



# KINGDOM PROVERBS

Forty Daily Devotions  
from the Book of Proverbs  
(Based on the NKJV)

## Introduction

We live in a society that is saturated with knowledge yet starving for wisdom. The Book of Proverbs is filled with spiritual wisdom and knowledge that can be applied to the practical situations we face every day. A “proverb,” by definition, is a truth stated in a memorable fashion. It often offers a contrast between the right and wrong way to live, thereby helping us to avoid disaster in our relationships with God and other people. This is a book about faith, family, and friendships. It is a book that was written with a personal, practical, precautionary, and preventive purpose in mind. We all need practical advice that is also good spiritual advice. This is the kind of information we will process as we take this daily walk through the Kingdom Proverbs.

## Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Proverbs 1:1-19	3/22/26
2	Proverbs 1:20-33	3/23/26
3	Proverbs 2	3/24/26
4	Proverbs 3:1-18	3/25/26
5	Proverbs 3:19-35	3/26/26
6	Proverbs 4	3/27/26
7	Proverbs 5	3/28/26
8	Proverbs 6:1-19	3/29/26
9	Proverbs 6:20-35	3/30/26
10	Proverbs 7	3/31/26
11	Proverbs 8:1-18	4/01/26
12	Proverbs 8:19-36	4/02/26
13	Proverbs 9	4/03/26
14	Proverbs 10	4/04/26
15	Proverbs 11	4/05/26
16	Proverbs 12	4/06/26
17	Proverbs 13	4/07/26
18	Proverbs 14:1-18	4/08/26
19	Proverbs 14:19-35	4/09/26
20	Proverbs 15:1-17	4/10/26

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Proverbs 15:18-33	4/11/26
22	Proverbs 16:1-16	4/12/26
23	Proverbs 16:17-33	4/13/26
24	Proverbs 17	4/14/26
25	Proverbs 18	4/15/26
26	Proverbs 19	4/16/26
27	Proverbs 20	4/17/26
28	Proverbs 21	4/18/26
29	Proverbs 22	4/19/26
30	Proverbs 23:1-16	4/20/26
31	Proverbs 23:17-35	4/21/26
32	Proverbs 24:1-16	4/22/26
33	Proverbs 24:17-34	4/23/26
34	Proverbs 25	4/24/26
35	Proverbs 26	4/25/26
36	Proverbs 27	4/26/26
37	Proverbs 28	4/27/27
38	Proverbs 29	4/28/26
39	Proverbs 30	4/29/26
40	Proverbs 31	4/30/26

## Day 1: Proverbs 1:1-19

*“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...” (Proverbs 1:7)*

### “The Fear of the LORD”

Depending on the translation you use, you will find the phrase, “The fear of the LORD,” as many as fourteen times in the Book of Proverbs. In addition, you will find the phrase “fear the LORD” as many as four times in some translations. The most often used name for God in Proverbs is “LORD,” which is translated from “Yahweh” or “Jehovah.” This name for God is translated in all capital letters (“LORD” or “GOD”) to help us distinguish it from another name for God that is translated “Lord” or “God.” Although this name for God (“Jehovah”) is found over 6,000 times in the Bible, the Hebrew people used it sparingly. During some eras of Jewish history, this name was spoken only once a year by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. This name for God was held in the highest reverence to show the high reverence in which the people held their great LORD! The word translated “fear” in today’s focus verse represents the reverential respect we should have for God. The word translated “beginning” is a word that was used to describe the foundation or beginning of a building as well as the capstone that marked the completion of a building. So, having a right attitude of reverential respect for God is where wisdom begins and ends. Understanding this helps us to understand what Jesus meant when He said three times that He was the “Alpha and the Omega – the Beginning and the End” (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:10).

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Realize** that even the best Christians sometimes fall short of obedience. **Understand** that God must chastise and correct His children when they sin. **Accept** God’s discipline with the knowledge that He sends it so that we might be restored to a right relationship with Him.

## Day 2: Proverbs 1:20-33

*“But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.” (Proverbs 1:33)*

### Life Without Fear

Our focus verse includes several promises to the wise person who “listens” to God. The Bible clearly states that those who listen to God will “dwell safely, and will be secure” and “without fear of evil.” The word translated “safely” in our focus verse comes from a Hebrew word associated with the peace of mind that comes from dwelling in a place of refuge. In Leviticus 25:18, God promised His people that they could dwell in the Promised Land “in safety” if they obeyed His laws and commands. The idea is that those who heed God’s wisdom will not have to live in fear or worry about any negative consequences coming as a result of living disobediently. They can rest in the confidence that God’s wisdom will guide them to live in ways that allow God’s fullest blessings. When we walk wisely, we can live in constant *expectation* and not constant *anxiety*.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Look** for the word “wisdom” as you read Proverbs. **Underline** and **note** the various phrases that promise rewards to those who heed God’s wisdom, as well as those phrases that describe the different consequences that come to those who refuse to do so. **Read** and **heed** the words of James 1:5 – “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God.” **Pray** for God’s wisdom to guide you as you seek to serve the Lord today.

## Day 3: Proverbs 2:1-22

*“My son, if you receive my words...if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.” (Proverbs 2:1-5)*

### “If” and “Then”

Circle or underline the words “if” and “then” in the focus verses above. You should find three “ifs” and one “then.” Many of us desire that which follows the “then” but lack the discipline to be obedient to the things that come after the “ifs.” You can also find eight verbs in the first four verses of this chapter that will give you some indication of the way God desires that His people pursue wisdom. For example, verse 1 tells us that we are to “receive” God’s words and “treasure” them in our hearts. In verse 2, we are advised to “incline (our) ear” to wisdom and to “apply (our) heart” to understanding. Verse 3 admonishes us to “cry out for discernment” and to “lift up” our voices for understanding. Verse 4 teaches us to “seek” wisdom “as silver” and to “search for her as for hidden treasure.” It is only after meeting these conditional “ifs” that we are promised the “then” of verse 5 that allows us to begin to “understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.” As a whole, these verses teach us to place real value on the wisdom that comes from God and His Word. We all need to ask ourselves “if” we place as much value on God’s Word as we do on materials things like “silver” and “treasures.”

**Prayer Emphasis: Claim** the promises of the Bible in confidence by being confident that you have pursued wisdom in the ways that God describes. **Realize** that “if” we do these things, “then” we can always rely on God to do all that He promises. **Ask** yourself the hard question: “How much do I value the wisdom of God?”

## Day 4: Proverbs 3:1-18

*“Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold.” (Proverbs 3:13-14)*

### The “Happy” Person

In our focus verses we are told that the person who finds wisdom and understanding is “happy.” Notice this same word is found again in the last verse of today’s reading. However, in verse 13 we find that happiness comes to “the man who finds wisdom” while verse 18 promises happiness to those who “retain” wisdom. The Bible clearly describes wisdom as something to be “found” as well as something to be “retained.” Today’s Scripture provides some sound spiritual advice on how to be happy. For example, if we “trust in the LORD with all (our) heart and lean not on (our) own understanding” and “in all (our) ways acknowledge Him,” then He will “direct” our path (vs. 5-6). Look for other conditional commands that are followed by promises in these verses of Scripture and note them in your Bible. For every command of God there is a promise of blessing if we are obedient. Every relationship is made stronger when it is marked with happiness.

**Prayer Emphasis: Refuse** to allow the world to set the standard for how happiness is defined in your life. **Ask** God to show you how to live wisely in a very unwise world and how to have the kind of happiness that comes from a right relationship with Him. **Share** at least one way that God brings happiness into your life with someone who crosses your path today.

## Day 5: Proverbs 3:19-35

*“The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens; by His knowledge the depths were broken up, and clouds drop down the dew.” (Proverbs 3:19-20)*

### Three Important “Tools”

Note the words “wisdom,” “understanding,” and “knowledge” in verses 19-20. We are told that when God performed His great creation work, He did it with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. If God went to work with these three especially important things in His “toolbox,” then we would be wise to do the same thing in our own lives as we go about doing the work to which He has called us to do. If “wisdom,” “understanding,” and “knowledge” were important to God, then how much more important should they be to us? (When we get to Proverbs 8, we will see the role that wisdom played in God’s creation work expounded on more fully.) Today’s focus verses indicate that God put great thought into His every act, thereby ensuring that each phase of His creative work would complement His previous acts. As believers, our real job is to be Christian witnesses to the world in which we live. So, the world is our workplace. It will take wisdom and insight from God if we are to live for an eternal purpose in such a very temporal world. Note the familiar phrase “My son” in verse 21. In most translations, this is the seventh time that we have seen these two words thus far, and we will see them again another sixteen times before we finish reading Proverbs. These words emphasize the value that God places on our family relationship with Him.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Ask God to pack your toolbox with the wisdom to know *what* to say and *when* to say it as He gives you opportunities to be His witness today. **Remember**, having the right tools is not always enough. We must know how, and when, to use them to accomplish God’s purposes in life.

## Day 6: Proverbs 4:1-27

*“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.” (Proverbs 4:7)*

### “The Principal Thing”

In our focus verse, God says that “wisdom is the principal thing.” The word that is translated “principal” in the NKJV is translated to say that wisdom is the “beginning” (foundational) thing in several other translations. Some translations state that wisdom is the “supreme” or “most important” thing. The literal translation of the Hebrew word that is found in this verse means “first, beginning, best, or chief.” This word is similar to the word “beginning” in Proverbs 1:7 that described the fear of the LORD as being the “beginning” of knowledge. In the KJV, this same word is translated “beginning” 18 times and “first” eight times. This is the same word that is translated “beginning” in Genesis 1:1, when we are told “In the *beginning* God created the heaven and the earth.” Since wisdom is said to be the most important thing, we are then given several commands regarding it. We are told not to forsake it (v. 6); to love it (v. 6); to exalt it (hold it in the highest esteem) (v. 8) and to embrace it (v. 8). The last half of the focus verse directs us to acquire it at any cost, even if it costs us all that we have!

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Remember**, James 1:5 tells us that we can ask God for wisdom. We are told that God will freely give us something that the richest man in the Bible was willing to give all that he had to obtain. **Thank** God for this blessing today.

## Day 7: Proverbs 5:1-23

*“For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He ponders all his paths.” (Proverbs 5:21)*

### “The Eyes of the LORD”

After some somber warnings about the dangers of sin, specifically adultery, Solomon reminds us that all “the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD” and that “He ponders all our paths.” At least one translation states that our ways are “in full view” of the LORD. The consequences of adultery alone should be enough to prevent us from straying from the right path, but Solomon provides an even higher motivation for our fidelity when he reminds us that God is always watching our every action. There is more to the statement about God’s eyes here than first meets our eye. We would do well to remember that God sees not only our actions but also our motivations. When we are so easily *distracted* by sin, it is an indicator that we are not *attracted* to the right things. Note that verse 18 commands the reader to find his joy in the arms of his own wife rather than in the arms of the adulteress. The true believer settles for nothing less than a genuine relationship with God and rejects anything that hinders that relationship. God knows when we are serving Him because we genuinely love Him. He also knows when we are simply going through the “motions” while our hearts are elsewhere.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Examine your motivations to see if God’s honor and glory are the primary desires of your heart. **Ask** yourself this very difficult question: Do I care more about what men see or what God sees? **Repent** of any known sin in your life and **rededicate** your heart to Him new and afresh today!

## Day 8: 6:1-19

*“Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise,” (Proverbs 6:6)*

### “The Ant”

In today’s focus verse, the sluggard is commanded to learn a big lesson from a little creature. That lesson is about life. The Hebrew word that is translated “sluggard” is found 14 times in Proverbs but then in no other book of the Bible. This word refers to more than being lazy. It also has a lot to do with the person that works only when they are commanded to do so and only when they know that the boss is watching. In several translations of the Bible, this word is translated “slothful” as many times as it is translated “sluggard.” Because of that, we understand that the word includes not only those who do not work, but also those who do not work to their best ability or at their highest capacity. Notice that verse 7 states that the ants work even when there is no “captain.” Other translations use the words “guide” or “commander” there. The purpose of that “captain” was obviously to serve as an “overseer or ruler” (v. 7). Could it be that the ant, by nature, already knows what God was trying to teach us yesterday when He reminded us that our lives are lived “before” or “in full view” of Him? I sometimes notice that when God refers to the ant, he uses the feminine pronoun “her.” That makes good sense because – if he were speaking of a male “ant” I guess it would be an “uncle!”

**Prayer Emphasis:** Refuse to allow a tiny, little creature like an ant to make you look small in God’s eyes! **Focus** on doing what you do for the LORD and His church with great enthusiasm and to the best of your ability. **Do** something good for someone today and give God all the credit!

## Day 9: Proverbs 6:20-35

*“Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbor’s wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent.” (Proverbs 6:27-29)*

### “Hot Coals”

Although I have never attended one, I have heard of many professional conferences where people walk barefoot across hot coals. It is called “fire walking” and it is often used in corporate and team-building seminars and self-help workshops as a confidence-building exercise. Fire walking is the act of walking barefoot over a bed of hot embers or stones. Some consider it a rite of passage. Others see it as a test of one’s strength or courage. There are even those who consider this act to be a test of faith. In today’s focus verse, “fire walking” has absolutely nothing to do with faith but a whole lot to do with foolishness. God clearly states that those who live immoral lifestyles and participate in immoral activities are walking on hot coals! He then clearly indicates that one cannot do this without eventually suffering some terrible consequences. Even with such clear warnings from God’s Word, many Christians continue to flirt with disaster by doing things they know are clearly contrary to God’s laws and commands. Verse 35 of today’s reading clearly indicates that there are some things that we simply cannot buy our way out of!

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** that we are always in God’s “full view” (Proverbs 5:21) and there is no hiding from God! **Expect** God to chastise His children when they sin. **Accept** God’s chastisement and allow it to be a *positive* and *protective* force in your life.

## Day 10: Proverbs 7:1-27

*“My son, keep my words, and treasure my commands within you...That they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words.” (Proverbs 7:1 & 5)*

### “Keep My Words”

In our first focus verse, Solomon pleads with his son to “keep” his commands and to “treasure” them. Other translations use the words “lay up” or “store” to express what God is commanding us to do here. The word that is translated “keep” in this verse is the same word used to describe the duty of the angel that God posted at the gate in Eden to “guard” or “keep” Adam and Eve from returning there (Genesis 3:24). This is the same word that is translated “keep” in our second focus verse. The magnificent truth that Solomon is trying to communicate to his son – and that God is trying to communicate to us – is that if we keep (guard) God’s Word in our hearts, He can then use that Word to keep (guard) us from falling prey to the many lusts of the flesh. The adulteress woman here represented any sin that might lure us away from the walk and work to which we have all been called. Verse 4 clearly indicates that heeding God’s divine wisdom is our greatest protection from becoming victims to Satan’s enticements.

**Prayer Emphasis: Reread** verse 5 and note the word “flatters.” This word is translated “divide” in 40 of the 65 times that it appears in the KJV. **Recognize** that it is Satan’s intention to create division, or separation, between man and God. **Refuse** to believe Satan’s lies and **remain** faithful to God!

## Day 11: Proverbs 8:1-18

*“Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, and from the opening of my lips will come right things...Riches and honor are with me, enduring riches and righteousness.” (Proverbs 8:6 & 18)*

### “Enduring Riches”

Today’s focus verses promise “enduring riches” to those who choose to listen to and heed God’s wisdom. In this chapter, wisdom is once again referred to with the use of feminine pronouns. Compare the godly woman that we read about today with the “woman” we read about yesterday in chapter seven and you will clearly see that both are out and about, in the streets, seeking people to do their bidding. The point that should be taken to heart here is that there is always an alternative to falling prey to temptation and the lures of sin and the flesh. We often cling to the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13, where God’s Word promises a way of “escape” when we are tempted to sin. That provision has always been available to God’s people, and it was obviously available in Solomon’s day. To those who choose wisely, God promises riches that will endure. This simply means that God will give us the kind of riches that man cannot take *from* us because man did not give them *to* us. These are the kind of riches that we can take with us when we leave this world for our eternal home.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Notice that verses 10 and 11 of today’s reading clearly indicate that the riches that are enduring and eternal are much more important and valuable than silver, gold, and precious stones. **Choose** wisely today. **Take** the alternative route that leads to righteousness and obedience to God.

## Day 12: Proverbs 8:19-36

*“My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver.” (Proverbs 8:19)*

### “Better”

Most of the translations of the Bible all agree that there is no “better” translation of one of the Hebrew words found in today’s focus verse than “better.” The first time this word was ever used in the Scriptures was in Genesis 1:4. There we are told that after God’s first creating command, there was light and that God saw the light and that it was “good.” In the KJV, this word is translated “good” 361 times and “better” only 72 times. The point I want to make today is that what God considers “better” for us is always, without exception, also “good” for us. That is why God repeatedly reminds us to ignore the temptation to determine what is “better” for us by what might impress those around us. When our thoughts and actions make an impression on God and heaven, then we will, most assuredly, make the right kind of impression on the lives of those around us in this world. Only God’s wisdom can help us to think in heavenly ways. Only His path can take us in a heavenly direction. From verses 22 through 31, we see that the world was created in accordance with God’s wisdom. Undoubtedly, that is why He was able to declare it to be “good.”

**Prayer Emphasis:** Note the word “blessed” in verse 34. This is the same word that is also translated “happy” in some places in the Bible. **Realize** there is no greater “blessing” or “happiness” for the believer than walking in the “good” and “better” ways of God.

## Day 13: Proverbs 9:1-18

*“Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding.” (Proverbs 9:6)*

### “The Way of Understanding”

Most translations consistently use the word “understanding” in today’s focus verse. This Hebrew word, like the root word from which it is derived, is found more often in Proverbs than any other book of the Bible. The command here is that we “go” or walk “in the way of understanding.” The first part of this verse clearly indicates that to walk otherwise would be to follow the way of “foolishness.” Some translations use the word “foolish” or “simple” in the first part of our focus verse. In today’s chapter, verses four through six include wisdom’s invitation for all to come and feast at her table. There are usually just two ways that one may respond to an invitation. We can choose to either *accept* it or to *reject* it. Notice that verses seven and eight record the responses of the “scoffer” while the last part of verse eight and verse nine record the responses of the wise person. Note that verse six teaches us that we may have to “forsake” or “leave” some relationships or friendships behind if we are going to walk in the way that our God has called us.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Accept** the fact that there will be many who refuse to walk in the way of understanding. **Be willing** to walk it alone, if necessary. **Realize** that we are never alone when we walk with God. **Choose** to be faithful to God in all circumstances and situations in your life.

## Day 14: Proverbs 10:1-32

*“The Proverbs of Solomon: A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother...The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.” (Proverbs 10: 1 & 11)*

### “The Proverbs of Solomon”

Today’s first focus verse contains the title to a wonderful section of Scripture that is called “The Proverbs of Solomon.” This special group of proverbs begins here at Proverbs 10:1 and continues through Proverbs 22:16. There are 375 verses in this collection of proverbs. It may be purely coincidental that the numeric value of the consonants that make up the word “Solomon” is also 375. But, then again, these 375 special selected proverbs may have been grouped together to indicate that these truths were the essence of Solomon’s life and best describe his beliefs. Beginning at verse 11 and reading through verse 32, take a few moments to mark the many different words associated with the mouth or speaking. Verse 11 indicates that the mouth of a righteous man is a “well of life.” Some translations use the word “fountain” in that verse. However, the mouth (or speech) of the wicked man is “covered” or “overwhelmed” by violence. Not everything that the righteous say is going to be right, while not everything that the wicked say is going to be wrong. However, it doesn’t take long for a person’s language to reveal what is in their heart.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Ask** God to give you an opportunity to speak words of love and healing to someone today. **Refrain** from any comment that is anything less than what you would find acceptable to have someone say to or about you or those you love. **Pray** for those who are angry and **seek** to always be a calming influence in the church.

## Day 15: Proverbs 11:1-31

*“He who is devoid of wisdom despises his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his peace.” (Proverbs 11:12)*

### “A Man of Understanding”

We will see the words “wisdom” and “knowledge” in Proverbs more than any other book of the Bible. The same is true about the word “understanding.” To have “knowledge” is to have “facts” or “information.” To have “wisdom” is to know what to do with, or about, the “knowledge” (the facts or information) that we have received. “Understanding” has much to do with the *when, where, and how* we act upon the “knowledge” that we have received. Understanding asks appropriate questions about the knowledge to which we have been exposed. It asks about the *who, what, when, where, and why* regarding the subject. Understanding seeks the meaning of the facts, or statements, and explores the motivation behind them. The person described in our focus verse then, is the person who “holds his peace,” or does not speak too quickly upon learning of things done or said. Understanding processes all the data before hitting the “reply” button. In yesterday’s reading (Proverbs 10:19) we were taught that “he who restrains his lips (holds his tongue) is wise.”

**Prayer Emphasis: Remember** to be both patient and prayerful prior to speaking to or about people. We must **refrain** from being critical of others or speaking half-truths simply because we did not wait until we knew the whole truth. **Review** chapter 11 and note all the verses that have to do with sins or mistakes related to our speaking.

## Day 16: Proverbs 12:1-28

*“A righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” (Proverbs 12:10)*

### “A Righteous Man”

While writing, I have asked the Lord to help me avoid using just the better-known verses from Proverbs by putting some of the lesser-known verses on my heart. Today’s focus verse is a good example of one of the days that God answered my prayer. The verse begins easily enough. It states that the truly “righteous” person is one who cares about more than himself or his own family. In fact, the righteous person cares about more than just his fellow man. The righteous person cares about the needs of all of God’s creations, especially those that have been entrusted to his care. How sad is the comparison to the “wicked” person. This person’s kindest actions are considered to be “cruel.” This person may do the things that have to be done for others, but it is obvious to those to whom he ministers or serves that he is only doing his job – what he *has* to do and not what he truly *desires* to do. The word “cruel” does not deal with this person’s actions – what he does – but with the *way* that he goes about doing it. This kind of cruelty can be discerned from the tone of our words. It can also be seen in the expression on our face. Can you imagine how those we serve are made to feel when they are left thinking that they have been a great inconvenience to us?

**Prayer Emphasis: Seek** to serve with the appropriate heart attitude. **Be kind** in your relationships. **Obey** the Scripture command to “speak the truth,” but do not forget that we are commanded to do so “in love.”

## Day 17: Proverbs 13:1-25

*“By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom.” (Proverbs 13:10)*

### “Pride”

Does it surprise you that we have read so much of the book of Proverbs and have only read the word “pride” three times? Back in Proverbs 8:13, we were told that wisdom hates pride. Then, in Proverbs 11:2 we read that when pride comes into our lives “shame” is soon to follow. Now we learn that pride can be a cause for “strife” in our relationships. Some translations use the words “contention” or “quarrels” to express what God is saying to us here. The word “pride” traces its origin back to a Hebrew word that means “to boil or seethe.” It means to act, or react, in a presumptuous manner. This word is first found in the Bible in Deuteronomy 18:22 where it is translated “presumptuously.” Pride causes us to presume a lot of things. It causes us to presume that we are acting in wisdom and understanding. It causes us to presume that we have all the facts. It also causes us to presume we are right and that anyone who disagrees with us is wrong. It is easy to see how this kind of attitude brings “nothing but strife,” disagreement, contention, and quarrels among even the best of God’s people. The opposing quality to pride is the willingness to seek counsel and to follow godly advice. The first time that the word translated “well-advised” here is found in the Bible is when Jethro provided Moses with some wise “counsel” back in Exodus 18:19.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Avoid reacting, or overreacting, in prideful ways that stir up contention and quarrels among God’s people. Ask God to give you a controlled tongue! As much as possible, **speak** to others of God’s goodness and **praise** Him for all that He is and for what He has done.

## Day 18: Proverbs 14:1-18

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

### A Truth Worth Repeating!

The spiritual truth that God is trying to communicate here is so important that it is repeated later in Proverbs 16:25. The word translated “way” here is a word that could be used in reference to a specific road or path, or, in a broader sense, a course or manner of life. In other places in the Bible, this same word is translated either “journey” or “manner.” The important thing to remember about this word is that it references God’s designated path, road, course, or manner of life. Solomon is advising us that there are some things that may “seem” to be the way that God would have us to go. There may be times we are absolutely convinced that what we are doing is in line with what God would desire. However, we cannot always trust our own instincts. We may have nothing but good intentions, but if our “way” is not “right” in God’s eyes, then it is not right at all.

**Prayer Emphasis:** We should all **remember** to check our *ways* against God’s *Word* on a regular basis. The absence of immediate chastisement is not always an indication that the way that we are going, or planning to go, is correct and acceptable to God. **Realize** that what may *seem* right in our eyes may not be *seen* as right in the eyes of God.

## Day 19: Proverbs 14:19-35

*“He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly.” (Proverbs 14:29)*

### *The Importance of Patience*

Our focus verse directs us to be “slow to wrath.” The Hebrew words that are translated “slow to wrath” here in the NKJV are sometimes simply translated “patient.” The Bible clearly teaches us that when we are patient, or not easily angered, we are of “great understanding.” It is interesting that the word translated “great” here is translated “captain” in as many as 24 places in some translations of the Bible. The impression that this verse leaves us with is that the person who controls his temper is being a good “captain” over his words and actions. As we learn to “captain” our understanding, we will soon find ourselves better controlling our words and actions. Being patient affords us time to police our thoughts and to process the knowledge (information) that is before us so that we can act in wisdom. Patience is about policing our spirit to prevent us from becoming angry about matters that can be resolved in better, more Christ-like ways.

**Prayer Emphasis: Practice** patience. **Pray** for patience. **Plan** to be patient at your very next opportunity. (I am sure that one will come along soon enough!) **Prepare** yourself to “captain” your spirit by spending time with God in prayer and Bible study.

## Day 20: Proverbs 15:1-17

*“Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted calf with hatred.” (Proverbs 15:17)*

### *Love Makes Everything “Better”*

There must not be a “better” way to translate the Hebrew word that is translated “better” in our focus verse. I say that because I checked 28 different translations and every one of them includes the word “better” in this wonderful verse of Scripture. Among other things, this same word is translated “good,” “better,” “best,” “precious,” and even “beautiful” in other places in the Bible. The words translated “dinner of herbs” is sometimes translated “meal of vegetables.” It is also translated in several other interesting ways in various translations, including “a simple meal,” “a meal of greens,” and even “a bowl of soup.” Now, I have no issue with thinking any of these things “better” than what some might consider to be fine dining. My family often had meals of just beans and cornbread – and I love it still to this day! However, the focus here is not on the meal, but on the emotion that is shared among those at the table. Literally, the wise man was saying that it is a better (more precious and beautiful) thing to sit down to a simple meal where love is shared than to have the finest foods without love. Presentation can make the simplest table a thing of beauty, and there is no better presentation that the believer can make but to do all things in love. The next time you plan a menu, plan to serve generous portions of love at your dinner and all will be blessed.

**Prayer Emphasis: Practice** Christian love in all your relationships. **Believe** that people desire love more than anything else. **Express** Christian love to others today and, thereby, provide a feast for what may be some very hungry people that you meet.

## Day 21: Proverbs 15:18-33

*“A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!” (Proverbs 15:23)*

### *The Value of Timely Words*

“It is not *what* you say, but *how* you say it!” If I had a nickel for every time that I heard my mother say those words, I would be an extraordinarily rich man! When you compare some of the different translations of the Bible, it might appear that the only similarity in the translations is the word “good.” However different the translations may sound, they do come to the same spiritual conclusion. I selected verse 23 as today’s focus verse because of this word “good.” This word comes from the same Hebrew word as the word “better” that we read about yesterday. If you recall, this same word is translated “good,” “better,” “best,” and even “precious,” and “beautiful” in other places in the Bible. I am sure that all of us can recall how precious or beautiful the comforting words of a friend have been to us in the different seasons of our lives. We all know that it is not always *what* is said but *how* it is said that enables words to make a meaningful difference. Sometimes we hear the love and compassion more than just the words that are spoken. From this Scripture we learn that the “best” or “good” and most “precious and beautiful” words are words that are spoken in the right *tone*, as well as at the right *time*.

**Prayer Emphasis: Look** for opportunities to speak words of love and compassion to others. **Be sensitive** to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and **speak** when He is urging you to do so. **Encourage** someone with words of love or comfort today.

## Day 22: Proverbs 16:1-16

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

### *How God Sees Things*

The word translated “pure” here in the NKJV is translated “clean” in the KJV and “innocent” in the NIV. However you translate the word, the truth remains the same. Our actions may *seem* “pure” in our “own eyes,” but we are reminded in our focus verse that God sees not only *what* we do but *why* we do it. Only God can truly know a person’s heart. We may think that we know our heart’s attitude, but we must repeatedly remind ourselves that in Jeremiah 17:9 the heart is said to be “deceitful above all things” and “desperately wicked” (NKJV) or “beyond cure” (NIV). Then to that incredible statement, the prophet adds this question about our hearts: “Who can ‘know’ (NKJV) or ‘understand’ (NIV) it?” God knows whether or not the motives for our actions are pure and holy, even when we may not realize it ourselves. That is why we must be purposefully and prayerfully searching God’s Word for guidance every day and in every situation of our lives. Only God’s Word can fill our hearts with the right motivations.

**Prayer Emphasis: Pray** the prayer of Psalm 139:23 today: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts” (KJV). **Examine** your motivations and seek to root out the bitter weeds of selfishness that might entangle your heart and mind.

## Day 23: Proverbs 16:17-33

*“Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.” (Proverbs 16:24)*

### “Pleasant Words”

If you are reading from the NKJV or the KJV, then Proverbs 16:24 marks the fifth time you have read the word “pleasant” in the Book of Proverbs. If you are reading from the NIV, or another version, then this might be the fourth time you have seen this word. However, today’s focus verse is the first time in either of those translations where we see the English word “pleasant” translated from this particular Hebrew word that is found in this verse. This Hebrew word is not found often in the original manuscripts. In fact, it is only found seven times in all the Old Testament with five of those times being in Psalms and Proverbs. The word translated “words” here is not referring to individual words but rather to phrases, utterances, or speeches. The indication here is that there is the ability within God’s people to speak kind, pleasant things to others in their times of greatest need. These Spirit-led, love-filled phrases will be “sweet” sounding to the souls of those who need to hear them, and they will promote “health” (NKJV) or “healing” (NIV) in the hearts and minds of those who may be suffering.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Weigh** your words carefully today. Seek to **speak about** things that will promote healing and be helpful to those you encounter today. **Realize** that there are many hurting people in the world and that God’s Word can be like a healing balm to their bitter wounds and burdened souls.

## Day 24: Proverbs 17:1-28

*“Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.” (Proverbs 17:28)*

### The Ministry of Silence!

I could not help but recall one of the sarcastic responses that Job gave to his accusers when I read this verse. Job said, “But you forgers of lies, you are all worthless physicians. Oh, that you would be silent, and it would be your wisdom!” (Job 13:4-5). It certainly sounds as if Job’s friends were speaking something much less than the “pleasant words” that we read about yesterday and that, at least in that suffering saint’s opinion, they would have been better off saying nothing at all. If you recall, *nothing* is exactly what Job’s friends said to him for seven days and seven nights when they first arrived to comfort him. It was only after those seven days and nights when they began to speak, that they began to antagonize their wounded friend. We would do well to learn that there is much ministry in silence. We, like the Apostle Peter, often think we simply have to say something, even if we have no clue at all as to what we should say. There is no sin in just being there. *Compassion* and *company* begin with the same letters and can meet some of the same needs.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Allow** God to communicate what is in your heart when you do not have the ability to put your care into words. **Trust** love to be a language that can be *viable* even when it is not *vocal*. **Hold** your peace until you have the peace of mind that you are speaking wisely.

## Day 25: Proverbs 18:1-24

*“The words of a man’s mouth are deep waters; the wellspring of wisdom is a flowing brook.” (Proverbs 18:4)*

### Refreshing Words!

The word translated “wellspring” in the NKJV and other translations of the Bible is translated “fountain” in the NIV. This word is found only seven times in Proverbs, and since this is the last of those seven times, I think I better talk about it now or it will be too late! The verse first speaks of man’s words and wisdom, comparing them to “deep waters.” The word “deep” could be referring to deep wells or cisterns from which it was difficult for people to draw the water that they needed, or it could be referring to slow, or even non-flowing, stagnant waters that would not be appealing or attractive to even the most parched soul. However, the aforementioned “wellspring” or “fountain” is said to be like a “flowing” (NKJV) or “bubbling” (NIV) brook. From this we learn that words of wisdom are clear, clean, and refreshing to those who hear them. Wisdom, unlike the deep waters of man’s philosophy and intellect, is not difficult to obtain or understand. In the New Testament, James tells us that we are simply to ask God for wisdom. When we speak words of wisdom to our friends and associates, we are speaking refreshing words of life that will encourage them along the way.

**Prayer Emphasis: Speak** something from the Word of God to someone that you meet today. **Refrain** from preaching and just **speak**. **Realize** that something that God has to say through you may make a very meaningful difference in someone’s life today.

## Day 26: Proverbs 19:1-29

*“Also it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge, and he sins who hastens with his feet.” (Proverbs 19:2)*

### A “Not Good”

Back on Day 12 of this devotional guide, I wrote about the word “good” that is found in our focus verse today. On that day, I referenced Genesis 1:4, where God spoke light into existence and then said that the light was “good.” As we read through the rest of the creation story, and all through the Bible, we find that many things are declared to be “good.” Today we learn of something that, in God’s opinion, is definitely “not good.” We are told that when we act or speak before we have “knowledge” (all the facts or information), we are doing something that is “not good.” This problem was not limited to Old Testament believers. Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome and, speaking of the Israelites, described them as having a zeal that was not “according to” (NKJV) or “based on” (NIV) knowledge (Romans 10:2). The last half of our focus verse clearly reveals God’s opinion of those who act or speak before they have all the information. He states that when we do so, we “sin” (NKJV) or “miss the way” (NIV). I guess the second sounds a little softer than the first, but surely *neither* would be considered “good.”

**Prayer Emphasis: Continue** to remind yourself about the importance of practicing patience. When it comes to how we react to things, we would do best to **remember** this simple rule: “I am going to *find out* before I get *fired up!*”

## Day 27: Proverbs 20:1-30

*“Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.” (Proverbs 20:20)*

### **Do You Have Proverbs “20/20” Vision?**

The “lamp” that is to be put out and the “deep” (NKJV), “obscure” (KJV), or “pitch” (NIV) darkness that is mentioned in our focus verse is a reference to the death penalty that was assigned to crimes against one’s parents in the Jewish society during Bible times. Levitical law clearly stated that anyone who cursed his father or mother should be put to death (Leviticus 20:9). The word “curses” in our focus verse describes something much more than crude or vulgar language. It means to despise, shame, belittle, embarrass, and even berate those who should be the ultimate earthly authority figures in your life. Since the Scripture reference for our focus verse is Proverbs 20:20, I will say this verse contains the “20/20” vision that we need to clearly see the value God places on the home, our parents, and the appropriate response to the assigned authority figures in our lives. It is hard to imagine anyone treating their own parents with cruelty and hatred, but it happens every day! Having spiritual “20/20” vision would allow us to “see through” the image that some would model for the home and “look past” the many attacks on the home and family that are launched by the enemy daily.

**Prayer Emphasis: Communicate** love and appreciation to your parents today. **Realize** that you are never too old to **honor** them. **Pray** for your parents today and let them know that you have done so.

## Day 28: Proverbs 21:1-31

*“He who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness, and honor.” (Proverbs 21:21)*

### **“Righteous and Mercy”**

Our focus verse speaks of one who “follows” (NKJV) or “pursues” (NIV) righteousness and mercy. The word translated “righteousness” here is a word that has much to do with relationships and can be used to describe the kind of relationship we should have with God and with other people. The first time this word is used in the Bible is when God stated that He knew Abraham would “do righteousness and justice” in Genesis 18:19. That verse was about the relationship Abraham had with God. The only other time this word is used in Genesis is where Jacob’s “righteousness” (KJV) or “honesty” (NIV) in his dealings with Laban is declared. The “Great Chase” for all of us is to pursue righteousness in all our relationships. We would be wise to acknowledge that the Bible presents the appropriate priority for these relationships. First, Abraham pursued a righteous relationship with God, and later, Jacob pursued a right relationship with his fellow man. Our relationship with God should set the standard for our human relationships and not vice versa!

**Prayer Emphasis: Seek** to please God and not just people. **Deal** fairly with all people. **Realize** that the believer is involved in no transaction from which God can be excluded. Always **remember** the way that we treat others may be a clear indicator of where we stand in our relationship with God.

## Day 29: Proverbs 22:1-29

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

### An Important Part of Parenting

Parenting may be the most *important* thing we will ever do. At the same time, it may also be the most *demanding thing* we will ever attempt to do. The word translated “train” in our focus verse is only found five times in the Old Testament. In four of those five times, it is translated “dedicate” or “dedicated” in both the NKJV and the NIV. To “train” a child meant to raise them as your own, but at the same time, as one that has been dedicated to God. In a sense, it meant to raise the child that God gave you for Him and His glory. Note that we should “train” the child in the way that they “should go.” To do this means that we should teach them early about what will be expected of them later in life. The sinful, rebellious acts that may be acknowledged as “cute” when the child is young and tender will, most probably, lead to some very ugly and repulsive actions when the child is older and the heart has become hardened and set in its ways. No child comes with a “guarantee” from God. There is no reason to believe that we have failed as parents when sin triumphs in the lives of our children. However, the best way to “train” our children is to be like “Conductors” on God’s Heavenly Railroad and make sure our children hear our call of “All aboard!”

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Pray** for your children every day – several times each day! **Express** love to them on a regular and consistent basis. **Tell** them that they have been dedicated to God and **explain** what that means. Most importantly, make sure that you, yourself, are on board with God and they will likely follow.

## Day 30: Proverbs 23:1-16

“My son, if your heart is wise, my heart will rejoice—indeed, I myself;” (Proverbs 23:15)

### Two Important Conditions

Our focus verse today is one of the many proverbs in which the writer addresses the reader by the words, “My son.” Some of the most personal instruction speeches in this book begin with, or include, these words. It conjures up an image of a father seeking to *prevent* his son from experiencing the sorrow of sinful living by helping him to *prepare* for life in order to *prevent* him from straying from the path that God would have him walk. If you recall, back in Proverbs 6:20, the mother’s teaching was also to be honored. Here the father states that, if his son’s heart will be “wise,” then his heart will “rejoice” (NKJV) or “be glad” (NIV). Here we have two heart “conditions” that are based on two “conditions.” Condition one is whether or not the father will invest the time to instruct his son by sharing God’s truth with him and modeling obedience to God’s Word in his own life. Condition two is whether or not the son will make his own personal decision and prepare his heart for life by heeding the wisdom that is found in God’s Word. Wisdom and joy are sometimes conditional upon what we do with the Word of God. If you want your heart to rejoice, then take the time to lovingly train your children in the way they should go and be careful to make sure that you are living that way before them.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Realize** that parenting does not come with the promise that all children will live wisely. **Remember** that Adam and Eve lived in a perfect environment and still were not able to resist temptation. **Pray** for our youth on a regular basis and encourage them when you have the opportunity to do so.

## Day 31: Proverbs 23:17-35

*“My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.” (Proverbs 23:26)*

### “My Son”

As you read through Proverbs 23, you will see the words “my son” three times. This term of endearment is found 23 times in Proverbs and is found three times in chapters one, three, four, and six and then here in chapter 23. In today’s focus verse, the father seeks to employ the greatest teaching tool available to any parent. This father desires to exhibit wise living to his son and to be an example for him. He pleads with his son to “observe” (NKJV) or “keep” (NIV) his ways. The desire here is not only that the son *watches* the father with his eyes, but also that the son learns to *walk* the path of wisdom after observing his father doing so. In this case, to “observe” meant more than just seeing with the eyes. The plea for the son to give him his heart was a plea for the son to take to heart the truth that his father was trying to live before him. This father desired that his son understand the motive for walking in wisdom. He knew that what comes from the *work* of our *hands* is most determined by whether or not we have the *Word* in our *hearts*. The best example that we may ever set for our children is to allow them to see us searching God’s Word for wisdom every day of our lives.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Desire** to model Christian wisdom and a Christian lifestyle for your children. **Disclose** that you are not perfect and **allow** them to learn from your victories as well as from your defeats. **Remember** that there is just as much wisdom in acknowledging our weaknesses as there is in boasting of our victories.

## Day 32: Proverbs 24:1-16

*“For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity.” (Proverbs 24:16)*

### How to “Rise Again”

There is much to learn from today’s focus verse by comparing it to another verse found in God’s Word. The wisdom that the writer is trying to share here is the same wisdom that God earlier shared with Job. In Job 5:19 we read, “He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes, in seven no evil shall touch you.” The number seven is often associated with completion or perfection in the Scriptures. Job’s friend was simply trying to tell Job that even the “perfect storm” could not totally defeat him. From man’s perspective, Job’s life had been totally destroyed. What the father is trying to teach his son in today’s proverb is that the person who has been made “righteous” by the power of God’s forgiveness can never be totally defeated by sin. If it is our desire to do so, we Christians can always “rise up” one more time than we fall. The main idea presented by the Hebrew word that is translated “fall” is when someone “falls” because of a sudden, accidental event. In other places in the Bible, this same word is used to describe men falling through a lattice (2 Kings 1:2) or in battle (Judges 20:44). In both cases, the fall was not intentional. The Bible never gives us permission to sin, but it does give us permission to come to God for forgiveness and cleansing every time that we do.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Believe** that those who have been made righteous by the blood of Jesus can never be completely and utterly broken in the eyes of God. **Attempt** to walk without falling, but **refuse** to stay down when you do fall. Notice that I used the word “when” and not “if” in that last statement!

## Day 33: Proverbs 24:17-34

*“I went by the field of the lazy man, and by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; and there it was, all overgrown with thorns; its surface was covered with nettles; its stone wall was broken down.” (Proverbs 24:30-31)*

### “Thorns”

The Hebrew word that is translated “thorns” in verse 31 is used to describe a useless plant that does not bear fruit. Not only does this plant *not* bear fruit, but it also bears “thorns” that hinder the ability to reap the fruit from the plants that are near it. We must remember that “thorns” are a natural byproduct of a fallen world. God told Adam that the earth, left untended, would produce nothing but “thorns” (Genesis 3:18). Although the same Hebrew word was not used there, it clearly meant the same thing. Because of the promise of Genesis, we are certainly unwise to think that any good will be produced from our lives without some arduous work. Notice that the writer observed the field of the lazy man and saw that it was “overgrown” with thorns and weeds. The lazy man had obviously planted some good things in his field, but he had neglected to take the time to keep some bad things out. Our work at church is much like that of the farmer. We are responsible for sowing good seed. However, there is a lot of tending and nurturing that must follow our sowing. The church that is most blessed is the church that pays attention to what it is doing and doesn’t expect God to do the things that He has wisely assigned to His people.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Become** a worker in the church! **Ask** yourself this simple question: “What would this Sunday’s service be like if every person in my church invested no more than I am willing to invest?” Would there be a Sunday School, nursery, choir, or greeters? Would anyone sing, pray, teach, or preach? And in some cases, we might have to ask ourselves, “Would anyone even attend?”

## Day 34: Proverbs 25:1-28

*“Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint.” (Proverbs 25:19)*

### “An Unfaithful Man”

When one has a bad tooth or a weak ankle, it is difficult to do even the simplest things (like eating and walking) without the fear of experiencing pain. You may enjoy several meals or walk many miles without pain and then experience great pain at the next bite or step. It is impossible to know when an aching tooth or foot is going to hurt you again. Such is the case with the “unfaithful” person. The person described here is not merely a person upon whom you cannot depend. In this case, the person being described is someone that you cannot trust or believe. This person may sometimes be fair and honest, but you cannot *rely* on them or their words. It is difficult to have a right relationship with anyone who is not reliable. This is the case with marriage, employment, friendships, or even our relationship with God. When we are not faithful to God, we are like that aching tooth or lame foot. He can depend on us sometimes, but not always. We have little confidence in such people, and after a few bad experiences, we often would prefer to just do something ourselves rather than depend on them again.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Be** the kind of Christian upon whom God, and others, can trust and rely. **Recognize** the importance of faithfulness and dependability and seek to be both in all your relationships. **Be** trustworthy in all that you do. **Remember**, we reap what we sow!

## Day 35: Proverbs 26:1-28

*“Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.” (Proverbs 26:20-21)*

### Refusing Gossip

In a challenging time in my life, I was reminded by a good friend and counselor that just like a fire will eventually burn out, strife and conflict will eventually pass away when no one continues to feed or fuel it. The word that is translated “talebearer” (NKJV) or “gossip” (NIV) in our focus verse is a word that means “whisperer.” The word used to describe this person is found only in Proverbs and is translated “talebearer” and “whisperer” in the NKJV (see Proverbs 16:28) while it is consistently translated “gossip” in the NIV. Verse 21 further describes this kind of person as being “contentious” (NKJV) or “quarrelsome” (NIV). Read one more verse (v. 22) and you will see that the words of the talebearer find their way into the innermost part of our being. We may try our best to disregard what we hear, but it is not easy to do so. While we may not be able to control what others say, we can certainly exercise some control over what we hear by refusing to keep company with those who gossip. When it comes to gossip, just choose to refuse!

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Speak** healing words. **Refuse** to add fuel to rumor, gossip, and innuendo, and you will be refusing to fuel the fire of strife and contention at the same time. **Practice** the “Golden Rule” when it comes to what you have to say about others. **Realize** that God earlier made this same statement in Proverbs 18:8. God sometimes repeats Himself – and when He does, we should be careful to listen!

## Day 36: Proverbs 27:1-27

*“A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself; the simple pass on and are punished.” (Proverbs 27:12)*

### “A Prudent Man”

How many times have we had something go terribly wrong only to say, “I *knew* that was going to happen!” In today’s focus verse we read that the “prudent” person sees danger ahead and takes appropriate actions to avoid potential problems and disasters. In a good sense, this word means to be “shrewd” or “sensible.” In a bad sense, it means to be “sly” or “crafty.” This is the word that is translated “cunning” (NKJV), “subtle” (KJV), or “crafty” (NIV) in Genesis 3:1 where we see the devil leading Eve to sin. How many times have we been deceived and afterward said, “I should have seen that coming!” We are not told that the “simple” person that meets with disaster here did not see it coming. The implication is that they, like the prudent man, foresaw evil but did nothing to avoid it. I have learned that a good pilot is always looking far ahead of his flight path in search of safe places to land his plane should some emergency or problem develop. It is best to be prepared in such situations and have a contingency plan at hand. In the same way, we should be aware of the things that could happen and have a plan for what we would do if trouble crosses our path or interrupts our plans. When we know something is not the best practice, yet we continue that path, we should never be surprised when we, and those we love, suffer because of that decision.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Live** wisely! **Practice** foresight! **Expect** to experience some turbulence if you are going to fly for God. **Be** prepared to do what is best for you and your family if emergencies or unexpected problems come your way. **Think** ahead and you can safely *move* ahead!

## Day 37: Proverbs 28:1-28

*“He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough!”*  
(Proverbs 28:19)

### *How to Have “Plenty”*

The truth behind today’s focus verse is much like the verse that we learned from back in Proverbs 24 on Day 33! While the Bible teaches us to have dreams, it never suggests that dreaming is enough to make our lives successful. I have often heard it said that “The only place where ‘*success*’ comes before ‘*work*’ is in the dictionary!” I have seen that adage proven true in my own life many times. Today we are promised that “He who tills” (NKJV) or “works” (NIV) their land will have plenty of food. However, those who are simply sitting around dreaming about an abundant harvest that will come about because of some get rich scheme will come into poverty. Dreaming is a good thing. But there must come a time when we lay aside the plans and pick up the tools and go to work! A person’s ship seldom comes in if they are not willing to sit down and pull on the oars! Churches, like people, can have big dreams that never come true because the people simply are not willing to do the work that is necessary to succeed in the ministry. If we are content to only talk about what we could, should, or would do for God, then we are most likely to accomplish little for His kingdom’s sake.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Set** some clearly defined, realistic goals for your spiritual life. **Find** something to do for God through His church. Make this the year that you move from planning and finally get around to performing!

## Day 38: Proverbs 29:1-27

*“A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.”* (Proverbs 29:11)

### *Knowing When to Keep Silent*

Today’s focus verse warns about the dangers of “blowing off some steam” and “letting it all out!” God’s Word declares that it is foolish to “vent” (NKJV), “utter all” (KJV), or to “give full vent” (NIV) to our angry thoughts. Compare this verse to verse 9 in this same chapter, and you will see that the foolish man may sometimes “rage” but seldom comes to any peaceful or purposeful conclusions. Take just a moment to look back at Proverbs 14:16-17, and you will see that “the fool rages and is self-confident” and the “quick-tempered man acts foolishly.” However, the wise person keeps his anger and his speech under control. By this, we learn that it is best to carefully and prayerfully consider when it is best to speak all that is on our mind against when wisdom might best be found in holding our tongue until we are sure that it is the right time to speak out. Take a moment and look again at Proverbs 16:32. God has much to say about the tongue and our ability to control it instead of allowing it to control us.

**Prayer Emphasis:** **Think** before you speak. **Remember** that the *tone* and *timing* of our words are particularly important. **Ask** God to help you control both your temper and your tongue, and you will find yourself managing many of life’s demanding situations in a more productive manner.

## Day 39: Proverbs 30:1-33

*“The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, his utterance. This man declared to Ithiel—to Ithiel and Ucal:” (Proverbs 30:1)*

### Meet Agur

Although some writers and scholars declare Agur to be a contributor to the Proverbs, many disagree that this name represents an actual, different person from Solomon. If Agur was a different person than Solomon, then he would need to also be a prophet because his words were considered to be an “utterance” (NKJV), a “prophecy” (KJV), or an “oracle” (NIV). Since there is no other mention of Agur, Jakeh, Ucal, or Ithiel in any other historical record in the Bible, most believe that these are fictitious persons who represent a different phase or mindset in Solomon’s history. (There is one mention of another “Ithiel” in Nehemiah 11, but that person was clearly a different individual in Bible history.) As you read the remaining verses in the chapter, it is not difficult to see that this might be Solomon describing himself in times that he has been out of harmony with God. Whatever the case may be, there are some wise sayings found in this chapter, and we would do well to pay careful attention to them.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Read the first four verses of today’s chapter and then carefully compare them to the final verses. It is clear that, by the time his thoughts are concluded, the way that he thinks about God and himself has changed drastically. **Avoid** being a hot and cold Christian by seeking God’s wisdom in everything that you do. **Realize** that a “bad *day*” could lead to a “bad *season*” in our lives.

## Day 40: Proverbs 31:1-31

*“The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him:” (Proverbs 31:1)*

### Lemuel

Like Agur, nothing else is mentioned about Lemuel other than these two references in Proverbs 31:1 & 4. The name Lemuel means “Devoted to God.” Again, this may be Solomon referring to himself, and if so, it is once again considered to be an “utterance” (NKJV), a “prophecy” (KJV), or an “oracle” (NIV) from God. Since the word “prophecy” is not used anywhere in this entire book until we reach these final two chapters, it may be an indication that we have the same person writing, but under a different kind of office or anointing. As it is with the entire Bible, we know that the author is the Holy Spirit and that all of its words are to be considered a message from God. As such, it is “profitable” (2 Timothy 3:16) and “written for our learning” (Romans 15:4). I pray that these daily readings have been helpful to your life, and they have brought health to your soul. Please continue to read from your Bible daily so that God can give you the wisdom to live for His honor and glory.

**Prayer Emphasis:** Thank God for the Bible and for the freedom that we have to read it and to share it with others. **Mention** something that you have learned from the Bible in a conversation with someone today. **Trust** God to do His part when you take the time and make the effort to include Him and His word in your conversations. **Contact us** at 850-562-8069 or at [gary@seminolebc.com](mailto:gary@seminolebc.com) if we can minister to you and your family in any way.