

## 20 - Proverbs

Proverbs

Key Verse:

### PROVERBS

Proverbs, for the most part, was written by King Solomon. When Solomon became king, he did not ask for wealth and power; he asked God to give him wisdom so that he could be a good shepherd for God's people. God was pleased, and gave him wisdom--and power and wealth as well (2Ch 1:7-12). The Proverbs reflect his wisdom. (Solomon himself did not follow his own advice; he gave his heart to many foreign wives and sowed seed of idolatry among his people [1Ki 11:8; Ne 13:26]).

A proverb is a short, wise statement that expresses some truth about human behavior. The wisdom of Solomon taught in this book is not just good advice based on human common sense. It rests on the fear of God. He says in 9:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The stated purpose of the book is to help young people "acquire a disciplined and prudent life by doing what is right and just and fair." It is to give "prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young" and to add to the knowledge of the wise. The first 9 chapters are directed to young men, and warn about the temptations of money and immoral women. In these chapters, Wisdom and Folly are personified. The rewards of following the way of wisdom, and the consequences of following the way of folly are well defined.

### FEAR THE LORD

Proverbs 1:1-33

Key Verse: 1:7

#### 1. Prologue (1-7)

Solomon, son of David, wrote the Proverbs to instruct young people so that they might learn prudence, knowledge and discretion, and acquire a disciplined life. All true wisdom rests on the fear of the Lord. To fear God means that we know that God is living, and that he is sovereign. We respect him and know that he punishes wrong-doers and blesses those who do right.

#### 2. Embrace Wisdom (8-19)

It is hard for a young person to overcome peer pressure. But a young man is wise if he listens to his godly parents and eschews the company and advice of those who go after ill-gotten gain.

#### 3. Warning against rejecting Wisdom (20-33)

Whoever listens to the voice of Wisdom will live in safety and be free from fear. Whoever rejects Wisdom and follows sinful desires or a way of violence will suffer.

Prayer: Lord, help me to fear you. Help me to follow the way of wisdom and discipline.

One Word: Fear God; don't be a fool

## THE LORD GIVES WISDOM

Proverbs 2:1-22

Key Verse: 2:6

### 1. Accept God's word (1-11)

When we store up God's word in our hearts and seek him in prayer, we will find true wisdom, for the Lord will give it to us. Furthermore, we will understand what it means to fear God. He will give us moral courage and protect us from the evil one. He will help us to walk in the way that is right and just. His wisdom will enter our hearts.

### 2. Wisdom saves from the way of the wicked (12-22)

God's wisdom in our hearts saves us from men who tempt us to leave the straight and narrow path and walk in the dark ways of dishonest dealings. God's wisdom also helps us to be chaste. Wisdom keeps us from falling into the temptation of those who try to persuade us that what is wrong is really all right. Wisdom helps us walk in the ways of good men, and live in God's land.

Prayer: Lord, give me your wisdom; help me to keep your word in my heart and walk in your ways.

One Word: Seek wisdom and live by it

## TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

Proverbs 3:1-10

Key Verse: 3:5,6

### 1. Keep God's commands in your heart (1-6)

How can I be healthy or popular or rich? According to Solomon, God's commands held in our hearts will give us health, long life, prosperity (2)--and many friends (4). What, then, are God's commands? First of all, we must trust in the Lord with all our hearts, and not depend on our human understanding. We must acknowledge his Lordship in all our ways, and he will show us how to live. If we want many faithful friends, then we must be a faithful friend.

### 2. Fear God; honor him with your wealth (7-10)

If we cast out our pride, if we fear God, and if we shun evil we will be healthy. How can we be rich? Only with God's blessing. God does not want our leftovers. He wants our firstfruits. If we honor God by bringing to him our firstfruits, he will bless us with an abundant harvest.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to trust you with my whole heart and not depend on my own ideas.

One Word: Trust in the Lord

BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO FINDS WISDOM

Proverbs 3:11-35

Key Verse: 3:12

### 1. The Lord's discipline (11-18)

Wisdom from God is more precious than gold or jewels; it is worth making a great sacrifice to obtain it (14-18). God teaches us his wisdom through discipline. When he disciplines us, we must first remember his love. Then we must seek to learn what he wants to teach us. We are very foolish if we resent or despise God's discipline. We only suffer more and do not grow.

### 2. The Lord's wisdom (19-35)

God is the source of all wisdom; he created the world by his wisdom. He gives us wisdom through his written word. He tells us not to live by our feelings but to exercise sound judgment and discernment. If the Lord is our confidence, then we can sleep peacefully. We must deal with others in God's way, not according to our pride or anger (27-32). We must not envy a violent man or choose his ways. God blesses the righteous and gives grace to the humble.

Prayer: Lord, teach me your wisdom and your love. Help me to walk in your ways.

One Word: Discipline...for those he loves

GUARD YOUR HEART

Proverbs 4:1-27

Key Verse: 4:23

### 1. Wisdom is supreme (1-19)

Good parents want to give their children everything, but the best thing a father can give his son is the word of God, for God's word is the source of wisdom. To have wisdom, one must lay hold of God's word with all his heart (4). He must esteem wisdom and love her (7,8). He must set his feet on the path of righteousness. Then he can walk in the light, and his life's direction will be clear (11,18).

## 2. Above all else, guard your heart (20-27)

We should not be careless about giving our hearts away. Once the heart becomes corrupt, the wellspring of life is polluted. If we give our hearts to God and let his word come in and dwell, then he keeps us from evil; he will help us to walk in the path of righteousness.

Prayer: Lord, help me to lay hold to your word with all my heart so that I may have your wisdom. Help me to guard my heart with diligence so that the wellspring of my life may be kept pure.

One Word: Guard your heart

## PEOPLE DIE FOR LACK OF DISCIPLINE

Proverbs 5:1-23

Key Verse: 5:21,23

### 1. Don't hate discipline (1-14)

Many people think they are being honest when they live according to their feelings. But our all-wise Father God warns us that illicit love affairs and/or promiscuous lifestyles are not only foolish, but they lead to death (5). Those who hate discipline and whose hearts spurn correction someday will be full of regret (12).

### 2. Drink water from your own cistern (15-23)

There is great peace and satisfaction of soul when we learn joyfully to accept the life God has given us. When we do things that we know are wrong, thinking that no one is watching, we may be sure that our ways are in full view of the Lord (21). One who thinks that he is expressing his freedom when he sins, finds that the cords of his own sin hold him fast, and that he dies for lack of discipline (22,23).

Prayer: Lord, teach me to discipline my heart and my words and my actions, and live according to your word, rather than by my own fickle feelings.

One Word: Exercise discipline--live in God's sight

## LEARN FROM THE ANT

Proverbs 6:1-35

Key Verse: 6:6

### 1. If you've put your foot in your mouth (1-11)

If one inadvertently makes a foolish commitment, he should not fatalistically give up and sleep. He should get rid of his pride, face the problem and solve it. Fatalism is laziness. We can learn a lesson from the diligent ant--he never gives up.

## 2. Seven things the Lord hates (12-19)

The Lord hates: Eyes that despise others; lying lips; hands that hurt others; hearts that devise wicked schemes; feet that rush to evil; false witnesses who destroy the good name of others; one who stirs up trouble among brothers. We must give our eyes, lips, hands, heart and feet to God for his use as instruments of righteousness (Ro 6:13).

## 3. The way to life (20-35)

The wise writer of Proverbs tells us again that to discipline our wayward hearts and walk in the way of God's commands is the way of life (23), while to allow lust to capture our hearts and lives is the sure way to destruction.

Prayer: Lord, help me to learn diligence and positive obedience from the ant.

One Word: Go to the ant and learn

## LIKE AN OX GOING TO THE SLAUGHTER

Proverbs 7:1-27

Key Verse: 7:2

### 1. The apple of your eye (1-5)

If I keep God's commands as the apple of my eye, and write them on the tablet of my heart, then God's word will keep me from the tempter's snare.

### 2. Like an ox to the slaughter (6-27)

The writer gives a vivid description of how a seductive woman tempts a man and leads him into a situation that will cost him his life. She looks for a simple young man who lacks judgment, and she brazenly approaches him and invites him to her home. She even appears to be a religious person. She assures him that her husband is away and invites him to come in and enjoy! He follows her like an ox led to the slaughter. A man with no word of God in his heart is easy prey. Satan tempts us at our vulnerable spots. When God's word is the apple of my eye, and it is stored in my heart, I can escape Satan's whisperings.

Prayer: Lord, help me to keep your word as the apple of my eye so that I may escape Satan's seductive voice.

One Word: God's word--the apple of my eye

## WISDOM SPEAKS

Proverbs 8:1-36

Key Verse: 8:35,36

### 1. Wisdom is more precious than rubies (1-21)

Wisdom speaks for herself! Her invitation is to all mankind (4). This is not worldly wisdom; it is spiritual wisdom from God. This wisdom offers prudence to the simple and understanding to the foolish. She detests wickedness and crookedness and hates arrogance and pride (13). Anyone who loves wisdom and seeks her will surely find her (17). True wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord.

### 2. Whoever finds me finds life (22-36)

God created the world through his word of wisdom. This Wisdom points to Jesus the Word (Jn 1:1,2). God's wisdom in creation far exceeds anything man can imagine. Wisdom rejoices in God himself and she delights in all his works of creation. This kind of wisdom is worth seeking with one's whole heart, for whoever fails to find her will surely die (35-36).

Prayer: Lord, teach me to love true spiritual wisdom and to honor you from my heart.

One Word: Those who seek wisdom find her

## INVITATIONS OF WISDOM AND FOLLY

Proverbs 9:1-18

Key Verse 9:10

### 1. Wisdom's invitation (1-12)

Wisdom invites us to leave our foolish ways and live. She invites those without moral direction, those inclined toward evil (1:22), to walk in the way of understanding. We must be humble to walk in this way--humble enough to accept rebukes and learn from our mistakes; humble enough to learn and grow through instructions. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

### 2. Folly's invitation (13-18)

Folly is a loud-mouth! Her invitation sounds like that of Wisdom (4,16). But she takes advantage of our foolishness and weakness. She says, "It's okay to sin if you don't get caught; go ahead and indulge in sinful thoughts and sinful actions--enjoy life! Nobody knows!" But Folly is undisciplined and without knowledge (13). Her invitation is an invitation to the house of death (18).

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember who you are and to have in my heart an awesome respect for you, so that I may reject the way of folly and follow the way of wisdom.

One Word: Fear God and live

## A REFUGE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

Proverbs 10:1-32

Key Verse: 10:29

### 1. The righteous and the wicked (1-7)

The "Proverbs of Solomon" include chapters 10:1-22:16. The purpose of this book is to help one build a personal code of moral values. In chapter 10, the contrast in lifestyle and life direction between the righteous and the wicked is described. God's hand of blessing and protection is on the righteous, but the wicked man will be frustrated; he will encounter violence; he must live with hatred. Finally, he will be utterly swept away. The way of the Lord is a refuge for the righteous, but it is a way of misery for the wicked.

### 2. Wisdom and foolishness (8-32)

The wise son brings joy to his father, but the foolish man brings grief to his mother. Laziness, pointless chattering, refusal to accept discipline or correction are all foolish. The wise person is diligent and obedient (8). He heeds discipline and speaks words that nourish others. His heart is full of love, not hatred. The wise person watches his tongue and walks in the righteous way of the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, help me to take refuge in your ways.

One Word: God's way is a refuge for the righteous

## THE FRUIT OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Proverbs 11:1-31

Key Verse: 11:30

### 1. Wealth is worthless on the day of wrath (1-8)

"But righteousness delivers from death" (4). The Lord does not like dishonesty or pride or unfaithfulness (1-3). A man who makes material wealth his goal often uses dishonest means, and feels no obligation to be faithful. When he becomes wealthy, he becomes proud. The righteous man puts his hope in God, and finds that God is utterly faithful to rescue and protect him.

### 2. The blessing of the upright (9-15)

The righteous man uses his mouth to build up and bless others. The wicked man gossips and talks too much. He destroys his neighbor by his words (9,11,13).

### 3. The fruit of the righteous (16-31)

The truly righteous person is one who has a right relationship with God. He attains life (19). He does not trust in riches (28), but in God. He who wins souls is wise (30).

Prayer: Lord, let the fruit of my life be a blessing to others.

One Word: He who wins souls is wise

## DON'T BE STUPID

Proverbs 12:1-28

Key Verse: 12:1

### 1. Love discipline (1)

No one loves discipline with his natural feelings, and no one likes to be corrected. But a humble person with a desire to learn and grow can love discipline and accept correction.

### 2. Obtain God's favor (2)

One who tries to succeed by being crafty or wicked will fail, but the man who obtains God's favor takes root in God and bears fruit.

### 3. Work hard (11,24,27)

A diligent hand will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor.

### 4. Be careful about what you say (14-23,25)

Words can build up others or tear them down. The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful. One shouldn't say everything he knows. He should be prudent (14-23,25). In the way of righteousness there is life and immortality (28).

Prayer: Lord, teach me wisdom; help me to walk in the way of righteousness.

One Word: Don't be stupid; be wise

## DISCIPLINE & WISDOM; RIGHTEOUSNESS & WEALTH

Proverbs 13:1-25



Key Verse: 13:18

1. Discipline and wisdom (1,10,13-14,18,20,24)

There are several ways to learn wisdom. One way is to heed instruction and advice (1,10,13-14); another is to respect discipline (18,24); another is to walk with wise men (20). Some people never listen to anyone, and when they are disciplined, they only become rebellious. Righteousness and integrity belong to the way of wisdom.

2. Righteousness or wealth (6,8,11,21-23,25)

It would be good to have both, but if that is not possible, it is better to have righteousness. Righteousness guards a man of integrity, but wickedness overthrows a sinner. A man's wealth may ransom his life if he is kidnapped, but if he is poor, no one will want to kidnap him. Blessings given by God to a righteous man become the inheritance of his children. One who seeks righteousness will find that his needs are supplied by God (Mt 6:33).

Prayer: Lord, give me a humble heart that seeks righteousness and wisdom first.

One Word: Seek God and his righteousness

## A WAY THAT SEEMS RIGHT

Proverbs 14:1-35

Key Verse: 14:12

1. There is a way that seems right (1-15)

Often, the way that seemed so right leads to death (12). Many proverbs in this chapter are about the foolishness of following one's own feelings or calculations. The woman who foolishly tears down her own house by her jealousy or nagging may think she is right. The mocker who seeks wisdom finds none because of his sarcasm (6). The unfaithful man thinks he is clever, but he will be fully repaid for all his ways; the good man will be rewarded for his.

2. The man whose walk is upright (16-35)

The man who fears the Lord walks uprightly; he has a secure fortress. To fear the Lord means to walk before God rather than before men. To fear the Lord is to honor and serve him. One who fears the Lord has a heart at peace (30). He does not envy anyone. One who fears the Lord is kind to the needy (31). Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin disgraces and destroys a people (34). To fear the Lord is the way that is right. This is the way of life (27).

Prayer: Lord, help me to fear and love and obey you and follow your word.

One Word: Fear the Lord; walk before him

## HUMILITY COMES BEFORE HONOR

Proverbs 15:1-33

Key Verse: 15:33

### 1. A tongue that brings healing (1-14)

The words we say reflect what is in our hearts. There are a number of proverbs in this chapter that deal with speaking (1,2,4,7,18,23,28) and with listening (5,10,12,14,22,31,32). We should use our tongues to encourage others and to share the life-giving gospel with them.

### 2. Better a simple meal with love (15-17)

A simple meal of vegetables eaten in an atmosphere of love and respect is far better than a rich meal of steak and lobster eaten in an atmosphere of hatred and mistrust. The one gives health, refreshment and strength; the other, indigestion.

### 3. Fear of the Lord teaches wisdom (18-33)

God gives wisdom to those who fear him and learn with humble hearts. A wise man listens to a life-giving rebuke (31). Humility comes before honor.

Prayer: Lord, rule my heart; control my tongue so that it may be used to share the life-giving word. Give me a humble heart and a learning mind.

One Word: Fear God; use your tongue to heal

## PRIDE GOES BEFORE DESTRUCTION

Proverbs 16:1-33

Key Verse: 16:18

### 1. Commit your plans to the Lord (1-9)

Man makes plans, but God gives the ability to carry them out. God weighs our motives: Do we seek his glory or our own benefit? We must seek his will, for he controls history. We must fit into his great purpose for ourselves and for all creation. We must fear God and humbly commit our way to him.

### 2. Pride goes before destruction (10-25)

God looks with favor on those whose lives reflect love and faithfulness (6); but proud men who seek their own selfish gain and ignore both truth and instruction are walking a way that leads to death (25).

### 3. A man who controls his temper (26-33)

In a world full of injustice, it is hard to control one's temper. But the man who controls his temper is better than one who takes a city. One who gives in to his anger must repent of his pride.

Prayer: Lord, I am nothing but dust and ashes; help me to know you; use me in your great redemptive purpose.

One Word: Pride goes before destruction

### A FRIEND LOVES AT ALL TIMES

Proverbs 17:1-28

Key Verse: 17:17

#### 1. What the Lord loves and what he detests (1-16)

Gold is tested in a crucible, but the Lord himself tests the heart. God is displeased by those who mock the poor (5); he does not like arrogant or lying lips (7), or men who bribe (8). He detests acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent; he is a God of justice. The Lord loves truthfulness; he does not like gossip (9). Parents should be worthy of their children's respect (6). He wants our hearts to be cheerful, for a cheerful heart is good medicine (22).

#### 2. A friend loves at all times (17-28)

In times of adversity we can discover who our friends are. Those who love us even when doing so means pain and loss are real friends. Jesus loves us at all times. He is our real friend.

Prayer: Lord, teach me the wisdom of walking close to you, my real friend--both in good times and in bad. Help me by your grace to pass the test of the heart.

One Word: A friend loves at all times

### A FRIEND WHO STICKS CLOSER THAN A BROTHER

Proverbs 18:1-24

Key Verse: 18:24b

#### 1. The power of the tongue (21)

There are several proverbs in this chapter which warn about the importance of how we use our tongues. Words can become a substitute for thinking; they can build up; they can tear down (2,4,6,7,8,13,20, 21,23).

## 2. Humility comes before honor (12)

The proud man does not want to learn; he only airs his own opinions (2). Sometimes God trains proud men by letting them fail in order to make them humble and useful to him (12). Marriage is also by God's grace and favor. One who leaves God out of his marriage is making a big mistake.

## 3. Our closest Friend (24)

A man who depends on many superficial friends will find himself alone at the very time he really needs a friend. But our best friend is Jesus. He is always there for us.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the failures that have made my heart humble. Thank you for always being there for me. Because you are there, I am not lonely.

One Word: Jesus is our best friend

## THE LORD'S PURPOSE PREVAILS

Proverbs 19:1-29

Key Verse: 19:21

### 1. Zeal without knowledge (1-19)

Zeal is good, but it must be tempered with knowledge and wisdom (2,3,8,10,11,19; Ro 10:2,3). One who blames God for his troubles (3) is a fool. One who trusts riches (1,4,6,7,17,22) will find them deceptive. One who tells lies and perverts the truth will perish (5,9,22,28). Wise parents discipline their children (18,27) and teach them to be diligent, obedient, and truthful (15,16).

### 2. The Lord's purpose prevails (20-29)

People make many plans and have all kinds of desires, but God's purposes prevail. So we must know God and learn to fear him and obey him. God gives us love that satisfies and real contentment (22,23). God establishes marriages. We may inherit wealth from parents, but God is the one who gives a prudent wife or a loving, diligent husband (14).

Prayer: Lord, teach me patience and wisdom and direct my zeal by your word and Spirit.

One Word: We need both zeal and knowledge

## THE LAMP OF THE LORD

Proverbs 20:1-30

Key Verse: 20:6

## 1. A faithful man who can find? (1-17)

People want to be faithful, but only God can help one be faithful. There are several things that deceive people. One is wine. Wine is a mocker. We can avoid being deceived by alcohol if we don't drink it. Laziness also deceives us by telling us that it's okay to put things off (4). Our desires for riches and material things also deceive us. Food gained by fraud tastes sweet, but ends up as a mouth full of gravel (17). False weights and measures only deceive the one who uses them.

## 2. God's lamp searches man's spirit (18-30)

God wants us to be loving and faithful; he detests dishonesty and double-mindedness (6,10,17, 23,25, 28). God knows our deepest thoughts and hidden motives (5,11,27). Even a child is known by his actions (11). We must acknowledge our sins and repent and ask God to cleanse and purify our hearts (9). Then we can be loving and faithful (6,28).

Prayer: Lord, search my heart; cleanse me by Jesus' blood and make me loving and faithful, as he is.

One Word: The Lord searches the spirit

## VICTORY RESTS WITH THE LORD

Proverbs 21:1-31

Key Verse: 21:31

## 1. The king's heart is in the Lord's hand (1-16)

The king is the leader of his people. He thinks he is in control; but God controls his heart. A man makes plans and does what seems right to him, but sometimes a man's perspective is crooked because his heart is crooked. God weighs a person's heart. God does not like haughty eyes or a proud heart. He does not like men who use violence to get what they want. To do what is right is more acceptable to the Lord than religious ritual (3).

## 2. He who pursues righteousness and love (17-31)

Neither worldly pleasures, nor material things such as a comfortable house can make a person happy (17); nor does marriage itself solve a person's problems (9,19). The person who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor. Men make plans, and get their horses ready for battle, but only God can give victory (30,31).

Prayer: Lord, help me to seek righteousness, not physical ease and material things; help me to become a loving person.

One Word: The Lord gives victory

## TRAIN A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO

Proverbs 22:1-29

Key Verse: 22:6

### 1. A good name--more desirable than riches (1-16)

Training a child in the right way means teaching him a right value system. A good name is more desirable than riches (1). We should despise no one, for God made us all (2). We must teach our children humility and the fear of the Lord (4); diligence (13); generosity (9); purity (11,14); prudence (3,16). We must discipline children (15). All of us find many excuses for laziness. Two excuses are in verse 13.

### 2. So that your trust may be in the Lord (17-29)

The words of God kept in our hearts give us true wisdom. There are no short cuts to wealth or wisdom. Wealth that comes by oppressing the weak or by sneakily moving boundary stones will not last. We must be careful about the friends we make (24); we must not be good-minded when it comes to money (26). We must fear God, respect others, and work hard.

Prayer: Lord, teach me humility; help parents to train their children so that children can be really free and happy.

One word: When he is old, he will not turn from it.

## DON'T ENVY SINNERS

Proverbs 23:1-35

Key Verse: 23:17

### 1. Don't be a slave to food and drink (1-8;20;26-35)

When one dines with a ruler, he should not think only about eating. He should pay attention to his host (1-3). When a stingy man invites you to eat and drink, his heart is not in it, so avoid such invitations. Gluttons, drunkards and those who chase women seem to live glamorous and exciting lives, but the outcome of such lives is tragic (20,26-28). Riches sprout wings and fly away (5). Verses 29-35 describe the agony of a person who is a slave to alcohol. We must be zealous for the fear of the Lord.

### 2. Discipline children (9-25)

It is hard to discipline those whom we love, but if we really love our children, we will discipline them. "Punish with the rod and save his soul from death." We must not try to protect our children or our sheep from God's discipline, but we must help them learn and grow from it.

Prayer: Lord, give me eyes to see worldly people from your point of view. Help me to be zealous for the fear of the Lord, and hold on to a sure hope (17,18).

One Word: Be zealous for the fear of the Lord

## A FUTURE HOPE FOR YOU

Proverbs 24:1-34

Key Verse: 24:14

### 1. By wisdom a house is built (1-22)

We should not envy wicked men, for their end is destruction. Rather, we should seek wisdom, for by wisdom a house is built (3). A wise man has great power (4); the one who wins the war is the man of wisdom (5,6,7). A wise person does not falter in times of trouble; he rescues those who are perishing (10-14). Wisdom is as sweet to the soul as honey is to the taste. If one has true wisdom, he has future hope; the word of the Lord is wisdom. The evil man has no future hope (20).

### 2. Don't show partiality in judging or be lazy (23-29)

God is sovereign. He is the Judge. He wants us to be honest and truthful. The guilty should be punished, but not for revenge (28-29).

### 3. Don't be lazy (30-34)

A little sleep and folding of the hands, and poverty will come on us like a bandit. We should do what we must do as if there were no tomorrow.

Prayer: Lord, give me wisdom, honesty, a hard-working spirit and a future hope.

One Word: A future hope

## A WORD APTLY SPOKEN

Proverbs 25:1-28

Key Verses: 11,25

### 1. For men who would be leaders (1-7)

God has hidden secrets; a leader must search out the deep things of God. A real leader is lonely, for he must keep many secrets in his heart. It is his business to know what is going on among his people and in his world. A leader is established in righteousness (3-5). We should have humble hearts before God and before the men he has established as our leaders (6-7).

## 2. An apt word (8-28)

Sometimes it is wiser to be silent (8-10). A rebuke is sometimes the most apt and appropriate word (11,12). The Lord wants trustworthy messengers who will deliver his message clearly (13). False testimony kills truth and destroys character. It is not fitting to sing joyful songs to one who has a heavy heart. Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land. We should love enemies for Jesus' sake (21,22), but we should not give in to them--and become like a polluted well (26).

Prayer: Lord, give me a humble heart so that the words I speak may be apt words. Help me to tell the good news of Jesus.

One Word: Speak apt words

## OF FOOLS, SLUGGARDS AND MALICIOUS MEN

Proverbs 26:1-28

Key Verse: 26:12

### 1. Fools (1-12)

There are many proverbs which describe the folly of a fool. A man who is wise in his own eyes is a fool. A fool curses good men, but his curse is ineffective (2). We must deal wisely with proud fools, or our efforts to help them become worse than useless (1,3-12). A fool never humbly receives discipline or instruction. He is a fool because he doesn't learn. Because he is a fool, he repeats his folly.

### 2. Sluggards (13-16)

There's a lion in the road! Sluggards find the strangest excuses for doing nothing! (13)

### 3. Malicious men (17-28)

A malicious man has fervent lips and an evil heart. He is deceptive. Jealousy, bitterness, a crooked sense of humor, and hidden sins make a person malicious. His malice may be concealed by deception, but he will finally be exposed.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse me by Jesus' blood from foolish pride, laziness and an impure heart; give me a humble and diligent heart.

One Word: Don't be a fool!

## DO NOT BOAST ABOUT TOMORROW

Proverbs 27:1-27



Key Verse: 27:1

### 1. Tomorrow (1-2)

We have only today. So we must live and work as if there were no tomorrow. We must boast only in the Lord and in his cross (Gal 6:14; 1Co 1:31). God holds our tomorrows in his hand.

### 2. Friends—and enemies (3-17)

Real friends are those who love us in Christ. Such friends are better than our human family. They rebuke us when we need rebuking (6,9); they are ready to help when disaster strikes. Jealousy clouds human relations, and flatterers cannot be trusted (6,7). One should be friends with those of his own household.

### 3. Stewardship and testing (18-27)

A man should take care of what he has and not be greedy for what he doesn't have (18-20; 23-27). A person is tested by praise and by suffering. If praise makes him proud, he is a fool. He should learn from suffering.

Prayer: Lord, I trust you for all my tomorrows. Help me to be a good steward of my privileges.

One Word: Finish it today

## BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO FEARS GOD

Proverbs 28:1-28

Key Verse: 28:14

### 1. The wicked man is full of fear (1-17)

A man who deliberately breaks the law or does what he knows he ought not do is full of fear (1); he not only does what is wrong, but also he praises the wicked (4); he does not understand justice (5); he cannot pray (9); he conceals his sin (13) and is tormented by guilt (17). When a wicked man rises to power, no one is glad (3,12,15,28). A person who does not fear God, but hardens his heart finds that he fears men and becomes wicked, even though this is not his intention (13,14).

### 2. The faithful and wise man is blessed (18-28)

The man who always fears the Lord is blessed. He is a faithful man. He seeks the Lord and can understand justice (5); he can be a leader (2); he confesses his sins and finds mercy (13); he works hard and has abundant food (19); he is not eager for riches, so he has compassion on the poor (8,20,22,25,27).

Prayer: Lord, teach my heart to fear you and help me to be faithful, even when it is costly.

One Word: The man who fears God is blessed

## WHERE THERE IS NO VISION

Proverbs 29:1-27

Key Verse: 29:18

### 1. A people who love justice (1-17)

If a nation has a wise, just and righteous ruler, the people are happy. But if the ruler is wicked and has no conscience, if he ignores justice, takes bribes, listens to lies, and oppresses the poor, then the people of that nation lose direction. The purpose of discipline is to make men and nations walk in the way of righteousness and justice. We must not be stiff-necked and proud when we are rebuked (1). We must discipline our children (15,17).

### 2. Where there is no revelation... (18-27)

The KJV translates verse 18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." Vision comes from God's revelation. God revealed himself and his world purpose in his word. It is here that we find God's vision for ourselves and for our nation. We must have vision, and we must have a prayer topic for our nation. If there is no national direction, the people cast off all moral restraint. This leads to destruction. We must fear God and put our hope in him (25,26).

Prayer: Lord, help America to become a kingdom of priests, not another Sodom.

One Word: Have God's vision

## THE FLAWLESS WORD OF GOD

Proverbs 30:1-33 (Sat.) June 26

Key Verse: 30:5

### 1. Wisdom from God's word (1-14)

Wisdom comes from God, who has given us his flawless word. One who adds to or subtracts from God's word is a liar (Rev 22:18,19). Falsehood and materialism destroy men's souls, so the psalmist asks to be kept from lies and from both poverty and riches. We only need our daily bread. Deeds that damage ourselves and others come from proud and impure hearts (10-14).

### 2. Learning the way of wisdom (15-33)

There are four things that are never satisfied. What are they? There are four mysterious things. What are they? The way of a man with a maiden should be a beautiful mystery, but if it becomes an immoral relationship, it is ugly (20). There are four things that no one can endure. What are

they? In each case, groundless pride makes the person unbearably arrogant. There are four small but wise creatures from whom we should learn. There are four bold and fearless creatures. We should respect others and have a learning mind.

Prayer: Lord, give me wisdom to learn and wisdom to repent.

One Word: Wisdom is from God's word

A NOBLE WOMAN

Proverbs 31:1-31

Key Verse: 31:30

1. A leader must be responsible (1-9)

King Lemuel's mother taught him that a king should live a responsible life. One cannot indulge his flesh desires and be a responsible leader at the same time. Alcohol and drugs are for those who are perishing in misery, not for men and women who want to live meaningful lives. She told him that kings must be shepherds who defend the rights of the needy, not selfish and vain men who exploit others and use their positions for self-indulgence.

2. Who can find a wife of noble character? (10-31)

She is God's gift. She is a blessing (12). She can be trusted completely by her husband (10). She is a good steward of her household, making sure that everyone has food and clothes (13-15). She helps her husband with wise decisions and hard work. She is generous and cares for the needy. She teaches her children. The key to her character is her faith--not her charm or beauty. She is a woman who fears the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, grant to our land responsible leaders and noble women.

One Word: Be a responsible and godly person