

THE ACTION
BIBLE
STUDY BIBLE *ESV*

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BIBLE
STUDY BIBLE **ESV**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SERGIO CARIELLO
GENERAL EDITOR CATHERINE DEVRIES

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THE ACTION BIBLE STUDY BIBLE ESV

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Proverbs

AUTHOR:
SOLOMON

Many of the proverbs were written by Solomon. He ruled Israel from 970-930 B.C. Some of his proverbs were collected and copied over 200 years later during the time of another king, Hezekiah.

GOD IN ACTION

God wants you to be wise. And He's given you the keys to wisdom in this book.

Proverbs is a collection of short sayings about everyday life. A proverb is not an absolute promise. It's a general statement about how the world usually works. The book of Proverbs is full of good advice that will help you become wise.

What's the first step to being wise? Knowing where to find true wisdom. Proverbs teaches that God is the source of all wisdom. The search for wisdom begins and ends with God. Before there were oceans, mountains, or anything else, God made wisdom (8:22-31). And He shared it with us so we would know how to live (8:32-36).

Wisdom starts with fearing God (1:7). This doesn't mean you have to be terrified of Him. But God wants you to respect Him. He wants you to honor Him and obey His commands. He wants you to count on Him for everything.

A big part of wisdom is remembering that God is in control. He sees everything you do (5:21). He even guides your steps (20:24). A wise person will ask what God cares about—and learn to care about the same things. For example, God cares about the poor, so we should be generous to them, too (14:31).

God gives you a choice: the way of wisdom (9:1-12) or the way of foolishness and folly (9:13-18). If you want to choose the way of wisdom, you can start by reading Proverbs.

PEOPLE IN ACTION

The wisdom of Proverbs is for everyone. But some parts were written especially for certain kinds of people. For example, Proverbs 1-9 gives advice from parents to their sons. Proverbs 31:10-31 celebrates a woman who takes care of her family, runs a successful business, and teaches others how to be wise.

FAITH IN ACTION

KEY WORDS IN THIS BOOK

FAIRNESS LISTEN
INTEGRITY
WORK ADVISE
WISDOM JUSTICE
HONOR

**DID YOU
KNOW**

The Book of Proverbs is just a small sample of Solomon's wisdom. Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs when he was alive (1 Kings 4:32).

The Beginning of Knowledge

1 The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel:

- 2 To know wisdom and instruction,
to understand words of insight,
- 3 to receive instruction in wise dealing,
in righteousness, justice, and equity;
- 4 to give prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the youth—
- 5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning,
and the one who understands obtain
guidance,
- 6 to understand a proverb and a saying,
the words of the wise and their riddles.
- 7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of
knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The Enticement of Sinners

- 8 Hear, my son, your father's instruction,
and forsake not your mother's teaching,
- 9 for they are a graceful garland for your head
and pendants for your neck.
- 10 My son, if sinners entice you,
do not consent.
- 11 If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait
for blood;
let us ambush the innocent without
reason;
- 12 like Sheol let us swallow them alive,
and whole, like those who go down to
the pit;
- 13 we shall find all precious goods,
we shall fill our houses with plunder;
- 14 throw in your lot among us;
we will all have one purse"—
- 15 my son, do not walk in the way with them;
hold back your foot from their paths,
16 for their feet run to evil,
and they make haste to shed blood.
- 17 For in vain is a net spread
in the sight of any bird,

REMEMBER IT

Hear, my son, your father's
instruction, and forsake not your
mother's teaching.

Proverbs 1:8

ACTIVATE

OBEYING YOUR PARENTS

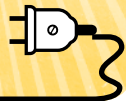
Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 1:8; Luke 2:41-51

"Because I said so." How many times have you heard that? Listening to your parents might seem annoying because you think you know what they're going to say or that they'll just tell you what to do. But Exodus 20:12 and Proverbs 1:8 show us the value of our parents' instruction. Jesus obeyed both His earthly parents (Luke 2:51) and His heavenly Father (Luke 2:49; John 15:10).

Parents don't always give you a hard time or an earful. They often give help and hope. Their guidance is like a bridge that carries you across hard times, providing solid footing across dangerous ground, and lending safety in a storm. Go your own way and you'll be pulled into a racing river of life problems, sink into soggy ground, wander away from values you need, and maybe get lost. But when you trust and follow your parents, following Jesus' example, your steps will be secure.

What rules seem most difficult to obey? Since Jesus obeyed His earthly parents, what does that mean for you and your parents?

Draw a picture of a bridge. Above the bridge, list the big rules your parents have given you. Below the bridge, list the danger or problem that each rule keeps you from sinking into.



- 18 but these men lie in wait for their own
blood;
they set an ambush for their own lives.
- 19 Such are the ways of everyone who is
greedy for unjust gain;
it takes away the life of its possessors.

The Call of Wisdom

- 20 Wisdom cries aloud in the street,
in the markets she raises her voice;
- 21 at the head of the noisy streets she cries
out;
at the entrance of the city gates she
speaks:
- 22 "How long, O simple ones, will you love
being simple?"

- How long will scoffers delight in their
scoffing
and fools hate knowledge?
- 23 If you turn at my reproof,¹
behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;
I will make my words known to you.
- 24 Because I have called and you refused to
listen,
I have stretched out my hand and no one
has heeded,
because you have ignored all my counsel
and would have none of my reproof,
- 26 I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when terror strikes you,
when terror strikes you like a storm
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
when distress and anguish come upon you.
- 28 Then they will call upon me, but I will not
answer;
they will seek me diligently but will not
find me.
- 29 Because they hated knowledge
and did not choose the fear of the LORD,
would have none of my counsel
and despised all my reproof,
therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way,
and have their fill of their own devices.
- 32 For the simple are killed by their turning
away,
and the complacency of fools destroys
them;
- 33 but whoever listens to me will dwell secure
and will be at ease, without dread of
disaster.”
- 9 Then you will understand righteousness and
justice
and equity, every good path;
10 for wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your
soul;
11 discretion will watch over you,
understanding will guard you,
12 delivering you from the way of evil,
from men of perverted speech,
13 who forsake the paths of uprightness
to walk in the ways of darkness,
14 who rejoice in doing evil
and delight in the perverseness of evil,
15 men whose paths are crooked,
and who are devious in their ways.
- 16 So you will be delivered from the forbidden²
woman,
from the adulteress³ with her smooth
words,
17 who forsakes the companion of her youth
and forgets the covenant of her God;
18 for her house sinks down to death,
and her paths to the departed;⁴
19 none who go to her come back,
nor do they regain the paths of life.

The Value of Wisdom

- 2** My son, if you receive my words
and treasure up my commandments with
you,
2 making your ear attentive to wisdom
and inclining your heart to understanding;
3 yes, if you call out for insight
and raise your voice for understanding,
4 if you seek it like silver
and search for it as for hidden treasures,
5 then you will understand the fear of the
LORD
and find the knowledge of God.
- 6 For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and
understanding;
7 he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk in
integrity,
8 guarding the paths of justice
and watching over the way of his saints.



¹ Or: Will you turn away at my reproof? ² Hebrew: strange ³ Hebrew: foreign woman ⁴ Hebrew: to the Rephaim

- 20 So you will walk in the way of the good
and keep to the paths of the righteous.
- 21 For the upright will inhabit the land,
and those with integrity will remain in it,
22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the treacherous will be rooted out
of it.

Trust in the LORD with All Your Heart

3 My son, do not forget my teaching,
but let your heart keep my commandments,
2 for length of days and years of life
and peace they will add to you.

- 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness
forsake you;
bind them around your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
- 4 So you will find favor and good success¹
in the sight of God and man.

- AB** 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own
understanding.
- 6 In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
- 7 Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.
- 8 It will be healing to your flesh²
and refreshment³ to your bones.
- 9 Honor the LORD with your wealth
and with the firstfruits of all your produce;
10 then your barns will be filled with plenty,
and your vats will be bursting with wine.
- 11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline
or be weary of his reproof,
12 for the LORD reproves him whom he loves,
as a father the son in whom he delights.

Blessed Is the One Who Finds Wisdom

- 13 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
and the one who gets understanding,
14 for the gain from her is better than gain

REMEMBER IT

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own
understanding.

Proverbs 3:5

Ancient Archives

Barns

Proverbs 3:10

In Bible times, animals were not often kept in barns. Instead, at night or during bad weather, they stayed in people's homes in a small area a couple of feet lower than the family's living area. This kept them safe and added extra warmth to the house from the heat the animals' bodies gave off. Barns in Bible times were often pits that were built up with bricks or stones to make a domed top. Farmers would then store their grain inside to keep it dry and safe from animals.

- from silver
and her profit better than gold.
- 15 She is more precious than jewels,
and nothing you desire can compare with
her.
- 16 Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.
- 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.
- 18 She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of
her;
those who hold her fast are called blessed.
- 19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;
by understanding he established the
heavens;
- 20 by his knowledge the deeps broke open,
and the clouds drop down the dew.
- 21 My son, do not lose sight of these—
keep sound wisdom and discretion,
22 and they will be life for your soul
and adornment for your neck.
- 23 Then you will walk on your way securely,
and your foot will not stumble.
- 24 If you lie down, you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be
sweet.
- 25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror
or of the ruin⁴ of the wicked, when it
comes,

¹ Or *repute* ² Hebrew *navel* ³ Or *medicine* ⁴ Hebrew *storm*

REMEMBER IT

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

Proverbs 3:27

26 for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.
 27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,¹ when it is in your power to do it.
 28 Do not say to your neighbor, “Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it”—when you have it with you.
 29 Do not plan evil against your neighbor, who dwells trustingly beside you.
 30 Do not contend with a man for no reason, when he has done you no harm.
 31 Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways,
 32 for the devious person is an abomination to the LORD, but the upright are in his confidence.
 33 The LORD’s curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.
 34 Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.²
 35 The wise will inherit honor, but fools get³ disgrace.

A Father’s Wise Instruction

4 Hear, O sons, a father’s instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain⁴ insight,
 2 for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching.
 3 When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother,
 4 he taught me and said to me,
 “Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live.
 5 Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.
 6 Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.

7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.
 8 Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.
 9 She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.”
 10 Hear, my son, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many.
 11 I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness.
 12 When you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble.
 13 Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.
 14 Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil.
 15 Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on.
 16 For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble.
 17 For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.
 18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.

UNLOCK IT

WHY SHOULD I DO GOOD TO OTHERS?

Proverbs 3:27

We should always try to do good to others because that’s how we show God’s love. When someone asked Jesus what the most important command in the Law of Moses was, He said, “Love the Lord your God.” But Jesus also said there is a second command that’s like the first: “Love your neighbor” (Matthew 22:34-40). An essential way to show your love for God is to love those around you—even if you don’t get anything in return.

¹ Hebrew *Do not withhold good from its owners* ² Or *grace* ³ The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain ⁴ Hebrew *know*

- 19 The way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
they do not know over what they stumble.
- 20 My son, be attentive to my words;
incline your ear to my sayings.
- 21 Let them not escape from your sight;
keep them within your heart.
- 22 For they are life to those who find them,
and healing to all their¹ flesh.
- 23 Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life.
- 24 Put away from you crooked speech,
and put devious talk far from you.
- 25 Let your eyes look directly forward,
and your gaze be straight before you.
- 26 Ponder² the path of your feet;
then all your ways will be sure.
- 27 Do not swerve to the right or to the left;
turn your foot away from evil.

Warning Against Adultery

- 5** My son, be attentive to my wisdom;
incline your ear to my understanding,
² that you may keep discretion,
and your lips may guard knowledge.
- ³ For the lips of a forbidden³ woman drip honey,
and her speech⁴ is smoother than oil,
⁴ but in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
sharp as a two-edged sword.
- ⁵ Her feet go down to death;
her steps follow the path to⁵ Sheol;
⁶ she does not ponder the path of life;
her ways wander, and she does not know it.
- ⁷ And now, O sons, listen to me,
and do not depart from the words of my mouth.
- ⁸ Keep your way far from her,
and do not go near the door of her house,
⁹ lest you give your honor to others
and your years to the merciless,
¹⁰ lest strangers take their fill of your strength,
and your labors go to the house of a foreigner,
¹¹ and at the end of your life you groan,
when your flesh and body are consumed,
¹² and you say, "How I hated discipline,
and my heart despised reproof!
¹³ I did not listen to the voice of my teachers
or incline my ear to my instructors.
¹⁴ I am at the brink of utter ruin
in the assembled congregation."

- ¹⁵ Drink water from your own cistern,
flowing water from your own well.
- ¹⁶ Should your springs be scattered abroad,
streams of water in the streets?
- ¹⁷ Let them be for yourself alone,
and not for strangers with you.
- ¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
¹⁹ a lovely deer, a graceful doe.
Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;
be intoxicated⁶ always in her love.
- ²⁰ Why should you be intoxicated, my son,
with a forbidden woman
and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?⁷
- ²¹ For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD,
and he ponders⁸ all his paths.
- ²² The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him,
and he is held fast in the cords of his sin.
- ²³ He dies for lack of discipline,
and because of his great folly he is led astray.

Practical Warnings

- 6** My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor,
have given your pledge for a stranger,
² if you are snared in the words of your mouth,
caught in the words of your mouth,
³ then do this, my son, and save yourself,
for you have come into the hand of your neighbor:
go, hasten,⁹ and plead urgently with your neighbor.
- ⁴ Give your eyes no sleep
and your eyelids no slumber;
⁵ save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter,¹⁰
like a bird from the hand of the fowler.
- ⁶ Go to the ant, O sluggard;
consider her ways, and be wise.
- ⁷ Without having any chief,
officer, or ruler,
⁸ she prepares her bread in summer
and gathers her food in harvest.
- ⁹ How long will you lie there, O sluggard?
When will you arise from your sleep?
- ¹⁰ A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
¹¹ and poverty will come upon you like a robber,
and want like an armed man.

¹ Hebrew *his* ² Or *Make level* ³ Hebrew *strange*; also verse 20 ⁴ Hebrew *palate* ⁵ Hebrew *lay hold of* ⁶ Hebrew *be led astray*; also verse 20 ⁷ Hebrew *a foreign woman* ⁸ Or *makes level* ⁹ Or *humble yourself* ¹⁰ Hebrew *lacks of the hunter*

- 12 A worthless person, a wicked man,
 goes about with crooked speech,
 13 winks with his eyes, signals¹ with his feet,
 points with his finger,
 14 with perverted heart devises evil,
 continually sowing discord;
 15 therefore calamity will come upon him
 suddenly;
 in a moment he will be broken beyond
 healing.
- 16 There are six things that the LORD hates,
 seven that are an abomination to him:
 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
 and hands that shed innocent blood,
 18 a heart that devises wicked plans,
 feet that make haste to run to evil,
 19 a false witness who breathes out lies,
 and one who sows discord among
 brothers.

Warnings Against Adultery

- 20 My son, keep your father's commandment,
 and forsake not your mother's teaching.
 21 Bind them on your heart always;
 tie them around your neck.
 22 When you walk, they² will lead you;
 when you lie down, they will watch over
 you;
 and when you awake, they will talk with
 you.
- 23 For the commandment is a lamp and the
 teaching a light,
 and the reproofs of discipline are the way
 of life,
 24 to preserve you from the evil woman,³
 from the smooth tongue of the
 adulteress.⁴
- 25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart,
 and do not let her capture you with her
 eyelashes;

- 26 for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of
 bread,⁵
 but a married woman⁶ hunts down a
 precious life.
- 27 Can a man carry fire next to his chest
 and his clothes not be burned?
 28 Or can one walk on hot coals
 and his feet not be scorched?
 29 So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife;
 none who touches her will go
 unpunished.
- 30 People do not despise a thief if he steals
 to satisfy his appetite when he is hungry,
 31 but if he is caught, he will pay sevenfold;
 he will give all the goods of his house.
- 32 He who commits adultery lacks sense;
 he who does it destroys himself.
 33 He will get wounds and dishonor,
 and his disgrace will not be wiped away.
 34 For jealousy makes a man furious,
 and he will not spare when he takes
 revenge.
- 35 He will accept no compensation;
 he will refuse though you multiply gifts.

Warning Against the Adulteress

- 7** My son, keep my words
 and treasure up my commandments with
 you;
 2 keep my commandments and live;
 keep my teaching as the apple of your
 eye;
 3 bind them on your fingers;
 write them on the tablet of your heart.
 4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
 and call insight your intimate friend,
 5 to keep you from the forbidden⁷ woman,
 from the adulteress⁸ with her smooth
 words.
- 6 For at the window of my house
 I have looked out through my lattice,
 7 and I have seen among the simple,
 I have perceived among the youths,
 a young man lacking sense,
 8 passing along the street near her corner,
 taking the road to her house
 9 in the twilight, in the evening,
 at the time of night and darkness.
- 10 And behold, the woman meets him,
 dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart.⁹
 11 She is loud and wayward;
 her feet do not stay at home;
 12 now in the street, now in the market,
 and at every corner she lies in wait.

REMEMBER IT

My son, keep your father's com-
 mandment, and forsake not your
 mother's teaching.

Proverbs 6:20

¹ Hebrew *scrapes* ² Hebrew *it*; three times in this verse ³ Revocalization (compare Septuagint) yields *from the wife of a neighbor* ⁴ Hebrew *the foreign woman*
⁵ Or (compare Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate) *for a prostitute leaves a man with nothing but a loaf of bread* ⁶ Hebrew *a man's wife* ⁷ Hebrew *strange* ⁸ Hebrew
the foreign woman ⁹ Hebrew *guarded in heart*

13 She seizes him and kisses him,
and with bold face she says to him,
14 “I had to offer sacrifices,¹
and today I have paid my vows;
15 so now I have come out to meet you,
to seek you eagerly, and I have found
you.
16 I have spread my couch with coverings,
colored linens from Egyptian linen;
17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,
aloes, and cinnamon.
18 Come, let us take our fill of love till
morning;
let us delight ourselves with love.
19 For my husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey;
20 he took a bag of money with him;
at full moon he will come home.”
21 With much seductive speech she persuades
him;
with her smooth talk she compels him.
22 All at once he follows her,
as an ox goes to the slaughter,
or as a stag is caught fast²
23 till an arrow pierces its liver;
as a bird rushes into a snare;
he does not know that it will cost him his
life.
24 And now, O sons, listen to me,
and be attentive to the words of my
mouth.
25 Let not your heart turn aside to her ways;
do not stray into her paths,
26 for many a victim has she laid low,
and all her slain are a mighty throng.
27 Her house is the way to Sheol,
going down to the chambers of death.

The Blessings of Wisdom

8 Does not wisdom call?
9 Does not understanding raise her voice?
2 On the heights beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;
3 beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries
aloud:
4 “To you, O men, I call,
and my cry is to the children of man.
5 O simple ones, learn prudence;
O fools, learn sense.
6 Hear, for I will speak noble things,
and from my lips will come what is right,
7 for my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

8 All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in
them.
9 They are all straight to him who
understands,
and right to those who find knowledge.
10 Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold,
11 for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot
compare with her.
12 “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,
and I find knowledge and discretion.
13 The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.
14 I have counsel and sound wisdom;
I have insight; I have strength.
15 By me kings reign,
and rulers decree what is just;
16 by me princes rule,
and nobles, all who govern justly.³
17 I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently
find me.
18 Riches and honor are with me,
enduring wealth and righteousness.
19 My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.
20 I walk in the way of righteousness,
in the paths of justice,
21 granting an inheritance to those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.
22 “The LORD possessed⁴ me at the beginning of
his work,⁵
the first of his acts of old.
23 Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the
earth.
24 When there were no depths I was brought
forth,
when there were no springs abounding
with water.
25 Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth,
26 before he had made the earth with its fields,
or the first of the dust of the world.
27 When he established the heavens, I was
there;
when he drew a circle on the face of the
deep,
28 when he made firm the skies above,
when he established⁶ the fountains of the
deep,

¹ Hebrew *peace offerings* ² Probable reading (compare Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac); Hebrew as an *anklet for the discipline of a fool* ³ Most Hebrew manuscripts; many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint *govern the earth* ⁴ Or *fathered*; Septuagint *created* ⁵ Hebrew *way* ⁶ The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

29 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,
 30 then I was beside him, like a master
 workman,
 and I was daily his¹ delight,
 rejoicing before him always,
 31 rejoicing in his inhabited world
 and delighting in the children of man.
 32 “And now, O sons, listen to me:
 blessed are those who keep my ways.
 33 Hear instruction and be wise,
 and do not neglect it.
 34 Blessed is the one who listens to me,
 watching daily at my gates,
 waiting beside my doors.
 35 For whoever finds me finds life
 and obtains favor from the LORD,
 36 but he who fails to find me injures himself;
 all who hate me love death.”

The Way of Wisdom

9 Wisdom has built her house;
 she has hewn her seven pillars.
 2 She has slaughtered her beasts; she has
 mixed her wine;
 she has also set her table.
 3 She has sent out her young women to call
 from the highest places in the town,
 4 “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”
 To him who lacks sense she says,
 5 “Come, eat of my bread
 and drink of the wine I have mixed.
 6 Leave your simple ways,² and live,
 and walk in the way of insight.”
 7 Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself
 abuse,
 and he who reproves a wicked man
 incurs injury.
 8 Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you;
 reprove a wise man, and he will love you.
 9 Give instruction³ to a wise man, and he will
 be still wiser;
 teach a righteous man, and he will
 increase in learning.
 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of
 wisdom,
 and the knowledge of the Holy One is
 insight.
 11 For by me your days will be multiplied,
 and years will be added to your life.
 12 If you are wise, you are wise for yourself;
 if you scoff, you alone will bear it.

The Way of Folly

13 The woman Folly is loud;
 she is seductive⁴ and knows nothing.
 14 She sits at the door of her house;
 she takes a seat on the highest places of
 the town,
 15 calling to those who pass by,
 who are going straight on their way,
 16 “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”
 And to him who lacks sense she says,
 17 “Stolen water is sweet,
 and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.”
 18 But he does not know that the dead⁵ are
 there,
 that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

The Proverbs of Solomon

10 The proverbs of Solomon.

A wise son makes a glad father,
 but a foolish son is a sorrow to his
 mother.
 2 Treasures gained by wickedness do not
 profit,
 but righteousness delivers from death.
 3 The LORD does not let the righteous go
 hungry,
 but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.
 4 A slack hand causes poverty,
 but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
 5 He who gathers in summer is a prudent son,
 but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who
 brings shame.
 6 Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
 but the mouth of the wicked conceals
 violence.
 7 The memory of the righteous is a blessing,
 but the name of the wicked will rot.
 8 The wise of heart will receive
 commandments,
 but a babbling fool will come to ruin.
 9 Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,
 but he who makes his ways crooked will
 be found out.
 10 Whoever winks the eye causes trouble,
 and a babbling fool will come to ruin.
 11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of
 life,
 but the mouth of the wicked conceals
 violence.
 12 Hatred stirs up strife,
 but love covers all offenses.
 13 On the lips of him who has understanding,
 wisdom is found,
 but a rod is for the back of him who lacks
 sense.

¹ Or *daily filled with* ² Or *Leave the company of the simple* ³ Hebrew lacks *instruction* ⁴ Or *full of simpleness* ⁵ Hebrew *Rephaim*

- 14 The wise lay up knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.
- 15 A rich man's wealth is his strong city;
the poverty of the poor is their ruin.
- 16 The wage of the righteous leads to life,
the gain of the wicked to sin.
- 17 Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to
life,
but he who rejects reproof leads others
astray.
- 18 The one who conceals hatred has lying lips,
and whoever utters slander is a fool.
- 19 When words are many, transgression is not
lacking,
but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.
- 20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver;
the heart of the wicked is of little worth.
- 21 The lips of the righteous feed many,
but fools die for lack of sense.
- 22 The blessing of the LORD makes rich,
and he adds no sorrow with it.¹
- 23 Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool,
but wisdom is pleasure to a man of
understanding.
- 24 What the wicked dreads will come upon
him,
but the desire of the righteous will be
granted.
- 25 When the tempest passes, the wicked is no
more,
but the righteous is established forever.
- 26 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the
eyes,
so is the sluggard to those who send him.
- 27 The fear of the LORD prolongs life,
but the years of the wicked will be short.
- 28 The hope of the righteous brings joy,
but the expectation of the wicked will
perish.
- 29 The way of the LORD is a stronghold to the
blameless,
but destruction to evildoers.
- 30 The righteous will never be removed,
but the wicked will not dwell in the land.
- 31 The mouth of the righteous brings forth
wisdom,
but the perverse tongue will be cut off.
- 32 The lips of the righteous know what is
acceptable,
but the mouth of the wicked, what is
perverse.
- 11** A false balance is an abomination to the
LORD,
but a just weight is his delight.
- 2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with the humble is wisdom.
- 3 The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the crookedness of the treacherous
destroys them.
- 4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,
but righteousness delivers from death.
- 5 The righteousness of the blameless keeps his
way straight,
but the wicked falls by his own
wickedness.
- 6 The righteousness of the upright delivers
them,
but the treacherous are taken captive by
their lust.
- 7 When the wicked dies, his hope will perish,
and the expectation of wealth² perishes
too.
- 8 The righteous is delivered from trouble,
and the wicked walks into it instead.
- 9 With his mouth the godless man would
destroy his neighbor,
but by knowledge the righteous are
delivered.
- 10 When it goes well with the righteous, the
city rejoices,
and when the wicked perish there are
shouts of gladness.
- 11 By the blessing of the upright a city is
exalted,
but by the mouth of the wicked it is
overthrown.
- 12 Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense,
but a man of understanding remains
silent.
- 13 Whoever goes about slandering reveals
secrets,
but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps
a thing covered.
- 14 Where there is no guidance, a people falls,
but in an abundance of counselors there
is safety.
- 15 Whoever puts up security for a stranger will
surely suffer harm,
but he who hates striking hands in pledge
is secure.
- 16 A gracious woman gets honor,
and violent men get riches.
- 17 A man who is kind benefits himself,
but a cruel man hurts himself.
- 18 The wicked earns deceptive wages,
but one who sows righteousness gets a
sure reward.
- 19 Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will
live,
but he who pursues evil will die.
- 20 Those of crooked heart are an abomination
to the LORD,

¹Or and toil adds nothing to it ²Or of his strength, or of iniquity

- but those of blameless ways are his delight.
- 21 Be assured, an evil person will not go unpunished,
but the offspring of the righteous will be delivered.
- 22 Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.
- 23 The desire of the righteous ends only in good;
the expectation of the wicked in wrath.
- 24 One gives freely, yet grows all the richer;
another withholds what he should give,
and only suffers want.
- 25 Whoever brings blessing will be enriched,
and one who waters will himself be watered.
- 26 The people curse him who holds back grain,
but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it.
- 27 Whoever diligently seeks good seeks favor,¹
but evil comes to him who searches for it.
- 28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall,
but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.
- 29 Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind,
and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.
- 30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and whoever captures souls is wise.
- 31 If the righteous is repaid on earth,
how much more the wicked and the sinner!
- AB** **12** Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates reproof is stupid.
- 2 A good man obtains favor from the LORD,
but a man of evil devices he condemns.
- 3 No one is established by wickedness,
but the root of the righteous will never be moved.
- 4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband,
but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones.
- 5 The thoughts of the righteous are just;
the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.
- 6 The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood,
but the mouth of the upright delivers them.
- 7 The wicked are overthrown and are no more,
but the house of the righteous will stand.
- 8 A man is commended according to his good sense,
but one of twisted mind is despised.
- 9 Better to be lowly and have a servant than to play the great man and lack bread.
- 10 Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast,
but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.
- 11 Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread,
but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.
- 12 Whoever is wicked covets the spoil of evildoers,
but the root of the righteous bears fruit.
- 13 An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips,
but the righteous escapes from trouble.
- 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.
- 15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
but a wise man listens to advice.
- 16 The vexation of a fool is known at once,
but the prudent ignores an insult.
- 17 Whoever speaks² the truth gives honest evidence,
but a false witness utters deceit.
- 18 There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- 19 Truthful lips endure forever,
but a lying tongue is but for a moment.
- 20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil,
but those who plan peace have joy.
- 21 No ill befalls the righteous,
but the wicked are filled with trouble.
- 22 Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD,
but those who act faithfully are his delight.
- 23 A prudent man conceals knowledge,
but the heart of fools proclaims folly.
- 24 The hand of the diligent will rule,
while the slothful will be put to forced labor.
- 25 Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down,
but a good word makes him glad.
- 26 One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor,³
but the way of the wicked leads them astray.
- 27 Whoever is slothful will not roast his game,
but the diligent man will get precious wealth.⁴

¹ Or acceptance ² Hebrew breathes out ³ Or The righteous chooses his friends carefully ⁴ Or but diligence is precious wealth

28 In the path of righteousness is life,
and in its pathway there is no death.

13 A wise son hears his father's instruction,
but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

2 From the fruit of his mouth a man eats what
is good,
but the desire of the treacherous is for
violence.

3 Whoever guards his mouth preserves his
life;
he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.

4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets
nothing,
while the soul of the diligent is richly
supplied.

5 The righteous hates falsehood,
but the wicked brings shame¹ and
disgrace.

6 Righteousness guards him whose way is
blameless,
but sin overthrows the wicked.

7 One pretends to be rich, yet has nothing;
another pretends to be poor, yet has great
wealth.

8 The ransom of a man's life is his wealth,
but a poor man hears no threat.

9 The light of the righteous rejoices,
but the lamp of the wicked will be put
out.

10 By insolence comes nothing but strife,
but with those who take advice is
wisdom.

11 Wealth gained hastily² will dwindle,
but whoever gathers little by little will
increase it.

12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

13 Whoever despises the word brings
destruction on himself,
but he who reveres the commandment
will be rewarded.

14 The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
that one may turn away from the snares
of death.

15 Good sense wins favor,
but the way of the treacherous is their
ruin.³

16 In everything the prudent acts with
knowledge,
but a fool flaunts his folly.

17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
but a faithful envoy brings healing.

18 Poverty and disgrace come to him who
ignores instruction,
but whoever heeds reproof is honored.

19 A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul,
but to turn away from evil is an
abomination to fools.

20 Whoever walks with the wise becomes
wise,
but the companion of fools will suffer
harm.

21 Disaster⁴ pursues sinners,
but the righteous are rewarded with
good.

22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his
children's children,
but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the
righteous.

23 The fallow ground of the poor would yield
much food,
but it is swept away through injustice.

24 Whoever spares the rod hates his son,
but he who loves him is diligent to
discipline him.⁵

25 The righteous has enough to satisfy his
appetite,
but the belly of the wicked suffers want.

14 The wisest of women builds her house,
but folly with her own hands tears it
down.

2 Whoever walks in uprightness fears the
LORD,
but he who is devious in his ways
despises him.

3 By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his
back,⁶
but the lips of the wise will preserve
them.

4 Where there are no oxen, the manger is
clean,
but abundant crops come by the strength
of the ox.

5 A faithful witness does not lie,
but a false witness breathes out lies.

6 A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain,
but knowledge is easy for a man of
understanding.

7 Leave the presence of a fool,
for there you do not meet words of
knowledge.

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his
way,
but the folly of fools is deceiving.

9 Fools mock at the guilt offering,
but the upright enjoy acceptance.⁷

10 The heart knows its own bitterness,
and no stranger shares its joy.

11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will flourish.

¹ Or stench ² Or by fraud ³ Probable reading (compare Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate); Hebrew is rugged, or is an enduring rut ⁴ Or Evil ⁵ Or who loves him disciplines him early ⁶ Or In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride ⁷ Hebrew but among the upright is acceptance

- 12 There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.¹
- 13 Even in laughter the heart may ache,
and the end of joy may be grief.
- 14 The backslider in heart will be filled with
the fruit of his ways,
and a good man will be filled with the
fruit of his ways.
- 15 The simple believes everything,
but the prudent gives thought to his steps.
- 16 One who is wise is cautious² and turns
away from evil,
but a fool is reckless and careless.
- 17 A man of quick temper acts foolishly,
and a man of evil devices is hated.
- 18 The simple inherit folly,
but the prudent are crowned with
knowledge.
- 19 The evil bow down before the good,
the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
- 20 The poor is disliked even by his neighbor,
but the rich has many friends.
- 21 Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner,
but blessed is he who is generous to the
poor.
- 22 Do they not go astray who devise evil?
Those who devise good meet³ steadfast
love and faithfulness.
- 23 In all toil there is profit,
but mere talk tends only to poverty.
- 24 The crown of the wise is their wealth,
but the folly of fools brings folly.
- 25 A truthful witness saves lives,
but one who breathes out lies is deceitful.
- 26 In the fear of the LORD one has strong
confidence,
and his children will have a refuge.
- 27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
that one may turn away from the snares
of death.
- 28 In a multitude of people is the glory of a
king,
but without people a prince is ruined.
- 29 Whoever is slow to anger has great
understanding,
but he who has a hasty temper exalts
folly.
- 30 A tranquil⁴ heart gives life to the flesh,
but envy⁵ makes the bones rot.
- 31 Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his
Maker,
but he who is generous to the needy
honors him.
- 32 The wicked is overthrown through his
evildoing,
but the righteous finds refuge in his
death.
- 33 Wisdom rests in the heart of a man of
understanding,
but it makes itself known even in the
midst of fools.⁶
- 34 Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a reproach to any people.
- 35 A servant who deals wisely has the king's
favor,
but his wrath falls on one who acts
shamefully.
- 15** A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- 2 The tongue of the wise commends
knowledge,
but the mouths of fools pour out folly.
- 3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
keeping watch on the evil and the good.
- 4 A gentle⁷ tongue is a tree of life,
but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.
- 5 A fool despises his father's instruction,
but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.
- 6 In the house of the righteous there is much
treasure,
but trouble befalls the income of the
wicked.
- 7 The lips of the wise spread knowledge;
not so the hearts of fools.⁸
- 8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an
abomination to the LORD,
but the prayer of the upright is acceptable
to him.
- 9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to
the LORD,
but he loves him who pursues
righteousness.
- 10 There is severe discipline for him who
forsakes the way;
whoever hates reproof will die.
- 11 Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the
LORD;
how much more the hearts of the
children of man!
- 12 A scoffer does not like to be reproved;
he will not go to the wise.
- 13 A glad heart makes a cheerful face,
but by sorrow of heart the spirit is
crushed.
- 14 The heart of him who has understanding
seeks knowledge,
but the mouths of fools feed on folly.
- 15 All the days of the afflicted are evil,
but the cheerful of heart has a continual
feast.

AB

¹ Hebrew ways of death ² Or fears [the LORD] ³ Or show ⁴ Or healing ⁵ Or jealousy ⁶ Or Wisdom rests quietly in the heart of a man of understanding, but makes itself known in the midst of fools ⁷ Or healing ⁸ Or the hearts of fools are not steadfast

16 Better is a little with the fear of the LORD
than great treasure and trouble with it.

17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is
than a fattened ox and hatred with it.

18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,
but he who is slow to anger quiets
contention.

19 The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of
thorns,
but the path of the upright is a level
highway.

20 A wise son makes a glad father,
but a foolish man despises his mother.

21 Folly is a joy to him who lacks sense,
but a man of understanding walks straight
ahead.

22 Without counsel plans fail,
but with many advisers they succeed.

23 To make an apt answer is a joy to a man,
and a word in season, how good it is!

24 The path of life leads upward for the
prudent,
that he may turn away from Sheol
beneath.

25 The LORD tears down the house of the proud
but maintains the widow's boundaries.

26 The thoughts of the wicked are an
abomination to the LORD,
but gracious words are pure.

27 Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles
his own household,
but he who hates bribes will live.

28 The heart of the righteous ponders how to
answer,
but the mouth of the wicked pours out
evil things.

29 The LORD is far from the wicked,
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

30 The light of the eyes rejoices the heart,
and good news refreshes¹ the bones.

31 The ear that listens to life-giving reproof
will dwell among the wise.

32 Whoever ignores instruction despises
himself,
but he who listens to reproof gains
intelligence.

33 The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom,
and humility comes before honor.

16 The plans of the heart belong to man,
but the answer of the tongue is from the
LORD.

2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own
eyes,
but the LORD weighs the spirit.

3 Commit your work to the LORD,
and your plans will be established.

4 The LORD has made everything for its
purpose,
even the wicked for the day of trouble.

5 Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an
abomination to the LORD;
be assured, he will not go unpunished.

6 By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is
atoned for,
and by the fear of the LORD one turns
away from evil.

7 When a man's ways please the LORD,
he makes even his enemies to be at peace
with him.

8 Better is a little with righteousness
than great revenues with injustice.

9 The heart of man plans his way,
but the LORD establishes his steps.

10 An oracle is on the lips of a king;
his mouth does not sin in judgment.

11 A just balance and scales are the LORD's;
all the weights in the bag are his work.

12 It is an abomination to kings to do evil,
for the throne is established by
righteousness.

13 Righteous lips are the delight of a king,
and he loves him who speaks what is
right.

14 A king's wrath is a messenger of death,
and a wise man will appease it.

15 In the light of a king's face there is life,
and his favor is like the clouds that bring
the spring rain.

16 How much better to get wisdom than gold!
To get understanding is to be chosen
rather than silver.

GUESS IT!

1. I am better than weapons of war.
(Eccl. 9:18)
2. A house is built by me. (Prv. 24:3)
3. Instruction in me leads to respect
for the Lord. (Prv. 15:33)
4. I am beyond the value of pearls,
crystal, or gold. (Jb. 28:18-19)
5. Solomon wished for me.
(1 Kgs. 3:9-12)

¹ Hebrew makes fat

- 17 The highway of the upright turns aside from evil;
 whoever guards his way preserves his life.
- 18 Pride goes before destruction,
 and a haughty spirit before a fall.
- 19 It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor
 than to divide the spoil with the proud.
- 20 Whoever gives thought to the word¹ will discover good,
 and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.
- 21 The wise of heart is called discerning,
 and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.
- 22 Good sense is a fountain of life to him who has it,
 but the instruction of fools is folly.
- 23 The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious
 and adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- 24 Gracious words are like a honeycomb,
 sweetness to the soul and health to the body.
- 25 There is a way that seems right to a man,
 but its end is the way to death.²
- 26 A worker's appetite works for him;
 his mouth urges him on.
- 27 A worthless man plots evil,
 and his speech³ is like a scorching fire.
- 28 A dishonest man spreads strife,
 and a whisperer separates close friends.
- 29 A man of violence entices his neighbor
 and leads him in a way that is not good.
- 30 Whoever winks his eyes plans⁴ dishonest things;
 he who purses his lips brings evil to pass.
- 31 Gray hair is a crown of glory;
 it is gained in a righteous life.
- 32 Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
 and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.
- 33 The lot is cast into the lap,
 but its every decision is from the LORD.
- 17** Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting⁵ with strife.
- ² A servant who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully
 and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.
- ³ The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold,
 and the LORD tests hearts.
- ⁴ An evildoer listens to wicked lips,
 and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue.
- ⁵ Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker;
 he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.
- ⁶ Grandchildren are the crown of the aged,
 and the glory of children is their fathers.
- ⁷ Fine speech is not becoming to a fool;
 still less is false speech to a prince.
- ⁸ A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of the one who gives it;
 wherever he turns he prospers.
- ⁹ Whoever covers an offense seeks love,
 but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.
- ¹⁰ A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding
 than a hundred blows into a fool.
- ¹¹ An evil man seeks only rebellion,
 and a cruel messenger will be sent against him.
- ¹² Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs
 rather than a fool in his folly.
- ¹³ If anyone returns evil for good,
 evil will not depart from his house.
- ¹⁴ The beginning of strife is like letting out water,
 so quit before the quarrel breaks out.
- ¹⁵ He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous
 are both alike an abomination to the LORD.
- ¹⁶ Why should a fool have money in his hand to buy wisdom
 when he has no sense?
- ¹⁷ A friend loves at all times,
 and a brother is born for adversity.
- ¹⁸ One who lacks sense gives a pledge
 and puts up security in the presence of his neighbor.
- ¹⁹ Whoever loves transgression loves strife;
 he who makes his door high seeks destruction.
- ²⁰ A man of crooked heart does not discover good,
 and one with a dishonest tongue falls into calamity.
- ²¹ He who sires a fool gets himself sorrow,
 and the father of a fool has no joy.
- ²² A joyful heart is good medicine,
 but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.
- ²³ The wicked accepts a bribe in secret⁶
 to pervert the ways of justice.
- ²⁴ The discerning sets his face toward wisdom,
 but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.



¹ Or to a matter ² Hebrew ways of death ³ Hebrew what is on his lips ⁴ Hebrew to plan ⁵ Hebrew sacrifices ⁶ Hebrew a bribe from the bosom

יפפרי בארנס

A JOYFUL HEART IS GOOD MEDICINE,
BUT A CRUSHED SPIRIT DRIES UP THE BONES.

- 25 A foolish son is a grief to his father
and bitterness to her who bore him.
- 26 To impose a fine on a righteous man is not
good,
nor to strike the noble for their
uprightness.
- 27 Whoever restrains his words has
knowledge,
and he who has a cool spirit is a man of
understanding.
- 28 Even a fool who keeps silent is considered
wise;
when he closes his lips, he is deemed
intelligent.
- 18** Whoever isolates himself seeks his own
desire;
he breaks out against all sound
judgment.
- 2 A fool takes no pleasure in understanding,
but only in expressing his opinion.
- 3 When wickedness comes, contempt comes
also,
and with dishonor comes disgrace.
- 4 The words of a man's mouth are deep
waters;
the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling
brook.
- 5 It is not good to be partial to¹ the wicked
or to deprive the righteous of justice.
- 6 A fool's lips walk into a fight,
and his mouth invites a beating.
- 7 A fool's mouth is his ruin,
and his lips are a snare to his soul.
- 8 The words of a whisperer are like delicious
morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the
body.
- 9 Whoever is slack in his work
is a brother to him who destroys.
- 10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower;
the righteous man runs into it and is
safe.
- 11 A rich man's wealth is his strong city,
and like a high wall in his imagination.
- 12 Before destruction a man's heart is haughty,
but humility comes before honor.
- 13 If one gives an answer before he hears,
it is his folly and shame.
- 14 A man's spirit will endure sickness,
but a crushed spirit who can bear?
- 15 An intelligent heart acquires knowledge,
and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
- 16 A man's gift makes room for him
and brings him before the great.
- 17 The one who states his case first seems
right,
until the other comes and examines him.
- 18 The lot puts an end to quarrels
and decides between powerful
contenders.
- 19 A brother offended is more unyielding than
a strong city,
and quarreling is like the bars of a castle.
- 20 From the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach
is satisfied;
he is satisfied by the yield of his lips.
- 21 Death and life are in the power of the
tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruits.
- 22 He who finds a wife finds a good thing
and obtains favor from the LORD.
- 23 The poor use entreaties,
but the rich answer roughly.
- 24 A man of many companions may come to
ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer
than a brother.
- 19** Better is a poor person who walks in his
integrity
than one who is crooked in speech and is
a fool.
- 2 Desire² without knowledge is not good,
and whoever makes haste with his feet
misses his way.

¹ Hebrew to lift the face of ² Or A soul

- 3 When a man's folly brings his way to ruin,
his heart rages against the LORD.
- 4 Wealth brings many new friends,
but a poor man is deserted by his friend.
- 5 A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who breathes out lies will not
escape.
- 6 Many seek the favor of a generous man,¹
and everyone is a friend to a man who
gives gifts.
- 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.²
- 8 Whoever gets sense loves his own soul;
he who keeps understanding will discover
good.
- 9 A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who breathes out lies will perish.
- 10 It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury,
much less for a slave to rule over princes.
- 11 Good sense makes one slow to anger,
and it is his glory to overlook an offense.
- 12 A king's wrath is like the growling of a lion,
but his favor is like dew on the grass.
- 13 A foolish son is ruin to his father,
and a wife's quarreling is a continual
dripping of rain.
- 14 House and wealth are inherited from
fathers,
but a prudent wife is from the LORD.
- 15 Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep,
and an idle person will suffer hunger.
- 16 Whoever keeps the commandment keeps
his life;
he who despises his ways will die.
- 17 Whoever is generous to the poor lends to
the LORD,
and he will repay him for his deed.
- 18 Discipline your son, for there is hope;
do not set your heart on putting him to
death.
- 19 A man of great wrath will pay the penalty,
for if you deliver him, you will only have
to do it again.
- 20 Listen to advice and accept instruction,
that you may gain wisdom in the future.
- 21 Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
but it is the purpose of the LORD that will
stand.
- 22 What is desired in a man is steadfast love,
and a poor man is better than a liar.
- 23 The fear of the LORD leads to life,
and whoever has it rests satisfied;
he will not be visited by harm.
- 24 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish
and will not even bring it back to his
mouth.
- 25 Strike a scoffer, and the simple will learn
prudence;
reprove a man of understanding, and he
will gain knowledge.
- 26 He who does violence to his father and
chases away his mother
is a son who brings shame and reproach.
- 27 Cease to hear instruction, my son,
and you will stray from the words of
knowledge.
- 28 A worthless witness mocks at justice,
and the mouth of the wicked devours
iniquity.
- 29 Condemnation is ready for scoffers,
and beating for the backs of fools.
- 20** Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler,
and whoever is led astray by it is not
wise.³
- 2 The terror of a king is like the growling of a
lion;
whoever provokes him to anger forfeits
his life.
- 3 It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from
strife,
but every fool will be quarreling.
- 4 The sluggard does not plow in the autumn;
he will seek at harvest and have nothing.
- 5 The purpose in a man's heart is like deep
water,
but a man of understanding will draw it
out.
- 6 Many a man proclaims his own steadfast
love,
but a faithful man who can find?
- 7 The righteous who walks in his integrity—
blessed are his children after him!
- 8 A king who sits on the throne of judgment
winnows all evil with his eyes.
- 9 Who can say, "I have made my heart pure;
I am clean from my sin"?
- 10 Unequal⁴ weights and unequal measures
are both alike an abomination to the LORD.
- 11 Even a child makes himself known by his
acts,
by whether his conduct is pure and
upright.⁵
- 12 The hearing ear and the seeing eye,
the LORD has made them both.
- 13 Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty;
open your eyes, and you will have plenty
of bread.

¹ Or of a noble ² The meaning of the Hebrew sentence is uncertain ³ Or will not become wise ⁴ Or Two kinds of; also verse 23 ⁵ Or Even a child can
dissemble in his actions, though his conduct seems pure and upright

- 14 “Bad, bad,” says the buyer,
but when he goes away, then he boasts.
- 15 There is gold and abundance of costly
stones,
but the lips of knowledge are a precious
jewel.
- 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.¹
- 17 Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man,
but afterward his mouth will be full of
gravel.
- 18 Plans are established by counsel;
by wise guidance wage war.
- 19 Whoever goes about slandering reveals
secrets;
therefore do not associate with a simple
babblor.²
- 20 If one curses his father or his mother,
his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.
- 21 An inheritance gained hastily in the
beginning
will not be blessed in the end.
- 22 Do not say, “I will repay evil”;
wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.
- 23 Unequal weights are an abomination to the
LORD,
and false scales are not good.
- 24 A man’s steps are from the LORD;
how then can man understand his way?
- 25 It is a snare to say rashly, “It is holy,”
and to reflect only after making vows.
- 26 A wise king winnows the wicked
and drives the wheel over them.
- 27 The spirit³ of man is the lamp of the LORD,
searching all his innermost parts.
- 28 Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the
king,
and by steadfast love his throne is upheld.
- 29 The glory of young men is their strength,
but the splendor of old men is their gray
hair.
- 30 Blows that wound cleanse away evil;
strokes make clean the innermost parts.
- 21** The king’s heart is a stream of water in
the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever he will.
- 2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,
but the LORD weighs the heart.
- 3 To do righteousness and justice
is more acceptable to the LORD than
sacrifice.
- 4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart,
the lamp⁴ of the wicked, are sin.
- 5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to
abundance,
but everyone who is hasty comes only to
poverty.
- 6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue
is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death.⁵
- 7 The violence of the wicked will sweep them
away,
because they refuse to do what is just.
- 8 The way of the guilty is crooked,
but the conduct of the pure is upright.
- 9 It is better to live in a corner of the housetop
than in a house shared with a
quarrelsome wife.
- 10 The soul of the wicked desires evil;
his neighbor finds no mercy in his eyes.
- 11 When a scoffer is punished, the simple
becomes wise;
when a wise man is instructed, he gains
knowledge.
- 12 The Righteous One observes the house of
the wicked;
he throws the wicked down to ruin.
- 13 Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor
will himself call out and not be answered.
- 14 A gift in secret averts anger,
and a concealed bribe,⁶ strong wrath.
- 15 When justice is done, it is a joy to the
righteous
but terror to evildoers.
- 16 One who wanders from the way of good
sense
will rest in the assembly of the dead.
- 17 Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man;
he who loves wine and oil will not be
rich.
- 18 The wicked is a ransom for the righteous,
and the traitor for the upright.
- 19 It is better to live in a desert land
than with a quarrelsome and fretful
woman.
- 20 Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man’s
dwelling,
but a foolish man devours it.
- 21 Whoever pursues righteousness and
kindness
will find life, righteousness, and honor.
- 22 A wise man scales the city of the mighty
and brings down the stronghold in which
they trust.
- 23 Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue
keeps himself out of trouble.
- 24 “Scoffer” is the name of the arrogant,
haughty man
who acts with arrogant pride.

¹ Or for an adulteress (compare 27:13) ² Hebrew with one who is simple in his lips ³ Hebrew breath ⁴ Or the plowing ⁵ Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Latin; most Hebrew manuscripts vapor for those who seek death ⁶ Hebrew a bribe in the bosom

אֲנֹדֶרֶע לֵע בְּלֶאֱנֹק

A GOOD NAME IS TO BE CHOSEN
RATHER THAN GREAT RICHES,
AND FAVOR IS BETTER
THAN SILVER OR GOLD.

- 25 The desire of the sluggard kills him,
for his hands refuse to labor.
- 26 All day long he craves and craves,
but the righteous gives and does not hold
back.
- 27 The sacrifice of the wicked is an
abomination;
how much more when he brings it with
evil intent.
- 28 A false witness will perish,
but the word of a man who hears will
endure.
- 29 A wicked man puts on a bold face,
but the upright gives thought to¹ his
ways.
- 30 No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel
can avail against the LORD.
- 31 The horse is made ready for the day of
battle,
but the victory belongs to the LORD.
- AB 22** A good name is to be chosen rather than
great riches,
and favor is better than silver or gold.
- 2 The rich and the poor meet together;
the LORD is the maker of them all.
- 3 The prudent sees danger and hides himself,
but the simple go on and suffer for it.
- 4 The reward for humility and fear of the LORD
is riches and honor and life.²
- 5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the
crooked;
whoever guards his soul will keep far
from them.
- 6 Train up a child in the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart
from it.
- 7 The rich rules over the poor,
and the borrower is the slave of the
lender.
- 8 Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity,
and the rod of his fury will fail.
- 9 Whoever has a bountiful³ eye will be
blessed,
for he shares his bread with the poor.
- 10 Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out,
and quarreling and abuse will cease.
- 11 He who loves purity of heart,
and whose speech is gracious, will have
the king as his friend.
- 12 The eyes of the LORD keep watch over
knowledge,
but he overthrows the words of the
traitor.
- 13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!
I shall be killed in the streets!"
- 14 The mouth of forbidden⁴ women is a deep
pit;
he with whom the LORD is angry will fall
into it.
- 15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,
but the rod of discipline drives it far from
him.
- 16 Whoever oppresses the poor to increase his
own wealth,
or gives to the rich, will only come to
poverty.

Words of the Wise

- 17 Incline your ear, and hear the words of the
wise,
and apply your heart to my knowledge,
18 for it will be pleasant if you keep them
within you,
if all of them are ready on your lips.

¹ Or: establishes ² Or: The reward for humility is the fear of the Lord, riches and honor and life ³ Hebrew good ⁴ Hebrew strange

19 That your trust may be in the LORD,
I have made them known to you today,
even to you.

20 Have I not written for you thirty sayings
of counsel and knowledge,
21 to make you know what is right and true,
that you may give a true answer to those
who sent you?

22 Do not rob the poor, because he is poor,
or crush the afflicted at the gate,
23 for the LORD will plead their cause
and rob of life those who rob them.

24 Make no friendship with a man given to
anger,
nor go with a wrathful man,
25 lest you learn his ways
and entangle yourself in a snare.

26 Be not one of those who give pledges,
who put up security for debts.

27 If you have nothing with which to pay,
why should your bed be taken from
under you?

28 Do not move the ancient landmark
that your fathers have set.

29 Do you see a man skillful in his work?
He will stand before kings;
he will not stand before obscure men.

23 When you sit down to eat with a ruler,
observe carefully what¹ is before you,
² and put a knife to your throat
if you are given to appetite.

³ Do not desire his delicacies,
for they are deceptive food.

GUESS IT!

1. I was taken from Egypt.
(Ex. 3:21-22)
2. I was on the ark of the covenant.
(Ex. 37:1-2)
3. I was in Solomon's temple.
(1 Kgs. 6:20-22)
4. To be held in favor, or high
esteem, is better than me.
(Prv. 22:1)
5. Streets will be paved with me
someday. (Rv. 21:21)

4 Do not toil to acquire wealth;
be discerning enough to desist.

5 When your eyes light on it, it is gone,
for suddenly it sprouts wings,
flying like an eagle toward heaven.

6 Do not eat the bread of a man who is
stingy;²
do not desire his delicacies,
7 for he is like one who is inwardly
calculating.³
“Eat and drink!” he says to you,
but his heart is not with you.

8 You will vomit up the morsels that you have
eaten,
and waste your pleasant words.

9 Do not speak in the hearing of a fool,
for he will despise the good sense of your
words.

10 Do not move an ancient landmark
or enter the fields of the fatherless,
11 for their Redeemer is strong;
he will plead their cause against you.

12 Apply your heart to instruction
and your ear to words of knowledge.

13 Do not withhold discipline from a child;
if you strike him with a rod, he will not
die.

14 If you strike him with the rod,
you will save his soul from Sheol.

15 My son, if your heart is wise,
my heart too will be glad.

16 My inmost being⁴ will exult
when your lips speak what is right.

17 Let not your heart envy sinners,
but continue in the fear of the LORD all
the day.

18 Surely there is a future,
and your hope will not be cut off.

19 Hear, my son, and be wise,
and direct your heart in the way.

20 Be not among drunkards⁵
or among gluttonous eaters of meat,
21 for the drunkard and the glutton will come
to poverty,
and slumber will clothe them with rags.

22 Listen to your father who gave you life,
and do not despise your mother when she
is old.

23 Buy truth, and do not sell it;
buy wisdom, instruction, and
understanding.

24 The father of the righteous will greatly
rejoice;
he who fathers a wise son will be glad in
him.

¹Or who ²Hebrew *whose eye is evil* ³Or *for as he calculates in his soul, so is he* ⁴Hebrew *My kidneys* ⁵Hebrew *those who drink too much wine*

25 Let your father and mother be glad;
let her who bore you rejoice.

26 My son, give me your heart,
and let your eyes observe¹ my ways.

27 For a prostitute is a deep pit;
an adulteress² is a narrow well.

28 She lies in wait like a robber
and increases the traitors among
mankind.

29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaining?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?

30 Those who tarry long over wine;
those who go to try mixed wine.

31 Do not look at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup
and goes down smoothly.

32 In the end it bites like a serpent
and stings like an adder.

33 Your eyes will see strange things,
and your heart utter perverse things.

34 You will be like one who lies down in the
midst of the sea,
like one who lies on the top of a mast.³

35 “They struck me,” you will say,⁴ “but I was
not hurt;
they beat me, but I did not feel it.
When shall I awake?
I must have another drink.”

24 Be not envious of evil men,
nor desire to be with them,
for their hearts devise violence,
and their lips talk of trouble.

3 By wisdom a house is built,
and by understanding it is established;
4 by knowledge the rooms are filled
with all precious and pleasant riches.

5 A wise man is full of strength,
and a man of knowledge enhances his
might,
6 for by wise guidance you can wage your
war,
and in abundance of counselors there is
victory.

7 Wisdom is too high for a fool;
in the gate he does not open his mouth.

8 Whoever plans to do evil
will be called a schemer.

9 The devising⁵ of folly is sin,
and the scoffer is an abomination to
mankind.

10 If you faint in the day of adversity,
your strength is small.

11 Rescue those who are being taken away to
death;
hold back those who are stumbling to the
slaughter.

12 If you say, “Behold, we did not know this,”
does not he who weighs the heart
perceive it?
Does not he who keeps watch over your
soul know it,
and will he not repay man according to
his work?

13 My son, eat honey, for it is good,
and the drippings of the honeycomb are
sweet to your taste.

14 Know that wisdom is such to your soul;
if you find it, there will be a future,
and your hope will not be cut off.

15 Lie not in wait as a wicked man against the
dwelling of the righteous;
do no violence to his home;
16 for the righteous falls seven times and rises
again,
but the wicked stumble in times of
calamity.

17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
and let not your heart be glad when he
stumbles,
18 lest the LORD see it and be displeased,
and turn away his anger from him.

19 Fret not yourself because of evildoers,
and be not envious of the wicked,
20 for the evil man has no future;
the lamp of the wicked will be put out.

21 My son, fear the LORD and the king,
and do not join with those who do
otherwise,
22 for disaster will arise suddenly from them,
and who knows the ruin that will come
from them both?

More Sayings of the Wise

²³ These also are sayings of the wise.

Partiality in judging is not good.

24 Whoever says to the wicked, “You are in the
right,”
will be cursed by peoples, abhorred by
nations,
25 but those who rebuke the wicked will have
delight,
and a good blessing will come upon them.

26 Whoever gives an honest answer
kisses the lips.

¹ Or *delight* in ² Hebrew *a foreign woman* ³ Or *of the rigging* ⁴ Hebrew *lacks you will say* ⁵ Or *scheming*

- 27 Prepare your work outside;
get everything ready for yourself in the
field,
and after that build your house.
- 28 Be not a witness against your neighbor
without cause,
and do not deceive with your lips.
- 29 Do not say, "I will do to him as he has done
to me;
I will pay the man back for what he has
done."
- 30 I passed by the field of a sluggard,
by the vineyard of a man lacking sense,
and behold, it was all overgrown with
thorns;
the ground was covered with nettles,
and its stone wall was broken down.
- 32 Then I saw and considered it;
I looked and received instruction.
- 33 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
34 and poverty will come upon you like a robber,
and want like an armed man.

More Proverbs of Solomon

25 These also are proverbs of Solomon which
the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied.

- 2 It is the glory of God to conceal things,
but the glory of kings is to search things
out.
- 3 As the heavens for height, and the earth for
depth,
so the heart of kings is unsearchable.
- 4 Take away the dross from the silver,
and the smith has material for a vessel;
5 take away the wicked from the presence of
the king,
and his throne will be established in
righteousness.
- 6 Do not put yourself forward in the king's
presence
or stand in the place of the great,
7 for it is better to be told, "Come up here,"
than to be put lower in the presence of a
noble.
- What your eyes have seen
8 do not hastily bring into court,
for¹ what will you do in the end,
when your neighbor puts you to shame?
- 9 Argue your case with your neighbor himself,
and do not reveal another's secret,
10 lest he who hears you bring shame upon
you,
and your ill repute have no end.

- 11 A word fitly spoken
is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.
- 12 Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold
is a wise reprover to a listening ear.
- 13 Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest
is a faithful messenger to those who send
him;
he refreshes the soul of his masters.
- 14 Like clouds and wind without rain
is a man who boasts of a gift he does not
give.
- 15 With patience a ruler may be persuaded,
and a soft tongue will break a bone.
- 16 If you have found honey, eat only enough
for you,
lest you have your fill of it and vomit it.
- 17 Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's
house,
lest he have his fill of you and hate you.
- 18 A man who bears false witness against his
neighbor
is like a war club, or a sword, or a sharp
arrow.
- 19 Trusting in a treacherous man in time of
trouble
is like a bad tooth or a foot that slips.
- 20 Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart
is like one who takes off a garment on a
cold day,
and like vinegar on soda.
- 21 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to
eat,
and if he is thirsty, give him water to
drink,
22 for you will heap burning coals on his head,
and the LORD will reward you.
- 23 The north wind brings forth rain,
and a backbiting tongue, angry looks.
- 24 It is better to live in a corner of the housetop
than in a house shared with a
quarrelsome wife.
- 25 Like cold water to a thirsty soul,
so is good news from a far country.
- 26 Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain
is a righteous man who gives way before
the wicked.
- 27 It is not good to eat much honey,
nor is it glorious to seek one's own glory.²
- 28 A man without self-control
is like a city broken into and left without
walls.
- 26** Like snow in summer or rain in harvest,
so honor is not fitting for a fool.
- 2 Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow
in its flying,
a curse that is causeless does not alight.

¹ Hebrew or else ² The meaning of the Hebrew line is uncertain

- 3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey,
and a rod for the back of fools.
- 4 Answer not a fool according to his folly,
lest you be like him yourself.
- 5 Answer a fool according to his folly,
lest he be wise in his own eyes.
- 6 Whoever sends a message by the hand of a fool
cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.
- 7 Like a lame man's legs, which hang useless,
is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
- 8 Like one who binds the stone in the sling
is one who gives honor to a fool.
- 9 Like a thorn that goes up into the hand of a drunkard
is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
- 10 Like an archer who wounds everyone
is one who hires a passing fool or drunkard.¹
- 11 Like a dog that returns to his vomit
is a fool who repeats his folly.
- 12 Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- 13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road!
There is a lion in the streets!"
- 14 As a door turns on its hinges,
so does a sluggard on his bed.
- 15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.
- 16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
than seven men who can answer sensibly.
- 17 Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own
is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears.
- 18 Like a madman who throws firebrands,
arrows, and death
- 19 is the man who deceives his neighbor
and says, "I am only joking!"
- 20 For lack of wood the fire goes out,
and where there is no whisperer,
quarreling ceases.
- 21 As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire,
so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.
- 22 The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the body.
- 23 Like the glaze² covering an earthen vessel
are fervent lips with an evil heart.
- 24 Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips
and harbors deceit in his heart;
- 25 when he speaks graciously, believe him not,
for there are seven abominations in his heart;
- 26 though his hatred be covered with deception,
his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.
- 27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it,
and a stone will come back on him who starts it rolling.
- 28 A lying tongue hates its victims,
and a flattering mouth works ruin.
- 27** Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring.
- 2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth;
a stranger, and not your own lips.
- 3 A stone is heavy, and sand is weighty,
but a fool's provocation is heavier than both.
- 4 Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming,
but who can stand before jealousy?
- 5 Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.
- 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.
- 7 One who is full loathes honey,
but to one who is hungry everything bitter is sweet.
- 8 Like a bird that strays from its nest
is a man who strays from his home.
- 9 Oil and perfume make the heart glad,
and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.³
- 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.
- 11 Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad,
that I may answer him who reproaches me.
- 12 The prudent sees danger and hides himself,
but the simple go on and suffer for it.
- 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.⁴
- 14 Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice,
rising early in the morning,
will be counted as cursing.

¹ Or hires a fool or passerby ² By revocalization; Hebrew *silver of dross* ³ Or and so does the sweetness of a friend that comes from his earnest counsel
⁴ Hebrew a foreign woman; a slight emendation yields (compare Vulgate; see also 20:16) foreigners

15 A continual dripping on a rainy day
and a quarrelsome wife are alike;
16 to restrain her is to restrain the wind
or to grasp¹ oil in one's right hand.
17 Iron sharpens iron,
and one man sharpens another.²
18 Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit,
and he who guards his master will be
honored.
19 As in water face reflects face,
so the heart of man reflects the man.
20 Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied,
and never satisfied are the eyes of man.
21 The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is
for gold,
and a man is tested by his praise.
22 Crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle
along with crushed grain,
yet his folly will not depart from him.
23 Know well the condition of your flocks,
and give attention to your herds,
24 for riches do not last forever;
and does a crown endure to all
generations?
25 When the grass is gone and the new growth
appears
and the vegetation of the mountains is
gathered,
26 the lambs will provide your clothing,
and the goats the price of a field.
27 There will be enough goats' milk for your
food,
for the food of your household
and maintenance for your girls.
28 The wicked flee when no one pursues,
but the righteous are bold as a lion.
2 When a land transgresses, it has many
rulers,
but with a man of understanding and
knowledge,
its stability will long continue.
3 A poor man who oppresses the poor
is a beating rain that leaves no food.
4 Those who forsake the law praise the
wicked,
but those who keep the law strive against
them.
5 Evil men do not understand justice,
but those who seek the LORD understand
it completely.
6 Better is a poor man who walks in his
integrity
than a rich man who is crooked in his
ways.
7 The one who keeps the law is a son with
understanding,

but a companion of gluttons shames his
father.
8 Whoever multiplies his wealth by interest
and profit³
gathers it for him who is generous to the
poor.
9 If one turns away his ear from hearing the
law,
even his prayer is an abomination.
10 Whoever misleads the upright into an evil
way
will fall into his own pit,
but the blameless will have a goodly
inheritance.
11 A rich man is wise in his own eyes,
but a poor man who has understanding
will find him out.
12 When the righteous triumph, there is great
glory,
but when the wicked rise, people hide
themselves.
13 Whoever conceals his transgressions will not
prosper,
but he who confesses and forsakes them
will obtain mercy.
14 Blessed is the one who fears the LORD
always,
but whoever hardens his heart will fall
into calamity.
15 Like a roaring lion or a charging bear
is a wicked ruler over a poor people.
16 A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel
oppressor,
but he who hates unjust gain will prolong
his days.
17 If one is burdened with the blood of
another,
he will be a fugitive until death;⁴
let no one help him.
18 Whoever walks in integrity will be
delivered,

REMEMBER IT

Whoever conceals his
transgressions will not prosper,
but he who confesses and forsakes
them will obtain mercy.

Proverbs 28:13

¹ Hebrew to meet with ² Hebrew sharpens the face of another ³ That is, profit that comes from charging interest to the poor ⁴ Hebrew until the pit

but he who is crooked in his ways will suddenly fall.

19 Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread,

but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty.

20 A faithful man will abound with blessings, but whoever hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.

21 To show partiality is not good, but for a piece of bread a man will do wrong.

22 A stingy man¹ hastens after wealth and does not know that poverty will come upon him.

23 Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue.

24 Whoever robs his father or his mother and says, “That is no transgression,” is a companion to a man who destroys.

25 A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched.

26 Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.

27 Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.

28 When the wicked rise, people hide themselves, but when they perish, the righteous increase.

29 He who is often reprov'd, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.

2 When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.

3 He who loves wisdom makes his father glad, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.

4 By justice a king builds up the land, but he who exacts gifts² tears it down.

5 A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet.

6 An evil man is ensnared in his transgression, but a righteous man sings and rejoices.

7 A righteous man knows the rights of the poor; a wicked man does not understand such knowledge.

8 Scoffers set a city aflame, but the wise turn away wrath.

ACTIVATE

CONFESS YOUR SINS TO GOD

Ezra 7:1-10, 9:1—10:17; Proverbs 28:13

You didn't mean to brush your bike against Dad's new car. Yikes! He saw the scratch on the driver's door and was not happy. How easy it was to blame your younger brother. How difficult it is to fess up. Besides, white lies are not really lies. Right? Read Proverbs 28:13.

Not owning up to your mistakes can affect others. When Ezra the priest and scribe learned of the sins of the Israelites, he grieved so deeply that he literally pulled out strands of his hair and beard. Ezra then led the people in public confession—and he included himself as an offender of God's ways. Admitting your wrongs to the Lord brings relief to your mind, body, and soul and frees you to live at peace with God and others.

Why is it sometimes challenging to own up to your mistakes? How is confessing your wrongs to your parents or a friend different from confessing to God?

Go sit where the sun is shining directly on you. Feel God's presence as you tell Him you're sorry for your sins. Next, thank Him for forgiveness and a fresh start.



- 9 If a wise man has an argument with a fool, the fool only rages and laughs, and there is no quiet.
- 10 Bloodthirsty men hate one who is blameless and seek the life of the upright.³
- 11 A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.
- 12 If a ruler listens to falsehood, all his officials will be wicked.
- 13 The poor man and the oppressor meet together; the LORD gives light to the eyes of both.
- 14 If a king faithfully judges the poor, his throne will be established forever.
- 15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

¹ Hebrew *A man whose eye is evil* ² Or *who taxes heavily* ³ Or *but the upright seek his soul*

- 16 When the wicked increase, transgression increases,
but the righteous will look upon their downfall.
- 17 Discipline your son, and he will give you rest;
he will give delight to your heart.
- 18 Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint,¹
but blessed is he who keeps the law.
- 19 By mere words a servant is not disciplined,
for though he understands, he will not respond.
- 20 Do you see a man who is hasty in his words?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- 21 Whoever pampers his servant from childhood
will in the end find him his heir.²
- 22 A man of wrath stirs up strife,
and one given to anger causes much transgression.
- 23 One's pride will bring him low,
but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.
- 24 The partner of a thief hates his own life;
he hears the curse, but discloses nothing.
- 25 The fear of man lays a snare,
but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.
- 26 Many seek the face of a ruler,
but it is from the LORD that a man gets justice.
- 27 An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous,
but one whose way is straight is an abomination to the wicked.

The Words of Agur

30 The words of Agur son of Jakeh. The oracle.³

- The man declares, I am weary, O God;
I am weary, O God, and worn out.⁴
- 2 Surely I am too stupid to be a man.
I have not the understanding of a man.
- 3 I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.
- 4 Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?

- What is his name, and what is his son's name?
Surely you know!
- 5 Every word of God proves true;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
- 6 Do not add to his words,
lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.
- 7 Two things I ask of you;
deny them not to me before I die:
8 Remove far from me falsehood and lying;
give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the food that is needful for me,
9 lest I be full and deny you
and say, "Who is the LORD?"
or lest I be poor and steal
and profane the name of my God.
- 10 Do not slander a servant to his master,
lest he curse you, and you be held guilty.
- 11 There are those⁵ who curse their fathers
and do not bless their mothers.
- 12 There are those who are clean in their own eyes
but are not washed of their filth.
- 13 There are those—how lofty are their eyes,
how high their eyelids lift!
- 14 There are those whose teeth are swords,
whose fangs are knives,
to devour the poor from off the earth,
the needy from among mankind.
- 15 The leech has two daughters:
Give and Give.⁶
Three things are never satisfied;
four never say, "Enough":
16 Sheol, the barren womb,
the land never satisfied with water,
and the fire that never says, "Enough."
- 17 The eye that mocks a father
and scorns to obey a mother
will be picked out by the ravens of the valley
and eaten by the vultures.
- 18 Three things are too wonderful for me;
four I do not understand:
19 the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a serpent on a rock,
the way of a ship on the high seas,
and the way of a man with a virgin.

¹ Or the people are discouraged ² The meaning of the Hebrew word rendered *his heir* is uncertain ³ Or *Jakeh, the man of Massa* ⁴ Revocalization; Hebrew *The man declares to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal* ⁵ Hebrew *There is a generation*; also verses 12, 13, 14 ⁶ Or "Give, give," they cry

20 This is the way of an adulteress:
she eats and wipes her mouth
and says, “I have done no wrong.”

21 Under three things the earth trembles;
under four it cannot bear up:
22 a slave when he becomes king,
and a fool when he is filled with food;
23 an unloved woman when she gets a
husband,
and a maidservant when she displaces her
mistress.

24 Four things on earth are small,
but they are exceedingly wise:
25 the ants are a people not strong,
yet they provide their food in the
summer;
26 the rock badgers are a people not mighty,
yet they make their homes in the cliffs;
27 the locusts have no king,
yet all of them march in rank;
28 the lizard you can take in your hands,
yet it is in kings’ palaces.

29 Three things are stately in their tread;
four are stately in their stride:
30 the lion, which is mightiest among beasts
and does not turn back before any;
31 the strutting rooster,¹ the he-goat,
and a king whose army is with him.²

32 If you have been foolish, exalting yourself,
or if you have been devising evil,
put your hand on your mouth.

33 For pressing milk produces curds,
pressing the nose produces blood,
and pressing anger produces strife.

The Words of King Lemuel

31 The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him:

2 What are you doing, my son?³ What are you
doing, son of my womb?
What are you doing, son of my vows?
3 Do not give your strength to women,
your ways to those who destroy kings.
4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
it is not for kings to drink wine,
or for rulers to take strong drink,
5 lest they drink and forget what has been
decreed
and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.
6 Give strong drink to the one who is
perishing,
and wine to those in bitter distress;⁴

7 let them drink and forget their poverty
and remember their misery no more.
8 Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all who are destitute.⁵
9 Open your mouth, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

The Woman Who Feared the Lord

10⁶ An excellent wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
12 She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
13 She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
14 She is like the ships of the merchant;
she brings her food from afar.
15 She rises while it is yet night
and provides food for her household
and portions for her maidens.
16 She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a
vineyard.
17 She dresses herself⁷ with strength
and makes her arms strong.
18 She perceives that her merchandise is
profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.

Ancient Archives

Role of Women in Bible Times

Proverbs 31:10-31

In Bible times, women typically ran the household—they were responsible for cooking, making clothing, and taking care of the children. Proverbs 31 talks about how women often made business decisions—they would buy and sell things to help take care of the household. The cultures around Israel often did not value women, but the Bible makes it clear that women are created in God’s image and are very important to Him.

¹ Or *the magpie*, or *the greyhound*; Hebrew *girl-of-loins* ² Or *against whom there is no rising up* ³ Hebrew *What, my son?* ⁴ Hebrew *those bitter in soul*
⁵ Hebrew *are sons of passing away* ⁶ Verses 10–31 are an acrostic poem, each verse beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet ⁷ Hebrew *She girds her loins*

- 19 She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
- 20 She opens her hand to the poor
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
- 21 She is not afraid of snow for her household,
for all her household are clothed in
scarlet.¹
- 22 She makes bed coverings for herself;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- 23 Her husband is known in the gates
when he sits among the elders of the
land.
- 24 She makes linen garments and sells them;
she delivers sashes to the merchant.
- 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.
- 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her
tongue.
- 27 She looks well to the ways of her
household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
- 29 “Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.”
- 30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be
praised.
- 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands,
and let her works praise her in the
gates.

What About This?



HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS REALLY TRUE?

Proverbs 30:5

The Bible has a lot of stories, and some of them might seem hard to believe (like Jonah and the great fish or the story of Noah and the flood). But every word in the Bible is true (Proverbs 30:5).

One way we can know the Bible is true is by looking at history. The Bible talks about many things you might learn about in history class. We can see how the Bible fits into history. Even though more than 40 different writers wrote the Bible over a period of more than 1,000 years, all the writers agree in the things they say about God and history.

The best proof that the Bible is true is the fact that some of the earlier writers of the Bible wrote predictions, or prophecies, about events and people. Hundreds of years later, we can see in both history and in the Bible that those things came true. (For examples of fulfilled prophecies, see Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1-6, Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:14-15.)

If some parts of the Bible are true, it makes sense that the rest would be, too!

¹Or in double thickness