



DAILY
B I B L E G U I D E

The Book of Proverbs

Days 196-2 of a Yearly Bible Reading Program

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Daily Bible Reading Plan

Day	Passage	☒
Day 196	Proverbs 1-3	☐
Day 197	Proverbs 4-6	☐
Day 198	Proverbs 7-9	☐
Day 199	Proverbs 10-12	☐
Day 200	Proverbs 13-15	☐
Day 201	Proverbs 16-18	☐
Day 202	Proverbs 19-21	☐
Day 203	Proverbs 22-24	☐
Day 204	Proverbs 25-27	☐
Day 205	Proverbs 28-31	☐

Introduction to Hebrew Poetry

The books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations are all written as Hebrew poetry. There are of course other portions of Scripture that contain poetry, but these are almost entirely that. In modern English, we use patterns of rhymes and accents to add artistic beauty to our poetry. In ancient Hebrew there is no rhyme or rhythm. The way I like to describe it is that it rhymes ideas. Each verse is either a couplet or triplet of ideas and imagery that enhances the meaning.

Welcome to the Book of Proverbs!

The Book of Proverbs is a collection of teachings and wise sayings by Solomon. Solomon was supernaturally blessed with great wisdom (I Kings 3:1-15). Scripture testifies of his wisdom in many places, such as I Kings 3:16-28, 4:29-34. This book is extremely practical. It exhorts the believer to be guided by Godly wisdom as they walk the path of righteousness.

A.T. Pierson defines a proverb as “a wise saying in which a few words are chosen instead of many, with a design to condense wisdom into a brief form both to aid memory and stimulate study.”

To understand the importance and breadth of the concept of wisdom in this book, I quote B.H. Carroll: “Then the Jewish idea of a perfectly wise man is, that the perfectly wise man is the one who, in his whole being, lives and thinks and acts in right relationship to the all-wise God. His wisdom commences emotionally in the fear of God; is manifested intellectually in his acquaintance with the manifestations of the divine nature in word and work; is active volitionally in obedience to the Will of God, as revealed in word and work.”

A few quick facts about Proverbs:

- The author is Solomon. Two sections are attributed to other names: Chapter 30 to Agur and Chapter 31 to King Lemuel. I believe these are pseudonyms for Solomon, in part because they cannot be positively attributed to any other historical figure.
- Solomon’s proverbs were recorded throughout his life (1035-975 B.C.). Much like the Book of Psalms being divided into five books that were compiled over time, there is evidence that Proverbs was a work in progress for centuries. Chapters 1-24 appear to have been collected in Solomon’s lifetime. Chapters 25-29 were compiled later during the reign of Hezekiah (726-698 B.C.).
- The key verse is Proverbs 1:7 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
- A brief outline:
 - Wisdom vs. Folly – Chapters 1-9
 - Miscellaneous Sayings – Chapters 10-24
 - Miscellaneous Sayings Collected by Hezekiah’s Scribes – Chapters 25-29
 - The Wisdom of Agur – Chapter 30
 - The Wisdom of Lemuel – Chapter 31

Chapter 1 Notes

In this chapter Solomon introduces the subject of and importance of wisdom.

vs. 1-7 – This prologue states the purpose of the book. It is for the edification of the believer to increase in wisdom. True wisdom is found only through God and in His commands.

vs. 8-19 – In this section, Solomon addresses his son (Rehoboam) directly. It is a parental advice to not, as Psalm 1:1 so clearly put it, “walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful.” There is danger in having the wicked as close company. Sadly, the evidence is that Rehoboam did not follow this advice (I Kings 12:1-15).

vs. 20-33 – Wisdom is personified. She calls out for the wanderer to follow her and warns of the consequences of not doing so.

Chapter 2 Notes

In this chapter Solomon continues his parental advice.

vs. 1-9 – The blessings of seeking and obtaining wisdom.

vs. 10-19 – Wisdom is a safeguard for the righteous against the wiles of the wicked. In vs. 16 we have the first appearance of the “strange woman”. She is described as a prostitute, but we may also see beyond that as a pagan woman who seducing the righteous, corrupting and ensnaring them. The concepts of prostitution and paganism were intertwined in practice in ancient Israel.

vs. 20-22 – The results of walking in wisdom. Compare to Psalm 1.

Chapter 3 Notes

In this chapter Solomon continues his parental advice.

vs. 1-10 – The blessings of walking in wisdom are highlighted. To have wisdom is to follow God and His commandments. This brings the blessings of God.

vs. 11-20 – The blessings that follow a man who acquires wisdom. Even if it is acquired through “the school of hard knocks”, the value of wisdom far exceeds that price paid.

vs. 21-25 – The blessings of keeping and allowing it to guide our steps. Again, Godly wisdom is seen as the divide between the righteous and the wicked from Psalm 1.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 196

We live in what is called the “Information Age”. We have at our fingertips endless amounts of data and opinion. Has this made us any wiser? No. If anything, our world suffers from a drought of practical and moral wisdom. This is because the main ingredient has been left out: God. Without Him and His revelation there is no true wisdom.

Hymn for Day 196

Our hymn today is “In Streets, and Op’nings of the Gates” by John Logan. Logan led a committee to produce the “Translations and Paraphrases of the Church of Scotland” in 1775, of which this text was a part. It is a paraphrase of Proverbs 1:20-31.

*In streets, and op’nings of the gates,
where pours the busy crowd,
Thus heav’nly Wisdom lifts her voice,
and cries to men aloud:*

*How long, ye scorers of the truth,
scornful will ye remain?
How long shall fools their folly love,
and hear my words in vain?*

*O turn, at last, at my reproof!
and, in that happy hour,
His bless’d effusions on your heart
my Spirit down shall pour.*

*But since so long, with earnest voice,
to you in vain I call
Since all my counsels and reproofs
thus ineffectual fall;*

*The time will come, when humbled low,
in Sorrow’s evil day,
Your voice by anguish shall be taught,
but taught too late, to pray.*

*When, like the whirlwind, o'er the deep
comes Desolation's blast;
Pray'rs then extorted shall be vain,
the hour of mercy past.*

*The choice you made has fixed your doom;
for this is Heav'n's decree,
That with the fruits of what he sowed
the sinner filled shall be.*

Chapter 4 Notes

In this chapter Solomon continues his fatherly instruction.

vs. 1-9 – Solomon recalls his upbringing and training. His father, David, had pressed on him the importance of gaining and utilizing wisdom. We note also the mention of his mother, Bathsheba, of which more will be said later.

vs. 10-19 – Solomon implores his son to follow his counsel. He lays out the two paths of righteousness and wickedness, showing the benefit of the path of righteousness and wisdom.

vs. 20-27 – Solomon continues to press his son to follow his teaching and apply it in his life and rule.

Chapter 5 Notes

In this chapter Solomon advises his son against the strange woman and praises faithful marriage.

vs. 1-14 – The strange woman of 2:16 reappearance. Here the wiles of the seductress are described as well as the cost of succumbing to her temptation. Sadly, Solomon did not follow his own advice and allowed his many wives to sway his heart (I Kings 11:4).

vs. 15-23 – The blessedness of faithful matrimony is expressed as counter to the dangers of the strange woman.

Chapter 6 Notes

In this chapter Solomon continues his fatherly advice.

vs. 1-5 – A warning against becoming entangled in contracts and agreements.

vs. 6-11 – The idle and lazy are pointed to observe the industrious ant. The insect has more sense than they do! He labors and prepares for the future, while the sluggard is unprepared for what comes his way.

vs. 12-19 – The description of a worthless person, building on the discussion of the sluggard. The Hebrew word used to describe them is *Belial*, like the sons of Belial we met in Deuteronomy 13:13 and many more times. Just as with the sluggard, destruction waits for him.

vs. 20-35 – We see Godly wisdom as guiding the steps of the good man. This is applied particularly to avoiding the strange woman and her wiles. Again, adultery and fornication are denounced.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 197

Of all the topics Solomon could seek to apply wisdom to, I find it instructive that he brings up marriage and adultery. If this was written as instruction for Rehoboam before he became king, then Solomon surely was speaking by experience. Sadly, sometimes it takes being burned to learn that a stove top is hot. Heed the advice of those who have made such mistakes and not seek to test them for yourself. Part of wisdom is learning from experience and, as we will see in Ecclesiastes, Solomon did just that at great cost to himself.

Hymn for Day 197

Our hymn today is “O Happy Home”. It was originally written in French by Karl Johann Philipp Spitta in 1833 and translated in English by Sarah B. Findlater in 1858. We need more songs like this to reinforce this idea in our modern age.

*O happy home, where Thou art loved the dearest,
Thou loving Friend and Savior of our race,
And where among the guests there never cometh
One who can hold such high and honored place!*

*O happy home, where two in heart united
In holy faith and blessed hope are one,
Whom death a little while alone divideth,
And cannot end the union here begun!*

*O happy home, whose little ones are given
Early to Thee, in humble faith and prayer,
To Thee, their Friend, who from the heights of Heaven
Guides them, and guards with more than mother's care!*

*O happy home, where each one serves Thee, lowly,
Whatever his appointed work may be,
Till every common task seems great and holy,
When it is done, O Lord, as unto Thee!*

*O happy home, where Thou art not forgotten,
Where joy is overflowing, full and free,
O happy home, where every wounded spirit
Is brought, Physician, Comforter, to Thee—*

*Until at last, when earth's day's work is ended,
All meet Thee in the blessèd home above,
From whence Thou camest, where Thou hast ascended,
Thy everlasting home of peace and love!*

Chapter 7 Notes

In this chapter Solomon continues his fatherly advice.

vs. 1-5 – Solomon again exhorts his son to obey his counsel and seek wisdom. It will be a deterrent to the seducer and the flatterer.

vs. 6-27 – The strange woman reappears as Solomon recounts watching her seduce a young man who had not sought wisdom. Not in vs. 14 how she even uses religion to lure in her prey. She says she has fulfilled a vow that day by offering a peace offering. Portions of these offerings were brought home to eat in celebrations (see Leviticus 7:11-15). Again, the dangers of being ensnared by her described in the harshest terms.

Chapter 8 Notes

In this chapter Wisdom is personified and speaks.

vs. 1-11 – Wisdom is again personified as calling out to be found. Wisdom is contrasted with the strange woman in the previous chapter. Both are vying for the heart of man, but only one is worth pursuing.

vs. 12-21 – Wisdom speaks and tells of the blessings of following her.

vs. 22-31 – Wisdom continues to speak and tells of being with God before the beginning. There are interesting parallels here to the Word, Jesus Christ, of John 1.

vs. 32-36 – Wisdom's appeal. The choice of following wisdom or rejecting it is displayed in the same manner as the two paths of Psalm 1.

Chapter 9 Notes

In this chapter Wisdom and Folly are personified.

vs. 1-12 – Wisdom is seen as the head of a house that has prepared a banquet. All are called to enjoy her benefits. The blessings and curses that follow the choice of the called are given.

vs. 13-18 – Folly is now personified as the strange woman. She too calls for passersby to take part in her sinful wares. Under whatever sweetness there may be in her goods, there is deadly poison therein.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 198

As we go through Proverbs I cannot help but return to Psalm 1 in my mind (and my notes). Solomon's presentation of Wisdom vs. Folly is yet another description of the two paths of righteousness and wickedness. It is not just a practical or moral discussion. It is a deeply spiritual affair, as references such as 9:10. There can be no true wisdom without the One Who is infinitely wise.

Hymn for Day 198

Our hymn today is "The Encouragement Young Persons Have to Seek Christ" by Philip Doddridge. It fits well the parental advice of Solomon to seek wisdom through God.

*Ye hearts with youthful vigor warm,
In smiling crowds draw near,
And turn from every mortal charm,
A Savior's voice to hear.*

*He, Lord of all the worlds on high,
Stoops to converse with you;
And lays His radiant glories by,
Your friendship to pursue.*

*"The soul that longs to see My face,
Is sure My love to gain;
And those that early seek My grace,
Shall never seek in vain."*

*What object, Lord, my soul should move,
If once compared with Thee?
What beauty should command my love,
Like what in Christ I see?*

*Away, ye false delusive toys,
Vain tempters of the mind!
'Tis here I fix my lasting choice,
And here true bliss I find.*

Chapter 10 Notes

In this chapter brings a series of miscellaneous proverbs through chapter 25. These are difficult if not impossible to categorize in large sections.

vs. 1-32 – Contrasts between the wise and the wicked. In vs. 12 we have a warning about the power of hatred. Hatred is something that does more damage to its container than to what it is poured out on. In vs. 22 we have a test that may be applied in life: if it is from the Lord then it will not add to our sorrow.

Chapter 11 Notes

In this chapter continues a series of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-31 – Contrasts between the just and the unjust. We have in vs. 1 the first of three proverbs, with 16:11 and 20:23, that concern unjust weights and balances. In vs. 2 we have a warning against the consequences of pride, which is a common target in this book.

Chapter 12 Notes

In this chapter continues a series of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-28 – Contrasts between morality and immorality. In vs. 15 is an important insight in the human psyche. Every person believes they are doing right. Even if they are doing wrong, they are convinced they are right in doing so. True wisdom is acknowledging that God's discernment, and not our own, is the truest test available for all things.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 199

Again and again the Proverbs illustrate that Godly wisdom is the key to happiness, peace, and prosperity. We see this in business dealings, family matters, and in human relations. Every aspect of life is touched by the application of true wisdom. Each verse is a road sign by which we can judge our heart and our heading. Though this section is varied in its subjects and targets, every single verse is points us to God and the path of righteous. Do not forsake the truth of even a single proverb.

Hymn for Day 199

Our hymn today is “O Happy is the Man Who Hears”, written by Michael Bruce. Was born in 1746 and died in 1767, but in that short life wrote many texts for his singing class. John Logan obtained permission and published three years later in 1770.

*O happy is the man who hears
Instruction's warning voice;
And who celestial Wisdom makes
his early, only choice.*

*For she has treasures greater far
than east or west unfold;
And her rewards more precious are
than all their stores of gold.*

*In her right hand she holds to view
a length of happy days;
Riches with splendid honours
are what her left displays.*

*She guides the young with innocence,
in pleasure's paths to tread,
A crown of glory she bestows
upon the hoary head.*

*According as her labours rise,
so her rewards increase;
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.*

Chapter 13 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-25 – Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. A few highlights include the wisdom of limiting our speech (vs. 3), the outcome of pride (vs. 10), the impact of those around us on ourselves (vs. 20), and the need for correction for children (vs. 24). I do not think this last verse literally means a rod must be used but speaks symbolically of many means of correction.

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Chapter 14 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-35 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. We see in vs. 4 one of my favorites, that to prosper (seen as an ox used for farming) you will deal with side issues (cleaning up after the ox). I like to categorize these issues as C.O.D.B. – the “cost of doing business”. If you want a harvest, it takes a lot of work beyond just the planting and reaping. You also must care for the ox. We see in vs. 17 and 29 the value of patience and self-control. In vs. 34 we see the importance of righteous people in establishing a strong nation.

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Chapter 15 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-33 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. We have the counsel in vs. 1 to guard our responses to others lest they incite anger. In vs. 16-17 true wealth is described as the fear of the Lord and peace, not the accumulation of wealth.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 200

There are so many themes in Proverbs that are worthy of attention and it is difficult to choose which to highlight. For today, I want to focus on the idea of self-control. In the Bible, a mature Christian is never pictured as someone driven by unbridled passions. Rather, they are a person who keeps their thoughts, attitudes, and actions in check by application of the wisdom of God's Word. Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" We cannot trust our fleshly nature. It must be governed by our higher faculties in accordance to God's commands.

Hymn for Day 200

Our hymn today is "Blest is the Man Whose Softening Heart", written by Anna Barbauld (1743-1825). It is an expression of one of the themes in Proverbs of charity and generosity.

*Blest is the man whose softening heart
Feels all another's pain;
To whom the supplicating eye
Was never raised in vain:*

*Whose breast expands with generous warmth
A stranger's woes to feel;
And bleeds in pity o'er the wound
He wants the power to heal.*

*He spreads his kind supporting arms
To every child of grief;
His secret bounty largely flows,
And brings unasked relief.*

*To gentle offices of love
His feet are never slow:
He views, through mercy's melting eye,
A brother in a foe.*

*Peace from the bosom of his God,
The Saviour's grace shall give;
And, when he kneels before the throne,
His trembling soul shall live.*

Chapter 16 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-33 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. There are warnings against pride in vs. 18-19. In vs. 2 and 25 we have reminders that every person does what they believe is right, whether it is right or not by God's standard. We have reminders of the power of humility and patience in vs. 19 and 32.

Chapter 17 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-28 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. Some personal favorites are vs. 27-28, which remind us that few words are often better. In vs. 22 is the sage advice of the power of the spirit over the body. How often have we seen this played out in the sick bed!

Chapter 18 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-19 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. We have wonderful verses here on relationships. We see the value of marriage in vs. 22. In vs. 24 is the principle that to have friends you must be friendly yourself. In vs. 19 we are warned of the dangers of offending a brother.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 201

Another of the great themes of Proverbs is that of controlling our speech. We are warned that words have great power, for good or evil. It is a constant battle for us to manage our tongue. Let us strive to speak in purity and love to all men and let the praises of our Lord be ever upon our lips.

Hymn for Day 201

We have seen much in our reading today about our relationships. Today's hymn, "I've Found a Friend", written by James G. Small in 1866, reminds us that Christ is the greatest Friend to all.

*I've found a Friend, oh, such a friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am His, and He is mine,
Forever and forever.*

*I've found a Friend, oh, such a friend!
He bled, He died to save me;
And not alone the gift of life,
But His own Self He gave me!
Naught that I have mine own I call,
I'll hold it for the Giver,
My heart, my strength, my life, my all
Are His, and His forever.*

*I've found a Friend, oh, such a friend!
All pow'r to Him is given,
To guard me on my onward course,
And bring me safe to heaven.
Th' eternal glories gleam afar,
To nerve my faint endeavor;
So now to watch, to work, to war,
And then to rest forever.*

*I've found a Friend, oh, such a friend!
So kind and true and tender,
So wise a Counselor and Guide,
So mighty a Defender!
From Him who loves me now so well
What pow'r my soul can sever?
Shall life or death, shall earth or hell?
No! I am His forever.*

Chapter 19 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-19 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. We are reminded in the opening verse that wealth is no measure of success or spirituality. In vs. 18 warns parents to diligently train their children while they can. In vs. 20 we are exhorted to receive counsel and instruction.

Chapter 20 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-30 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. The power of our testimony is seen in vs. 11. We are warned against the danger of consuming alcohol in vs. 1. How God works through human consciousness is described in vs. 27.

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Chapter 21 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-31 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. This chapter opens by reminding us that even the greatest of men are pawns in the hand of God. We are reminded again that man believes all that they do is right in vs. 2. In vs. 17 we are challenged to discipline our appetites, as chasing amusement will both morally and financially bankrupt us.

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Devotional Thoughts for Day 202

In 21:20, we are told that there is no truth nor hope for anything that runs counter to the God. This is the greatest theme of Proverbs. True knowledge and true wisdom is found only in God. Men seek in vain to find it elsewhere. Those that foolishly deny God build their philosophies on crumbling foundations. Truth is not lost nor is it subjective. It is readily found in God's Word.

Hymn for Day 202

Our hymn today, "Christian, Rise and Act They Creed", was written by Francie Albert Rollo Russell in 1893. It reflects the practical nature of Proverbs in challenging us to live our our faith.

*Christian, rise and act thy creed;
Let thy prayer be in thy deed;
Seek the right, perform the true,
Raise thy works and life anew.*

*Hearts around thee sink with care;
Thou canst help their load to bear;
Thou canst bring inspiring light,
Arm their faltering wills to fight.*

*Let thine aims be hope and joy,
And thy worship God's employ;
Give Him thanks in humble zeal,
Learning all His will to feel.*

*Come, then law divine, and reign;
Freest faith assailed in vain,
Perfect love bereft of fear,
Born in heaven and radiant here.*

Chapter 22 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-29 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. Some see a division in vs. 17 so that what follows are “the words of the wise”, distinct from Solomon’s writings. I do not see this but want to acknowledge the theory. The chapter opens with the worth of a good name. In vs. 6 we are reminded of the responsibility of training a child to walk in the proper way, and the need for it for such is in vs. 15. The power of the lender over the borrower is seen in vs. 7. In vs. 22 there is the first of two verses, with 23:10, warning against moving the boundary markers between the family sections in Israel. This principle can be applied to many areas.

Chapter 23 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-35 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. In vs. 7 is the universal truth that what man is on the inside is the true man. We are told to not envy sinners and their supposed success in vs. 17. One of the great sections on the dangers of alcohol is ins vs. 29-35.

Chapter 24 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-34 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. Some see a division in vs. 23 so that what follows are “things... belong to the wise”, distinct from Solomon’s writings. I do not see this but want to acknowledge the theory. The wisdom is seeking counsel from multiple sources is seen in vs. 6. In vs. 16 we see the dogged determination of the righteous who, though they fail, rise up and press onward. The dangers of laziness and slothfulness are described in vs. 30-34.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 203

The Book of Proverbs opened with Solomon's fatherly advice to his own son. It is no surprise then to see him exalt the wisdom of properly training children. I read 22:6 a little differently than most. I have witnessed so many that were raised right but drifted away from the Lord in their adulthood. However, they could never escape the lessons of their youth. Much later in life, they come back to the Lord. Like the Prodigal Son they paid a heavy price for their wandering, but also like him they came to their senses and found their way home. They were trained in the right way, but only when they were old did they return and not depart from it. The middle of their life may have been messy, but all that life could teach them was the truth of the principles instilled in them as a child.

Hymn for Day 203

This hymn, "My Lord, I Do Not Ask to Stand" was written by Norman Richardson. It is a beautiful prayer for every heart that seeks to train up children in the ways of the Lord.

*My Lord, I do not ask to stand
As king or prince of high degree,
I only pray that hand in hand
A child and I may come to Thee.*

*To teach a tender voice to pray,
Two childish eyes Thy face to see--
Two feet to guide in Thy straight way,
This fervently I ask of Thee.*

*O grant Thy patience to impart
Thy holy law, Thy words of truth,
Give, Lord, Thy grace, that my whole heart
May overflow with love of youth.*

*As step by step we tread the way,
Trusting, and confident, and free--
A child and I shall, day by day,
Find sweet companionship with Thee.*

Chapter 25 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-28 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. The power and beauty of a right word is compared to beautiful treasures in vs. 11. The principle of being kind toward your enemies in vs. 21-22 is repeated by Christ in Matthew 5:44 and by Paul in Romans 12:20-21. The chapter closes in vs. 28 with the vivid picture of someone who has no self-control. They are like a city without walls, exposed for all to be spoiled at will.

Chapter 26 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-28 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. We have the humorous but true comparison of a fool in vs. 11 to a dog that eats its own vomit. The impact of gossip is seen in vs. 20-22. The ludicrous excuses of the lazy man are revealed in vs. 13.

Chapter 27 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-27 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. In vs. 1 we are warned against taking the future for granted. In vs. 2 we are told to let others praise us instead of praising ourselves. The actions of a true friend, even if they are hurtful, are seen in vs. 6. In vs. 17 the role we play in edifying one another is described as iron sharpening iron. In vs. 23 we are exhorted again to not take things for granted, but to be mindful of our possessions. This verse easily applies to our finances and business.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 204

The beauty of a fit word is compared in 25:11 to “apples of gold in pictures of silver”. This verse rightly describes the Proverbs and their powerful imagery. I may not always consider that a fool does not learn their lesson and keeps repeating their mistakes, but I do remember they are compared to dogs eating their own vomit. Sometimes we settle for just stating the truth and find it ineffective. So many times the reason is because we fail to find ways to impress it on the imagination. God knows us. We may not remember every line or precept, but dogs eating vomit? How could we forget that?

Hymn for Day 204

Our song today is “Somebody”, written by John Clements in 1901. We have read much in Proverbs about how we should interact with others, and this song exhorts us to the one that makes a difference in others’ lives.

*Somebody did a golden deed,
Proving himself a friend in need;
Somebody sang a cheerful song,
Bright'ning the sky the whole day long, -
Was that somebody you?
Was that somebody you?*

*Somebody tho't 'tis sweet to live,
Willingly said, "I'm glad to give;"
Somebody fought a valiant fight,
Bravely he lived to shield the right, -
Was that somebody you?
Was that somebody you?*

*Somebody made a loving gift,
Cheerfully tried a load to lift;
Somebody told the love of Christ,
Told how His will was sacrificed, -
Was that somebody you?
Was that somebody you?*

*Somebody idled all the hours,
Carelessly crushed life's fairest flow'rs,
Somebody made life loss, not gain,
Tho'tlessly seemed to live in vain, -
Was that somebody you?
Was that somebody you?*

*Somebody filled the day with light,
Constantly chased away the night;
Somebody's work bore joy and peace,
Surely his life shall never cease, -
Was that somebody you?
Was that somebody you?*

Chapter 28 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-28 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. In vs. 1 we see the effects of a guilty conscience and the boldness of an innocent conscience. We are warned against covering and hiding our sins without properly dealing with them in vs. 13. In vs. 26 we are warned against following our heart.

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Chapter 29 Notes

In this chapter we continue a collection of miscellaneous proverbs.

vs. 1-27 - Further contrasts between the wise and the unwise. The wisdom of not speaking all your mind is seen in vs. 11. One of the most misused verses in the Bible is vs. 18. The “vision” being discussed is not leadership goals. It is the revelation of God. Life and happiness are tied to holding and following God’s truth.

Chapter 30 Notes

In this chapter we have words attributed to Agur.

vs. 1 – Who is Agur, the author of this chapter? Some think he is a forgotten wise man. I would rather believe that this is Solomon using a pseudonym. Agur means “gatherer” and Jakeh means “pious”, which could reflect Solomon as gathering wisdom as the son of pious David. Ithiel (“God is with me”) and Ucal (“devoured”) are said to have heard these words. These could be descriptions of the person that devours the teaching and thus walks the path of righteousness with God. I think Solomon likely wrote this very late in life.

vs. 2-3 – A confession of humility and abasement.

vs. 4-6 – The greatness of the Creator and His Word.

vs. 7-10 – A prayer to be delivered from falsehoods and to maintain a pure heart.

vs. 11-14 – Four proverbs concerning “this generation”. These are four types of wicked men that we have met in Proverbs.

vs. 15-16 – Four proverbs concerning things that are not satisfied. These are compared to the insatiable appetite of a leach.

vs. 17 – A singular proverb that interrupts the flow of discussing things in fours. It reiterates the destruction that awaits the wicked.

vs. 18-20 – Four proverbs concerning things that “are too wonderful” for the author to comprehend and leave no trace behind them. These are compared to the adulteress that claims she has committed no evil.

vs. 21-23 – Four proverbs concerning things that the world cannot bear and are intolerable.

vs. 24-28 – Four proverbs concerning small things on earth that are proven wise. The ant works with its colony to prepare for winter. The coney, or the hyrax to use its modern name, are small mammals that dwell safely among the rocks. The locusts have no leader but move in large, coordinated groups. The spider (wrongly translated as lizard by many) lives in the grandest halls of men.

vs. 29-31 – Four proverbs concerning things that are beautiful in their movement: a lion, a greyhound (literally “girt about the loins”, describing a slender dog), a ram, and a king.

vs. 32-33 – A final word of caution to have self-control.

Chapter 31 Notes

In this chapter we have words attributed to Lemuel.

vs. 1 – Who is king Lemuel? I believe this is another pseudonym for Solomon. Lemuel means “dedicated to God”. The interesting effect of this, which is rarely discussed, is that “his mother” is then Bathsheba.

vs. 2-9 – This is Bathsheba’s instruction to young Solomon. I do not know if she originally arranged it in poetic form if Solomon later reworked it to be such. She strongly warns her son against the dangers of alcohol and strange women. She then exhorts him to execute justice for the weak and downtrodden.

vs. 10-31 – This final section is an acrostic using the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It is a description of the ideal wife. I do not know if this is a continuation of Bathsheba’s instructions or if this is Solomon looking at his mother’s example as inspiration. The ideal woman is here a wife that is virtuous, trustworthy, industrious, diligent, caring, generous, prepared, and wise. She brings joy and blessings upon her family.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 205

If the fact that Bathsheba is tied in some way to the “virtuous woman” of Proverbs 31 shocks you, then you sadly do not understand God’s grace. Her and David were guilty of adultery, and she was complicit in the murder of her husband. We praise David for finding forgiveness through confession and repentance (see Psalm 51), but what about Bathsheba? I believe that she too found forgiveness just as David did. There is plenty of evidence for it if you pay attention to the details of her life after her and David’s sin was exposed. This amazing story of God’s grace has too long been overlooked because we would rather judge Bathsheba for her sin than acknowledge the change in her that came afterward.

Hymn for Day 205

Our hymn today is “Gracious Savior, Who Didst Honor”, written by Emily Shirreff in 1897. She was an advocate for the improvement of education for women in Victorian England. This work is a prayer that God would bless the work of mothers.

*Gracious Savior, who didst honor
Womankind as woman’s Son;
Very Man, though God begotten,
And with God the Father One;
Grant our womanhood may be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.*

*Jesus, Son of human mother,
Bless our motherhood, we pray;
Give us grace to lead our children,
Draw them to Thee day by day;
May our sons and daughters be
Dedicated, Lord, to Thee.*

*Thou who didst with Joseph labor,
Nor didst humble work disdain,
Grant we may Thy footsteps follow
Patiently through toil and pain;
May our quiet home life be
Lived, O Lord, in Thee, to Thee.*

*Thou who didst go forth in sorrow,
Toiling for the souls of men,
Thou who shalt draw all men to Thee,
Though despised, rejected then;
Humble though our influence be,
Use it in the world for Thee.*