

30 DAYS IN PROVERBS:
Topical Readings from Inspired Wisdom

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Preface

Proverbs is not a book like Ephesians or the Gospel of John. It is collection, like recipe box, or a rolodex of ancient, wise counsel. For many readers a chapter of Proverbs seems like a kaleidoscope of random ideas. I have often read the “Proverb of the Day” (e.g., Sept. 2, read Proverbs 2). Despite the fact that the 31 Proverbs correspond nicely to the days of the month, too many disparate proverbs come within a single chapter for me to memorably hold on to it. Arranging them topically provides an easier access for meditation and devotional purposes. These readings from Proverbs show the angles and dimensions of a theme like a diamond ring held up to the light. We can see lines and colors refracted on each topic.

My initial interest in Proverbs was to master the content of the book. I knew a few isolated verses and had some vague notions of certain passages concerning sluggards, fools, ants, and contentious wives. Arranging them topically provides an easier access point for devotional purposes.

As I began to read Proverbs consistently, that calm excitement from gaining truth and wisdom motivated me to think about the practicality of the book. No one who has read Proverbs can say biblical faith is a theoretical ideology. As the excellent commentator Derek Kidner says, “... it is a book which seldom takes you to church. . . it calls you in the street about some everyday matter, things out at home. Its function in Scripture is to put godliness into working clothes.”¹ As you use this selection of street Words, it is my prayer that you may be strengthened in your understanding of biblical wisdom. Even more, I hope you come to know the Lord of Wisdom more fully. *“And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent”* (John 17:3).

Suggestions to Help Your Devotional Life

When we enter into the presence of the Divine Majesty our aim should be knowing Him. Indeed, we are called to know Him, rather than a “text” or a book. Knowing God as He reveals Himself to us must inevitably lead to worship. As A.W. Tozer said, “We are saved to worship God. All that Christ has done for us in the past and all that He is doing now leads to this one end.”² Even though deep times of worship may be our aim, the day to day paths in which we walk often conflict with those godly desires. Practically speaking, we must *do something which facilitates* that knowledge of the Holy One with the goal of worship in spirit and truth.

Anything we come to know and understand through God’s Word may be useful in equipping us for God’s purposes, now and forever. Biblical knowledge also aids us in knowing Him, whether that knowledge is theologically deep or practically wise. We must come to God on His terms, His revealed terms. Certainly the Proverbs fall on the practical end of the continuum in Scripture. While considering topics like money, debt, talking and diligence may not inspire everyone to spiritual warmth, if we intentionally take such practical words, swirling them in the glass of our devotion, tasting and observing before the face of God, we will gain knowing the mind of our Maker. For every aspect of our lives is to be brought and offered unto Him. In this way we live all of life unto Him.

Getting the Most Out of This Guide in Ten Steps

1. Pray through the Proverbs as you read them; think of someone and/or yourself in need of this wisdom and make it a prayer.
2. Read the day’s selections more than once during the day in order to integrate that time into the whole day, lest it become a ritual with no lasting effect.
3. Practice memorizing a verse from each daily reading, so that you can meditate on it later in the day. I have suggested a memory verse by the use of the asterisk.*

4. Make a continual prayer of your memory verse in order to avoid rote memory without actual spiritual enrichment.
5. In praying with such Proverbs, ask God to bear fruit in your life as a result of this spiritual exercise.
6. Consider the New Testament truths that correspond to the wisdom presented in the Proverbs. Connect the dots.
7. Use these thirty days as a time to not only read and memorize, but study. Take time to look up unclear words online, in a Bible dictionary, or commentary.
8. Read several Study Bible, commentary, or encyclopedia introductions to the Proverbs during these days.
9. Purpose to know this section of Scripture as a result of these thirty days; immerse yourself in God's Words of Wisdom.
10. Each day seek to get face to face with the Lord with at least one verse from the Proverbs. Don't condemn yourself for missing a day's reading; instead, pray about some Proverb truth every day and keep moving forward.

What is a Proverb?

Most cultures have "proverbs." In our context, we may think of these: "It takes a village," "A bird in the hand . . .," "Actions speak louder . . .," "Better late than . . .," "Necessity is the mother . . .," "When in Rome . . ." Most of my readers can finish these. This kind of pithy saying captures in a few words a principle or concept that applies to life in this world. In Hebrew, the word for "proverb" actually means "parallel," "similar," or "a comparison." The term translated "proverb" is *mashal* (מִשְׁלָּה). Another term descriptive of the sayings in Proverbs is "riddle" or "enigma," *chidah* (חִידָה) in Hebrew. Biblical proverbs often involve a phrase that is paralleled, restated, contrasted, emphasized, or illustrated. Consider the following: (a) "Take my instruction, and not silver and knowledge rather than choicest gold" (2:2); (b) "The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom, But the perverted tongue will be cut out." (10:31), (c) "A wise man scales the city of the mighty, And brings down the stronghold in which they trust" (21:22). To understand Proverbs, one must know the nature of the comparison.

Studying the Book of Proverbs

One may consider two ways of studying Proverbs: a topical study brings coherence to the themes, or a verse by verse study in sequence to bring out deeper structural meaning and identify the flow of thought in each chapter. This guide for daily devotions is compiled and organized to help you capture and meditate on particular themes in Proverbs.

It is helpful to know some general facts and figures before beginning either study. Of the 800 or so proverbs (915 verses) in the book, most were written by Solomon, David's son (1:1; 10:1; cf. 22:20). Apparently the book came together when Hezekiah's scribes chose from the 3000 proverbs that Solomon wrote and arranged them as wisdom for the people (1 Kings 4:32). There may have been later editors to bring this book in a final form for the Hebrew Scriptures. As it says, "These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied" (25:1). We also know of two other writers, Agur the prophet and Lemuel the prophet.

The book of Proverbs fits in the general category of biblical literature known as "wisdom literature." While much could be said about this ancient Hebraic writing, remembering the *Christocentric* purpose is relevant for devotional purposes. Since we know that in Christ are hidden "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," we can see Proverbs as a significant part of that "wisdom in Christ" (Col. 2:3). The Old Testament promises Christ (according to the New Testament) and provides the foundational revelation for His coming. As Luke 24:44-45 says, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." Here "the Psalms" stand for the section of the Hebrew Scriptures containing Proverbs.

Norman Geisler has helpfully observed that the various kinds of literature of the Old Testament present Christ: Law is the *foundation* for Christ. History is the *preparation* for Christ. Poetry is the *aspiration* for Christ. Prophecy is the *expectation* of Christ. Biblical poetry or wisdom literature can be outlined further: Job is the aspiration for *mediation* by Christ. Psalms is the aspiration for *communion* with Christ. Proverbs is the aspiration for *wisdom* in Christ. Ecclesiastes is the aspiration for ultimate *satisfaction*. Song of Solomon is the aspiration for *union in love* with Christ.³

How do the Proverbs relate to Christ? How are they fulfilled in Christ? How do they reveal Christ? Certainly Christ was wise and acted wisely, but there is more to Christ's fulfilling than simple moral obedience. There is a deeper structural meaning to Proverbs. *It moves from a son to a wife.* Remember the Garden. An immature Adam (the son of God) was given counsel and God led him through a process of growth to realize he needed a bride. The fullest realization of his desires was for this completing companion. So the book of Proverbs starts with a son and ends with a glorious wife.

This is certainly Israel's story. Israel as Yahweh's son in one sense, is to become, in another sense, Yahweh's Bride. That is not only the story of Israel, *this is the story of Jesus.* After the dismal failure of Israel, in the fulness of time, Jesus (true Israel) came as the wise Son who grew in that wisdom, spoke wisely, and sacrificed fully so that He could gain a beautiful and virtuous Wife. This emphasis is enhanced by the fact that the last verses of Proverbs on the glorious Wife (31:10-31) are in the poetic form of a Hebrew alphabetic acrostic (the first line begins with *aleph*, then *beth*, then *gimmel*, etc.). The contour of Proverbs is the shape of Jesus and His Church.

What is Wisdom in Proverbs?

The Concept of Wisdom - The concept of wisdom is presented in Proverbs as follows: 1. Wisdom as the *Fear of the Lord* (1:7; 9:10;

10:12-13; 13:5). 2. Wisdom as the *Gift of God* (2:6; 8:29-30; 2:3; 3:7; 8:13). 3. Wisdom as the *Way to Life* ("life" occurs 24 times) (3:2; 8:35). The basis of wisdom is three-fold: 1. Wisdom is grounded in the *reverence* for the authority and majesty of God (1:7). 2. Wisdom *respects* the authority and sanctity of the family (1:8). 3. Wisdom *regards* the authority and moral standards of a biblical society (1:10f.).⁴

The Character of Wisdom - Wisdom is personified as a virtuous woman (3:15; 7:4; 8:3f; 31:10ff). This is due in some part to the fact that wisdom is a feminine noun in Hebrew. The term is *chokhmah* (חֹכְמָה). There is high praise for the model woman who "fears the Lord" (31:30). She is a paragon of virtue, a gift to her husband. This wise woman is in contrast to the adulteress, who models folly, evil, temptation, and destruction (5:3ff).

The Content of Wisdom - Commentator Derek Kidner suggests eight major subjects presented in Proverbs:

1. God and Man
2. Wisdom
3. The Fool
4. The Sluggard
5. The Friend
6. Words
7. The Family
8. Life and Death⁵

While I have suggested above that a linear reading of Proverbs in chapters is difficult to organize, still the chapters may be outlined as follows:

1. Words to the wise: Wisdom is valuable: seek it (chs 1-9).
2. Words of the wise: Wisdom is practical; follow it (chs 10-22a).
3. Words for the wise: Wisdom is admonitional, hear it (chs 22b-24).
4. Words from the wise: Wisdom is ethical; do it (chs 25-31).⁶

DAY ONE: THE FEAR OF THE LORD

- ♦ *Proverbs 1:7 - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- ♦ Proverbs 1:29 - Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD.
- ♦ Proverbs 3:7-8 - Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.
- ♦ Proverbs 8:13 - The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.
- ♦ Proverbs 10:27 - The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short.
- ♦ Proverbs 14:26 - In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:16 - Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:23 - The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:4 - The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life.
- ♦ Proverbs 23:17 - Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day.
- ♦ Proverbs 24:21-22 - My son, fear the LORD and the king, and do not join with those who do otherwise, for disaster will arise suddenly from them, and who knows the ruin that will come from them both?

Since Proverbs are comparisons or parallels, what parallels on the “fear of the Lord” strike you? What will you do as a result? Write at least one action you should take today.

DAY TWO: WISDOM

- ♦ Proverbs 2:1-8 - My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding . . .
- ♦ Proverbs 3:19 - The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens.
- ♦ Proverbs 7:1-4 - My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you; keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call insight your intimate friend.
- ♦ *Proverbs 9:10 - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.
- ♦ Proverbs 10:13 - On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense.
- ♦ Proverbs 10:23 - Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:16 - How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:30 - No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the LORD.

Wisdom is a key concept in Proverbs, can you define it from these verses? How can you act wisely today? Write at least one example.

DAY THREE: MORE WISDOM

♦ Proverbs 8:11-21 - For wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. . . . I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly. I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. *Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries. The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man. . . . Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD, but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death.

What does Wisdom do? How does it act? How is Wisdom described? Underline and reflect on the actions of Wisdom. How could this change your attitude today? Turn this into a prayer request.

DAY FOUR: EVEN MORE WISDOM

- ✦ Proverbs 10:31 - The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off.
- ✦ Proverbs 11:2 - When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.
- ✦ Proverbs 13:10 - By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom.
- ✦ Proverbs 14:8 - The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.
- ✦ Proverbs 14:33 - Wisdom rests in the heart of a man of understanding, but it makes itself known even in the midst of fools.
- ✦ Proverbs 17:24 - The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.
- ✦ Proverbs 19:20 - Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.
- ✦ Proverbs 24:3 - By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established.
- ✦ *Proverbs 28:26 - Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.
- ✦ Proverbs 29:3 - He who loves wisdom makes his father glad, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.
- ✦ Proverbs 29:15 - The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

How is Wisdom related to other actions such as our speaking, our pride, our ambitions, etc.? Write a few ideas you could do today which would promote more Wisdom in your life?

DAY FIVE: KNOWLEDGE

- ✦ Proverbs 10:14 - The wise lay up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.
- ✦ Proverbs 11:9 - With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbor, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.
- ✦ *Proverbs 12:23 - A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.
- ✦ Proverbs 14:6 - A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding.
- ✦ Proverbs 14:18 - The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
- ✦ Proverbs 15:7 - The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools.
- ✦ Proverbs 15:14 - The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly.
- ✦ Proverbs 18:15 - An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
- ✦ Proverbs 19:2 - Desire without knowledge is not good, and whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way.
- ✦ Proverbs 20:15 - There is gold and abundance of costly stones, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.
- ✦ Proverbs 22:12 - The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the traitor.
- ✦ Proverbs 24:5 - A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might,
- ✦ Proverbs 28:2 - When a land transgresses, it has many rulers, but with a man of understanding and knowledge, its stability will long continue.

How is knowledge gained? What other characteristics does a person with knowledge possess? Jot down a few ways you could grow in knowledge.

DAY SIX: UNDERSTANDING

- ♦ *Proverbs 3:5 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.
- ♦ Proverbs 3:19 - The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:12 - Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent.
- ♦ Proverbs 14:29 - Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:21 - Folly is a joy to him who lacks sense, but a man of understanding walks straight ahead.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:10 - A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:2 - A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:25 - Strike a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence; reprove a man of understanding, and he will gain knowledge.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:5 - The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.
- ♦ Proverbs 28:16 - A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor, but he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.
- ♦ Proverbs 29:7 - A righteous man knows the rights of the poor; a wicked man does not understand such knowledge.

Is understanding the same as knowledge or wisdom? How would you describe it from these verses? What is one matter that you need to gain understanding on today? Define knowledge below.

DAY SEVEN: THE WISE PERSON

- ✦ Proverbs 3:7 - Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.
- ✦ Proverbs 3:35 - The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.
- ✦ Proverbs 6:6 - Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.
- ✦ Proverbs 8:33 - Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it.
- ✦ Proverbs 9:8 - Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.
- ✦ Proverbs 9:9 - Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.
- ✦ Proverbs 10:8 - The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin.
- ✦ Proverbs 11:29 - Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.
- ✦ Proverbs 11:30 - The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.
- ✦ *Proverbs 12:15 - The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.
- ✦ Proverbs 13:1 - A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.
- ✦ Proverbs 13:14 - The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.
- ✦ Proverbs 13:20 - Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

What are some activities of wise people? List at least three. Which one should you do today?

DAY EIGHT: MORE ON THE WISE PERSON

- ♦ Proverbs 14:1 - The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down.
- ♦ Proverbs 14:3 - By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them.
- ♦ Proverbs 14:16 - One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:20 - A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:31 - The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:21 - The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:23 - The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:28 - Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.
- ♦ *Proverbs 20:18 - Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:26 - A wise king winnows the wicked and drives the wheel over them.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:20 - Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:22 - A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the stronghold in which they trust.

What are some activities of foolish people? List at least three. Which one should you avoid today?

DAY NINE: EVEN MORE ON THE WISE PERSON

- ✦ Proverbs 23:24 - The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him.
- ✦ *Proverbs 24:5 - A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might.
- ✦ Proverbs 24:6 - For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.
- ✦ Proverbs 24:23 - These also are sayings of the wise. Partiality in judging is not good.
- ✦ Proverbs 26:5 - Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.
- ✦ Proverbs 26:12 - Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- ✦ Proverbs 26:16 - The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.
- ✦ Proverbs 28:11 - A rich man is wise in his own eyes, but a poor man who has understanding will find him out.
- ✦ Proverbs 29:8 - Scoffers set a city aflame, but the wise turn away wrath.
- ✦ Proverbs 29:11 - A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.
- ✦ Proverbs 30:24-28 - Four things on earth are small, but they are exceedingly wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in the summer; the rock badgers are a people not mighty, yet they make their homes in the cliffs; the locusts have no king, yet all of them march in rank; the lizard you can take in your hands, yet it is in kings' palaces.

Describe a wise person's character attributes from these verses. Identify one attribute in which you need to grow. Write it down as a prayer.

DAY TEN: DISCIPLINE

- ♦ Proverbs 3:11-12 - My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.
- ♦ Proverbs 5:23 - He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray.
- ♦ Proverbs 6:23 - For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life,
- ♦ *Proverbs 12:1 - Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:1 - A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:18 - Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:24 - Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:10 - There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way; whoever hates reproof will die.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:15 - Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.
- ♦ Proverbs 23:13 - Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die.
- ♦ Proverbs 29:17 - Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart.
- ♦ Proverbs 29:19 - By mere words a servant is not disciplined, for though he understands, he will not respond.

These truths are some of the hardest to embrace. But have you learned, "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11). Write an example from your own experience.

DAY ELEVEN: PLANNING

- ♦ Proverbs 14:15 - The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:22 - Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:1 - The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:3 - Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.
- ♦ *Proverbs 16:9 - The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:33 - The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:21 - Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:5 - The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:18 - Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:24 - Man's steps are ordained by the LORD, How then can man understand his way?
- ♦ Proverbs 21:5 - The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.
- ♦ Proverbs 24:8 - Whoever plans to do evil will be called a schemer.

What lessons do these verses suggest about our "steps," plans, and ambitions? List three verses that speak to your life situation now. What actions could you take this week to respond faithfully to these truths?

DAY TWELVE: MONEY

- ♦ *Proverbs 3:9–10 - Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.
- ♦ Proverbs 10:15 - A rich man's wealth is his strong city; the poverty of the poor is their ruin.
- ♦ Proverbs 10:22 - The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:4 - Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:16 - A gracious woman gets honor, and violent men get riches.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:28 - Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:7 - One pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:8 - The ransom of a man's life is his wealth, but a poor man hears no threat.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:11 - Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:22 - A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.
- ♦ Proverbs 14:20 - The poor is disliked even by his neighbor, but the rich has many friends.

There are many lessons about money and wealth in the Proverbs. What comparisons in these verses strike you? Describe at least one truth that should guide your thinking in financial matters.

DAY THIRTEEN: MORE ON MONEY

- ♦ Proverbs 14:24 - The crown of the wise is their wealth, but the folly of fools brings folly.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:11 - A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:23 - The poor use entreaties, but the rich answer roughly.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:4 - Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:17 - Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.
Proverbs 21:17 - Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:1 - A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:4 - The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life.
- ♦ *Proverbs 22:7 - The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:16 - Whoever oppresses the poor to increase his own wealth, or gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.
- ♦ Proverbs 23:4-5 Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist. When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven.
- ♦ Proverbs 28:8 - Whoever multiplies his wealth by interest and profit gathers it for him who is generous to the poor.
- ♦ Proverbs 28:20 - A faithful man will abound with blessings, but whoever hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.
- ♦ Proverbs 30:7-8 - Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me.

Is wealth always a blessing? Mark verses that show a negative association or consequence in wealth. Mediate on the one which may be a temptation for you.

DAY FOURTEEN: ABOMINATIONS

- ♦ Proverbs 3:32 - For the devious person is an abomination to the LORD, but the upright are in his confidence.
- ♦ *Proverbs 6:16-19 - There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:1 - A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is his delight.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:20 - Those of crooked heart are an abomination to the LORD, but those of blameless ways are his delight.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:22 - Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:8-9 - The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but he loves him who pursues righteousness.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:26 - The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, but gracious words are pure.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:12 - It is an abomination to kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:15 - He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:23 - Unequal weights are an abomination to the LORD, and false scales are not good.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:27 - The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with evil intent.
- ♦ Proverbs 28:9 - If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

Mark some actions that God really hates. Meditate on one of them, probing the reason why this is an abomination before God.

DAY FIFTEEN: FOOLS

- ♦ Proverbs 1:22 - "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?"
- ♦ Proverbs 1:32 - For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them;
- ♦ Proverbs 10:10 - Whoever winks the eye causes trouble, and a babbling fool will come to ruin.
- ♦ Proverbs 10:18 - The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever utters slander is a fool.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:16 - The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.
- ♦ *Proverbs 14:7 - Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.
- ♦ Proverbs 14:8 - The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.
- ♦ Proverbs 14:9 - Fools mock at the guilt offering, but the upright enjoy acceptance.
- ♦ Proverbs 14:16 - One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:5 - A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:22 - Good sense is a fountain of life to him who has it, but the instruction of fools is folly.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:10 - A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:12 - Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs rather than a fool in his folly.

The "Fool" is a key theme in Proverbs. How would you define foolish behavior from these verses? Describe it with at least three characteristics.

DAY SIXTEEN: MORE ON FOOLS

- ♦ Proverbs 17:21 - He who sires a fool gets himself sorrow, and the father of a fool has no joy.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:24 - The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:28 - Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:2 - A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:7 - A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:10 - It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, much less for a slave to rule over princes.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:3 - It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling.
- ♦ Proverbs 23:9 - Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the good sense of your words.
- ♦ Proverbs 24:7 - Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the gate he does not open his mouth.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:1 - Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool.
- ♦ *Proverbs 26:4-5 - Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:6 - Whoever sends a message by the hand of a fool cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:11 - Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.
- ♦ Proverbs 29:11 - A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.
- ♦ Proverbs 29:20 - Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Mark some verses that apply to your recent behavior. How have you played the fool? Ask God to forgive you and give your grace to overcome in these matters.

DAY SEVENTEEN: SCOFFING & FOOLISHNESS

- ✦ Proverbs 9:7 - Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury.
- ✦ Proverbs 10:1 - A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.
- ✦ Proverbs 10:14 - The wise lay up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.
- ✦ *Proverbs 11:29 - Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.
- ✦ Proverbs 14:1 - The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down.
- ✦ Proverbs 14:3 - By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them.
- ✦ Proverbs 17:25 - A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.
- ✦ Proverbs 19:13 - A foolish son is ruin to his father, and a wife's quarreling is a continual dripping of rain.
- ✦ Proverbs 19:29 - Condemnation is ready for scoffers, and beating for the backs of fools.
- ✦ Proverbs 21:20 - Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it.
- ✦ Proverbs 21:24 - "Scoffer" is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride.
- ✦ Proverbs 22:10 - Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out, and quarreling and abuse will cease.
- ✦ Proverbs 29:9 - If a wise man has an argument with a fool, the fool only rages and laughs, and there is no quiet.
- ✦ Proverbs 30:32 - If you have been foolish, exalting yourself, or if you have been devising evil, put your hand on your mouth.

How often in these verses is foolish behavior indicated by speaking or verbal actions? Mark the verses that are related. What is one way you could apply this insight today? Identify one verse that could help you avoid foolish behavior today.

DAY EIGHTEEN: STRIFE & CONTENTION

- ♦ Proverbs 10:12 - Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:10 - By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:18 - A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:28 - A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.
- ♦ *Proverbs 17:1 - Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:14 - The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:19 - Whoever loves transgression loves strife; he who makes his door high seeks destruction.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:1 - Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:3 - It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:10 - Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out, and quarreling and abuse will cease.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:17 - Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:20 - For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:21 - As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.
- ♦ Proverbs 28:25 - A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched.
- ♦ Proverbs 29:22 - A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.
- ♦ Proverbs 30:33 - For pressing milk produces curds, pressing the nose produces blood, and pressing anger produces strife.

Which verse most applies to you today? Mark it and remember it through the course of this day. Pray to the Lord about it.

DAY NINETEEN: FRIENDSHIP

- ♦ *Proverbs 17:9 - Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:17 - A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:24 - A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:4 - Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:6 - Many seek the favor of a generous man, and everyone is a friend to a man who gives gifts.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:7 - All a poor man's brothers hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him! He pursues them with words, but does not have them.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:11 - He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.
- ♦ Proverbs 27:6 - Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.
- ♦ Proverbs 27:9 - Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.
- ♦ Proverbs 27:10 - Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.
- ♦ Proverbs 27:14 - Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing.

Do any of these verses about friendship apply to your life today? Write out a sentence or two about your plan to be a better friend to someone.

DAY TWENTY: WIVES

- ♦ Proverbs 5:18-19 - Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?
- ♦ Proverbs 6:29 - So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:4 - An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:22 - He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:13 - A foolish son is ruin to his father, and a wife's quarreling is a continual dripping of rain.
- ♦ *Proverbs 19:14 - House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:9 - It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:19 - It is better to live in a desert land than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman.
- ♦ Proverbs 27:15-16 - A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike; to restrain her is to restrain the wind or to grasp oil in one's right hand.
- ♦ Proverbs 30:21-23 - Under three things the earth trembles; under four it cannot bear up: a slave when he becomes king, and a fool when he is filled with food; an unloved woman when she gets a husband, and a maidservant when she displaces her mistress.
- ♦ Proverbs 31:10-12 - An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.

If you are a husband how can you show gratitude to your wife for her faithfulness? If you are a wife, what kinds of actions in the above verses should you practice or avoid? If you are not married, what characteristics in a future spouse should you desire?

DAY TWENTY-ONE: A VIRTUOUS WOMEN

✦ Proverbs 31:10–31 - An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." *Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

This is the last chapter of Proverbs. Why do you think this is placed at the end of the book of Proverbs? How does this related to the other themes in the book? Mark a few key phrases that you could apply to your life by way of example, in attitudes or actions.

DAY TWENTY-TWO: SONS

- ✦ Proverbs 1:8 - Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching.
- ✦ Proverbs 1:10 - My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.
- ✦ Proverbs 3:21 - My son, do not lose sight of these— keep sound wisdom and discretion,
- ✦ Proverbs 4:1 - Hear, O sons, a father’s instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight,
- ✦ Proverbs 4:3 - When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother,
- ✦ Proverbs 4:10 - Hear, my son, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many.
- ✦ Proverbs 6:20 - My son, keep your father’s commandment, and forsake not your mother’s teaching.
- ✦ *Proverbs 10:5 - He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.
- ✦ Proverbs 17:2 - A servant who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.
- ✦ Proverbs 17:6 - Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers.

Faithful and wise children are the greatest blessing. Disobedient children are one of the greatest trials. If you are a parent, consider these verses for use in prayer for your child/children. If you are a child under the care of your parents, what are some ways you could show more respect and honor to your parents?

DAY TWENTY-THREE: THE ACTIONS OF CHILDREN

- ✦ Proverbs 19:18 - Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.
- ✦ Proverbs 19:26 - He who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who brings shame and reproach.
- ✦ Proverbs 23:19 - Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way.
- ✦ Proverbs 23:24 - The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him.
- ✦ Proverbs 23:26 - My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.
- ✦ Proverbs 24:13 - My son, eat honey, for it is good, and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste.
- ✦ Proverbs 24:21 - My son, fear the LORD and the king, and do not join with those who do otherwise,
- ✦ Proverbs 27:11 - Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him who reproaches me.
- ✦ Proverbs 28:7 - The one who keeps the law is a son with understanding, but a companion of gluttons shames his father.
- ✦ *Proverbs 14:26 - In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.
- ✦ Proverbs 22:6 - Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

What are some of the principles of training children that you have learned from Proverbs thus far? Reflect on your own experience. What did your parents do that conforms to these principles? Thank them for it and give thanks to God for them. What are some ways that you want to follow the Proverbs in having influence on your children or the children in your context?

DAY TWENTY-FOUR: PLEDGES AND SURETY

- ♦ Proverbs 6:1-5 - My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, have given your pledge for a stranger, if you are snared in the words of your mouth, caught in the words of your mouth, then do this, my son, and save yourself, for you have come into the hand of your neighbor: go, hasten, and plead urgently with your neighbor. Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber; save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:15 - Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm, but he who hates striking hands in pledge is secure.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:18 - One who lacks sense gives a pledge and puts up security in the presence of his neighbor.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:16 - Take a man's garment when he has put up security for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for foreigners.
- ♦ *Proverbs 22:26 - Be not one of those who give pledges, who put up security for debts.
- ♦ Proverbs 27:13 - Take a man's garment when he has put up security for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for an adulteress.

Other passages address this and related themes, such as Ecclesiastes 5:5, "It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay." Psalm 37:21 says, "The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives." Romans 13:8 says, "Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law." Given the teaching in Proverbs as well as other passages, what is the key instruction the Bible gives on "surety" or "pledges"? How does this relate to you practically? Have you "cosigned" for a loan? Do these verses apply? Are you at fault with any person or institution? If so, seek counsel on how to be properly released and make a short-term plan and long-term plan. Ask the Lord to provide for you.

DAY TWENTY-FIVE: WORDS

- ♦ Proverbs 10:20 - The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is of little worth.
- ♦ Proverbs 10:31 - The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:18 - There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:19 - Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:2 - The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:4 - A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:4 - An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue.
- ♦ *Proverbs 18:21 - Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:6 - The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:23 - Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.
- ♦ Proverbs 25:15 - With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.
- ♦ Proverbs 25:23 - The north wind brings forth rain, and a backbiting tongue, angry looks.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:28 - A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.
- ♦ Proverbs 28:23 - Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue.

What are some ways you sin with your tongue? Confess to the Lord the last use of your words to hurt someone. Ask for their forgiveness if you have not already done so. Mark two or three verses that could be an aid for you today, as you seek to use your words for life, rather than death.

DAY TWENTY-SIX: MORE ON WORDS

- ♦ Proverbs 11:12 - Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:13 - Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.
- ♦ Proverbs 5:3 - For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil,
- ♦ Proverbs 16:21 - The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:7 - Fine speech is not becoming to a fool; still less is false speech to a prince.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:1 - Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in speech and is a fool.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:11 - He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.
- ♦ Proverbs 5:7 - And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth.
- ♦ *Proverbs 10:19 - When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:6 - The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the mouth of the upright delivers them.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:14 - From the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied with good, and the work of a man's hand comes back to him.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:25 - Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:13 - Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.
- ♦ Proverbs 14:7 - Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:1 - A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Mark the verses that you need to apply to your regular patterns of speech. Remember to turn these in to prayers asking for the Lord's help.

DAY TWENTY-SEVEN: EVEN MORE ON WORDS

- ♦ Proverbs 15:23 - To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!
- ♦ Proverbs 16:20 - Whoever gives thought to the word will discover good, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:24 - Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:27 - A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire.
- ♦ Proverbs 17:27 - Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:4 - The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.
- ♦ Proverbs 18:8 - The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:7 - All a poor man's brothers hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him! He pursues them with words, but does not have them.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:12 - The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the traitor.
- ♦ Proverbs 23:9 - Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the good sense of your words.
- ♦ Proverbs 23:12 - Apply your heart to instruction and your ear to words of knowledge.
- ♦ *Proverbs 25:11 - A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:22 - The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body.
- ♦ Proverbs 29:19 - By mere words a servant is not disciplined, for though he understands, he will not respond.
- ♦ Proverbs 29:20 - Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- ♦ Proverbs 30:5 - Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

What are the repeated themes in these verses? Take them to heart through prayer.

DAY TWENTY-EIGHT: LAZINESS

- ♦ Proverbs 6:6 - Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.
- ♦ Proverbs 6:9 - How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?
- ♦ *Proverbs 10:4 - A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:24 - The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:27 - Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:4 - The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.
- ♦ Proverbs 15:19 - The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:15 - Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger.
- ♦ Proverbs 19:24 - The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:4 - The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:5 - The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:25 - The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.
- ♦ Proverbs 22:13 - The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!"
- ♦ Proverbs 26:14 - As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:15 - The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.
- ♦ Proverbs 26:16 - The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.

Identify a few areas of your life in which you are lazy? What are you going to do about it today? Ask God to strengthen you in diligence.

DAY TWENTY-NINE: OLD FAVORITES

- ♦ Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.
- ♦ Proverbs 5:1-6 - My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge. For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:2 - A good man obtains favor from the LORD, but a man of evil devices he condemns.
- ♦ Proverbs 12:10 - Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.
- ♦ *Proverbs 13:12 - Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.
- ♦ Proverbs 13:25 - The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, but the belly of the wicked suffers want.
- ♦ Proverbs 21:1 - The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.
- ♦ Proverbs 23:1-3 - When you sit down to eat with a ruler, observe carefully what is before you,
♦ and put a knife to your throat if you are given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food.
- ♦ Proverbs 24:26 - Whoever gives an honest answer kisses the lips.
- ♦ Proverbs 27:17 - Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.
- ♦ Proverbs 25:2 - It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out.

Mark a few of these that relate to your life at present. Write them down or print them out for memorization and meditation.

DAY THIRTY: MORE FAVORITES

- ♦ Proverbs 25:16 - If you have found honey, eat only enough for you, lest you have your fill of it and vomit it.
- ♦ *Proverbs 27:5 - Better is open rebuke than hidden love.
- ♦ Proverbs 24:24–25 - Whoever says to the wicked, “You are in the right,” will be cursed by peoples, abhorred by nations, but those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, and a good blessing will come upon them.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:11 - By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown.
- ♦ Proverbs 11:14 - Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.
- ♦ Proverbs 20:1 - Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.
- ♦ Proverbs 23:20–21 - Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.
- ♦ Proverbs 23:28–35 - Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things. You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. “They struck me,” you will say, “but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink.”
- ♦ Proverbs 21:31 - The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD.
- ♦ Proverbs 16:4 - The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.

Mark the top three relevant examples to your life in these verses. Pray through them and write them down or print them out for memorization and meditation.

REVIEW

Has your engagement with biblical Wisdom changed you? Write out a few actions that you have done as a result of 30 Days with the Proverbs.

With a quick browse back through this guide, what are three verses that have had the most influence in your actions over these days?

Write from memory several Proverbs that you have learned by heart.

Notes

There is an accompanying group of songs that I have written which are available in an audio CD or via downloads at WordMp3.com. This site also hosts many other resources for a deeper study of Proverbs in the form of articles and recorded talks.

¹ Derek Kidner, *Proverbs: An Introduction & Commentary* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries #15) (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1964), 35.

² A.W. Tozer, *Whatever Happened to Worship?: A Call to True Worship* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012 [1985]), 94.

³ Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 181.

⁴ *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*, 207.

⁵ *Proverbs: An Introduction & Commentary*, 31ff.

⁶ *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*, 207-212.