in an unrighteous manner can never escape a righteous retribution.

- *Job 26:6 Hell [sheol] is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.*
- *Proverbs 15:11 Hell [sheol] and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?*

8. Sheol gives meaning to Psalms 16:10. *“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”*
9. Peter saw the fulfillment of Psalm 16:10 in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - *Acts 2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

5:22. his own cords.

Ten Signs of Addiction

1. A secret life and thus a double life.
2. With only the slightest encouragement an inappropriate deed is done.
3. The need for additional and excessive privacy.
4. Repetitive behavior that is compulsive in nature.
5. Non accountability and an unwillingness to become accountable because of pride.
6. A quick temper that is not justified over a given situation.
7. Self loathing and yet a return to that which gives pleasure.
8. Constant fantasizing about the area of desire.
9. Using anything and every means and opportunity to return to the secret life and practice of choice.
10. Compartmentalization of self so that the whole personality is not integrated.

PROVERBS 6

1 My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,

2 Thou art snared [trapped] with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

6:1 -2 surety. The Word of God has wise counsel for personal business transactions, one of which is not to sign a note on behalf of someone else. Pride is usually at the root of becoming a security on someone's behalf in the sense that self wants to be well thought of as a person or a clever business personality. Whatever the motive, a person can become ensnared in the obligations of someone else.

3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend [neighbor]; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

4 Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

6: 3-5 do this now. Rather than remain the basis of security on behalf of someone else, the exhortation is given to find a way to be released from the obligation by confessing that self has taken on more than righteousness and reason would counsel.

Four Dangers of Being a Surety

- One or both parties cannot fulfill the original obligations thereby making everyone unable to discharge legitimate obligations.
- There is a change of mind on the part of the person money has been loaned so that there is a reluctance to return the money borrowed if borrowed from the surety.
- The law remains merciless to the surety and will demand payment no matter what the circumstances might be.
- Fellowship can be broken over the matter of being a surety and friendships can be destroyed.

6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

8 Provideth [prepares] her meat [food] in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

6:6-8 go to the ant. Prudence and forethought are two great virtues which can be learned from the ant. While the Lord does not want His children to have undue care (Matt. 6:25-33) He would have individuals prepare for the future in a wise and prudent manner. What the ant does instinctively the Christian should do intuitively.

9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

6:9 sleep. There is a physical sleep of rest and a physical sleep of death (1 Thess. 4:14). There is also a spiritual sleep of non service for the Savior. “A little more sleep, a little more slumber, and thou shalt wake in hell to sleep no more forever!” (Adoniram Judson).

10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

6:9-11 sluggard. The sluggard is the lazy person who will not work. By degrees poverty will come to any person or nation that refuses to work. Poverty comes because individuals sleep more and more and work less and less. Poverty is personified as a traveler who must spend money on a journey and as a thief that robes a victim. Both analogies are appropriate. Whether willingly, as in the first illustration, or unwillingly, as in the second, poverty accomplishes the goal of taking resources away. In both physical and spiritual matters “the diligent soul shall be made fat” (Prov. 13:6).

Five Characteristics of a Spiritual Sluggards

- Spiritual sluggards refuse to read the Scriptures on a daily basis.
- Spiritual sluggards reject the intake of Bible doctrine and do not regularly study to show themselves approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15).
- Spiritual sluggards are unlike the Bereans to challenge and check on the accuracy of what is being taught in the name of the Lord (Acts 17:11).
- Spiritual sluggards are willing to depend upon others to gather their spiritual food for them and live on what others provide.
- Spiritual sluggards prefer sleep to service for the Savior and rest to responsible efforts to promote the kingdom of heaven.

12 A naughty person [a man of Belial], a wicked man, walketh with a froward [false] mouth.

6:12 a naughty person. A naughty person is an individual without profit, one who is worthless, a scoundrel and a villain.

13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth [points] with his fingers;

14 Frowardness [perversity] is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.

6:12-14

Portrait of the Worthless Person

- He speaks falsely
- His eyes betray the words of his lips
- He shifts his feet
- He points with his finger
- Perversity is in his heart
- His imagination is given to scheming
- He is willing to sow discord in order to achieve his objectives

15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

6:15 therefore. Because of who the worthless person is and because of what he does he shall be overwhelmed with disaster. Without warning he shall be judged. Worthless individuals were found to be among the saints in the church of Thessalonica. The apostle Paul gave counsel to withdraw fellowship from such people that they might be ashamed. Note that the worthless person might be a professing Christian in a state of spiritual retrogression. *2 Thessalonians 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed . 15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Seven Deadly Sins

- A proud look
- A lying tongue
- Murder

- Wicked thoughts
- Gossip
- A false witness
- The sowing of discord

20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

6:20 keep thy father's commandment. Subjection to parental authority is pleasing to the Lord for it speaks of being submissive to His commandments.

21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

6:21 bind them. Taking such exhortations literally, Jewish tradition introduced phylactery which were small square leather boxes or cases, each containing four strips of parchment with Scripture from the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament (Exodus 13:1-10,11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21). During Biblical days, phylacteries were worn by male Israelite 13 years of age and over during morning prayer, except on the Sabbath and holidays. While orthodox Jews still observe this practice, reformed Judaism does not continue its observation.

22 When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

6:22

When Will Doctrinal Commandments Keep a Person?

- When a person is engaged in daily living.
- When a person is asleep. Doctrine in the soul reduces stress and anxiety and allows the body to relax.
- When a person is awake, doctrine is personified as talking.

23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

6:23 way of life. Criticism that is rooted in Bible doctrine is designed to give a quality as well as a quantity to life. Being criticized is not a problem if you develop a positive way of dealing with it. Winston Churchill had the following words of Abe Lincoln framed on the wall of his office: "I do the very best I can, I mean to keep going. If the end brings me out all right, then what is said against me won't matter. If I'm wrong, ten angels swearing I was right won't make a difference."

24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

6:24 evil woman. The strange woman is the same as the evil woman for she is injurious to one's soul and body.

25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.

6:25-26 lust not. Once more a word of warning is raised against the evil or injurious woman. The heart of a man must be guarded against natural physical attractions such as outward beauty and flirtatious eyes. Inappropriate relationships based upon lust will consume the soul and reduce a man to almost begging for bread as resources are taken away as a form of divine judgment. In this process the adulteress will disregard the soul in search of another to consume.

27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

28 Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?

6:27-28. Can a man. Rhetorical questions demand no answer for it is implied. Here, the answer is no. A man cannot take fire in his bosom and not be burned. A man cannot go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned.

29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.

30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul [body] when he is hungry;

31 But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.

6:30-31 Men do not despise a thief, if. Some sins are understandable. Restitution can be made for some transgressions and justice is satisfied. The Mosaic Law demanded restoration plus the adding of the fifth part (Lev. 6:5). Human Law might demand up to seven fold restoration. However, in contrast, there is some self destructive behavior that is without logic and cannot be justified or forgiven.

32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

6:33 not be wiped away. While sin is judiciously expunged in the sight of God so there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1), the practical result of sin is a stain on the soul that cannot be wiped away in time. “The marks of the wound and the dishonor will remain to haunt one through the years” (H.A. Ironside).

34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

35 He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

6:34-35 jealousy is the rage. When man has been incensed at moral injustice there will be no appeasement by gifts however generous nor by acts of contrition no matter how earnest and sincere. John the Baptist was rightly jealous over the immorality of Herod Antipas who had taken Herodias, his brother Philip's wife for himself.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 6

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 6

1. List four dangers of being a surety.

Answer.

- One or both parties cannot fulfill the original obligations thereby making everyone unable to discharge legitimate obligations. .
- There is a change of mind on the part of the person money has been loaned so that there is a reluctance to return the money borrowed if borrowed from the surety.
- The law remains merciless to the surety and will demand payment no matter what the circumstances might be.
- Fellowship can be broken over the matter of being a surety and friendships can be destroyed.

2. Give the five characteristics of the spiritual sluggard.

Answer.

- Spiritual sluggards refuse to read the Scriptures on a daily basis.
- Spiritual sluggards reject the intake of Bible doctrine and do not regularly study to show themselves approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15).
- Spiritual sluggards are unlike the Bereans to challenge and check on the accuracy of what is being taught in the name of the Lord (Acts 17:11).
- Spiritual sluggards are willing to depend upon others to gather their spiritual food for them and live on what others provide.
- Spiritual sluggards prefer sleep to service for the Savior and rest to responsible efforts to promote the kingdom of heaven.

3. Provide a portrait of the worthless person.

Answer.

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- His eyes betray the words of his lips
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- His imagination is given to scheming

- He is willing to sow discord in order to achieve his objectives

4. What are the seven deadly sins?

Answer.

- A proud look
- A lying tongue
- Murder
- Wicked thoughts
- Gossip
- A false witness
- The sowing of discord

5. When will doctrinal commandments keep a person?

Answer.

- When a person is engaged in daily living.
- When a person is asleep. Doctrine in the soul reduces stress and anxiety and allows the body to relax.
- When a person is awake, doctrine is personified as talking.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Have you ever been a surety for someone? How was that experience?
2. Like the ant, how are you preparing for the future in the following areas?
 - Spiritually
 - Occupationally
 - Financially
3. Give an example of how Bible doctrine in the soul has guided you or kept you at a critical moment.
4. What are some practical ways a person can guard the heart against lust?
5. Would you agree or disagree that “sin is a stain on the soul that cannot be wiped away in time”?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 6: 16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 6:15.

Doctrine of Spiritual Retrogression

1. The Doctrine of Retrogression includes the unbeliever as well as the believer.
2. The unbeliever retrogresses from the divine ideal when the divine institutions are dishonored and the laws of divine establishment are violated.

Four Divine Institutions

- Government
- Marriage
- Home
- Church

Laws of Divine Establishments Violated

- Anarchy
- Divorce
- Lack of proper love
- Rejection of the gospel Psalms 10:4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

3. Every person who professes to be a Christian either progresses in the sphere of saving faith or retrogresses.
4. While there is no specific term for retrogressive behavior in the Bible the concept is established by specific words and phrases.
 - **Backward.** *Isaiah 1:4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.*
 - **Cannot cease from sin.** *2 Peter 2:14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:*

- **Depart.** *1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*
- **Departed.** *Psalm 18:21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.*
- **Enemies of the cross.** *Philippians 3:18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*
- **Erred from the faith.** *1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*
- **Fail of the grace of God.** *Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*
- **Fallen.** *Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*
- **Fallen from grace.** *Galatians 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*
- **Forsake the Lord.** *Joshua 24:16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;*
- **Left your first love.** *Revelation 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 2 Chronicles 24:18 And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.*
- **Lukewarm.** *Revelation 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*
- **Offended.** *Mark 4:17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.*
- **Revolted.** *Jeremiah 5:23 But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.*
- **Slidden Back.** *Jeremiah 8:5 Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.*

- **Turned aside.** *1 Timothy 1:6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;*
- **Turned away.** *1 Kings 11:9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,*
- **Turned back.** *1 Samuel 15:11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. Acts 7:39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,*
- **Uncircumcised heart.** *Jeremiah 9:25 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; 26 Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.*
- **Vexed.** *2 Peter 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)*

5. The only cure for retrogressive behavior is to repent and move in a new direction.
6. Biblical repentance means to change one's mind and confess specific transgressions. If God is merciful He will give the grace to repent reflected in heart felt sorrow.
 - *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
 - *Acts 5:31 Him [Jesus Christ] hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*
7. It is impossible to progress in the Christian life without the sustaining power and prayer of Christ.
 - *John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*
 - *John 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*
8. Every professing believer is responsible for progressing in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior.

- *2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

9. Self examination is essential in the process of determining progression or retrogression.

- *2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

10. Progression in saving faith and holiness of life is not an option. To state the matter negatively, retrogression is not an option for the true believer.

- *Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

11. The Doctrine of Retrogression must be understood in association with the Doctrine of Salvation. Christ has come to save His people from their sins not in them.

- *Matthew 1:21 And she [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

12. It is a fearful matter to fall into the hands of the living God in a state of unbelief or retrogression.

- *Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

13. The professing believer who is in retrogression of the soul will have no assurance of salvation, no clear conscience and no confidence in the hour of death of eternal life.

- *John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

14. The gospel of repentance which John the Baptist preached is the gospel which Jesus preached and it is the message that is needed in religious circles today.

- *John 1:23 He [John] said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.*
- *Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*
- *Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

6:1 bind them.

“Phylacteries consisted of two small hollow cubes made of the skin of clean animals. These boxes were attached to leather straps which were used to fasten them to the left hand and to the forehead during morning worship. The custom of wearing phylacteries can be traced to Deuteronomy 6:8, "You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes." The discovery of portions of phylacteries in the Dead Sea caves reveals they were not standardized before the time of Christ. Certainly not all the people wore them, but the Pharisees possibly wore them constantly during the time of Jesus. The word phylacteries occurs only once in the New Testament: "They [the scribes and Pharisees] make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments" (Matthew 23:5). In this passage Jesus criticized the display of some religious leaders who wanted to impress people with their piety (*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).

6:22 talk with thee.

God Still Talks to the Person who Cares

1. During the days of Moses God promised to “come down” and talk with him.

- *Numbers 11:17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.*

2. Prior to the incarnation of Christ, God was pleased to talk in a discernable human voice.

- *Deuteronomy 5:24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.*

3. Christian parents, and fathers in particular, are responsible to talk about the Scriptures.

- *Deuteronomy 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

4. God listens to what individuals say as well as what individuals do.

- *1 Samuel 2:3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.*

5. The people of God are exhorted to talk about the Lord and share all of His wondrous works.

- *1 Chronicles 16:9 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.*

- *Psalms 71:24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.*
- *Psalms 77:12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.*
- *Psalms 105:2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.*

6. The more individuals know about God and understand His essence the more they shall be able to bear witness of His wondrous works.

- *Psalms 119:27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.*
- *Psalms 145:11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;*

7. There is an old adage that “talk is cheap.” It can also be unprofitable if it is a substitute for honest labor.

- *Proverbs 14:23 In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.*

8. The prophet Jeremiah pleaded with God to let him talk about troublesome questions on his own heart.

- *Jeremiah 12:1 Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?*

9. As God promised to talk to Moses so He promised to talk to Ezekiel.

- *Ezekiel 3:22 And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.*

10. Only the most wicked of men will try to ensnare the Divine in dialogue.

- *Matthew 22:15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.*

11. There are times when the Lord cannot talk much with His beloved for a season.

- *John 14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*

Proverbs 6:34. jealousy.

Doctrine of Jealousy

1. As an emotion jealousy [Heb. *qanna'* (kaw-naw), to envy, to have a zeal] is ascribed to God as a divine attribute and so need not be a sinful emotion.

The Father is Jealous

- *Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;*
- *Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:*
- *Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.*
- *Deuteronomy 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,*
- *Deuteronomy 6:15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.*

The Apostle Paul was Jealousy for Christ's Sake

- *2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

The Holy Spirit is Jealous

- *James 4:5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? [Lusteth, *epipotheo* (ep-ee-poth-eh'-o); *potheo* (to yearn); to dote upon, i.e. intensely crave possession (lawfully or wrongfully):*
- 2. It is possible to provoke the Lord to jealousy.

God can be Provoked to Anger through Idolatry

- *Deuteronomy 32:16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.*
- *Deuteronomy 32:21 They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*

God can be Provoked to Anger through sins of Immorality

- *1 Kings 14:22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.*
- *Psalms 78:58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.*

3. Unsanctified jealousy can lead to irrational behavior with tragic consequences such as public examination and shame.

- *Numbers 5:14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: 15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.*
- *Numbers 5:30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law.*

4. In the Old Testament era Joshua warned the people of God of presumptuous sin.

- *Deuteronomy 29:20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.*
- *Joshua 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.*

5. In the New Testament era the Church is not to provoke the Lord to anger.

- *1 Corinthians 10:22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?*

6. God is pleased when individuals are jealous for His holy name.

Phinehas Honored the name of the Lord Among the People of his Generation

- *Numbers 25:11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.*

The prophet Elijah was Jealous for the Cause of the Lord in his Generation and so Apposed the Prophets of Baal

- *1 Kings 19:10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (cf. 1 Kings 19:14).*

5. God is jealous to protect His own character.

- *Ezekiel 39:25 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;*

7. As God is jealous to protect His name so He will move to protect all that He uses for His own glory.

The Land of Palestine

- *Joel 2:18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.*
- *Zechariah 1:14 So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.*
- *Zechariah 8:2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.*

The Nation of Israel Prior to AD 70

- *Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.*
- 8. In order to bring many in the nation of Israel to repentance God once provoked the people to jealousy by showing special favor to the Gentiles.
 - *Romans 10:19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*
 - *Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.*
- 9. When individuals do not arrest the slightest outburst of unsanctified anger the potential increases for self-destructive and other destructive behavior.
 - *Proverbs 6:34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.*

10. There is an unforgiving element to jealousy for a key component is anger.

- *Psalms 79:5 How long, LORD? Wilt thou be angry for ever? Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?*

11. A jealous person is a mean person in as far as they consider and manifest their jealousy.

- *Song of Solomon 8:6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.*

12. Because jealousy is such a strong emotion the Lord is presented as going forth with such passion to war against His enemies.

- *Isaiah 42:13 The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.*
- *Ezekiel 16:38 And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy.*
- *Ezekiel 16:42 So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.*

13. If God is gracious he will show the believer that which arouses His anger.

- *Ezekiel 8:3 And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy....8:5 Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.*

14. God first warned national Israel about His jealous rage and then He demonstrated it through the Assyrians in 721 BC and then the Chaldeans in 586 BC.

- *Ezekiel 23:25 And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire.*
- *Ezekiel 36:5 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. 6 Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus*

saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:

- *Ezekiel 38:19 For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel;*

15. The jealousy of God is intense and the destruction of His enemies complete.

- *Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.*
- *Zephaniah 3:8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.*

16. On a personal level there are many examples in Scripture of the self-destructive nature and other destructive consequences of jealousy.

- Cain was jealous of Abel's offering before the Lord.
- Sarah was jealous that Hagar was able to bear children and she was not.
- The brothers of Joseph were jealous because God and man favored him.
- Saul was jealous of David because the women of Israel sang his praises.
- Joab, the captive of the army of Israel was jealous of the position of Abner and found an occasion to kill him.
- The Ephraimites were jealous of Gideon and then of Jephthah, the ninth judge of Israel.
- The elder of the prodigal son was jealous of the younger brother's favor with the father after returning home from a life of debauchery.
- Sectional jealousy existed between Israel and the tribe of Judah.

PROVERBS 7

- 1 My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.
- 2 Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

7:1-2 keep...and lay up. Knowledge of Bible doctrine is not enough. The divine counsel must be kept. Doctrine must be applied to various situations in life to be meaningful and effective.

“Trust and obey,
for there’s no other way
to be happy in Jesus,
but to trust and obey.”

- 3 Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.
- 4 Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman [close friend]:

7: 4 say unto wisdom. The concept of self talk is well established in Scripture. Many times the Scriptures actually command the language of self talk to be used as in this passage and Psalm 42:5 “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”

The Value of Self Talk

- An issue can become crystallized
- The soul can be stabilized
- A godly plan of action can be visualized
- A sense of direction can be utilized

5 That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.

6 For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,
7 And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,

8 Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house,
9 In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:

10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

11 (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:
12 Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

13 So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,

14 I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.

15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

16 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.

17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.

19 For the Goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey:

20 He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.

7:5-20

Fifteen Characteristics of the Strange Woman

- She preys on the young and unsuspecting.
- She dresses seductively.
- She is deceitful in her heart.
- She is vocal and talkative.
- She is stubborn and has a will to power.
- She is restless and abides not at home.
- She is indiscriminate as she roams the streets, public places, the internet.
- She is forceful.
- She is immodest.
- She is full of burning illicit passion.
- She uses religion as a cloak for immoral behavior believing that ritual is a substitute for righteousness.
- She has the ability to flatter and make a person feel more important than the situation merits.
- She is seductive in presenting all the various preparations she has made for the expression of sensual passions.
- She calls lust love and so abuses and misuses the meaning of words.
- She offers reassurance that inappropriate actions will not be discovered and so there will be no consequences to suffer.

21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

22 He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;

23 Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

7:21-23

Three Marks of Foolish Behavior

- The words of the wicked are embraced as reasonable and worth any risk
- The pursuit of sensual pleasures is sought with eagerness.
- There is no genuine comprehension of lasting danger.

24 Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

26 For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

27 Her house is the way to hell [Sheol], going down to the chambers of death.

7:24-27

Three Reasons Not to Listen to the Strange Woman

- Those who listen to the strange woman become just another causality in a long list.
- If the strong do not survive the seduction of sin how can the weak escape?
- Physical and eternal death stalks to overtake the soul sooner rather than later.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 7

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 7

1. What is the only way to be truly happy in life?

Answer.

“Trust and obey,
for there’s no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
but to trust and obey.”

2. What precise language is to be used in talking to self about doctrine?

Answer.

Let the heart say, “*Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman [close friend].*”

3. What is the Value of Self Talk?

Answer.

- An issue can become crystallized
- The soul can be stabilized
- A godly plan of action can be visualized
- A sense of direction can be utilized

4. List fifteen characteristics of the strange woman.

Answer.

- She preys on the young and unsuspecting.
- She dresses seductively.
- She is deceitful in her heart.
- She is vocal and talkative.
- She is stubborn and has a will to power.
- She is restless and abides not at home.
- She is indiscriminate as she roams the streets, public places, the internet.
- She is forceful.
- She is immodest.
- She is full of burning illicit passion.
- She uses religion as a cloak for immoral behavior believing that ritual is a substitute for righteousness.
- She has the ability to flatter and make a person feel more important than the situation merits.
- She is seductive in presenting all the various preparations she has made for the expression of sensual passions.

- She calls lust love and so abuses and misuses the meaning of words.
- She offers reassurance that inappropriate actions will not be discovered and so there will be no consequences to suffer.

5. What three reasons can be given for not listening to the strange woman?

Answer.

- Those who listen to the strange woman become just another causality in a long list.
- If the strong do not survive the seduction of sin how can the weak escape?
- Physical and eternal death stalks to overtake the soul sooner rather than later.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you talk to yourself with spiritual words and hymns? Read Colossians 3:16. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
2. Would the characteristics of the strange woman or the woman who is a stranger to the covenant of grace and holiness apply equally to a man? If not how would the characteristics differ?
3. Are the Scriptures realistic in describing individuals as eager to sin?
4. Despite the constant exhortations to do right why is there so many doing wrong? Why do people not learn from and avoid the mistakes of others?
5. Proverbs 6: 23 speaks of shameful behavior leading to the equivalent of a dart striking through his liver. In other words sin brings great pain. Would you agree or disagree that sin sooner or later brings pain? If you agree describe some of the pain that sin brings in the following areas: emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 7: 4 Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman [close friend]:

PROVERBS 8

1 Doth not wisdom cry? And understanding put forth her voice?

8:1 cry. Wisdom is personified.

- Wisdom cried 8:1-3
- Wisdom stands 8:2
- Wisdom calls 8:4
- Wisdom speaks 8:4
- Wisdom reproves 8:5
- Wisdom abhors sin 8:7
- Wisdom admonishes 8:10
- Wisdom searches 8:12
- Wisdom hates 8:13
- Wisdom counsels 8:14
- Wisdom advises 8:15
- Wisdom loves 8:17
- Wisdom leads 8:20
- Wisdom blesses 8:21
- Wisdom rejoices 8:30
- Wisdom delights 8:31

2 She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.

3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.

4 Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

8:1-4 I call. There is a public and universal call of wisdom inviting all to come and learn. Wisdom does not wait for souls to seek her. With a yearning heart she goes to stand in the market place of commerce, the paths of personal pleasure, the courts of judgment and the schools of learning. Anywhere and everywhere she makes her presence known.

5 O ye simple [silly], understand wisdom: and, ye fools [fat and thus stupid], be ye of an understanding heart.

6 Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

7 For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness [lawlessness] is an abomination [abhorrence] to my lips.

8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward [crooked] or perverse [crafty] in them.

8:8 in righteousness. Wisdom speaks in a righteous manner by setting forth what man owes to God, his neighbor and himself so that each might receive what is properly due.

9 They are all [straight and] plain to him that understandeth, and right [righteous] to them that find knowledge.

8:9 they are all plain. Here is the biblical response to the skeptics of God's Word. The problem is not with the Scriptures but with those who read. Difficulties vanish when a person is taught by the Lord. *Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he [Jesus] expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

10 Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

11 For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

12 I wisdom dwell with prudence [practical wisdom], and find out knowledge of witty [shrewd] inventions.

13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil [injurious behavior]: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the foward [perverse] mouth, do I hate.

8:13 hate evil. A person may avoid evil as a matter of practice but love it in the heart. To hate evil necessitates divine wisdom. "Lord, teach me to hate evil and to love holiness."

8:13 fear of the Lord.

Four Practical Ways the Fear of the Lord is Manifested

- Evil is hated
- Pride and arrogance are hated
- The way of evil is hated
- The perverse mouth is hated

14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

8:17 seek me early. Youth is the best time to gain wisdom.

18 Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.

20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

Wisdom as a Young Child
Proverbs 8:22-31

22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:

26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;

31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.

33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.

36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

8:36 he that sinneth. Individuals are personally responsible for accepting or rejecting wisdom. It is not sin or Satan that causes the soul to do wrong at any given moment but a conscious will to power and thus a choice to commit evil. Why anyone at any given moment would choose to do wrong over right is a great mystery, but that is what happens. While a sense of helplessness might exist in the heart that yields easily, earnestly and repeatedly to what is wrong, still the individuals is held accountable in the sight of God. To accept this spiritual reality provides a chance to choose life. To reject this truth and surrender to inordinate passions and inappropriate behavior is to court death not only in time but in eternity.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 8

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 8

1. List sixteen ways wisdom is personified.

Answer.

- Wisdom cried 8:1-3
- Wisdom stands 8:2
- Wisdom calls 8:4
- Wisdom speaks 8:4
- Wisdom reproves 8:5
- Wisdom abhors sin 8:7
- Wisdom admonishes 8:10
- Wisdom searches 8:12
- Wisdom hates 8:13
- Wisdom counsels 8:14
- Wisdom advises 8:15
- Wisdom loves 8:17
- Wisdom leads 8:20
- Wisdom blesses 8:21
- Wisdom rejoices 8:30
- Wisdom delights 8:31

2. What is the biblical response to the skeptics of God's Word?

Answer.

The problem is not with the Scriptures but with those who read. Difficulties vanish when a person is taught by the Lord. *Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he [Jesus] expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

3. In what four practical ways is the fear of the Lord manifested?

Answer.

- Evil is hated
- Pride and arrogance are hated
- The way of evil is hated
- The perverse mouth is hated

4. What passage teaches personal responsibility for salvation or damnation?

Answer.

Proverbs 8: 35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. 36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

5. How is wisdom portrayed in Proverbs 8:23-31?

Answer.

Wisdom is portrayed as a Young Child in Proverbs 8:22-31.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Would you agree that wisdom is to be preferred to riches? If so why and if not why not?
2. Do you think Proverbs 8:22-31 is a reference to the pre-incarnate Christ? Why or why not?
3. Is Jesus Christ in view in Proverbs 8:23-31? Why or why not?
4. Since individuals are born enslaved to sin how can they be held responsible for their immoral actions which is a natural outworking of their soul and how can a just God condemn them to hell?
5. How important is faith in association with the expression of wisdom? Is faith a creative power?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 8: 13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of the Fear of the Lord

1. Fear of the Lord can be instilled as an act of the sovereign will of God

- **as a motive for service.** *1 Samuel 11:7 And he [Elijah] took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.*
- **as a form of divine judgment.** *2 Chronicles 14:14 And they [the armies of Judah] smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of the LORD came upon them [the enemies of Israel]: and they [the Hebrews] spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them.*
- **as a form of divine protection.** *2 Chronicles 17:10 And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.*

2. The fear of the Lord is commanded to be found in the heart of those who profess to know Him.
 - *2 Chronicles 19:7 Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.*
 - *2 Chronicles 19:9 And he [Jehoshaphat] charged them [the people of Israel], saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.*
3. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
 - *Psalms 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth forever.*
 - *Job 28:28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*
 - *Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*
 - *Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*
4. The Fear of the Lord is defined biblically.
 - *Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*
 - *Proverbs 14:27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*
 - *Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.*
5. The fear of the Lord is characterized.
 - *Psalms 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*
6. Great mercy and grace is extended to those who fear the Lord.
 - **A longer life.** *Proverbs 10:27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.*

- **A better quality of life.** *Proverbs 19:23 The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.*
- **A stronger faith.** *Proverbs 14:26 In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.*
- **Material prosperity.** *Proverbs 22:4 By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.*
- **Better understanding of spiritual realities.** *Isaiah 11:3 And shall make him [the Messiah] of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:*
- **Grace under pressure.** *Isaiah 33:6 And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.*
- **Social stability.** *Acts 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*

7. The soul that possesses little of this world's goods but much of the fear of the Lord is far better off than a rich person with much silver and gold.
 - *Proverbs 15:16 Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.*
8. The fear of the Lord produces holiness of life.
 - *Proverbs 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.*
9. The Scriptures warn the believer never to stop fearing the Lord.
 - *Proverbs 23:17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.*
10. Fear of God was a mark of the Messiah.
 - *Isaiah 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*

Proverbs 8:36. wrongeth his own soul.

Doctrine of Self-Sanctification

1. The practice of some form of self-sanctification is an established principle in the Word of God. In the Old Testament the people of God were reminded often to set themselves apart in a special way for service and sacrifice and worship.
2. The priests of God were to sanctify themselves before entering into His presence.
 - *Exodus 19:22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.*
3. The people of God were to sanctify themselves and be a holy people.
 - *Leviticus 11:44 For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*
 - *Leviticus 20:7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.*
4. When a new home was established it could be sanctified unto the Lord.
 - *Leviticus 27:14 And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the LORD, then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand.*
5. The Lord was pleased when man sanctified a portion of his possession.
 - *Leviticus 27:16 And if a man shall sanctify unto the LORD some part of a field of his possession, then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof: an homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver.*
6. Prior to receiving a blessing of God the children of Israel sanctified themselves.
 - *Numbers 11:18 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.*
7. When God's people sanctify themselves divine wonders can be performed.
 - *Joshua 3:5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.*
8. Practical godliness involves self-sanctification and thus a measure of personal responsibility to root out inward corruption.

- *Joshua 7:13 Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.*

9. The prophet Samuel called upon the family of Jesse to sanctify themselves even though they did not know they would receive a great blessing from the Lord. Personal holiness is its own virtue.

- *1 Samuel 16:5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.*

10. No matter how menial the task for the Lord, divine service requires a sanctified people.

- *1 Chronicles 15:12 And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it.*

11. Ministers of the gospel must lead the people of God in the matter of self-sanctification.

- *2 Chronicles 29:5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.*
- *2 Chronicles 35:6 So kill the Passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.*

12. God's people should exhort each other to holiness.

- *Nehemiah 13:22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.*

13. There are degrees of self-sanctification. Some individuals are more conscientious than others.

- *2 Chronicles 29:34 But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the other priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.*

14. The mercies of God are designed to lead the people of God to self-sanctification.

- *Isaiah 29:23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.*

15. A feigned holiness will be judged.

- *Isaiah 66:17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.*

16. Ultimately God is the one who must save and sanctify His people. Nevertheless, the Lord uses means and gives grace so that a measure of self-sanctification can take place. There is human responsibility in the matter of holiness.

- *Joel 1:14 Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,*
- *Joel 2:15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:*
- *Joel 2:16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.*

17. Jesus has prayed for the sanctification of His people.

- *John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

18. Because Christ has sanctified Himself, because Christ has prayed, Christians will be sanctified through the truth or through Bible doctrine in the soul.

- *John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

19. One of the great purposes of redemption is for the Lord to have a sanctified people.

- *Ephesians 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

20. The apostle Paul prayed that God would sanctify or make the church holy.

- *1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

21. Holiness is not without a high price. Jesus had to suffer in order for the Church to be sanctified.

Hebrews 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

22. The last word in the New Testament on this topic calls upon the Christian to recognize and accept personal responsibility for holiness through self-sanctification.

- *1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

23. Unless the concept of self-sanctification is recognized there will be a passive phase in the Christian experience whereby sin in the soul is not radically dealt with. In fact, its very existence is justified.

- The heart will be tempted to say, "I am just weak."
- The heart will be tempted to say, "If God does not sanctify me I cannot help myself."
- The heart will be tempted to say, "It is God's fault I am the way I am."
- The heart will be tempted to say, "I cannot change, I cannot be different. I have tried."

24. It is instructive to note that in the Bible God never says, "Try to sanctify yourself." The imperative is given time and again, "Sanctify yourself." What God commands He will give strength to perform for His glory and man's good.

PROVERBS 9

1 Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:

9:1 Wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to make right decisions at the right time to produce righteous results thereby bringing glory to God and good to self and others.

9:1 seven pillars. Seven is the number of perfection or completion. A build with multiple pillars has a strong foundation. Wisdom, embodied in the Scriptures is perfect or complete and will give the soul a strong foundation for life. *Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

9:1-5 Wisdom personified is continued.

- Wisdom builds 9:1
- Wisdom cooks 9:2
- Wisdom plans 9:3
- Wisdom invites 9:4-5

2 She [Wisdom] hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.

3 She [Wisdom] hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city,

9:3 she crieth. Though Wisdom pleads loudly, the simple, the foolish, and the silly refuse to listen. Because wisdom is not listened to and obeyed sin is able to survive and thrive.

4 Whoso is simple [silly, susceptible], let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she [Wisdom] saith to him,

5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled [mixed].

6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

9:4-6 whoso is simple. Like Wisdom, the Word of God invites individuals who know they are susceptible to sin, Satan and self destructive interests, to come for spiritual nourishment. To spiritually feast upon the Word of God is to forsake foolishness and to gain life and understanding.

7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.

9:7 scorner. A variety of names are given in Scripture that reveals the character and content of individuals in an unflattering way.

Insulting Names in Scripture

• The fool	Psalm 14:1
• The simple	Proverbs 9:4
• The scorner	Proverbs 9:7
• The wicked	Proverbs 9:7
• Ignorant	Isaiah 56:10
• That fox	Luke 13:32
• Vipers	Matthew 3:7
• Hypocrites	Matthew 6:2
• Blind guides	Matthew 23:16
• Whited sepulchers	Matthew 23:27
• Wolves	Acts 20:29
• Whited wall	Acts 23:3
• Dogs	Philippians 3:2
• Evil workers	Philippians 3:2
• The concision	Philippians 3:2
• Lukewarm	Revelation 3:16

8 Reprove not a scorner [scoffer], lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

9:7, 8, These two verses are parenthetical as they explain why the call from Wisdom goes unheeded and meets with opposition. The scorner does not accept correction and will hate anyone who offers it. Spiritual discernment is needed to know not only when to speak but also when to keep silent. Much hatred and hostility in the church can be traced to pastoral counsel being rejected and the pastor hated for offering it.

9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just [righteous] man, and he will increase in [spiritual] learning.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

9:10 fear of the Lord. The fear of God includes a terror of His power, a dread of His frowning face and a conscious desire to please Him lest He be angry.

9:10 the knowledge of the holy. God is known through meditation, study of the Bible, life's experiences, nature, revelation and the person of Jesus Christ.

11 For by me [Wisdom] thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

9:11 thy days shall be multiplied. Sin pulls the soul and body to the grave as quickly as possible. Many a person has died the sin unto death or forfeited life prematurely through violation of the Wisdom of the Word of God. Many diseases are contracted through an immoral and indiscriminate lifestyle. Many deaths can be attributed to those associated with someone under God's judgment.

12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

9:12 be wise for thyself. It is for one's own good that a person should listen to the teaching of Wisdom. There is an invested self interest in obeying God. God will not be the loser if the scorner persists in a senseless and self destructive course of action. Though others may be affected by evil attitude and actions death and damnation are singular events.

13 A foolish woman is clamorous [full of noise]: she is simple, and knoweth nothing.

14 For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city,

15 To call passengers who go right on their ways:

16 Whoso is simple [naïve], let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

17 Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

18 But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

9:13-18 foolish woman.

Characteristics of the Ungodly Woman

- She is clamorous or boisterous.
- She is without spiritual discernment.
- She is an extrovert and makes her presence known.
- She initiates conversations and is disruptive of others who pass by.
- She dispenses worldly wisdom.
- She traffics in death.
- She is on a journey to hell.

“My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flower, the fruit of life is gone.
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Are mine alone.”

Lord Byron

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 9

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 9

1. Define wisdom.

Answer.

Wisdom is the ability to make right decisions at the right time to produce righteous results thereby bringing glory to God and good to self and others.

2. How is sin able to survive and thrive?

Answer.

Though Wisdom pleads loudly the simple, the foolish, and the silly refuse to listen. Because wisdom is not listened to and obeyed sin is able to survive and thrive.

3. List sixteen insulting names used in Scripture.

Answer.

• The fool	Psalm 14:1
• The simple	Proverbs 9:4
• The scorner	Proverbs 9:7
• The wicked	Proverbs 9:7
• Ignorant	Isaiah 56:10
• That fox	Luke 13:32
• Vipers	Matthew 3:7
• Hypocrites	Matthew 6:2
• Blind guides	Matthew 23:16
• Whited sepulchers	Matthew 23:27
• Wolves	Acts 20:29
• Whited wall	Acts 23:3
• Dogs	Philippians 3:2
• Evil workers	Philippians 3:2
• The concision	Philippians 3:2
• Lukewarm	Revelation 3:16

4. Explain why wisdom goes unheeded.

Answer.

The scorner does not accept correction and will hate anyone who offers it.

5. Provide seven characteristics of the ungodly woman.

Answer.

- She is clamorous or boisterous.
- She is without spiritual discernment.
- She is an extrovert and makes her presence known.
- She initiates conversations and is disruptive of others who pass by.
- She dispenses worldly wisdom.
- She traffics in death.
- She is on a journey to hell.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Would you consider yourself a wise person? Why or why not? Who is the wisest person you have known or known about, biblically or otherwise?
2. From your personal experience give an example of when it was wise to keep silent.
3. Is the pursuit of wisdom and Bible doctrine for self interest intrinsically wrong?
4. Is it right or wrong to use insulting language and call other people names if biblical language is used?
5. Have you known someone who died the sin unto death or prematurely because of a wrong association? Please share.

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 9: 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Division 3
The First Collection of the
Proverbs of Solomon
Proverbs 10:1-24:34

PROVERBS 10

The first division of Proverbs ends and the second division now begins. In the first section Wisdom has called out to exhort individuals to come for enlightenment. Those who listen to the voice of Wisdom find happiness. Those who refuse to listen to Bible doctrine find heartache, destruction and death.

1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness [grief] of his mother.

10:1 a glad father. Solomon speaks from personal experience for he listened to the counsel of his own father King David. On the other hand it is the tender heart of the mother who is usually most grieved with a wayward child.

“A Mother’s love is something
that no one can explain,
It is made of deep devotion
and of sacrifice and pain,

It is endless and unselfish
and enduring come what may
For nothing can destroy it
or take that love away...

It is patient and forgiving
when all others are forsaking,
And it never fails or falters
even though the heart is breaking...

It believes beyond believing
when the world around condemns,
And it glows with all the beauty of the rarest, brightest gems...

It is far beyond defining,
it defies all explanation,
and it still remains a secret like the mysteries of creation...

A many-splendored miracle
man cannot understand
And another wondrous evidence of God’s tender guiding hand.”
Source unknown

2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.

10:2 The events in the book of Esther illustrate the truth of this proverb. Haman did not profit by his wickedness and Mordecai did not die because of his righteousness. Only in the gospel are true riches to be obtained.

- Riches of mercy Ephesians 2:4
- Riches of grace Ephesians 1:7
- Riches of goodness Romans 2:4
- Riches of glory Philippians 4:10
- Riches of God Romans 11:33

3 The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

10: 3 the soul of the righteous. There is spiritual food that only the righteous can enjoy. After speaking to the woman at the well, Jesus told His disciples who had brought Him food, "*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*" (John 4:32). His soul was not famished but was satisfied. In contrast the wealth of the wicked is often taken away suddenly. "*And he [Jesus] spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God*" (Luke 12:16-21).

4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

10:4 a slack hand. Honest labor is always honored in Scripture. “The work of a Beethoven, and the work of a charwoman, become spiritual on precisely the same condition, that of being offered to God, of being done humbly “as to the Lord.” This does not, of course, mean that it is for anyone a mere toss-up whether he should sweep rooms or compose symphonies. A mole must dig to the glory of God and a cock must crow” C. S. Lewis in *The Weight of Glory*. Though initially poor and a stranger in a strange land Ruth was financially honored because she was willing to labor. In the midst of a wicked generation that is being taught Christians do not need to work because they are children of the King, the gospel message says “the hand of the diligent maketh rich.”

5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

10:5 Karl Marx (1818-1883) devoted his life without God trying to discover the economic principles that govern society and the movement of history. Had he been wiser Marx would have turned to the Scriptures for guidance. There is a universal principle which states that time is to be redeemed (Colossians 4:5). Those who labor will be rewarded while those who slumber will come to shame.

6 Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

7 The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

10:6-7 the memory. The validity of this proverb may become apparent only with the passing of time. Today, the apostle Paul is honored as a righteous man. His name is a blessing to millions. In contrast, a violent judgment fell upon Nero who wickedly persecuted the just.

8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating [talking or babbling] fool shall fall.

10:8 the fool. Biblically a fool refers to someone who is perverse and thus silly in the sight of God and man.

9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

10:9 uprightly. To walk uprightly is to live with integrity reflected in the life of Joseph who could be trusted with all that was placed into his care including the wife of his master (Gen. 40-41). In contrast Ziba, a former servant of king Saul proved to be a perverse man without integrity and without honor (2 Samuel 16:1-4; 19:24-27).

10 He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating [talking or babbling] fool shall fall.

10:10 winketh. Winking with the eye while speaking something different with the lips has always been a sign of insincerity. The person who can do this will bring sorrow to his own life and distress to those who trusted him. Judas kissed Jesus while winking with his eye at the soldiers who had come to arrest Christ.

11 The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

10:11 the mouth. The testimony of the lips must be matched by the testimony of the life. Many have no power and usefulness in witnessing because there is an inconsistency in communication and conduct. Samuel had an effective ministry following the death of Eli whose own ministry ended in violence (1 Samuel 4:1-18).

12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

10:12 stirreth up strife. The actions of Doeg the Edomite illustrates the principle of hatred stirring up strife (1 Samuel 22:9-19) while the actions of Nathan with David shows how love can cover sin (2 Samuel 12:1-14).

10:12 covereth all sins. Part of this verse is quoted in the New Testament. *1 Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.* Concerning a particular Christian it was said by a friend, “I do not know how good he would be in a fight but I know he can out love any man I have ever met.” That is what the Christian wants to do, out love all others.

13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.

10:13 While Solomon had been given wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-28) his son Rehoboam embraced foolish counsel and came under the rod of divine judgment (1 Kings 12:8-19).

14 Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

10:14 lay up knowledge. A wise person knows the limitations of his knowledge and will seek him in good books and good counsel. In contrast the foolish will speak recklessly inviting destruction. While Timothy from a child knew the Scriptures able to make one wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:14, 15, the magician Elymas talked himself into divine judgment (Acts 13:6-11).

15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.

10:15 strong city. Only in time can the rich man flee to his “strong city” in a pressure situation. In eternity riches will avail nothing as Dives discovered (Luke 16:19-31).

10:15 their poverty. “Poor people think themselves undone because they are poor; but it is their mistake: The destruction of the poor is their poverty; it sinks their spirits, and ruins all their comforts; whereas a man may live very comfortably, though he has but a little to live on, if he be but content, and keep a good conscience, and live by faith” (Matthew Henry). Lazarus was a poor man but he gained heaven and eternal life (Luke 16:19-31).

16 The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin.

10:16 the righteous. The righteous refers to a person who is spiritual. Romans 8:6 explains. *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* Cain and Able illustrate the truth of this proverb for while Able was righteous Cain produced nothing but sin (Gen. 4:5-8).

17 He is in the way of life that keepeth [obeys] instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

10:17 the way of life. The way of life is the divinely appointed path which God has marked out for every person. “This is the way, let us walk in it” is not a pious cliché but the utterance of an eternal moral truth. The person that will not listen to reason and reproof becomes hard hearted and will dishonor themselves. Saul refused correction and instruction in righteousness and lost his kingdom (1 Samuel 15:33). David received reproof and found grace and forgiveness.

18 He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.

10:18 lying lips...slander. Hypocrisy and tale-bearing are twin sins of the worse magnitude (Lev. 19:16). There are people who feign love and friendship while harboring hatred in the heart and so in secret spread evil stories or insinuate motives that are not verifiable. The divine verdict, such person is a fool. Joab was not honest concerning Abner (2 Samuel 3:27) while Jeremiah fell victim to slander (Jeremiah 37:11-15).

19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

10:19 multitude of words. The Bible has much to say about the tongue and the damage it can do. James 3 describes how the tongue is “*is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*” While many have regretted speaking, few ever regret their silence. Jesus said in Matthew 12:37, “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned”.

20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.

10:20 choice silver. When the heart of a person is in harmony with God then the speech will be valued. In contrast a wicked heart produces little that is worthwhile. Simon Magnus brought himself much harm by his wicked heart speaking. Of him Peter said, *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity* (Acts 8:23).

21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

10:21. feed many. There is a spiritual feeding that takes place when a righteous person speaks. Their words nourish the soul. In contrast the speech of the fool is worthless and produces death. When the prophet Samuel spoke the nation was blessed but when Saul spoke he led the people into murder and mayhem.

22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

10:22 maketh rich. It is possible to become financially rich in an unholy and thus unauthorized way. Such wealth will bring much sorrow by those who are touched by it. It is possible to enjoy spiritual riches that bring much joy as Habakkuk and Paul testify to.

Habakkuk 3:17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

23 It is as sport [entertainment] to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.

10:23 to do mischief. Greedy for financial gain Balaam played with his soul to his and others eternal shame (Numbers 31:16). In contrast Phinehas was a man of understanding whose wisdom turned away the vengeance of God (Numbers 25:6-13).

24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

25 As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

10:24-25. fear of the wicked. While the wicked might act indestructible the Bible reveals the secret dread they carry in their heart of the certain judgment that will come upon them. One day suddenly and without warning judgment falls and the wicked perish much like an unexpected whirlwind brings death and destruction. In contrast the righteous do not fear and are established in time and in eternity. While the accusers of Daniel perished, he was established (Daniel 6:4-24).

26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.

10:26 the sluggard. A strong acid will cause the teeth to be set on edge and smoke will irritate the eyes. In like manner it is frustrating, it is irritating to place confidence in a person whose heart is not engage in the mission entrusted to them. Jesus spoke of such an unfaithful servant in Luke 19:20-26.

Six Characteristics of the Sluggard

- The sluggard is foolish. *Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:*
- The sluggard is lazy and prefers sleep to work. *Proverbs 6:9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?*
- The sluggard is irritating to others and full of indifference. *Proverbs 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.*
- The sluggard is satisfied to covet and be poor. *Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*
- The sluggard finds excuses not to work. *Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.*
- The sluggard is full of self conceit. *Proverbs 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*

27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

28 The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.

29 The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.

10:27-30. Time is short, death is certain and eternity is real. The wicked will perish sooner in time than the righteous and forever in eternity while the righteous live on. To testify to this contrast the Word of God provides the following examples for consideration in establishing these four proverbs.

- Cain and Able
- The world that perished and Noah
- Lot and Abraham
- Isaac and Ishmael

- Esau and Jacob
- The accusers and Joseph

31 The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.

32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

10:31-32. Jezebel had a froward tongue, a deceitful tongue, a perverse tongue. She was cut off in her sin. In contrast Elijah whom she hated and spoke against and tried to kill was established in righteousness.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 10

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 10

1. What happens to those who find wisdom and those who don't?

Answer.

Those who listen to the voice of Wisdom find happiness. Those who refuse to listen to Bible doctrine fine heartache, destruction and death.

2. Provide five examples of spiritual riches.

Answer.

- Riches of mercy Ephesians 2:4
- Riches of grace Ephesians 1:7
- Riches of goodness Romans 2:4
- Riches of glory Phil. 4:10
- Riches of God Rom 11:33

3. Which personality in the Bible illustrates how “the hand of the diligent maketh rich”.

Answer.

Though initially poor and a stranger in a strange land Ruth was financially honored because she was willing to labor.

4. What observation did Matthew Henry make about poor people?

Answer.

“Poor people think themselves undone because they are poor; but it is their mistake: The destruction of the poor is their poverty; it sinks their spirits, and ruins all their comforts; whereas a man may live very comfortably, though he has but a little to live on, if he be but content, and keep a good conscience, and live by faith” (Matthew Henry). Lazarus was a poor man but he gained heaven and eternal life (Luke 16:19-31).

5. Define who the “righteous” are in Scripture.

Answer.

The righteous refers to a person who is spiritual. Romans 8:6 explains. *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* Cain and Able illustrate the truth of this proverb for while Able was righteous Cain produced nothing but sin (Gen. 4:5-8).

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Is the language concerning spiritual riches helpful or frustrating to those who are physically poor and in need of financial resources?
2. Do you find it easy to forgive those who have wounded you? Do you have any sort of hatred in your heart against someone? If you do not have any hatred is it because you have never been deeply wounded or because you are very forgiving?
3. Is the modern “Health and Wealth” message a perversion of the historic gospel message? If so, explain how.
4. How can sin be “covered” and yet not be “covered up”?
5. By a simple “yes” or “no” answer, do you consider yourself a righteous person? Why or why not?

Hiding God’s Word in my Heart

Proverbs 10: 12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Leader’s Supplemental Material

Doctrine of the Fool

1. Biblically a fool refers to someone who is perverse and thus silly in the sight of God and man. To be perverse is to turn away from what is right or good. It is to be corrupt, improper and incorrect. To be perverse is to act contrary to the evidence. It is to remain obstinate in opposing what is right, reasonable.
2. Individuals can know when they are acting foolish. Sometimes they just do not care. On other occasions they repent of their attitude and actions.
 - *1 Samuel 26:21 Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.*
3. Those who do not repent often die the death of the wicked which is to die as a fool dieth.
 - *2 Samuel 3:33 And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth?*

4. A fool can be recognized by several distinguishing characteristics.

- **Atheism.** *Psalms 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*
- **Lack of discernment.** *Psalms 92:6 A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.*
- **Intemperate in speech.** *Proverbs 29:11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.*
- **Enjoys making trouble.** Proverbs 10:23 It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.
- **Possess an inflated ego.** *Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*
- **Silliness.** *Proverbs 13:16 Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.*
- **Inappropriate anger.** *Proverbs 14:16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.*
- **Hostile to parents.** *Proverbs 15:5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.*
- **Illogical.** *Proverbs 17:7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.*
- **Unwilling to receive correction no matter how painful it might be.** *Proverbs 17:10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.*
- **Indifferent to Bible doctrine.** *Proverbs 17:16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?*
- **Dull in understanding.** *Proverbs 24:7 Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.*
- **Lack of spiritual insight into self.** *Proverbs 18:2 A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.*
- **Meddlesome.** *Proverbs 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.*
- **Untrustworthy.** *Proverbs 26:6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage.*

- **Lazy.** *Ecclesiastes 4:5 The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.*
- **Giggly.** *Ecclesiastes 7:6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.*
- **Self-destructive.** *Ecclesiastes 10:12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.*

5. The Bible predicts what happens to fools.

- **The fool will lose wealth.** *Psalm 49:10 For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.*
- **The fool will fall from an exalted position to a lower one in life.** *Proverbs 10:8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.*
- **The fool will become the servant of others who are wiser.** *Proverbs 11:29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.*
- **The fool will not receive much honor.** *Proverbs 26:1 As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.*
- **The fool will continue to act foolishly.** *Proverbs 26:11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.*

6. Because the fool is so evil and dangerous it would be better and easier to confront an angry bear than a fool committing folly.

- *Proverbs 17:12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.*

7. Godly parents should pray they do not give birth to a fool.

- *Proverbs 17:21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy.*

8. There is a way for even the most foolish to appear wise and that is to not speak too quickly.

- *Proverbs 17:28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.*

9. Because the foolish person will not listen and will despise wisdom, there are times when he should not be spoken to.

- *Proverbs 23:9 Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.*

10. When a person argues with a fool it is possible to become just like that person.

- *Proverbs 26:4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.*

11. At times the kindness course of action is to confront a fool lest he be puffed with and destroyed by pride and self importance.

- *Proverbs 26:5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.*

12. The fool has no capacity for life.

- *Ecclesiastes 2:14 The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.*
- *Ecclesiastes 10:3 Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.*

13. The foolish person is soon forgotten.

- *Ecclesiastes 2:16 For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? As the fool.*

14. Every person has the potential of being wise, or being a fool.

- *Ecclesiastes 2:19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.*

15. It is possible for the spiritual leaders of a nation to be classified as a fool.

- *Hosea 9:7 The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.*

16. The Lord does not want His disciples to engage in personal name calling in a spirit of anger.

- *Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

17. While God does not engage in name calling in a spirit of personal anger He does accurately access a person to be a fool.

- *Luke 12:20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*

18. The apostle Paul did call Christians in the church of Corinth fools, not in personal anger but because of the dullness of their understanding of Bible doctrine.

- *1 Corinthians 15:36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:*

19. Knowing the characteristics and end of a fool the Christian must strive to embrace wisdom and store Bible doctrine in the soul for the glory of God and the good of his own heart.

PROVERBS 11

1 A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

11:1 a false balance. Those who practice acts of injustice manifest the lack of righteousness in the heart. The Law demanded that honest scales be kept. *Deuteronomy 25: 13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. 14 Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. 15 But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*

How to Live Longer

• Honor parents	Ex. 20:12
• Keep the commandments	Ex. 5:33; 11:21
• Fear God	Deut. 6:1
• Keep honest weights	Deut. 25:13

2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

11:2 pride cometh. There is a pride of self exaltation and arrogance which is displeasing to God. The divine judgment on such emotion is shame. Because a person is more like the devil himself when filled with pride, the fate of Lucifer shall also be shared (Isa. 14: 13-15).

3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

11:3 integrity. It is not general knowledge or even knowledge of Bible doctrine that will guide a believer, but moral innocence from that which defiles the soul. Those who distort the truth shall be destroyed. The lives of Obadiah and Ahab illustrate this truth (1 Kings 18:3, 4; 21:25).

4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

11:4 day of wrath. The wrath of God may be administered directly through divine intervention or indirectly through the laws of the universe. In that day money will not be of any help (Rev. 6:12-17; 20:12-15). Only righteousness can deliver, illustrated in the life of Noah (Gen. 6).

Various Types of Righteousness Mentioned in the Bible

• Faith righteousness	Genesis 15:6
• Divine righteousness	Psalm 22:31
• Paths of righteousness	Psalm 23:3
• Imputed righteousness	Psalm 24:5
• Self righteousness	Matthew 5:20
• Legal righteousness	Galatians 3:21
• Works righteousness	Ephesians 2:8,9
• Fruit producing righteousness	James 3:18

5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.

7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.

8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.

11:5-8. The Law of Divine Retribution is in view in verses 5-8. What a person sows that shall they reap, be it bad or good. *Galatians 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* The book of Esther along with the experiences of Daniel and his enemies illustrates the Law of Divine Retribution.

9 An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

11:9 An hypocrite. In order to protect himself at all costs a hypocrite is willing to sacrifice anyone and everyone upon the altar of social expediency. The righteous are content to let God judge the matter as Joseph trusted in the Lord (Genesis 39).

10 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.

11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

11:10-11. One generation rejoiced over the downfall of Abimelech (Judges 9:53-57) while another generation celebrated the exaltation of David (2 Samuel 19:14).

12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

11:12 holdeth his peace. It is difficult not to speak evil against someone who says something unkind or respond in like manner. Nevertheless, there is wisdom in being like Christ *Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously* (1 Peter 2:23).

13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

11:13 concealeth. In the Law provision was made to snuff out the flame of the candles on the golden candlestick with golden snuffers and dispose of the black soot afterwards in golden dishes (Ex. 37:17-24). As no lamp will burn well for long without a bit of “snuffing” so no Christen will be useful without a measure of grace being shown. And what is to be done with the “soot”? It must be disposed of according to gospel terms which is verbal restraint and not the retelling of the matter far and wide. Christian be a golden “snuffer” and use the golden “snuff dish” often.

14 Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

11:14 counsellors. This is a wise proverb establishing a general principle establishing the fact that different perspectives are needed in considering an important matter. Of course the multitude of counsellors must also be committed to righteousness, or error will only reinforce error.

15 He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure.

11:15 suretiship. Many friendships have been ruined by a pledge being made to stand for good for another. There is at least one exception to this proverb for Christ became a surety for those who were strangers from the grace of God. *Hebrews 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*

“He bore on the tree
the sentence for me;
And now both the Surety
and sinner are free.”

16 A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches.

11:16 By physical strength men can protect their property and by inner strength of character a gracious woman can retain honor reflected in the actions of Abigail in her dealings with David (1 Samuel 25).

17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

11:17 merciful man...he that is cruel. Mercy, not might makes right. Isaac was a gracious man (Gen. 26) while Joab was cruel (1 Kings 2:5, 6).

18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

19 As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.

20 They that are of a foward [distorted, false] heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.

21 Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

11: 18-21 Once more sin and righteousness are set in opposition one to the other. The wicked are characterized by deceit, falsehood, and unity of purpose in evil. Because God has established a moral universe the wicked will not go unpunished in time or eternity. In contrast the righteous are rewarded with a clear conscience, peace of heart, being the delight of God and divine deliverance in times of adversity. The life of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (king, c. 705 BC) and Hezekiah, king of Judah (715-686 BC), illustrates the principles of these verses as per 2 Chronicles 32.

22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's [hog's nose] snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

11:22 Though priceless jewels and beauty are united to evil behavior to make it more attractive, it is still vile and in the sight of God is ugly. Jezebel was a queen with all the beauty and luxuries of the court, but her soul was ugly. In her death the dogs licked her bones. (1 Kings 21:23).

23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

11:23 only good. A person can determine the status of their heart by reflecting upon what they desire for others. Feelings of revenge, hatred, jealousy and pettiness characterize the wicked not the righteous.

24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

“A man there was,
though some did count him mad,
The more he cast away,
the more he had.”

John Bunyan

2 Corinthians 9:6-10 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. 10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

25 The liberal [generous] soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

11:24-26 Here is a spiritual principle that goes contrary to natural reasoning. There is truth to the concept that no one can out give God. Let the Christian support generously the work of the Lord.

“Give thanks to God, for good is He,
His grace abideth ever;
To Him all praise and glory be,
His mercy faileth never.
His wondrous works with praise record, His grace abideth ever;
The only God, the sovereign Lord, Whose mercy faileth never.”

27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

11:27 The law of retributive justice is once more in view because it is a large theme in Scripture. Adoni-bezek sought evil and was judged for it, while Caleb was rewarded (Judges 1:5-7; Josh 14:6-13).

28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

11:28 Jesus Himself provided a wonderful commentary on this concept in a parable. *And he [Jesus] spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:16-22).*

29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.

11:29 troubleth his own house. The sins of parents can be visited upon succeeding generations for God shows *mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation (Exodus 34:7). Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin (2 Kings 10:31).*

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

11:30 a tree of life. Trees which bear good fruit provide food to the hungry and therefore life. Wisdom is similar. It provides a quality as well as a quantity to life. But wisdom is not merely knowing Bible doctrine and Biblical principle. True wisdom is the ability to walk in the power of spiritual principles and to pass them on to others thereby winning souls. Much wisdom is needed in turning individuals from the power of Satan unto God (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed [rewarded] in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

11:31 much more the wicked. The recompense or reward of the wicked is greater degrees of depravity. Peter alludes to the principle of this passage in his epistle *1 Peter 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

Descent into Decadence

- Sin begins in the imagination. There is a thought fantasized about which knowingly violates the commandments of God.

- Sin progresses with a physical act of living out the fantasy. If there are no immediate repercussions the heart is emboldened.
- New fantasies are imagined.
- New acts are engaged in for new thrills are sought.
- A secret life is learned to be lived if the sin of choice will bring social shame or negative exposure.
- The conscience is suppressed, the heart is hardened so that guilt is either no longer felt or is dismissed.
- Sin is emotionally propelled forward by the principle of pleasure and the will to power.
- A false sense of freedom is enjoyed until the soul wants to stop a certain behavior. Only too late are the real but invisible chains of sin which bind the soul to specific actions understood. The ultimate “reward” of the wicked can be written in the word, DAMNATION. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).*

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 11

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 11

1. List four ways to literally live longer.

Answer.

• Honor parents	Exodus 20:12
• Keep the commandments	Exodus 5:33; 11:21
• Fear God	Deuteronomy 6:1
• Keep honest weights	Deuteronomy 25:13

2. Name at least eight types of righteousness mentioned in the Bible.

Answer.

• Faith righteousness	Genesis 5:6
• Divine righteousness	Psalm 22:31
• Paths of righteousness	Psalm 23:3
• Imputed righteousness	Psalm 24:5
• Self righteousness	Matthew 5:20
• Legal righteousness	Galatians 3:21
• Works righteousness	Ephesians 2:8,9
• Fruit producing righteousness	James 3:18

3. What is the Law of Divine Retribution?

Answer.

Simply stated the Law of Divine Retribution says that what a person sows they shall reap.

4. Define the word, "foward."

Answer.

The word "foward" means to distort, or to be false.

5. State the eight steps into decadence.

Answer.

- Sin begins in the imagination. There is a thought fantasized about which knowingly violates the commandments of God.
- Sin progresses with a physical act of living out the fantasy. If there are no immediate repercussions the heart is emboldened.
- New fantasies are imagined.

- New acts are engaged in for new thrills are sought.
- A secret life is learned to be lived if the sin of choice will bring social shame or negative exposure.
- The conscience is suppressed, the heart is hardened so that guilt is either no longer felt or is dismissed.
- Sin is emotionally propelled forward by the principle of pleasure and the will to power.
- A false sense of freedom is enjoyed until the soul wants to stop a certain behavior.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. As you read the Scriptures keep a record of the specific judgment God pronounces against a particular sin. For example, In Proverbs 11:2 shame is said to be the judgment for inordinate pride. Will you make a commitment to keep such a record so that in the day of ultimate accountability you will be without excuse and in time you will be able to guard your heart?
2. Why does a dollar bill look so small at a grocery store and yet so large when thinking of an offering plate? What can be said to the person who does not contribute to the work of the Lord financially?
3. Do you believe in the Law of Retributive Justice? Why does it seem that some people get away with rape, murder, stealing and meanness?
4. What could be said to a person who does not believe they have been really “bad” in life, at least not bad enough to merit eternal condemnation?
5. Have you ever led a secret life of sin? Are you leading a secret life of sin now by protecting what the Puritans called a “darling sin?” How are you cultivating sanctification in your life?

Hiding God’s Word in my Heart

Proverbs 11:24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 11:2.

Doctrine of Pride

1. There are several well-known expressions of pride mentioned in the Bible and its tragic results.
 - Pride contributed to the death of Ahithophel who killed himself because his counsel was not followed. *2 Samuel 17:23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.*
 - Naaman initially refused to wash in the Jordan River and so was not cured of his leprosy. *2 King 5:11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?*
 - Hezekiah manifested unholy pride by displaying his resources to foreign representatives. *2 King 20:13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. 2 Chr 32:31 Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart. Isaiah 39:2 And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.*
 - The pride of Uzziah led him to offer an unacceptable sacrifice to the Lord. *2 Chronicles 26:16 16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: 18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. 19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the*

leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

- The pride of Haman led to anger and a desire to kill the Jews as a race only to be destroyed himself.

Esther 3:5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

Esther 5:11 And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

Esther 5:13 Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

Esther 6:6 So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

Esther 7:10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

- The King of Tyre was destroyed for his pride. *Ezekiel 28:2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:*
- Nebuchadnezzar was proud of the works of his hands only to have it all taken from him. *Daniel 4:30-34 30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? 31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. 32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. 34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: Daniel 5:20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:*

2. Pride is listed as one of the seven deadly sins.

- *Proverbs 6:16-19 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

3. God has warned His people that He will move to break the pride of their heart, no longer answer their prayers or bless their labors.

- *Leviticus 26:19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass.*
- *Psalms 18:27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.*

4. Financial prosperity can lead to pride and a forgetting of the source of one's wealth.

- *Deuteronomy 8:11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12 Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; 14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;*
- *Deuteronomy 8:17 And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. 18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. 19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. 20 As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.*

5. Military conquest can lead to pride.

- *1 Kings 20:11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.*

6. Job defended himself against the pride of his three friends who came to comfort him. They thought they knew why Job was suffering affliction but they did not.

- *Job 12:2 2 No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. 3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?*

- *Job 13:2 What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.*

7. The heart of the wicked is characterized by pride due to finding clever ways to extract money from the poor.

- *Psalms 10:2 2 The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. 3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.*

8. Pride will cause a person to not seek after God.

- *Psalm 10:4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. 5 His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. 6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.*

9. The ability to speak in a persuasive manner can lead to a pride that tries to shut out God.

- *Psalms 12:4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?*

Proverbs 11:9.

Doctrine of Hypocrisy

1. There are two basic words translated “hypocrite” in the Bible.
 - In the Old Testament the Hebrew word is *chaneph* (khaw-naf') and means to become soiled (i.e. with sin), impious.
 - In the New Testament the Greek word is *hypokrites* (hoop-ok-ree-tace') and refers to an actor under an assumed character such as a stage-player, i.e. figuratively the word has reference to a dissembler.
- Taken together the concept is presented that a hypocrite is someone who has soiled their soul with sin and, while pretending to be holy and good remain impious in behavior. A hypocrite may articulate well an orthodox belief but the behavior does not conform to the rhetoric.
2. The hypocrite is a person who appears to be religious but whose heart is really far from God.
 - *Job 13:16 He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.*
3. It is possible for the hypocrite to be recognized—and hated.
 - *Job 17:8 Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.*
4. While hypocrites rejoice in their willful ways such happiness does not last long.
 - *Job 20:5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?*
5. The religious hypocrite has a false hope of being found acceptable in the eyes of God.
 - *Job 27:8 For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?*
6. It is not wrong to pray against the hypocrite lest others be led astray.
 - *Job 34:30 That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.*
7. The hypocrite tries to destroy others with his lips but is not always successful.
 - *Proverbs 11:9 An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.*

8. Knowing the hearts of men God hates the hypocrite and in the Day of Judgment will show no mercy.

- *Job 15:34 For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.*
- *Job 36:13 But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.*
- *Isaiah 9:17 Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*
- *Isaiah 33:14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*

9. Religious hypocrites enjoy telling others their faults and how to correct them while doing nothing about their own personal moral and spiritual failures.

- *Matthew 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*
- *Luke 6:42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.*

10. Hypocrites are notorious for displaying a moral superiority of “Do as I say and not as I do.”

- *Luke 13:15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?*

11. Jesus listed and condemned many specific sins of the religious hypocrites of His day embodied in the Pharisees.

- The religious hypocrite loves to be seen of men in the matter of giving. *Matthew 6:2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

- The religious hypocrite loves to be seen of men in times of prayer. *Matthew 6:5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*
- The religious hypocrite loves to be seen of men in times of fasting. *Matthew 6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*
- The religious hypocrite has a heart that is secretly hostile to God in worship. *Matthew 15:7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*
- The religious hypocrite has no true understanding of the Bible. *Matthew 16:3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?*
- The religious hypocrite is willing to use verbal deceit in order to win a religious debate. *Matthew 22:18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?*
- The religious hypocrite will keep others from going to heaven if possible. *Matthew 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.*
- The religious hypocrite is motivated by material gain. *Matthew 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*
- The religious hypocrite has a zeal to promote false teaching. *Matthew 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*
- The religious hypocrite places more value on symbols than spiritual substance. *Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

- The religious hypocrite is externally wholesome but internally corrupt. *Matthew 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*
- The religious hypocrite is able to make a fine presentation of himself outwardly. *Matthew 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.*
- The religious hypocrite pretends to honor the very prophets shown disrespect to. *Matthew 23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,*
- The religious hypocrite shall be assigned a proper place with the wicked. *Matthew 24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*
- The religious hypocrite is capable of hiding his true agenda. *Luke 11:44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.*

Proverbs 11:13. secrets.

Doctrine of Secrets

1. It is proper to desire to know the secrets of wisdom.
 - *Job 11:6 And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.*
2. God knows the secrets of the hearts of men for nothing is withheld from His understanding.
 - *Psalms 44:21 Shall not God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*
 - *Psalms 90:8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*
 - *Jeremiah 23:24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? Saith the LORD.*
 - *Daniel 2:22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.*

3. It is dishonorable to share what has been told in confidence.
 - *Proverbs 11:13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.*
 - *Proverbs 20:19 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.*
4. God can reveal the secrets or hidden meaning of dreams, visions, thoughts and motives.
 - *Daniel 2:28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;*
 - *Daniel 2:29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.*
 - *Daniel 2:47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.*
5. One day God shall evaluate all the secrets of men by the work of Jesus Christ and measure out a just reward.
 - *Romans 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*
 - *Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*
6. The gospel when properly preached and understood has a way of revealing the secrets of the heart.
 - *1 Corinthians 14:25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*
7. It is a sin to make a graven image and hide it in secret.
 - *Deuteronomy 27:15 Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.*
8. God has a revealed will and a secret will which contains His ultimate decree of what will come to pass.

- *Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

9. The name of the angel of the Lord is a secret.

- *Judges 13:18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?*

10. Job was mocked and asked if he knew the secret of God as if divine secrets cannot be revealed, but they can be.

- *Job 15:8 Hast thou heard the secret of God? And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?*

11. Secret sins or addictions need to be confessed, forsaken and forgiven.

- *Psalms 19:12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.*

12. God has promised to reveal secrets to those that fear Him.

- *Psalms 25:14 The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.*
- *Proverbs 3:32 For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.*

- ❖ J. Hudson Taylor was shown
- ❖ Samuel Logan Brengle was shown
- ❖ John Bunyan was shown
- ❖ Amy Carmichael was shown
- ❖ Oswald Chambers was shown
- ❖ Charles Grandison Finney was shown
- ❖ Adoniram Judson Gordon was shown
- ❖ Richard C. Halverson was shown
- ❖ Frances Ridley Havergal was shown
- ❖ John Hyde was shown
- ❖ Dwight Lyman Moody was shown
- ❖ Handley C. G. Moule was shown
- ❖ Andrew Murray was shown
- ❖ Robert E. Nicholas was shown
- ❖ William P. Nicholson was shown
- ❖ Eugenia Price was shown
- ❖ Charles G. Trumbull was shown
- ❖ Walter L. Wilson was shown
- ❖ John Allen Wood was shown
- ❖ W. Ian Thomas was shown

the Secret of the Exchanged Life
 the Secret of the Cleansed Life
 the Secret of the Unchained Life
 the Secret of the Radiant Life
 the Secret of the Highest Life
 the Secret of the Powerful Life
 the Secret of the Disciplined Life
 the Secret of the Burning Life
 the Secret of the Overflowing Life
 the Secret of the Prevailing Life
 the Secret of the Dynamic Life
 the Secret of the Fragrant Life
 the Secret of the Abiding Life
 the Secret of the Satisfying Life
 the Secret of the Soul Winning Life
 the Secret of the Buoyant Life
 the Secret of the Victorious Life
 the Secret of the Yielded Life
 the Secret of the Holy Life
 the Secret of the Adventurous Life

❖ Robert B. Thieme, Jr. was shown	the Secret of the Doctrinal Life
❖ John R. Rice was shown	the Secret of the Prayerful Life
❖ L. R. Shelton Jr. was shown	the Secret of the Faith Life

13. As God has secrets the wicked also have secrets which the Christian can pray to be delivered from.

- *Psalms 64:2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:*

14. In Psalms 91:1 a great truth laid down in general, All those who live a life of communion with God are constantly safe under his protection, and may therefore preserve a holy serenity and security of mind at all times (Matthew Henry).

- *Psalms 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

15. God does not always speak in an obscure or secret manner.

- *Isaiah 45:19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.*
- *Isaiah 48:16 Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.*

16. God has promised not to act prior to revealing His secret counsel to His servants.

- *Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.*

17. The search for the secrets of God is encouraged and promised.

- *Matthew 13:35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*

18. The great secret God will reveal to any heart is the way of personal salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. All other knowledge pales in comparison, as great and as wondrous as it might be.

- *Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,*

Proverbs 11:18.

Characteristics of the Righteous

1. The righteous will offer intercession on behalf of others.

- *Genesis 18:23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?*

2. The righteous do not accept bribes.

- *Exodus 23:8 And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.*
- *Deuteronomy 16:19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.*

3. The righteous die well.

- *Numbers 23:10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!*

4. The righteous will render a wise and objective verdict on matters that come under their judgment.

- *Deuteronomy 25:1 If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.*

5. The righteous will mediate upon, remember and verbalize the righteous acts of God.

- *Judges 5:11 They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.*

6. The righteous will use the righteous acts of God as the basis of an argument for God's people to do right in a given matter.

- *1 Samuel 12:7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.*

7. The righteous will pray that God's righteousness will prevail in the kingdoms of this world in which He has established.

- *1 Kings 8:32 Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.*
- *2 Chronicles 6:23 Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.*

8. The friends of Job argued that the righteous do not perish nor are they cut off.

- *Job 4:7 Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off?*

9. The righteous grow stronger and stronger in moral authority the longer they live.

- *Job 17:9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.*

10. The righteous see spiritual truth that others do not.

- *Job 22:19 The righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn.*

11. The righteous should argue and plead appropriately at the right time.

- *Job 23:7 There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.*

12. The righteous can know that the eye of God is always upon him.

- *Job 36:7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.*

13. The righteous will stand separate from the wicked in the day of ultimate judgment.

- *Psalms 1:5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*
- *Psalms 69:28 Let them [the wicked] be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

14. The righteous enjoys the knowledge of God's abiding interest in his life.

- *Psalms 1:6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

15. The righteous shall know the blessing of the Lord and His favor.

- *Psalms 5:12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*

16. The righteous shall be established. Their lives will have meaning, definition and purpose.

- *Psalms 7:9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.*

17. The righteous shall be tested and judged by God for the purpose of approval.

- *Psalms 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*
- *Psalms 11:5 The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.*

18. The righteous are subject to the laws of divine establishment which are Volition (Freedom), Marriage, Home and Government with internal and external protection. Internal protection means a policeman on the corner and a judge on the bench. External protection means a strong military defense. If those laws and institutions are violated the righteous too shall suffer.

- *Psalms 11:3 If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

19. God loves righteousness and therefore the upright or the righteous.

- *Psalms 11:7 For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.*

20. The righteous cannot exist apart from God.

- *Psalms 14:5 There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.*

21. The righteous will know the brutality of slander.

- *Psalms 31:18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*

22. The righteous have the ear of heaven open to their cry.

- *Psalms 34:15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*

- *Psalms 34:17 The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*

23. The sufferings of the righteous are numerous but God shall deliver from them all.

- *Psalms 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.*

24. The righteous shall be the object of hatred.

- *Psalms 34:21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*

25. God has promised to sustain the righteous.

- *Psalms 37:17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.*
- *Psalms 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

26. The righteous are generous and they honor their debts.

- *Psalms 37:21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.*

27. The righteous shall inherit the land which God has promised which includes the new earth.

- *Psalms 37:29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

28. Wisdom characterizes the speech of the righteous.

- *Psalms 37:30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.*

29. The righteous shall always be the object of hostility by the wicked for the righteous passes moral judgment upon evil and this the ungodly despise.

- *Psalms 37:32 The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.*

30. The righteous depend upon the Lord in the time of trouble.

- *Psalms 37:39 But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.*

31. The righteous will laugh at the wicked.

- *Psalms 52:6 The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:*

32. The righteous enjoy the promise of God of ultimate security.

- *Psalms 55:22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

33. The righteous rejoice when justice is administered.

- *Psalms 58:10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*

34. The righteous are anxious that the justice of God be vindicated.

- *Psalms 58:11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

35. The righteous are happy in the Lord.

- *Psalms 64:10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*
- *Psalms 68:3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea let them exceedingly rejoice.*

36. A Spirit of thanksgiving characterizes the righteous.

- *Psalms 140:13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*

37. The righteous are characterized by sound wisdom.

- *Proverbs 2:7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.*

38. The righteous learn the secrets of God.

- *Proverbs 3:32 For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.*

39. The lips of the righteous protect and prosper the lives of others.

- *Proverbs 10:21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.*

40. Pure motives characterize the heart of the righteous.

- *Proverbs 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.*

41. Stability of soul and life characterize the righteous.

- *Proverbs 12:3 A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.*

42. The righteous flee to God in time of trouble and place no confidence in the flesh.

- *Proverbs 18:10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*

43. A glorious future waits for the righteous.

- *Matthew 13:43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*
- *Matthew 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

44. Righteousness can be imitated but not reproduced by hypocrites.

- *Matthew 23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,*

45. There is a collective judgment that God will pour out upon the wicked for their treatment of the righteous.

- *Matthew 23:35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.*
- *Romans 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

46. There is a crown of righteousness to receive for all who love the doctrine of the Second Advent.

- *2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

47. God is pleased to hear the prayers of the righteous.

- *1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

PROVERBS 12

1 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

12:1 loveth instruction. It is possible to enjoy the acquisition of knowledge but rebel against the process of learning which includes correction and instruction. The mind must adjust to value the process as well as the product. Before the Flood individuals rejected the gospel and so they perished (Job 22:15-17). In contrast, Josiah, the good king of Judah loved instruction (2 Chron. 34).

2 A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.

12:2

Characteristics of a Good Man

• A good man shares good news.	2 Samuel 18:27
• A good man walks in steps ordained of the Lord.	Psalms 37:23
• A good man helps others.	Psalms 112:5
• A good man finds favor with God.	Proverbs 12:2
• A good man gives gifts to his children.	Proverbs 13:22
• A good man will be satisfied with holy thoughts.	Proverbs 14:14; Matthew 12:35
• A good man is hard to find.	Micah 7:2
• A good man is a just man.	Luke 23:50
• Christ was a good man.	John 7:12
• Barnabas was a good man.	Acts 11:24
• A good man generates respect, love and loyalty.	Romans 5:7

3 A man shall not be established [made solid] by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

12:3 A contrast between wicked and righteous counsel can be found in Hushai (“hasty”) and Ahithophel (“brother of folly”). Hushai was loyal to David and so was able to give counsel to the rebellious son Absalom that undermined the counsel of Ahithophel (2 Samuel 15:32; 16:15-23; 17:5-22).

4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

12:4 virtuous woman. A virtuous woman is not only one who is morally pure but one who displays vital godliness. Sarah is set forth as an example of a woman whose faith is to be emulated while the wife of Job is a woman of shame and dishonor (1 Peter 3:1-6; Job 2:9, 10).

5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels [advice] of the wicked are deceit.

6 The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.

7 The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.

12:5-7 thoughts. Right thoughts produce right rhetoric and actions and are rewarded by God. “Let the mind of the Master be the master of your mind – (Anon). In contrast the words of the wicked produce acts of violence and will result in physical death both in time and spiritual death in eternity.

“Watch your thoughts; they become words.
Watch your words; they become actions.
Watch your actions; they become habits.
Watch your habits; they become character.
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.”

Frank Outlaw

8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse [crooked] heart shall be despised.

12:8 commended...despised. True wisdom is universally applauded even if not always appreciated while the foolish spirit is exposed to universal contempt. Individuals found in Gideon wisdom and in Abimelech foolishness (Judges 7-9).

9 He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.

12:9 It is better if a person has his needs met even if he is not well thought of than to assume honor for oneself and yet have no food to eat.

10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

12:10 The heart of a righteous person will be consistent to man and animal in that mercy will be shown to both. In contrast cruelty and unrighteousness unite. While Jacob was thoughtful of the animals (Gen. 33:13, 14), Balaam beat his donkey (Numbers 22:23-31).

11 He that tilleth [works] his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.

12:11 He that tilleth. There is a natural reward for those who will work hard and wisely. In spiritual matters the principle is the same. Spiritual backsliding, coldness of heart and acts of evil would cease if Christian would spend time laboring in the Word of God. *2 Timothy 3: 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* The life of Jehoiakim reflects what happens when labor in Scripture ceases (Jeremiah 36:22-32).

12 The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.

12:12 wicked desireth. Unholy passions can and do dominate the soul of those who give themselves to evil or injurious behavior. There are good emotions and there are dark and evil emotions as well. The wicked actually long for and seek after that which will ensnare the soul, such is the strength of sin.

Radio personality Paul Harvey tells the story of how an Eskimo kills a wolf. The account is grisly, yet it offers fresh insight into the consuming, self-destructive nature of sin. "First, the Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood. Next, the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh frozen blood. He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade in the arctic night. So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf does not notice the razor-sharp sting of the naked blade on his own tongue, nor does he recognize the instant at which his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his OWN warm blood. His carnivorous appetite just craves more—until the dawn finds him dead in the snow!" In like manner the wicked desire that which will harm them.

13 The wicked is snared [trapped] by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble.

12:13 is snared. The wicked engages in words that seek to stimulate the emotions or obtain some desired goal all the while hoping to escape a just judgment. But it is to no avail. Words trap the soul as Gehazi discovered (2 Kings 5:20-27). In contrast the just, the righteous shall come out of trouble. They may get into trouble if their words are not believed or if their words are resented but God shall in time deliver them out of trouble.

2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence [deeds] of a man's hands shall be rendered [returned] unto him.

12:14. Time and again the spiritual law of compensation is set forth because the heart is slow to learn, “whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7; Matt. 18:24-35).

15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

12:15 is right in his own eyes. No one ever acts contrary to their will. It is impossible to do so. The reason why any person engages in a certain act is because they believe it is in their own best interest to do so at that moment. Wisdom will temper foolish talk and behavior with righteous impressions upon the will resulting in better actions and words. When Ham shared the shame of father Noah he did so because he believed it was in his best interest. Shem and Japheth were more circumspect because they listened to the voice of divine wisdom (Gen. 9). Parents are to be honored not shamed.

16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent [smart] man covereth shame.

12:16 covereth shame. Love will cover a multitude of sins. Love will not cover up sin but will provide a gracious covering. Let those who are not yet converted to Christ see that He is willing to cover your shame.

“Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You who are longing to see His face,
Will you this moment His grace receive?”

Julia H. Johnston

17 He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.

18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.

21 There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief [trouble].

22 Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.

12:17-22 In these verses a contrast is made between truth and lying lips.

Characteristics of Truth

- Righteousness 12:17
- Mental, physical and spiritual health 12:18
- Stability 12:19
- Joy 12:20
- Ultimate security 12:21
- Divine pleasure 12:22

Characteristics of Lying Lips

- Deceit 12:17
- Words that wound 12:18
- Temporary 12:19
- Expression of evil thoughts 12:20
- Eventual ensnarement 12:21
- Incurring of divine wrath 12:22

Kings of Italy and Bohemia both promised safe transport and safe custody to the great pre-Reformation Bohemian reformer, John Hus. Both, however, broke their promises, leading to Hus's martyrdom in 1415. Earlier, Thomas Wentworth had carried a document signed by King Charles I which read, "Upon the word of a king you shall not suffer in life, honour, or fortune." It was not long, however, before Wentworth's death warrant was signed by the same monarch! (*Today in the Word*, April, 1989).

23 A prudent [smart] man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.

12:23 fools proclaimeth. Among the most foolish of the fools of life are the false prophets. The modern church is plagued with foolish individuals who are prone to setting dates of the Lord's return in veiled forms, predicting the end of the world scenarios or the beginning of WWIII or the approach of Armageddon. It is an abomination. The church in the OT suffered from false prophets as well as in such individuals as Hananiah the son of Azzur, a prophet of Gibeon, who uttered false prophecies in the fourth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah. Hananiah publicly predicted in the Temple that within two years Jeconiah and his fellow captives, with the vessels of the Lord's house, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken away to Babylon, would be brought back to Jerusalem.

He tried to enhance his prophetic word by taking off from the neck of Jeremiah the yoke that he wore by divine command (Jeremiah 27:2) symbolizing the subjection of Judah and the neighboring countries to the Babylonian Empire. In response, the Lord instructed Jeremiah to go and tell Hananiah that for the wooden yokes that he had broken he should make yokes of iron, "that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar." Hananiah the prophet died in the same year in the seventh month, c. 593 BC (*The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*).

24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

12:24 the hand of the diligent. God has always been pleased to honor hard work. There is a gospel of work whereby faith is place in spiritual coveralls and goes forth to labor. Hebrews 11 could be called the "Works Hall of Fame" by way of illustration.

25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

12:25 Depression is a dark emotion that affects physical health as the Scriptures indicate. The biblical cure for depression is to speak good words to the heart. There is to be self talk as attention is redirected from self to God. *Psalms 42:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*

26 The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.

12:26 more excellent. The righteous have a pure conscience and a moral basis to judge matters. In contrast the wicked must use words that only seduce and deceive to advance whatever position is taken in a matter. The prophet Nathan was able to confront and rebuke king David concerning his sin of adultery (2 Samuel 12:1-14). The woman of Tekoa illustrates seductive words (2 Samuel 14:1-20).

27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.

12:27 The slothful man. The slothful person is essentially a treacherous person for the heart guides behavior. The diligent are rewarded with precious substances. Ruth was diligent in that after she gleaned she "beat out that which she had gleaned" (Ruth 2:17).

28 In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

12:28 there is no death. The righteous will pass through the valley of shadow of death but they need fear no evil for they go to the land of life, eternal life through Jesus Christ the Lord.

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 12

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 12

1. What are the eleven characteristics of a good man?

Answer.

- A good man shares good news. 2 Samuel 18:27
- A good man walks in steps ordained of the Lord. Psalms 37:23
- A good man helps others. Psalms 112:5
- A good man finds favor with God. Proverbs 12:2
- A good man gives gifts to his children. Proverbs 13:22
- A good man will be satisfied with holy thoughts. Proverbs 14:14
- A good man is hard to find in the midst of a wicked generation. Matthew 12:35
- A good man is a just man. Micah 7:2
- Christ was a good man. Luke 23:50
- Barnabas was a good man. John 7:12
- A good man generates respect, love and loyalty even to the point of death. Acts 11:24
- Romans 5:7

2. List the six characteristics of truth.

Answer.

- Righteousness Proverbs 12:17
- Mental, physical and spiritual health Proverbs 12:18
- Stability Proverbs 12:19
- Joy Proverbs 12:20
- Ultimate security Proverbs 12:21
- Divine pleasure Proverbs 12:22

3. Provide the six characteristics of lying lips.

Answer.

- Deceit Proverbs 12:17
- Words that wound Proverbs 12:18
- Temporary Proverbs 12:19
- Expression of evil thoughts Proverbs 12:20
- Eventual ensnarement Proverbs 12:21
- Incurring of divine wrath Proverbs 12:22

4. What is the Biblical cure for depression?

Answer.

The biblical cure for depression is to speak good words to the heart. There is to be self talk as attention is redirected from self to God. *Psalms 42:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*

5. In what sense can it be said of the righteous, “there is no death”?

Answer.

The righteous will pass through the valley of shadow of death but they need fear no evil for they go to the land of life, eternal life through Jesus Christ the Lord. *John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Are you a good person according to Biblical terms? Specifically, how many of the characteristics apply to you? Which ones?
2. Do you love truth? Are you careful to speak the truth on all occasions?
3. Has anyone ever lied to you? Give an example. Do you know of someone who lives a secret life that involves lying such as visiting the chat rooms on line or pretending to be someone or something they are not? Are you guilty of living a lie in any form?
4. Have you ever experienced depression? What caused it? How do you handle depression?
5. Are you afraid of dying? Why? What can be done to minimize the fear of dying for Christians?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 12: 3 A man shall not be established [made solid] by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 12:3. the root of righteousness.

A.W. Tozer
(1897-1963)

“One marked difference between the faith of our fathers as conceived by the fathers and the same faith as understood and lived by their children is that the fathers were concerned with the root of the matter, while their present-day descendants seem concerned only with the fruit. ... ”The root of the righteous yieldeth fruit,” said the wise man in the Proverbs. ...

We demand the fruit immediately even though the root may be weak and knobby or missing altogether. Impatient Christians today explain away the simple beliefs of the saints of other days and smile off their serious-minded approach to God and sacred things. They were victims of their own limited religious outlook, but great and sturdy souls withal who managed to achieve a satisfying spiritual experience and do a lot of good in the world in spite of their handicaps. So we’ll imitate their fruit without accepting their theology or inconveniencing ourselves too greatly by adopting their all-or-nothing attitude toward religion.....

Preoccupation with appearances and a corresponding neglect of the out-of-sight root of the true spiritual life are prophetic signs which go unheeded.

Immediate “results” are all that matter, quick proofs of present success without a thought of next week or next year. **Religious pragmatism** is running wild among the orthodox. Truth is whatever works. If it gets results it is good. There is but **one test for the religious leader: success**. Everything is forgiven him except failure.

...the Apostle Paul ... urges his readers to be” rooted and built up in him,” which envisages the Christian both as a tree to be well rooted and as a temple to rise on a solid foundation....

Open your hearts and search the Scriptures. Bear your cross, follow your Lord and pay no heed to the passing religious vogue. The masses are always wrong. In every generation the number of the righteous is small. Be sure you are among them.”

”A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.”

Proverbs 12:17-22. a false witness.

Famous American Falsehoods

- The check is in the mail.
- I'll start my diet tomorrow.
- We service what we sell.
- Give me your number and the doctor will call you right back.
- Money cheerfully refunded.
- One size fits all.
- This offer limited to the first 100 people who call in.
- Your luggage isn't lost, it's only misplaced.
- Leave your resume and we'll keep it on file.
- This hurts me more than it hurts you.
- I just need five minutes of your time.
- Your table will be ready in a few minutes.
- Open wide, it won't hurt a bit.
- Let's have lunch sometime.
- It's not the money, it's the principle.

(*Bits and Pieces*, December 9, 1993)

Proverbs 12:24. the slothful.

New Policies

1. **SICKNESS:** No excuse. We will no longer accept your doctor's statement as proof, as we believe that if you are able to go to the doctor, you are able to come to work.
2. **LEAVE OF ABSENCE** (for an operation): We are no longer allowing this practice. We wish to discourage any thought that you may have about needing an operation. We believe that as long as you are employed here, you will need all of whatever you have and should not consider having anything removed. We hired you as you are and to have anything removed would certainly make you less than we bargained for.
3. **DEATH** (other than your own): This is no excuse. There is nothing you can do for them, and we are sure that someone else in a lesser position can attend to the arrangements. However, if the funeral can be held in late afternoon, we will be glad to let you off one hour early, provided your share of work is ahead enough to keep the job going in your absence.
4. **DEATH** (your own): This will be accepted as an excuse, but we would like a two-week notice, as we feel it is your duty to teach someone else your job. Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all (Sam Ewing, quoted in *Reader's Digest*).

Proverbs 12:27. the slothful.

Characteristics of a Slothful Person

1. The slothful person is useless in a military campaign and in gospel obedience. *Judges 18:9 And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.*
2. The slothful person places himself in bondage to others. *Proverbs 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.*
3. The slothful person is reluctant to follow up on his initial efforts. *Proverbs 12:27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.*
4. The actions of the slothful person wounds self and others. *Proverbs 15:19 The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.*
5. The slothful person tends to be a wasteful person. *Proverbs 18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.*
6. The slothful person is essentially lazy. *Proverbs 19:24 A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.*
7. The slothful person is filled with covetousness which immobilizes productive behavior. *Proverbs 21:25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.*
8. The slothful person makes irrational excuses for not doing right and working. *Proverbs 22:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.*
9. The slothful person is to lazy to learn. *Proverbs 24:30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;*
10. The slothful person loves to sleep all the day long. *Proverbs 26:14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.*
11. The slothful person makes no effort to protect the interests of others. *Matthew 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:*
12. The Christian is commanded not to be slothful or lazy in business or faith. *Romans 12:11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Hebrews 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

PROVERBS 13

1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

13:1

Four Marks of a Wise Son

- Brings happiness to his parents. *Proverbs 10:1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.*
- Prepares for the future. *Proverbs 10:5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*
- Is teachable. *Proverbs 13:1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.*
- Keeps the law of God. *Proverbs 28:7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.*

Solomon was considered to be a wise son. *1 Kings 5:7 And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.*

While Isaac learned from his father (Genesis 26), Simeon and Levi acted in a treacherous manner in the name of avenging honor (Genesis 34:25-31).

2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.

3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

13:2-3 keepeth his mouth. To control the lips is to guard life itself and the enjoyment of the same. Words that wound, words that are cruel, words that are unkind will only bring trouble to the soul. Shimei cruelly and unjustly attacked David. *1 Kings 2:8 And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. David in turn was wise in his response to unjust criticism. 1 Samuel 17:28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why comest thou down hither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. 29 And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?*

4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

13:4 the sluggard. There are individuals who want everything but are not willing to labor for anything. It is right they are left destitute. Tough love contends that, *if any would not work, neither should he eat* (*2 Thessalonians 3:10*). In spiritual matters the principle remains the same. The believer who will not labor in the Word of God will not be able to feast on spiritual food. Only the soul of the diligent will be fat. Of Ezra it was said that *he prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments* (*Ezra 7:10*).

5 A righteous man [person] hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome [acts disgustingly], and cometh to shame.

13:5 hateth lying. There are good reasons to hate lying not the least of which is the fact that it is the essence of sin. “All sin is a kind of lying” Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430). When Lucifer said he would be like God he was lying, to himself and to those who believed in him. When the Evil One Spoke to Eve he lied to her and she in turn lied to herself when she thought it was something to be desired. Adam in turn lied to God by suggesting he was not responsible for his rebellion. Augustine is wise when he notes that “All sin is a kind of lying.”

6 Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

13:6 Righteousness keepeth. The heart of the believer must initially embrace righteousness as a concept to be cultivated and honored. Then, righteousness personified will keep or protect individuals who are trying to walk in the right way.

13:6 wickedness overthroweth. A primary means by which wickedness personified is able to overthrow a person is through the emotions. Within the heart are positive emotions as well as negative. The Enemy comes through the various senses to stir the emotions of passion and carry the will in a wayward direction.

Since every person is born physically alive and spiritually dead, righteousness must be learned in the abstract in order for it to reach a point of being able to concretely keep a person in the right way. The means by which righteousness keeps a person is by influencing the will with gospel principles.

7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

13:7 By way of application there are two thoughts in this passage. First, the proverb speaks against covetous. The covetous person acquires wealth, but has nothing of lasting value such as love, thoughtfulness and generosity. In contrast a person can give away earthly wealth in order to have riches in heaven. Second, the proverb also speaks against deceit. There are people who pretend to be poor though they have great wealth. There are people who pretend to be wealthy through the use of credit though they are in reality very poor. Both covetousness and deceit is forbidden.

8 The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.

13:8 It is possible for a person to become enamored with wealth to the point of being proud and arrogant based on being secure in economic matters. Let a person be careful that gold does not become one's savior. Only Christ can ransom the soul from the penalty and pain of sin while, "Gold opens every gate; e'en that of hell" Monander (C. 342-291 BC). It is also possible for the poor to be too proud not to receive a well deserved rebuke.

9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

13:9 Freedom from sin brings peace and comfort to the heart. Those who insist on transgressing the law of God are warned time and again that God will put out whatever little light they might have.

10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

13:10 only by pride. Unholy pride involves self exaltation and self protection. The end result of such pride is strife or contention. It is not unusual in this day and age to hear people say they "demand respect." When a certain concept of respect is not forthcoming, verbal and or physical violence ensues. Such has always been the case. The conflict between the herdsmen of Lot and Abraham was rooted in pride (Gen. 13).

11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

13:11 wealth gotten by vanity. The principle behind this passage is that which comes easily slips away readily. What is acquired by earnest effort is valued. The lives of Ziba (2 Samuel 16:4; 19:29) and Caleb illustrate this truth (Josh. 14:6-14).

12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

13 Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

14 The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

13:13-15 despiseth the word. There is a fundamental attitude of respect toward the Word of God which brings reward, favor and even life itself. There is a fundamental attitude of contempt and disrespect for the Word of God which will result in temporal hardship and eternal destruction. Pharaoh held the Word of the Lord in contempt and died the death of the wicked. King Saul did not listen to the voice of the Lord and died the sin unto death at the Battle of Gilboa. Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, the last three kings of Judah, did not honor the Word of the Lord. Each learned that the “way of transgressors is hard.” God demands that His word be held in honor. *Isaiah 66:2 ...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

16 Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth [displays] open his folly.

13:16 every prudent man. The voice of experience cries out. Every wise person will learn from the experiences of life whether good or bad. In contrast a fool, a self sufficient person, openly displays that nothing has been learned. Despite much affirmation that Moses was the Divine choice to lead the nation of Israel, Korah and his company displayed their foolishness by challenging his leadership (Numbers 16).

17 A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.

13:17 into mischief. In the matter of communicating the gospel there is much restless activity and self centeredness. As a result false doctrine abounds and much harm has come to the church through various new gospels such as the health and wealth gospel or liberation theology. What the church needs is more faithful messengers calling individuals to be reconciled to God. *2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

18 Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

13:18 refuseth instruction. Johanan [joe HAY nuhn] (Jehovah is gracious) is the name of eight or nine men in the Old Testament. One Johanan was a captain of the Jews who united forces with Gedaliah, governor of Judah, after the fall of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:23). When Gedaliah was murdered, Johanan sought out the assassin. He rescued several people, whom the assassin had taken as captives, including the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 41-43). Against the counsel of Jeremiah, Johanan took these people to Egypt. He refused to listen to instruction. As a result much harm came to the people of God.

19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

13:19 desire accomplished. It is not wrong to enjoy a sense of satisfaction when a legitimate project is accomplished and a purpose is achieved. But the only desire of the fool is to satisfy the next unbridled lust of passion. A foolish person believes it is wrong to depart from evil or injurious behavior because it seems at the moment so pleasurable. Even when the conscience whispers a word of warning, the conscience is silenced with the inner thought, “I do not care. I will pay the price for this moment of pleasure.”

20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

13:20 a companion of fools. It is still true that evil companions corrupt good morals. Unlike the good king Josiah, Rehoboam surrounded himself with a company of fools leading to moral and spiritual ruin (1 Kings 12:8; 2 Kings 22).

21 Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed.

13:21 evil pursueth. There is a spiritual principle or retributive justice. Once evil is unleashed it becomes a hound of hell to chase down and destroy a soul. Unless the Lord delivers a person pursued by evil there will be certain and eternal ruin. The sinner pursues evil only to find that evil pursues him. The righteous who do good find righteousness returning in kind.

22 A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

13:22 leaveth an inheritance. A good person might be able to leave a material inheritance or better yet a spiritual legacy in the form of a good name and a righteous example. The sinner leaves nothing of lasting value. In the end God will see the “meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalms 37:11). An example of each is found in the wickedness of Jonadab the Rechabite (Jeremiah 35:6-11) with the righteousness of Corniah (Jehoiachin, Jeremiah 22:24-30).

23 Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.

13:23 the tillage of the poor. While work might be hard and wages might be small there is much that can be produced. Those who refuse to work rightly perish without Divine sympathy. *2 Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat* (Paul, the apostle).

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

13:24 spareth his rod. It is a wicked and unloving parent that will not discipline a child. Love must at times be tough and even harsh. Eli did not discipline his sons and so they brought great shame to the church of the Old Testament (1 Samuel 3:13, 14). The son of Abraham was a source of blessing to himself and others (Gen. 18:19).

25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.

13:25 the satisfying of his soul. Jesus said, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled* (Matthew 5:6). In contrast the belly of sin is never filled. It only has an insatiable appetite and like hell is enlarged.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 13

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 13

1. List the four marks of a wise son.

Answer.

- A wise son brings happiness to his parents. Proverbs 10:1
- A wise son prepares for the future. Proverbs 10:5
- A wise son is teachable. Proverbs 13:1
- A wise son keeps the law of God. Proverbs 28:7

2. Give a good reason to hate lying lips.

Answer.

There are good reasons to hate lying not the least of which is the fact that it is the essence of sin. "All sin is a kind of lying" Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430).

3. What is the root of conflict according to Proverbs 13:10?

Answer.

Unholy pride involves self exaltation and self protection. The end result of such pride is strife or contention. It is not unusual in this day and age to hear people say they "demand respect."

4. Explain why a person might not want to depart from evil.

Answer.

A foolish person believes it is wrong to depart from evil or injurious behavior because it seems at the moment so pleasurable.

5. Characterize the parent that does not discipline a child.

Answer.

It is a wicked and unloving parent that will not discipline a child. Love must at times be tough and even harsh.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Of the four characteristics of a wise son (child) how would you be rated by your parents?
2. Are you a teachable person? Do you bristle at instruction? Give an illustration of how you were teachable.
3. Do you believe it is a person's nature to do wrong or is it simple a lack of proper nurturing by family and friends and society that makes a person do evil?

4. What type of inheritance would you like to leave your children? Be specific.
5. Do you believe in corporal punishment? Why or why not?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 13:7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 13:5. hateth.

Doctrine of Hatred

1. The righteous have always been the target of irrational hatred.
 - *Genesis 24:60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.*
 - *Genesis 26:27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?*
2. The righteous do not hate even when they have been treated unjustly.
 - *Genesis 50:15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.*
3. The wicked hate God.
 - *Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;*
4. Hatred is an expression of the heart and so from the heart this sinful emotion must not be made manifest.
 - *Leviticus 19:17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*
5. When God moves to judge His people He allows the enemies of the saints to rule over them.

- *Leviticus 26:17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.*

6. It is not wrong to pray that the enemies of God will be destroyed and dispersed.

- *Numbers 10:35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.*

7. God is an awesome God. Because He has established a moral universe He will not wait until eternity to move to destroy those that hate Him through military conquest and diseases.

- *Deuteronomy 7:10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.*
- *Deuteronomy 7:15 And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.*

8. Pre-meditated murder is a hate crime.

- *Deuteronomy 19:11 But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities:*

9. Some marriages are characterized by hatred [sane' (saw-nay')]; a primitive root; to hate (personally): enemy, foe, (be) hate (-ful, -r), odious, utterly] and so are to be terminated by a bill of divorce.

- *Deuteronomy 22:13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her,*
- *Deuteronomy 24:3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;*

10. As God will avenge those who hate Him so He will move to avenge His people against those who hate them.

- *God's judgment will fall upon the enemies of the church. Deuteronomy 30:7 And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.*
- *God's judgment will fall upon the enemies of the Divine. Deuteronomy 33:11 Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.*

11. Those who have been hated.

- Rebekah's seed. *Genesis 24:60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.*
- Isaac. *Genesis 26:27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?*
- Jephthah. *Judges 11:7 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? And why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?*
- David. *2 Samuel 22:41 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.*
- Micaiah. *1 Kings 22:8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.*
- God the Father. *2 Chronicles 19:2 And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.*
- God the Son. *John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*
- The church. *Luke 6:22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you [not 'if' but 'when'], and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 1 John 3:13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*
- Belteshazzar. *Daniel 4:19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.*

12. The accusation of hatred can be used in an emotional way to control the conduct of someone illustrated by Delilah.

- *Judges 14:16 And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee?*

13. It is proper to plead with God for mercy when suffering occurs because of the hate of others.

- *Psalm 9:13 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:*
- *Psalm 25:19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.*
- *Psalm 69:14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.*

14. Sometimes God is pleased to deliver those who hate the saints into the hands of the righteous in order to be destroyed. In the church of the Old Testament the destruction of the enemy was sometimes violent and bloody. In the church of the New Testament the enemies of God are to be destroyed by love.

- *Psalm 18:40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.*

15. Those that hate will be left desolate if not financially and physically certainly emotionally, as the heart grows cold and hard and there is no sensitivity in the soul.

- *Psalm 34:21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*

16. It is possible to hate without a cause. Such is the strength of sin that it is irrational. To look for reason in sin is to look in vain. It is at this point the danger arises to ascribe motives that are not present and so error is compounded and the mind is not satisfied.

- *Psalm 35:19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.*

17. The emotion of hatred produces imaginative ways to hurt and wound and gain allies in an unholy passion.

- *Psalm 38:19 But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.*

18. Before hatred explodes in open verbal and physical violence it whispers.

- *Psalms 41:7 All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.*

19. Those who hate eventually become their own worst enemy.

- *Psalms 44:10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.*

20. Hatred is simply a more intense expression of anger.

- *Psalms 55:3 Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.*

21. It is not wrong to try to appease the angry person, though it will prove to be of no use. The Psalmist said he restored that which he did not take in the first place.

- *Psalms 69:4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.*

22. The heart of the believer can pray that God will send a signal that He loves those whom others hate without a cause.

- *Psalms 86:17 Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.*

23. While it is wrong for Christians to hate individuals it is not wrong for believers to hate evil. It is commanded. This is not easy to do for by nature the heart loves darkness. By nature the heart loves evil.

- *Psalms 97:10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*

24. The heart must learn to hate evil.

Lesson one. Avoid becoming familiar with vice.

“Vice is a monster of so frightful a mien,
That to be trusted needs but to be seen.
Yet, seen to often, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then
embrace.”

- *Psalms 101:3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.*

Lesson Two. Learn Bible doctrine.

- *Psalms 119:104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.*

Lesson Three. Study the Law of God and love it.

- *Psalms 119:113 I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.*

25. The heart of the righteous can be confident that the Lord will take their side and they will live to see a just judgment upon those who have hated without a cause.

- *Psalms 118:7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.*

26. Those who learn to hate evil know how to fear the Lord.

- *Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*

27. Unauthorized hatred will produce death not only physical but eternal death. There is no place in heaven for those with hatred in their hearts.

- *Proverbs 8:36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.*

28. What elicits hatred from others?

- Unwanted correction. *Proverbs 9:8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.*
- Being poor. *Proverbs 19:7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? He pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.*
- Being socially insensitive. *Proverbs 25:17 Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.*
- Defending righteousness. *Amos 5:10 They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.*
- Unwanted suffering for righteousness sake. *Matthew 24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.*

29. There is a time to hate.

- *Ecclesiastes 3:8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

30. God's mercy will be extended to those who learn to hate evil, love good and will defend justice.

- *Amos 5:15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.*

31. What God hates.

- God hates insincere religion. *Amos 5:21 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.*
- God hates a lavish lifestyle that neglects the poor. *Amos 6:8 The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.*
- God hates those who reject that which is good and love that which is evil. *Micah 3:2 Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;*
- God hates those who plot evil in their hearts. *Zechariah 8:17 And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.*
- God hates false doctrine. *Revelation 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.* The Nicolaitans tried to unite idolatry with Christian worship. They denied God was the creator of the universe, ascribing its origin to lesser beings. They also encouraged sexual promiscuity in the name of love.

32. Jesus does not give individuals permission to hate their enemies.

- *Matthew 5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

33. Every person must determine who will be loved and who will be hated: God or Satan; the Savior or self.

- *Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

34. Ultimately the Lord will deliver His own from all that hate them.

- *Luke 1:71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;*

35. The believer does struggle with loving sin inappropriately.

- *Romans 7:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

Proverbs 13:5.

Doctrine of Lying

Introduction

A businessman well known for his ruthlessness once announced to writer Mark Twain, "Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and read the 10 Commandments aloud at the top." "I have a better idea," replied Twain. "You could stay in Boston and keep them." Though Mark Twain was not a Christian he did believe there was a moral law in the universe. The Bible summarizes the moral law of God in the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20. What are the Ten Commandments? Not everyone knows though some pretend to know them. A Hebrew School student was asked to list the Ten Commandments in any order. He wrote, "3, 6, 1, 8, 4, 5, 9, 2, 10, and 7."

1. In summary form the Ten Commands are as follows as found in Exodus 20.

- There are to be no other gods in one's life except the one true God
- No idols are to be worshipped
- Do not take God's name in vain
- Keep the Sabbath holy
- Honor your father and mother
- Do not murder
- Do not commit adultery
- Do not steal
- Do not give false testimony
- Do not covet

2. The third command and the ninth commandment forbids lying.

- *Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*
- *Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

3. Lying is a universal problem. David grew so frustrated with people lying that he said in haste, *All men are liars (Psalms 116:11).*

4. The seriousness of lying is found in the fact that God calls it an abomination.

- *Proverbs 6:16-19 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

5. Because lying is an abomination in the sight of a holy God He has determined to extract the severest penalty from those who practice it.

- *Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*
- *1 Timothy 1:10 [The wrath of God is reserved] For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;*

6. The Bible reveals the personal tragedy that accompanies lying or the potential of damage.

- When Abraham lied to a ruler by the name of Abimelech that his wife was only his sister he set the stage for the death of this innocent ruler. The story is told in Genesis 20.
- Because Jacob lied to his father Isaac in order to steal the family blessing he engaged the anger of his brother Esau who vowed to kill him for the deception. The story is told in Genesis 25.
- In the days of the early Church a man and his united to lie to the Holy Spirit and to the local congregation. Judgment fell. Their sin was exposed and they paid a terrible personal price.

Acts 4:1-6 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. 4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. 5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

7. Why do people lie?

- Some people lie in order to avoid punishment.
- Some people lie in order to secure an object.
- Some people lie for the fun of it.
- Some people lie to enflame their own ego.
- Some people lie because they are ashamed.
- Some people lie to be socially polite.

8. What is the cure for lying?

- An acknowledgment that lying does take place.
- A realization that it is a transgression of the Moral Law of God and that its effects are harmful.
- A realization that a lying person is an untrustworthy person.
- Speaking the truth in small matters will lead to speaking honestly in larger matters.
- Being accountable to someone else who knows you well.

9. The rewards for speaking the truth.

- The judgment of God's wrath is removed.
- There is a measure of self-respect that is regained.
- A love for righteousness, integrity and honor has a chance to mature in the soul
- It is to be like Christ who said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

10. It is the will of God that individuals speak the truth in love.

1 Timothy 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

PROVERBS 14

1 Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

14:1 wise woman. A contrast is made between the wise woman and the foolish. One will establish her house on principles of love and righteousness, the other will single handily destroy it through immoral actions, biting remarks, sarcasm and ridicule. The mother of Moses feared God and protected the life of her child (Ex. 2) while Athaliah, the mother of Jehoram had murder in her heart (2 Kings 11:16-18; 23:14-17; 2 Chron. 22:2, 3).

2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse [is turned aside] in his ways despiseth [disesteem] him.

14:2 despiseth him. The fear of God and the hatred of God are revealed not by the language of the lips but by the life that is lived. The fear of God and the despising of God is not defined as an emotion but as a behavioral pattern (1 Samuel 15:22).

3 In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

14:3 a rod of pride. The lips or speech of the foolish are contrasted with the lips or speech of the righteousness. Goliath spoke foolishly with his boasting and was beaten by the rod of divine judgment when his head was taken from his body (1 Samuel 17:41-49). David spoke wisely with faith and was preserved in the day of battle.

4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

14:4 the crib is clean. Not all of life is pretty. Not all situations in the church are easy to deal with (1 Corinthians 5). However, the first response is not to get rid of the offending person and their sin but to seek to bring an individual to repentance and restoration in righteousness (Judges 20:35-48; 21:1-2).

5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.

14:5 will not lie...will utter lies. Before Festus and Agrippa, Paul did not lie but gave a good testimony of Christ (Acts 26:25). Before the accusations of a little girl, Peter did lie about Christ, saying he did not know Jesus (Luke 22:55-62).

6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

14:6 findeth it not. The attitude a person possesses regarding ultimate truth is either one of skepticism or reception. The mind that mocks revealed truth will seek wisdom and never find it, which seems to characterize many in eighteenth century Europe's so called Age of Enlightenment. Pilate asked with mockery, *What is truth* (John 18:38) but did not wait for a reply though Truth incarnate stood before him. In contrast Daniel accepted divine revelation and so was able to understand great mysteries.

7 Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips [words] of knowledge.

14:7 go from. Not every conversation is to be carried to a conclusion. There is wisdom in departing from a person who is obstinate in defending the indefensible. Jesus said, *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you* (Matt. 7:6).

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

14:8 understand his way. A wise person will understand his own heart and be honest about all matters including personal motives. A fool will engage in self deceit and then deception of others. They will consider it wise to use deceit as a way of life but it will prove to be folly or silly.

9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour [delight].

14:9 mock at sin. A fool is a self sufficient person. When a person lives apart from God he boasts of his self sufficiency and mocks or laughs at the world and at sin. There is laughter in sin as when lewd humor is used. There is laughter at sin when it is dismissed lightly. What is discovered too late is that sin ultimately brings suffering and sorrow. Only in righteousness is there true soulish delight.

10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

14:14 his own bitterness. Henry David Thoreau was not wrong when he wrote, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. " Dr. H.A. Ironside said, "Every heart has its secret of joy or sorrow that no other ever shares." Jesus Himself had anguish of soul and thus He is a sufficient High Priest to whom the heart can go to share the innermost thoughts of exultation and delight or sinful defeat.

11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle [tent] of the upright shall flourish.

12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.

14:11-13 the ways of death. A house is here contrasted with a tent for while the house of the wicked appears to be established it is the righteous in the transitory tent that shall arrive at the New Jerusalem. In the journey of life there are many ways that upon consideration appears to be the right course of action but they lead to death, moral death, spiritual death, eternal death. One path is marked Willfulness. Another is marked Unbelief. Still another path is labeled Lust. Other paths are called Greed, Adultery, and Fornication. Jesus said, *I am the way , the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6)*.

14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

14:14 backslider. To backslide is to give up spiritual ground once taken for the Lord. It is possible for a person to flinch, turn back or retreat from righteousness because the heart is full of self interests. If the backsliding heart is not arrested by repentance it can slide all the way into apostasy which refers to the complete abandonment of the truth. In contrast the good man will be filled with spiritual treasures stored in his heart from the gifts of divine grace imparted, from the fragrance of fellowship memories and from the intake of Bible doctrine.

15 The simple [silly] believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well [carefully] to his going.

16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

17 He that is soon angry [quick tempered] dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.

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

19 The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

14:15-19 the evil bow before the good. The contrast between the simple and the wise is not referring to mental ability but to moral acumen. A wise person will fear God, depart from evil, and enjoy eternal life. The simple or silly person will believe non sensical ideals such as evolution which says that humans have evolved from protoplasm to apes to what they are now. When challenged in his thinking or behavior the fool becomes angry and defiant. With clever words and deeds the foolish person finds creative ways to sin even when he is despised for not having integrity. In the end the wicked will not win the game of life but will be forced to bow before the righteous and confess there was a better way to live.

20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.

14:20 the poor is hated. There is no dishonor in being poor if every means has been taken of rising changing that condition. The loss of a job, war, famine, the forces of nature or sickness can deplete all resources. However, those who remain poor because they choose to live in poverty and accept the charity of others are resented and hated and to a certain degree rightly so. The Word of God never authorizes socialism, communism or a welfare state.

21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

22 Do they not err that devise evil? But mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.

14:21-22 devise good. It is possible for a person to secretly plan evil or good. Mercy and truth shall be rewarded to the latter while sin is leveled against the former. The princes of Judah planned to hurt the prophet Jeremiah but the eunuch Ebed-melech was instrumental in saving him from the dungeon and famine (Jeremiah 38:7-13). For his kindness, Ebed-Melech was promised deliverance when the city should fall into the enemy's hands (Jeremiah 38:1-13; 39:15-18), 589 BC

23 In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

14:23 the talk of the lips. In Matthew 21:28-31 Jesus illustrated how some individuals only talk but do not act.

24 The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly [more foolishness].

14:24 riches. The reward of the wise is to possess riches. If not in material matters certainly in the matters of the heart which has lasting value. Nabal was financially rich but he was a fool (2 Samuel 13:13).

Daniel was a slave yet rich in God and so was able to write, “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” Daniel 12:3.

25 A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.

14:25 true witness. In Proverbs 14:5 reference is made to a faithful witness. Here reference is made to a true witness. In Revelation 3:14 Christ is presented as both. *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.*

A true witness will give accurate testimony. A faithful witness cannot be bribed or persuaded to change the testimony. Jesus has promised eternal life to all who trust Him. He bore true witness of spiritual matters. Nothing can make Him change His testimony.

26 In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

14:26-27. depart from. Strong motives are needed to deliver souls from the power of sin's polluting power. In the fear of the Lord and in His precious promises the snares of death are ultimately avoided. *2 Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

28 In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.

14:28 multitude of people. A king needs a kingdom in order to rule. This is true in secular affairs and it is true in the spiritual world. Of the kingdom of God there is a number of citizen saints which cannot be counted. *Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.*

29 He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

14:29 slow to wrath. Anger uncontrolled leads to cruel words and actions against the righteous. Zedekiah struck the prophet Michaiah in hasty and unjust anger though later the words of Michaiah were vindicated (1 Kings 22:24, 25).

30 A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.

14:30 envy the rottenness of the bones. Asaph confesses that he was envious of the wicked until he went into the house of the Lord and saw the end of those who will not put away emotional sins of the soul (Psalm 73).

31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

14:31 the poor. Not all people are poor by choice. Those who are born into poverty or find themselves the victim's of circumstances beyond their control are to be pitied and helped as David showed mercy to Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9).

32 The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

14:32 wicked is driven. When sin is given control of the soul it drives a person by means of powerful emotional forces into wicked ways. In the hour of death an evil life is often remembered in alarm. In contrast the righteous have hope in death of going to a better world as Stephen saw the glory of Christ in his dying moments (Acts 7:59,60).

33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known.

14:33 is made known. Foolish thoughts lead to foolish actions and the actions in turn reveal the senselessness of the soul.

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach [disgrace] to any people.

14:34 As God judges individuals so He judges nations collectively. Many once great civilizations are now nothing more but memories in the dustbin of history.

35 The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.

14:35 It is an honor to be counsel to a person in great authority. However, the counsel must be valid, productive and in the best interest of the person in authority. In the kingdom of heaven the Christian should seek to serve the King of kings by giving wise counsel that brings honor to the Lord reflected in the words and wisdom of Daniel (Daniel 6:3).

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 14

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 14

1. How is a wicked woman to be contrasted with a foolish woman?

Answer.

A wise woman will establish her house on principles of love and righteousness, the other will single handily destroy it through immoral actions, biting remarks, sarcasm and ridicule. .

2. What is the difference between laughing in sin and laughing at sin?

Answer.

There is laughter in sin when lewd humor is used. There is laughter at sin when it is dismissed lightly.

3. Strong motives are needed in order to depart from sin. According to 2 Peter 1:4 what is given to the believer to find victory over sin's corrupting power.

Answer.

2 Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

4. What attitude of the heart is to be cultivated toward those who are poor?

Answer.

Those who are born into poverty or find themselves the victim's of circumstances beyond their control are to be pitied and helped as David showed mercy to Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9).

5. Describe the cycle of sin of the fool.

Answer.

Foolish thoughts lead to foolish actions and the actions in turn reveal the senselessness of the soul.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Tell of a wise woman you have known in life. Be specific in describing her and illustrate what made her wise.
2. Have you been guilty of envy? What have you wanted? How can envy be distinguished from a legitimate desire for something and working to achieve it?

3. What is your attitude toward the poor? How have you helped someone less fortunate than yourself? Give a specific example.
4. Reflect upon your nation. Is it characterized by righteousness? If so, in what way and if not how is unrighteousness made manifest in the national culture?
5. Is it wrong to pray for the death of an evil person? Why or why not?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 14: 16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

Leader's Supplemental Material

What the Fear of the Lord Is

Psalms 34:11

*Come, ye children, hearken unto me:
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*

1. Wisdom. *Psalms 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*
2. Knowledge. *Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*
3. A Hatred of Evil. *Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*
4. Confidence. *Proverbs 14:26 In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.*
5. A Fountain of life. *Proverbs 14:27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*
6. A Teachable Spirit. *Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.*

PROVERBS 15

1 A soft answer turneth away wrath [anger]: but grievous [harsh] words stir up anger.

15:1 a soft answer. A soft answer will not always turn away wrath or appease anger but at times it does. Even if anger is not abated by a kind response the spirit of a person is under control and that is pleasing to the Lord.

2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

15:2 mouth of a fool. The mouth of a fool will utter foolish thoughts for it can do no less. The fool is characterized by the following.

• The fool is a persecutor of the innocent	1 Samuel 26:21
• The fool embraces atheism	Psalms 14:1
• The fool tends to lack financial resources	Psalms 49:10
• The fool engages in a lifestyle of personal corruption	Psalms 53:1
• The fool becomes a servant to others	Proverbs 11:29
• The fool is emotionally out of control	Proverbs 14:16
• The fool is ungrateful to God	Proverbs 26:10
• The fool walks in moral and spiritual perversion	Ecclesiastes 2:14
• The fool is forgotten with the passing of time	Ecclesiastes 2:16
• The fool is self destructive	Ecclesiastes 4:5
• The fool expresses inappropriate laughter	Ecclesiastes 7:6

3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding [watching] the evil [injurious behavior] and the good.

15:3 in every place. The essence of God is referred to in theological terminology by describing His attributes. A simple definition of an attribute would be that whatever is true about God is an attribute.

Ten Attributes of God

God is love	1 John 4:8
Love is an attribute of God	
God is merciful	Psalm 116:5
Mercy is an attribute of God	
God is omniscient	Isaiah 55:9
Possessing all knowledge is an attribute of God	
God is omnipotent	Job 38:1-39:30
Possessing all power is an attribute of God	

God is omnipresent	Psalm 139:7-13
Being in all places at the same time is an attribute of God	
God is spirit	John 4:24
Spirituality is an attribute of God	
God is truth	Titus 1:2
Truthfulness is an attribute of God	
God is immutable	James 1:17
Being unchangeable is an attribute of God	
God is eternal life	1 John 5:11
Life is an attribute of God	
God is holy	Habakkuk 1:13
Holiness is an attribute of God	

4 A wholesome [healthy] tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness [distortion, viciousness] therein is a breach [fracture] in the spirit [life of a rational person].

15:4 tongue. Abraham used his tongue to bring healing to others when he said, *Let there be no strife, for we be brethren* (Gen. 13:8). Sheba the son of Bichri used his tongue to cause division and discord in Israel and brought judgment upon himself (2 Samuel 20).

The use of the tongue is a large theme in Proverbs in particular and Scripture in general for the tongue can be used for good or evil.

15:4 tree of life.

Ten References to the Tree of Life

- The Tree of Life was created by God. Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- It is not good that anyone should live forever in a fallen body corrupted by sin and dominated by an evil nature. *Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*
- The Tree of Life was no longer made available after the Fall. *Genesis 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*
- The memory of the Tree of Life is preserved in metaphorical language in the following passages.
- ❖ A kind woman. *Proverbs 3:18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.*

- ❖ A righteous person. *Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.*
- ❖ Satisfied desires. *Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.*
- ❖ A wholesome tongue. *Proverbs 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.*
- ❖ Salvation. *Revelation 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Revelation 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*
- ❖ Eternal life in heaven. *Revelation 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

5 A fool despiseth [rejects] his father's instruction: but he that regardeth [is hedged about by] reproof is prudent [made bare].

15:5 instruction. A fool will despise the discipline of a parent but the wise shall receive it even though their faults are laid bare. In this matter the life of Manasseh can be contrasted with his father Hezekiah (2 Kings 18 – 21).

6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues [income] of the wicked is trouble.

15:6 trouble. The alleged prosperity and happiness of the ungodly is an illusion. In God's moral universe they shall know trouble and sorrow in large measure as Achan discovered (Josh. 7:19-26).

7 The lips of the wise disperse [spread] knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so.

15:7 dispense knowledge. In place of questionable humor and unkind remarks the lips of the wise will spread Bible doctrine and spiritual truth to bless others. Paul and Elymas at Paphos illustrate the wise and the fool (Acts 13:6-12).

8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination [repugnant] to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

15:8 an abomination. The idea that worship would be rejected by God because of who is offering it may surprise some. Before worship can take place there must be repentance, a bowing of the soul before the Sovereign, and the seeking of His face in simplicity and sincerity. The Lord delights in integrity.

9 The way of the wicked is an abomination [disgusting] unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

15:9 way of the wicked. The wicked do have a way about them. They have a world view that is manifested in definite acts against revealed religion in the Bible. Their way is disgusting to God. Consider the way of abortion, homosexuality, self esteem, and the militant radical feminist movement.

10 Correction is grievous [bad] unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.

15:10 Unless a person learns to accept correction it will be considered bad and thus of no value. Such a person will die the death of the wicked as Saul died at Gilboa. (1 Samuel 31:8).

11 Hell [Sheol, the sphere of the dead] and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

15:11 before the Lord. The darkest regions in the universe are open before God. How much more the hearts of individuals? Known to Him are all the ways of people. The modern philosophy of Open Theism where by God does not know all, is contrary to biblical revelation. The Scripture clearly proclaims that God has complete, accurate, and infallible knowledge of all events in the universe past, present, and future including all future decisions and actions of free moral agents.

12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.

15:12 a scorner. The word for scorner is *luwts* (loots) and means literally to make mouths at, i.e. to scoff. Mimes may bring a smile to the face by their mouthing actions in a comedy routine but the smile vanishes when wise counsel is rejected or not sought.

13 A merry [joyful] heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the [human] spirit is broken.

15:13 The joyful heart is the heart that knows sins are forgiven by grace through faith in Christ and that all burdens can be cast upon the Lord for He careth for us.

“The burden of my fear and sin
On Christ by faith I roll;
And now I have His peace within
And victory in my soul.

There’s victory in my soul,
Victory in my soul;
I grasp the promises by faith,
There’s victory in my soul.”

14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

15:14 the mouth of fools feedeth. The heart of the righteous seeking understanding is contrasted with the mouth of the fool which eats and feeds upon foolishness. In the act of seeking spiritual knowledge the mind is engaged and reason is honored. In the act of eating there is primarily a self pleasure principle involved that guides the behavior. Every believer must make a decision to be either centered or self centered. The pursuit of God or the exaltation of self is what is in view.

15 All the days of the afflicted [depressed] are evil [injurious]: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.

15:15 feast. Life can be a banquet, a continual feast by knowing Christ. Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). The abundant life belongs to the Christian.

“Jesus has a table spread
Where the saints of God are fed,
He invites His chosen people,
‘Come and dine’;
With His manna He doth feed
And supplies our every need:
O ’tis sweet to sup with Jesus all the time!

“Come and dine,”
the Master calleth,
‘Come and dine’;

You may feast at Jesus'
table all the time;
He Who fed the multitude,
turned the water into wine,
To the hungry calleth now,
'Come and dine.'"

The Christian is not to feast on trashy novels, internet chat room conversations or the sinful pleasures of the world. To do so will be to become like the Exodus generation which lost its appetite for angel's food for the imagined dainties of Egypt (Numbers 11:4-9).

16 Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.

17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled [fattened] ox and hatred therewith.

15:16-17 In Luke 12:15 Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he posseseth." Daniel and his friends refused to eat of the king's food (Daniel 1). They ate alone with God rather than to be friends of a world hostile to the Lord's people and hostile to God himself.

18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

15:18 wrathful man. A wrathful person is a proud person or else they would not be easily aroused. Angry words generate more angry words and harmful actions. The Lord has not called His people to verbal or physical conflict. There is power in the softly spoken word. It can sooth affect passions and avoid discord. *Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

19 The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

15:19 the way. A contrast is made between the way of the lazy person and the way of the righteous. Both want a sense of direction but only one will be divinely guided in a plain manner. For the Christian who needs another incentive for holy living, a reason is provided: what should be done in a given situation will be made plainer.

20 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth [does not hold in honor] his mother.

15:20 When reaching the age of maturity a child can prove to be either wise through understanding and obedience thereby making the heart of his parents glad or a fool by mocking and despising parental instruction.

21 Folly [silliness] is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

15:21 is joy. In sensual pleasures there is much joy. Though the pleasure is only momentary it is sought again and again. In this way the soul becomes addicted to a vicious sevenfold process in the cycle:

Seven Facets in the Cycle of Sin

- Allurement
- Building temptation
- Persuasion to act
- Momentary pleasure
- Guilt if the heart is not completely hardened
- Confession to God if the heart is religiously inclined or vows of self help if not
- Repetition of the process.

15:21 a man of understanding. What a person thinks will affect how they behave. With understanding comes a moral life. However, there is a difference between intellectual understanding of life and spiritual understanding. Some people know intellectually what is right and what is wrong. They might even teach and work for the betterment of society yet they can still maintain a secret life of moral corruption. Yes, such a soul is hypocritical. But such a soul is also missing some part of the gospel message which will cause them to walk uprightly. “Oh Father God, have mercy on such religious hypocrisies. Be gracious to the person torn between two lovers, *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would* (Galatians 5:17). Father God, come quickly and give more understanding lest the soul perish.”

22 Without counsel purposes [plans] are disappointed [confused]: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

15: 22 counsellors. “I not only use all the brains I have but all I can borrow” (Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States, 1856-1924).

23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

15:23 in due season. To respond to others that leaves no regret is the word spoken in good season. True words are not always necessary words to be spoken. Some things should not be spoken or repeated. General Robert E. Lee was asked what he thought of a fellow officer in the Confederate army who had made some derogatory remarks about him. Lee rated him as being very satisfactory. The person who asked the question seemed perplexed. "General," he said, "I guess you don't know what he's been saying about you." "I know," answered Lee. "But I was asked my opinion of him, not his opinion of me!"

24 The way of life is above [upward] to the wise, that he may depart from hell [Sheol (the grave)] beneath.

15:24 way of life. Longevity of life was promised to the righteous. For example, Exodus 20:12 says, *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee*. When facing a premature death Hezekiah asked for more time which was granted (Isa 38; 2 Kings 20).

25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.

15:25 widow. God has a special regard in His heart for the widow and the orphan.

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour the mill,
And back of the mill is the wheat
and the shower,
And the sun and the Father's will."

Maltbie D. Babcock
1858-1901

26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination [disgusting] to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

15:26 thoughts of the wicked. Before a person speaks God knows what is being considered. "Christian thinking is a rare and difficult thing; so many seem unaware that the first great commandment according to our Lord is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . with all thy mind* (Oswald Chambers, 1874-1917).

27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

15:27 shall live. A righteous person is not greedy of gain nor can they be bribed. The soldiers who guarded the tomb of Christ took a bribe to be silent and lie to their eternal shame. Russian author Leo Tolstoy tells the story of a rich man who was never satisfied. He always wanted more and more. He heard of a wonderful chance to get more land. For a thousand rubles he could have all that he could walk around in a day. But he had to make it back to the starting point by sundown or he would lose it all. He arose early and set out. He walked on and on, thinking that he could get just a little more land if he kept going on. But he went so far that he realized he must walk very fast if he was to get back in time to claim the land. As the sun got lower in the sky, he quickened his pace. He began to run. As he came within sight of the starting place, he exerted his last energies, plunged over the finish line, fell to the ground, and collapsed. A stream of blood poured out of his mouth and he lay dead. His servant took a spade and dug a grave. He made it just long enough and just wide enough and buried him. The title of Tolstoy's story is "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" He concludes by saying, "Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed."

28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil [injurious] things.

15:28 studieth to answer. The wise person will wait to answer an important statement or accusation. The wicked will emotionally respond with injurious words. In this matter Elisha is contrasted to the sons of the prophets at Jericho in 2 Kings 2:15-18.

29 The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

15:29 he heareth the prayer. God is a prayer hearing God. Let that thought penetrate the heart and the soul will be spurred to commune with God. "Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly. Others give but an occasional pluck at the rope. But he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously, with all his might" (Charles Haddon Spurgeon).

30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.

15:30 light of the eyes. What makes the heart rejoice is spiritual perception and understanding.

15: 30 a good report. Rather than engage in the art of personal destruction Christians are to esteem others better than themselves and so build them up instead of tearing them down.

31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life [remains] abideth among the wise.

32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth [heeds] reproof getteth understanding.

33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

15:31-33 reproof. While being the object of criticism and correction is not pleasant it is profitable. Rather than resent and resist it an attitude of acceptance can be and must be cultivated as unto the Lord.

“Batter my heart,
Three-personed God; for, you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise, and stand,
o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to break,
blow, burn and make me new.”

John Donne
1572-1631

Before honour is humility as the life of Joseph so well testifies to (Genesis 37-50).

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 15

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 15

1. List eleven characteristics of a fool.

Answer.

- The fool is a persecutor of the innocent (1 Samuel 26:21).
- The fool embraces atheism (Psalms 14:1).
- The fool tends to lack financial resources (Psalms 49:10).
- The fool engages in a lifestyle of personal corruption (Psalms 53:1).
- The fool becomes a servant to others. (Proverbs 11:29).
- The fool is emotionally out of control (Proverbs 14:16).
- The fool is ungrateful to God. (Proverbs 26:10).
- The fool walks in moral and spiritual Perversion (Ecclesiastes 2:14).
- The fool is forgotten with the passing of time (Ecclesiastes 2:16).
- The fool is self destructive (Ecclesiastes 4:5).
- The fool expresses inappropriate laughter (Ecclesiastes 7:6).

2. Give ten attributes of God.

Answer.

- God is love (1 John 4:8).
- God is merciful (Psalm 116:5)
- God is omniscient (Isaiah 55:9)
- God is omnipotent (Job 38:1-39:30)
- God is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-13)
- God is spirit (John 4:24)
- God is truth (Titus 1:2)
- God is immutable (James 1:17)
- God is eternal life (1 John 5:11)
- God is holy (Habakkuk 1:13)

3. To what does “hell” refer in the Old Testament?

Answer.

The reference to “hell” in the Old Testament is a reference to Sheol, the sphere of the dead to which all go.

4. What verse in proverbs 15 speaks of the omniscience of God?

Answer.

Proverbs 15: 26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination [disgusting] to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words. Before a person speaks God knows what is being considered.

5. Describe the sin cycle.

Answer.

- Allurement
- Building temptation
- Persuasion to act
- Momentary pleasure
- Guilt if the heart is not completely hardened
- Confession to God if the heart is religiously inclined or vows of self help if not
- Repetition of the process.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Are you an angry person? Are you a critical person? Would the testimony of others support your self analysis?
2. Do you believe in Open Theism or the concept that God does not know all things though the overall direction of history is under His sovereign control? Why or why not?
3. While the general cycle of sin has been set forth those who struggle with a repetitive area of weakness develop their own negative MO or “method of operation”. In judgment day honesty, what is your MO?
4. What are some dangers Christians face in the matter of money (Prov. 15:27)?
5. On a scale of 1-10 how well do you receive criticism? When was the last time you received criticism and were changed in a positive way by it?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 15: 1 A soft answer turneth away wrath [anger]: but grievous [harsh] words stir up anger.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of the Tongue

As Found in the book of Proverbs

1. God hates a lying tongue. It is listed as one of the seven deadly sins.
 - *Proverbs 6:17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*
2. Sensual women bent on immorality will use their tongues to flatter men. Bible doctrine residing in the soul is needed to keep a man from designing women.
 - *Proverbs 6:24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.*
3. A proper use of the tongue is recognized as something of great value.
 - *Proverbs 10:20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.*
4. When the tongue is consecrated to God and full of Bible doctrine it can communicate spiritual wisdom.
 - *Proverbs 10:31 The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.*
5. When the tongue is used to wound, the words spoken are like the piercing of a dagger.
 - *Proverbs 12:18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*
6. In the providence of God He has established a principle of morality in the universe to curb and control lying. It will only be allowed to last for a brief time.
 - *Proverbs 12:19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.*
7. When a person is without God and without Bible doctrine in the soul then the lips of that person can only speak foolishness. A fool is a person who is “stupid” and “wicked” for such does the word “fool” (Heb. nabal) mean. Therefore foolishness refers to thoughts which are simple “stupid” and “wicked.”
 - *Proverbs 15:2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.*
8. As the lips of a righteous person speaks that which is valuable (Proverbs 10:20) so the same lips are analogous to a tree that produces good living fruit. .

- *Proverbs 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.*

9. There are many situations where wisdom is the better part of valour. The Lord must give the proper answer.

- *Proverbs 16:1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.*

10. A person who lies will in turn listen to lies being told.

- *Proverbs 17:4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.*

11. Those who speak one way to one person and then change their thoughts with another will find their inconsistencies will produce much harm.

- *Proverbs 17:20 He that hath a froward [distorted, false] heart finideth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue [a tongue that changes] falleth into mischief.*

12. Individuals who learn the power of an effective use of the tongue for evil or good can persuade people towards death or life. Consider the words of Martin Luther, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards or George Muller and contrast them with the words of Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin or Sadam Hussein.

- *Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.*

13. It is possible to think and grow rich by using lies to acquire wealth. It is also the equivalent of seeking out death.

- *Proverbs 21:6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.*

14. A person who is able to control his tongue saves his soul from much heartache.

- *Proverbs 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.*

15. Soft matter can eventually wear and break down that which is stronger than itself. A single drop of water falling on a rock will have little or no impact. But a steady dropping of water will eventually wear the stone away. In like manner a soft answer can have a profound impact on a hard heart.

- *Proverbs 25:15 By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.*

16. There are times when the expression of righteous anger will do much to drive away an abusive tongue.

- *Proverbs 25:23 The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance backbiting tongue.*

17. Those who lie will despise those who are affected by their lie. Perhaps this is due in part to a willingness to believe one's own lie in order to have self righteous anger.

- *Proverbs 26:28 A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.*

18. Many Christians believe the way to win souls to Christ is to flatter the ungodly rather than call them to repentance. The honest sinner would rather be rebuked out of conviction than flattered with insincerity.

- *Proverbs 28:23 He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.*

19. A virtuous woman is one who speaks kindness.

- *Proverbs 31:26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.*

Proverbs 15:25.

Doctrine of the Widow

1. A priest was not allowed to marry a widow.

- *Leviticus 21:14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.*

2. The Law provided special protection for the widow and orphan.

- *Exodus 22:22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.*

3. Food was to be made available to the widow.

- Wheat. *Deuteronomy 24:19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.*

- Oil. *Deuteronomy 24:20 When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.*

- Grapes. *Deuteronomy 24:21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.*

4. The widow was to share in the tithe.

- *Deuteronomy 26:12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;*

5. Anyone who oppressed a widow through legal maneuvering was cursed.

- *Deuteronomy 27:19 Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.*

6. Widows have been used mightily in the service of God such as the widow who ministered to Elijah.

- *1 Kings 17:9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.*

7. In time of personal pressure widows are subject to doubts and fears due to anguish of heart.

- *1 Kings 17:17-18 And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. 18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? ...20 And he [Elijah] cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?*

8. Widows can be abused by the ungodly. .

- *Job 24:21 He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.*
- *Psalms 94:6 They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.*
- *Isaiah 1:23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.*

9. Job defended his life of honor by asking if anyone could prove he had hurt anyone including a widow.

- *Job 31:16 If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;*

10. Imprecatory prayers plead with God for revenge upon one's enemies with special curses such as causing sudden death leaving the children of the wicked fatherless and the wife a widow.

- *Psalms 109:9 Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.*

11. The plight of the widow is well known to God.

- *Psalms 146:9 The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*
- *Proverbs 15:25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.*

12. The Lord declares how society should conduct itself in social terms.

- *Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.*
- *Jeremiah 22:3 Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.*
- *Zechariah 7:10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.*

13. God will honor and bless those who look after the widow.

- *Jeremiah 7:6 If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: :7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.*

14. God will judge those who harm the widow.

- *Malachi 3:5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.*

15. The Lord receives the sacrificial giving and worship of the widow.

- *Mark 12:42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:*

16. The widow can give more time to serving the Lord reflected in Anna.

- *Luke 2:37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.*
- *1 Timothy 5:5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.*

17. Jesus had compassion on widows even to the raising of one's dead son.

- *Luke 7:12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.*

18. The plight of a widow provided Christ with a sermon illustration on the power of persistent prayer.

- *Luke 18:3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; :5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.*

19. The early church accepted responsibility for looking after widows provided certain conditions were met.

- *1 Timothy 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.*
- *1 Timothy 5:9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man.*

Doctrine of Thoughts

1. The thoughts of the wicked are evil continuously.
 - *Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*
2. It is possible to have great thoughts of the heart, thoughts of victory in battle.
 - *Judges 5:15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.*
3. Intercessory and personal prayer begs God to keep and establish the thoughts of the hearts of His people.
 - *1 Chronicles 29:18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee:*
4. The time will come when the thoughts of the heart will cease, be those thoughts good or bad.
 - *Job 17:11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.*
5. The thoughts of God's heart will last to all generations.
 - *Psalms 33:11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*
6. God knows how empty and vain the thoughts of the natural man are.
 - *Psalms 94:11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.*
7. The thoughts of the righteous are pure and uplifting and are contrasted with the thoughts of the wicked which are disgusting to God.
 - *Proverbs 12:5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.*
 - *1 Corinthians 3:20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.*
 - *Proverbs 15:26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.*

- *Isaiah 59:7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.*

8. Impulsive thoughts will lead to poverty or at least economic hardship.

- *Proverbs 21:5 The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.*

9. God is thinking of how He will deal with the ungodly. The wrath of God is being stored up against the wicked. Once His judgment begins it will not cease until He has performed the thoughts of His heart.

- *Jeremiah 23:20 The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.*

10. If a person wants to know what God is thinking about them personally the answer is this, provided no judgment has been unleashed. God is thinking thoughts of peace and mercy.

- *Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

11. Through Bible doctrine it is possible for a person to know the thoughts of their own heart, a point which is contrary to much modern thinking which teaches the subconscious drives individuals.

- *Daniel 2:30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.*

12. The unbelieving and ungodly do not know the thoughts of God for God is spiritual and the unconverted is flesh and fleshly in every facet of being: body, soul and spirit.

- *Micah 4:12 But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.*

13. Jesus Christ reveals the innermost thoughts of a person's heart.

- *Luke 2:35 (Yea [Mary], a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*

PROVERBS 16

1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

16:1 from the LORD. The question of the extent of divine providence continues to be debated. While the discussion continues the Scriptures indicate that it is not in man that liveth to direct his way. The story of Balaam indicates how true this is (Number 23-24). “The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of man; and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?” (Benjamin Franklin).

2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weighth the spirits.

16:2 in his own eyes. The television program American Justice has a recurring phrase theme from the subjects of its programs, accused murderers, rapists and thieves: “I am innocent.” Is it any wonder that in the day of ultimate judgment every mouth will be silenced (Romans 3:19)? One night Belshazzar was “weighted in the balances” and was found wanting (Daniel 5:25-30).

3 Commit [roll] thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

16:3 established. The ways of God are often the opposite of human understanding and wisdom. Here is such an example. Proper thinking is said to be established when our behavior is committed to the Lord. Hannah committed or rolled her desire for a child before the Lord and He established her thoughts (1 Samuel 1:9-20). Jesus committed or rolled the great work of redemption to the Father by saying “nevertheless, not my will but thine be done” and His thoughts were established. Let the church commit or roll her works to the Lord and the thoughts shall be established.

4 The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

16:4-5 The LORD. It is difficult to understand in what sense God has made the wicked but He has. All of history is simply HIStory. In the end everything will either reflect God’s glory and mercy or His justice and holy fury. The soul searching question is this: “Will your life and eternal destiny reflect God’s mercy or His justice”? What is your answer today?

6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.

16:6. purged. For the person who has sinned grievously and would like to be purified here is the divine remedy: practice mercy towards others and speak the truth at all times to self, to God and to others. For the person who would like to be fundamentally and forever different and be separated from evil here is the divine remedy: learn to fear God.

7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

16:7 at peace. If a person has enemies it is not wrong to reflect with self inquiry if God is pleased with one's life. If upon honest soul searching reflection the conscience is not condemned, then life is to be lived "through evil report and good report" as Daniel did (Daniel 6:4, 5) until the Lord changes hearts or the tongue of the slanderer is silenced.

8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.

16:8 Better is little. The Christian faith teaches individuals to be content and not overreach for even the desire to be rich can lead to great temptation and sin. *1 Timothy 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

Epictetus (c. AD 55-c. 135) said, "He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has"

Socrates (470-399 BC) taught, "He is richest who is content with the least." William Shakespeare (AD 1564-1616) wrote, "He is well paid that is well satisfied. " Naboth was content with what God had given him while Ahab was not (1 Kings 21).

9 A man's heart deviseth [schemes] his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

16: 9 the LORD directeth. When the Lord arrests evil schemes, when the Lord directs towards a path of righteousness then the heart rejoices. It is more challenging to understand how the Lord directs the paths of those who do violence and harm to others and engage in self destructive behavior through problems of living. Nevertheless, when Jacob schemed to take the family blessing, the LORD directed His steps until one night he was able to be blessed (Genesis 32:26).

10 A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.

11 A just weight and balance are the LORD's: all the weights of the bag are his work [concern].

12 It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.

13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.

14 The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.

15 In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.

16:10-15 the king. The Bible has much to say to and about kings or rulers. A divine ideal is set forth in these verses.

Characteristics of an Ideal King

- One who hates iniquity.
- One who loves righteousness.
- One who will judge with equity.
- One who condemns the vile person.
- One who hates lawlessness of every kind.
- One who renders a sure decision.
- One who does not transgress justice.
- One who hates baseness and trickery.
- One who is honest and just.
- One who delights in the truth.
- One who loves sound speech.

As King of kings and Lord of lords Jesus Christ fulfills the role of an ideal Ruler.

16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

16:16-17. to depart from evil. Wisdom and understanding are of more value than gold or silver for while the later is good for this world the former will bring a soul to heaven. To depart from evil is the grand objective of the Christian. It is not easy to depart from evil but it can be and must be done.

Sixteen Ways to Depart from Evil

• Confess all known sin	1 John 1:9
• Dedicated the body to Christ knowing that it is the temple of the Holy Spirit	1 Corinthians 6:19
• Be renewed in the mind	Romans 12:1-2
• Make no provision for the flesh	Romans 13:14

• Become accountable to someone	James 5:16
• Learn Bible doctrine	Psalm 86:11
• Memorize the Word of God	Psalm 119:11
• Walk in the Spirit	Galatians 5:16
• Believe there is a way out of every temptation	1 Corinthians 10:13
• Mortify the motion towards sin at the first	Romans 8:13
• Make a covenant with your eyes	Job 31:1
• Guard or garrison the heart	Proverbs 4:23
• Think pure thoughts	Philippians 4:8
• Flee fornication	1 Corinthians 6:18
• Put off the works of the flesh	Galatians 5:19-21
• Put on the works of the Spirit	Galatians 5:22-25

18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

16:18 pride. It has been said that a person is most like Satan when inordinate pride is found in the heart (Isaiah 14: 13-14). When a victorious Roman general arrived back in Rome, he was given a hero's welcome and a triumphant parade of victory. But a philosopher was hired to ride beside him in the victory parade. As the victor acknowledged the cheers of the crowd, the philosopher kept whispering in his ear: "You are mortal. You are mortal."

19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

16:19 a humble spirit. "People are strange: they want the front of the bus, the back of the church, and the center of attention" (Unknown).

20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.

16:20 handleth a matter wisely.

Ten Ways to Handle a Matter Wisely

- Do not violate the known will of God.
- Base the decision on principle not practicality.
- Seek the counsel of others.
- Do not act too quickly.
- Look for precedents.
- Meditate on the outcome and potential consequences.
- Do not violate the conscience.
- Do not go against the counsel of other leaders.

- Write down the decision making process and why something will be done.
- Stand by the decision unless there is conclusive evidence that a mistake has been made.
- Then, be willing to make corrections.

21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.

16:23 wise in heart.

Twenty Characteristics of being Wise

- The wise person will hear and increase in understanding. *Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:*
- The wise person will inherit glory. *Proverbs 3:35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.*
- The wise person will observe nature. *Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:*
- The wise person will receive instruction. *Proverbs 8:33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.*
- The wise person will receive correction. *Proverbs 9:8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.*
- The wise person will increase in knowledge. *Proverbs 10:14 Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.*
- The wise person will command others. *Proverbs 11:29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.*
- The wise person will win souls to Christ. *Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.*
- The wise person will listen to the counsel of others. *Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*
- The wise person will speak good words. *Proverbs 12:18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*
- The wise person will honor parents. *Proverbs 13:1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.*

- The wise person will flee from the snares of death. *Proverbs 13:14 The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*
- The wise person surrounds himself with other wise people. *Proverbs 13:20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*
- The wise woman is able to build a comfortable home. *Proverbs 14:1 Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.*
- The wise man will depart from evil. *Proverbs 14:16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.*
- The wise person is able to control his tongue. *Proverbs 17:28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.*
- The wise person honors the law of God. *Proverbs 28:7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.*
- The wise person is not a transparent personality. *Proverbs 29:11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.*
- The Supreme Wise Person is God. *Romans 16:27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. Jude 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*
- The wise person is humble. *1 Corinthians 3:18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.*

22 Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.

16:22 understanding. There is a difference between having knowledge or factual information and possessing an understanding of what the consequences of the information will mean. “God gives the believer a new set of inner eyes to see what he could not see before, a new set of inner ears to hear what he could not hear before” (John Powell).

23 The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

16:23 teacheth his mouth.

- “Evil words cut more deeply than a sword.”
- “Knowing what to say is not enough; we must know how to say it.”
- “Words break no bones, but they do break hearts.”
- “Gentle words fall lightly, but they have great weight.”
- “Speech is silver, but silence is golden.”

24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

26 He that laboureth [works] laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him.

27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire.

“A wise old owl lived in an oak;
The more he saw, the less he spoke;
The less he spoke, the more he heard;
Why can't we all be like that old bird?”

28 A foward [perverse] man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

16:28 foward. The Hebrew word *tahpukah* (tah-poo-kaw') means “to be perverse” which speaks of a turning away from what is right or good, corrupt. It refers to improper or incorrect behavior. The corrupt person is obstinate in opposing what is right, reasonable, or accepted.

29 A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.

30 He shutteth his eyes to devise foward [perverse] things: moving his lips he bringeth evil [injurious behavior] to pass.

16: 28 violent man. Because of the Fall the nature of man has been changed. An element of violence has entered into the soul whereby verbal and physical force is used to say or take what is desired. The Psalmist prayed to be delivered from the violent man. *Psalms 140:4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.*

31 The hoary [gray] head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.

16:31 hoary head. With the passing of time much wisdom can be gained. Symbolic of spiritual maturity are the gray hairs of a righteous person.

'Tis sweet to grow old
in the fear of the Lord,
As life's shadows longer creep.
Till our steps grow slow,
and our sun swings low-
He gives his beloved sleep."

John Wesley
1703-1791

32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

16:32 slow to anger. "When anger enters the mind, wisdom departs" Thomas A Kempis, c. 1380-1471). "When anger was in Cain's heart, murder was not far off" (Philip Henry, 1631-1696)

33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing [every deception] thereof is of the LORD.

16:33 the whole disposing. While the casting of lots to discern the will of God is not condemned in Scripture, nor is it to be encouraged.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 16

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 16

1. List sixteen ways to depart from evil.

Answer.

Sixteen Ways to Depart from Evil

- Confess all known sin. 1 John 1:9
- Dedicated the body to Christ knowing that it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19
- Be renewed in the mind. Romans 12:1-2
- Make no provision for the flesh. Romans 13:14
- Become accountable to someone James 5:16
- Learn Bible doctrine Psalm 86:11
- Memorize the Word of God Psalm 119:11
- Walk in the Spirit Galatians 5:16
- Believe there is no need to sin and there is a way out of every temptation 1 Corinthians 10:13
- Mortify the motions towards sin at the first Romans 8:13
- Make a covenant with your eyes Job 31:1
- Guard or garrison the heart Proverbs 4:23
- Think pure thoughts Philippians 4:8
- Flee fornication 1 Corinthians 6:18
- Put off the works of the flesh Galatians 5:19-21
- Put on the works of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-25

2. Provide ten ways to handle a matter wisely.

Answer.

- Do not violate the known will of God.
- Base the decision on principle not practicality.
- Seek the counsel of others.
- Do not act too quickly.
- Look for precedents.
- Meditate on the outcome and potential consequences.
- Do not violate the conscience.
- Do not go against the counsel of other leaders.
- Write down the decision making process and why something will be done.
- Stand by the decision unless there is conclusive evidence that a mistake has been made.

Then, be willing to make corrections.

3. Give twenty characteristics of being wise

Answer.

- The wise person will hear and increase in understanding. Proverbs 1:5
- The wise person will inherit glory. Proverbs 3:35
- The wise person will observe nature. Proverbs 6:6
- The wise person will receive instruction. Proverbs 8:33
- The wise person will receive correction. Proverbs 9:8
- The wise person will increase in knowledge. Proverbs 10:14
- The wise person will command others. Proverbs 11:29
- The wise person will win souls to Christ. Proverbs 11:30
- The wise person will listen to the counsel of others. Proverbs 12:15
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- The wise person will honor parents. Proverbs 13:1
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- The wise person surrounds himself with other wise people. Proverbs 13:20
- The wise woman is able to build a comfortable home. Proverbs 14:1
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- The wise person is able to control his tongue. Proverbs 17:28
- The wise person honors the law of God. Proverbs 28:7
- The wise person is not a transparent personality. Proverbs 29:11
- The Supreme Wise Person is God. Romans 16:27
- The wise person is humble. 1 Corinthians 3:18

4. What is the difference between knowledge and understanding?

Answer.

Knowledge is the accumulation of facts and figures while understanding is found when “God gives the believer a new set of inner eyes to see what he could not see before, a new set of inner ears to hear what he could not hear before” (John Powell).

5. What are a foward mouth and a hoary head?

Answer.

A foward mouth refers to perverse language while a hoary head reflects the voice of age and wisdom.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Of the twenty characteristics of the wise person, count how many would apply to you. Which characteristics do you need to improve on?
2. Are you personally slow to anger? What can you share about the subject of anger and how you handle it?

3. Addiction plagues Christians and non-Christians alike. What counsel would you give to someone who struggles with repetitive behavior that is self-destructive and other destructive?
4. Do you believe the Scriptures condone or condemn gambling? What biblical principles would you appeal to in support of your position?
5. Many Christians believe voting is a form of gambling. Should Christians vote? Why or why not?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 16: 7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Proverbs 16: 25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Proverbs 16:32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 16:3. fear God.

Doctrine of Fearing God

1. The Bible speaks of those who possessed a fear of God.

- Joseph feared God. *Genesis 42:18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:*
- The leaders of Israel feared God. *Exodus 18:21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:*
- Job feared God. *Job 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?*
- Wise believers fear God. *Psalms 66:16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*
- A dying thief feared God. *Luke 23:40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?*

- Devout Jews feared God. *Acts 13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.*

2. Life will turn out well for those who fear God.
 - *Ecclesiastes 8:12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:*
3. Cultivating a fear of God is part of the duty of every person.
 - *Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*
 - *1 Peter 2:17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*
4. Why individuals should fear God is revealed: there is coming an hour of ultimate judgment.
 - *Revelation 14:7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*
5. The heart that has become gospel hardened in sin must learn to fear God. This can be done in the following manner.
 - Pray for the new birth. Ask God to convert the heart and give a new heart of flesh that quivers to the divine touch and responds to the divine will because the holy laws are written on the conscience.
 - Ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit who has been promised upon request. *Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*
 - Reflect upon the biblical judgments on nations and individuals. *Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
 - Read gospel sermons on this topic such as Jonathan Edwards' *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. "Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a

burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies" (from Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God).

6. Remember the proverbs say that by fear of the Lord the soul will become separated from sin. This becomes a great motive to cultivate fear of God.

Doctrine of the Foward Person

1. The basic Hebrew word tahpukah (tah-poo-kaw') translated foward means to be perverse and speaks of a turning away from what is right or good. It refers to improper or incorrect behavior. The corrupt person is obstinate in opposing what is right, reasonable, or accepted.
2. The Lord will hide His holy face from the foward person.
 - *Deuteronomy 32:20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very foward [perverse] generation, children in whom is no faith.*
3. The Lord will prove to be unsavory or tortuous towards the foward person.
 - *2 Samuel 22:27 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the foward [perverse] thou wilt shew thyself unsavory [tortuous].*
4. The forward person is characterized by the following.
 - Willfulness. *Job 5:13 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the foward [perverse] is carried headlong.*
 - Godlessness. *Psalms 101:4 A foward [perverse] heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.*
 - An evil lifestyle. *Proverbs 2:15 Whose ways are crooked, and they foward [perverse] in their paths:*
 - Engages in inappropriate speech. *Proverbs 6:12 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a foward [perverse] mouth.*
 - A troublemaker. *Proverbs 16:28 A foward [perverse] man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.*

5. God must deliver a person from the person who is a fraud.
 - *Proverbs 2:12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward [perverse] things;*
6. God has secrets to share with the righteous. For those who are spiritual frauds His attitude is one of settled abomination.
 - *Proverbs 3:32 For the froward [perverse] is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.*
7. The believer is responsible for personal sanctification.
 - *Proverbs 4:24 Put away from thee a froward [perverse] mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.*
 - *2 Samuel 22:24 I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity.*
8. The natural condition of a man is that of perverseness. Only the new birth can make a person pure and holy.
 - *Proverbs 21:8 The way of man is froward [perverse] and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right.*
9. The Christian is responsible to obey those in authority over them even when they are perverse.
 - *1 Peter 2:18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward [perverse].*

Doctrine of Anger

1. Anger is an explosive and destructive emotion. When excessive and unreasonable it brings divine denunciation (Genesis 49:6, 7).
2. Sometimes the saints do display a carnal anger (Jonah 4:9; Ex. 32:19).
3. Most of the time anger is unreasonable (Numbers 24:10) and may be traced to extenuating circumstances such as extreme fatigue, extreme embarrassment, extreme frustration, or rejection.
4. It must be recognized that anger is not only emotional, it is biochemical as well. In pressure situations an involuntary response takes place from a quiet condition to an alarm reaction state.
5. The will, however, determines what will be done with the "fight or flight" state of alertness. Far too often people decide to fight, to lash out, and to be angry.
6. It does not have to be this way as both selected personal experience and the Word of God reveals.7. The Lord would have His people to live in peace as per Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:31; and Colossians 3:8.8.
7. There are several techniques to be used in order not to express anger:
 - Avoid using grievous words that stirs up anger (Prov. 15:1).
 - Cultivate a mindset of controlling negative emotions (Prov. 15:18).
 - Remember that being slow to anger is a mark of a great person (Prov. 16:32).
 - Give a gift or do a deed of kindness in response to anger (Prov. 21:14).
 - Understand that the angry person is foolish (Eccl. 7:9).
 - Avoid being a friend of an angry person (Prov. 22:24).
 - Realize that damnation awaits the angry person who does not repent (Matthew 5:22).
 - Make anger a matter of prayer.
 - Explain negative feelings to a mature and understanding third party who can advise and lead. Confess faults to one another.
 - Realize that expectations of others may never materialize. Therefore, live with the fact that it hurts less to expect nothing than to hope in vain.
8. God is angry at the wicked everyday (Ps. 7:11).
9. Jesus was angry with the Pharisees (Mark 3:5).
10. Paul became angry at Peter's improper conduct and withstood him face to face.
11. Most anger is sinful and should be dealt with as such so that the Christian is characterized by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

12. Ventilation of anger is aimed at destroying others, which God forbids (Romans 12:18-21).
13. Internalization of anger is prone to result in tension, ulcers, migraines, or other such miseries.
14. The key is to release anger by holding back not holding in if one is given to ventilation, or by releasing anger under control if the tendency is to internalize.
15. Anger under control is the Scriptural mandate.

Doctrine of Casting of Lots

1. Prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture the casting of lots was commanded by God on certain occasions to determine His will.
2. The casting of lots determined many practical matters.
 - The casting of lots determined which animal was to be sacrificed. *Leviticus 16:8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.*
 - The casting of lots determined which land was to be given to whom. *Joshua 18:6 Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. Joshua 18:10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.*
 - Which person had sinned. *Jonah 1:7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.*
3. People who did not oppose the casting of lots include the following.
 - Saul, king of Israel. *1 Samuel 14: 41 Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. 42 And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.*
 - David, king of Israel. *1 Chronicles 24:31 These likewise cast lots over against their brethren the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites, even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren.*
 - The leaders of Israel. *1 Chronicles 25:8 And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar.*

- Zechariah, a wise counsellor. *1 Chronicles 26:14 And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward.*
- Nehemiah, the governor of Jerusalem. *Nehemiah 10:34 And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law:*

4. The small as well as the great were allowed to cast lots as a means of equalizing the people.

- *1 Chronicles 26:13 And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate.*
- *Nehemiah 11:1 And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities.*

5. The casting of lots, like all of God's provisions was subject to abuse by individuals with evil hearts.

- The garments of the Messiah would become an object for the taking by the casting of lots. *Psalms 22:18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*
- The casting of lots would be used to enslave individuals. *Joel 3:3 And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. Nahum 3:10 Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.*
- The casting of lots was used to determine the fate of Jerusalem. *Obadiah 11 In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.*

3. In the New Testament the practice of casting of lots is mention on two occasions, the crucifixion of Christ and the selection of a replacement for Judas.

- The crucifixion. *Matthew 27:35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. Mark 15:24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. John 19:24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*

- The selection of a replacement. *Acts 1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

4. While not prohibited, the casting of lots to determine the will of God is not recommended for the church which enjoys the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and a completed canon of Scripture.

PROVERBS 17

1 Better is a dry morsel [bite] and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.

17:1 dry morsel. There is more to home life than being wealthy and having the ability to offer rich sacrificial animals. There is peace and tranquilly.

“A world of care without,
A world of strife shut out,
A world of love shut in.”

Dora Greenwell

2 A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

17:2 servant. The thoughts of the writer turn to the value of a trusted servant who has been with the family many years. While hard labor is honored, there is no substitute for a beloved son as Eliezer discovered with Abram (Gen. 15:2, 3).

3 The fining [refining] pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.

17:3 Trails and tribulations, pain and suffering constitute some of God’s refining pots. *1 Peter 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:* At all times the Lord watches over the refining process as per Malachi 3:3. *And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.* Sometimes the Lord personally endures the same experience as His servants as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego discovered (Daniel 3:19-26).

4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

17:4 When a person is not living right they do not think right and so will readily listen to deceitful lips. The people of Judah readily listened to the lying priests and prophets of their day in the seventh century BC. *Jeremiah 5:30 A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; 31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?*

5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities [troubles] shall not be unpunished.

17:5 There is no virtue in being poor and yet there is no shame either. Those who are poor should seek to better themselves as unto the Lord. Those who have been blessed by God should remember to help the poor. Their plight should stir the heart of the Christian to kindness and consideration. "While women weep, as they do now, I'll fight; while little children go hungry, I'll fight; while men go to prison, in and out, in and out, as they do now, I'll fight; while there is a drunkard left, while there is a poor lost girl upon the streets, where there remains one dark soul without the light of God, I'll fight! I'll fight to the very end! "(William Booth, Founder of the Salvation Army). As the poor are not to be mocked those in difficult situation are not to be rejoiced over.

The Lord's controversy with Edom was that the nation rejoiced at the calamity of Israel. *Obadiah 12 But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. 13 Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; 14 Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. 15 For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.*

God judged Edom for this transgression. 16 For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

6 Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

17:6 Grandparents and great grandparents feel young again in the presence of children. Ideally, children are proud of their fathers.

"I took a piece of plastic clay,
And idly fashioned it one day.
And as my fingers pressed it still,
It moved and yielded to my will.
I came again when the days were passed,
And the bit of clay was hard at last.
The form I gave it still it bore,
But I could change that form no more.

I took a piece of living clay,
And gently formed it day by day;
And molded with my power and art,
A young child's soft and yielding heart.

I came again when the days were gone,
It was a man I looked upon.
He still that early impress wore,
But I could change that form no more".

Dave Stone,
Keep the Dust off the Highchair

7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.

17:7 When king Saul was pursing David to kill him without cause he acted foolishly though he spoke excellently. His lying lips regarding David's heart revealed his own moral darkness and was unfitting for a king. No wonder the people mocked and asked, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* (*1 Samuel 10:10-12*).

8 A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.

17:8 Behind every gift is a giver and it is the giver that makes any gift valuable. Spiritually, the church has received many gifts but what makes them precious is the Giver, the Lord Jesus Christ who is Himself the best Gift of God. *Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men". John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

17:9 Love covers a multitude of sins. Love does not cover up sin but it does provide a basis for grace to be shown by gentle correction leading to repentance. A person can be like Christ who provided a covering for sin by His blood atonement or a person can be like Satan, an accuser or slanderer. Three questions should be considered before repeating a matter.

“Is it true?”

“Is it kind?”

“Is it necessary?”

The actions of Sanballat reflects the behavior of someone who whispers as he tried to destroy the integrity of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 6).

10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes [beatings] into a fool.

17:10 The heart of the wicked can be obstinate despite reason or correction. Abimelech wisely repented when he was reproved by Abraham. *Genesis 21:25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.* *26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day. Herod did not repent when reproved by John. Luke 3:19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.*

11 An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

17:11 The evil person is the individual who is self destructive and other destructive. The thoughts of these people are self centered to the point of lawlessness. Only too late will they hear the cruel but just judgment: *TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting (Daniel 5:27).*

12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps [cubs] meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.

17:12 It is easier to confront an enraged mother bear robbed of her cubs than to try to reason with a person enamored with a particular lifestyle. "Our addictions make us cling to what the world proclaims as the keys to self-fulfillment: accumulation of wealth and power; attainment of status and admiration; lavish consumption of food and drink; and sexual gratification without distinguishing between lust and love. The addicted life can aptly be designated a life lived in "a distant country." Beneath it all is the great rebellion, the unspoken curse: 'I wish you were dead'". (Henri J. M. Nouwen in *The Return of the Prodigal. Christianity Today*, Vol. 36, no. 10.)

13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

17:13 Moral consequences are part of God's creation. Joab learned the truth of this Proverb by hard experience. *1 Kings 2:28 Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. 29 And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. 30 And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the Lord, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. 31 And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.*

32 And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. 33 Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the Lord. 34 So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.

14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.

17:14 Thomas à Kempis (C. 1380-1471) wisely noted that, “All men desire peace, but very few desire those things that make for peace”. Blessed is the person who can bear reproach without engaging in controversy.

15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

17:15 When the heart is in emotional revolt of the soul against God the temptation comes to call wrong right. To do so brings forth divine disgust and hatred. Pilate justified the wicked when he condemned the Holy and Just One of Israel. *Matthew 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. 25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. 26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.*

Special note. In matchless grace God does justify the ungodly in the person and work of Jesus Christ when He redeems them. The reason why God can righteously do this is because the issue of sin was dealt with at Calvary. Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?

17:16 Wisdom cannot be purchased by a foolish person illustrated by Simon Magus who thought he could buy the power of the Holy Spirit. *Acts 8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.*

17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

17:17

“A friend is never known until a man have need”. (John Heywood (c.1497-1580)

“A friend is one who comes in when the whole world has gone out”.

“A friend is one who knows all about you and likes you just the same”. (Elbert Green Hubbard, 1856-1915)

“A friend is one who knows you as you are
understands where you've been
accepts who you've become
and still, gently invites you to grow”.

Jesus is a Friend of Sinners. John 13:1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

“What a Friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge,
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.

Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised Thou wilt all our burdens bear
May we ever, Lord, be bringing all to Thee in earnest prayer.

Soon in glory bright unclouded there will be no need for prayer
Rapture, praise and endless worship will be our sweet portion there”.

Joseph M. Scriven, 1855

18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.

17:18 The Word of God commands Christians to “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8). Becoming a surety or guarantee for a loan on the basis of friendship violates not only God’s perfect will but shows lack of understanding of sound principles of money management. Remember, “Out of debt, out of danger”.

19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.

17:19 There are many negative emotional attachments for the heart. It is possible to love to transgress the laws of God. It is possible to love strife and controversy. Some people thrive on it for it stimulates the emotions and feeds the ego if a person feels superior in a verbal exchange. However, when such a person lifts themselves up high like a gate, they are sure to fall. *Proverbs 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

20 He that hath a foward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.

17:20 A foward heart is a heart which is habitually disposed to disobedience and opposition to authority. Such a heart will never find righteousness. Because individuals speak what is in their hearts a perverse tongue will be manifested resulting into unproductive and counterproductive behavior. Hanun, king of Ammon, was a proud and defiant individual who fell into great mischief when he dishonored the ambassadors of David (2 Samuel 10:4) and involved the Ammonites in a disastrous war (2 Samuel 12:31; 1 Chronicles 19:6; c. BC 1035).

21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy.

17:21 It is possible for good parents to produce foolish children to their great sorrow. David had no joy over his capable and handsome but rebellious son Absalom (2 Samuel 18:33).

22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

17:22 Mental anguish can be more painful and more stressful than acute physical pain. For that reason the divine Comforter comes.

“Mid the wild and fearful blast,
I have reached the Rock at last;
Helpless, weak and sore dismayed,
To the cross I’ll cling for aid.

Blessèd “Rock,” whose love divine,
Fills with joy this heart of mine;
Cross of Him who died for me,
Evermore I’ll cling to Thee.

Wrecked by sin, by tempest tossed,
Compass, chart and anchor lost;
He whose power alone can save,
Lulls the wind and stills the wave.

Rock, that hides my trembling soul
From the storms that darkly roll;
While beneath the surges dash,
Thunders roar, and lightnings flash.

When beyond the vale of night
I shall soar to realms of light;
When mine eyes behold the King,
Heart and soul and tongue shall sing.”

Fanny Crosby, 1900

23 A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert [change] the ways of judgment.

17:23 The Creator has a right to tell His creatures what is right and what is wrong. It is morally wrong to use money to influence or change what is right. Christian, beware of the temptation to alter justice. The good king Hezekiah acted in haste to make an unholy alliance without seeking the will of the Lord when the king of Babylon sent him a letter and a present. *Isaiah 39:1 At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.* On a previous occasion Hezekiah had consulted the Lord before acting. *Isaiah 37:14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers [of the king of Assyria], and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.*

24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

17:24 The contrast between a wise person and a foolish person is profound and made manifest in a variety of ways. The wise person lives a purpose driven life. The foolish person is aimless and wanders the earth without any sense of direction, always looking but never seeing what they should do in life. The apostle Paul could say, *This one thing I do (Philippians 3:13)* while warning of those who *heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Timothy 4:3)*.

25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.

17:25 A child who consistently acts in a foolish manner not only grieves the father but becomes a source of bitterness to the mother. In the law the death penalty was provided for the stubborn and rebellious son. *Deuteronomy 21:18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: 19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; 20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. 21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear".*

26 Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.

17:26 Sometimes justice is perverted by those in power and sometimes those who want to be in power agitate to overthrow divine established and godly authority. A reckless and lawless man named Ishmael assassinated the godly prince Gedaliah, and then massacred sixty men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria in fear of having his crime exposed.

Jeremiah 41:1 Now it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah. 2 Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. 3 Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, even with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, and the men of war. 4 And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew it, 5 That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord. 6 And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. 7 And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, and cast them into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that were with him.

27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.

17:27 The apostle Paul was a man capable of sparing his words by speaking and writing succinctly reflected in His epistles. The late A.W. Tozer (1897-1963) is a modern day example of a man of great spiritual knowledge who spared his words but said so much in doing so. His books are worth their weight in gold: The Knowledge of the Holy; The Pursuit of God; Man, the Dwelling Place of God etc. Elisha manifested an excellent spirit of self control when tempted to speak in irritation to others during the closing hours of his fellowship with Elijah. *2 Kings 2:3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.*

28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

17:28 It is far better to remain silent on a subject that one has no knowledge of than to speak. Even if people think you are a fool, it is better to be silent than to speak and remove all doubt. The humorist Mark Twain wrote about being in France. “In Paris they simply stared when I spoke to them in French; I never did succeed in making those idiots understand their own language”.

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 17

1. What does love cover? Explain the difference between a cover for sin and a covering up of the same.

Answer.

Proverbs 17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. Sin can be challenged in private without being communicated to others. The Christian has an obligation to exhort each other to good works without a condemning Pharisaical spirit.

2. How does the Bible define a friend? How would you define a friend?

Answer.

Proverbs 17:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

3. List three questions that should be asked of self before negative information is passed along about someone else.

Answer.

“Is it true?”
“Is it kind?”
“Is it necessary?”

4. What is “behind” every gift and why is that so important to know?

Answer.

Behind every gift is a giver and it is the giver that makes any gift valuable.

5. What observation did Thomas à Kempis (C. 1380-1471) wisely note about peace?

Answer.

“All men desire peace, but very few desire those things that make for peace”.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you agree or disagree that people love their sins?
2. What is your position on capital punishment?
3. Have you ever witnessed a perversion of justice? If so, please share the details.
4. Have you ever signed a note becoming a guarantee for someone else? What was the result of your actions?

5. Are you a person of few words or more of a conversationalist? Have you ever spoken about a matter without really knowing what you were talking about?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 17:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Capital Punishment in the Bible

1. Capital punishment resulted for a variety of transgressions.

- Murder. *Numbers 35:30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. Deuteronomy 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*
- Adultery. *Leviticus 20:10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. Deuteronomy 22:24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.*
- Incest. *Leviticus 20:11 And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 12 And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them. 13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 14 And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you.*
- Bestiality. *Exodus 22:19 Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death. Leviticus 20:15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. 16 And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*
- Sodomy. *Leviticus 20:13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*

- Incontinence. *Deuteronomy 22:21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. 22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. 23 If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; 24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.*
- Rape. *Deuteronomy 22:25-26 But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die: 26 But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter:*
- Perjury. *Zechariah 5:4 I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.*
- Kidnapping. *Exodus 21:16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. Deuteronomy 24:7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.*
- Fornication. *Leviticus 21:9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.*
- Witchcraft. *Exodus 22:18 Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.*
- Offering human sacrifice. *Leviticus 20:2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3 And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. 4 And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not: 5 Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.*

- Striking or cursing father or mother. *Exodus 21:15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. Exodus 21:17 And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.*
- Disobedience to parents. *Deuteronomy 21:18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: 19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; 20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. 21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.*
- Theft. *Zechariah 5:3 Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it. 4 I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.*
- Blasphemy. *Leviticus 24:16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death.*
- Sabbath breaking. *Exodus 35:2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.*
- Prophesying falsely, or propagating false doctrine. *Deuteronomy 13:1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. 5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. 6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; 7 Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of*

the earth; 8 Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: 9 But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. 10 And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

- Sacrificing to false gods. *Exodus 22:20 He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed.*
- Refusing to abide by a decision of court. *Deuteronomy 17:12 And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.*
- Treason. *1 Kings 2:25 And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.*
- Violation of law concerning oxen. *Exodus 21:28 If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. 29 But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.*

2. Capital punishment was administered in different ways.

- Burning. *Leviticus 20:14 And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you.*
- Stoning. *Numbers 14:10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.*
- Hanging. *Deuteronomy 21:22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: 23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*
- Beheading. *Matthew 14:10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.*
- Sword or spear. *Exodus 19:13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.*

3. The manner of practicing capital punishment was established.

- Executed by the witnesses. *Deuteronomy 17:7 The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.*
- Executed by the congregation. *Numbers 15:35 And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. 36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses.*
- Not executed except on the testimony of no less than two witnesses. *Deuteronomy 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*
- Executed speedily. *Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

4. Provision was made to spare the life of one who had killed "unawares" or "accidentally". *Numbers 35:9 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; 11 Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. 12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment. 13 And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge.*

5. The individual who had killed "unawares" was to remain in the city of refuge until he stood before the congregation in judgment or until the death of the high priest. If he came out of the city he was no longer protected from those who sought revenge. *Numbers 35:12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment. Numbers 35:26 But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; 27 And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: 28 Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.*

PROVERBS 18

1 Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth [quarrels] with all wisdom.

18:1 Dr. Harry Ironside wrote, “To separate from apostasy is right and Scriptural. To separate from what is of God is schism and heresy”. Paul spoke of a man named Alexander, a coppersmith, who with his companion Hymanaeus gave up the truth and bitterly opposes the apostle’s ministry. *1 Timothy 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; 19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

2 A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.

18:2 Among the many characteristics of the foolish person is an extreme self centeredness. The foolish person hates correction or instruction in righteousness. The only concern for a foolish person is to discover new ways to please self. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees who had no delight in spiritual understanding. *Matthew 23:17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? 18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?*

3 When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy [disgrace] reproach.

18:3 There is a downward spiral for the wicked who bring a spirit of contempt of others with them to their own disgrace leading to reproach. The life of Pashur reflects this downward spiral of self destruction. *Jeremiah 20:1 Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. 2 Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord. 3 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib. 4 For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. 5 Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon.*

6 And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.

4 The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.

18:4 Godly people are thoughtful people. When they speak they have a substance to their words. "Every Christian can elevate himself by meditation ... silence in the presence of God, in which the soul without being inactive acts no longer except by divine impulse" Madame Jeanne Marie de La Mothe Guyon (1648-1717). Perhaps Jesus was speaking of this verse when He said in *John 7: 37 If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

5 It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

18:5 One way in which evil finds a way to prevail in society is for individuals who act contrary to the known will of the Lord to be accepted in a non judgmental way. Nevertheless, "it is not good to accept the person of the wicked." Neither is it good to overthrow the righteous in judgment whether in a court of law, in the arena of politics or in the local assembly. The Lord delights to honor the judgments of His saints.

Example. *Deuteronomy 1:16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. 17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.*

Example. *Deuteronomy 16:18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. 20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

Example. *1 Corinthians 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life? 4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. 5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?*

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. 7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

6 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.

7 A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

18:6-7 The foolish person is always ready to do verbal combat with hasty remarks and bitter comments. Ironically, the strongest words are usually used in the weakest arguments. A foolish person deserves to be severely rebuked for destruction is certain if there is no repentance. Korah, Dathan and Abiram were certainly foolish men as per Numbers 16.

8 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

18:8 Words do wound the soul. They go as it were into the “innermost parts of the belly” which, in the ancient world was considered to be the seat of emotions and life itself. Today we might say that words that wound “break the heart.”

9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

18:19 The person who will waste resources is kin to the person who will squander time. The Biblical command is to redeem the time (Colossians 4:5).

10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

18:10 The “name of the LORD” stands for the LORD Himself. To run to Him is to constantly abide in Him especially in time of trouble.

“There’s a peace in my heart
that the world never gave,
A peace it cannot take away;

Though the trials of life
may surround like a cloud,
I’ve a peace that has come here to stay!

Constantly abiding, Jesus is mine;
Constantly abiding, rapture divine;
He never leaves me lonely,
whispers, O so kind:

‘I will never leave thee,’
Jesus is mine.

All the world seemed
to sing of a Savior and King,
When peace sweetly came to my heart;
Troubles all fled away and my night turned to day,
Blessèd Jesus, how glorious Thou art!

This treasure I have in a temple of clay,
While here on His footstool I roam;
But He’s coming to take me some glorious day,
Over there to my heavenly home!”

Anne S. Murphy, 1908

The Tower of Thebez

Judges 9:50-57

Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. 51 But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut it to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower. 52 And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. 53 And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull. 54 Then he called hastily unto the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died. 55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place. 56 Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: 57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

18:11 A person's wealth can prove deceitful. While wealth seems to offer security, it does not as Jesus noted in a parable He told. *And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:16-21).*

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) said, “Building one's life on a foundation of gold is just like building a house on foundations of sand”.

12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.

18:12 It is said among the Hindus, “You can walk on the dust forever and it never answers back.” What is humility? Humility is not thinking lowly thoughts about oneself; it is not thinking about self at all. Humility is self forgetfulness. Humility manifests itself in a spirit of meekness, which, in the sight of God is of great value. Moses was a meek man as was Christ.

- *Numbers 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)*
- *Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

18:13 Much needless harm has come to the body of Christ because people form triangles by believing something a friend tells them about another person or the pastor without giving a full hearing to the matter. The ravaging effect of false rumors can be seen in the biblical narrative of Joshua 22:11-34.

14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

18:14 When the spirit of a man is encouraged the hardships of life are bearable. However, when the spirit of a person is depressed, even good news is a burden. God's people should be found encouraging one another. *Nehemiah 8:10 Then he [Nehemiah] said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.

18:15 Jesus said, *Seek and ye shall find.* The holy author declared that understanding or knowledge will come to those who seek it and the same shall be considered wise. We read of Ezra who had *prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments (Ezra 7:10).*

“Seek ye first the kingdom;
not the things of earth.
Priceless are the treasures
of immortal worth.

Like a flitting shadow,
time will pass away,
But the heav’lly riches change not,
nor decay.

“Seek ye first the kingdom,”
'tis the Master's voice;
In His precious promise evermore rejoice.

“All things else,” His words are true, “shall be added unto you.”
In His precious promise,
evermore rejoice.

Seek ye first the kingdom;
seek the gift of God.

'Tis the Savior's offer
purchased by His blood.

Seek ye first His glory;
be it life's sweet aim;
Him to serve and honor,
trusting in His Name”.

Eliza E. Hewitt, 1901

For those frustrated and discourage by seeking spiritual knowledge and yet never being able to find what is needed to help the soul, the exhortation comes, “Do not give up. Do not give up. Knowledge will come.”

16 A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

18:16 A secular understanding of this verse is true in the sense that a person who asserts himself will eventually become noticed by others who have pushed themselves upwards to the top of their profession. However, self assertiveness is not a Christian virtue. The Christian, by a quiet life of service for the Savior will be recognized and honored by Him in due time. The prophet Amos offers a good illustration.

Amos 7:14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah [the priest of the golden calves at Bethel in the time of Jeroboam II, c. 793 B.C. - 753 BC], I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: 15 And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

17 He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

18:17 Most people can make a good case for their particular cause or biased point of view when left unchallenged. Even the best of people will tell only a partial account of a disputed situation. Saul was able to justify his cause to Samuel but was not left unchallenged in the process. *1 Samuel 15:13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord. 14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?*

18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.

18:18 Prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture the casting of lots was permitted as a way of determining a matter. *Micah 2:5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the Lord.* Today, the Word of God, ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit is that which should be the court of final appeal over any given matter. Let God's people be a people of one Book and one Book only, the Bible.

19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

18:19 After more than thirty years in public ministry I have never known a single act of Christian forgiveness by someone I have offended. People do not forgive easily or if at all. It is possible for individuals to be reconciled if both are overcome by grace and lowliness. It is possible but not probable. One New Year's Eve at London's Garrick Club, British dramatist Frederick Lonsdale was asked by Symour Hicks to reconcile with a fellow member. The two had quarreled in the past and never restored their friendship. "You must," Hicks said to Lonsdale. "It is very unkind to be unfriendly at such a time. Go over now and wish him a happy New Year." So Lonsdale crossed the room and spoke to his enemy. "I wish you a happy New Year," he said, "but only one." (*Today in the Word*). For those struggling to forgive, consider these words.

"Alas! And did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
for such a worm as I?"

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
the debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself away
'Tis all that I can do!
At the cross, at the cross
Where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day".

Christian, learn to love. Learn to forgive.

20 A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

18:20-21 Rarely do words go forth without consequences. Evil (injurious) words produce death. Wholesome words produce life. The false teachers of 2 Peter 2 are contrasted with the ambassadors of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5. One group brings in damnable heresies while the other reconciles individuals to Christ.

22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

18:22 Boaz found a good wife in Ruth. *Ruth 4:9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. 10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. 11 And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem: 12 And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.*

23 The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

18:23 There is an insidious side often associated with great wealth. Those who have money or acquired it tend to be condescending to those who are less fortunate (Matthew 18:23-35). The Lord has entrusted money to some in His kingdom to help others, not to horde it for self interest alone. There is a spiritual gift of giving.

Romans 12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

24 A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

18:24 To have friends a person must be a friend. Here are some of the ways a friend will relate to someone else.

- A friend will listen.
- A friend will not use words that wound even in a humorous way.
- A friend will ask questions with a view to understanding the feelings and moods of another.
- A friend will help solve problems.
- A friend will be complimentary.
- A friend will disagree without becoming disagreeable by bitter words.
- A friend will be dependable.
- A friend will show respect at all times.
- A friend is trustworthy.
- A friend will allow room for personal growth and maturity.
- A friend will care at all times. See also the story of The Good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37.

In Christ are all the characteristics of a Friend for He truly is One who will stick to the soul “closer than a brother”.

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 18

1. Define the word “ignominy”

Answer.

Ignominy refers to a deep personal humiliation and disgrace. It refers to a disgraceful or dishonorable conduct, quality, or action

2. What is a foolish person always ready to do? (18:6-7)

Answer.

The foolish person is always ready to do verbal combat with hasty remarks and bitter comments

3. How can wealth be deceitful?

Answer.

While wealth seems to offer security, it does not as Jesus noted in a parable He told.

4. What was once an acceptable means of finding the will of the Lord but is no longer valid today?

Answer.

Once the casting of lots was a valid means of finding the will of the Lord but is not necessary today because the church has a completed canon of Scripture.

5. What will be the end product of the seeking of knowledge?

Answer.

Knowledge will be obtained!

Personal Application and Reflection

1. What does it mean to be delivered to Satan?
2. Does evil exist? If so, identify the “wicked” in society and discuss how they have been accepted in the Christian community.
 - What is to be said of those who take the life of their unborn children?
 - What is to be said about those who live in an unmarried relationship?
 - What is to be said of those who practice a homosexual lifestyle?
 - What is to be said of those who openly advocate the legalization of outlawed drugs for recreational usage?

- What is to be said of those who advocate a non historic faith?

3. How can the Christian “redeem the time”?
4. Suggest some way a Christian man can find a good wife, and vice versa.
5. List the specific characteristics you possess that would make others value you as a friend.

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 18: 13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 18:10.

LORD. In our English Bibles the sacred name of God is translated in capital letters as YAHWEH which is the Hebrew Tetragrammaton [four letters, YHWH] traditionally pronounced Jehovah.

Doctrine of Separation

1. The doctrine of separation is found in the Old and New Testament for God would have a people separate from the world and sin unto Himself.
2. The first usage of the term separate is in association with the trouble between the herdsmen of Lot and Abraham. At the suggestion of Abraham, Lot was to separate himself with his possessions in order for the quarreling to cease.
 - *Genesis 13:9 Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*
3. Though Jacob was being cheated by his father in law he separated the lambs as suggested and still received a blessing from the Lord. The principle is established. The physical prosperity of the believer does not depend upon other people but upon the Lord.
 - *Genesis 30:40 And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.*
4. When exercised by the wicked the purpose of separation has evil intentions as when the brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery. God would have His people dwell together in peace (Psalm 133:1).

- *Genesis 49:26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.*
- *Luke 6:22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.*

5. When coming into the presence of the Lord the Old Testament saints were to sanctify themselves and separate themselves from moral and ceremonial uncleanness.

- *Leviticus 15:31 Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them.*

6. The ministers of God are to be considered a set apart people.

- *Leviticus 22:2 Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they profane not my holy name in those things which they hallow unto me: I am the LORD.*
- *Numbers 8:14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.*

7. In the hearts of some there is desire to seek holiness to an unusual degree. In the Old Testament economy a Nazarite vow could be taken by such individuals. Specific conditions were imposed.

- *Numbers 6:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD:*
- *Numbers 6:3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.*

8. In times of severe judgment God will instruct the righteous to separate themselves from the unrighteousness.

- *Numbers 16:21 Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.*

9. God will sanctify and separate not only individuals but cities unto Himself for a stated purpose.

- *Deuteronomy 19:2 Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.*
- *Deuteronomy 19:7 Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee.*
- *Joshua 16:9 And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.*

10. The principle of being separated unto evil is also established in Scripture. This takes place when God administers the curses of the covenant.

- *Deuteronomy 29:21 And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law:*

11. God has a separated people on earth. He always has and always will have a separated people. The only question is this, “Who is on the Lord’s side?”

- *1 Kings 8:53 For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.*
- *Ezra 10:11 Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.*

12. At the end of time the Lord will gather His people, called “sheep”, unto Himself and shall separate them from the “goats”.

- *Matthew 25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:*

13. Among the called out assembly the Lord continues to separate individuals for special service.

- *Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

14. While the doctrine of separation from the world and evil is of particular importance, nothing shall divide or separate the believer from the love of Christ.

- *2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,*

- *Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ...39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

15. The Supreme Example of One who is separate from sin is Christ.

- *Hebrews 7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

16. The wicked separate themselves from the righteous in order to be sensual and avoid the convicting and converting work of God the Holy Spirit.

- *Jude 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*

PROVERBS 19

1 Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse [crooked] in his lips, and is a fool.

19:1 All of life is summarized in the word choice, first demonstrated in the Garden of Eden. There is the way of integrity which even a poor person can choose and there is the way of the foolish person characterized by self-will and ignorance. The question comes, “Will you choose a life of integrity or a life without God?” Today is the hour of decision. C. S. Lewis reminds us of choosing now and for this reason. “When the author walks onto the stage, the play is over. God is going to invade, all right; but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else comes crashing in? This time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. That will not be the time for choosing; It will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen, whether we realized it before or not. Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side”.

2 Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.

19:2 There is no virtue in ignorance, unless it is ignorance of the ways of evil. *1 Corinthians 14:20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*

3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth [to boil up; to be peevish, angry] against the LORD.

19:3 A foolish thought, but one not uncommon, is to believe that God does not have the best interest of His creation in His heart and so He imposes rules and regulations which causes the soul to rebel or He ordains life to move in a different direction than what we wish it to be. Jonah fretted against the Lord and was properly rebuked. *Jonah 4:8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live. 9 And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.*

4 Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.

19:4 There is a power of attraction associated with money and there is a principle of recoil among those who are poor. The church is not to give undue preference to those who are rich but to esteem the lowly, lest sin be found in the sanctuary. *James 2:9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.*

5 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.

19:5 The judgment of God is always according to truth. The lie of a person may seem to be advantageous but in time truth will triumph. Naboth had many false witnesses against him from the highest echelon in society, yet in the end his name was vindicated. *1 Kings 21:8 So she [Queen Jezebel] wrote letters in [king] Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. 9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: 10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. 11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. 12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. 13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.*

6 Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.

7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? He pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.

19:6-7 It is characteristic of the world to court the wealthy while rejecting the lowly. Christ Himself was rejected because He identified Him with the poor. *Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good.

19:8 This Hebraism speaks of acquiring sound judgment or common sense. Wisdom is the ability to apply right biblical principles to the right situation at the right moment for only then will there be good results. *2 Timothy 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

9 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.

19:8 Because lying has become an intrinsic part of the fabric of life it is difficult to see how and when it is punished unless there is a flagrant lie being told. Consider some famous American lies.

- The check is in the mail.
- I'll start my diet tomorrow.
- We service what we sell.
- Give me your number and the doctor will call you right back.
- Money cheerfully refunded.
- One size fits all.
- This offer limited to the first 100 people who call in.
- Your luggage isn't lost, it's only misplaced.
- Leave your resume and we'll keep it on file.
- This hurts me more than it hurts you.
- I just need five minutes of your time.
- Your table will be ready in a few minutes.
- Open wide, it won't hurt a bit.
- Let's have lunch sometime.
- It's not the money, it's the principle.

In verse 5 the Proverb says the liar shall be punished. In verse 9 the warning is that the liar shall perish. Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

10 Delight [luxury] is not seemly [fitting] for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes.

19:10 Nature seems to have a natural order that, when violated, makes a situation obscene. The servant ruling over his master or the fool enjoying luxury speak of situations which are not orderly. A wise person will exercise grace and humility even when placed in a position of controlling authority as Joseph did after being released from prison. *Genesis 47:14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. 15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? For the money faileth. 16 And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. 17 And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year. 18 When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands:*

19 Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate. 20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.

11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

19:11 No one can make another person anger unless an individual gives the other person that power. Jacob made Esau angry until Esau decided to defer his anger and greet his brother after a long absence with grace and magnanimity. *Genesis 33:4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. 5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. 6 Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. 7 And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. 8 And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. 9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.*

12 The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.

19:12 Because there is power in the words of a king his anger is to be dreaded while his favor is to be courted. How much more true in the person of the King of kings and Lord of lords. *Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* The baker and the butler whom Joseph knew illustrate both aspects of this proverb (Genesis 40).

13 A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions [arguments] of a wife are a continual dropping [dripping].

19:13 A foolish son and a feisty wife are emotional burdens on a man. Both undermine authority resulting in a self-centered and bitter spirit. Michal, the daughter of Saul is the unhappy illustration of a contentious wife. *1 Chronicles 15:29 And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.*

14 House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent [intelligent] wife is from the LORD.

19:14 While an earthly inheritance is within the natural order of events only the Lord can bring into a mans life a prudent wife as a gift of divine grace. Jacob was blessed with Rebekah because of divine guidance (Genesis 24, c. BC 1857). "If you are for pleasure, marry. If you prize rosy health, marry. A good wife is heaven's last best gift to a man; his angel of mercy; minister of graces innumerable; his gem of many virtues; his box of jewels; her voice, his sweetest music; her smiles, his brightest day; her kiss, the guardian of innocence; her arms, the pale of his safety; the balm of his health; the balsam of his life; her industry, his surest wealth; her economy, his safest steward; her lips, his faithful counselors...and her prayers, the ablest advocates of heaven's blessing on his head" (Bishop Taylor).

15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

19:15 Excessive idleness is a great sin. The Biblical command is to *redeem the time* (Colossians 4:5). Redeem the time by being in the presence of God; by being part of a committed fellowship of believers engaged in advancing the kingdom of heaven; and by preaching Christ. Time should be redeemed because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16).

16 He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

Shimei was instructed how to live in the presence of an outraged king but surrendered his life instead. *1 Kings 2:36 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. 37 For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head. 38 And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. 39 And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. 40 And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. 41 And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. 42 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the Lord, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? And thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good. 43 Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the Lord, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? 44 The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the Lord shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; 45 And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord for ever. 46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon. Many a person is like Shimei. The Lord tells us how to live but we defy His commandments and recklessly forfeit life.*

17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

19:17 As God has compassion on the poor so should all Christians. The widow of Zarephath took pity on Elijah in his distress and was blessed for doing so *1 Kings 17:10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. 12 And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. 13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. 14 For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. 16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.*

18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

19:17 Children need corporal punishment at an early age to train them in goodness. Firm but gracious discipline should characterize every Christian home. Parents are not to provoke their children to anger or treat them unwisely with verbal abuse as Saul treated Jonathan. *1 Samuel 20:30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?*

19 A man of great wrath [anger] shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver [rescue] him, yet thou must do it again.

19:19 Many a good person find themselves making constant excuses for the bad behavior of friends or loved ones who have an angry disposition. The time must come to stop defending the indefensible.

20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

21 There are many devices [plans] in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

19:20 Those who would receive counsel of the Lord must hear with a purpose to obey what is received. Joshua waited on his commission from the Lord and so was able to wisely and effectively lead the nation of Israel after the death of Moses. *Joshua 1:5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*

22 The desire [charm] of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.

19:22 It is tempting to appear to be richer than one is when all people really want from someone is kindness and authenticity. Pride and the desire for financial security will lead some to living a lie through over extension of credit, maintaining an inappropriate and illegitimate relationship based on money or deceitful investments. A poor man is a better man than a liar on any level. Peter was a poor man but he was a kind man and was able to help others despite his poverty. *Acts 3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

23 The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

19:23 Evil or injurious behavior cannot come to the person who fears God for such an individual rests in the enjoyment of His omnipotent power and abiding love. *Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

24 A slothful [work hater] man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

19:24 A lazy person will not lift a finger to help and that is not only a character flaw, it is a great sin. Laziness must be arrested for many of us are continually on the lookout, at least subconsciously, for easier ways to perform onerous or routine tasks much like the old mountaineer and his wife who were sitting in front of the fireplace one evening just whiling away the time. After a long silence, the wife said: "Jed, I think it's raining. Get up and go outside and see." The old mountaineer continued to gaze into the fire for a second, sighed, then said, "Aw, Ma, why don't we just call in the dog and see if he's wet."

25 Smite [strike] a scorner, and the simple will beware [learn]: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

19:12 To strike a scorner, verbally at least, is sometime necessary in order to correct others. *1 Timothy 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.* To reprove a person who only needs clarification will be appreciated as when Paul rebuked Peter for siding with the Judaizers against the principle of grace. *Galatians 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*

26 He that wasteth [abuses] his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

19:26 When a child rebels against the parents there is nothing but shame and reproach. How tragic that we are living in the last days characterized by such behavior. *2 Timothy 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.* And they are.

27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

19:27 At time parents must plead with their children to reject the counsel of faithless friends because what is said will lead them away from righteousness and true knowledge. Certainly parents must pray for their children.

"Father, hear us, we are praying.
Hear the words our hearts are saying.
We are praying for our children.

Keep them from the powers of evil,
From the secret, hidden peril.
Father, hear us for our children.

From the worldling's hollow gladness,
From the sting of faithless sadness,
Father, Father, keep our children.

Through life's troubled waters steer them.
Through life's bitter battles cheer them.

Father, Father, be thou near them.
And wherever they may bide,
Lead them home at eventide".

Amy Carmichael

28 An ungodly [Belial] witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.

29 Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools.

19:28-29 A witness of Belial refers to a person who is worthless and ungodly because they reject any righteous evaluation or judgment and correction. What shall be the proper reward of such behavior but some form of divine discipline. *Acts 5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 19

1. What does it mean to fret against the Lord?

Answer.

To fret against the Lord means to be peevish or angry with Him.

2. What is one foolish but not uncommon thought about God?

Answer.

It is believed that God does not have the best interest of His creation in His heart and so He imposes rules and regulations which causes the soul to rebel or He ordains life to move in a different direction than what we wish it to be.

3. Why can no evil come to the person who fears the Lord?

Answer.

Evil or injurious behavior cannot come to a person who fears the Lord because of the promise and principle of Romans 8:28-30.

4. How does pride and a desire for money lead some people to act?

Answer.

Pride and the desire for financial security will lead some to living a lie through over extension of credit, maintaining an inappropriate and illegitimate relationship based on money or deceitful investments.

5. What happens when a child rebels against a parent?

Answer.

When a child rebels against the parents there is nothing but shame and reproach

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Have you ever fretted against the Lord? If so, what was the cause? Perhaps you know of someone else who has fretted against the Lord. What reason did they give as to why they were angry with God?
2. Do you think it is unscriptural to dedicate a baby to the Lord? Have you specifically prayed for your child to be converted?
3. Respond to the concept that no evil can come to those who fear the Lord. What is to be said about those who are persecuted or find themselves with cancer that is inoperable?

4. What would you do for financial security? How far would you go to acquire something? How far have you gone?
5. Is there any part of your life which is a lie? If so, what are you going to do about the matter?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 19: 16 He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of Fretting

1. A primary Hebrew word for fretting is a`am (raw-am') which means “to tumble”, i.e. “to be violently agitated; specifically, to crash (of thunder); figuratively, to irritate (with anger)”.
2. In a culture that valued children Hannah was provoked to fret or be angry by the taunts of Peninnah. Both women were wives of a *certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of Mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite* (1 Samuel 1:1):
 - *1 Samuel 1:6 And her adversary [Peninnah] also provoked her [Hannah] sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb.*
3. The Christian is instructed not to become angry with those who do evil nor be envious of what seems to be their ability to act as they wish without any negative consequence. The reason why the heart is not to become resentful is because the evil that people do will be soon judged. In a moral universe God does not allow anyone to go unpunished in acts of moral transgression.
 - *Psalms 37:1 A Psalm of David. Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.*
 - *Proverbs 24:19 Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;*
4. Rather than be an angry personality it is the will of the Lord that Christians find their rest in Him. The Sovereign and Righteous Judge of all the earth does not sleep nor does He forget the evil [injurious behavior] individuals inflict on others.

- *Psalms 37:7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*

5. Not only is the Christian to cease from anger, forsake a boiling hostility towards others but the believer is to in no way be moved to do evil as an act of retaliation.

- *Psalms 37:8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*

The word for “fret” here in Psalms 37:8 is charah (khaw-raw') and means “to glow or grow warm; figuratively (usually) to blaze up, of anger, zeal, jealousy”.

6. Part of God’s judgment upon evil is to stir up a deep spirit of resentment within the heart so that an individual is kept in a state of perpetual “blaze”.

- *Isaiah 8:21 And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.*
- *Isaiah 48:22 There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.*

7. A person who worries and is angry with anyone and everyone, a person who flares up against the mere mention of another person’s name is not coming under judgment. Rather, that individual has been committed unto judgment and the burning negative emotions in their heart manifests a judgment that is simply being worked out.

PROVERBS 20

1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

20:1 Like every creative act of God wine has its place. Scriptures recognize the medicinal value of wine and it is to be used when needed (1 Timothy 5:23). Wine can be enjoyed properly as Christ Himself enjoyed wine and made it (John 2:1-11). However, drunkenness is forbidden (Ephesians 5:18). Much harm has been done to countless individuals through the abuse of intoxicating beverages.

Five Self-Deceptions Associated with Strong Drink

1. Self deception is convincing self that something is true when it is not.
2. Many people who drink to excess engage in self deception. Examples of self deception include the following thoughts.
 - “I can handle my liquor.”
 - “I am not an alcoholic.”
 - “No one is hurt if I drink a little too much.”
 - “Drinking just helps relieve the pressure I am under.”
 - “Everyone has some area of weakness. My drinking is not as bad as some other vices.”
3. Even godly men have been deceived by wine such as Noah (Genesis 9:20-21) and Lot (Genesis 19:30-36).
4. Drunkenness is declared to be a work of the flesh. *Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envynings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*
5. So serious is the sin of drunkenness that it can bar a person from inheriting the kingdom of God.
6. The cure for self deception is to stand in judgment on self according to gospel terms and to receive Jesus Christ as personal savior for “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

2 The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.

20:2 The fear of a king. God has ordained all powers that be according to His own good pleasure and purposes. What the divine designs are may be hard to discern but they do exist. Therefore, it is good not to provoke a ruler to anger as Hanun did when he refused the king's kindness (2 Samuel 10). In as far as the king speaks of the King of kings as a type, individuals should be careful not to provoke God to wrath for to do so is to sin against one's own soul by placing the soul in danger of eternal judgment. The rebel does not go unpunished in time by secular rulers or in eternity by the Sovereign of the Universe.

3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

20:3. cease from strife. Foolish pride will often prolong a needless controversy even when a person knows they are wrong in a matter. A man of God should be ready to cease from strife according to the known will of the Lord (Philippians 4:5). When this is not done much harm will result as Josiah learned the hard way (2 Chronicles 35:20-24).

4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

20:4. The sluggard will not plow. Some people look for any excuse not to work. Hunger is their reward. In honest labor there is creativeness and in that we become like God. "God is our Creator. God made us in his image and likeness. Therefore we are creators. . . . The joy of creativeness should be ours." Dorothy May Day (1897-1980)

5 Counsel [a plan] in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

20:5. deep water. The prudent or cautious man will consider a course of action deeply and will patiently wait to implement it. Others will notice and value such depth of thinking. Joseph was such a man whom Pharaoh came to trust (Genesis 41) and so was able to draw out what was in his heart.

6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

20:6. his own goodness. It has been said facetiously there are no guilty people in prison. Every person in prison seems to have been wrongly convicted, to listen to the stories of the inmates. Like Adam and Eve there is an instinctive inclination to lie in order to appear innocent or to shift blame from self to someone else. It is rare to find a faithful man who will confess his own guilt while speaking on God's behalf. It is when the heart is honest to God that forgiveness and salvation becomes possible as per 1 John 1:9.

7 The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.

20:7 integrity. A person who has integrity has character. “Character in a saint means the disposition of Jesus Christ persistently manifested” Oswald Chambers (1874-1917). His descendants will never have to be ashamed of their heritage. Abraham offers one good example (Genesis 17:1-9).

8 A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.

20:8 scattereth away all evil. It is possible for a king, with greater resources to investigate a matter, to scatter or dispel evil. The question is, “Will he?” Solomon did (1 Kings 3:16-28) and all of Israel marveled in gratitude.

9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

20:9. Who can say? This rhetorical proverbs demands only one response, “No one can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin” for *there is none righteous, no not one* (*Romans 3:10*). Let every soul learn this truth. “A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. As long as I am by myself in the confession of my sins everything remains in the dark, but in the presence of a brother the sin has to be brought into the light” Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945).

10 Divers [different] weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.

20:10. divers weights. It is very tempting to want to make just a little more money even if it means stealing little by little from a client. The Lord calls any deviation from a just standard an abomination.

11 Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

20:11. a child is known. In modern society it is falsely assumed that children have no sense of right or wrong or moral obligation. Young Samuel testifies to the truthfulness of this proverb (1 Samuel 3:18-21) and thereby establishes accountability at a very young age.

12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.

20:12. hearing ear, and seeing eye. In Exodus 4:11 the Lord takes full responsibility for those born with infirmities. *And the Lord said unto him [Moses], Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord?* The Lord is also responsibility for good health. Spiritual health is also a gift of divine grace. God gives the ability for sheep to hear the voice of their Shepherd and for blinded eyes to see their Savior as Peter saw the Lord (Luke 5:3:-9) and Paul as well (Acts 9:1-9).

13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

20:13. love not sleep. A certain amount of physical rest is necessary for good health. However, the active and diligent are duly rewarded. There are also those who love too much sleep spiritually and so gospel words of exhortation come. *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light (Ephesians 5:14).* It was by taking his ease that David fell into great sin (2 Samuel 11:1).

14 It is naught [bad], it is naught [bad], saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

20:14. It is naught [bad]. In the act of making barter or a trade it is not uncommon to find fault with a good product in order not to give a fair market value. Such a practice is despised by God. The prophet Hosea brings such a charge against Ephraim (Hosea 12:7-8).

15 There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

20:15. lips of knowledge. Scholastic knowledge is valuable and even more so spiritual knowledge. *Psalms 119:72 The law of thy mouth [LORD] is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.* Jesus asked, *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Mark 8:36).*

16 Take his garment that is surety [responsible] for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

20:16. surety. Becoming responsible for the debt or behavior of another person is a grave responsibility. Generally, the Scriptures teach it to be an unwise practice. However, in spiritual matters, in matchless grace and mercy Christ has become the surety for the salvation of every believer. *Hebrews 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.* See also Hebrews 9:11-15.

17 Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.

20:17. deceit is sweet. There is a momentary pleasure in sin which the Scriptures recognize (Hebrews 11:24, 25). But the pleasure of sin does not last for God has designed a moral universe. In time sin will produce something hard, gritty and tasteless like gravel. Eve ate the fruit of deceit and suffered the terrible consequences of her actions (Genesis 3:1-16).

18 Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.

20:18. established by counsel. The Lord amplified this proverb in Luke 14:31-35 when talking about being a true disciple and counting the cost. *Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. 34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*. Lacking his own good counsellors, Rehoboam, king of Judah, listened to Shemaiah who knew the mind of God. A disastrous war was not waged against Jeroboam, king of Israel. *2 Chronicles 11:1 And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam. 2 But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 3 Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 4 Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the Lord, and returned from going against Jeroboam.*

19 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

20:19. talebearer. The person who will flatter and share intimate details with one person will also slander the same person to someone else. Universally people have recognized the danger of the person who gossips reflected in their cultural proverbs.

- Japanese Proverb. “A statement once let loose cannot be caught by four horses”.
- Jewish Proverb. “A tongue can be a dangerous weapon”.
- Arabian Proverb. “A wound caused by words is more painful than a wound caused by an arrow”.
- Spanish Proverb. “Be busy, but not a busybody”!

The Amalekite paid a great personal price because he eagerly brought the news of Saul’s death (2 Samuel 1:1-16).

20 Whoso curseth [revileth] his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

20:20. father or mother. While parents are not perfect they are God's gift to children and so are worthy of honor. Ham dishonored his father to his eternal shame and harm for his descendants (Genesis 9:22).

21 An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.

20:21. inheritance. It is possible to build up personal resources at the expense of one's honor and conscience. The end of such acquisitions will not be blessed. The rich who have gained wealth by oppressing the poor are singled out for special unhappiness (James 5:1-4).

22 Say not thou, I will recompense [repay] evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

20:22. I will recompense. It is a natural response of the fallen human heart to desire harsh revenge on those who have wounded us verbally or physically. However, it is also possible to respond to injustices with grace and humor. Georges Clemenceau was twice the prime minister of France, and played a major role in the treaties that concluded WWI. At the Versailles conference, Clemenceau was on his way to a meeting with President Woodrow Wilson's adviser when he was shot at by a young anarchist named Emile Cottin. As Clemenceau's car sped away Cottin fired at least six more shots, one of which struck Clemenceau near his heart. Cottin was captured and the death penalty demanded, but Clemenceau asked for leniency, recommending eight years in prison "with intensive training in a shooting gallery." The story of David and Shimei offers a biblical example of great mercy (2 Samuel 19:16-23). See also Romans 12:17-19.

23 Divers [different] weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good.

20:23. divers weights. A just business person of integrity will have one set of weights for all his customers. A just Christian will have one standard of righteousness. We often excuse in ourselves and our friends what we condemn in others.

24 Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

20:24 his own way. Like Israel at the Jordan every believer is in need of divine counsel to go in the right direction at all times (Joshua 3:4).

25 It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry.

20:25. vows. In the OT economy and the reign of the Law vows or the making of a pledge seems to have been a common practice. Paul himself made such a vow (Acts 18:18). When a foolish vow was made in haste it led to tragic results as in the case of Jephthah (Judges 11:30-40).

However, under the NT economy of grace a person's simple word should be their bond. *Matthew 5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

26 A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel [punishment] over them.

20:26. bringeth the wheel. A wise king will root out crime by severe punishment of the guilty.

27 The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

20:27. spirit of man. Man is more than body, he is spirit. This spirit is created by God (Zechariah 12:1). By the spirit within a person is able to think and plan and understand matters both moral and spiritual. The spirit is the seat of intelligence. The spirit is not merely a "breathe" or "vapor." The spirit is rational and individual. It is what gives him pre-eminence over all of creation while remaining subordinate to the Creator. The theory of evolution cannot explain the mystery of the spirit of man nor should it try. By the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, through the God inspired Word of Scripture the inward parts of man, his thoughts, motives and emotions can be examined.

28 Mercy [loving-kindness] and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy [loving-kindness].

28: mercy and truth. In human affairs and in the kingdom of God righteousness is the foundation of the throne but loving-kindness will uphold it.

29 The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head.

29; glory...beauty. In youth glory is found in strength and acts of power. Old age is the time for meditation and sobriety. In one of his epistles John speaks of young men being strong in the faith but to the fathers he writes, *Ye have known him (1 John 2:12-13).* Oh, may that be said of every maturing believer,

“Ye have known him.”
“When my lifework is ended
and I cross the swelling tide,

When the bright and glorious morning
I shall see,
I shall know my Redeemer
when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me.

I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
And redeemed by His side I shall stand!
I shall know Him, I shall know Him
By the print of the nails in His hand”.

Fanny Crosby
1820-1915

30 The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.

20:30. blueness of a wound. A wound may be sore and painful but a skilled doctor might still cut and probe in order to cleanse and heal the wound. Spiritually, the Lord will put His children under the rod in order to cleanse their hearts of sin. *Psalms 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. The apostle Paul instructed the church of Corinth to place a man under discipline in order to save his soul. 1 Corinthians 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 20

1. List five common thoughts of the person who has been deceived by wine.

Answer.

- “I can handle my liquor.”
- “I am not an alcoholic.”
- “No one is hurt if I drink a little too much.”
- “Drinking just helps relieve the pressure I am under.”
- “Everyone has some area of weakness. My drinking is not as bad as some other vices.”

2. What is the spiritual cure for self deception?

Answer.

The cure for self deception is to stand in judgment on self according to gospel terms and to receive Jesus Christ as personal savior for *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

3. Comment on the spirit of man and how it distinguishes him from the animal kingdom thereby disproving the theory of evolution.

Answer.

This spirit is created by God (Zechariah 12:1). By the spirit within, a person is able to think and plan and understand matters both moral and spiritual. The spirit is the seat of intelligence. The spirit is not merely a “breathe” or “vapor.” The spirit is rational and individual. It is what gives him pre-eminence over all of creation while remaining subordinate to the Creator. The theory of evolution cannot explain the mystery of the spirit of man nor should it try. By the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, through the God inspired Word of Scripture the inward parts of man, his thoughts, motives and emotions can be examined.

4. In human affairs and in the kingdom of God what is a foundational principle and what two concepts will uphold it?

Answer.

In human affairs and in the kingdom of God righteousness is the foundation of the throne but loving-kindness will uphold it.

5. In what way is glory found in the youth and beauty in old age?

Answer.

In youth glory is found in strength and acts of power. Old age is a beautiful time for meditation and sobriety. In one of his epistles John speaks of young men being strong in the faith but to the fathers he writes, “Ye have known him” (1 John 2:12-13).

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you enjoy alcoholic beverages? Do you believe Christians should drink wine or other potentially intoxicating beverages? Why or why not?
2. Are you a person that enjoys a good argument? How does this affect your Christian witness?
3. Comment on the Doctrine of the Hypo-static Union. How would you respond to someone who said they believed that there was a time when Jesus was not God or that He is merely a created being?
4. Do you show mercy and kindness to those who have offended you?
5. Has the Lord ever placed you “under the rod” in order to cleanse your heart? Please share what happened.

Hiding God’s Word in my Heart

Proverbs 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

Leader’s Supplemental Material

Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union

1. The hypostatic union is the theological term used to describe how God the Son, Jesus Christ, took on a human nature, yet remained fully God at the same time.
2. The term “hypostatic” is from the Greek, *hypostasis* which is translated “reality” or “person”.
3. Jesus always had been very God of very God (John 5:58; 10:30), but at the incarnation Christ permanently took on human flesh - He became a human being (John 1:14).
 - *John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*
 - *John 10:30 I and my Father are one.*
 - *John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*
4. Prior to the incarnation Christ appeared in various forms called a theophany from the Greek, *theophaneia* meaning “appearance or showing of God”.

5. The existence of the human nature with the divine nature makes Jesus, the God-man. This is the hypostatic union, Jesus Christ, one Person, fully God and fully man.
6. This doctrine was affirmed at the Council of Chalcedon which was held from October 8 to November 1, 451 AD. Chalcedon was a city of Bithynia in Asia Minor. Today the area is the district of Kadikoy in Istanbul, Turkey on the Asian side of the Bosphorus.
7. Apollinaris of Laodicea (in Syria) who died in AD 390 was the first to use the term hypostasis in trying to understand the Incarnation. Apollinaris described the union of the divine and human in Christ as being of a single nature and having a single essence, a single hypostasis.
8. The Council of Chalcedon declared that in Christ there are two natures; each retaining its own properties, and together united in one subsistence and in one single person. How this is effected remains a great mystery.
9. Jesus' two natures, human and divine, are inseparable. Jesus will forever be the God-man, fully God and fully human, two distinct natures in one Person. Jesus' humanity and divinity are not mixed, but are united without loss of separate identity. Jesus sometimes operated with the limitations of humanity and other times in the power of His deity.
 - The limitations of His humanity.

John 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

- The power of His deity.

John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

Matthew 14:18 He said, Bring them hither to me. 19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. 20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. 21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

10. In both, Jesus' actions were from His one Person. Jesus had two natures, but only one person or personality.
11. The doctrine of the hypostatic union is a human attempt to explain the great mystery of how Jesus could be both God and man at the same time.

12. Humility is needed in studying this doctrine for we, as finite human beings, should not expect to be able to comprehend an infinite God. Jesus is God's Son in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

- *Luke 1:35 and the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

13. The necessity of and the purpose for the incarnation is so that Christ could identify with us in our struggles (Hebrews 2:17), die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and ultimately be glorified on high (Philippians 2:5-11).

- *Hebrews 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*
- *Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

14. In summary, the hypostatic union declares Jesus to be both fully human and fully divine, that there is no mixture or dilution of either nature, and that He is one united Person, forever.

Doctrine of Deceit

1. A deceptive person is an individual who deliberately misleads others.
2. The deceptive person carefully considers what is being done and is driven by their “belly” or emotions. In the end, only vanity or emptiness will be produced.
 - *Job 15:35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.*
3. Job made a vow not to utter deceitful words.
 - *Job 27:4 My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.*
4. Job wanted to be evaluated in the sight of God in order to vindicated his integrity.
 - *Job 31:5 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; 6 Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.*
5. The mouth of a deceitful man is full of cursings, lies and fraud.
 - *Psalms 10:7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.*
6. The deceitful person ceases to be wise and to do good.
 - *Psalms 36:3 The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.*
7. The deceitful person volitionally gives himself to speaking evil.
 - *Psalms 50:19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.*
8. Once a person engages in deceitful speech and practices it is difficult to stop.
 - *Psalms 55:11 Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.*
9. When God converts a person He redeems the soul from deceit.
 - *Psalms 72:14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*
10. The righteous do not want the workers of deceit to dwell within the family structure or fellowship.

- *Psalms 101:7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*

11. If and when God judges the deceitful person, He does no wrong.

- *Psalms 119:118 Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.*

12. When a person is deceptive he is prone to give deceptive counsel as well.

- *Proverbs 12:5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.*

13. A false witness must of necessity deceive others from knowing the truth.

- *Proverbs 12:17 He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.*

14. When a person is determined to do evil [inflict injurious behavior] on someone, deceit will surface in the heart. Hidden motives drives outward speech and behavior.

- *Proverbs 12:20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.*

15. Foolish people are naturally subject to engaging in deceit in order to obtain their goals.

- *Proverbs 14:8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.*

16. There is a certain amount of pleasure that comes to a person when deceitful actions are fulfilled but afterwards, if God is merciful, the conscience will be smitten and there will be a bitter taste following the transgression.

- *Proverbs 20:17 Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.*

17. Deceit is but one sin among a sevenfold cluster of sins.

- *Proverbs 26:24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; 25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart.*

18. Often hatred is covered by deceitful words of praise and support. One day the congregation of the righteous shall be shown the truth.

- *Proverbs 26:26 Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.*

19. Jesus had no deceit in His mouth. He alone of all who have been born was absolutely righteous.

- *Isaiah 53:9 And he [the Messiah] made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

20. Not all but some individuals are able to become great and grow rich by words and acts of deceit.

- *Jeremiah 5:27 As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.*

21. There is strength to evil that must not be underestimated. Individuals will hold fast to their deceitful ways.

- *Jeremiah 8:5 Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.*

22. By suppressing the truth and by willfully embracing the lies of false religions individuals refuse to know the Lord.

- *Jeremiah 9:6 Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord.*

23. The deceitful person will feign friendship and engage in fellowship with someone that shall soon be the object of their wrath and treachery. Many people are surprised to discover how shallow human relationships can be.

- *Jeremiah 9:8 Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.*

24. Every generation seems to have religious frauds that deceive people.

- *Jeremiah 14:14 Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

- *Jeremiah 23:26 How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart;*

24. God has an elect people that will not try to deceive Him or others.

- *Hosea 11:12 Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.*

25. God charged Ephraim with deceptive acts of trade which serves as a warning to all that the love of money will lead to acts of deception.

- *Hosea 12:7 He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.*

26. The prophet Amos also denounced the insatiable lust for money by God's people to the point they were anxious for religious duties to end in order to return to their questionable trading.

- *Amos 8:5 Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?*

27. By way of application of the biblical narrative, God will punish individuals in every generation who bring violence and deceit to others.

- *Zephaniah 1:9 In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit.*

28. The ultimate source of deception is found in the human heart and not from an external temptation.

- *Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:*

29. The state of the natural man is that he is filled with a variety of evil ways.

- *Romans 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,*
- *Romans 3:13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*

30. Christians must beware lest they be spoiled in the Christian faith through deceitful teachings.

- *Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

Special note. Modern day examples of Christians be spoiled through deceitful teachings might include the following.

- ❖ Deceitful teaching. The Mormon theology teaches that men can become a god. They are the godmakers.

- ❖ Deceitful teaching. The Health and Wealth Gospel teaches that God wants every Christian to be healthy and wealthy.
- ❖ Deceitful teaching. The Christian Science religion contends that pain is an illusion.
- ❖ Deceitful teaching. The Church of Church advocates that individuals must be baptized in order to be saved. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is foundational to their understanding of salvation.

31. The apostle Paul was careful that people believed his motive was as pure as his message.

- *1 Thessalonians 2:3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:*

PROVERBS 21

1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

21:1. Daniel tried to impress the truth of this verse upon the heart of Belshazzar on the last night of his reign as king of Babylon and on the night he died (Daniel 5:1-30). The story of Esther also illustrates this truth as does the naming of Cyrus years before that ruler was born (Isaiah 45:1-7).

2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

21:2 "When the lofty spire of Old St. Paul's was destroyed by lightning, there were many superstitious people who were amazed beyond measure at the calamity, for in the cross there had long been deposited relics of certain saints which were considered sufficient to avert all danger of tempests. With what amazement will ignorant, self-righteous sinners see their own destruction come upon them, notwithstanding all the refuge of lies in which they trusted" (Charles Haddon Spurgeon). 2 *Corinthians 10:18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.*

3 To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

21:3. Individuals are always impressed with what they do; God is most impressed and pleased with gospel obedience and attention to justice and righteous judgment. 1 *Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said [to king Saul], Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

21:4. A proud air of superior sophistication, a proud heart and a militant spirit in performing acts of wickedness is sin. As a nation, Israel engaged in many worthy activities but denied the Lord of Glory. Romans 10:1-3 speaks of the sad state of Israel. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

5 The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.

6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

7 The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.

21:5-7. It is possible to become rich quickly by lying and deceit and sometimes outright robbery but the end result is always the same, shame and sorrow. Individuals engage in self destructive as well as other destructive acts when they refuse to do right. Life becomes empty when treasures are accrued in an unauthorized manner (Ecclesiastes 5:10-17).

8 The way of [a guilty] man is foward [perverse] and strange [criminal]: but as for the pure, his work is right.

21:8. A snake will leave a crooked path and so will a guilty person. In contrast the pure in heart can live and work without deceit or fear of discovery or remorse. Daniel lived such a life. *Daniel 6:4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.* In contrast to Daniel, the life of Ahab is the way of a crooked man (1 Kings 20-22).

9 It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling [contentious] woman in a wide house.

21:9. Relationships make a home a pleasant place and not the size or price. Job and David discovered how troublesome to the soul a contentious woman can be.

Job. *Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*

David. *2 Samuel 6:20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! 21 And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord. 22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. 23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.*

10 The soul of the wicked [lawless] desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.

21:10. The honest heart knows what it loves and desires. The Bible says a person who is wicked or lawless against God longs for evil and delights in it. Moreover, such a person has no regard for others and will move to hurt them. Sanballat had a wicked soul. *Nehemiah 6:5 Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; 6 Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. 7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. 8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. 9 For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.*

11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

21:11. If a scorner is not punished then sin is strengthen in the soul. If a scorner is punished, others might profit. *1 Timothy 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.* Paul had to rebuke Elymas the sorcerer as well as Peter and Barnabas (Acts 13:8-12; Galatians 2:11-16).

12 The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.

21:12. When the righteous person considers the house of the wicked there is the discernment to know the wicked are not happy for long nor does their boasting last or their militancy in evil. At the last God shall judge the wicked for the evil they do. God does not judge evil because He is capricious or unloving or uncaring. He destroys the wicked for their wickedness and that is only right.

13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

21:13. Compassion is a Christian virtue illustrated in the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-36 and by Christ Himself on many occasions (Matthew 9:36). A little girl was sent on an errand by her mother. She took much too long in coming back. Mother, therefore, demanded an explanation when she finally did return. The little girl explained that on her way she had met a little friend who was crying because she had broken her doll. "Oh," said the mother, "then you stopped to help her fix her doll?" "Oh, no," replied the little girl. "I stopped to help her cry."

14 A gift in secret pacifieth [holds back] anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.

21:14. Here is an amazing concept. Giving someone a gift in secret can turn away their anger. The temptation comes to let others know when a good deed is being done. However, therein is danger for even good acts can be mistaken and assigned false motives. It is far better to try to do good to others in private and hope for a good end as Jacob sought to turn away any lingering anger in Joseph (Genesis 43:11-14).

15 It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

21:15-16. There are many positive emotions in the soul that are elicited by acts of righteousness. Joy is one such emotion. Sometimes individuals forget to act in a righteous and responsible manner and believe there is some personal benefit in transgressing the moral law of God. They not only enter into the congregation of the dead they shall remain there. *1 Timothy 5:6 But she [or he] that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.*

17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

21:17. The pursuit of pleasure has a way of draining financial resources as well as moral and spiritual strength.

18 The wicked [lawless] shall be a ransom [cover] for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.

21:18. "This intimates,

1. What should be done by the justice of men: The wicked, that are the troublers of a land, ought to be punished, for the preventing and turning away of those national judgments which otherwise will be inflicted and in which even the righteous are many times involved. Thus when Achan was stoned he was a ransom for the camp of righteous Israel; and the seven sons of Saul, when they were hanged, were a ransom for the kingdom of righteous David.
2. What is often done by the providence of God: The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked comes in his stead, and so seems as if he were a ransom for him, ch. 11:8. God will rather leave many wicked people to be cut off than abandon his own people. I will give men for thee, *Isaiah 43:3, 4*" (Matthew Henry). An illustration of how a wicked person named Sheba became a ransom or protective covering for a city is found in 2 Samuel 20:14-22.

19 It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

21:19. Unfortunately not all women are sweet, humble and submissive. Some are contentious and angry by nature and by choice. A place of isolation is preferred to their presence. Athaliah was a woman of violent passions and unlimited ambition (2 Kings 11; 27:15-16).

20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

21:20. Some societies encourage immediate self gratification in the pursuit of pleasure. Indeed, the survival of the national economy demands excessive consumption of goods and services. A foolish person will spend up all the treasures of time and more.

21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findest life, righteousness, and honour.

21:21. Three rewards await individuals who pursue righteousness: eternal life, sanctification and personal honor. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all pursued righteousness as did Asa, king of Judah (2 Chronicle 14-16).

“Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time”.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
1807-1882

22 A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.

21:22. Misplaced confidence will lead to destruction. Some people trust in wealth. It can vanish over night. Some people trust in their intellectual acumen. Disease can destroy it. Some people trust in military security. But a wise man can find a way to breach the security of even the most powerful of cities and empires illustrated by the downfall of Jebus (Jerusalem) and Babylon (1 Chronicles 11:4-6; Jeremiah 51:27-33). We must ultimately only trust in the Lord. *Psalms 20:7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.*

23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

21:23. The misuse of the tongue is a constant theme in Proverbs. Unwise words, though they may be true, are often the cause of great sorrow and trouble. Grief and bitter memories can be reduced by guarding the tongue carefully. “A slip of the foot you may soon recover, But a slip of the tongue you may never get over” (Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790). “Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving wordy evidence of the fact” (George Eliot).

24 Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

21:24. There are two distinguishing traits of an arrogant and self willed spirit and they are unbridled words and an uncontrollable temper. Lamech was a dealer “in proud wrath” (Genesis 4:23) as were Simeon and Levi (Genesis 49:5-7).

25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour [work].

21:25. Man was created to work and to enjoy the fellowship of God. Therefore, it is a violation of the natural order for a person to refuse to work all the while coveting what others have. It is possible for a person to be full of desire and yet resist the labor needed to obtain what the heart desires.

26 He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth [withhold] not.

21:26. The spirit of Achsan (Joshua 7:21) is contrasted with the Philippian Christians (2 Corinthians 8:2). “Covetous men must be the sport of Satan, for their grasping avarice neither lets them enjoy life nor escape from the second death. They are held by their own greed as surely as beasts with cords, or fish with nets, or men with chains. They may be likened to those foolish apes which in some countries are caught by narrow-necked vessels. Into these corn is placed, the creatures thrust in their hands, and when they have filled them they cannot draw out their fists unless they let go of the grain. Sooner than let go they submit to be captured. Are covetous men then so like the animals? Let them ponder and be ashamed” (Charles Haddon Spurgeon).

27 The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination [disgusting]: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

21:27. “To carry on so-called religious duties to be seen of men and to hide a life of wickedness, is iniquity of the most revolting character” (H. A. Ironside). To bring to God religious acts with a pretense of honor adds abomination to abomination. Jesus constantly condemned the Pharisees for their religious acts to be seen of men while hurting poor widows due to their greed and covetousness (Matthew 23:13-29).

28 A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.

21:28. Those who embrace false doctrine can sometimes articulate an effective argument for their position but in the end they shall perish along with their destructive teachings. The kingdom of the cults shall one day give way to the Kingdom of our God. The false witnesses of Jehovah shall perish while all those who hear the words of the Lord shall speak effectively and confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of our God. Christ was able to give a good confession before Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate despite the lying testimony of false witnesses who could not agree with one another (Matthew 26:59-64; 27:11-14).

29 A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.

21:29. A hardened face speaks of a person who has sinned so much and so often that evil no longer affects the heart. Guilt and sorrow, shame and remorse are no longer reflected in the face of a person with a defiled conscience (1 Corinthians 8:7). The face is hardened. Eventually the Lord will give such a person over to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:28). However, for those who desire to walk in righteousness and in an upright manner, God will direct the path (see Doctrine of Divine Guidance).

30 There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.

21:30. "Open theism, also called openness and the open view, is a theological position dealing with human free will and its relationship to God and the nature of the future. It is the teaching that God has granted to humanity free will and that in order for the free will to be truly free, the future free will choices of individuals cannot be known ahead of time by God. They hold that if God knows what we are going to choose, then how can we be truly free when it is time to make those choices since a counter choice cannot then be made by us because it is already "known" what we are going to do. In other words, we would not actually be able to make a contrary choice to what God "knows" we will choose thus implying that we would not then be free. In open theism, the future is either knowable or not knowable. For the open theists who hold that the future is knowable by God, they maintain that God voluntarily limits His knowledge of free will choices so that they can remain truly free. Other open theists maintain that the future, being non-existent, is not knowable, even by God" (Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry). Proverbs 21:30 condemns open theism and every other philosophical and theological construct designed to exalt man against God or limit the Lord's sovereignty.

31 The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.

21:31. Every generation must learn afresh that military might, a strong economy or a superior health care system might be good preparations for difficult days but true safety, and true security is in the Lord. Only when this spiritual mindset is in vogue will individuals be able to say with David, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident" (Psalm 27:3). Asa was not intimidated by the Ethiopian leader Zerah at the Battle of Mareshah. Rather, he prayed and the Lord answered his cry (2 Chronicles 14:11).

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 21

1. Which verse sets forth the sovereignty of God over the hearts of individuals? Provide three illustrations that this is true.

Answer.

Daniel tried to impress the truth of Proverbs 21:1 and God's sovereignty upon the heart of Belshazzar on the last night of his reign as king of Babylon and on the night he died (Daniel 5:1-30). The story of Esther also illustrates this truth as does the naming of Cyrus years before that ruler was born (Isaiah 45:1-7).

2. With what is God most impressed and pleased with?

Answer.

Individuals are always impressed with what they do; God is most impressed and pleased with gospel obedience and attention to justice and righteous judgment. 1 Samuel 15:22.

3. Explain how a wicked person can become a ransom for the righteous.

Answer.

According to the gospel of redemption a Righteous person, Jesus Christ, became a ransom for the wicked (1 Timothy 2:6). But, it is possible for a wicked person to become a ransom for the righteous in certain situations when justice is served and the innocent are spared. An illustration of how a wicked person named Sheba became a ransom or protective covering for a city is found in 2 Samuel 20:14-22.

4. According to Dr. H. A. Ironside, what is wickedness of the most revolting character?

Answer.

"To carry on so-called religious duties to be seen of men and to hide a life of wickedness, is iniquity of the most revolting character" (H. A. Ironside).

5. Define "Open Theism."

Answer.

"Open theism, also called openness and the open view, is a theological position dealing with human free will and its relationship to God and the nature of the future. It is the teaching that God has granted to humanity free will and that in order for the free will to be truly free, the future free will choices of individuals cannot be known ahead of time by God."

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Since God is sovereign and can turn the hearts of individuals in any direction He so chooses, why do Christians still sin? What is the source for the strength of sin in the soul?
2. Are there certain acts of evil that you long for and delight in and even make provisions for?
3. Do you every fear God will turn your mind over to that of a reprobate due to excessive sinning? Should you be afraid of this happening?
4. How careful are you with money? Do you covet what others have? How can a person guard their heart against covetousness?
5. Do you believe the theological position of Open Theism has any merit? Can God limit His sovereignty and His divine attributes? Is God not all knowing?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 21:21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of Divine Guidance

1. The Christian should live life believing in the sovereign God who rules in the affairs of His creation. Throughout Scripture God declares that He will perform specific acts in the affairs of men.
 - *Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*
 - *Genesis 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*
 - *Genesis 7:4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.*
 - *Genesis 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.*
 - *2 Kings 21:4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.*

2. Hundreds of time the phrase “I will” is found in the Bible.
3. Since the will of God is supreme a person is wise to seek the Lord even though His will is not always easy to discern.
4. The search for the divine will is encouraged and commanded in Scripture.

- *Psalms 27:8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.*
- *Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

5. In order to seek the Lord in an acceptable manner the right preparation is needed.

- First, a person must be properly related to God in order to know His will for the prayers that are most acceptable to God are the prayers that are according to His will. On this point not everyone agrees. Dr. John R. Rice taught that God hears and answers the prayers of the heathen. In contrast former President Jimmy Carter created a national fervor when he answered “No” to a question as to whether or not God would hear the prayers of a Jewish person who denied Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. While the debate rages the voice of God has been heard saying of Christ, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him.” Jesus told Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again.” To know the will of God one must be properly related to Him.
- Second, a person must not have any unconfessed sin in the heart. Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.
- Third, prayer is to be offered in the name of the Son to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
- Fourth, faith is to be present when the will of the Father is sought.
 - There must be faith that God exists.
 - There must be faith that God is listening.
 - There must be faith that God will answer prayer.

Preparation to meet with God is important. Why would the Lord agree to meet with someone who is not properly related to Him, hostile to His Son and in doubt of the Lord’s very existence?

6. Once the will of the Lord is sought in an appropriate manner the next issue is how to recognize the divine response. One simple way is the correlation between what is asked for and what comes to pass. “I asked, He answered” is a good way to know the God who is there.

7. It should be recognized that God does use a variety of different methods to manifest His will. In Acts 11 the is story of told of how Peter came to know the will of God concerning treatment of the Gentiles. Peter recorded how he found divine guidance in a variety of ways.
 - **Divine guidance comes through prayer.** *Acts 11:5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:*
 - **Divine guidance comes through meditation.** *Acts 11:6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.*
 - **Divine guidance comes through the word of God.** *Acts 11:7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.*
 - **Divine guidance comes through providential circumstances.** *Acts 11:11-14 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. 12 And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: 13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*
 - **Divine guidance comes through Scripture memorization.** *Acts 11:16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*
 - **Divine guidance comes through the prompting of the Holy Spirit.** *Acts 11:12 And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:*
 - **Divine guidance comes through the testimony of others.** *Acts 11:13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*
 - **Divine guidance comes through visual confirmation.** *Acts 11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.*
8. God the Father is as anxious to make His will known as believers are to know His will and to follow it. However, once known, the will of the Lord must be obeyed lest the Holy Spirit be grieved, hardened and quenched.
9. In many matters the will of the Lord has been clearly revealed.

- **It is the will of God to save souls.** *2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. To pray for the salvation of souls is pleasing to the Lord.*
- **It is the will of God that the saints be holy.** *1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*
- **It is the will of God that Christians be a thankful people.** *1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*
- **It is the will of God that some believers bear witness to a lost world through pain and suffering.** *1 Peter 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. 17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.*
- **It is the will of God that sins be confessed and repented of.** *Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

10. At the end of time it will be discovered that those who seek and do the will of the Lord shall live forever and ever. *1 John 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*

PROVERBS 22

1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

22:1. The word “good” does not occur in the original. The sense of the verse is that some desire to have a name of renown more than wealth or favor. Sometimes this desire is not legitimate as in Genesis 11:4 when individuals said “let us make a name” though what they proposed was contrary to God’s will. The best name is associated with those who live for the Lord and honor Him. Saul of Tarsus acquired a name for himself and men trembled in fear and terror. The same man was given a new name by God, Paul, and today is loved by multitudes.

2 The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

22:2. There is nothing ennobling about poverty nor is there anything shameful in that state unless it is self imposed through being lazy. The rich and the poor meet together at the Cross and in the Lord who is the Creator of all. *Acts 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.* In reality the rich and the poor not only meet but need each other reflected a Russian proverb. “The rich would have to eat money, but luckily the poor provide food”.

3 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

22:3. Most of the danger individuals face in life will not come without warning signs. The problem is that people ignore their conscience, the experimental history of others or the exhortations of faithful friends and loved ones. And so the simple or foolish person passes on and is punished with the consequences of their wrong decisions.

4 By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.

22:4. Three rewards are promised those who are humble in spirit and fear the Lord: spiritual riches, personal honor and eternal life.

5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the foward [perverse]: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

22:5. The story of Hezekiah and his son Manasseh before he was humbled, illustrates the truthfulness of Proverbs 22:4-5. Humility and fear of the Lord are contrasted with insubordination and self will.

6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

22:6. This is a proverb not a promise. Many Christian parents have children that are hostile to their faith and love for Christ. Jesus said this would be the case. *Matthew 10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.* Nevertheless, when children are properly brought up in the Lord their hearts are usually inclined to embrace Him as Lord and Savior. This was the experience of Timothy to whom Paul wrote. *2 Timothy 1:5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant [slave] to the lender.

22:7. In as far as possible debt is to be avoided. *Romans 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* The rule over the poor by the lender is often without mercy (2 Kings 4:1). “A man in debt is caught in a net. Out of debt, out of danger”.

8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

22:8. To sow iniquity is to engage in attitudes and actions contrary to the known will of God. What we sow, we reap. *Galatians 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* Even if the worker of iniquity uses force and emotional anger to impose his will, that rule shall come to a troublesome end. Question: “Do you sow any seeds of iniquity in your life?” The English poet Lord George Noel Gordon Byron (1788-1824) did and lamented, “The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree I planted; they have torn me, and I bleed. I should have known what fruit would spring from such seed”

9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

22:9. It is hard not to be self centered and self absorbed but a blessing awaits those who cultivate a generous heart. This is an important concept in the Bible for the longest chapter in Scripture is Numbers chapter 7, nearly two thousand words, and it is all about giving. Bread cast upon the waters returns after many days. Study Ebed-melech (Jeremiah 38:7-12; 39:16-18).

10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

22:10. Pastors in particular would do well to pay attention to this proverb in order to have peace in the local assembly. Not every person should be allowed to unite with the church or stay with the assembly. There are disruptive spirits. Once they are gone, strife and reproach shall cease. Under the law the scorner could be put to death (Deut. 17:2-7). Under the reign of grace the disruptive soul is to simply be cast out of the church (1 Cor 5:11-12). Hymenaeus and Alexander are also examples of wretched evil speaking individuals (1 Timothy 1:20).

11 He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.

22:11. It is the pure in heart that shall see the King of kings for He delights in gracious lips. *Colossians 4:6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* Notice the favor Mordecai found with the Persian ruler and what was said of him. *Esther 10:2 And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? 3 For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.*

12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.

22:12. Knowledge of the truth is something the Lord keeps His eye on to preserve. He guards it by day and by night eternally. Those who will move against the truth shall at the last be overthrown. The case of Micaiah and the prophets of Baal illustrated this (1 Kings 22).

13 The slothful [indolent] man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

22:13. A slothful or indolent person is one who is adverse to activity. Labor is one of God's intended purposes for the creation of man. *Genesis 2:15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.* The lazy person will make up entertaining but bizarre excuses for not working. The Christian should pray, "God give me work till my life shall end and life till my work is done" (Winifred Holtby, 1898-1935).

14 The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.

22:14. The concept that men hate God is well understood. What is not so well understood is that God is furiously displeased with some individuals and judges them. One form of divine judgment is allowing men to fall into the pit of adultery. Judah is one example of this truth (Gen. 38).

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

22:15. Under the law capital punishment was an option for rebellious adult children. Exodus 21:15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. 16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. 17 And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. Corporal punishment goes a long way to diminish the development of rebellion in the heart of a child. "Let God put you on his wheel and whirl you as he likes.... Don't lose heart in the process" (Oswald Chambers, 1874-1917). The tragic ending of Absalom and Adonijah testifies to negative consequences when parental discipline is removed (2 Samuel 14; 1 Kings 1:6).

16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

22:16. Greed has a ravenous appetite. It will cause the poor to be oppressed and will accept bribes. The oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller, once the richest man in the world, was asked how much money was enough. He replied, "Just a little bit more." (see James 5; Doctrine of Covetousness).

17 Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

18 For it is a pleasant [good] thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

19 That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.

20 Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

21 That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?

22:17-21. It is one thing to hear the words of wisdom, it is another to submit to and apply them. When godly knowledge is applied to the life it is a pleasant or good thing for there is no sense of shame or guilt. The greatest application of gospel truth is to receive Christ as Savior so that the burden of sin can be removed.

"Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
Calvary, Calvary,
Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
Jesus is very near".

In a post modern era of skepticism the Christian has a sure foundation on which to rest. The Christian who trusts in the Lord can answer with confidence those who are questioning life and the goodness of God. Certainly the writers of the New Testament valued the words of truth written by the finger of God.

Paul quotes from Proverbs in Romans 12:19-20 and Hebrews 12:5-6. In his epistle James quotes from Proverbs in James 4:6. Peter also appeals to the Proverbs in 1 Peter 4:8, 17-18 and in 2 Peter 2:22. Jude also quotes from Proverbs in verse 12.

22 Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:

23 For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

22:22-23. There is an old expression about not “kicking a man when he is down.” There is a depraved temptation to take advantage of the poor because they are poor and that is morally wrong. There is a good reason not to oppress the poor. The Lord has pledged Himself to avenging their cause and spoiling the spoilers in time and in eternity. *James 5:1 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.*

24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man [hot tempered] thou shalt not go:

25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

22:24. It is possible for a person to learn anger much like a child imitates the behavior of a parent. While there is righteous anger most anger is not justified and should be put away. *Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* “Hot heads and cold hearts never solved anything” Billy Graham (1918-). Thomas A Kempis (c. 1380-1471) noted, “When anger enters the mind, wisdom departs”. King Saul was no friend to David (1 Samuel 19:1).

26 Be not thou one of them that strike hands [give pledges], or of them that are sureties for debts.

27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

22:26-27. Many families, friendships and business arrangements have been ruined because of the violation of the principle under girding this proverb. Sometimes out of love parents lend money to their children who cannot afford a toy in time. The end result is emotional disaster. Sometimes good friends will enter into a partnership and then the business fails and again there is much division for one has given a pledge to the other. When there is forgiveness of a debt (Luke 7:40-43) grace is shown but more often than not stern legal justice is sought even to the confiscation of personal property.

28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

22:28. The Law of Moses commanded this (Deut. 19:14) for each Israelite had received a portion of the land of promise from the hand of the Lord. In spiritual matters great doctrines are the landmarks of the faith which should not be moved. These landmarks include the deity of Christ, His death burial, resurrection, ascension into heaven and second coming. The doctrine of the tri-unity cannot be removed nor salvation by grace through faith alone. Election and predestination and regeneration by the Holy Spirit must also be protected for these are the boundaries of soteriology or how individuals come to saving faith in Christ.

29 Seest thou a man diligent [skilled] in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

22:29. Honor and reward await the diligent worker. The life worth living has a purpose and a passion and it is all to be done to the glory of God. *1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Leader's Study Guide

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 22

1. Should church discipline be limited to physical immoral acts of misconduct or does it include matters of the heart as well?

Answer.

Church discipline does include matters of the heart and the scorner in particular. Such a person should be asked to leave the assembly if there is no response to pastoral counsel and a request to change. *Proverbs 22:10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.*

2. What is meant by the “rod of correction?”

Answer.

The rod of correction is a reference to corporal punishment or the spanking of a child. *Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.* God has said that foolishness can be driven from a child when a proper discipline is administered in love.

3. What negative emotion in the soul triggers a thought process that wants more and more? What does it cause a person to do?

Answer.

Greed is the negative emotion in the soul that triggers a desire for more and more. Greed will cause a person to lose compassion and oppress the poor or accept bribes. *Proverbs 22:16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.*

4. Is it scripturally possible for anger to be a learned behavior?

Answer.

Much anger is a learned behavioral response to negative stimuli. *Proverbs 22: 24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man [hot tempered] thou shalt not go: 25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.*

5. Should Christians co-sign a legal note of obligation on behalf of family and friends?

Answer.

Christians should not become a pledge for others. *Proverbs 22: 26 Be not thou one of them that strike hands [give pledges], or of them that are sureties for debts. 27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?*

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Would you agree or disagree that God is angry with individuals and confirms them in the sin of their choice even if it is a sexual sin such as adultery. (Read Romans 1:1-32).
2. Comment on Proverbs 22:6. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”. How has this Proverb been misapplied? Do some parents have a false hope that their children will come to faith after a life of wasted years?
3. Are you a slothful person? Yes ____ No ____ What is the evidence?
4. Are you a greedy person? Yes ____ No ____ What is the evidence?
5. Which doctrinal landmarks have been or are being removed today?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 22:29 Seest thou a man diligent [skilled] in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of Prudence

1. The Hebrew word for prudent is *bene* and means, “to separate mentally (distinguish)”. It is variously translated: “attend, consider, be cunning, diligently, direct, discern, eloquent, feel, inform, instruct, have intelligence, know, look well to, mark, perceive, be prudent, regard, (can) skill (-full), teach, think, (cause, make to, get, give, have) understand (-ing), view, (deal) wise (-ly, man).
2. Young people can be prudent as David was said to be.
 - *1 Samuel 16:18 Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.*
3. A prudent person is characterized by what he will or will not do.
 - A prudent person will cover the shame of showing excessive anger. *Proverbs 12:16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.*
 - A prudent person will receive correction and instruction and learn from it. *Proverbs 15:5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.*

- A prudent person can foresee and will avoid evil. *Proverbs 22:3 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.*
- A prudent person will know of and walk in the ways of the Lord. *Hosea 14:9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.*

4. A prudent person is characterized by what he will or will not say.

- A prudent person will not speak on matters beyond his or her capacity or area of expertise. *Proverbs 12:23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.*
- A prudent person knows when to remain silent. *Amos 5:13 Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.*

5. A prudent person is characterized by what he or she will study.

- A prudent person wants to understand not only what is to be done but why something is to be done. *Proverbs 14:8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.*
- A prudent person values education. *Proverbs 13:16 Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.*
- A prudent person will evaluate a matter so there are no negative unintended consequences. *Proverbs 14:15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.*

7. The prudent person will find rewards in life.

- There is the reward of knowledge. *Proverbs 14:18 The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.*
- There is the reward of a good name. *Proverbs 16:21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.*
- There is the reward of a good spouse in marriage. *Proverbs 19:14 House and riches are the inheritance of fathers and a prudent wife is from the Lord.*

8. When God is determined to visit a nation in righteous judgement, He removes the prudent from their midst.

- *Isaiah 3:1 For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, 2 The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, 3 The captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.*

9. It is possible for foolish people to believe they are prudent in their own estimation.

- *Isaiah 5:21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!*

10. God looks with disdain on the arrogance of rulers that insist they are prudent as illustrated in the king of Assyria during the days of Isaiah.

- *Isaiah 10:13 For he [Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, BC 747 to B.C. 730] saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: 14 And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.*

11. Gospel truth is withheld from the worldly wise and prudent (Gk. *sunetos* (soon-et'-os), sagacious) person.

- *Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*
- *1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*

12. The unconverted can be prudent and all the more so when they are attentive and want to hear the word of the Lord.

- *Acts 13:6 And when they [Barnabas and Paul] had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.*

PROVERBS 23

- 1 When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee:
- 2 And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.
- 3 Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat.

23:1-3. The point of this passage is not to act in a presumptuous manner if invited to a position of privilege and favor (see Daniel 1). A mindset of entitlement destroys not only restraint and good manners but personal incentive to labor. A sense of entitlement promotes unhealthy self interest and self centeredness. The sin of gluttony is also condemned in this verse. A blunt Jewish proverb declares, “Gluttons dig their graves with their teeth”.

- 4 Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.

23:4. One of the great lessons of life is that if a person will give themselves to finding a great passion in life and working hard at it, financial rewards tend to follow. When money becomes the primary object then temptations come that could have been avoided. “Ahab sold himself for a vineyard; Judas, a bag of silver; Achan, a wedge and a garment; Gehazi, silver and raiment. Are you for sale?” (Orin Philip Gifford, b. 1847).

- 5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

“Gold begets in brethren hate;
Gold in families debate;
Gold does friendship separate;
Gold does civil wars create”.

Abraham Cowley
1618-1667

23:5. The apostle Paul also warned of the dangers of moving too quickly to be rich. *1 Timothy 6:6-10. But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

- 6 Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats:

7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

8 The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.

23:6-8. Covetousness and self seeking are twin sins. “I remember the disappointment I once had when a deacon asked me as a young pastor to his lovely house for dinner. I thought he was being friendly but what he had in mind was signing me up in a marketing network pyramid he was putting together. My appetite was soon gone when I realized what his real intent and why he had spoken all the kind words. I grew silent. I was not his friend. I was only another money source to bankroll his covetousness.” (Stanford E. Murrell).

9 Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

23:9. It is a waste of time to speak to someone who is committed to acting contrary to reason and the Word of God. The trouble Jotham had with the followers of Abimelech illustrates this truth (Judges 9:7-21).

10 Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:

11 For their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.

23:10. Widows and orphans are not spared when individuals seek to possess what they have. Fortunately, the Lord has covenanted to be their redeemer and look after their best interest. The church should look after widows and orphans in its midst. The eighteenth century evangelist George Whitefield said, “I hope to grow rich in heaven by taking care of orphans on earth”. (Read Psalm 35).

12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.

23:12. Proper study requires diligence. The mind must be engaged and the ears must be ready to listen. The prophet Jeremiah is a wonderful role model. *Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.*

13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver [rescue] his soul from hell [Sheol].

23:13-14. The disciplining of a child can be and should be administered though not harshly or severely. Martin Luther would tell his students, “My mother once beat me with a cane for stealing a nut, until the blood came. Such strict discipline drove me to the monastery, although she meant well.” The world would be better off if parents emulated Manoah. *Judges 13:8 Then Manoah intreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.*

15 My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.

16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

23:15-16. A good father is pleased when his children act wisely. So is a spiritual father. 3 *John 3:4 For I [John, the apostle] rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.

18 For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

23:17-18. It is not hard to look at those living contrary to the will of God and envy their prosperity especially when the wicked mock Christ and Christians. However, all people will have an end and after that the judgment. Then will the teaching of Christ be realized. Those who live righteously shall be blessed. *Matthew 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

20 Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:

21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

23:19-23. While the drinking of alcoholic beverages is not forbidden in Scripture, drunkenness is. “Drink has drained more blood, hung more crepe, sold more houses, plunged more people into bankruptcy, armed more villains, slain more children, snapped more wedding rings, defiled more innocence, blinded more eyes, twisted more limbs, dethroned more reason, wrecked more manhood, dishonored more womanhood, broken more hearts, blasted more lives, driven more to suicide, and dug more graves than any other poisoned scourge that ever swept its death-dealing waves across the world” (Evangeline Cory Boom, 1865-1950).

22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

23:22. There is a natural obligation on the part of children to honor their parents. It is one of the foundational principles for godly living and is incorporated into the Moral Law. *Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

23:23. There are four great assets to buy: truth, wisdom, instruction and understanding. The gospel contains all of these spiritual treasures and can be bought even without money. *Isaiah 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*

24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.

25 Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

23:24-25. A child can bring joy and happiness to the heart of a good father and mother by living in a righteous manner and acting wisely. Jacob and Joseph brought honor to their parents by being men of faith (Genesis 46-48).

26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

23:26. As good fathers do not hesitate to plead with their children to do right so our heavenly Father pleads with His own. *Hebrews 4:7 To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

As God pleads with men so men must plead with others to get right with God. D. L. Moody, the great evangelist, was preaching in Chicago on October 8, 1871. A biographer writes, "Before him was the largest congregation he had ever addressed in the city. He concluded with a blunder that he had called the biggest in his life, one which he vowed he would give his right hand to recall. He, D. L. Moody, gave them a week to decide for Christ" (Richard K. Curtis, *They Called Him Mister Moody*). That night the great Chicago fire broke out and many of the people who were there were killed. Moody said that was the last time he ever told anyone to postpone a decision for Christ.

27 For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.

28 She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.

23:27-28. see Doctrine of a Whore

29 Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

23:29-32. By six inquires the Scriptures direct attention to what will happen when individuals tarry long at the wine.

There will be misery.

There will be sorrow.

There will be contentions.

There will be foolish talking (babbling).

There will be acts of injury to self and to others without cause.

There will be bodily changes including redness of eyes.

H. W Gibson wrote...

“I am the greatest criminal in history.

I have killed more men than have fallen in all the wars of all the world.

I have turned men into brutes.

I have made millions of homes unhappy.

I have changed many promising young men into hopeless parasites.

I destroy the weak and weaken the strong.

I make the wise man a fool and I ensnare the innocent.

I have ruined millions and shall try to ruin millions more.

I am alcohol”.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken [struck] me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

23:33-35. The negative effect of drunkenness continues. The person who is not responsible in their drinking shall lust after women and allow their tongues to say foolish things. The inebriated or drunken person is like a person who tries to lie down in the midst of the sea, there is disorientation.

When conscious and alert for a moment there is the realization that all is not right for new wounds have appeared on the body, but the will to reform is gone. "I will seek it yet again." Such is the strength of sin. *2 Peter 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.* It is good for the child of God to flee such danger and live soberly.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 23

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 23

1. What does a mindset of entitlement destroy?

Answer.

A mindset of entitlement destroys not only restraint and good manners but personal incentive to labor.

2. What will tend to follow a great passion in life and hard work?

Answer.

If a person will give themselves to finding a great passion in life and working hard at it, financial rewards tend to follow.

3. Why is it important to be able to identify a foolish person, and not try to speak to him on important matters?

Answer.

It is a waste of time to speak to someone who is committed to acting contrary to reason and the Word of God.

4. What did George Whitefield say about orphans?

Answer.

The eighteenth century evangelist George Whitefield said, "I hope to grow rich in heaven by taking care of orphans on earth".

5. List six by-products noted in Scripture concerning what will happen when individuals drink to excess.

Answer.

There will be misery.

There will be sorrow.

There will be contentions.

There will be foolish talking (babbling).

There will be acts of injury to self and to others without cause.

There will be bodily changes including redness of eyes.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Is there anything you think God “owes” you such as money, a nicer home, better insurance, or a family?
2. Do you eat too much? Does your current weight support your answer?
3. Are you laboring to be rich? What motivates you in living?
4. Have you ever encountered a biblical fool? Is there someone you have determined not to speak to anymore on spiritual matters because they will not listen?
5. Do you personally consume alcoholic beverages? Should you? How does your conscience react when you drink?
6. What practical steps can a Christian take to guard the heart against the twin sins of covetousness and self seeking?
7. Which spiritual “landmarks” are being removed today through Dispensational Theology, Liberation Theology, New Covenant Theology, Preterism, the Charismatic movement, and the various cults such as the Jehovah Witnesses and the Mormons?
8. What is the responsibility of the local church toward widows and orphans?
9. What can Christian parents do practically to instill wisdom in their children?
10. Should gospel ministers preach sermons about total abstinence of alcoholic beverages? Defend your answer with Scripture.

Hiding God’s Word in my Heart

Proverbs 17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of a Whore

1. Parents are to protect their daughters from acts of immorality and not prostitute them or encourage them in lewd behavior.
 - *Leviticus 19:29 Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.*
2. No priest could have a wife that was a whore.
 - *Leviticus 21:7 They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God.*
3. As a prophet of God, Hosea was instructed to take a prostitute as a wife in order to illustrate the love of God for His people and the depths He was willing to go to redeem them.
 - *Hosea 1:2 The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hose'a. And the LORD said to Hose'a, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.*
4. Death was the penalty for a whore.
 - The daughter of a priest who became a whore was to be burnt with fire. *Leviticus 21:9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.*
 - The daughter of a non priest was to be stoned. *Deuteronomy 22:21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.*
5. Though God has denounced a woman being a whore and provided the death penalty for this transgression, grace can be found to cover even this sin.
 - *John 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one,*

beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

6. The sin of whoredom and the sin of homosexuality are united in Scripture and equally prohibited.

- *Deuteronomy 23:17 There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.*

7. The whore was to be kept outside the house of God.

- *Deuteronomy 23:18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the Lord thy God.*

The house of the Lord is to be protected where souls gather for acts of worship.

- *1 Corinthians 5: 1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

8. A whore is characterized as being like a deep ditch and a narrow pit. It is dangerous and even deadly to fall into a concealed deep ditch or narrow pit. Sometimes, there is no rescue.

- *Proverbs 23:27 For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.*

Samson fell for a lovely whore named Delilah and eventually died a sin unto death (Judges 13:24-16:31).

9. Though words of judgment are spoken grace continues to warn the whore to repent.

- *Isaiah 57:3 But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.*

10. The concept of a spiritual whore is a constant picture of God's people turning from Him and being unfaithful but without any satisfaction.

- *Ezekiel 16:28 Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatisfiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldst not be satisfied.*

11. False religion is the great whore of the Revelation. Religion woes individuals that are spiritually sensitive by promising a heavenly way to go to hell based on the principle of pleasure and self interest while justifying every activity with feelings of good works.

- *Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:*

12. The success of religion to seduce multitudes is indicated in Scripture.

- *Revelation 17:15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*

13. Because the world has its own agenda it hates the whore [any expression of formal religion] and seeks to destroy it. Modern day examples of this would be the ideology of communism, socialism and the propaganda of the secular progressive against formal religion.

- *Revelation 17:16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.*

14. God has vowed to judge the great spiritual whore [religion] as he judges physical whoredom.

- *Revelation 19:2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.*

Questions to Consider

About Being...Under the Influence

1. What husband, the victim of David's adulterous scheming, was made drunk by the king?
2. What man was seduced by his daughters while he was drunk?
3. Who dropped dead as a stone on hearing bad news the morning after being drunk?
4. What virtuous man, who later married a virtuous woman, fell asleep in a heap of grain after eating and drinking?
5. Absalom wanted to avenge the rape of his sister, Tamar, so he waited until the rapist was very drunk. Who was this drunk, later slain by Absalom's men?
6. This king of Israel, who ruled barely two years, was assassinated while drunk. Who was he?
7. What Syrian king was getting drunk at a time when he was supposed to be making war on the Samaritans?
8. Nehemiah waited until this Persian king was softened up with wine before he asked the king to let the Jews return to their homeland. Who was the king?
9. What Persian queen refused to obey her drunken husband's order that she appear before his besotted guests?
10. Job's sons and daughters were so busy eating and drinking that they failed to notice that disaster was about to strike. What killed them?
11. The arrogant Babylonian king Belshazzar, drunk at his feast, committed an outrage when he asked for new drinking vessels to be brought in. What were these vessels that led to so much trouble for the king?

Answers

1. Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba	2 Samuel 11:13
2. Lot	Genesis 19:30-36
3. Nabal, Abigail's husband	1 Samuel 25:36-37
4. Boaz, husband of Ruth	Ruth 3:7-14
5. Amnon, Absalom's half-brother	2 Samuel 13:28
6. Elah	1 Kings 16:9
7. Ben-hadad	1 Kings 20:12-19
8. Artaxerxes	Nehemiah 2:1
9. Vashti	Esther 1:3-12
10. A great wind storm	Job 1:13-18
11. Vessels from the temple of Jerusalem	Daniel 5:1-5

Taken from the work by J. Stephen Lang, *The Complete Book of Bible Trivia* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1988).

PROVERBS 24

1 Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

2 For their heart studieth destruction [plan violence], and their lips [thoughts] talk of mischief.

24:1-2. There are two reasons why Christians should not be envious of individuals who hurt others. First, the heart of an evil person plots and plans to hurt others on a continual basis. Second, the lips of an evil person verbalize and crystallize what is being planned turning ideas into reality. As a person comes closer to the edge of eternity they realize that a life of wasted years in self destructive and other destructive behavior is foolish and most people tend to regret their involvement in bad behavior. Usually, the end of a life of violence is wretchedness reflected in Jehoram, king of Juda (2 Chronicles 21).

3 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:

4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

24:3-4. Building a spiritual edification complex of the soul is like building an elaborate and richly furnished house. Knowledge and understanding of basic principles is needed and wisdom to know when to apply them. True spiritual wisdom is not of human origin but can be received as a gift of divine grace for it comes from the Father above.

- *James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*
- *James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

5 A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.

6 For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

24:5. Spiritual wisdom can make even the weak to be strong in the spiritual warfare the believer is called upon to engage in. Putting on the whole armor of God is part of being wise and increasing in strength in order to receive protection from the fiery darts of the devil. *Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all,

taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

7 Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.

24:7. The wise man is not rash nor is he self-centered and egotistical. He will listen to the counsel of others and he will not overreach by aiming too high. The wise person will plan his work and then work his plan. *Luke 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.*

24:7. It was a custom in the ancient world for wise men to gather at the city gate to discuss important topics. The fool has nothing to say “in the gate” and so he is silent.

8 He that deviseth [plans] to do evil shall be called a mischievous person.

9 The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner [mocker of others] is an abomination to men.

24:8-9. Much bad behavior is labeled as being done by a “crazy person” when the reality is that evil stems from the natural depravity of the human heart. *Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.* For the Christian, the divine command comes to change the way one thinks.

Because of the natural depravity of the human heart every person needs to be born again in order to think better thoughts. *Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

10 If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

24.10. The Christian faces the day of adversity when the hour of temptation comes. In that day of moral and ethical conflict, a person’s spiritual strength will be found to be very great or very small. The determining fact is whether or not the temptation is yielded to. It is wrong and even foolish to speak of a person having great faith when the reality of their private moral life contradicts the rhetoric of their religious lips.

Even the best of saints need to grow in grace and in knowledge illustrated in the life of Elijah, who, when threatened by Jezebel fled in fear and wanted to die (1 Kings 19:2-4). The best

example to follow is that of Christ. Our Lord was strong in the day of adversity (Matthew 4:1-11).

11 If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain;

12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works?

24:11-12. At the end of World War II, the allies liberated the Nazi death camps. United States General Dwight D. Eisenhower insisted on documenting and taking pictures of the death camps so people in the future would be aware of what happened. He also made German people who lived near the camps come and look at what had happened so close to them and without their protests. General Eisenhower had a valid point. The German people were not innocent in what was done by their political and military leaders. The first known criminal, Cain, asked with scorn, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The solemn answer is, "Yes." Individuals do have a responsibility toward others to help them and to protect them from harm or injustice. Spiritually, Christians must not be indifferent to the lost.

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.
Though they are slighting Him, still He is waiting,
Waiting the penitent child to receive;
Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently;
He will forgive if they only believe.

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior has died".

Fanny Crosby, 1869

Study the words of the watchman in Ezekiel 33:1-12.

13 My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste:

14 So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

24:13-14. Wisdom for the soul is said to be as enjoyable as eating honey and a honeycomb. Those who seek spiritual wisdom, like Cornelius (Acts 10) will never be ashamed. But be careful. Worldly wisdom invites the enjoyment of sensual pleasure. Worldly wisdom advocates gaining knowledge by experiencing evil. See Proverbs 5:3.

15 Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place:

16 For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

24:15-16. In the journey into grace, the Christian will fall many times into misfortunes and / or sin. The difference is that unlike the natural man, the Christian's heart longs to be free of the filth of the flesh. The soul of a believer longs to be fundamentally and forever different. The soul is grieved when the Holy Spirit is wounded (Study Matthew 26:75; 27:3-5; Psalm 34:18-22).

17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:

18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

24:17-18. The Lord is displeased when individuals rejoice at the trouble others are having. Love does not rejoice over the sorrows of others though they may justly deserve a severe setback, from a human perspective. The anger of the Lord was provoked against Edom because the nation was delighted at the suffering of Israel (Obadiah 12-16).

19 Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;

20 For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

24:19-20. Several times in the Bible instruction is given not to be jealous of those who do evil because they will receive a just reward for the deeds they do, if not in time then in eternity. The light or life of the wicked will soon and often suddenly end which is one mercy that death does bring. An example of the light of the wicked being suddenly extinguished is found in the death of Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:20-23).

Agrippa was the son of Aristobulus and Bernice, and grandson of Herod the Great. He was brought up at Rome, and was put into prison by Tiberius, where he remained till the accession of Caligula, who made him king, first of the tetrarchy of Philip and Lysanias; afterward the

dominions of Antipas were added, and finally Judea and Samaria. Unlike his predecessors, Agrippa was a strict observer of the Mosaic Law as he curried with success the favor of the Jews. His desire to please the Jews led in part, to his putting to death James the son of Zebedee, and imprisoning Peter (Acts 12:1, ff). His sudden death astonished many (Acts 12:20-23).

21 My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change:

22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?

24:21-22. Submission to divinely ordained authorities has always characterized God's people. Involvement in revolution and plots to assassinate or overthrow political figures through violence and intrigue is forbidden. "Fear the LORD and the king". Death and destruction waits for all who engage in political and social upheaval due to unintended consequences (see Theudas and Judas of Galilee in Acts 5:36, 37).

Proverbs 24 Four Final Topics

- Do not be a respecter of persons 23-26
- The importance of counting the cost 27
- Being a faithful and true witness 28-29
- Slothfulness 30-34

23 These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:

25 But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.

26 Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.

24:23-26. In a moral society the person who says to the wicked, "Thou are righteous" would receive a just condemnation. Tragically, the culture of a country can deteriorate to the point where the person who says that something wrong really is wrong is condemned. John the Baptist was executed because he did not tell the wicked they were righteous. His story may be summarized. Herod Antipas had taken to himself Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip; and when John reproved him for this, as well as for other sins, Luke 3:19. Herod cast him into prison. (March, A.D. 28.) The place of his confinement was the castle of Machaerus, a fortress on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. It was here that reports reached him of the miracles which our Lord was working in Judea.

Nothing but the death of the Baptist would satisfy the resentment of Herodias. A court festival was kept at Machaerus in honor of the king's birthday. After supper the daughter of Herodias

came in and danced before the king. Inflamed by lust the king promised with an oath to give Salome whatsoever she should ask. Prompted by her mother, Salome demanded the head of John the Baptist. Herod gave instructions to an officer of his guard who went and executed John in the prison. The head of the Baptist was brought to the banquet for the eyes of the adulteress to feast upon. This was the revenge of Herodias for John had denounced her sins. The death of John probably occurred just before the third Passover, in the course of the Lord's ministry (March, AD 29, *Smith's Bible Dictionary*).

27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.

24:27. Careful thought should be given to any undertaking whether the project is a major one or a minor one. In one particular area this proverb has a vital application and that is marriage. Many young people try to build a house without first preparing by paying off credit, finishing a good education or securing a sound job. In other matters too the principle of the proverb applies. See the Lord's parable in Luke 14:28-30. Most importantly, when witnessing to others, be sure to tell the potential convert and disciple to count the cost before professing a commitment to Christ.

28 Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips.

29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.

24:28-29. The desire to hurt someone who has hurt self is a powerful motive leading to many ungodly and unhealthy fantasies. An opportunity for revenge often presents itself but should not be taken advantage of. The person of faith need not worry about defending a good name, for the Lord promised His own divine protection. *Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.* David had an opportunity to avenge the evil of Shemei toward him, but declined (2 Samuel 16:5, 7, 13; 19:16-23).

30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.

33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

24:30-34. It is sad to stand as a witness and see what might have been in life, in the church, in the life of a nation. All that can be done is to make personal application through reflective mediation and learn principles of life. Slothfulness comes in many forms, due and for a variety of reasons but the end result is poverty. There is poverty of intellect to the person who will not study. There is poverty of soul for those who will not give themselves to holy matters. There is poverty of possessions for those who will not work. The blast of the Christian's trumpet is to redeem the times (Colossians 4:5).

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 24

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 24

1. What are two reasons why Christians should not be jealous of evil people?

Answer.

There are two reasons why Christians should not be envious of individuals who hurt others. First, the heart of an evil person plots and plans to hurt others on a continual basis. Second, the lips of an evil person verbalize and crystallize what is being planned turning ideas into reality.

2. How is wisdom like building a house?

Answer.

Building a spiritual edification complex of the soul is like building an elaborate and richly furnished house. Knowledge and understanding of basic principles is needed and wisdom to know when to apply them. True spiritual wisdom is not of human origin but can be received as a gift of divine grace for it comes from the Father above.

3. How many times might a just or righteous man fall? How is his failure different from an unrighteous person?

Answer.

A just or righteous man might fall seven times but he will rise up again to try to walk in the path of righteousness. This is in contrast to the wicked who fall into evil and enjoy that environment.

4. Contrast worldly wisdom with Bible doctrine or biblical wisdom.

Answer.

Those who seek spiritual wisdom, like Cornelius (Acts 10) will never be ashamed. But be careful. Worldly wisdom invites the enjoyment of sensual pleasure. Worldly wisdom advocates gaining knowledge by experiencing evil. See Proverbs 5:3.

5. What four final topics close out Proverbs 24?

Answer.

The four final topics addressed in proverbs 24 are as follows: do not be a respecter of persons (Proverbs 24: 23-26), the importance of counting the cost (Proverbs 24: 27), being a faithful and true witness (Proverbs 24: 28-29), and slothfulness (Proverbs 24: 30-34).

Personal Application and Reflection

1. What are you doing personally to arrest the slaughter of unborn children? Can you do more?
2. What temptations do you find in life? You have an area of strength which means there are certain acts you will not commit. What is your area of strength? You have an area of weakness which is something questionable or wrong you will do. What is your area of weakness?

“Sin is a monster of such frightful countenance,
that to be hated needs but to be seen.

But, seen too often, familiar with her face,
we first endure, then pity, and then embrace.”

Alexander Pope

3. Do you prepare your physical and spiritual work carefully by planning and thinking of what it takes to have a successful outcome?
4. What repetitive sins do you fall into? Be specific. Are they secret “darling sins”, sins that you love and make provisions for? How can they be mortified or put to death?
5. Do you rejoice at the misfortune of others, perhaps those who are rich? Are you happy when you discover your enemies are having personal setbacks?
6. What is the responsibility of the church to speak out against abortion, infanticide and genocide?
7. Evaluate the society you live in. Can you think of an instance where a person called wrong right? Can you think of an example where a person called right wrong? Have you ever tried to justify that which you know is unjustifiable behavior? Why did you do this?
8. What do you fantasize about? Be specific.
9. Have you had an opportunity to extract revenge on someone who has hurt you? Did you take advantage of the opportunity? If so, what did you do? If not, why not?
10. How do you redeem the time? Be specific. Write down a typical weekly schedule. Include how many hours are spent in reading, studying, prayer, eating, sleeping etc.

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 24: 11 If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; 12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works?

Division Four
The Second Collection of Solomon
Proverbs 25:1-29:21

PROVERBS 25

1 These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out [collected (orally or by writing)].

25:1. Solomon was the last son born to King David. His mother was Bathsheba. Solomon reigned over Israel from 1015-975 BC. During his lifetime Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs and wrote one thousand and five songs (1 Kings 4:32; see Psalm 127). Three centuries later, Hezekiah became the twelfth king of Judah. He was the son of the apostate Ahaz and Abi (or Abijah) and ascended the throne at the age of 25, BC 726. After a reign of twenty nine years he died in 697 BC at the age of 56. It was during Hezekiah's reign that some of the proverbs of Solomon were rescued from oblivion.

2 It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

25:2. To conceal a thing. *Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

In many moral matters God is pleased to conceal a particular sin in order to bring a soul to repentance. If an issue can be handled in private then it should be done so. In the name of church discipline and purity, the temptation comes to expose a matter publically thereby bringing unnecessary shame and sorrow to others. *Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?*

“A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord,
A wonderful Savior to me;
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,
Where rivers of pleasure I see.”

Fanny Crosby

In contrast, Kings hold a responsibility to search out a matter in order to render a proper judgment. Wise princes, when they search into a matter, have reaches which one would not think of, as Solomon, when he called for a sword to divide the living child with, designing thereby to discover the true mother (Matthew Henry).

3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable.

25:3.

Three Unsearchable Areas

- Heaven. Space is infinite and holds many mysteries. There are worlds beyond this one that have yet to be explored. God has created a majestic universe. *Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*
- Earth. The more earth is explored, on land and sea and within the depths of the earth, great and marvelous discoveries are made. Earth is so complex with its various life forms and ecosystems it remains a great mystery. *Psalms 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*
- The heart of a King. Princes have their state secrets, designs which are kept private, and reasons of state, which private persons are not competent judges of, and therefore ought not to pry into (Matthew Henry).

4 Take away the dross [waste] from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.

5 Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.

25:4. Sin has many names in Scripture. Here, it is compared to dross in silver. Take away the dross or corrupt elements in silver and a lovely vessel is produced. When evil is removed from the heart of a king through gospel repentance and obedience then a nation can be established in righteousness. During the Constitution Convention in 1787, Benjamin Franklin said; “The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, “That God Governs in the Affairs of Men.” And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that ‘except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.’ I firmly believe this; and I also believe, that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builder’s of Babel.”

6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men:

7 For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

25:6-7. Worldly wisdom encourages individuals to promote themselves. Many self help books are written to instruct people in this endeavor. In contrast, the gospel counsels humility. It is the will of the Lord (Luke 14:7-11). The world renowned missionary to China, Hudson Taylor was scheduled to speak at a Large Presbyterian church in Melbourne, Australia. The moderator of the service introduced the missionary in eloquent and glowing terms. He told the large congregation all that Taylor had accomplished in China, and then presented him as "our illustrious guest." Taylor stood quietly for a moment, and then opened his message by saying, "Dear friends, I am the little servant of an illustrious Master."

William Temple said, "Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself one way or the other at all" (Christ in His Church).

8 Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover [reveal] not a secret to another:

10 Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.

25:8-10. There is a very dark side to human nature which includes a love for a fight. Violence attracts. King Josiah was drawn to battle as he hastily and needlessly went forth to war with the king of Egypt. *2 Chronicles 35:20 After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. 21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. 23 And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. 24 His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.*

A major battle ground is the home. A study released in 1980 reported that of all married couples, 30% have at least one violent episode during their marriage. Each year some 1.8 million wives are severely attacked by their husbands, and almost the same number of husbands are assaulted by their wives. In 1975 it was estimated that nearly 2 million individuals faced a mate wielding a gun or knife. Nearly 2 million children a year (almost 4% of all children between the ages of 3 and 17) are victims of parental abuse and neglect. More than 2,000 die as a result. According to national averages, every household in America is the scene of family violence at least once a year (Murray Straus and Richard Gelles, *Behind Closed Doors, Violence in the American Family*).

As there is violence in the home so there is hostility between neighbors. Three points of counsel are offered by Solomon to minimize aggression in this area. First, do not overreact. Do not move too quickly to enter into a neighborly controversy. Consider a plan of action and possible solutions. Second, talk to the neighbor personally and try to reconcile differences. Third, do not involve others in the controversy.

11 A word fitly [properly] spoken is like apples of gold [color] in pictures [on platters] of silver.

12 As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reproof upon an obedient ear.

25:11. The American humorist Will Rogers was a severe critic of professional diplomats. “A Diplomat is a man that tells you what he don’t believe himself, and the man that he is telling it to don’t believe it any more than he does.” While that is often the case in politics, Christians should be diplomatic in their private lives and they should always tell the truth. When properly understood, diplomacy is the art of resolving differences of opinion without physical conflict or hostility. The Christian should enhance the art of diplomacy by not using sarcasm, insulting terminology, profane language or an accusatory tone and by agreeing as much as possible with the opponents position (Matthew 5:25). In many different and difficult situations, diplomacy can be useful as when Ruth responded to Naomi (Ruth 2:8-13) or the disciples reported to counsel in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

25:13. In the ancient world in Palestine, snow was used to keep items cool and refresh the soul in warm weather. In like manner, when a faithful messenger brings a good report, he refreshes the soul. Jahaziel encouraged many hearts with his message. 2 *Chronicles 20:14 Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation; 15 And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. 16 To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.* Psalm 47 was sung on the battlefield after the victory (2 Chronicles 20:26) and Psalm 48 was subsequently sung in the temple (2 Chronicles 20:28).

14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

25:14. In an agricultural region, rain clouds are very important for crop survival. When rain clouds pass by without leaving moisture, a drought is sure to follow. Spiritually, a person who presents himself as having gifts but possesses no evangelical grace is a severe disappointment and will leave behind unnourished souls.

15 By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

25:15. A spirit of obstinacy and anger can be as strong as a bone. Kindness and forbearance are useful instruments in softening the heart of someone. “Kindness makes a person attractive. If you would win the world, melt it, do not hammer it” (Alexander Maclaren).

16 Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

25:16. It is wrong to over indulge on anything. Moderation is a virtue. *Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* If honey is found, enjoy it. Many of the best gifts in life are free, but do not seek for natural pleasures too hard. There is danger for the soul in the pursuit of natural sensual pleasures (note 1 Timothy 5:13).

17 Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.

25:17. Hospitality is a wonderful spiritual gift of divine grace (Romans 12:3), but it should not be abused by those who receive it. "Treat your guest as a guest for two days; on the third day, give him a hoe" (Swahili proverb). Another saying notes, "Familiarity breeds contempt."

18 A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.

25:18.

Three Characteristics of a False Witness

- A false witness is like a maul. A maul refers to a battleaxe or a hammer. It was often used as an instrument of war.
- A false witness is like a sword.
- A false witness is like a sharp arrow.

Hateful and cruel words are like instruments of war. Words can wound and hurt and bring the destruction of peace of mind while disrupting friendships and fellowship. Job, David, Daniel and all the prophets and apostles were the victims of the tongue of the slanderer as was the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes God allows the tongue of the slanderer to lash out for the purpose of testing how His children will respond. There are some spiritual graces that can only be manifested in the presence of evil. To be able to forgive someone means someone has to hurt you. To love the unlovely, to extend mercy and grace means that others are in need of these divine attributes reflected in the soul of the saint.

19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

25:19. A broken tooth or a foot out of joint causes excruciating pain. In like manner pain is caused by a misplaced confidence in a person in the hour of need. The apostle Paul was hurt by the desertion of John Mark during a missionary tour reflected in part by his anger towards the young man on a later occasion (See Acts 13:13; 15: 37-38).

20 As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre (soda, natron), so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.

25:20. For someone to sing a lighthearted or frivolous song to someone in a state of suffering and sorrow is like a person who takes away a garment in cold weather or the foaming of a chemical substance. A bad situation is made worse. Those who are grief stricken prefer loving sympathy and not meaningless attempts at being cheered up. See Judah by the Rivers of Babylon. *Psalms 137:1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. 3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. 4 How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*

21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

25:21-22. Using the Septuagint, the third to first century Greek translation of the Old Testament Scripture, the apostle Paul quotes this proverb in Romans 12:21. The guiding concept is that vengeance is not to be part of the Christian's thought process. Georges Clemenceau was twice the prime minister of France, and played a major role in the treaties that concluded WWI. At the Versailles conference, Clemenceau was on his way to a meeting with President Woodrow Wilson's adviser when he was shot at by a young anarchist named Emile Cottin. As Clemenceau's car sped away Cottin fired at least six more shots, one of which struck Clemenceau near his heart. Cottin was captured and the death penalty demanded, but Clemenceau asked for leniency, recommending eight years in prison "with intensive training in a shooting gallery" (*Today in the Word*). Such grace by Clemenceau with his gentle humor shows a good heart without vengeance. Those who have been shown grace by God must show grace to those who wrong them as Stephen did in the hour of his death by stoning (Acts 7:60).

23 The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.

25:23. There is a righteous anger in which there is no sin (Ephesians 4:26). One place where it is proper to display a righteous anger is when the backbiter, the slanderer, the assassination of another person's character comes to speak. Such a person should be driven away with an angry countenance as the north wind drives away rain with mighty force. No place should be given to the Rechab's and Baanah's of this world. *2 Samuel 4:5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon. 6 And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 7 For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night. 8 And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed. 9 And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, 10 When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings: 11 How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? Shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? 12 And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.*

24 It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.

25:24. Domestic tranquility makes for a loving household. Unfortunately, some women, by temperament or choice like to brawl or complain (see Proverbs 21:9). If a man would like to reduce probable causes for a brawling woman, he might consider meeting some basic needs. The American pastor Chuck Swindoll lists the following: affection, a conversation, honesty and openness, financial support, and family commitment (study also Ephesians 5:22-24).

25 As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

25:25. For the person that is sick and tired of being sick and tired of sin as Franklin Graham was just prior to his conversion (Rebel with a Cause, 1997), the gospel is the best news in the world for it proclaims that Jesus saves! The woman of Samaria came to understand this good news and ran to tell others, Jesus saves! Jesus saves! (John 4:6-29).

We have heard the joyful sound:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
Spread the tidings all around:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Bear the news to every land,
climb the mountains, cross the waves;
Onward! 'tis our Lord's command;
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Waft it on the rolling tide:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Tell to sinners far and wide:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Sing, you islands of the sea;
echo back, you ocean caves;
Earth shall keep her jubilee:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Sing above the battle strife:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

By His death and endless life
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Shout it brightly through the gloom,
when the heart for mercy craves;
Sing in triumph o'er the tomb:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Give the winds a mighty voice:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Let the nations now rejoice:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
Shout salvation full and free;
highest hills and deepest caves;
This our song of victory:
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

Priscilla J. Owens, 1882

26 A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain,
and a corrupt spring.

25:26. If a person known for righteousness gives in to wickedness, they become a terrible disappointment to others, much like the thirsty traveler is disappointed to discover a fountain or spring has become polluted.

There is another understanding of this passage and that is how the wicked are merciless when they have an opportunity to hurt a righteous man who falls into their hands. *Jeremiah 41:1 Now it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah [God is my greatness] the son of Ahikam to Mizpah [and the good governor in Judah appointed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC]; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah. 2 Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. 3 Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, even with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, and the men of war.*

27 It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

25:27. The prohibition against sensual overindulgence and self promotion is returned to by Solomon. Worldly wisdom insists on individuals pampering themselves and engaging in self praise. Today, in countless ways, a whole generation is being taught that self praise enhances self confidence and produces many positive benefits. The Bible says self glory is no glory. While just a young man contemplating an important personal decision, the words of the Lord to Baruch moved Charles Haddon Spurgeon in a new direction that revolutionized his life and his ministry. “And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not: (Jeremiah 45:5).

28 He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

25:28. In the ancient world a city that had no defense and was without walls was open to attack and conquest. A person who cannot control the passions of his own heart will be easily attacked and conquered by the world, the flesh and the devil. In grace and in order not to leave any Christian defenseless, God has provided believers with the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, a sure word of prophecy (2 Peter 1:19) and full body spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:11-18). The apostle Paul made a personal commitment to Christ to keep his body under control.

- *1 Corinthians 9:26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

- *Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 25

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 25

1. How many proverbs did Solomon speak and how many songs did he write?

Answer.

During his lifetime Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs and wrote one thousand and five songs (1 Kings 4:32).

2. List three unsearchable areas.

Answer.

- Heaven. Space is infinite and holds many mysteries. There are worlds beyond this one that have yet to be explored. God has created a majestic universe. *Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*
- Earth. The more earth is explored, on land and sea and within the depths of the earth, great and marvelous discoveries are made. Earth is so complex with its various life forms and ecosystems it remains a great mystery. *Psalms 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*
- The heart of a King. Princes have their state secrets, designs which are kept private, and reasons of state, which private persons are not competent judges of, and therefore ought not to pry into (Matthew Henry).

3. Sin has many names in Scripture. In Proverbs 25:5 it is compared to dross in silver. Explain what that means.

Answer.

In Proverbs 25:4 sin is compared to dross in silver. Take away the dross or corrupt elements in silver and a lovely vessel is produced. When evil is removed from the heart of a king through gospel repentance and obedience then a nation can be established in righteousness.

4. List three characteristics of a false witness.

Answer.

- A false witness is like a maul. A maul refers to a battleaxe or a hammer. It was often used as an instrument of war.
- A false witness is like a sword.
- A false witness is like a sharp arrow.

5. What four provisions has God provided to believers so that no Christian is left defenseless?

Answer.

God has provided believers with the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, a sure word of prophecy (2 Peter 1:19) and full body spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:11-18).

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you know of a situation where the transgression of a person was exposed to the public when the matter could have been handled in private? Please share.
2. How do you treat those who have hurt you in life? Do you fantasize how you can hurt them? Do you want revenge? Have you ever taken steps to get even with someone?
3. Are you a person given to boasting and self promotion? How can a Christian advance in life on the job and or in business without violating any Scriptural principles in this area?
4. What is your view of self esteem theology?
5. Are you able to control your passions?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 25:28 He that hath no rule [control] over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

PROVERBS 26

The Fool

1 As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly [proper] for a fool.

26:1. a fool. Fools are those who make a mockery of sin, rejoice in iniquity, and refuse to listen to wise counsel.

26:1. Snow is out of place in summer and rain is out of place during the harvest season. In like manner, there is no honor that belongs to someone who acts the part of a fool. To bestow honor would be out of place. Nebuchadnezzar acted like an animal before he was restored to his right mind and repented (Daniel 4:33-37). The honor of his office did not match the indignity of his behavior.

2 As the bird [sparrow] by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse [uttered by a fool], causeless shall not come.

26:2. Many people are brought up to obey and accept responsibility when something goes wrong. As a child this is proper but as an adult a spirit of timidity can be used against a sensitive soul by an unscrupulous person who curses them without just cause. For those who are not well informed or who might accept false guilt and dread negative consequences, this verse offers comfort. As a sparrow and a swallow fly naturally and freely through the air unharmed, so no curse shall remain on the person who has been wrongfully anathematized by a foolish person.

3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass [donkey], and a rod for the fool's back.

26:3.

Three Just Instruments

- A whip for a horse.
- A bridle for a donkey.
- A rod to whip a foolish person.

In the western world, a bridle would probably be used on a horse and a whip would be used on a donkey. But in the Middle East, horses are not used as much and are found to be stubborn. The ass, however, is more active as an animal there and needs to be tamed with a bit and bridle. The fool is capable of acting like a horse, in need of a whipping, or like a donkey, in need of restraint. Some form of a “rod” becomes a fitting instrument of correction. *Psalms 32:9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*

4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

26:4-5.

Sometimes it is wise not to respond to a foolish person lest those who are listening become unable to distinguish who is right and who is wrong in a matter. The men who worked with the twelfth king of Judah, Hezekiah (reigned 726-697), obeyed this counsel when Rabshakeh blasphemed them. Rabshakeh was one of the officers of the king of Assyria sent to fight against Jerusalem *2 Kings 18:36 But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.*

Sometimes it is wise to respond to a foolish person lest the individual become confirmed in error and his own conceit and use misplaced silence to hurt others. When Nehemiah answered Sanballat, he exercised the provision of Proverbs 26:5. *Nehemiah 6:8 Then I [Nehemiah] sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.*

Certainly, the wise person will avoid using profanity, sarcasm, scoffing, and a condescending attitude when addressing a fool.

6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage [poison].

26:6. Those who deliver important message must be able to be trusted. A fool cannot be trusted with any important matter. To trust a foolish person is like cutting off one's own feet or like drinking poison. Both are self destructive acts. Jonah played the part of a fool until the Lord brought him to repentance (Jonah 1).

7 The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable [wise saying] in the mouth of fools.

26:7. The legs of a lame person move in a halting manner. Wisdom in the mouth of a fool is expressed with uncertainty and without conviction or understanding. There is a disconnect between the rhetoric and the reality of a fool.

8 As he that bindeth a stone in a sling [stone-heap], so is he that giveth honour to a fool.

26:8. Honor should not be bestowed upon a fool. To do so would be like casting a precious stone into a stone-heap or putting a mud brick on top of a marble column. Both are out of place. No one would bind a stone to a slingshot and then try to throw it, so no one should give honor to a fool.

9 As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

26:9. A thorn piercing into the hand of a careless drunkard is painful and so is wisdom in the mouth of a fool. It is hard to listen to such a person speak.

10 The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.

26:10. God pays just wages to the fool. The wages of sin is death. *Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* See the fate of Herod Agrippa I. *Acts 12:20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. 21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.*

11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

26:11. When a dog returns to his own vomit to consume it, the action is vile and disgusting. When a foolish person returns to self destructive and other destructive behavior, it is just as disgusting. Study 2 Peter 2:20-22; Philippians 3:2 and Isaiah 56:10-12.

The Conceited Man

12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit [eyes]? There is more hope of a fool than of him.

26:12. Some people hold too high of an opinion of themselves, and it shows. A story is told about Lady Nancy Astor (1879-1964), the first woman ever seated in the British House of Commons. Mrs. Astor encountered a lot of male antagonism – but proved herself capable of handling the hostility with some stylish humor. Once, at a formal dinner, Lady Astor said a little too loudly to a guest sitting next to her that she considered men to be more conceited than women. Noticing that she had been overheard around the table, she continued: "It's a pity that the most intelligent and learned men attach the least importance to the way they dress. Why, right at this table the most cultivated man is wearing the most clumsily knotted tie!" The words were scarcely out of her mouth before every man in the room discreetly reached up to adjust his tie (*Today in the Word*, May 9, 1992). There is more hope for a fool coming to understand his folly than there is for a pedantic egotist to change. The Christian is to be far different. *Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*

The Slothful Man

13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.

14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.

15 The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.

16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

26:13-16.

Characteristics of a Slothful Person

- The slothful person will make exaggerated excuses to avoid work Proverbs 26:13
- The slothful person will sleep late and often Proverbs 26:14
- The slothful person will not exert himself even on the basics of life Proverbs 26:15
- The slothful person will justify his decision not to engage in labor Proverbs 26:16

The slothful person has no driving purpose in life and that is perhaps the greatest tragedy of all. Study Joash, king of Israel, and Elisha the prophet in 2 Kings 13:14-19.

The Meddling Man

17 He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

26:17. Some people are far too ready to become involved in a controversial situation that does not directly relate to them. To do so is like taking a dog by the ears. The dog may not like what is being done and will try to bite and attack. There are unintended consequences for getting involved in an unnecessary hostile triangle. *1 Thessalonians 4:10 ...but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; 11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.* People resent it when others interfere in a matter not of their concern and will soon turn to attack them as Moses once discovered (Exodus 2:13-14).

The Deceptive Man

18 As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death,

19 So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?

26:18. A person who is mentally and emotionally defective will try to hurt others with harmful instruments or illicit tricks and then move on to murder itself. Such is the deceptive man, and then he will think it is all a big joke. The sons of Jacob demanded, as a condition of the proposed union between their sister Dinah and Shechem, the circumcision of the Shechemites.

The men unwisely assented; and on the third day, when the pain and fever resulting from the operation were at the highest, Simeon and Levi, attacked them unexpectedly, slew all the males, and plundered their city.

Age is not a factor in the ability to deceive others. In 1212 a French shepherd boy by the name of Steven claimed that Jesus had appeared to him disguised as a pilgrim. Supposedly, Jesus instructed him to take a letter to the king of France. This poor, misguided boy told everyone about what he thought he had encountered. Before long he had gathered a large following of more than thirty thousand children who accompanied him on his pilgrimage. As the church historian Philip Schaff records it, when asked where they were going, they replied, "We go to God, and seek for the holy cross beyond the sea." They reached Marseilles, but the waves did not part and let them go through dry-shod as they expected.

It was at Marseilles that tragedy occurred. The children met two men, Hugo Ferreus and William Porcus. The men claimed to be so impressed with the calling of the children that they offered to transport them across the Mediterranean in seven ships without charge. What the children didn't know was that the two men were slave traders. The children boarded the ships and the journey began, but instead of setting sail for the Holy Land they set course for North Africa, "where they were sold as slaves in the Muslim markets that did a large business in the buying and selling of human beings. Few if any returned. None ever reached the Holy Land." Two cunning men enjoyed enormous financial profits simply because they were willing to sacrifice the lives of thousands of children (Steve Farrar, *Family Survival in the American Jungle*).

The Contentious Man

20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

21 As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

26:20-21. There are people who love to gossip knowing the tales they bear will create strife and discord among others. Why then, is this done? Several reasons emerge to include a personal satisfaction of a sadistic nature, the ability to be in control of a situation, and the joy of knowing what is going on. Many church conflicts would be resolved if an officer's wife was not found in the midst of a matter. See 1 Timothy 3:10. *And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.* Fire needs wood to burn and conflict is fueled by the contentious person. Remove the fuel, in nature or in life, and the strife will cease.

Many years ago the Moody Church News carried a humorous story about a woman in a small town who was known for being a gossip. One day on vacation she visited the offices of The Chicago Daily News. She was wearing a white dress and inadvertently leaned against a wall where a freshly printed copy of the front page was hanging. It was a hot, humid day, and some of the print came off on the back of her white dress. Later, she walked down the street to meet her husband, who knew her problem well. She noticed that people walking behind her were snickering. When she reached the place where her husband was waiting, she asked him if there was anything on her back that shouldn't be there. As she turned around, he read the large black reversed letters: *Daily News*. Realizing the appropriateness of the words, he said, "No, dear, nothing's on your back that doesn't belong there (*Our Daily Bread*, June 23, 1994).

The Talebearer

22 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

26:22. The person who bears tales in order to sow discord among the brethren has committed one of the seven deadly sins of Proverbs 6:16-19. That person has also violated the Law of Moses. Leviticus 19:16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord. Unlike other transgressors, the talebearer speaks words that wound not only the heart but the soul. Sometimes, there is no recovering from the damage that can be inflicted by a talebearer. Raymond Donovan, was the first United States Cabinet member to be indicted while in office. Almost from the time of his confirmation as Secretary of Labor in 1981, Secretary Donovan was plagued by allegations that he had maintained close ties with organized crime leaders while he was a construction executive in New Jersey. A special prosecutor investigated him twice and concluded each time that there was "insufficient credible evidence" to indict Donovan for anything. Nonetheless, in 1984 Bronx District Attorney Mario Merola persuaded a grand jury to indict Donovan and the other defendants on charges of larceny and fraud in connection with a subway-tunnel deal. The next year, after a judge refused to dismiss the indictment, Donovan felt obliged to resign. Small wonder, then, that after his acquittal Donovan, rigid and pale, called out to Prosecutor Stephen Bookin, "Give me back my reputation!" It could not be done (*TIME Magazine*).

23 Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.

26:23. There are those who will profess love for someone and then turn and plot their destruction. They are like a broken piece of pottery that has been covered with a thin veneer of silver. Such a person appears to be a valued friend but in reality they are a worthless soul. Beautiful words can cover a corrupt heart.

The Hateful Man

24 He that hateth dissembleth [pretends ignorance] with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him;

25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations [many projects of mischief] in his heart.

26 Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.

27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.

26:24-27. Hatred in the heart is one of the most powerful and most destructive of all the negative emotions.

- Hatred will cause a person to pretend ignorance of the truth. Proverbs 26:24
- Hatred will make a person act in a deceitful manner. Proverbs 26:24
- Hatred will cause a person to lose all credibility. Proverbs 26:25
- Hatred will cause a person to become a master of disguises. Proverbs 26:25
- Hatred will one day be exposed bringing open shame. Proverbs 26:27
- Hatred will trip a person up on their own acts of revenge. Proverbs 26:28
- Hatred will cause a person to lie. Proverbs 26:28

King Saul was not only jealous of young David; he hated him with a passion and moved to hurt him in every way possible. The sad story is told in great detail beginning in 1 Samuel 16 and following.

Perhaps one of the worst cases of hatred on record was found in a will written in 1935 by a Mr. Donohoe. It said, "Unto my two daughters, Frances Marie and Denise Victoria, by reason of their unfilial attitude toward a doting father . . . I leave the sum of \$1.00 to each and a father's curse. May their lives be fraught with misery, unhappiness, and poignant sorrow. May their deaths be soon and of a lingering malignant and torturous nature." The last line of the will is the most vicious. It read, "May their souls rest in hell and suffer the torments of the condemned for eternity" (*Our Daily Bread*, February 18, 1994).

A very famous former newspaper advice columnist wrote, Hate is like acid. It can damage the vessel in which it is stored as well as destroy the object on which it is poured (Ann Landers, *Bits & Pieces*, September 17, 1992).

28 A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

"It is common for men to hate those whom they have injured" said the Roman named Tacitus. Conscious of doing wrong to someone but determined not to confess that sin will lead to hatred.

“a flattering mouth worketh ruin”, said Solomon. Haman flattered Ahasuerus who gave him permission to vent his hatred against the Jews. But in the end, his flattery brought his own destruction and he was hanged on the gallows he had made for Mordecai (read Esther).

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 26

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 26

1. Provide four characteristics of a slothful person.

Answer.

- The slothful person will make exaggerated excuses to avoid work Proverbs 26:13
- The slothful person will sleep late and often Proverbs 26:14
- The slothful person will not exert himself even on the basics of life Proverbs 26:15
- The slothful person will justify his decision not to engage in labor Proverbs 26:16

2. How is a meddling person like taking a dog by the ears?

Answer.

The dog may not like what is being done and will try to bite and attack. There are unintended consequences for getting involved in an unnecessary hostile triangle. People resent it when others interfere in a matter not of their concern and will soon turn to attack them.

3. Describe the deceptive man.

Answer.

A person who is mentally and emotionally unstable will try to hurt others with harmful instruments and move on to murder itself. Such is the deceptive man, and then he will think it all a big joke.

4. List three reasons why a church officer's wife might become involved in being a talebearer.

Answer.

- A personal satisfaction of a sadistic nature.
- The ability to be in control of a situation.
- The joy of knowing what is going on.

5. Make a list of the eight men detailed in Proverbs 26.

Answer.

- The Fool Proverbs 26:1-11
- The Conceited Man Proverbs 26:12
- The Slothful Man Proverbs 26:13-16
- The Meddling Man Proverbs 26:17

- The Deceptive Man Proverbs 26:18-19
- The Contentious Man Proverbs 26:20-21
- The Talebearer Proverbs 26:22-23
- The Hateful Man Proverbs 26:24-28

Personal Application and Reflection

Self Test for Determination of Being a Fool

1. I make a mockery of sin. True ____ False ____
2. I rejoice in iniquity. True ____ False ____
3. I refuse to listen to wise counsel. True ____ False ____
4. I belittle, condemn and anathematize others. True ____ False ____
5. I sometimes act like an animal: cruel and brutish. True ____ False ____
6. I have been known to use profanity when I speak to and of others. True ____ False ____
7. I am well known for my sarcasm. True ____ False ____
8. I express a condescending attitude toward some people. True ____ False ____
9. I cannot be trusted to accurately convey important information. True ____ False ____
10. I do not care if there is a difference between what I say and what I do. True ____ False ____
11. I engage time and again in the same self destructive behavior. True ____ False ____
12. I know I am superior to so many other people. True ____ False ____

Conclusion

How did you do on the self test?

- I am a foolish person. Yes ____ No ____

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 26:22 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

PROVERBS 27

1 Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

27:1. Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, the only thing we have is the present time which is to be redeemed according to gospel terms. A wise Spanish proverb says, “The road of by and by leads to the house of never.” The English say, “Procrastination is the thief of time.” The apostle James warns Christians not to take time for granted. *James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.*

A sense of immediate urgency is especially true in the matter of salvation. Consider the following.

- Every day lived without Christ is a day that rejects grace offered and that is unreasonable. *Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*
- Every day lived without Christ is a day without life. Jesus said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).*
- Every day lived without Christ and in delay compounds sin and will leave more scars of regret on the conscience.
- Every day lived without Christ makes the heart harder. The same sun which melts the butter hardens the clay and the same gospel which breaks the heart can harden it. *Hebrews 3:7-8 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*
- Every day lived without Christ is like playing spiritual Russian roulette for no person knows when they might step into a Christless eternity without hope. *2 Corinthians 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

27:2. In America, a large industry has been built around helping people exalt themselves. Even presidential candidates and war heroes have been exposed as inflating their resumes. It is sad. Self promotion and boasting of one's own accomplishments is not a Christian virtue. It is offensive to hear and leads to pettiness and a sense of entitlement. *Joshua 17:14 And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto? 15 And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.*

3 A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.

27:3. The wrath of a fool is excessive because the act of retaliation far exceeds any perceived slight or personal insult or injury. The fool will not listen to reason and will resent any effort to pacify him.

4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy [jealousy]?

27:4. The great evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) used to illustrate the deadly effects of jealousy. "There is a fable of an eagle", he said, "which could out fly another, and the other didn't like it. The latter saw a sportsman one day, and said to him: 'I wish you would bring down that eagle.' The sportsman replied that he would if he only had some feathers to put into the arrow. So the eagle pulled one out of his wing. The arrow was shot, but didn't quite reach the rival eagle; it was flying too high. The envious eagle pulled out more feathers, and kept pulling them out until he lost so many that he couldn't fly, and then the sportsman turned around and killed him. My friend, if you are jealous, the only man you can hurt is yourself." The brothers of Joseph would agree (Genesis 37).

5 Open rebuke [disagreement] is better than secret [hidden] love.

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful [false].

27:5-6. The person who truly loves will not hide concern for someone who is going astray. Barnabas had to rebuke Paul for a censorious attitude towards John Mark (Acts 15:35-39). Later, Paul had to rebuke the Galatians who were moving away from a pure gospel (Galatians 1 and 2).

7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

27:7. This verse teaches the value of being needy. A person whose appetite is fully satiated will not enjoy a delicious meal while the hungry person will value whatever he finds to consume. When the heart of a person is hungry for God then the Word of God is sweet and precious. When the soul of a person is satiated by the delectable delights of the world, the flesh and the devil, the Word of God becomes bitter (study Ezekiel 3:1-4 and Revelation 10:9-10).

8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.

27:8. Great personal sorrow and depression comes when a person overreaches. It is not good to want more than what God has allotted. It is not good to want to be somewhere other than the geographical and occupational place God has appointed. Finding the will of God and being content with it brings joy and peace. *1 Corinthians 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.* The bird that wanders from her nest is subject to danger. In like manner, the man who wanders from his divinely appointed place courts unhappiness and maybe even something worse (see Demas 2 Timothy 4:10).

9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

27:9. In a dry climate oil and perfume can be very refreshing. In a similar manner the heart can be refreshed by good counsel from a friend. David found such a friend in Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1ff).

10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.

27:10. Three commands are given.

- Do not forsake your own friend.
- Do not forsake the friend of your father.
- Do not go into the house of your brother in the day of trouble.

The first commandment is related to verse 9 and says that friendships are to be valued and protected. The second and third commands suggest that in troublesome times it is sometimes better to have a trusted friend than to turn to a relative. Time and distance have a tendency to erode strong emotional ties among family members. A faithful friend is more likely to be of greater help. "By friendship we mean the greatest love, the greatest usefulness, the most open communication, the noblest sufferings, the severest truth, the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of minds of which brave men and women are capable" (Jeremy Taylor, 1613-1667).

11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.

27:11. A son who acts wisely makes the heart of his father very happy. Moreover, such a father is also able to give a positive and proper answer to someone who would dare reproach him for the way he has reared the child. Spiritually, how the Christian lives is a reflection on our heavenly Father. The sin of David with Bathsheba gave the enemies of the Lord an opportunity to blaspheme. *2 Samuel 12:14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.*

12 A prudent man foreseeth the evil [harmful behavior], and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.

27:12. While many people can see where they have gone wrong in hindsight, foresight of evil is the mark of a prudent and wise person. It is not impossible to foresee evil if a person is a student of history and a student of the Bible for evil will rarely disguise itself. Evil is militant. Evil is bold. Evil has a definite agenda. Evil is predictable. Still, the simple person, the foolish person, the self absorbed person presses on and are without excuse. *Jeremiah 13:21 What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? For thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?*

13 Take his garment that is surety [guarantee] for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

27:13. Repetition is the way everyone learns. This is true in educational studies and it is true in Scriptural studies. This proverb is a repetition of Proverbs 20:16. The proverb speaks about those who are almost certain to be impoverished. First, those who become a surety or who will guarantee the debt of others will likely be in debt themselves for people are notorious for not paying what they owe. Second, those who give themselves to immorality tend to become impoverished for immorality drains creative energy, squanders financial resources, and puts a person's health at risk with high medical bills to follow. The counsel of this proverb is to avoid lending money to those who are obviously wasting it unless they can give a very good security. Likewise, a binding legal pledge must be demanded of those who are known to have loose moral habits.

14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.

27:14. Practical experiences indicates that when someone professes "love" for another person too quickly and pours out excessive praise too early, that person will prove to be fickle and faithless. The men of Israel praised Absalom quickly but were not loyal to him in the day of battle (2 Samuel 15:1-6).

15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious [argumentative] woman are alike.

16 Whosoever hideth [restrain] her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth [betrays] itself.

27:15-16. A contentious woman is, to say the very least, annoying. And, to make matters worse she cannot be hidden away and so becomes a source of social shame to the man who has married, her. Try as he will to hide her, he might as well try to hide the wind or the aroma of his right hand after it has been rubbed with oil. It cannot be done.

17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance [features] of his friend.

27:17. Friction can be used in a creative manner to make an instrument stronger. In like manner the friction of conflicting or opposing ideas can make an argument stronger.

18 Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.

27:18. There is an old expression in America about there being “too many chiefs and not enough Indians”. The concept is that people do not mind a place of authority but they do not like servitude. This proverb reminds the Christian that there is honor in service. Paul did not mind proclaiming he was a servant or better, a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.* Faithfulness in service is a virtue no matter how humble the position might be, such as attending to a fig tree in obscurity.

19 As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

27:19. In a clear pool of water a person can look down and see the reflection of his face. When a person looks at another human, he should be able to see the reflection of himself, a sinner in need of a Savior (study Romans 10:5-13). The behavior of another human should never be a surprise, no matter how badly that behavior might be for what is to be expected of sinners but sin? There is no room for self righteousness in the heart of the honest man, but there is need for redemption by grace through faith alone in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

20 Hell [sheol, the grave] and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

27:20.

Three Items Never Satisfied

- The grave.
- Destruction.
- The lustful eye.

The heart of the natural man craves more no matter how much it possesses. In answer to the question, "Where is happiness?" Clarence Macartney said, "It's not found in pleasure—Lord Byron lived such a life if anyone did. He wrote, "The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone." Happiness is not found in money—Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said, "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth." It's not found in position and fame—Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote, "Youth is a mistake, manhood a struggle, and old age a regret." It's not found in military glory—Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent because, he said, "There are no more worlds to conquer." Jesus said, "*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*" (John 10:10).

21 As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.

27:21. It is easier to pass the test of adversity and being poor than to pass the test of popularity and prosperity. As silver and gold must be refined and purified so the Christian's goodness has to be tested. One way God will test a soul is by how well praise and success are handled. Many people fail the prosperity test. The Lord blesses and the soul is lifted up with pride. Soon, a person believes they deserve God's blessing or worse, they can do anything they want. Gideon becomes an object lesson in life in this matter. The praise of others led him into idolatry. *Judges 8:22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. 23 And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you. 24 And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) 25 And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. 26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks. 27 And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.*

22 Though thou shouldest bray [violently strike] a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

27:22. There is a universal spiritual principle: what a man sows he reaps.

"Sow an act and you reap a habit.
Sow a habit and you reap a character.
Sow a character and you reap a destiny."

Charles Reade

There is a time when those who will not change, cannot change. The foolish person can be confirmed in foolishness. *Revelation 22:11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

27:23.

Parents, be diligent to know how your children are doing.
Teachers, be diligent to know how your students are fairing.
Employers, be diligent to know the welfare of those who work for you.
Pastors, be diligent to know the state of your flock. Jesus said to Peter, "*Feed my lambs.*" And Peter did (John 21:15).

24 For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?

27:24. It is one of God's great mercies that the "crown" does not endure forever lest madmen and dictators be confirmed forever in a position of godless political power. Wealth too is fleeting. Money is to be enjoyed but not worshipped. The riches that multitudes have today far exceed what previous generations have enjoyed as P. Brand realized in this sweet prayer.

Dear Lord,

I have been re-reading the record of the Rich Young Ruler and his obviously wrong choice. But it has set me thinking. No matter how much wealth he had, he could not ride in a car, have any surgery, turn on a light, buy penicillin, hear a pipe organ, watch TV, wash dishes in running water, type a letter, mow a lawn, fly in an airplane, sleep on an innerspring mattress, or talk on the phone,

If he was rich, then what am I?

(*Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, p. 61).

The Christian finds his greatest treasures in Christ and those we can be blessed with (Ephesians 3:16).

25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.

26 The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.

27 And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.

27:25-27. As always, there is a reward in God's economy for those who are good stewards of what has been entrusted to them much like the good herdsman is rewarded. The lambs provide clothing, the goats can be sold for profit, and there is food and milk to enjoy. Oh Christian, God will not be indebted to any person. Serve Him well. Be faithful. Love the Lord. Serve Him. Love His church. Your rewards will be all you need and more than you could have imagined. *Mark 10:29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 27

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 27

1. Provide four reasons why salvation should not be neglected.

Answer.

- Every day lived without Christ is a day that rejects grace offered and that is unreasonable.
- Every day lived without Christ is a day without life.
- Every day lived without Christ and in delay compounds sin and will leave more scars of regret on the conscience.
- Every day lived without Christ makes the heart harder.
- Every day lived without Christ is like playing spiritual Russian roulette for no person knows when they might step into a Christless eternity without hope.

2. What is one distinguishing mark of a prudent person?

Answer.

The ability to foresee evil is one distinguishing mark of a prudent man. *Proverbs 27:12 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.*

3. What are four characteristics of evil?

Answer.

- Evil is militant.
- Evil is bold.
- Evil has a definite agenda.
- Evil is predictable.

4. What is a universal principle according to Proverbs 27:22? What did Charles Reade say?

Answer.

There is a universal spiritual principle: what a man sows he reaps.

"Sow an act and you reap a habit.
Sow a habit and you reap a character.
Sow a character and you reap a destiny."

Charles Reade

5. List four groups of people who should take special care to know the state of those entrusted to their care.

Answer.

Parents should be diligent to know how their children are doing.
Teachers should be diligent to know how their students are fairing.
Employers should be diligent to know the welfare of those who work for them.
Pastors should be diligent to know the state of their flock.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Have you ever been the object of a “fool’s wrath” (Proverbs 27:3)?
2. Have you ever had someone express their “love” for you and praise you in an excessive manner? Did they remain faithful (Proverbs 27:14)?
3. How do you respond to those who challenge your beliefs and ideas? Are you receptive to challenge (Proverbs 27:17)?
4. Are you satisfied with being a keeper of the fig tree (Proverbs 27:18)?
5. What spiritual and or material rewards have you received in life as a result of your faith?

Hiding God’s Word in my Heart

Proverbs 27: 23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

PROVERBS 28

1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

28:1. Sin makes the saint's heart quake and the body to quiver without reason. Sin makes a person an emotional coward. Dark imaginations are substituted for reality. In contrast, righteousness emboldens the soul that knows it is living rightly and thinking correctly. There is holy boldness in virtue *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind* (2 Timothy 1:7). Righteousness strengthens the soul, dispels the darkness and roars in confidence. The devil also roars, but he does so as he stalks the soul he wants to destroy (1 Peter 5:8). It is far better to have the spirit of Elisha than to be a member of the army of Syria (2 Kings 7:6-7; 6: 8-17).

2 For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.

28:2. Time and again a nation will exalt a most vile and ruthless individual to the highest political office in the land. Usually, the people are responding to promises made by the candidate to give them public treasures and look after their needs from the cradle to the grave. It is interesting that the more a government takes upon itself the task of looking after the welfare of the people the less religious that nation becomes. There is a simple reason. No longer do the people have to look to heaven and pray to God the Father, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" They look to the state. But those in power cannot produce righteousness in a people for they themselves tend to become corrupted by the process and by the freedom to release the dark passions of the naturally depraved heart. After all, who will rebuke them now? Many years ago the historian and social commentator John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton (1834–1902), expressed a very astute opinion in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men." The true stabilizing force in a nation is the person of spiritual understanding and knowledge.

3 A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

28:3. The sudden elevation of a poor man to power can be very dangerous. Some will have no pity or compassion. Like a rain that sweeps away not only the crop but the seed and the soil, the oppressive poor man placed in power will sweep away every visage of human kindness to protect and promote his own self interests. Such is the nature of fallen man.

4 They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.

28:4. In the end, either the Moral Law of God will be praised, protected and defended or it will be violated and the wicked will be honored and praised. It is a common spectacle to see those who believe in abortion honor advocates of Pro Choice. Actors who promote homosexuality are given academy awards. Legislators who allow civil unions between same sex partners are financially funded and win re-election. Those who forsake the Moral Law of God will praise the wicked.

5 Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.

28:5. Individuals who engage in evil or injurious behavior are emotionally and intellectually blind to true justice. Following World War II some of the top Nazi leaders were put on trial including Hermann Goering (1893-1945). Before a world wide audience the former Luftwaffe leader (German Air Force) gave a vigorous defense of his ideology which brought death to millions of people in death camps. He did not understand justice. In contrast those who seek the mind of the LORD, those who study Bible doctrine can judge righteous judgment (John 7:24). They understand true truth.

6 Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

28:6. It is good to be rich, it is far better to be righteous. *Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Study the story of Dives and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31.

7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous [gluttonous] men shameth his father.

28:7. From a child Timothy was taught the Law and so he was taught those Scriptures which were able to make him wise unto salvation. A son who keeps the Law of God is wise. In contrast, a child that is a companion of lawless, self indulgent individuals is a shame to the parents.

“Father, hear us, we are praying.
Hear the words our hearts are saying.
We are praying for our children.

Keep them from the powers of evil,
From the secret, hidden peril.
Father, hear us for our children.

From the worldling's hollow gladness,
From the sting of faithless sadness,
Father, Father, keep our children.

Through life's troubled waters steer them.
Through life's bitter battles cheer them.
Father, Father, be thou near them.

And wherever they may bide,
Lead them home at eventide."

Amy Carmichael
1867-1951

8 He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.

28:8. Because God hates extortion and covetousness He will from time to time take ill-gotten gains and leave them to those who have compassion on the poor. *James 5:1 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. 4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. 6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.*

9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

28:9. There are many reason for unanswered prayers. Failure to listen and obey the Moral Law of God is one. *Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:* In the novel by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the hero endures all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp. One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner notices him and says with ridicule, "Prayers won't help you get out of here any faster." Opening his eyes, Ivan answers, "I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God" (*Our Daily Bread*, December 29, 1993). Notice Ezekiel 20:1-3. God will turn away His ear from those who turn away from His Law. Study Ezekiel 20:1-3.

10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

28:10. It is bad enough when a person sins, but evil is compounded when a person leads another individual to go astray and commit destructive behavior. A godly example, or a leader into sin, that is the choice an individual must make. One Sunday morning in 1865, a black man entered a fashionable church in Richmond, Virginia. When Communion was served, he walked down the aisle and knelt at the altar. A rustle of resentment swept the congregation. How dare he! After all, believers in that church used the common cup. Suddenly a distinguished layman stood up, stepped forward to the altar, and knelt beside the black man. With Robert E. Lee setting the example, the rest of the congregation soon followed his lead (*Today in the Word*, September, 1991). Jesus spoke on the importance of being a good example. *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea* (*Matthew 18:6*). Balaam led others to sin to his everlasting shame (*Numbers 31:16*; *Revelation 2:4*).

11 The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

28:11. Financial prosperity brings many temptations as well as potential good. Those who become rich sometimes become prideful and conceited. Money can produce a false sense of security and independence. But spiritual understanding through the consistent intake of Bible doctrine will search out sin and stand in judgment upon it, in self or in others. What a blessed thought, the poor in this world can be rich in faith. *1 Corinthians 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:*

12 When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.

28:12. When a good person rises to political office or to any position of leadership, there is great joy and a reflective glory. However, when an evil person comes to power, there is good reason to hide in fear and have anxious thoughts. The terrifying reign of king Saul stands in stark contrast to the Golden Years of Hebrew History under king David and king Solomon. Let the Christian continue to pray to “*our Father which art in heaven, hallow be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*” (*Matthew 6:9*).

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

28:13. God's grace will cover sin but never cover them up. The gospel conditions for having sin forgiven is twofold. First, there must be an honest confession by specifically naming the transgression as per 1 John 1:9. Second, evil must be forsaken. The woman brought to Jesus by the self righteous Pharisees was told her sin was forgiven but she should go and sin no more (John 8:51). Christ died to release His people from the pollution and power of sin as a reigning principle. In time the Holy Spirit will bring conviction so that "darling sins" are eventually forsaken. The Lord loves the church and died for it *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word (Ephesians 5:26)*.

14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

28:14. There is a type of fear which brings happiness, life and wisdom. It is the fear of the Lord. *Psalm 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.* The psalmist was willing to teach this fear to others. *Psalm 34:11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* In The Chronicles of Narnia, an allegory by C.S. Lewis, the author has two girls, Susan and Lucy, getting ready to meet Aslan the lion, who represents Christ. Two talking animals, Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, prepare the children for the encounter. "Ooh," said Susan, "I thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion." "That you will, dearie." said Mrs. Beaver. "And make no mistake, if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knee's knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly." "Then isn't he safe?" said Lucy. "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the king, I tell you!" (*Our Daily Bread*, February 17, 1994). If there is no fear of God, there will be no fear of men or magistrates and the soul will be certain to fall into trouble.

15 As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

28:15. Many dictators rise to power on the back of a popular vote but once in power they oppress the poor. In so doing they are nothing better than a beast such as a lion or bear. Political "animals" are ready to devour good citizens and hard working people through excessive taxation and foolish fiscal and military policies.

16 The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

28:16. People are always looking for a way to extend life through diet, drugs, exercise or medical technology. The proverb offers one way to prolong life, do not be coveting what others have.

17 A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit [grave]; let no man stay [support] him.

28:17. Under the Law there were six cities of refuge where a person could flee as a safe haven: Kadesh, in Naphtali; Shechem, in Mt. Ephraim; Hebron, in Judah (these were W of Jordan); Golan, in Bashan; Ramoth in Gilead, in Gad; and Bezer, in Reuben (E of Jordan). See Numbers 35. What is referred to here is a person who has spilled innocent blood and felt guilty about it and did not want to face an avenger. Such a person would “flee to the pit” or the grave by committing suicide. Judas Iscariot offers one such example (Acts 1:16-20).

18 Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse [crooked] in his ways shall fall at once.

28:18. In the salvation of the soul, good works do not save. *Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;* However, in the area of sanctification a soul is saved from failure and sin, from guilt and remorse through righteous living. *Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

19 He that tilleth [plows] his land shall have [be satisfied with] plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have [be filled with] poverty enough.

28:19-20. There are two general classes of people in the world: those who work hard and those who do not. The first class will be satisfied with the fruits of labor while the second class will descend into want. Spiritually, there are also two classes of people: those who are saved and those who are lost. Those who are saved will enjoy spiritual riches as they give themselves to Christ and His Word. Those who are lost will know poverty of soul in time and in eternity.

20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

28:20. Danger awaits those who desire to be rich quickly. *1 Timothy 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* The American tycoon John D. Rockefeller had three simple rules for anyone who wants to become rich: First, go to work early. Second, stay at work late. Third, find oil. While this was said with humor the concept is valid.

Faithfulness in labor will eventually produce a blessing. In spiritual matters the same principle applies. Faithfulness in laboring in the Word will produce a bountiful blessing. “*Lord, incline my heart to righteousness and not to covetousness*” (*Psalm 119:36*).

21 To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress.

28:21. One of many Christian virtues is to serve God and not man. *Ephesians 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Colossians 3:22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.* If a Christian seeks merely to please men and not God, the temptation will come to hurt someone over an inconsequential matter, such as a piece of bread.

Full time Christian workers are subject to this temptation. A rich or popular person in the congregation will try to control the pastor or the assembly. If the shepherd is not careful, he will let such a person rule. Why? Perhaps he does not want to jeopardize his salary. Perhaps he does not want to stir up controversy. Perhaps he is afraid.

Nevertheless, God’s true servants are to stop being afraid of men. With Ezekiel, anyone and everyone who hurt’s God’s people must be challenged, and that includes faithless men-pleasing prophets. *Ezekiel 13:17 Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them, 18 And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you? 19 And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?*

22 He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye [covetous eye], and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

28:22. The phrase, “evil eye” is used two other times in Scripture. *Proverbs 23:6 Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: Mark 7:22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:* In popular usage an “evil eye” refers to a look or stare believed to cause injury or misfortune to others. The “evil eye” is the presumed power to cause injury or misfortune to others by magic or supernatural means. However, in biblical usage the term here refers to a covetous eye, a lusting for wealth in an inappropriate way. By over reaching for wealth, individuals will find poverty instead.

Bernard Madoff (b. 1938) will go down in American history as the man who was able to steal more than sixty five billion dollars from individuals through investment fraud. On March 12, 2009, Madoff pled guilty to an eleven count criminal complaint, admitting to defrauding thousands of investors. He will spend the rest of his life in prison. He never considered that poverty would come upon him.

23 He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

28:23. The person who flatters for self serving purposes does not do justice or service to someone who needs to be rebuked. The wise man will appreciate correction. Peter was still able to call Paul “our beloved brother” (2 Peter 3:15) even though Paul had to rebuke Peter on an act of legalism (Galatians 2:11-16).

24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.

28:24.

Under the Law a stubborn and disobedient child could be stoned. *Deuteronomy 21:18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: 19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; 20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. 21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.*

Under the reign of grace, a rebellious child is not to be stoned but their life can still be cut short through divine discipline. The apostle Paul teaches this truth in Ephesians 6:1ff. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.* There are many ways a child can literally rob his father or mother and be encouraged to do so by other siblings. Both are companions of the destroyer, a reference to the criminal who destroys what belongs to others.

Some of the Pharisees were found robbing their fathers and their mothers of filial help by appealing to the Corban Law. *Matthew 15:3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.*

Special note. The Corban (offering) is a reference to a holy gift devoted to God (Exodus 28:38). The Pharisees found a way to use the Law in a self serving manner to avoid their paternal obligation. For example, the Pharisees taught that "if a man says to his father or his mother, anything of mine you might have been helped by is Corban [i.e., devoted (to God)]" (Mark 7:11), he thereby consecrated all to God and was relieved from using it for his parents. Jesus declared this legal and socially acceptable practice was contradictory of the command that taught children to honor their parents.

25 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife [fighting]: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.

28:25. One sign of excessive personal pride is the willingness to argue with anyone and everyone that disagrees with a given position or decision. Such a spirit is not becoming in a saint. The Christian who puts their trust in the LORD shall be established. *Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.*

26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

28:26. A humorous but wise legal proverb says, "*He that represents himself in a court of law has a fool for a client.*" It is foolish to trust in one's own wisdom on important matters in life without consulting the Word of God, Christian counsel, or the advice of family and friends. The person who walks wisely is the person who learns from others and pursues righteousness. Only then can the soul be delivered from heartache and sorrow.

27 He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

28:27. Compassion marked the ministry of Christ and it should be a distinctive mark of every Christian. But, "let us not underestimate how hard it is to be compassionate. Compassion is hard because it requires the inner disposition to go with others to the place where they are weak, vulnerable, lonely, and broken. But this is not our spontaneous response to suffering. What we desire most is to do away with suffering by fleeing from it or finding a quick cure for it" (Henri J. M. Nouwen). The rich young ruler came close to Christ but then turned away because he would not give to the poor and follow the Lord (Luke 18:18-27).

28 When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.

28:28. The list is long of wicked men who caused others to hide in fear. In modern history the following names come to mind: Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Mao Se Tung, Pol Pot, and Saddam Hussein. When they perished, millions rejoiced, and the righteous increased. The righteous increase with the death of the wicked because evil produces evil. Destroy the source of evil, the wicked ruler, and righteousness cannot but help to increase. Study what happened when Jonathan overthrew the wicked (1 Samuel 13:6; 14; 22).

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 28

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 28

1. How does sin affect the soul (Proverbs 28:1)?

Answer.

Sin makes the saint's heart quake and the body to quiver without reason. Sin makes a person an emotional coward. Dark imaginations are substituted for reality.

2. How can life be extended according to Proverbs 28:16?

Answer.

One way to prolong life is by not coveting what others have.

3. Define the two general classes of people in the secular and sacred world (Proverbs 28:19-20).

Answer.

There are two general classes of people in the world: those who work hard and those who do not. The first class will be satisfied with the fruits of labor while the second class will descend into want. Spiritually, there are also two classes of people: those who are saved and those who are lost. Those who are saved will enjoy spiritual riches as they give themselves to Christ and His Word. Those who are lost will know poverty of soul in time and in eternity.

4. Explain the Corban Law.

Answer.

The Corban (offering) is a reference to a holy gift devoted to God (Exodus 28:38). The Pharisees found a way to use the Law in a self serving manner to avoid their paternal obligation. For example, the Pharisees taught that "if a man says to his father or his mother, anything of mine you might have been helped by is Corban [i.e., devoted (to God)]" (Mark 7:11), he thereby consecrated all to God and was relieved from using it for his parents.

5. How do the righteous increase with the death of the wicked?

Answer.

The righteous increase with the death of the wicked because evil produces evil. Destroy the source of evil, the wicked ruler, and righteousness cannot but help to increase.

Personal Application and Reflection

Reflect once more on Proverbs 28:14 and then study the following passages. Write out a spiritual truth based on each text.

The Fear of God

1. Spiritual Truth.

- *Genesis 20:11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.*

2. Spiritual Truth.

- *2 Samuel 23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.*

3. Spiritual Truth.

- *2 Chronicles 20:29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel.*

4. Spiritual Truth.

- *Nehemiah 5:15 But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.*

5. Spiritual Truth.

- *2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

6. Spiritual Truth.

- *Ephesians 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

7. Study Proverbs 28:17 which says, *A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.* Should a person who is feeling guilty over spilt blood be supported in any way? Should such a person be allowed to commit suicide if that is their intention?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 28:1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Proverbs 28: 6 Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Proverbs 28:27 He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 28:8.

Doctrine of Usury

1. The term “usury” generally refers to interest of any kind upon money.
2. The Law did not allow the charging of interest upon money loaned from one Hebrew to the next.
 - *Exodus 22:25 If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.*
3. No Israelite was to profit in any way by taking advantage of the need of a fellow brother.
 - *Leviticus 25:36 Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. 37 Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.*
 - *Deuteronomy 23:19 Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:*
4. Interest could be charged on foreigners.
 - *Deuteronomy 23:20 Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.*

5. The Lord God promised to bless the Israelites that honored the financial principles of the Law.

6. During the Babylonian Captivity some Jews began to violate the Law and charged their brothers interest. Nehemiah rebuked the nobles and the rulers who were doing this following the captivity.

- *Nehemiah 5:7 Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them.*

9. While he was willing to use social shame, Nehemiah appealed to the Jews to stop charging their brethren usury.

- *Nehemiah 5:10 I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury.*

10. A blessing awaits those who will help the need without charging them for the service.

- *Psalms 15:5 He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*

11. Because God hates extortion and covetousness He will from time to time take ill-gotten gains and leave them to those who have compassion on the poor.

- *Proverbs 28:8 He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.*

12. In times of divine judgment upon a nation, those who have taken usury will not be spared despite whatever riches they might have gained.

- *Isaiah 24:2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.*

13. By the time of the prophets those who loaned money were charging a high rate of return, up to twelve percent interest. So notorious was the practice that being a money changer was viewed in a negative light.

- *Jeremiah 15:10 Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me.*

14. Not taking usury was a sign of righteousness.

- *Ezekiel 18:8 He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,*

15. In Hebrew history, God was more inclined to spare individuals who did not charge usury and judge those who did.

- *Ezekiel 18:13 Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? He shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.*
- *Ezekiel 18:17 That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.*

16. Capitalism is based in a large part upon money making money. Jesus did not condemn the principle or the practice but encouraged it as a form of wisdom and good stewardship.

- *Matthew 25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.*

Proverbs 28:17.

Seven Biblical Suicides

Suicide Based on Military Pride

- **Abimelech.** *Judges 9:52 And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. 53 And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull. 54 Then he called hastily unto the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died.*

Suicide in Order to Extract Revenge

- **Samson.** *Judges 16:25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars. 26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. 27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. 28 And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. 29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood,*

and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. 30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

Suicide due to Defeat in Battle and Public Rejection

- **Saul.** *1 Samuel 31:4 Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.*

Suicide Based on Love and Loyalty in a Death Pact

- **Saul's armor-bearer.** *1 Samuel 31:5 And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.*

Suicide Based on Wounded Pride

- **Ahithophel.** *2 Samuel 17:23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.*

Suicide Based upon Rebellion and Treason

- **Zimri.** *1 Kings 16:15 In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. 16 And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. 17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. 18 And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died, 19 For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin. 20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

Suicide Rooted in Misguided Patriotic Zeal, Covetousness and Guilt at Having Betrayed Innocent Blood

- **Judas.** *Matthew 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

Proverbs 28:18.

Doctrine of Good Works

1. Good works are meant to be put on public display. They are deigned to reflect the glory of God the Father.
 - *Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*
2. Jesus performed many good works thereby setting the perfect example for His disciples. His good works were also used in His defense against those who wished to find fault with His ministry.
 - *John 10:32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?*
3. Christian ladies of redeeming grace will be careful to perform good works as Dorcas did.
 - *Acts 9:36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did.*
 - *1 Timothy 2:10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.*
4. Specific examples of good works by Christian ladies include proper rearing of the children, hospitality, humility, and helping the poor.
 - *1 Timothy 5:10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.*
5. Generally, a person who performs good works has nothing to fear from legal authorities.
 - *Romans 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*
6. God has ordained that His children perform many good works as a matter of living out the Christian life.
 - *Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

7. Many good works are performed in private but some are made manifest. When that happens, there is nothing wrong with it provided a pharisaical spirit is not present.
 - *1 Timothy 5:25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.*
8. Individuals who have been entrusted by God with material prosperity are to do good works with the money. Christians are to be rich in good works.
 - *1 Timothy 6:18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;*
9. Diligent Bible study will show the Christian how to perform good works.
 - *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*
10. Pastors and other leaders can become a pattern for others to follow by contending for pure doctrine and by being serious and sincere in matters pertaining to the Christian faith.
 - *Titus 2:7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,*
11. One of the reasons why Christ died was that He might redeem souls from sin and have a people eager to perform good works.
 - *Titus 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*
12. So closely are good works associated with Christians, the term becomes a proverb.
 - *Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*
13. No Christian should want to remain unfruitful.
 - *Titus 3:14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.*

“Must I go, and empty handed
Thus my dear Redeemer meet?
Not one day of service give Him,
Lay no trophy at His feet?

Must I go, and empty handed?
Must I meet my Savior so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him,
Must I empty handed go?
Not at death I shrink or falter,
For my Savior saves me now;
But to meet Him empty handed,
Thought of that now clouds my brow.

Must I go, and empty handed?
Must I meet my Savior so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him,
Must I empty handed go?
Oh the years in sinning wasted,
Could I but recall them now,
I would give them to my Savior,
To His Will I'd gladly bow.

Must I go, and empty handed?
Must I meet my Savior so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him,
Must I empty handed go?
O ye saints, arouse, be earnest
Up and work while yet 'tis day;
E'er the night of death o'er take thee,
Strive for souls while yet you may.

Must I go, and empty handed?
Must I meet my Savior so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him,
Must I empty handed go?”

Words by Charles Carroll Luther * Music by George Coles Stebbins

1877

14. Christians are to exhort one another to good works.

- *Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

15. Good works encourage soul winning activity.

- *1 Peter 2:12 Having your conversation [manner of life] honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

Proverbs 28:27.

Doctrine of Compassion

1. To have compassion is to have a feeling of pity with a view to wanting to alleviate suffering and help.

- *Exodus 2:6 And when she [Pharaoh's daughter] had opened it [the basket], she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.*

2. Compassion is a divine attribute.

- *Isaiah 49:15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*
- *Psalms 86:15 But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*
- *Psalms 111:4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.*
- *Psalms 112:4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.*
- *Psalms 145:8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*

3. Divine compassion can be prayed for.

- *1 Kings 8:50 And [Father-God] forgive thy people that have sinned against thee and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:*

4. Divine compassion can be expected.

- *Micah 7:19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

5. Compassion was a well-known characteristic of Christ.

Jesus had compassion on the multitudes. .

- *Matthew 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

- *Matthew 14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.*
- *Matthew 15:32 Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*

Jesus had compassion on the individual.

- *Matthew 20:34 So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.*
- *Mark 1:41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.*

6. The compassion of Christ is extended to the ignorant and to the weak.

- *Hebrews 5:2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*

7. Compassion is something that can be and should be demonstrated by all.

- Compassion can be shown to those who struggle to pay a legitimate debt. *Matthew 18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?*
- Compassion can be shown to those who have been hurt and left to suffer on their own. *Luke 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,*
- Compassion can be shown to a child repenting and returning home. *Luke 15:20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*

8. Compassion can be identified with and expressed in a variety of methods.

- Compassion can be associated with healing. *Mark 5:19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.*
- Compassion can be associated with people not having a leader or a sense of direction. *Mark 6:34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.*

- Compassion can be associated with hunger. *Mark 8:2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:*
- Compassion can be associated with someone caught up in the world of the occult. *Mark 9:22 And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.*
- Compassion can be associated with those who are grieving. *Luke 7:13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*

9. The sovereignty of God is bound up in the divine displaying of compassion.

- *Romans 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

10. Compassion is to a distinguishing mark of all Christians.

- *1 Peter 3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:*

11. Lack of compassion is a sign that salvation has not touched the heart.

- *1 John 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

12. The eternal destiny of a person may be dependant on whether or not compassion was shown as a strategic moment.

- *Jude 22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:*

PROVERBS 29

1 He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

29:1. The image of hardening the neck is taken from the way a difficult bull will turn away from and avoid the yoke. Like this stubborn animal, individual will either yield to correction or they will turn away in obstinacy and persist in the wrong they do. God is long-suffering but after a while He will move to destroy the rebellious and he will do so without mercy. Study the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16:1-34).

2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

29:2. This is the third time the author makes this same point in *Proverbs*. See also:

Proverbs 28:12 When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.

Proverbs 28:28 When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.

Both the divine and human authors want to impress upon a nation the importance of righteous rulers. The political and spiritual message unites to say that happiness in society is found, not with the principles and policies of the wicked but with the practices of the righteous. Former President of the United States Gerald Ford was a good and decent man. He once said, “A government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have”. Any politician and any political party that tries to replace God in meeting every need of the people, from the cradle to the grave, is not righteous and is not the right form of government. Under such a rule the people will come to mourn. The reign of a good king like Josiah or Hezekiah is to be preferred over the reign of an Ahab or Manasseh.

3 Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.

29:3. The best commentary on *Scripture* is *Scripture*. Study the following passages.

Proverbs 28:7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

Luke 15:11 And he [Jesus] said, A certain man had two sons: 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

4 The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.

29:4. "Honesty stands at the gate and knocks, and bribery enters in".

'Tis pleasant purchasing our fellow-creatures;
And all are to be sold, if you consider
Their passions and are dexterous;

Some by features are brought up,
others by a warlike leader;
Some by a place—as tend their years or natures;
The most by ready cash—but all have prices,
From crowns to criminals, according to their vices.

Lord Byron (George Gordon Noel Byron)
1788-1824

When bribery is received, spirituality is perverted and justice is overthrown. See the bad behavior of the sons of Samuel (1 Samuel 8:3ff).

5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.

29:5. As king, Solomon no doubt was subject to much flattery and saw the damage it can do to self and to those who give it. By definition flattery is saying what the heart does not mean in order to curry favor or mislead. "Men seldom flatter without a purpose; and they who listen to such music may expect to pay the piper" (Aesop, c. 550 BC). Absalom flattered the people and princes of Israel but was caught in the net of his own making. (Read 2 Samuel 15-19).

6 In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

29:6. There is a difference between the physical and inner countenance of an evil person and a righteous person. Those who seek to hurt self and others do not have a light heart and inner joy that characterizes those who are walking with the Lord. An evil person cannot sing the following song composed in 1905 by Civilla D. Martin and composer Charles H. Gabriel.

“Why should I feel discouraged,
Why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart feel lonely,
And long for heaven and home?

When Jesus is my portion
A constant friend is He,
His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches over me.
His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches me.

I sing because I'm happy
I sing because I'm free.
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

His eye is on the sparrow
And I know He watches,
I know He watches,
I know He watches me.

I sing because I'm happy
I sing because I'm free.
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me”.

The countenance of Peter and John in prison (Acts 3:1-8), offers a contrast to the religious Pharisees (Matthew 23: 23-28).

7 The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

29:7. Christian reader, do you help others? Those who are wicked have no regard for others. They do not even want to know about the needs others might have. Still, “Charity is never lost. It may meet with ingratitude, or be of no service to those on whom it was bestowed, yet it ever does a work of beauty and grace upon the heart of the giver” (Conyers Middleton (1683-1750). Jesus said, *It is more blessed to give than to receive* (Acts 20:35). Paul noted that *God loveth a cheerful giver* (2 Corinthians 9:7). Solomon stated a great theological truth when he observed that *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord* (Proverbs 19:17).

8 Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.

29:8. The scornful person is the individual who displays an open dislike and disrespect or derision for someone or something. Their comments are often mixed with an emotional display of indignation. When a person is scornful and commands a high political office, the citizens are put in jeopardy. Wise men will try to turn away the wrath of others.

9 If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.

29:9. Knowing when not to speak is a great virtue and mark of maturity. To engage in a dialogue with a fool, either in anger or in joviality will produce no peace or rest. The foolish person always manages to stir up trouble. Nehemiah's relationship with Sanballat illustrates this proverb (Nehemiah 2:10, 19; 4:1-10; 6:1-9).

10 The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul.

29:10. One of the longest ongoing debates among members of society is whether or not a bloodthirsty person is a product of nature or nurture. What is certain is that bloodthirsty individuals exist and are on the prowl. The bloodthirsty person certainly hates the upright for God's people will say, "NO!" to their attempts to hurt others by way of abortion or murder, rape or robbery. As there are bloodthirsty individuals, so there are just people who seek the soul of the upright to learn more of the ways of righteousness as Nicodemus sought out Jesus (John 3:1-21).

11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

29:11. A comparison between a fool and a wise man is a large theme of *Proverbs*. Here, another distinguishing characteristic is noted. The fool will speak his mind freely and often. A fool is bold and brazen in society and has an opinion on everything. A wise person is more cautious and more discrete. The American sage Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) wrote, "Be civil to all; sociable to many; familiar with few; friend to one; enemy to none". Discretion is a virtue. "Discretion is leaving a few things unsaid" (Elbert Green Hubbard, 1856-1915).

12 If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.

29:12. When discussing others, conversations seem to naturally gravitate to some weakness or flaw in a person. If a ruler listens to all of the court gossip, he will come to believe that no one can be trusted and all of his servants are wicked. Christian, be careful of gossip. Do not let others form your opinion of any individual. Read Joshua 22:11-34 for the ravaging effect of rumors.

29:12. There is another understanding of this proverb which reflects the Jewish mindset that a corrupt ruler will surround himself with corrupt individuals so that all are lawless together. “As the judge of the people is himself, so are his officers; and what manner of man the ruler of the city is, such are all that dwell therein.” This quote is from the apocryphal book, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach 10:2.

13 The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes.

29:13. The poor man is a prime target of opportunity for the deceitful man. Financial predators tend to go after the poorest of poor in a society to exploit their need. Only the LORD can enlighten both their eyes, the one to finding a sufficiency in Christ and the other, the evil of his deeds.

14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

29:14. Earthly rulers should reflect the Ultimate Ruler of the Universe who is Himself gracious to all including the poor. *Matthew 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* (Read Psalm 89:19-29).

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

29:15. Children who do not receive corporal punishment are more likely to bring shame to his parents and trouble to himself through acts of lawlessness. “Let’s not be too sentimental. Regardless of the innocent beauty of children, they need redemption” (Garth Bolinder in *Leadership*, Vol. 8, no. 4).

16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall.

29:16. For every person under an oppressive political regime, for every Christian who is tormented by a ruthless aggressor this proverb offers hope that in the end justice shall prevail. The righteous shall see the fall of the wicked. It does not matter that the wicked are multiplied and that transgressions increase. God has established a moral universe and with the passing of time that which is wrong is made right. A study of history reveals this truth. Corrupt rulers die. Apostate nations are punished. Civilizations that promote evil disintegrate into the dustbin of history. The Nazi Party thought it would last a thousand years. It ruled for thirteen years and then many of its wicked leaders met justice at Nuremberg. Christian, do not despair. The church as the kingdom of God shall triumph over all the kingdoms of this world.

17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

29:17. A parent who properly corrects a child will find peace on earth and rest in heaven knowing the child is safe in the arms of God. “The only thing that parents can take to heaven is their children” (Gigi Graham). Isaac brought joy and peace to his father Abraham as a son who was obedient even unto death. Read Genesis 22:1-14 and keep in mind that Isaac was not a child but a young man probably twenty or more years of age. He could have resisted but was obedient to the will of his father.

18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

29: 18. Visions have always been part of the Christian experience. Spiritual enlightenment is vital to Christian faith and practice. When enlightenment is united to gospel obedience of the moral law of God, there is happiness. The church must have individuals with spiritual discernment and enlightenment and must pray to that end. *Ephesians 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.* Without spiritual enlightenment the church will perish as a vital force in a community. Souls will perish in the deadness of a cold, indifferent orthodoxy or theological aberrations.

19 A [stubborn] servant will not be corrected by words: for though he understand he will not answer.

29:19. Accountability is not accomplished by words alone but must be accompanied with verification followed up with concrete discipline if necessary. Otherwise, as the Septuagint notes, a stubborn servant will sullenly listen but not answer or acknowledge the correction.

20 Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him.

29:20. "Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of the fact" (George Eliot). The hasty speech of King Saul almost caused the death of his son Jonathan (1 Samuel 14). The hasty speech of Jephthah brought death to his daughter (Judges 11). Read Proverbs 26:12.

21 He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length.

29:21. Eliezer of Damascus was a house-born domestic and steward of Abraham. In the absence of a natural heir, he was scheduled to become the patriarch's heir, about 2070 B.C. (Genesis 15:2-3). In matchless grace the Lord has made Christians the children of Abraham and heirs of the promises of God. *Galatians 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

22 An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

29:22. Anger is one of the most destructive negative emotions. It stirs up controversy, arouses anger in others, and leads to horrific acts of passion and violence. "When anger enters the mind, wisdom departs" (Thomas A Kempis (C. 1380-1471). "When anger was in Cain's heart, murder was not far off" (Philip Henry, 1631-1696)

23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

29:23. Because of pride people destroy themselves for they will not admit to a mistake or to have misspoken. It is far better to remember we are mortal and subject to error. When a victorious Roman general arrived back in Rome, he was given a hero's welcome and a triumphant parade of victory. But a philosopher was hired to ride beside him in the victory parade. As the victor acknowledged the cheers of the crowd, the philosopher kept whispering in his ear: "You are mortal. You are mortal."

29:23. Honor is contrasted to pride for honor will sustain the person who is meek and lowly. Christ was sustained by honor in the hour of His greatest humiliation, even the Cross.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
1807-1882

24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.

29:24. It is possible to participate in the sins of others, but the cost will be the selling of one's soul. To meet a thief and want to unite with him, to hear cursing and not be offended by it, is the selling of the soul. What is needed is the touch of the Master's hand.

"It was battered and scarred,
And the auctioneer thought it
hardly worth his while
To waste his time on the old violin,
but he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bid, good people", he cried,
"Who starts the bidding for me?"
"One dollar, one dollar, Do I hear two?"
"Two dollars, who makes it three?"
"Three dollars once, three dollars twice, going for three,"

But, No,
From the room far back a gray bearded man
Came forward and picked up the bow,
Then wiping the dust from the old violin
And tightening up the strings,
He played a melody, pure and sweet
As sweet as the angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said "What now am I bid for this old violin?"
As he held it aloft with its' bow.

"One thousand, one thousand, Do I hear two?"
"Two thousand, Who makes it three?"
"Three thousand once, three thousand twice,
Going and gone", said he.

The audience cheered,
But some of them cried,
"We just don't understand."
"What changed its' worth?"

Swift came the reply.
"The Touch of the Masters Hand."

And many a man with life out of tune
All battered with bourbon and gin
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd
Much like that old violin
A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,
A game and he travels on.
He is going once, he is going twice,
He is going and almost gone.

But the Master comes,
And the foolish crowd never can quite understand,
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought
By the Touch of the Masters' Hand".

Myra Brooks Welch

25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

29:25. Trust in the LORD is contrasted with fear of man. Fearing others will cause the pastor not to preach a biblical message. Fear of others will cause a young person to go and say and do things they know are wrong. Fear of others will cause a person to be silent when they should speak up in defense of honor, the truth, or life itself. Fear of others will bring a moral snare to the soul and physical sickness to the body through stress and worry. In contrast those who study Bible doctrine, those who are Spirit led, those who will simply do right and put their trust in the LORD regarding the outcome shall be safe in time and in eternity. Oh it is good to be sheltered in the arms of God.

"I feel the touch of hands so kind and tender
They're leading me in paths that I must trod
I have no fear when Jesus walks beside me
For I'm sheltered in the arms of God.

So let the storms rage high
The dark clouds rise
They won't worry me
For I'm sheltered safe within the arms of God.

He walks with me
And naught of earth shall harm me
For I'm sheltered in the arms of God.

Soon I shall hear the call from heaven's portals
Come home my child
It's the last mile you must trod
I'll fall asleep
And wake in God's sweet heaven
Sheltered safe within the arms of God.

So let the storms rage high
The dark clouds rise
They won't worry me
For I'm sheltered safe within the arms of God.

He walks with me
And naught of earth shall harm me
For I'm sheltered in the arms of God
Oh yes I'm sheltered in the arms of God."

Written by Dottie Rambo

26 Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the LORD.

29:26. Desperate people will take desperate actions including appealing to a political ruler's favor. For a Christian, to beg is a shame. Through the Spirit, with prayer and supplication, requests should be made known to the LORD who will ultimately determine every person's portion in life. To beg, is to bring shame (Luke 16:3).

27 An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.

29:27. This proverb sets forth the Law of Double Abomination. As the wicked is viewed as something horrible to the righteous, so the righteous is abhorred by the wicked. Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, True and Falsehood are opposites. They are mutually exclusive. The apostle Paul asked ... *for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?* (2 Corinthians 6:14). The correct answer is, "None." There is no fellowship with unrighteousness for the Christian, but, in like manner, there is no fellowship with the Christian for the unbeliever during acts of unrighteousness.

One practical application of this proverb for the believer is to stop trying to win the approval of the unbelieving community or believe that in the heart of the wicked there is any measure of tolerance for righteousness or the righteous. Evil is militant – and so should the Christian be. Christian, understand, it is a war that you are engaged in. Therefore, onward Christian.

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.
Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;
Forward into battle see His banners go!

*Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.*

At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee;
On then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise;
Brothers lift your voices, loud your anthems raise.

Like a mighty army moves the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.
We are not divided, all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

What the saints established that I hold for true.
What the saints believèd, that I believe too.
Long as earth endureth, men the faith will hold,
Kingdoms, nations, empires, in destruction rolled.

Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus constant will remain.
Gates of hell can never against that church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail.
Onward then, ye people, join our happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices in the triumph song.
Glory, laud and honor unto Christ the King,
This through countless ages men and angels sing.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 29

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 29

1. What is one of the longest running debates in society?

Answer.

One of the longest ongoing debates among members of society is whether or not a bloodthirsty person is a product of nature or nurture.

2. What type of person preys on the poor?

Answer.

The poor man is a prime target of opportunity for the deceitful man. Financial predators tend to go after the poorest of poor in a society to exploit their need.

3. What has always been part of the Christian experience?

Answer.

Visions have always been part of the Christian experience

4. Which negative emotion is one of the most destructive? Why?

Answer.

Anger is one of the most destructive negative emotions. It stirs up controversy, arouses anger in others, and leads to horrific acts of passion and violence.

5. List four negative results of fear?

Answer.

Fearing others will cause the pastor not to preach a biblical message. Fear of others will cause a young person to go and say and do things they know are wrong. Fear of others will cause a person to be silent when they should speak up in defense of honor, the truth, or life itself. Fear of others will bring a moral snare to the soul and physical sickness to the body through stress and worry.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Do you help others? Who? When? Where? Be specific.
2. What does it mean to participate in the sins of someone else? Have you done this?
3. Do you believe that God might still speak to individuals through dreams and visions? Study Acts 2:1-21. Have you ever had a heavenly dream or vision?
4. Is it a shame for a person to seek favor with leaders in high places, or a desperate mother to beg for food for her child?
5. Explain the Law of Double Abomination. How does it apply to the church today?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 29:18.

Doctrine of Visions

1. A vision refers to a divine revelation that reveals the will of God. Visions generally occurred while the prophet of God was awake or was in a semi state of consciousness.
2. At least twenty-two people in the Bible are said to have received a vision. Sixteen visions were given to the Old Testament saints while seven were given to New Testament believers.

Visions from God

• Abraham	Genesis 15:1
• Jacob	Genesis 46:2
• Balaam	Numbers 24:4
• Samuel	1 Samuel 3:15
• Nathan	2 Samuel 7:17; 1 Chronicles 17:15
• Isaiah	2 Chronicles 32:32; Isaiah 1:1; 21:2; 22:1,5
• The Messiah	Psalm 89:19
• Ezekiel	Ezekiel 1:1; 7:13; 8:3-4; 11: 24 13:16; 40:2; 43:3
• Daniel	Daniel 2:19; 7:2; 8:1-2
• Eliphaz	Job 4:13 cf. 7:14
• Obadiah	Obadiah 1:1
• Nahum	Nahum 1:1
• Habakkuk	Habakkuk 2:2
• Zechariah	Zechariah 13:4 cf. 2 Chronicles 26:5

• Iddo	2 Chronicles 9:29
• Hosea	Hosea 12:10
• Peter	Matthew 17:1,10; Acts 10:17; 11:5
• James	Matthew 17:1,10
• John	Matthew 17:1,10; Revelation 9:17
• Ananias	Acts 9:10
• Paul	Acts 9:12; 16:9,10; 26:19; 2 Corinthians 12:11
• Cornelius	Acts 10:3

3. God promised to speak to His prophets in visions.

- *Numbers 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.*

4. Long periods of time went by when there was no vision from God.

- *1 Samuel 3:1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.*
- *Lamentations 2:9 Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord.*

5. Where there is no vision the people perish.

- *Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*

6. It was possible for men to err in their visions.

- *Isaiah 28:7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.*
- *Jeremiah 14:14 Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

7. God's people were called upon to seek visions from the prophets.

- *Ezekiel 7:26 Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.*

8. Angels were sometimes used to help explain a vision.

- *Daniel 8:16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.*
- *Daniel 9:21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. 24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

9. Visions can produce great emotional distress.

- *Daniel 8:27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.*
- *Daniel 10:16 And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.*

10. It is possible for one person only to have a vision even in the presence of others.

- *Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.*
- *Daniel 10:7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.*

11. The absence of visions was considered to be a form of divine judgment.

- *Micah 3:6 Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.*

12. The prophet Joel predicted that visions were to be found during the New Testament era.

- *Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:*
- *Acts 2:16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:*

13. The appearance of the angels to the women on the morning of Christ's resurrection was considered by them to have been a vision (Luke 24:23 cf. Acts 12:9) so that it is sometimes hard to separate a vision from "reality".

- *Luke 24:24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.*
- *Acts 12:9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.*

14. A vision can come during the act of prayer.

- *Acts 10:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,*
- *Acts 11:5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:*

Proverbs 29:26.

Doctrine of Trusting in the Lord

1. Evil individuals will mock those who say they trust in the Lord.

- Rabshakeh mocked the leaders of Israel. *2 Kings 18:22 But if ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?*

2. The ungodly will boldly tell Christians not to trust in the Lord.

- *2 Kings 18:30 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.*

3. Gospel obedience demands that Christians offer the sacrifices of righteousness and trust in the Lord.

- *Psalms 4:5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.*

4. Christians have a right to hate those who do evil. A Christian will not advance himself through lies but by trusting in the Lord.

- *Psalms 31:6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord.*

5. Christians are to trust in the Lord and do good to others in faith that God will provide shelter and food.

- *Psalms 37:3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

6. Gospel witnessing by singing the songs of Zion and offering spiritual praise will result in soul wining activity. Others will see the Christian testimony, come to fear God, and shall trust in the Lord.

- *Psalms 40:3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.*

7. By drawing near to God, and by trusting in the Lord, the Christian has a basis to testify to all His works of mercy and grace.

- *Psalms 73:28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.*

8. The psalmist remembered how the house of Aaron trusted in the Lord. Christians need to be reminded of their spiritual heritage and take courage from the confidence of others.

- *Psalms 115:10 O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.*

9. Those who fear the Lord are to trust in Him as well. Christians are to trust that the Lord will always be faithful. They are to trust in His love. They are to trust His mercy and grace.

- *Psalms 115:11 Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.*

10. It is far better and wiser to place ultimate trust in the Lord than in any government program or politician or any human no matter how well meaning and sincere they may seem to be.

- *Psalms 118:8 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.*
- *Psalms 118:9 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.*

11. There are spiritual rewards for trusting in the Lord.

- Security and Stability. *Psalms 125:1 A Song of degrees. They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.*
- Spiritual and Material Prosperity. *Proverbs 28:25 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat.*
- Physical and emotional safety. *Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.*

12. As men are not to be ultimately trusted, neither is self to be viewed as the master of one's own fate.

Worldly Wisdom

Invictus (Latin, *Invisible*)

“Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud,
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul”.
William Ernest Henley, 1875

The Wisdom of God

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

13. In matters small and great, in daily acts of God's providence, the Christian is to trust in the Lord.

- *Philippians 2:19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.*
- *Philippians 2:24 But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.*

Division 5

The words of Agur

Proverbs 30:1-33

PROVERBS 30

1 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man [Agur] spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,

30:1.

Agur (a gatherer, i.e. together of wise men) was the son of Jakeh, an unknown Hebrew wise man who uttered or collected the sayings of wisdom recorded in Proverbs 30.

Jakeh (pious) was the father of Agur. While no other concrete information is available about either Agur or Jakeh some Bible scholars have attempted to unite Jakeh with Massa, the land of an Ishmaelite tribe (cf. Genesis 25:14; 1 Chronicles 1:30).

Ithiel (God is with me) is mentioned in Proverbs 31 along with Ucal as being addressed by the words of Agur.

Ucal (I am strong) was associated with Ithiel as being a recipient of the words of Agur.

The German Protestant commentator Karl Keil (1807-1888) surmises that Ucal is representative of all those who boast of their personal intellectual and spiritual strength and so find freedom in their thinking to deny God. Such individuals feel themselves to be above the revealed moral law. By embracing philosophical atheism and a value's system of personal hedonism, the Ucal's of this world indulge in the lusts of the flesh (Proverbs 30:1).

2 Surely I am more brutish [stupid] than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.

3 I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

30:2-3. Agur honestly and humbly declares he is not a learned man apart from divine enlightenment. He bows before the Most Holy One and confesses how exalted the Lord is in wisdom and knowledge. The omniscience of God is clearly taught in Scripture and challenges the modern error of Open Theology. "When, by the reception of the Holy Spirit, I begin to realize that God knows all the deepest possibilities there are in me, knows all the eccentricities of my being, I find that the mystery of myself is solved by this besetting God" (Oswald Chambers, 1874-1917).

4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

30:4.

Seven Questions

- Who hath ascended up into heaven,
- Or [Who hath] descended?
- Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?
- Who hath bound the waters in a garment?
- Who hath established all the ends of the earth?
- What is his name,
- And what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

Seven Answers

- Christ has ascended up into the heavens. *John 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*
- Christ has descended, first to earth and then into the grave. *Romans 10:6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*
- Christ has gathered the wind in His fists. *Mark 4:39 And he [Jesus] arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*
- Christ has bound the waters in a garment. *John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*
- Christ has established all the ends of the earth. *Colossians 1:16 For by him [Jesus] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

- Christ's name is well known for it was prophesied. *Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*
- Jesus is the name of the Father's Son. *Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

5 Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

30:5. pure. When men talk it is not always clear what is being said either by design, by misstatement, or by lack of comprehension. This is not true of the Word of God. It is pure and undiluted without error or fabrication because it is God-breathed. *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* Because the Bible is true and trustworthy and contains the promises of God, the Lord becomes a shield, a protector for all who put their trust in Him. *Psalms 20:7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.* Many religious writings were not allowed to be part of the Canon because they were not pure, were not true. Among the many writings excluded were the fantastic legends of Tobit and Judith, the Vision of Hermes, the pseudo gospels of the Infancy, St. Thomas, Nicodemus, the Jewish Talmud and the Kabbalah (lit. receiving).

6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

30:5-6. The mark of every cult and alternative religion is an unholy boldness to add to the Word of God as individuals unduly substitute and exalt the writings of the founder of the movement or the writings of the organization. Among the worst are the wild visions of Emanuel Swedenborg, the *Book of Mormons*, the Flying Roll of the Jezreelites, the prophecies of Ellen G. White, and *Science and Health* by Mary Baker Eddy.

7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

30:8. Pride and untruthfulness are two great sins Agur prays to be delivered from and rightly so for both are self destructive and other destructive. He also prays that he be not poor or too rich and that he will have food sufficient for the day. Jesus taught His disciples to request the same (Matthew 6:11).

9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

30:9. The reason why Agur prayed as he did was so he would not be tempted to be unfaithful to the Lord. Many people have turned away from the Lord in the hour of temptation.

30:7-9. When Henry VIII became king of England in 1509, Cardinal Wolsey (1471-1530) became the King's almoner. An almoner is a chaplain or church officer who originally was in charge of distributing charity. In this important position Wolsey prospered and by 1514 he had become the controlling political adviser in all matters of state and extremely influential within the Church. Cardinal Wolsey held favor with the king until Henry wanted his marriage to Catherine to be annulled. Wolsey would not agree to engage in a religious scam. He was arrested and condemned to death. Near the end Wolsey cried, "Had I but served my God as faithfully as I served my king, He would not have cast me off in my old age." (Study the prayer of Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4:10) *And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.*

10 Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.

30:10. A false accusation can result in shame when it is discovered the accusation was false, no matter how sincere it might have been given. The Christian must be careful and not cultivate a critical and censures spirit. Christian, *Judge righteous judgment (John 7:24).*

11 There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

13 There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up.

14 There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

Four Marks of an Ungodly Generation

30:11-14

- Disrespectful to parents 30:11
- Self-righteous but immoral 30:12
- Prideful 30:13
- Without compassion 30:14

One of the great sociological studies yet to be considered in America and Europe is how The Greatest Generation (1930-1960) produced in procreation a subsequent rebellious and narcissistic generation. How did the generation that survived the hardships of the Great Depression and then went on to fight World War II and the Korean War produce children that wanted to “tune in, turn on and drop out” through drugs and free sex all the while protesting established authority?

15 The horse-leach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough:

16 The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough.

17 The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

30:15. The leech is found in stagnant waters throughout the land. It has a voracious appetite which is never satiated.

30:15-17.

Four Entities that Want More

- The grave
- The womb
- The earth
- Fire

“Thou hast made us for Thyself,” said Augustine of Hippo, “and our hearts will never be at rest, until they rest in Thee.” Come to Christ. Find your rest in Him. *Hebrews 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*

“I came to Jesus, weary, worn, and sad.
He took my sins away, He took my sins away.
And now His love has made my heart so glad,
He took my sins away.

He took my sins away, He took my sins away,
And keeps me singing every day!
I’m so glad He took my sins away,
He took my sins away.

The load of sin was more than I could bear.
He took my sins away, He took my sins away.
And now on Him I roll my ev’ry care,
He took my sins away.

No condemnation have I in my heart,
He took my sins away, He took my sins away.
His perfect peace He did to me impart,
He took my sins away.

If you will come to Jesus Christ today,
He'll take your sins away, He'll take your sins away,
And keep you happy in His love each day,
He'll take your sins away.

Margaret J. Harris, 1903

18 There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:

19 The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.

Four Matters too Wonderful to Understand

- The soaring eagle
- The movement of a snake
- The stability of a ship in voyage
- The romancing of a woman

20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.

30:20. Agur confesses that he does not understand adulterous women who will engage in inappropriate relationships and then say, “I have done no wrong.” He declares it to be a mystery. It is also delusional. It is one thing to say, “I have done wrong and I know it”, but it is far more serious to say, “I do no wrong.”

21 For three things the earth is disquieted [shaken], and for four which it cannot bear:

22 For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;

23 For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

Four People the Earth Cannot Bear

• A servant who comes to power	as Zimri did in 1 Kings 16:1-20.
• A fool who has eaten too much	as Nabal in per 1 Samuel 25:1-39.
• An unfaithful wife	reflected in Gomer as told in Hosea 2:5.
• A servant girl who becomes rich	manifested in the story of Esther.

24 There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding [very] wise:

25 The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;

26 The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;

27 The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;

28 The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

Four Little Creatures

• Ants	make providential provisions for the future
• Conies (Syrian hyrax)	are able to hide in the rocks
• Locusts	move with almost military precision and might
• Spiders (lit. house lizard, the gecko)	which is home in a king's palace

Spiritually, like ants, the Christian is rich in Christ and has an abundance of grace to enjoy for time and eternity. Also like ants the believer is careful to perform good works in order to be helpful to self and a blessing to others.

Like the hyrax, the believer finds refuge in the Rock of their salvation.

“On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

As the locust move with military might and precision so the Christian is guided by the Captain of their Salvation. Though He is unseen yet He has never left His own for He promised, “*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*” (*Hebrews 13:5*). When David Livingstone read Hebrews 13:5 he wrote in the margin of his Bible, “It is the word of a gentleman of the most strict and sacred honour, so there's an end of it!”.

Like the gecko with its ability to run up marble walls due to tiny sponge like sacs on the underside of each toe containing an adhesive fluid, the believer clings to Christ and the Cross of Christ.

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

George Bennard, 1913

29 There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely [stately] in going [movement]:

30 A lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any;

31 A greyhound; an he [male] goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up.

Four Things which are Comely in Movement

- A lion
- A greyhound
- A he goat
- A powerful king

Spiritually, the Christian who walks in righteousness and faith can be as bold as a lion (Proverbs 28:1), for Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5).

The Christian is like a swift beast of the field such as a greyhound, horse or zebra. The Christian is to be swift to hear Bible doctrine (James 1:19) and to strive to win the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14).

The Christian is to be like a goat, every climbing rugged terrain of pain, suffering and hardship in order to achieve greater heights of spiritual maturity.

“I’m pressing on the upward way,
New heights I’m gaining every day;
Still praying as I’m onward bound,
“Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”

Lord, lift me up and let me stand,
By faith, on Heaven’s table land,
A higher plane than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where those abound,
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.

I want to live above the world,
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.

I want to scale the utmost height
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till Heav'n I've found,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

Johnson Oatman Jr. 1898

The Christian is also to rule and reign in regal royal majesty and for good reason. *Revelation 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* Christians do not normally view themselves in royal terms but there is divine permission to do so. Christ has made us heirs of the kingdom (James 2:5). Whenever the church stands in judgment of the world as it moves to kill unborn babies, oppresses the poor, or rob the widows and orphans, royal judgment is exercised, dignity is displayed, the weak are protected, and there is no valid defense on the part of the wicked. *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith (1 John 5:4).*

32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.

30:32. Agur counsels a self imposed humility upon reflection of pride and inappropriate thinking lest evil be compounded by intemperate speaking. It is a gift of divine grace when a person has a clear sight of themselves as Peter had one day while fishing (study Luke 5:1-9). A fine Scottish Christian man, who was a successful businessman, had one son. He was proud of his boy for he was for all outward purposes a splendid, well-educated, and respected young fellow—until one day he was arrested for embezzlement. At the trial he was found guilty. And all through the trial, and even up through the rendering of the verdict, the young man appeared essentially unconcerned and proud and nonchalant. Certainly he was not humbled or broken by the experience thus far. But then the verdict was brought in. The judge told the young man to stand for the sentence.

He stood, still somewhat cocky and proud. And he glanced around the courtroom, only to notice that over at his attorney's table his father too was standing. His father had recognized that he was involved with the problem of what his boy had become. He looked and saw his father—who once had walked and stood erect with head and shoulders straight, as those of an honest man with a clear conscience.

And now those same shoulders were bowed low with sorrow and shame as he stood to receive, as though it were for himself, his son's sentence from the judge. At the sight of his father, bent and humiliated, the son finally began to weep bitterly and for the first time repented of his crime.

33 Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

30:33. Nihilism is a term that describes a revolutionary movement of mid 19th-century Russia that scorned authority and tradition and believed in reason, materialism, and radical change in society and government through terrorism and assassination. There are many individuals who are determined to force wrath. They invite confrontation in order to achieve political or personal objectives, and they shall have it. As the churning of milk will produce butter, as the twisting of a nose will break the capillaries and make the nose bleed, so when an issue is forced in anger it will produce violence. Many congregations are set in turmoil because individuals are determined to express their anger.

30:33. With these words the brief ministry of Agur comes to an end. Agur will become one of many obscure saints the Christian will want to meet in heaven.

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 30

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 30

1. List four entities that are never satisfied.

Answer.

- The grave
- The womb
- The earth
- Fire

2. What are four matters too wonderful to understand?

Answer.

- The soaring eagle
- The movement of a snake
- The stability of a ship in voyage
- The romancing of a woman

3. What are four types of people the earth cannot bear?

Answer.

- A servant who comes to power
- A fool who has eaten too much
- An unfaithful woman
- A servant girl who becomes rich

4. List four little creatures of Proverbs 30:24-28.

Answer.

- Ants
- Conies
- Locusts
- Spiders

5. What four things are comely or lovely in motion?

Answer.

- A lion
- A greyhound
- A he goat
- A powerful king

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Is there some facet of your character that wants more and more? Be specific.
2. What theological issue do you not understand but would like to? Be specific.
3. Are there certain individuals the earth should not bear? Do you believe in capital punishment? Why or why not?
4. Which creature in nature do you enjoy the most? What is there about this creature that you enjoy the most?
5. List at least five principles individuals can learn from nature?

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 30: 8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: 9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of Heirship

1. To encourage the hearts of Christians, God the Holy Spirit has revealed to the church the concept of believers being heirs of many spiritual gifts of divine grace.
2. In order to receive the spiritual gifts of divine grace there must be a bonified relationship.
3. By faith, individuals are born into the family of God and so become the children of God, and if children, then heirs.
 - *Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*
 - *John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*
 - *Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*
4. The new birth that every Christian enjoys is based not only on divine mercy and grace but is according to covenantal promise.
 - *Galatians 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

5. There are many marvelous and spiritual results based on being justified by grace alone.

- Hope of eternal life. *Titus 3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*
- Angelic protection. *Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*
- Knowledge of Bible doctrine. *Hebrews 6:17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:*
- A heavenly home. *Hebrews 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:*
- An effective prayer life (based on marital harmony if applicable and gospel obedience). *1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

6. These are just some of the treasures every Christian receives by being an heir of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

7. The inheritance of the believer is a present reality.

- Right now the Christian has confidence of going to heaven. *Philippians 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*
- Right now the Christian enjoys angelic protection. *Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*
- Right now the Christian can know divine mysteries. *Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*
- Right now the Christian can be assured of going to a heavenly home. *John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

- Right now the Christian can enjoy an effective prayer life. *Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

8. The Christian's inheritance is grounded in God's electing love and the believer's corresponding response of abiding love. Question: "Do you love God?"

- *James 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

Division Six
The words of Lemuel's Mother
Proverbs 31:1-33:31

PROVERBS 31

1 The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.

31:1 Lemuel. If Lemuel is another name for Solomon then his mother was Bathsheba. There is no record of any king named Lemuel who sat upon the throne of Israel nor is the name found in any list of kings in other nations. The name Lemuel means “devoted to God”, which Solomon was. He was loved by God (2 Samuel 12:24). The description of a virtuous woman is not the thoughts of man but the observation of a redeemed mother.

2 What, my son? And what, the son of my womb? And what, the son of my vows?

31:2. What. The force of this word repeated three times is, “What shall I say?” This lady of grace wanted to communicate to her son great truths and eternal principles for she, like Hannah, had vowed to bring her son up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (1 Samuel 1:1-2;21; Ephesians 6:4).

Wisdom for Wise Leaders Proverbs 31:3-9

3 Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

31:3. In time Solomon would fail to remember the warning of his mother. He would multiply wives in violation of the Law (Deuteronomy 17:17). His many wives would turn his heart from God (1 Kings 11:3).

4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:

5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts [in despair].

29:6. While a strong case can be made for the value of total abstinence in certain societies and under special conditions, passages such as this place a check and balance on extremism. On any given topic no one should make the *Scriptures* go beyond what they actually teach. When discussing alcohol some people are very stubborn in their position. The story is told of a teetotaling mother who was very vocal from time to time about her theory that only grape juice and not wine was served at the Last Supper. During an animated discussion her daughter said, "But mother, do you not remember at Cana, Jesus turned the water into wine?"

The mother, eyes blazing, said, "Yes! And He never should have done it either!" Let us never go beyond Scripture or Christ in addressing any issue of life.

7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

8 Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

31:3. A moral failure in one area tends to lead to a moral failure in another area. Once the wives of Solomon turned his heart from the Lord, Solomon allowed children to be sacrificed. He did not open his mouth for the dumb but personally appointed them to destruction.

1 Kings 11:3 And he [Solomon] had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. 9 And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

31:3-9.

Ten Commandments for a King

- Do not dissipate your moral strength with women. Proverbs 31:3
- Do not engage in self destructive behavior. Proverbs 31:3
- Do not engage in drunken behavior. Proverbs 31:4
- Do not forget the rule of law. Proverbs 31:5
- Do not pervert justice. Proverbs 31:5
- Be sensitive to those who are in sorrow. Proverbs 31:6
- Encourage happiness. Proverbs 31:7
- Defend the weak. Proverbs 31:8
- Judge righteously. Proverbs 31:9
- Plead the cause of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:9

**A Hebrew Acrostic
Portrait of a Virtuous Woman
Proverbs 31:10-31**



Aleph
Ox/strength/leader

10 Who can find a virtuous [thrifty and devoted] woman? For her price is far above rubies.

Proverbs 31:10-31. This section is an acrostic poem reflected in one of the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet beginning each verse. This technique was used as a memory devise. It is interesting that originally, each Hebrew letter had a pictorial meaning associated with it.

31:10. Who can find. While a virtuous woman might be difficult to find, it is not an impossible task. God has many daughters of grace whose value is far above rubies. These great ladies become the mothers of Israel (the church). The virtuous woman is a woman who can be depended upon. She is capable, has a high energy level, maintains a high sense of dignity, and is capable of handling her household duties.



Bet
House / “In”

11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil [prey, booty].

31:11. The heart of a good husband will have total confidence in the love, loyalty and unselfish affection of a good woman. Despite his position in life he will never be poor.



Gimel
Foot / camel / pride

12 She will do him good and not evil [injurious behavior] all the days of her life.

31:11. The virtuous woman will use all of her influence for the good of her husband. She will not speak evil of him or do anything to cause him harm. She will not embarrass him in any way all the days of her life.



Dalet
Tent Door / pathway

13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

31:13. As Eve was made to be a help mate for Adam, so the virtuous woman finds joy in acts of service. Her mental attitude regarding service is one of delight and not drudgery. She seeks to serve and works willingly.



Hey
Lo! Behold! “The”

14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

31:14. The ancient ships would bring treasures from distant lands. In like manner the virtuous woman is constantly like the merchant's ships as she brings forth things old and new to surprise and delight those whom she serves with love.



Vav
Nail / peg / add / “And”

15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat [prepares food] to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

31:15. The virtuous woman will rise early if necessary to accomplish the work that needs to be done. Her thoughts are not on herself or having others serve her. Rather, she serves others.



Zayin
Plow / weapon / cut off

16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

31:16. The virtuous woman is not only industrious but looks to enlarge the possessions of the family through wise investments.



Chet
Tent wall / fence / separation

17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

31:17. The virtuous woman exerts herself and her physical strength increases. She is able to accomplish much through proper planning and organization.



Tet
Basket / snake / surround

18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

31:18. The virtuous woman has confidence in what she produces and she diligently works at what her hands finds to do. Her candle does not go out by night for she toils until her task is done.



Yod
Arm and hand / work / deed

19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold [pull] the distaff [the prepared fibers from the spindle].

31:19. It is possible to hold a distaff in one hand and twirl the long wool spindles with the other then pausing to wrap the thread around a spindle.



Kaf
Palm of hand / to open

20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

31:20. By diligent work the virtuous woman is able to help the needy.



Lamed
Staff / goad / control / “Toward”

21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet [the best].

31:21. As the virtuous woman looks after the needs of the poor she does not neglect her own. Some parents are so busy doing good for others they neglect their own family, and that is wrong. The virtuous woman clothes her family with the best garments possible for her economy.



Mem
Water / chaos

22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry [cloth]; her clothing is silk [fine white linen] and purple.

31:22. Silk was not brought to Israel until the time of Justinian (AD 483 – 13 or 14 November 565). Fine white linen is probably referred to. The virtuous woman does not mind dressing well and that is important. Far too many women let their personal appearance dissipate after they are married. That should not be done.



Nun
Seed / fish / activity / life

23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

31:23. The virtuous woman will be patient and marry well. She will marry someone of like faith and temperament. As a result, the marriage will allow her to enhance his reputation and promote him so that he is honored among others. He is known in the gates, the place of public gathering for important discussions.



Samekh
Hand on staff / support / prop

24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

31:24. The diligence and hard work of the virtuous woman has produced enough for her to make linen and sell it for profit. Spiritually, there is an application from this section. The virtuous woman is filled with practical godliness so that she is a blessing to her family and a blessing to others as well.



Ayin
Eye, watch, know

25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

31:25. A person is more than the substance of material matter. Every person has a soul and thus a character. Spiritual strength and personal honor characterize the virtuous woman bringing her peace of mind and inner joy for time and eternity. There is much joy in having a good conscience toward God that is undefiled (1 Peter 3:21).



Pey
Mouth, open, edge

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law [governing principle] of kindness.

31:26. Wisdom is the right application of bible doctrine to a given situation. The virtuous woman is known for being wise and expressing her thoughts with kindness according to gospel terms. Violent verbal language, sarcasm, emotional outbursts and dark thoughts are not to be found in the virtuous woman. Aesop (620-560 BC), the ancient storyteller, told this fable: Once upon a time, a donkey found a lion's skin. He tried it on, strutted around, and frightened many animals. Soon a fox came along, and the donkey tried to scare him, too. But the fox, hearing the donkey's voice, said, "If you want to terrify me, you'll have to disguise your bray."

Aesop's moral: Clothes may disguise a person, but words will give a person away. Blessed (and rare) is the man who has found a woman characterized by kindness in her conversation.



Tsade
Side, lay, edge

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

31:27. The virtuous woman is not an idle woman. She puts her family and not herself first. Others are her priority and in serving them she finds personal fulfillment. The virtuous woman does not let the hours slip away in idle behavior that is unproductive and self destructive of her time and character. The Spanish philosopher Miquel Unamuno (1864-1936) once illustrated how destructive idleness is in all of nature. He told about the Roman aqueduct at Segovia, in his native Spain. It was built in 109 A.D. For eighteen hundred years, it carried cool water from the mountains to the hot and thirsty city. Nearly sixty generations of men drank from its flow. Then came another generation, a recent one, who said, "This aqueduct is so great a marvel that it ought to be preserved for our children, as a museum piece. We shall relieve it of its centuries-long labor." They did; they laid modern iron pipes. They gave the ancient bricks and mortar a reverent rest. And the aqueduct began to fall apart. The sun beating on the dry mortar caused it to crumble. The bricks and stone sagged and threatened to fall. What ages of service could not destroy idleness disintegrated (Resource, Sept./ Oct., 1992).



Quph
Sun, condense

28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

31:28. The virtuous woman does not crave self attention and she certainly does not demand it. Nevertheless, if she will be virtuous and forget herself and serve her family and others, she will be rewarded. One day her children and her husband will rise up and call her blessed. They will do this out of a deep appreciation for who and what a good woman is. Any woman who demands attention and affection and honor will not find it. That is not the gospel way. God's way is for a woman to serve others and in that service she will find her glory. If this is a biblical concept hard to believe, it is because a generation of women has arisen more interested in looking out for number one than in having a meek and gentle spirit. Study 1 Peter 3:1.

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.



Resh
Head, top, first

29 Many daughters have done virtuously [well], but thou excellest them all.

31:29. Many types of women can excel in life but the virtuous women is said to remain pre-eminent. Brains, beauty, an attractive figure, and a large bank account are commendable assets but the spiritual woman is the most honored in the kingdom of God.



Schin
Teeth, sharp

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

31:30. The virtuous woman may not be the most physically attractive woman but her spirituality and tremendously kind personality makes her a beauty to all. Men by nature are initially attracted to outward beauty but most do value much more a godly and virtuous woman. She is the one who shall be praised. Shame, decay, sorrow and death waits for those who live for the sake of personal vanity and do not cultivate an inward spiritual life that fears the LORD.



Tau
Mark

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

31:31. The final listed characteristic of a virtuous woman reflects the sum total of her life. The works of a woman will either condemn or praise her. How can a man recognize a virtuous woman? Jesus has provided the answer in Matthew 7:20. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

31:11-27.

**Seventeen Characteristics of a Virtuous Woman
What a Christian Woman will Do**

- A Christian woman will not give her husband any cause for behavioral concern (31:11).
- A Christian woman will not engage in injurious behavior towards her husband (31:12).
- A Christian woman will work diligently with the tasks set before her (31:13).
- A Christian woman will be wise in matters of commerce (31:14).
- A Christian woman will prefer the needs of others before her own interests (31:15).
- A Christian woman will be able to successfully engage in expanding her household resources (31:16).
- A Christian woman will not avoid hard work (31:17).
- A Christian woman will not be bound to a strict time schedule but will do all that is necessary to bring many projects to a good conclusion (31:18).
- A Christian woman will be accomplished in practical matters within her sphere of endeavor (31:19).
- A Christian woman will be compassionate and reach out her hands to help others in need (31:20).
- A Christian woman will make sure her family is seasonably comfortable (31:21).
- A Christian woman will be careful about her personal appearance (31:22).
- A Christian woman will marry wisely an honorable man (31:23).
- A Christian woman will be able to be industrious when the opportunity arises and seek out ways to improve the household income (31:24).
- A Christian woman will be characterized by moral and spiritual strength and honor so there is nothing she will be ashamed of (31:25).
- A Christian woman will be gracious in her speech, dispensing words of wisdom with kindness (31:26).
- A Christian woman will not be slothful but diligent in her labors (31:27).

Leader's Study Guide

Proverbs 31

Questions and Answers on Proverbs 31

1. What evidence is there that Lemuel is another name for Solomon?

Answer.

There is no record of any king named Lemuel who sat upon the throne of Israel nor is the name found in any list of kings in other nations. The name Lemuel means “devoted to God”, which Solomon was. He was loved by God (2 Samuel 12:24).

6. Who is the real voice and teacher behind these proverbs?

Answer.

Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, taught him the truths stated here.

7. What did Bathsheba want to teach Solomon and why?

Answer.

Bathsheba wanted to communicate to Solomon great truths and eternal principles for she, like Hannah, had vowed to bring her son up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (1 Samuel 1:1-2:21; Ephesians 6:4).

8. List ten commandments for a king.

Answer.

• Do not dissipate your moral strength with women.	Proverbs 31:3
• Do not engage in self destructive behavior.	Proverbs 31:3
• Do not engage in drunken behavior.	Proverbs 31:4
• Do not forget the rule of law.	Proverbs 31:5
• Do not pervert justice.	Proverbs 31:5
• Be sensitive to those who are in sorrow.	Proverbs 31:6
• Encourage happiness.	Proverbs 31:7
• Defend the weak.	Proverbs 31:8
• Judge righteously.	Proverbs 31:9
• Plead the cause of the poor and needy.	Proverbs 31:10

9. List the seventeen characteristics of a virtuous woman.

Answer.

- A Christian woman will not give her husband any cause for behavioral concern (31:11).
- A Christian woman will not engage in injurious behavior toward her husband (31:12).

- A Christian woman will work diligently with the tasks set before her (31:13).
- A Christian woman will be wise in matters of commerce (31:14).
- A Christian woman will prefer the needs of others before her own interests (31:15).
- A Christian woman will be able to successfully engage in expanding her household resources (31:16).
- A Christian woman will not avoid hard work (31:17).
- A Christian woman will not be bound to a strict time schedule but will do all that is necessary to bring many projects to a good conclusion (31:18).
- A Christian woman will be accomplished in practical matters within her sphere of endeavor (31:19).
- A Christian woman will be compassionate and reach out her hands to help others in need (31:20).
- A Christian woman will make sure her family is seasonably comfortable (31:21).
- A Christian woman will be careful about her personal appearance (31:22).
- A Christian woman will marry wisely an honorable man (31:23).
- A Christian woman will be able to be industrious when the opportunity arises and seek out ways to improve the household income (31:24).
- A Christian woman will be characterized by moral and spiritual strength and honor so there is nothing she will be ashamed of (31:25).
- A Christian woman will be gracious in her speech, dispensing words of wisdom with kindness (31:26).
- A Christian woman will not be slothful but diligent in her labors (31:27).

Personal Application and Reflection

Self Evaluation

- I do not give my husband any cause for behavioral concern (31:11). Yes ____ No ____
- I do not engage in injurious behavior toward my husband (31:12). Yes ____ No ____
- I work diligently on the tasks set before me (31:13). Yes ____ No ____
- I am wise in matters of money (31:14). Yes ____ No ____
- I prefer the needs of others before my own interests (31:15). Yes ____ No ____
- I successfully engage in expanding my household resources (31:16). Yes ____ No ____
- I do not avoid hard work (31:17). Yes ____ No ____
- I am not bound to a strict time schedule but do all that is necessary to bring projects to a good conclusion (31:18). Yes ____ No ____
- I am accomplished in practical matters in my sphere of endeavor (31:19). Yes ____ No ____
- I am compassionate and reach out to help others in need (31:20). Yes ____ No ____
- I make sure my family is comfortable according to the season (31:21). Yes ____ No ____
- I am careful about my personal appearance (31:22). Yes ____ No ____
- I married wisely an honorable man (31:23). Yes ____ No ____
- I am industrious when the opportunity arises and seek out ways to improve the household income (31:24). Yes ____ No ____
- I am characterized by moral and spiritual strength and honor (31:25). There is nothing I am ashamed of. Yes ____ No ____

- I am gracious in my speech and try very hard to dispense words of wisdom with kindness (31:26). Yes ____ No ____
- I am diligent in my daily labors (31:27). Yes ____ No ____

Hiding God's Word in my Heart

Proverbs 31: 30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

Leader's Supplemental Material

Proverbs 31:2.

Doctrine of the Vow

1. By definition a vow is a strong verbal oath taken in the sight of the Lord that a certain action will or will not be performed. There is usually a condition involved.
2. God remembers the vows that are made and expects those who make them to keep them.
 - *Genesis 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on. 21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*
 - *Genesis 31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.*
 - *Numbers 30:2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*
 - *Deuteronomy 23:21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.*
3. When the Mosaic Law was established provision was made for the offering of a voluntary offering to visualize a vow.
 - *Leviticus 7:16 But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten:*

4. The sacrifice made in association with the vow had to be a pure offering without blemish to indicate the sincerity and purity of the heart.
 - *Leviticus 22:21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. 23 Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted.*
5. Either a man or a woman could take the Nazarite vow which caused them to be set apart from others for the service of God. The obligation was either for life or for a defined time. The term “Nazarite vow” comes from the Hebrew word nezer meaning to be separate.
 - *Numbers 6:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD:*
6. During the course of keeping the Nazarite vow there was to be the separation from strong drink and the hair was not to be cut.
 - *Numbers 6: 3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. 4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. 5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.*
7. Sometimes a very foolish vow can be made such as the vow of Jephthah.
 - *Judges 11:30-31 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, 31 Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. 35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! Thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. 36 And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. 37 And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. 38 And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. 39 And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom*

in Israel, 40 That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

8. Sometimes an honorable vow can be made such as when Hannah dedicated her child Samuel to the service of the Lord.

- *1 Samuel 1:11 And she [Hannah] vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him [Samuel] unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head [in compliance with the Nazarite vow].*

9. Sometimes a religious vow can be used as a covering for treachery as in the case of Absalom who plotted to take the kingdom from his father David.

- *2 Samuel 15:7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. 8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD. 9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron. 10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.*

10. As an act of genuine worship making vows to God is an acceptable form.

- *Psalms 65:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm and Song of David. Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.*
- *Psalms 76:11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*
- *Acts 18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.*

11. Only a fool would break a vow made to God.

- *Ecclesiastes 5:4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.*

12. It is far better not to ever make a vow to God than to make one and break it.

- *Ecclesiastes 5:5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*

13. It is considered to be lying to the Holy Spirit to promise to do something and then not do it. Such was the sin of Ananias and his wife.

- *Acts 5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?*

14. It is not wrong for a vow to be made to God. However, a vow should meet some criteria.

- A biblical vow should come from the heart.
- A biblical vow should be rooted in righteousness whereby the glory of God is in view while others are blessed.
- A biblical vow should be thoughtful and obtainable.
- A biblical vow should be definite in scope and easy to be remembered.
- A biblical vow should be kept at all cost.

15. Some vows are made in ignorance of Bible doctrine and should not be kept. For example, a man who makes a vow of celibacy because a church hierarchy demands it, is actually being taught a doctrine of demons as per 1 Timothy 4:1-3. If a person makes such a foolish vow and then learns the mind of God on this matter they are free to marry without sin (study 1 Corinthians 7:25-28, 36).

Addendum

Matthew Henry on the Virtuous Woman of

Proverbs 31:10-33

This description of the virtuous woman is designed to show what wives the women should make and what wives the men should choose; it consists of twenty-two verses, each beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order, as some of the Psalms, which makes some think it was no part of the lesson which Lemuel's mother taught him, but a poem by itself, written by some other hand, and perhaps had been commonly repeated among the pious Jews, for the ease of which it was made alphabetical. We have the abridgment of it in the New Testament (1 Timothy 2:9,10; 1 Peter 3:1-6), where the duty prescribed to wives agrees with this description of a good wife; and with good reason is so much stress laid upon it, since it contributes as much as any one thing to the keeping up of religion in families, and the entail of it upon posterity, that the mothers be wise and good; and of what consequence it is to the wealth and outward prosperity of a house every one is sensible. He that will thrive must consider his wife's counsel. Here is,

I. A general enquiry after such a one (v. 10),

where observe,

1. The person enquired after, and that is a virtuous woman—a woman of strength (so the word is), though the weaker vessel, yet made strong by wisdom and grace, and the fear of God: it is the same word that is used in the character of good judges (Exodus 18:21), that they are able men, men qualified for the business to which they are called, men of truth, fearing God. So it follows, A virtuous woman is a woman of spirit, who has the command of her own spirit and knows how to manage other people's, one that is pious and industrious, and a help meet for a man. In opposition to this strength, we read of the weakness of the heart of an imperious whorish woman, Ezekiel 16:30. A virtuous woman is a woman of resolution, who, having espoused good principles, is firm and steady to them, and will not be frightened with winds and clouds from any part of her duty.

2. The difficulty of meeting with such a one: Who can find her? This intimates that good women are very scarce, and many that seem to be so do not prove so; he that thought he had found a virtuous woman was deceived; Behold, it was Leah, and not the Rachel he expected. But he that designs to marry ought to seek diligently for such a one, to have this principally in his eye, in all his enquiries, and to take heed that he be not biassed by beauty or gaiety, wealth or parentage, dressing well or dancing well; for all these may be and yet the woman not be virtuous, and there is many a woman truly virtuous who yet is not recommended by these advantages.

3. The unspeakable worth of such a one, and the value which he that has such a wife ought to put upon her, showing it by his thankfulness to God and his kindness and respect to her, whom he must never think he can do too much for. Her price is far above rubies, and all the rich ornaments with which vain women adorn themselves. The more rare such good wives are the more they are to be valued.

II. A particular description of her and of her excellent qualifications.

1. She is very industrious to recommend herself to her husband's esteem and affection. Those that are good really will be good relatively. A good woman, if she be brought into the marriage state, will be a good wife, and make it her business to please her husband, 1 Corinthians 7:34. Though she is a woman of spirit herself, yet her desire is to her husband, to know his mind, that she may accommodate herself to it, and she is willing that he should rule over her.

(1.) She conducts herself so that he may repose an entire confidence in her. He trusts in her chastity, which she never gave him the least occasion to suspect or to entertain any jealousy of; she is not morose and reserved, but modest and grave, and has all the marks of virtue in her countenance and behaviour; her husband knows it, and therefore his heart doth safely trust in her; he is easy, and makes her so. He trusts in her conduct, that she will speak in all companies, and act in all affairs, with prudence and discretion, so as not to occasion him either damage or reproach. He trusts in her fidelity to his interests, and that she will never betray his counsels nor have any interest separate from that of his family. When he goes abroad, to attend the concerns of the public, he can confide in her to order all his affairs at home, as well as if he himself were there. She is a good wife that is fit to be trusted, and he is a good husband that will leave it to such a wife to manage for him.

(2.) She contributes so much to his content and satisfaction that he shall have no need of spoil; he needs not be griping and scraping abroad, as those must be whose wives are proud and wasteful at home. She manages his affairs so that he is always before-hand, has such plenty of his own that he is in no temptation to prey upon his neighbors. He thinks himself so happy in her that he envies not those who have most of the wealth of this world; he needs it not, he has enough, having such a wife. Happy the couple that have such a satisfaction as this in each other!

(3.) She makes it her constant business to do him good, and is afraid of doing any thing, even through inadvertency, that may turn to his prejudice, v. 12. She shows her love to him, not by a foolish fondness, but by prudent endearments, accommodating herself to his temper, and not crossing him, giving him good words, and not bad ones, no, not when he is out of humor, studying to make him easy, to provide what is fit for him both in health and sickness, and attending him with diligence and tenderness when any thing ails him; nor would she, no, not for the world, willfully do any thing that might be a damage to his person, family, estate, or reputation. And this is her care all the days of her life; not at first only, or now and then, when she is in a good humor, but perpetually; and she is not weary of the good offices she does him:

She does him good, not only all the days of his life, but of her own too; if she survive him, still she is doing him good in her care of his children, his estate, and good name, and all the concerns he left behind him. We read of kindness shown, not only to the living, but to the dead, Ruth 2:20.

(4.) She adds to his reputation in the world (v. 23): Her husband is known in the gates, known to have a good wife. By his wise counsels, and prudent management of affairs, it appears that he has a discreet companion in his bosom, by conversation with whom he improves himself. By his cheerful countenance and pleasant humor it appears that he has an agreeable wife at home; for many that have not have their tempers strangely soured by it. Nay, by his appearing clean and neat in his dress, every thing about him decent and handsome, yet not gaudy, one may know he has a good wife at home, that takes care of his clothes.

2. She is one that takes pains in the duty of her place and takes pleasure in it. This part of her character is much enlarged upon here.

(1.) She hates to sit still and do nothing: She eats not the bread of idleness, v. 27. Though she needs not work for her bread (she has an estate to live upon), yet she will not eat it in idleness, because she knows that we were none of us sent into this world to be idle, that when we have nothing to do the devil will soon find us something to do, and that it is not fit that those who will not labour should eat. Some eat and drink because they can find themselves nothing else to do, and needless visits must be received with fashionable entertainments; these are eating the bread of idleness, which she has no relish for, for she neither gives nor receives idle visits nor idle talk.

(2.) She is careful to fill up time, that none of that be lost. When day-light is done, she does not then think it time to lay by her work, as those are forced to do whose business lies abroad in the fields (Psalms 104:23), but her business lying within-doors, and her work worth candle-light, with that she lengthens out the day; and her candle goes not out by night, v. 18. It is a mercy to have candle-light to supply the want of day-light, and a duty, having that advantage, to improve it. We say of an elaborate piece, It smells of the lamp.

(3.) She rises early, while it is yet night (v. 15), to give her servants their breakfast, that they may be ready to go cheerfully about their work as soon as the day breaks. She is none of those who sit up playing at cards, or dancing, till midnight, till morning, and then lie in bed till noon. No; the virtuous woman loves her business better than her ease or her pleasure, is in care to be found in the way of her duty every hour of the day, and has more true satisfaction in having given meat to her household betimes in the morning than those can have in the money they have won, much more in what they have lost, who sat up all night at play. Those that have a family to take care of should not love their bed too well in a morning.

(4.) She applies herself to the business that is proper for her. It is not in a scholar's business, or statesman's business, or husbandman's business, that she employs herself, but in women's business: She seeks wool and flax, where she may have the best of each at the best hand, and cheapest;

she has a stock of both by her, and every thing that is necessary to the carrying on both of the woollen and the linen manufacture (v. 13), and with this she does not only set the poor on work, which is a very good office, but does herself work, and work willingly, with her hands; she works with the counsel or delight of her hands (so the word is); she goes about it cheerfully and dexterously, lays not only her hand, but her mind to it, and goes on in it without weariness in well-doing. She lays her own hands to the spindle, or spinning-wheel, and her hands hold the distaff (v. 19), and she does not reckon it either an abridgment of her liberty or a disparagement to her dignity, or at all inconsistent with her repose. The spindle and the distaff are here mentioned as her honour, while the ornaments of the daughters of Zion are reckoned up to their reproach, Isaiah 2:18, &c.

(5.) She does what she does with all her might, and does not trifle in it (v. 17); She girds her loins with strength and strengthens her arms; she does not employ herself in sitting work only, or in that which is only the nice performance of the fingers (there are works that are scarcely one remove from doing nothing); but, if there be occasion, she will go through with work that requires all the strength she has, which she will use as one that knows it is the way to have more.

3. She is one that makes what she does to turn to a good account, by her prudent management of it. She does not toil all night and catch nothing; no, she herself perceives that her merchandise is good (v. 18); she is sensible that in all her labour there is profit, and that encourages her to go on in it. She perceives that she can make things herself better and cheaper than she can buy them; she finds by observation what branch of her employment brings in the best returns, and to that she applies herself most closely.

(1.) She brings in provisions of all things necessary and convenient for her family, v. 14. No merchants' ships, no, not Solomon's navy, ever made a more advantageous return than her employments do. Do they bring in foreign commodities with the effects they export? So does she with the fruit of her labours. What her own ground does not produce she can furnish herself with, if she have occasion for it, by exchanging her own goods for it; and so she brings her food from afar. Not that she values things the more for their being far-fetched, but, if they be ever so far off, if she must have them she knows how to come by them.

(2.) She purchases lands, and enlarges the demesne of the family (v. 16): She considers a field, and buys it. She considers what an advantage it will be to the family and what a good account it will turn to, and therefore she buys it; or, rather, though she have ever so much mind to it she will not buy it till she has first considered it, whether it be worth her money, whether she can afford to take so much money out of her stock as must go to purchase it, whether the title be good, whether the ground will answer the character given of it, and whether she has money at command to pay for it. Many have undone themselves by buying without considering; but those who would make advantageous purchases must consider, and then buy. She also plants a vineyard, but it is with the fruit of her hands; she does not take up money, or run into debt, to do it, but she does it with what she can spare out of the gains of her own housewifery.

Individuals should not lay out any thing upon superfluities, till, by the blessing of God upon their industry, they have got beforehand, and can afford it; and then the fruit of the vineyard is likely to be doubly sweet, when it is the fruit of honest industry.

(3.) She furnishes her house well and has good clothing for herself and her family (v. 22): She makes herself coverings of tapestry to hang her rooms, and she may be allowed to use them when they are of her own making. Her own clothing is rich and fine: it is silk and purple, according to her place and rank. Though she is not so vain as to spend much time in dressing herself, nor makes the putting on of apparel her adorning, nor values herself upon it, yet she has rich clothes and puts them on well. The senator's robes which her husband wears are of her own spinning, and they look better and wear better than any that are bought. She also gets good warm clothing for her children, and her servants' liveries. She needs not fear the cold of the most pinching winter, for she and her family are well provided with clothes, sufficient to keep out cold, which is the end chiefly to be aimed at in clothing: All her household are clothed in scarlet, strong cloth and fit for winter, and yet rich and making a good appearance. They are all double clothed (so some read it), have change of raiment, a winter suit and a summer suit.

(4.) She trades abroad. She makes more than she and her household have occasion for; and therefore, when she has sufficiently stocked her family, she sells fine linen and girdles to the merchants (v. 24), who carry them to Tyre, the mart of the nations, or some other trading city. Those families are likely to thrive that sell more than they buy; as it is well with the kingdom when abundance of its home manufactures are exported. It is no disgrace to those of the best quality to sell what they can spare, nor to deal in trade and send ventures by sea.

(5.) She lays up for hereafter: She shall rejoice in time to come, having laid in a good stock for her family, and having good portions for her children. Those that take pains when they are in their prime will have the pleasure and joy of it when they are old, both in reflecting upon it and in reaping the benefit of it.

4. She takes care of her family and all the affairs of it, gives meat to her household (v. 15), to every one his portion of meat in due season, so that none of her servants have reason to complain of being kept short or faring hard. She gives also a portion (an allotment of work, as well as meat) to her maidens; they shall all of them know their business and have their task. She looks well to the ways of her household (v. 27); she inspects the manners of all her servants, that she may check what is amiss among them, and oblige them all to behave properly and do their duty to God and one another, as well as to her; as Job, who put away iniquity far from his tabernacle, and David, who would suffer no wicked thing in his house. She does not intermeddle in the concerns of other people's houses; she thinks it enough for her to look well to her own.

5. She is charitable to the poor, v. 20. She is as intent upon giving as she is upon getting; she often serves the poor with her own hand, and she does it freely, cheerfully, and very liberally, with an out-stretched hand. Nor does she relieve her poor neighbors only, and those that are nigh at hand, but she reaches forth her hands to the needy that are at a distance, seeking opportunities to do good and to communicate, which is as good housewifery as any thing she does.

6. She is discreet and obliging in all her discourse, not talkative, censorious, nor peevish, as some are, that know how to take pains; no, she opens her mouth with wisdom; when she does speak, it is with a great deal of prudence and very much to the purpose; you may perceive by every word she says how much she governs herself by the rules of wisdom. She not only takes prudent measures herself, but gives prudent advice to others; and this not as assuming the authority of a dictator, but with the affection of a friend and an obliging air: In her tongue is the law of kindness; all she says is under the government of that law. The law of love and kindness is written in the heart, but it shows itself in the tongue; if we are kindly affectioned one to another, it will appear by affectionate expression. It is called a law of kindness, because it gives law to others, to all she converses with. Her wisdom and kindness together put a commanding power into all she says; they command respect, they command compliance. How forcible are right words! In her tongue is the law of grace, or mercy (so some read it), understanding it of the word and law of God, which she delights to talk of among her children and servants. She is full of pious religious discourse, and manages it prudently, which shows how full her heart is of another world even when her hands are most busy about this world.

7. That which completes and crowns her character is that she fears the Lord, v. 30. With all those good qualities she lacks not that one thing needful; she is truly pious, and, in all she does, is guided and governed by principles of conscience and a regard to God; this is that which is here preferred far before beauty; that is vain and deceitful; all that are wise and good account it so, and value neither themselves nor others on it. Beauty recommends none to God, nor is it any certain indication of wisdom and goodness, but it has deceived many a man who has made his choice of a wife by it. There may be an impure deformed soul lodged in a comely and beautiful body; nay, many have been exposed by their beauty to such temptations as have been the ruin of their virtue, their honour, and their precious souls. It is a fading thing at the best, and therefore vain and deceitful. A fit of sickness will stain and sully it in a little time; a thousand accidents may blast this flower in its prime; old age will certainly wither it and death and the grave consume it. But the fear of God reigning in the heart is the beauty of the soul; it recommends those that have it to the favour of God, and is, in his sight, of great price; it will last for ever, and bid defiance to death itself, which consumes the beauty of the body, but consummates the beauty of the soul.

III. The happiness of this virtuous woman.

1. She has the comfort and satisfaction of her virtue in her own mind (v. 25): Strength and honour are her clothing, in which she wraps herself, that is, enjoys herself, and in which she appears to the world, and so recommends herself.

She enjoys a firmness and constancy of mind, has spirit to bear up under the many crosses and disappointments which even the wise and virtuous must expect to meet with in this world; and this is her clothing, for defense as well as decency. She deals honorably with all, and she has the pleasure of doing so, and shall rejoice in time to come; she shall reflect upon it with comfort, when she comes to be old, that she was not idle or useless when she was young. In the day of death it will be a pleasure to her to think that she has lived to some good purpose. Nay, she shall rejoice in an eternity to come; she shall be recompensed for her goodness with fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

2. She is a great blessing to her relations, v. 28.

(1.) Her children grow up in her place, and they call her blessed. They give her their good word, they are themselves a commendation to her, and they are ready to give great commendations of her; they pray for her, and bless God that they had such a good mother. It is a debt which they owe her, a part of that honour which the fifth commandment requires to be paid to father and mother; and it is a double honour that is due to a good father and a good mother.

(2.) Her husband thinks himself so happy in her that he takes all occasions to speak well of her, as one of the best of women. It is no indecency at all, but a laudable instance of conjugal love, for husbands and wives to give one another their due praises.

3. She gets the good word of all her neighbors, as Ruth did, whom all the city of her people knew to be a virtuous woman, Ruth 3:11. Virtue will have its praise, Philippians 4:8. A woman that fears the Lord, shall have praise of God (Romans 2:29) and of men too. It is here shown,

(1.) That she shall be highly praised (v. 29): Many have done virtuously. Virtuous women, it seems, are precious jewels, but not such rare jewels as was represented v. 10. There have been many, but such a one as this cannot be paralleled. Who can find her equal? She excels them all.

Note.

Those that are good should aim and covet to excel in virtue. Many daughters, in their father's house, and in the single state, have done virtuously, but a good wife, if she be virtuous, excels them all, and does more good in her place than they can do in theirs. Or, as some explain it, A man cannot have his house so well kept by good daughters, as by a good wife.

(2.) That she shall be incontestably praised, without contradiction, v. 31. Some are praised above what is their due, but those that praise her do but give her of the fruit of her hands; they give her that which she has dearly earned and which is justly due to her; she is wronged if she have it not.

Note.

Those ought to be praised the fruit of whose hands is praise-worthy. The tree is known by its fruits, and therefore, if the fruit be good, the tree must have our good word. If her children be dutiful and respectful to her, and conduct themselves as they ought, they then give her the fruit of her hands; she reaps the benefit of all the care she has taken of them, and thinks herself well paid. Children must thus study to requite their parents, and this is showing piety at home, 1 Timothy 5:4. But, if men be unjust, the thing will speak itself, her own works will praise her in the gates, openly before all the people.

[1.] She leaves it to her own works to praise her, and does not court the applause of men. Those are none of the truly virtuous women that love to hear themselves commended.

[2.] Her own works will praise her; if her relations and neighbors altogether hold their peace, her good works will proclaim her praise. The widows gave the best encomium of Dorcas when they showed the coats and garments she had made for the poor, Acts 9:39.

[3.] The least that can be expected from her neighbors is that they should let her own works praise her, and do nothing to hinder them. Those that do that which is good, let them have praise of the same (Romans 13:3) and let us not enviously say, or do, any thing to the diminishing of it, but be provoked by it to a holy emulation. Let none have an ill report from us, that have a good report even of the truth itself. Thus is shut up this looking-glass for ladies, which they are desired to open and dress themselves by; and, if they do so, their adorning will be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

The Meaning of “Proverb”

Proverbs 1:1.

proverbs. The word “proverb” is “mishlai” from “mashal” meaning “to rule.” Mashal is used in various ways in Scripture.

- **An allegory.** *Ezekiel 17:2 Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel;*
- **A discord.** *Numbers 23:7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. 8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?*
- **A triumph song.** *Isaiah 14:4 That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! The golden city ceased!*
- **An argument.** *Job 29:1 Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,*
- **A byword.** *Jeremiah 24:9 And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.*
- **A lament.** *Micah 2:4 In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields.*
- **A proverb or wise saying.** *1 Kings 4:32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.*

- **A type.** *Hebrews 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;*
- **A figure.** *Hebrews 11:19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

Proverbs

New Testament Quotations

1:1 proverbs. The book of *Proverbs* is quoted at least six times in the *New Testament*.

First Quote *Proverbs*

Proverbs 1:16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

New Testament

Romans 3:15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

Second Quote *Proverbs*

Proverbs 3:11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: 12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

New Testament

Hebrews 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Third Quote
Proverbs

Proverbs 3:34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

New Testament

James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Fourth Quote
Proverbs

Proverbs 11:31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

New Testament

1 Peter 4:18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

Fifth Quote
Proverbs

Proverbs 25:21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: 22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

New Testament

Romans 12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Sixth Quote
Proverbs

Proverbs 26:11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

New Testament

2 Peter 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

The Purpose of the Proverbs

Proverbs 1:1-6

1. To know wisdom
2. To know instruction.
3. To perceive the words of understanding.
4. To receive the instruction of wisdom.
5. To receive the instruction of justice.
6. To receive the instruction of judgment.
7. To receive the instruction of equity.
8. To give subtilty to the simple.
9. To give to the young man knowledge.
10. To give to the young man discretion.
11. To understand a proverb.
12. To understand the interpretation of a proverb.
13. To understand the words of the wise.
14. To comprehend dark sayings.

Doctrines Found in Proverbs

1. Doctrine of Anger
2. Doctrine of a Whore
3. Doctrine of Casting of Lots
4. Doctrine of Compassion
5. Doctrine of Covetousness
6. Doctrine of Divine Guidance
7. Doctrine of Fearing God
8. Doctrine of Fretting
9. Doctrine of Good Works
10. Doctrine of Hatred
11. Doctrine of Heirship
12. Doctrine of Hypocrisy
13. Doctrine of Hypostatic Union
14. Doctrine of Jealousy
15. Doctrine of Lying
16. Doctrine of Mercy
17. Doctrine of Pride
18. Doctrine of Prudence
19. Doctrine of Secrets
20. Doctrine of Self Sanctification
21. Doctrine of Separation
22. Doctrine of Sheol
23. Doctrine of Spiritual Retrogression
24. Doctrine of The Fool
25. Doctrine of The Froward Person
26. Doctrine of The Tongue

- 27. Doctrine of Thoughts
- 28. Doctrine of Trusting in the Lord
- 29. Doctrine of Usury
- 30. Doctrine of the Vow
- 31. Doctrine of the Widow