

PROVERBS

How Not to Be a Fool

AUTHOR	Mostly King Solomon, 1:1, 10:1 and 25:1. Also the wise, 22:17 and 24:23, a man named Agur, 30:1, and King Lemuel's mother, 31:1.
DATE	Solomon ruled about 970 to 930 BC. King Hezekiah's men copied more of his sayings about 700 BC, 25:1. The book was put together after that.
WRITTEN TO	A son. The father says my son again and again. Really it is for anyone who wants to grow up wise.
KEY VERSE	Proverbs 1:7. The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.



THE OLDEST COPIES OF PROVERBS

Pieces of two Proverbs scrolls from Qumran Cave 4, laid on one museum plate. The big dark piece at the top is 4QProv a, with words from Proverbs 1 and 2. The other pieces are 4QProv b, with parts of Proverbs 13 to 15 and a few words from chapter 7. Both were copied in the first century BC or the first century AD.

Only these two copies of Proverbs, and a tiny third piece from Cave 6 with words from Proverbs 11, were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Photo Shai Halevi, Israel Antiquities Authority, Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library.

Historical Setting

The royal court of Jerusalem, where kings trained young men to lead. Proverbs is not a story. It is a book of short sayings about everyday life: money, work, friends, words, sex, food, drinking and how to treat your parents. It teaches you to live in God's world His way.

What It Warns Against

THE FOOL. The man who will not listen, 1:7 and 12:15. Proverbs has several Hebrew words for fool, from the clueless to the mocker.

THE LAZY MAN. He sleeps, makes excuses and ends up poor, 6:9 to 11 and 26:13 to 16.

THE ADULTERESS. Her words are smooth, but her house is the road to the grave, chapters 5 and 7.

A LOOSE TONGUE. Gossip, lying and quick anger, 18:8, 12:22 and 29:22.

The Idiot Proof Summary

Proverbs is a father teaching his son how to live. Chapters 1 to 9 are long talks: get wisdom, stay away from crooks, and run from the adulteress. Wisdom calls out like a woman in the street, and Folly calls too. Then come hundreds of short sayings, mostly from Solomon, about work, money, words, friends, anger and family. The book ends with King Lemuel's mother and a poem about a wife of noble character.

Proverbs at a Glance

CH 1 to 9	A FATHER'S TALKS Get wisdom; Lady Wisdom and the adulteress.
CH 10 to 22:16	SOLOMON'S SAYINGS 375 one liners.
CH 22:17 to 24	SAYINGS OF THE WISE Thirty sayings, and a few more.
CH 25 to 29	HEZEKIAH'S COPY More of Solomon's sayings.
CH 30	AGUR Who made the world? Things in threes and fours.
CH 31	LEMUEL'S MOTHER Advice for a king; the noble wife, A to Z.

Where Jesus Shows Up

PROVERBS 8:22 TO 31 Wisdom was with God before the world began. John 1:1 to 3 and Colossians 1:15 to 17 say the same about the Son, and Paul calls Christ the wisdom of God, 1 Corinthians 1:24.

PROVERBS 30:4 What is the name of His Son? Jesus said He came down from heaven, John 3:13.

PROVERBS 25:6 TO 7 Do not take the best seat, wait to be told, Come up here. Jesus told the same story at a dinner, Luke 14:8 to 11.

1 KINGS 4:31 Solomon was the wisest man of his day. Jesus said, Something greater than Solomon is here, Matthew 12:42.

GOD'S NAMES IN PROVERBS

Yahweh 87 times in the Hebrew. God, Elohim, only five times, and Eloah once, 30:5. Agur calls Him the Holy One, 30:3, as 9:10 does.

What to Watch for in Proverbs

MESSIANIC FORESHADOW	8:23, 30:4
THE HEART	3:1, 3:3, 3:5, 4:23, 7:3, 12:25, 13:12 and 18 more
ARCHAEOLOGY	22:17
DEMONIC	26:2
NOTABLE	3:6, 9:10, 15:1, 16:3, 16:18, 17:17, 18:10 and 4 more
GOD SPEAKING	Words in red are God speaking. Only the words He actually said are red.
BLOODLINE OF CHRIST	Names underlined in red are in the family line of Jesus.

Cool Stuff Most People Miss

SOLOMON'S NUMBER

10:1 to 22:16 has exactly 375 verses, and the Hebrew letters in Solomon's name add up to 375.

A TO Z

The last poem, 31:10 to 31, is an acrostic: each verse starts with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

THE GREEK IS DIFFERENT

The Greek Old Testament puts chapters 24 to 31 in a different order and adds lines, like the busy bee after the ant in 6:8.

ANSWER HIM, DON'T ANSWER HIM

26:4 and 26:5 say opposite things, side by side, on purpose. Wisdom knows which one fits the moment.

How Does It End?

With a woman. The book opens with Lady Wisdom calling in the streets and closes with a real wise woman at home, strong, busy and kind, who fears Yahweh, 31:30.

BLOODLINE OF CHRIST

1

CHAPTER 1 IN 30 SECONDS

Dad sits his son down for the talk. Start here: the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge. If the gang says, Come with us, we will get rich quick, say no. Then Lady Wisdom shouts in the street, and the people who ignore her end up eating the fruit of their own choices.

THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE // PROVERBS 9:1-12

- ¹These are the proverbs of Solomon son of David,
king of Israel,
²for gaining wisdom and discipline,
for comprehending words of insight,
³and for receiving instruction in wise living
and in righteousness, justice, and equity.
⁴To impart prudence to the simple
and knowledge and discretion to the young,
⁵let the wise listen and gain instruction,
and the discerning acquire wise counsel
⁶by understanding the proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.
⁷The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

THE ENTICEMENT OF SIN

- ⁸Listen, my son, to your father's instruction,
and do not forsake the teaching of your mother.
⁹For they are a garland of grace on your head
and a pendant around your neck.

■ **PROV 1:1 [NOTE]** SOLOMON. David's son, the third king of Israel, about 970 to 930 BC. God gave him wisdom when he asked for it, and he spoke 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs, 1 Kings 3:9 to 12 and 4:32. Only some of them are here.

■ **PROV 1:1 [NOTE]** WHAT IS A PROVERB? The Hebrew word *maschal* means a saying that compares one thing to another. Most proverbs are short, two lines that rhyme in thought instead of sound.

■ **PROV 1:7 [NOTE]** THE KEY VERSE. The fear of Yahweh is not being scared of God. It is the respect that takes Him seriously. 9:10 says it again, near the end of the father's talks.

■ **PROV 1:8 [NOTE]** MY SON. The father calls him my son over and over in chapters 1 to 7. Mom teaches too, 1:8 and 6:20, and so does the king's mother in chapter 31.

- ¹⁰My son, if sinners entice you,
do not yield to them.
¹¹If they say, "Come along, let us lie in wait for blood,
let us ambush the innocent without cause,
¹²let us swallow them alive like Sheol,
and whole like those descending into the Pit.
¹³We will find all manner of precious goods;
we will fill our houses with plunder.
¹⁴Throw in your lot with us;
let us all share one purse"—
¹⁵my son, do not walk the road with them
or set foot upon their path.
¹⁶For their feet run to evil,
and they are swift to shed blood.
¹⁷How futile it is to spread the net
where any bird can see it!
¹⁸But they lie in wait for their own blood;
they ambush their own lives.
¹⁹Such is the fate of all who are greedy,
whose unjust gain takes the lives of its possessors.

WISDOM CALLS ALOUD

- ²⁰Wisdom calls out in the street,
she lifts her voice in the square;
²¹in the main concourse she cries aloud,
at the city gates she makes her speech:
²²"How long, O simple ones, will you love your simple ways?
How long will scoffers delight in their scorn
and fools hate knowledge?
²³If you had repented at my rebuke,
then surely I would have poured out my spirit on you;
I would have made my words known to you.
²⁴Because you refused my call,
and no one took my outstretched hand,
²⁵because you neglected all my counsel,
and wanted none of my correction,
²⁶in turn I will mock your calamity;

■ **PROV 1:20 [NOTE]** LADY WISDOM. Proverbs paints wisdom as a woman calling in the street. She is not a goddess. Many see her as a picture of God's wisdom, and many Christians hear Christ in her words, 8:22 to 31. Her rival is the adulteress, and later Folly, 9:13. Her words are black here; only 8:22 to 31 is red.

THE HEART

- I will sneer when terror strikes you,
²⁷ when your dread comes like a storm,
 and your destruction like a whirlwind,
 when distress and anguish overwhelm
 you.
- ²⁸ Then they will call on me, but I will not
 answer;
 they will earnestly seek me, but will not
 find me.
- ²⁹ For they hated knowledge
 and chose not to fear Yahweh.
- ³⁰ They accepted none of my counsel;
 they despised all my reproof.
- ³¹ So they will eat the fruit of their own
 way,
 and be filled with their own devices.
- ³² For the waywardness of the simple will
 slay them,
 and the complacency of fools will de-
 stroy them.
- ³³ But whoever listens to me will dwell in
 safety,
 secure from the fear of evil."

2

CHAPTER 2 IN 30 SECONDS

Dig for wisdom like it is buried treasure. If you do, God will give it to you, and it will keep you away from crooked men and from the smooth talking woman who forgot her promises.

THE BENEFITS OF WISDOM

- ¹ My son, if you accept my words
 and hide my commandments within you,
² if you incline your ear to wisdom
 and direct your heart to understanding,
³ if you truly call out to insight
 and lift your voice to understanding,
⁴ if you seek it like silver
 and search it out like hidden treasure,
⁵ then you will discern the fear of Yahweh
 and discover the knowledge of God.
- ⁶ For Yahweh gives wisdom;
 from His mouth come knowledge and
 understanding.
- ⁷ He stores up sound wisdom for the up-
 right;
 He is a shield to those who walk with in-
 tegrity,
⁸ to guard the paths of justice

and protect the way of His saints.

- ⁹ Then you will discern righteousness
 and justice and equity—every good
 path.
- ¹⁰ For wisdom will enter your heart,
 and knowledge will delight your soul.
- ¹¹ Discretion will watch over you,
 and understanding will guard you,
¹² to deliver you from the way of evil,
 from the man who speaks perversity,
¹³ from those who leave the straight paths
 to walk in the ways of darkness,
¹⁴ from those who enjoy doing evil
 and rejoice in the twistedness of evil,
¹⁵ whose paths are crooked
 and whose ways are devious.
- ¹⁶ It will rescue you from the forbidden
 woman,
 from the stranger with seductive words
¹⁷ who abandons the partner of her youth
 and forgets the covenant of her God.
- ¹⁸ For her house sinks down to death,
 and her tracks to the departed spirits.
- ¹⁹ None who go to her return
 or negotiate the paths of life.
- ²⁰ So you will follow in the ways of the
 good,
 and keep to the paths of the righteous.
- ²¹ For the upright will inhabit the land,
 and the blameless will remain in it;
²² but the wicked will be cut off from the
 land,
 and the unfaithful will be uprooted.

3

CHAPTER 3 IN 30 SECONDS

Trust Yahweh with all your heart and stop trying to figure everything out yourself. Honor Him with your money, take His correction like a son, and do not tell your neighbor, Come back tomorrow, if you can help him today.

TRUST IN YAHWEH WITH ALL YOUR HEART

- ¹ My son, do not forget my teaching,
 but let your heart keep my command-
 ments;

■ **PROV 2:16 [NOTE] THE ADULTERESS.** Literally the strange woman and the foreign woman: a woman outside your marriage. The father warns about her in chapters 2, 5, 6 and 7.

■ **PROV 3:1 [HEART]** Do not forget my teaching. Let your heart keep my commands.

THE HEART OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW NOTABLE

² for they will add length to your days,
years and peace to your life.

³ Never let loving devotion or faithfulness
leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

⁴ Then you will find favor and high regard
in the sight of God and man.

⁵ Trust in Yahweh with all your heart,
and lean not on your own understand-
ing;

⁶ in all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He will make your paths straight.

⁷ Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear Yahweh and turn away from evil.

⁸ This will bring healing to your body
and refreshment to your bones.

⁹ Honor Yahweh with your wealth
and with the firstfruits of all your crops;

¹⁰ then your barns will be filled with plenty,
and your vats will overflow with new
wine.

¹¹ My son, do not reject the discipline of Yah-
weh,
and do not loathe His rebuke;

¹² for Yahweh disciplines the one He loves,
as does a father the son in whom he delights.

THE BLESSINGS OF WISDOM

¹³ Blessed is the man who finds wisdom,
the man who acquires understanding,

¹⁴ for she is more profitable than silver,
and her gain is better than fine gold.

¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire compares with her.

¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.

¹⁷ All her ways are pleasant,
and all her paths are peaceful.

¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who em-
brace her,

and those who lay hold of her are
blessed.

¹⁹ Yahweh founded the earth by wisdom
and established the heavens by under-
standing.

²⁰ By His knowledge the watery depths
were broken open,
and the clouds dripped with dew.

²¹ My son, do not lose sight of this:
Preserve sound judgment and discern-
ment.

²² They will be life to your soul
and adornment to your neck.

²³ Then you will go on your way in safety,
and your foot will not stumble.

²⁴ When you lie down, you will not be
afraid;

when you rest, your sleep will be sweet.

²⁵ Do not fear sudden danger
or the ruin that overtakes the wicked,

²⁶ for Yahweh will be your confidence
and will keep your foot from the snare.

²⁷ Do not withhold good from the deserv-
ing
when it is within your power to act.

²⁸ Do not tell your neighbor,
"Come back tomorrow and I will pro-
vide"—

when you already have the means.

²⁹ Do not devise evil against your neigh-
bor,
for he trustfully dwells beside you.

³⁰ Do not accuse a man without cause,
when he has done you no harm.

³¹ Do not envy a violent man
or choose any of his ways;

³² for Yahweh detests the perverse,
but He is a friend to the upright.

³³ The curse of Yahweh is on the house of
the wicked,
but He blesses the home of the right-
eous.

³⁴ He mocks the mockers,
but gives grace to the humble.

³⁵ The wise will inherit honor,
but fools are held up to shame.

■ PROV 3:3 [HEART] Write loyalty and faithfulness on the
tablet of your heart.

■ PROV 3:4 [QUOTED] Quoted in the New Testament →
2CO 8:21 p.-

■ PROV 3:5 [HEART] Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and do not lean on your own understanding.

■ PROV 3:5 [NOTE] ALL YOUR HEART. In Hebrew thinking
the heart is where you think, decide and want, not only
where you feel. Trusting with all your heart means with
your whole self.

■ PROV 3:6 [NOTABLE] Bring God into every part of life,
not only Sunday, and He will lead the way.

■ PROV 3:11 [QUOTED] Quoted in the New Testament →
HEB 12:5-6 p.-

■ PROV 3:34 [QUOTED] Quoted in the New Testament →
JAS 4:6 p.-

■ PROV 3:34 [QUOTED] Quoted in the New Testament →
1PE 5:5 p.-

THE HEART OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

4

CHAPTER 4 IN 30 SECONDS

Grandpa taught Dad, and Dad is teaching you: get wisdom, whatever it costs. Stay off the road the wicked walk. Guard your heart, because everything you do flows out of it.

A FATHER'S INSTRUCTION

- ¹ Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction;
pay attention and gain understanding.
- ² For I give you sound teaching;
do not abandon my directive.
- ³ When I was a son to my father,
tender and the only child of my mother,
- ⁴ he taught me and said,
"Let your heart lay hold of my words;
keep my commands and you will live.
- ⁵ Get wisdom, get understanding;
do not forget my words or turn from
them.
- ⁶ Do not forsake wisdom, and she will pre-
serve you;
love her, and she will guard you.
- ⁷ Wisdom is supreme; so acquire wisdom.
And whatever you may acquire, gain un-
derstanding.
- ⁸ Prize her, and she will exalt you;
if you embrace her, she will honor you.
- ⁹ She will set a garland of grace on your
head;
she will present you with a crown of
beauty."
- ¹⁰ Listen, my son, and receive my words,
and the years of your life will be many.
- ¹¹ I will guide you in the way of wisdom;
I will lead you on straight paths.
- ¹² When you walk, your steps will not be
impeded;
when you run, you will not stumble.
- ¹³ Hold on to instruction; do not let go.
Guard it, for it is your life.
- ¹⁴ Do not set foot on the path of the
wicked
or walk in the way of evildoers.
- ¹⁵ Avoid it; do not travel on it.
Turn from it and pass on by.
- ¹⁶ For they cannot sleep
unless they do evil;
they are deprived of slumber
until they make someone fall.

- ¹⁷ For they eat the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence.
- ¹⁸ The path of the righteous is like the first
gleam of dawn,
shining brighter and brighter until mid-
day.
- ¹⁹ But the way of the wicked is like the
darkest gloom;
they do not know what makes them
stumble.
- ²⁰ My son, pay attention to my words;
incline your ear to my sayings.
- ²¹ Do not lose sight of them;
keep them within your heart.
- ²² For they are life to those who find them,
and health to the whole body.
- ²³ Guard your heart with all diligence,
for from it flow springs of life.
- ²⁴ Put away deception from your mouth;
keep your lips from perverse speech.
- ²⁵ Let your eyes look forward;
fix your gaze straight ahead.
- ²⁶ Make a level path for your feet,
and all your ways will be sure.
- ²⁷ Do not swerve to the right or to the left;
turn your feet away from evil.

5

CHAPTER 5 IN 30 SECONDS

*Her lips drip honey, but she ends up bitter as poi-
son. Stay away from her door. Drink water from
your own well: enjoy the wife of your youth.*

AVOIDING IMMORALITY // LEVITICUS 20:10-21; 1
CORINTHIANS 5:1-8

- ¹ My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
incline your ear to my insight,
- ² that you may maintain discretion
and your lips may preserve knowledge.
- ³ Though the lips of the forbidden woman
drip honey
and her speech is smoother than oil,
- ⁴ in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
sharp as a double-edged sword.
- ⁵ Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to Sheol.

■ PROV 4:23 [HEART] Guard your heart above all else, be-
cause everything in your life flows from it.

■ PROV 4:23 [NOTE] THE SPRING. The heart is pictured as
a spring that waters the whole land. Jesus said the same
thing: out of the heart come evil thoughts, Matthew 15:19.

■ PROV 4:26 [QUOTED] Quoted in the New Testament →
HEB 12:12-13 p.-

- ⁶ She does not consider the path of life;
she does not know that her ways are
unstable.
- ⁷ So now, my sons, listen to me,
and do not turn aside from the words of
my mouth.
- ⁸ Keep your path far from her;
do not go near the door of her house,
- ⁹ lest you concede your vigor to others,
and your years to one who is cruel;
- ¹⁰ lest strangers feast on your wealth,
and your labors enrich the house of a
foreigner.
- ¹¹ At the end of your life you will groan
when your flesh and your body are
spent,
- ¹² and you will say, "How I hated discipline,
and my heart despised reproof!
- ¹³ I did not listen to the voice of my teach-
ers
or incline my ear to my mentors.
- ¹⁴ I am on the brink of utter ruin
in the midst of the whole assembly."
- ¹⁵ Drink water from your own cistern,
and running water from your own well.
- ¹⁶ Why should your springs flow in the
streets,
your streams of water in the public
squares?
- ¹⁷ Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers.
- ¹⁸ May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your
youth:
- ¹⁹ A loving doe, a graceful fawn—
may her breasts satisfy you always;
may you be captivated by her love for-
ever.
- ²⁰ Why be captivated, my son, by an adul-
teress,
or embrace the bosom of a stranger?
- ²¹ For a man's ways are before the eyes of
Yahweh,
and Yahweh examines all his paths.
- ²² The iniquities of a wicked man entrap
him;
the cords of his sin entangle him.
- ²³ He dies for lack of discipline,
led astray by his own great folly.

6

CHAPTER 6 IN 30 SECONDS

Do not cosign a loan for a stranger. Lazy? Go watch the ant. Here are seven things Yahweh hates. And again: adultery is like carrying fire in your lap and hoping your shirt does not burn.

WARNINGS AGAINST FOOLISHNESS

- ¹ My son, if you have put up security for
your neighbor,
if you have struck hands in pledge with
a stranger,
- ² if you have been trapped by the words of
your lips,
ensnared by the words of your mouth,
- ³ then do this, my son, to free yourself,
for you have fallen into your neighbor's
hands:
- Go, humble yourself,
and press your plea with your neighbor.
- ⁴ Allow no sleep to your eyes
or slumber to your eyelids.
- ⁵ Free yourself, like a gazelle from the
hand of the hunter,
like a bird from the snare of the fowler.
- ⁶ Walk in the manner of the ant, O slacker;
observe its ways and become wise.
- ⁷ Without a commander,
without an overseer or ruler,
- ⁸ it prepares its provisions in summer;
it gathers its food at harvest.
- ⁹ How long will you lie there, O slacker?
When will you get up 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 need like a bandit.
- ¹² A worthless person, a wicked man,
walks with a perverse mouth,
- ¹³ winking his eyes, speaking with his feet,
and pointing with his fingers.
- ¹⁴ With deceit in his heart he devises evil;
he continually sows discord.
- ¹⁵ Therefore calamity will come upon him
suddenly;

■ **PROV 6:6 [NOTE] THE ANT.** The Greek Old Testament adds three lines after 6:8 that tell the lazy man to go to the bee too. They are not in the Hebrew.

THE HEART

in an instant he will be shattered beyond recovery.

¹⁶ There are six things that Yahweh hates, seven that are detestable to Him:

¹⁷ haughty eyes,

a lying tongue,

hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked schemes,

feet that run swiftly to evil,

¹⁹ a false witness who gives false testimony,

and one who stirs up discord among brothers.

WARNINGS AGAINST ADULTERY

²⁰ My son, keep your father's commandment,
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

²¹ Bind them always upon your heart;
tie them around your neck.

²² When you walk, they will guide you;
when you lie down, they will watch over you;
when you awake, they will speak to you.

²³ For this commandment is a lamp, this teaching is a light,
and the reproofs of discipline are the way to life,

²⁴ to keep you from the evil woman,
from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

²⁵ Do not lust in your heart for her beauty
or let her captivate you with her eyes.

²⁶ For the levy of the prostitute is poverty,
and the adulteress preys upon your very life.

²⁷ Can a man embrace fire
and his clothes not be burned?

²⁸ Can a man walk on hot coals
without scorching his feet?

²⁹ So is he who sleeps with another man's wife;
no one who touches her will go unpunished.

³⁰ Men do not despise the thief
if he steals to satisfy his hunger.

■ **PROV 6:16 [NOTE] SIX THINGS, NO, SEVEN.** A Hebrew way of counting that builds up to the last one. The seventh, stirring up trouble among brothers, is the punch line. Chapter 30 does the same with three, no, four.

³¹ Yet if caught, he must pay sevenfold;
he must give up all the wealth of his house.

³² He who commits adultery lacks judgment;
whoever does so destroys himself.

³³ Wounds and dishonor will befall him,
and his reproach will never be wiped away.

³⁴ For jealousy enrages a husband,
and he will show no mercy in the day of vengeance.

³⁵ He will not be appeased by any ransom,
or persuaded by lavish gifts.

7

CHAPTER 7 IN 30 SECONDS

Dad watches out the window as a clueless young man walks right to her house at night. She has the bed ready and her husband is away. He follows her like an ox going to the butcher. Do not be that guy.

WARNINGS ABOUT THE ADULTERESS

¹ My son, keep my words
and treasure my commandments within you.

² Keep my commandments and live;
guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.

³ Tie them to your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.

⁴ Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and call understanding your kinsman,

⁵ that they may keep you from the adulteress,
from the stranger with seductive words.

⁶ For at the window of my house
I looked through the lattice.

⁷ I saw among the simple,
I noticed among the youths,
a young man lacking judgment,

⁸ crossing the street near her corner,
strolling down the road to her house,

⁹ at twilight, as the day was fading
into the dark of the night.

■ **PROV 6:32 [NOTE] LACKS JUDGMENT.** The Hebrew says lacks heart. Proverbs uses this saying about ten times for a person with no sense, 7:7, 9:4, 10:13 and more. Heart here means the mind that should be making good choices.

■ **PROV 7:3 [HEART]** Write God's commands on the tablet of your heart.

¹⁰ Then a woman came out to meet him,
with the attire of a harlot and cunning of
heart.

¹¹ She is loud and defiant;
her feet do not remain at home.

¹² Now in the street, now in the squares,
she lurks at every corner.

¹³ She seizes him and kisses him;
she brazenly says to him:

¹⁴ "I have made my peace offerings;
today I have paid my vows.

¹⁵ So I came out to meet you;
I sought you, and I have found you.

¹⁶ I have decked my bed with coverings,
with colored linen from Egypt.

¹⁷ I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,
with aloes, and with cinnamon.

¹⁸ Come, let us take our fill of love till
morning.

Let us delight in loving caresses!

¹⁹ For my husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey.

²⁰ He took with him a bag of money
and will not return till the moon is full."

²¹ With her great persuasion she entices
him;

with her flattering lips she lures him.

²² He follows her on impulse,
like an ox going to the slaughter,
like a deer bounding into a trap,

²³ until an arrow pierces his liver,
like a bird darting into a snare—
not knowing it will cost him his life.

²⁴ Now, my sons, listen to me,
and attend to the words of my mouth.

²⁵ Do not let your heart turn aside to her
ways;

do not stray into her paths.

²⁶ For she has brought many down to
death;

her slain are many in number.

²⁷ Her house is the road to Sheol,
descending to the chambers of death.

8

CHAPTER 8 IN 30 SECONDS

Lady Wisdom stands at the crossroads and calls to everyone. She is better than gold. She was there before the mountains, at God's side when He made the world. Whoever finds her finds life.

THE EXCELLENCE OF WISDOM

¹ Does not wisdom call out,
and understanding raise her voice?

² On the heights overlooking the road,
at the crossroads she takes her stand.

³ Beside the gates to the city,
at the entrances she cries out:

⁴ "To you, O men, I call out,
and my cry is to the sons of men.

⁵ O simple ones, learn to be shrewd;
O fools, gain understanding.

⁶ Listen, for I speak of noble things,
and the opening of my lips will reveal
right.

⁷ For my mouth will speak the truth,
and wickedness is detestable to my lips.

⁸ All the words of my mouth are righteous;
none are crooked or perverse.

⁹ They are all plain to the discerning,
and upright to those who find knowl-
edge.

¹⁰ Receive my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than pure gold.

¹¹ For wisdom is more precious than ru-
bies,
and nothing you desire compares with
her.

¹² I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence,
and I find knowledge and discretion.

¹³ To fear Yahweh is to hate evil;
I hate arrogant pride, evil conduct, and
perverse speech.

¹⁴ Counsel and sound judgment are mine;
I have insight and strength.

¹⁵ By me kings reign,
and rulers enact just laws;

¹⁶ By me princes rule,
and all nobles who govern justly.

¹⁷ I love those who love me,

■ **PROV 8:1 [NOTE] WISDOM SPEAKS.** In chapter 8 Wisdom tells her own story. Black letters here; red starts at 8:22, where she speaks of being with God before the world was made.

MESSIANIC FORESHADOW | GOD SPEAKING

and those who seek me early shall find me.

- ¹⁸ With me are riches and honor,
enduring wealth and righteousness.
¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, pure gold,
and my harvest surpasses choice silver.
²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,
²¹ bestowing wealth on those who love me
and making their treasures full.

- ²² Yahweh possessed me at the beginning
of His way,
before His works of old.

- ²³ From everlasting I was established,
from the beginning, before the earth be-
gan.

- ²⁴ When there were no watery depths, I
was brought forth,
when no springs were overflowing with
water.

- ²⁵ Before the mountains were settled,
before the hills, I was brought forth,
²⁶ before He made the land or fields,
or any of the dust of the earth.

- ²⁷ I was there when He established the
heavens,
when He inscribed a circle on the face
of the deep,
²⁸ when He established the clouds above,
when the fountains of the deep gushed
forth,
²⁹ when He set a boundary for the sea,
so that the waters would not surpass
His command,
when He marked out the foundations of
the earth.

■ **PROV 8:22 [MESSIAH SPEAKING]** Red letters here mean Wisdom is read as Christ speaking, the Son who was with the Father before creation, John 1:1 to 3 and Colossians 1:15 to 17. Many church fathers read it that way, like Justin Martyr. No New Testament verse quotes these lines as His words. Many Jewish readers and many scholars see wisdom pictured as a person, and later Jewish writers linked her to God's law, Sirach 24. See the Big Question Lady Wisdom and Jesus.

■ **PROV 8:22 [TEXT] POSSESSED.** The Hebrew word *qanah* usually means got or owned, as it does everywhere else in Proverbs: Get wisdom, 4:5. So this Bible says possessed me, like the KJV. Some Bibles say created me, like the Greek Old Testament, and in the 300s Arius used that line to say Christ was created. Others say brought me forth, to match the birth words in 8:24 to 25. See Lady Wisdom and Jesus.

■ **PROV 8:23 [PROPHECY]** Foreordained from everlasting
→ JN 1:1-3; COL 1:15-17 · MEDIUM p.-

- ³⁰ Then I was a skilled craftsman at His
side,
and His delight day by day,
rejoicing always in His presence.

- ³¹ I was rejoicing in His whole world,
delighting together in the sons of men.

- ³² Now therefore, my sons, listen to me,
for blessed are those who keep my
ways.

- ³³ Listen to instruction and be wise;
do not ignore it.

- ³⁴ Blessed is the man who listens to me,
watching daily at my doors,
waiting at the posts of my doorway.

- ³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life
and obtains the favor of Yahweh.

- ³⁶ But he who fails to find me harms him-
self;
all who hate me love death."

DEBATED | THE BIG QUESTION

LADY WISDOM AND JESUS

Who Is Speaking in Proverbs 8?

PROVERBS 8:22 TO 31 · 3:19 · 1:20 TO 33

THE WORDS

Wisdom says she was there before the mountains, before the earth, beside God when He set the sky in place, rejoicing in His world, 8:22 to 31.

SOUNDS LIKE JESUS

In the beginning was the Word, and through Him all things were made, John 1:1 to 3. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together, Colossians 1:17. Christ is the wisdom of God, 1 Corinthians 1:24.

SHE IS A SHE

In Hebrew the word wisdom is feminine, so wisdom is pictured as a woman. That does not make Jesus a woman; it is how the language works.

WHY THIS BIBLE PRINTS IT RED

These lines are red because so many Christians through the ages have heard Christ in them. No New Testament verse quotes these words as His, so the other views below matter.

■ **PROV 8:30 [NOTE] SKILLED CRAFTSMAN.** The Hebrew word *amon* is rare. It can mean master worker, as here, or little child, playing at His side. Both fit the rejoicing that follows.

NOTABLE

Every View

JOHN 1:1 TO 3 · COLOSSIANS 1:15 TO 17 · 1 CORINTHIANS 1:24 · HEBREWS 1:3

VIEW 1: CHRIST SPEAKING

Many early Christian writers, like Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Origen, read Wisdom here as the Son of God before He came to earth. Irenaeus read Wisdom as the Holy Spirit instead. Many Christians today agree: Proverbs 8 is a preview of John 1.

THE FIGHT WITH ARIUS

In the 300s a priest named Arius used 8:22 in Greek, The Lord created me, to teach that the Son was made, so there was a time when He was not. Athanasius answered that the verse, if it is about Christ, speaks of Him becoming a man, or of His work, not of His beginning. The Nicene Creed of 325 says the Son is begotten, not made.

VIEW 2: A PICTURE, NOT A PERSON

Many scholars say wisdom here is one of God's qualities painted as a person, like a poem. Later the New Testament writers used this wisdom language to describe Jesus, because He is what wisdom always pointed to.

VIEW 3: GOD'S LAW

Many Jewish readers link Wisdom to the Torah, God's teaching. Sirach 24 says it outright, and an old rabbi taught that God looked into the Torah when He made the world.

WHAT ALL SIDES AGREE ON

God made the world with wisdom, 3:19, and wisdom is the way to life, 8:35. Many Christians believe that wisdom has a name: Jesus.

9

CHAPTER 9 IN 30 SECONDS

Two women throw two parties. Wisdom says, Come eat my bread. Folly says, Stolen water is sweet. Her guests are in the grave. Pick your party carefully.

THE WAY OF WISDOM // PROVERBS 1:1-7

¹Wisdom has built her house;
she has carved out her seven pillars.

■ **PROV 9:1 [NOTE]** SEVEN PILLARS. Wisdom's house is big and finished. Seven is the number for complete in the Bible. Some old readers saw the church here.

- ²She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine;
she has also set her table.
- ³She has sent out her maidservants;
she calls out from the heights of the city.
- ⁴"Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"
she says to him who lacks judgment.
- ⁵"Come, eat my bread
and drink the wine I have mixed.
- ⁶Leave your folly behind, and you will live;
walk in the way of understanding."
- ⁷He who corrects a mocker brings shame on himself;
he who rebukes a wicked man taints himself.
- ⁸Do not rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you;
rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.
- ⁹Instruct a wise man, and he will be wiser still;
teach a righteous man, and he will increase his learning.

¹⁰The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

- ¹¹For through wisdom your days will be multiplied,
and years will be added to your life.
- ¹²If you are wise, you are wise to your own advantage;
but if you scoff, you alone will bear the consequences.

THE WAY OF FOLLY

- ¹³The woman named Folly is loud;
she is naive and knows nothing.
- ¹⁴She sits at the door of her house,
on a seat in the heights of the city,
- ¹⁵calling out to those who pass by,
who make their paths straight.
- ¹⁶"Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"
she says to him who lacks judgment.
- ¹⁷"Stolen water is sweet,
and bread eaten in secret is tasty!"
- ¹⁸But they do not know that the dead are there,

■ **PROV 9:10 [NOTABLE]** Real wisdom starts with taking God seriously.

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW **BLOODLINE OF CHRIST**

that her guests are in the depths of
Sheol.

10

CHAPTER 10 IN 30 SECONDS

Now the one liners begin, 375 of Solomon's sayings. A wise son makes Dad happy. Lazy hands make you poor. Love covers over all wrongs. The more you talk, the more you sin, so maybe stop.

SOLOMON'S PROVERBS: THE WISE SON

¹The proverbs of Solomon:

A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish son grief to his mother.

²Ill-gotten treasures profit nothing,
but righteousness brings deliverance
from death.

³Yahweh does not let the righteous go
hungry,
but He denies the craving of the wicked.

⁴Idle hands make one poor,
but diligent hands bring wealth.

⁵He who gathers in summer is a wise son,
but he who sleeps during harvest is a
disgraceful son.

⁶Blessings are on the head of the right-
eous,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals
violence.

⁷The memory of the righteous is a bless-
ing,
but the name of the wicked will rot.

⁸A wise heart will receive command-
ments,
but foolish lips will come to ruin.

⁹He who walks in integrity walks securely,
but he who perverts his ways will be
found out.

¹⁰He who winks the eye causes grief,
and foolish lips will come to ruin.

¹¹The mouth of the righteous is a fountain
of life,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals
violence.

¹²*Hatred stirs up dissension,
but love covers all transgressions.*

¹³Wisdom is found on the lips of the dis-
cerning,
but a rod is for the back of him who
lacks judgment.

¹⁴The wise store up knowledge,
but the mouth of the fool invites de-
struction.

¹⁵The wealth of the rich man is his forti-
fied city,
but poverty is the ruin of the poor.

¹⁶The labor of the righteous leads to life,
but the gain of the wicked brings pun-
ishment.

¹⁷Whoever heeds instruction is on the
path to life,
but he who ignores reproof goes astray.

¹⁸The one who conceals hatred has lying
lips,
and whoever spreads slander is a fool.

¹⁹When words are many, sin is unavoid-
able,
but he who restrains his lips is wise.

²⁰The tongue of the righteous is choice
silver,
but the heart of the wicked has little
worth.

²¹The lips of the righteous feed many,
but fools die for lack of judgment.

²²The blessing of Yahweh enriches,
and He adds no sorrow to it.

²³The fool delights in shameful conduct,
but a man of understanding has wis-
dom.

²⁴What the wicked man dreads will over-
take him,
but the desire of the righteous will be
granted.

²⁵When the whirlwind passes, the wicked
are no more,
but the righteous are secure forever.

■ **PROV 10:1 [NOTE]** 375 SAYINGS. 10:1 to 22:16 has ex-
actly 375 verses. In Hebrew, letters are also numbers,
and the letters of Solomon's name, Shelomoh, add up to
375. Many think that is on purpose.

■ **PROV 10:12 [ALLUDED TO]** The New Testament refers to
this → JAS 5:20 p. -

■ **PROV 10:12 [QUOTED]** Quoted in the New Testament →
1PE 4:8 p. -

■ **PROV 10:12 [NOTE]** QUOTED BY PETER. Love covers a
multitude of sins, 1 Peter 4:8. James 5:20 points to it too.

²⁶ Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
so is the slacker to those who send him.

²⁷ The fear of Yahweh prolongs life,
but the years of the wicked will be cut short.

²⁸ The hope of the righteous is joy,
but the expectations of the wicked will perish.

²⁹ The way of Yahweh is a refuge to the upright,
but destruction awaits those who do evil.

³⁰ The righteous will never be shaken,
but the wicked will not inhabit the land.

³¹ The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
but a perverse tongue will be cut out.

³² The lips of the righteous know what is fitting,
but the mouth of the wicked is perverse.

11

CHAPTER 11 IN 30 SECONDS

Yahweh hates rigged scales. Pride comes, then shame. A pretty woman with no sense is like a gold ring in a pig's snout. The generous get richer, and the stingy get poorer. Go figure.

DISHONEST SCALES // DEUTERONOMY 25:13–16;
EZEKIEL 45:10–12

¹ Dishonest scales are an abomination to Yahweh,
but an accurate weight is His delight.

² When pride comes, disgrace follows,
but with humility comes wisdom.

³ The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the perversity of the faithless destroys them.

⁴ Riches are worthless in the day of wrath,
but righteousness brings deliverance from death.

⁵ The righteousness of the blameless directs their path,

but the wicked fall by their own wickedness.

⁶ The righteousness of the upright delivers them,
but the faithless are trapped by their own desires.

⁷ When the wicked man dies, his hope perishes,
and the hope of his strength vanishes.

⁸ The righteous man is delivered from trouble;
in his place the wicked man goes in.

⁹ With his mouth the ungodly man destroys his neighbor,
but through knowledge the righteous are rescued.

¹⁰ When the righteous thrive, the city rejoices,
and when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.

¹¹ By the blessing of the upright a city is built up,
but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.

¹² Whoever shows contempt for his neighbor lacks judgment,
but a man of understanding remains silent.

¹³ A gossip reveals a secret,
but a trustworthy person keeps a confidence.

¹⁴ For lack of guidance, a nation falls,
but with many counselors comes deliverance.

¹⁵ He who puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer,
but the one who hates indebtedness is secure.

¹⁶ A gracious woman attains honor,
but ruthless men gain only wealth.

¹⁷ A kind man benefits himself,
but a cruel man brings trouble on himself.

¹⁸ The wicked man earns an empty wage,
but he who sows righteousness reaps a true reward.

■ **PROV 11:1 [NOTE] THE SCALES.** Before coins, people paid in silver weighed on a balance against stones from a bag. A cheater kept two sets: a heavy stone for buying and a light one for selling. 16:11, 20:10 and 20:23 say the same. See the pim weight in 1 Samuel, p. –.

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

- ¹⁹ Genuine righteousness leads to life,
but the pursuit of evil brings death.
- ²⁰ The perverse in heart are an abomina-
tion to Yahweh,
but the blameless in their walk are His
delight.
- ²¹ Be assured that the wicked will not go
unpunished,
but the offspring of the righteous will
escape.
- ²² Like a gold ring in a pig's snout
is a beautiful woman who lacks discre-
tion.
- ²³ The desire of the righteous leads only to
good,
but the hope of the wicked brings
wrath.
- ²⁴ One gives freely, yet gains even more;
another withholds what is right, only to
become poor.
- ²⁵ A generous soul will prosper,
and he who refreshes others will himself
be refreshed.
- ²⁶ The people will curse the hoarder of
grain,
but blessing will crown the one who
sells it.
- ²⁷ He who searches out good finds favor,
but evil will come to him who seeks it.
- ²⁸ He who trusts in his riches will fall,
but the righteous will thrive like foliage.
- ²⁹ He who brings trouble on his house 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 he who wins souls is wise.
- ³¹ *If the righteous receive their due on earth,
how much more the ungodly and the sinner!*

12

CHAPTER 12 IN 30 SECONDS

Whoever loves correction loves knowledge, and whoever hates it is stupid. That is the actual word. A good wife is her husband's crown. Careless words stab like a sword, but wise words heal.

LOVING DISCIPLINE AND KNOWLEDGE

- ¹ Whoever loves discipline loves knowl-
edge,
but he who hates correction is stupid.
- ² The good man obtains favor from Yah-
weh,
but Yahweh condemns a man who de-
vises evil.
- ³ A man cannot be established through
wickedness,
but the righteous cannot be uprooted.
- ⁴ A wife of noble character is her
husband's crown,
but she who causes shame is like decay
in his bones.
- ⁵ The plans of the righteous are just,
but the counsel of the wicked leads to
deceit.
- ⁶ The words of the wicked lie in wait for
blood,
but the speech of the upright rescues
them.
- ⁷ The wicked are overthrown and perish,
but the house of the righteous will
stand.
- ⁸ A man is praised according to his wis-
dom,
but a twisted mind is despised.
- ⁹ Better to be lightly esteemed yet have a
servant,
than to be self-important but lack food.
- ¹⁰ A righteous man regards the life of his
animal,
but the tender mercies of the wicked are
only cruelty.
- ¹¹ The one who works his land will have
plenty of food,
but whoever chases fantasies lacks
judgment.

THE HEART

- ¹² The wicked desire the plunder of evil men,
but the root of the righteous flourishes.
- ¹³ An evil man is trapped by his rebellious speech,
but a righteous man escapes from trouble.
- ¹⁴ By fruitful speech a man is filled with good things,
and the work of his hands returns to him.
- ¹⁵ The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
but a wise man listens to counsel.
- ¹⁶ A fool's anger is known at once,
but a prudent man overlooks an insult.
- ¹⁷ He who speaks the truth declares what is right,
but a false witness speaks deceit.
- ¹⁸ Speaking rashly is like a piercing sword,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- ¹⁹ Truthful lips endure forever,
but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.
- ²⁰ Deceit is in the hearts of those who devise evil,
but the counselors of peace have joy.
- ²¹ No harm befalls the righteous,
but the wicked are filled with trouble.
- ²² Lying lips are detestable to Yahweh,
but those who deal faithfully are His delight.
- ²³ A shrewd man keeps his knowledge to himself,
but a foolish heart proclaims its folly.
- ²⁴ The hand of the diligent will rule,
but laziness ends in forced labor.
- ²⁵ Anxiety weighs down the heart of a man,
but a good word cheers it up.
- ²⁶ A righteous man is cautious in friendship,
but the ways of the wicked lead them astray.

- ²⁷ A lazy man does not roast his game,
but a diligent man prizes his possession.
- ²⁸ There is life in the path of righteousness,
but another path leads to death.

13

CHAPTER 13 IN 30 SECONDS

Hope put off makes the heart sick. Walk with the wise and you will become wise; hang out with fools and you will get hurt. Whoever spares the rod hates his son.

A FATHER'S DISCIPLINE

- ¹ A wise son heeds his father's discipline,
but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.
- ² From the fruit of his lips a man enjoys good things,
but the desire of the faithless is violence.
- ³ He who guards his mouth protects his life,
but the one who opens his lips invites his own ruin.
- ⁴ The slacker craves yet has nothing,
but the soul of the diligent is fully satisfied.
- ⁵ The righteous hate falsehood,
but the wicked bring shame and disgrace.
- ⁶ Righteousness guards the man of integrity,
but wickedness undermines the sinner.
- ⁷ One pretends to be rich, but has nothing;
another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.
- ⁸ Riches may ransom a man's life,
but a poor man hears no threat.
- ⁹ The light of the righteous shines brightly,
but the lamp of the wicked is extinguished.
- ¹⁰ Arrogance leads only to strife,
but wisdom is with the well-advised.
- ¹¹ Dishonest wealth will dwindle,
but what is earned through hard work will be multiplied.

PROV 12:25 [HEART] Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.

¹² Hope deferred makes the heart sick,

THE HEART

but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

- ¹³ He who despises instruction will pay the penalty,
but the one who respects a command
will be rewarded.
- ¹⁴ The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
turning one from the snares of death.
- ¹⁵ Good understanding wins favor,
but the way of the faithless is difficult.
- ¹⁶ Every prudent man acts with knowledge,
but a fool displays his folly.
- ¹⁷ A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
but a faithful envoy brings healing.
- ¹⁸ Poverty and shame come to him who ignores discipline,
but whoever heeds correction is honored.
- ¹⁹ Desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul,
but turning from evil is detestable to fools.
- ²⁰ He who walks with the wise will become wise,
but the companion of fools will be destroyed.
- ²¹ Disaster pursues sinners,
but prosperity is the reward of the righteous.
- ²² A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,
but the sinner's wealth is passed to the righteous.
- ²³ Abundant food is in the fallow ground of the poor,
but without justice it is swept away.
- ²⁴ He who spares the rod hates his son,
but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.
- ²⁵ A righteous man eats to his heart's content,
but the stomach of the wicked is empty.

14

CHAPTER 14 IN 30 SECONDS

There is a way that seems right to a man, but it ends in death. Even in laughter the heart can ache. A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

THE WISE WOMAN

- ¹ Every wise woman builds her house,
but a foolish one tears it down with her own hands.
- ² He who walks in uprightness fears Yahweh,
but the one who is devious in his ways despises Him.
- ³ The proud speech of a fool brings a rod to his back,
but the lips of the wise protect them.
- ⁴ Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty,
but an abundant harvest comes through the strength of the ox.
- ⁵ An honest witness does not deceive,
but a dishonest witness pours forth lies.
- ⁶ A mocker seeks wisdom and finds none,
but knowledge comes easily to the discerning.
- ⁷ Stay away from a foolish man;
you will gain no knowledge from his speech.
- ⁸ The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way,
but the folly of fools deceives them.
- ⁹ Fools mock the making of amends,
but goodwill is found among the upright.
- ¹⁰ The heart knows its own bitterness,
and no stranger shares in its joy.
- ¹¹ The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will flourish.
- ¹² There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way of death.
- ¹³ Even in laughter the heart may ache,

■ **PROV 14:12 [NOTE]** SAID TWICE. 16:25 repeats this verse word for word. A few sayings show up twice in Proverbs, like 21:9 and 25:24.

THE HEART NOTABLE

and joy may end in sorrow.

- ¹⁴ The backslider in heart receives the fill of his own ways,
but a good man is rewarded for his ways.
- ¹⁵ The simple man believes every word,
but the prudent man watches his steps.
- ¹⁶ A wise man fears and turns from evil,
but a fool is careless and reckless.
- ¹⁷ A quick-tempered man acts foolishly,
and a devious man is hated.
- ¹⁸ The simple inherit folly,
but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
- ¹⁹ The evil bow before the good,
and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
- ²⁰ The poor man is hated even by his neighbor,
but many are those who love the rich.
- ²¹ He who despises his neighbor sins,
but blessed is he who shows kindness to the poor.
- ²² Do not those who contrive evil go astray?
But those who plan goodness find loving devotion and faithfulness.
- ²³ There is profit in all labor,
but mere talk leads only to poverty.
- ²⁴ The crown of the wise is their wealth,
but the effort of fools is folly.
- ²⁵ A truthful witness saves lives,
but one who utters lies is deceitful.
- ²⁶ He who fears Yahweh is secure in confidence,
and his children shall have a place of refuge.
- ²⁷ The fear of Yahweh is a fountain of life,
turning a man from the snares of death.
- ²⁸ A large population is a king's splendor,
but a lack of subjects is a prince's ruin.
- ²⁹ A patient man has great understanding,
but a quick-tempered man promotes folly.

³⁰ A tranquil heart is life to the body,

but envy rots the bones.

- ³¹ Whoever oppresses the poor taunts their Maker,
but whoever is kind to the needy honors Him.
- ³² The wicked man is thrown down by his own sin,
but the righteous man has a refuge even in death.
- ³³ Wisdom rests in the heart of the discerning;
even among fools she is known.
- ³⁴ Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a disgrace to any people.
- ³⁵ A king delights in a wise servant,
but his anger falls on the shameful.

15

CHAPTER 15 IN 30 SECONDS

A gentle answer turns away anger. A bowl of veggies with love beats a steak dinner with hate. Plans fail without good advice, so ask around.

A GENTLE ANSWER TURNS AWAY WRATH

- ¹ A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- ² The tongue of the wise commends knowledge,
but the mouth of the fool spouts folly.
- ³ The eyes of Yahweh are in every place,
observing the evil and the good.
- ⁴ A soothing tongue is a tree of life,
but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.
- ⁵ A fool rejects his father's discipline,
but whoever heeds correction is prudent.
- ⁶ The house of the righteous has great treasure,
but the income of the wicked is trouble.
- ⁷ The lips of the wise spread knowledge,
but not so the hearts of fools.
- ⁸ The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable to Yahweh,

PROV 14:30 [HEART] A heart at peace gives life to the body.

PROV 15:1 [NOTABLE] How you say it can stop a fight or start one.

THE HEART

- but the prayer of the upright is His delight.
- ⁹ Yahweh detests the way of the wicked, but He loves those who pursue righteousness.
- ¹⁰ Discipline is harsh for him who leaves the path; he who hates correction will die.
- ¹¹ Sheol and Abaddon lie open before Yahweh—
how much more the hearts of men!
- ¹² A mocker does not love to be reproved, nor will he consult the wise.
- ¹³ A joyful heart makes a cheerful countenance,
but sorrow of the heart crushes the spirit.
- ¹⁴ A discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.
- ¹⁵ All the days of the oppressed are bad, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast.
- ¹⁶ Better a little with the fear of Yahweh than great treasure with turmoil.
- ¹⁷ Better a dish of vegetables where there is love than a fattened ox with hatred.
- ¹⁸ A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger calms dispute.
- ¹⁹ The way of the slacker is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.
- ²⁰ A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.
- ²¹ Folly is joy to one who lacks judgment, but a man of understanding walks a straight path.
- ²² Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.
- ²³ A man takes joy in a fitting reply—and how good is a timely word!
- ²⁴ The path of life leads upward for the wise,
that he may avoid going down to Sheol.
- ²⁵ Yahweh tears down the house of the proud,
but He protects the boundaries of the widow.
- ²⁶ Yahweh detests the thoughts of the wicked,
but the words of the pure are pleasant to Him.
- ²⁷ He who is greedy for unjust gain brings trouble on his household,
but he who hates bribes will live.
- ²⁸ The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer,
but the mouth of the wicked blurts out evil.
- ²⁹ Yahweh is far from the wicked,
but He hears the prayer of the righteous.
- ³⁰ The light of the eyes cheers the heart,
and good news nourishes the bones.
- ³¹ He who listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.
- ³² He who ignores discipline despises himself,
but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.
- ³³ The fear of Yahweh is the instruction of wisdom,
and humility comes before honor.

16

CHAPTER 16 IN 30 SECONDS

You make the plans, Yahweh directs the steps. Pride goes before destruction. Commit your work to Yahweh. Even when you roll the dice, He decides how they land.

THE REPLY OF THE TONGUE IS FROM YAHWEH

- ¹ The plans of the heart belong to man,
but the reply of the tongue is from Yahweh.
- ² All a man's ways are pure in his own eyes,

■ PROV 15:11 [HEART] If God can see into the grave, He can surely see into a human heart.
■ PROV 15:13 [HEART] A glad heart makes a cheerful face.

■ PROV 16:1 [HEART] People make plans in their heart, but the answer comes from the Lord.

THE HEART NOTABLE

- but his motives are weighed out by Yahweh.
- 3 Commit your works to Yahweh and your plans will be achieved.**
- 4** Yahweh has made everything for His purpose—
even the wicked for the day of disaster.
- 5 Everyone who is proud in heart is detestable to Yahweh;
be assured that he will not go unpunished.**
- 6** By loving devotion and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for,
and by the fear of Yahweh one turns aside from evil.
- 7** When a man's ways please Yahweh,
He makes even the man's enemies live at peace with him.
- 8** Better a little with righteousness than great gain with injustice.
- 9 A man's heart plans his course,
but Yahweh determines his steps.**
- 10** A divine verdict is on the lips of a king;
his mouth must not betray justice.
- 11** Honest scales and balances are from Yahweh;
all the weights in the bag are His concern.
- 12** Wicked behavior is detestable for kings,
for a throne is established through righteousness.
- 13** Righteous lips are a king's delight,
and he who speaks honestly is beloved.
- 14** The wrath of a king is a messenger of death,
but a wise man will pacify it.
- 15** When a king's face brightens, there is life;
his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.
- 16** How much better to acquire wisdom than gold!

PROV 16:3 [NOTABLE] Hand your plans to God first, and let Him shape them.

PROV 16:5 [HEART] Everyone proud in heart is detestable to the Lord.

PROV 16:9 [HEART] A man plans his way in his heart, but the Lord directs his steps.

- To gain understanding is more desirable than silver.
- 17** The highway of the upright leads away from evil;
he who guards his way protects his life.
- 18 Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall.**
- 19** It is better to be lowly in spirit among the humble
than to divide the spoil with the proud.
- 20** Whoever heeds instruction will find success,
and blessed is he who trusts in Yahweh.
- 21** The wise in heart are called discerning,
and pleasant speech promotes instruction.
- 22** Understanding is a fountain of life to its possessor,
but the discipline of fools is folly.
- 23** The heart of the wise man instructs his mouth
and adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- 24** Pleasant words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
- 25** There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way of death.
- 26** A worker's appetite works for him
because his hunger drives him onward.
- 27** A worthless man digs up evil,
and his speech is like a scorching fire.
- 28** A perverse man spreads dissension,
and a gossip divides close friends.
- 29** A violent man entices his neighbor
and leads him down a path that is not good.
- 30** He who winks his eye devises perversity;
he who purses his lips is bent on evil.
- 31** Gray hair is a crown of glory;
it is attained along the path of righteousness.

PROV 16:18 [NOTABLE] Pride is the step right before the crash.

THE HEART NOTABLE

³² He who is slow to anger is better than a warrior,
and he who controls his temper is
greater than one who captures a
city.

³³ The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from Yahweh.

17

CHAPTER 17 IN 30 SECONDS

A dry crust in peace beats a feast with fighting. A friend loves at all times. A joyful heart is good medicine. Even a fool looks wise if he keeps his mouth shut.

BETTER A DRY MORSEL IN QUIETNESS

¹ Better a dry morsel in quietness
than a house full of feasting with strife.

² A wise servant will rule over a disgrace-
ful son
and share his inheritance as one of the
brothers.

³ A crucible for silver and a furnace for
gold,
but Yahweh is the tester of hearts.

⁴ A wicked man listens to evil lips;
a liar gives ear to a destructive tongue.

⁵ He who mocks the poor insults their
Maker;
whoever gloats over calamity will not go
unpunished.

⁶ Grandchildren are the crown of the aged,
and the glory of a son is his father.

⁷ Eloquent words are unfit for a fool;
how much worse are lying lips to a ruler!

⁸ A bribe is a charm to its giver;
wherever he turns, he succeeds.

⁹ Whoever conceals an offense promotes
love,
but he who brings it up separates
friends.

¹⁰ A rebuke cuts into a man of discernment
deeper than a hundred lashes cut into a
fool.

■ **PROV 16:33 [NOTE] CASTING LOTS.** Like rolling dice or drawing straws. Israel used lots to make decisions, and the apostles did too, Acts 1:26. The point: there is no such thing as luck with God.

■ **PROV 17:3 [HEART]** Fire tests gold and silver. God tests the heart.

¹¹ An evil man seeks only rebellion;
a cruel messenger will be sent against
him.

¹² It is better to meet a bear robbed of her
cubs
than a fool in his folly.

¹³ If anyone returns evil for good,
evil will never leave his house.

¹⁴ To start a quarrel is to release a flood;
so abandon the dispute before it breaks
out.

¹⁵ Acquitting the guilty and condemning
the righteous—
both are detestable to Yahweh.

¹⁶ Why should the fool have money in his
hand
with no intention of buying wisdom?

¹⁷ A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity.

¹⁸ A man lacking judgment strikes hands in
pledge
and puts up security for his neighbor.

¹⁹ He who loves transgression loves strife;
he who builds his gate high invites de-
struction.

²⁰ The one with a perverse heart finds no
good,
and he whose tongue is deceitful falls
into trouble.

²¹ A man fathers a fool to his own grief;
the father of a fool has no joy.

²² A joyful heart is good medicine,
but a broken spirit dries up the bones.

²³ A wicked man takes a covert bribe
to subvert the course of justice.

²⁴ Wisdom is the focus of the discerning,
but the eyes of a fool wander to the
ends of the earth.

²⁵ A foolish son brings grief to his father
and bitterness to her who bore him.

²⁶ It is surely not good to punish the inno-
cent
or to flog a noble for his honesty.

■ **PROV 17:17 [NOTABLE]** Real friends show up when life is hard.

■ **PROV 17:22 [HEART]** A joyful heart is good medicine.

THE HEART NOTABLE

- 27 A man of knowledge restrains his words,
and a man of understanding maintains a calm spirit.
- 28 Even a fool is considered wise if he keeps silent,
and discerning when he holds his tongue.

18

CHAPTER 18 IN 30 SECONDS

The name of Yahweh is a strong tower. Death and life are in the power of the tongue. He who finds a wife finds a good thing. And there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

THE SELFISHNESS OF THE UNFRIENDLY

- 1 He who isolates himself pursues selfish desires;
he rebels against all sound judgment.
- 2 A fool does not delight in understanding,
but only in airing his opinions.
- 3 With a wicked man comes contempt as well,
and shame is accompanied by disgrace.
- 4 The words of a man's mouth are deep waters;
the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.
- 5 Showing partiality to the wicked is not good,
nor is depriving the innocent of justice.
- 6 A fool's lips bring him strife,
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 gossip are like choice morsels
that go down into the inmost being.
- 9 Whoever is slothful in his work
is brother to him who destroys.
- 10 The name of Yahweh is a strong tower;
the righteous run to it and are safe.
- 11 A rich man's wealth is his fortified city;
it is like a high wall in his imagination.
- 12 Before his downfall a man's heart is proud,
but humility comes before honor.
- 13 He who answers a matter before he hears it—
this is folly and disgrace to him.
- 14 The spirit of a man can endure his sickness,
but who can survive a broken spirit?
- 15 The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge,
and the ear of the wise seeks it out.
- 16 A man's gift opens doors for him,
and brings him before great men.
- 17 The first to state his case seems right
until another comes and cross-examines him.
- 18 Casting the lot ends quarrels
and separates strong opponents.
- 19 An offended brother is harder to win
than a fortified city,
and disputes are like the bars of a castle.
- 20 From the fruit of his mouth a man's belly is filled;
with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied.
- 21 Life and death are in the power of the tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.
- 22 He who finds a wife finds a good thing
and obtains favor from Yahweh.
- 23 The poor man pleads for mercy,
but the rich man answers harshly.
- 24 A man of many companions may come to ruin,
but there is a friend who stays closer
than a brother.

■ PROV 18:10 [NOTABLE] When trouble comes, run to God first.

■ PROV 18:12 [HEART] Before destruction the heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.

■ PROV 18:21 [NOTABLE] Your words can build people up or tear them down. Choose them well.

■ PROV 18:22 [NOTE] A GOOD THING. The Greek Old Testament adds a line here about sending away a good wife. It is not in the Hebrew.

THE HEART

19

CHAPTER 19 IN 30 SECONDS

Better poor and honest than rich and crooked. A man's foolishness ruins his life, and then he is mad at Yahweh. A nagging wife is like a dripping faucet. Many plans are in your heart, but God's plan wins.

THE MAN OF INTEGRITY

- 1 Better a poor man who walks with integrity than a fool whose lips are perverse.
- 2 Even zeal is no good without knowledge, and he who hurries his footsteps misses the mark.
- 3 A man's own folly subverts his way, yet his heart rages against Yahweh.
- 4 Wealth attracts many friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend.
- 5 A false witness will not go unpunished, and one who utters lies will not escape.
- 6 Many seek the favor of the prince, and everyone is a friend of the gift giver.
- 7 All the brothers of a poor man hate him—how much more do his friends avoid him!
He may pursue them with pleading, but they are nowhere to be found.
- 8 He who acquires wisdom loves himself; one who safeguards understanding will find success.
- 9 A false witness will not go unpunished, and one who pours out lies will perish.
- 10 Luxury is unseemly for a fool—how much worse for a slave to rule over princes!
- 11 A man's insight gives him patience, and his virtue is to overlook an offense.
- 12 A king's rage is like the roar of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass.
- 13 A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.
- 14 Houses and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from Yahweh.
- 15 Laziness brings on deep sleep, and an idle soul will suffer hunger.
- 16 He who keeps a commandment preserves his soul, but he who is careless in his ways will die.
- 17 Kindness to the poor is a loan to Yahweh, and He will repay the lender.
- 18 Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be party to his death.
- 19 A man of great anger must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do so again.
- 20 Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.
- 21 Many plans are in a man's heart, but the purpose of Yahweh will prevail.
- 22 The desire of a man is loving devotion; better to be poor than a liar.
- 23 The fear of Yahweh leads to life, that one may rest content, without visitation from harm.
- 24 The slacker buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth.
- 25 Strike a mocker, and the simple will beware; rebuke the discerning man, and he will gain knowledge.
- 26 He who assaults his father or evicts his mother is a son who brings shame and disgrace.
- 27 If you cease to hear instruction, my son, you will stray from the words of knowledge.
- 28 A corrupt witness mocks justice, and a wicked mouth swallows iniquity.
- 29 Judgments are prepared for mockers, and beatings for the backs of fools.

■ PROV 19:21 [HEART] There are many plans in a man's heart, but the Lord's purpose will stand.

THE HEART

20

CHAPTER 20 IN 30 SECONDS

Wine is a mocker and beer is a brawler. The lazy man does not plow in the fall, then wonders why there is no harvest. Rigged weights make God sick. Do not say, I will get even.

WINE IS A MOCKER

- ¹Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler,
and whoever is led astray by them is not wise.
- ²The terror of a king is like the roar of a lion;
whoever provokes him forfeits his own life.
- ³It is honorable for a man to resolve a dispute,
but any fool will quarrel.
- ⁴The slacker does not plow in season;
at harvest time he looks, but nothing is there.
- ⁵The intentions of a man's heart are deep waters,
but a man of understanding draws them out.
- ⁶Many a man proclaims his loving devotion,
but who can find a trustworthy man?
- ⁷The righteous man walks with integrity;
blessed are his children after him.
- ⁸A king who sits on a throne to judge
sifts out all evil with his eyes.
- ⁹Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure;
I am cleansed from my sin"?
- ¹⁰Differing weights and unequal measures—
both are detestable to Yahweh.
- ¹¹Even a young man is known by his actions—
whether his conduct is pure and upright.
- ¹²Ears that hear and eyes that see—
Yahweh has made them both.
- ¹³Do not love sleep, or you will grow poor;
open your eyes, and you will have plenty of food.
- ¹⁴"Worthless, worthless!" says the buyer,
but on the way out, he gloats.
- ¹⁵There is an abundance of gold and rubies,
but lips of knowledge are a rare treasure.
- ¹⁶Take the garment of the one who posts security for a stranger;
get collateral if it is for a foreigner.
- ¹⁷Food gained by fraud is sweet to a man,
but later his mouth is full of gravel.
- ¹⁸Set plans by consultation,
and wage war under sound guidance.
- ¹⁹He who reveals secrets is a constant gossip;
avoid the one who babbles with his lips.
- ²⁰Whoever curses his father or mother,
his lamp will be extinguished in deepest darkness.
- ²¹An inheritance gained quickly
will not be blessed in the end.
- ²²Do not say, "I will avenge this evil!"
Wait on Yahweh, and He will save you.
- ²³Unequal weights are detestable to Yahweh,
and dishonest scales are no good.
- ²⁴A man's steps are from Yahweh,
so how can anyone understand his own way?
- ²⁵It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly,
only later to reconsider his vows.
- ²⁶A wise king separates out the wicked
and drives the threshing wheel over them.
- ²⁷The spirit of a man is the lamp of Yahweh,
searching out his inmost being.
- ²⁸Loving devotion and faithfulness preserve a king;
by these he maintains his throne.

■ PROV 20:1 [NOTE] WINE. Proverbs does not ban wine, 3:10 and 9:5, but it warns again and again about drunkenness, 23:29 to 35.

■ PROV 20:5 [HEART] The purposes of a heart are like deep water. A wise person draws them out.

THE HEART

- ²⁹ The glory of young men is their strength,
and gray hair is the splendor of the old.
- ³⁰ Lashes and wounds scour evil,
and beatings cleanse the inmost parts.

21

CHAPTER 21 IN 30 SECONDS

The king's heart is like a stream in Yahweh's hand. Doing right matters more to God than sacrifice. Better to live in the corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

THE KING'S HEART // PSALM 21:1–13

- ¹ The king's heart is a waterway in the hand of Yahweh;
He directs it where He pleases.
- ² All a man's ways seem right to him,
but Yahweh weighs the heart.
- ³ To do righteousness and justice
is more desirable to Yahweh than sacrifice.
- ⁴ Haughty eyes and a proud heart—
the guides of the wicked—are sin.
- ⁵ The plans of the diligent bring plenty,
as surely as haste leads to poverty.
- ⁶ Making a fortune by a lying tongue
is a vanishing mist, a deadly pursuit.
- ⁷ The violence of the wicked will sweep
them away
because they refuse to do what is just.
- ⁸ The way of a guilty man is crooked,
but the conduct of the innocent is up-
right.
- ⁹ Better to live on a corner of the roof
than to share a house with a quarrel-
some wife.
- ¹⁰ The soul of the wicked man craves evil;
his neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.
- ¹¹ When a mocker is punished, the simple
gain wisdom;
and when a wise man is instructed, he
acquires knowledge.
- ¹² The Righteous One considers the house
of the wicked
and brings the wicked to ruin.
- ¹³ Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the
poor,
he too shall cry out and receive no an-
swer.
- ¹⁴ A gift in secret soothes anger,
and a covert bribe pacifies great wrath.
- ¹⁵ Justice executed is a joy to the right-
eous,
but a terror to the workers of iniquity.
- ¹⁶ The man who strays from the path of
understanding
will rest in the assembly of the dead.
- ¹⁷ He who loves pleasure will become
poor;
the one who loves wine and oil will
never be rich.
- ¹⁸ The wicked become a ransom for the
righteous,
and the faithless for the upright.
- ¹⁹ Better to live in the desert
than with a contentious and ill-tempered
wife.
- ²⁰ Precious treasures and oil are in the
dwelling of the wise,
but a foolish man consumes them.
- ²¹ He who pursues righteousness and lov-
ing devotion
finds life, righteousness, and honor.
- ²² A wise man scales the city of the mighty
and pulls down the stronghold in which
they trust.
- ²³ He who guards his mouth and tongue
keeps his soul from distress.
- ²⁴ Mocker is the name of the proud and ar-
rogant man—
of him who acts with excessive pride.
- ²⁵ The craving of the slacker kills him
because his hands refuse to work.
- ²⁶ All day long he covets more,
but the righteous give without restraint.
- ²⁷ The sacrifice of the wicked is
detestable—
how much more so when brought with ill
intent!
- ²⁸ A lying witness will perish,

NOTABLE

but the man who listens to truth will speak forever.

²⁹ A wicked man hardens his face,
but the upright man makes his way sure.

³⁰ There is no wisdom, no understanding,
no counsel
that can prevail against Yahweh.

³¹ A horse is prepared for the day of battle,
but victory is of Yahweh.

22

CHAPTER 22 IN 30 SECONDS

A good name beats great riches. Train up a child in the way he should go. The borrower is a slave to the lender. Then a new section starts: thirty sayings of the wise.

A GOOD NAME

¹ A good name is more desirable than great riches;
favor is better than silver and gold.

² The rich and the poor have this in common:
Yahweh is Maker of them all.

³ The prudent see danger and take cover,
but the simple keep going and suffer the consequences.

⁴ The rewards of humility and the fear of Yahweh
are wealth and honor and life.

⁵ Thorns and snares lie on the path of the perverse;
he who guards his soul stays far from them.

⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not depart from it.

⁷ The rich rule over the poor,
and the borrower is slave to the lender.

⁸ He who sows injustice will reap disaster,
and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.

⁹ A generous man will be blessed,
for he shares his bread with the poor.

■ **PROV 22:6 [NOTABLE]** What you teach kids early shapes their whole life. See Are Proverbs Promises?

■ **PROV 22:6 [NOTE] TRAIN UP.** The Hebrew can also mean dedicate. In the way he should go may mean the right way, or the way that fits who the child is. See the Big Question Are Proverbs Promises?

DEBATED THE BIG QUESTION

ARE PROVERBS PROMISES?

Train Up a Child

PROVERBS 22:6 · 10:4 · 10:27 · 3:9 TO 10 · 26:4 TO 5

THE VERSE

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, 22:6. Many godly parents have kids who walked away from God. Did God break a promise?

HOW PROVERBS WORKS

A proverb is a short saying about how life usually goes. Lazy hands make you poor, 10:4. The fear of Yahweh adds years to life, 10:27. Both are true as a rule, but some hard workers are poor and some godly people die young.

THE BOOK ITSELF SHOWS IT

26:4 says do not answer a fool, and 26:5 says do. They cannot both be promises for every case. They are wisdom for different moments.

Every View

ECCLESIASTES 9:11 · JOB 42:7 · EZEKIEL 18:20 · 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

VIEW 1: A GENERAL RULE

Most Bible teachers say proverbs are true in general, not guarantees. Good training usually lasts a lifetime, but every child still makes his own choices, Ezekiel 18:20. Job's friends got in trouble for turning a rule into a promise, Job 42:7.

VIEW 2: A PROMISE WITH A CATCH

Some read 22:6 as a real promise from God that may be kept late in life. When he is old he will come back, even after years away. Many parents hold on to it in prayer.

VIEW 3: HIS OWN WAY

Some say the Hebrew means train him in his own way. Shape the training to the child, or else, as a warning: let a kid have his own way and he will never change.

WHAT ALL SIDES AGREE ON

Every word of God is true, 30:5, and Proverbs is good for teaching, 2 Timothy 3:16. Training a child matters, and parents can pray and trust God with what they cannot control.

ARCHAEOLOGY

- ¹⁰ Drive out the mocker, and conflict will depart;
even quarreling and insults will cease.
- ¹¹ He who loves a pure heart and gracious lips
will have the king for a friend.
- ¹² Yahweh's eyes keep watch over knowledge,
but He frustrates the words of the faithless.
- ¹³ The slacker says, "There is a lion outside!
I will be slain in the streets!"
- ¹⁴ The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit;
he who is under the wrath of Yahweh
will fall into it.
- ¹⁵ Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child,
but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.
- ¹⁶ Oppressing the poor to enrich oneself or
giving gifts to the rich
will surely lead to poverty.

THIRTY SAYINGS OF THE WISE

SAYING 1

¹⁷ Incline your ear and hear the words of
the wise—

apply your mind to my knowledge—

- ¹⁸ for it is pleasing when you keep them
within you
and they are constantly on your lips.
- ¹⁹ So that your trust may be in Yahweh,
I instruct you today—yes, you.
- ²⁰ Have I not written for you thirty sayings
about counsel and knowledge,
- ²¹ to show you true and reliable words,
that you may soundly answer those who
sent you?

■ **PROV 22:17 [ARCHAEOLOGY]** An Egyptian book of wisdom in thirty chapters, about 1300 to 1100 BC, has many lines like Proverbs 22:17 to 24:22; see The Instruction of Amenemope Field Notes page → FIELD NOTES p.31

■ **PROV 22:17 [NOTE] THE WORDS OF THE WISE.** A new part of the book begins here and runs to 24:22. It sounds a lot like an Egyptian book of wisdom.

■ **PROV 22:20 [TEXT] THIRTY SAYINGS.** The Hebrew is hard to read here. The letters as written can mean before now. The Jewish reading tradition says excellent things, like the KJV, and the Greek says three times. Many Bibles today read thirty, because this part can be counted as thirty sayings, and an Egyptian book of wisdom has thirty chapters. See The Instruction of Amenemope.

SAYING 2

- ²² Do not rob a poor man because he is poor,
and do not crush the afflicted at the gate,

²³ for Yahweh will take up their case
and will plunder those who rob them.

SAYING 3

- ²⁴ Do not make friends with an angry man,
and do not associate with a hot-tempered man,

²⁵ or you may learn his ways
and entangle yourself in a snare.

SAYING 4

- ²⁶ Do not be one who gives pledges,
who puts up security for debts.

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

SAYING 5

- ²⁸ Do not move an ancient boundary stone
which your fathers have placed.

SAYING 6

- ²⁹ Do you see a man skilled in his work?
He will be stationed in the presence of kings;
he will not stand before obscure men.

23

CHAPTER 23 IN 30 SECONDS

At a fancy dinner with the boss, put a knife to your throat if you are a big eater. Riches sprout wings and fly away. Do not stare at the wine when it sparkles; it bites like a snake.

TRUE RICHES // 1 TIMOTHY 6:17–19; JAMES 5:1–6

SAYING 7

- ¹ When you sit down to dine with a ruler,
consider carefully what is set before you,

² and put a knife to your throat
if you possess a great appetite.

³ Do not crave his delicacies,
for that food is deceptive.

SAYING 8

- ⁴ Do not wear yourself out to get rich;

■ **PROV 22:28 [NOTE] BOUNDARY STONES.** Stones marked the edge of a family's land. Moving one at night was stealing land, Deuteronomy 19:14. 23:10 says it again.

THE HEART

be wise enough to restrain yourself.

- ⁵ When you glance at wealth, it disappears,
for it makes wings for itself
and flies like an eagle to the sky.

SAYING 9

- ⁶ Do not eat the bread of a stingy man,
and do not crave his delicacies;

⁷ for as he thinks within himself,
so is he.

"Eat and drink," he says to you,
but his heart is not with you.

- ⁸ You will vomit up what little you have
eaten
and waste your pleasant words.

SAYING 10

- ⁹ Do not speak to a fool,
for he will despise the wisdom of your
words.

SAYING 11

- ¹⁰ Do not move an ancient boundary stone
or encroach on the fields of the father-
less,

¹¹ for their Redeemer is strong;
He will take up their case against you.

SAYING 12

- ¹² Apply your heart to instruction
and your ears to words of knowledge.

SAYING 13

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

- ¹⁴ Strike him with a rod,
and you will deliver his soul from Sheol.

SAYING 14

- ¹⁵ My son, if your heart is wise,
my own heart will indeed rejoice.
¹⁶ My inmost being will rejoice
when your lips speak what is right.

■ **PROV 23:7 [HEART]** A stingy man says eat and drink, but his heart is not with you. Words and heart can say two different things.

■ **PROV 23:7 [TEXT]** AS HE THINKS. This line follows the well known KJV, As he thinketh in his heart, so is he. The Hebrew word here is *nephesh*, soul or throat, not heart, and many Bibles today read it about a stingy host who is counting the cost of every bite. Either way, the next words say it plainly: his heart is not with you.

■ **PROV 23:13 [NOTE]** AHIQAR SAID IT TOO. An old Aramaic story has almost the same saying: if you strike a boy with a rod, he will not die. See The Ahiqar Papyrus in 2 Peter, p. 2, and the Big Question Spare the Rod?

DEBATED THE BIG QUESTION

SPARE THE ROD?

What Proverbs Says

PROVERBS 13:24 · 22:15 · 23:13 TO 14 · 29:15 · 3:11 TO 12

THE VERSES

He who spares the rod hates his son, 13:24. Strike him with a rod and you will save his soul from the grave, 23:13 to 14. The rod and correction give wisdom, 29:15. The saying Spare the rod and spoil the child is not in the Bible. It was made famous by an English poem, Hudibras, printed in 1663 and 1664.

WHAT THE ROD WAS

A shepherd's stick or a teacher's switch. In Bible times a father, or a teacher, used it to correct a child, and also used it on grown fools, 10:13 and 26:3.

THE HEART OF IT

Proverbs says discipline is love: Yahweh disciplines the one He loves, like a father, 3:11 to 12. A parent who never corrects is not being kind.

Every View

HEBREWS 12:5 TO 11 · EPHESIANS 6:4 · COLOSSIANS 3:21

VIEW 1: SPANKING IS BIBLICAL

Many Christians say these verses teach that careful, loving spanking of young children is good, never in anger and never to harm. They point to 22:15 and say God's word does not change.

VIEW 2: THE ROD MEANS DISCIPLINE

Many other Christians say the rod is a picture of correction in general. In their day it meant a stick; today it means firm rules, consequences and teaching. They point out that Proverbs also uses the rod on adults.

VIEW 3: TIMES HAVE CHANGED

Some say the Bible gives the goal, a child who learns wisdom, while the method fit an ancient world. They point to the New Testament: Fathers, do not provoke your children, Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS TODAY

Laws on spanking differ from place to place. Hitting that leaves injuries is abuse in every view, and the Bible never allows a parent to harm a child.

WHAT ALL SIDES AGREE ON

Parents must correct their children, with love and self control, never in rage, 29:22. The goal is a child who learns wisdom, not a child who is afraid.

SAYING 15

- ¹⁷ Do not let your heart envy sinners,
but always continue in the fear of Yah-
weh.
¹⁸ For surely there is a future,
and your hope will not be cut off.

SAYING 16

- ¹⁹ Listen, my son, and be wise,
and guide your heart on the right
course.
²⁰ Do not join those who drink too much
wine
or gorge themselves on meat.
²¹ For the drunkard and the glutton will
come to poverty,
and drowsiness will clothe them in rags.

SAYING 17

- ²² Listen to your father who gave you life,
and do not despise your mother when
she is old.
²³ Invest in truth and never sell it—
in wisdom and instruction and under-
standing.
²⁴ The father of a righteous man will
greatly rejoice,
and he who fathers a wise son will de-
light in him.
²⁵ May your father and mother be glad,
and may she who gave you birth rejoice!

SAYING 18

- ²⁶ My son, give me your heart,
and let your eyes delight in my ways.
²⁷ For a prostitute is a deep pit,
and an adulteress is a narrow well.
²⁸ Like a robber she lies in wait
and multiplies the faithless among men.

SAYING 19

- ²⁹ Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions? Who has com-
plaints?
Who has needless wounds? Who has
bloodshot eyes?
³⁰ Those who linger over wine,

who go to taste mixed drinks.

- ³¹ Do not gaze at wine while it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup
and goes down smoothly.
³² In the end it bites like a snake
and stings like a viper.
³³ Your eyes will see strange things,
and your mind will utter perversities.
³⁴ You will be like one sleeping on the high
seas
or lying on the top of a mast:
³⁵ "They struck me, but I feel no pain!
They beat me, but I did not know it!
When can I wake up
to search for another drink?"

24

CHAPTER 24 IN 30 SECONDS

Do not envy evil people. By wisdom a house is built. If you faint when things get hard, your strength is small. A little sleep, a little slumber, and poverty sneaks up like a robber.

DO NOT ENVY**SAYING 20**

- ¹ Do not envy wicked men
or desire their company;
² for their hearts devise violence,
and their lips declare trouble.

SAYING 21

- ³ By wisdom a house is built
and by understanding it is established;
⁴ through knowledge its rooms are filled
with every precious and beautiful trea-
sure.

SAYING 22

- ⁵ A wise man is strong,
and a man of knowledge enhances his
strength.
⁶ Only with sound guidance should you
wage war,
and victory lies in a multitude of coun-
selors.

SAYING 23

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

SAYING 24

- ⁸ He who plots evil

THE HEART OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW BLOODLINE OF CHRIST

will be called a schemer.

- ⁹ A foolish scheme is sin,
and a mocker is detestable to men.

SAYING 25

- ¹⁰ If you faint in the day of distress,
how small is your strength!
¹¹ Rescue those being led away to death,
and restrain those stumbling toward the
slaughter.

¹² If you say, "Behold, we did not know about
this,"
does not He who weighs hearts consider it?
Does not the One who guards your life know?
Will He not repay a man according to his
deeds?

SAYING 26

- ¹³ Eat honey, my son, for it is good,
and the honeycomb is sweet to your
taste.
¹⁴ Know therefore that wisdom is sweet to
your soul.
If you find it, there is a future for you,
and your hope will never be cut off.

SAYING 27

- ¹⁵ Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, near
the dwelling of the righteous;
do not destroy his resting place.
¹⁶ For though a righteous man may fall
seven times, he still gets up;
but the wicked stumble in bad times.

SAYING 28

- ¹⁷ Do not gloat when your enemy falls,
and do not let your heart rejoice when
he stumbles,
¹⁸ or Yahweh will see and disapprove,
and turn His wrath away from him.

SAYING 29

- ¹⁹ Do not fret over evildoers,
and do not be envious of the wicked.
²⁰ For the evil man has no future;
the lamp of the wicked will be extin-
guished.

SAYING 30

- ²¹ My son, fear Yahweh and the king,
and do not associate with the rebellious.
²² For they will bring sudden destruction.

■ PROV 24:12 [HEART] You cannot say you did not know.
The One who weighs the heart knows the truth.

■ PROV 24:12 [QUOTED] Quoted in the New Testament →
ROM 2:6 p.-

Who knows what ruin they can bring?

FURTHER SAYINGS OF THE WISE

- ²³ These also are sayings of the wise:
To show partiality in judgment
is not good.
²⁴ Whoever tells the guilty, "You are inno-
cent"—
peoples will curse him, and nations will
denounce him;
²⁵ but it will go well with those who convict
the guilty,
and rich blessing will come upon them.
²⁶ An honest answer given
is like a kiss on the lips.
²⁷ Complete your outdoor work and pre-
pare your field;
after that, you may build your house.
²⁸ Do not testify 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 repay the man according to his
work."
³⁰ I went past the field of a slacker
and by the vineyard of a man lacking
judgment.
³¹ Thorns had grown up everywhere,
thistles had covered the ground,
and the stone wall was broken down.
³² I observed and took it to heart;
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 need like a bandit.

25

CHAPTER 25 IN 30 SECONDS

Hezekiah's men copied more of Solomon's say-
ings. Do not grab the best seat at the party. Good
news from far away is like cold water to a thirsty
soul. If your enemy is hungry, feed him.

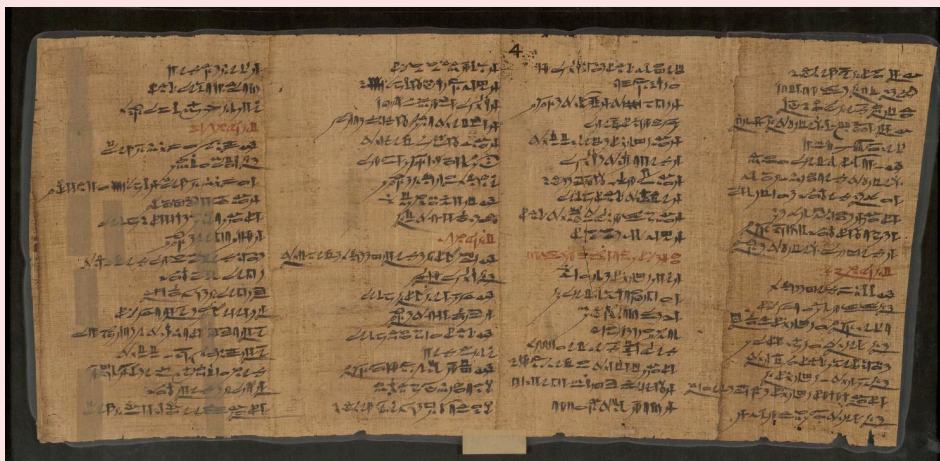
MORE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

- ¹ These are additional proverbs of
Solomon, which were copied by the men
of Hezekiah king of Judah:

DEBATED FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: HIGH FOR THE PAPYRUS · DEBATED: WHO BORROWED FROM WHOM

THE INSTRUCTION OF AMENEMOPE

PROVERBS 22:17 TO 24:22



A page of the Instruction of Amenemope on papyrus, from Thebes, Egypt. British Museum, London, EA 10474. Public domain.

WHAT IT IS

An Egyptian book of wisdom. A father named Amenemope, son of Kanakht, teaches his son how to live a quiet, honest life. It is split into thirty short chapters.

HOW OLD IT IS

Most scholars think it was written about 1300 to 1100 BC. The British Museum papyrus was copied much later, about 600 to 500 BC. Bits of it are also on writing boards, a piece of pottery and other scraps.

WHERE AND WHEN FOUND

The papyrus came from Thebes in Egypt, and the British Museum bought it through Wallis Budge in 1888. Budge published it in 1922 and 1923. In 1924 the German scholar Adolf Erman showed how much it sounds like Proverbs.

LINEs THAT SOUND LIKE PROVERBS

Give your ears, hear the sayings, Amenemope begins; compare 22:17. Do not move the markers on the borders of fields; compare 22:28. Riches make themselves wings like geese and fly to the sky; compare 23:5. Look to these thirty chapters; compare thirty sayings in 22:20.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT

Amenemope serves the Egyptian gods.

Proverbs puts every saying under Yahweh: I teach you today so that your trust may be in Yahweh, 22:19. Proverbs leaves out the Egyptian gods and adds its own sayings.

WHO BORROWED?

Most scholars think the wise men of Israel knew Amenemope and reworked some of it for God's people. A few have argued the Egyptian book borrowed from a Hebrew source. Others think both used older sayings that everyone knew.

WHY A BIBLE WRITER MIGHT BORROW

Solomon's court traded with Egypt and he married Pharaoh's daughter, 1 Kings 3:1. His wisdom was greater than all the wisdom of Egypt, 1 Kings 4:30. Many Christians say all truth is God's truth, and an inspired writer can take a true saying and set it under the fear of Yahweh.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

It does not show that Proverbs is only Egyptian wisdom. It shows that Proverbs was written in a real world, and that God's people answered the wisdom around them by putting Yahweh at the center.

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

- ² It is the glory of God to conceal a matter
and the glory of kings to search it out.
- ³ As the heavens are high and the earth is
deep,
so the hearts of kings cannot be
searched.
- ⁴ Remove the dross from the silver,
and a vessel for a silversmith will come
forth.
- ⁵ Remove the wicked from the king's pres-
ence,
and his throne will be established in
righteousness.
- ⁶ Do not exalt yourself in the presence of
the king,
and do not stand in the place of great
men;
- ⁷ for it is better to be told, "Come up here!"
than to be demoted in the presence of
the prince.
- Even what you have seen with your own
eyes,
⁸ do not bring hastily to court.
Otherwise, what will you do in the end
when your neighbor puts you to shame?
- ⁹ Argue your case with your neighbor
without betraying another's confidence,
¹⁰ lest he who hears you bring shame upon
you,
and your infamy never go away.
- ¹¹ A word fitly spoken
is like apples of gold in settings of silver.
- ¹² Like an earring of gold or an ornament
of fine gold
is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.
- ¹³ Like the cold of snow in the time of har-
vest
is a trustworthy messenger to those
who send him;
he refreshes the soul of his masters.
- ¹⁴ Like clouds and wind without rain
is the man who boasts of gifts never
given.

■ **PROV 25:1 [NOTE] THE MEN OF HEZEKIAH.** King Hezekiah ruled Judah about 715 to 686 BC, more than 200 years after Solomon. His scribes copied these sayings from older collections. A clay seal mark with Hezekiah's name was found in Jerusalem in 2015. See Hezekiah's Seal in 2 Kings, p.~.

■ **PROV 25:14 [ALLUDED TO]** The New Testament refers to this → JUDE 1:12 p.~.

- ¹⁵ Through patience a ruler can be per-
suaded,
and a gentle tongue can break a bone.
- ¹⁶ If you find honey, eat just what you
need,
lest you have too much and vomit it up.
- ¹⁷ Seldom set foot in your neighbor's
house,
lest he grow weary and hate you.
- ¹⁸ Like a club or sword or sharp arrow
is a man who bears false witness
against his neighbor.
- ¹⁹ Like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint
is confidence in a faithless man in time
of trouble.
- ²⁰ Like one who removes a garment on a
cold day
or vinegar poured on a wound
is one who sings songs to a heavy
heart.
- ²¹ *If your enemy is hungry, give him food to
eat,
and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.*
- ²² *For in so doing, you will heap burning coals
on his head,
and Yahweh will reward you.*
- ²³ As the north wind brings forth rain,
so a backbiting tongue brings angry
looks.
- ²⁴ Better to live on a corner of the roof
than to share a house with a quarrel-
some wife.
- ²⁵ Like cold water to a weary soul
is good news from a distant land.
- ²⁶ Like a muddied spring or a polluted well
is a righteous man who gives way to the
wicked.
- ²⁷ It is not good to eat too much honey
or to search out one's own glory.
- ²⁸ Like a city whose walls are broken down

■ **PROV 25:21 [QUOTED]** Quoted in the New Testament → ROM 12:20 p.~.

■ **PROV 25:21 [NOTE] QUOTED BY PAUL.** Romans 12:20 quotes these lines and adds, Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Jesus said, Love your enemies, Matthew 5:44.

■ **PROV 25:22 [NOTE] BURNING COALS.** Your kindness makes him feel the heat of shame, and it may turn him around. Some think of an old Egyptian rite where a sorry man carried coals on his head.

THE HEART DEMONIC OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

is a man who does not control his temper.

26

CHAPTER 26 IN 30 SECONDS

Fools, lazy people and gossips get roasted. A fool repeats his folly like a dog going back to its vomit. The lazy man says, There is a lion in the street! Sure there is.

SIMILITUDES AND INSTRUCTIONS

- ¹ Like snow in summer and rain at harvest, honor does not befit a fool.
- ² Like a fluttering sparrow or darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.
- ³ A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the backs of fools!
- ⁴ Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be like him.
- ⁵ Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he become wise in his own eyes.
- ⁶ Like cutting off one's own feet or drinking violence is the sending of a message by the hand of a fool.
- ⁷ Like lame legs hanging limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
- ⁸ Like binding a stone into a sling is the giving of honor to a fool.
- ⁹ Like a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
- ¹⁰ Like an archer who wounds at random is he who hires a fool or passerby.
- ¹¹ *As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.*
- ¹² Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?

■ **PROV 26:2 [DEMONIC]** An undeserved curse does not come to rest

■ **PROV 26:4 [NOTE]** ANSWER HIM OR NOT? 26:4 says do not answer a fool, and 26:5 says do. They sit side by side on purpose. Wisdom knows when to argue and when to walk away. Old rabbis even asked if Proverbs should be put away because of these verses. They decided one is about arguing over God's law and the other about everyday things, so both are true.

■ **PROV 26:11 [QUOTED]** Quoted in the New Testament → 2PE 2:22 p.~

■ **PROV 26:11 [NOTE]** QUOTED BY PETER. 2 Peter 2:22 quotes the dog and adds a washed pig from another old saying. See The Ahikar Papyrus in 2 Peter, p.~.

There is more hope for a fool than for him.

- ¹³ The slacker says, "A lion is in the road! A fierce lion roams the public square!"
- ¹⁴ As a door turns on its hinges, so the slacker turns on his bed.
- ¹⁵ The slacker buries his hand in the dish; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.
- ¹⁶ The slacker is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly.
- ¹⁷ Like one who grabs a dog by the ears is a passerby who meddles in a quarrel not his own.
- ¹⁸ Like a madman shooting firebrands and deadly arrows,
- ¹⁹ so is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!"
- ²⁰ Without wood, a fire goes out; without gossip, a conflict ceases.
- ²¹ Like charcoal for embers and wood for fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.
- ²² The words of a gossip are like choice morsels that go down into the inmost being.
- ²³ Like glaze covering an earthen vessel are burning lips and a wicked heart. ²⁴ A hateful man disguises himself with his speech, but he lays up deceit in his heart.
- ²⁵ When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart.
- ²⁶ Though his hatred is concealed by deception, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.
- ²⁷ He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.
- ²⁸ A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth causes ruin.

■ **PROV 26:23 [HEART]** Smooth lips with an evil heart are like cheap glaze on clay.

THE HEART [NOTABLE]

27

CHAPTER 27 IN 30 SECONDS

Do not brag about tomorrow. Wounds from a friend can be trusted. As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. Know the condition of your flocks, because riches do not last forever.

DO NOT BOAST ABOUT TOMORROW // JAMES 4:13-17

- 1 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 a burden,
but aggravation from a fool outweighs them both.
- 4 Wrath is cruel and anger is like a flood,
but who can withstand jealousy?
- 5 Better an open rebuke
than love that is concealed.
- 6 The wounds of a friend are faithful,
but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.
- 7 The soul that is full loathes honey,
but to a hungry soul, any bitter thing is sweet.
- 8 Like a bird that strays from its nest
is a man who wanders from his home.
- 9 Oil and incense bring joy to the heart,
and the counsel of a friend is sweetness to the soul.
- 10 Do not forsake your friend or your father's friend,
and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity;
better a neighbor nearby
than a brother far away.
- 11 Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart,
so that I can answer him who taunts me.
- 12 The prudent see danger and take cover,
but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.
- 13 Take the garment of him who posts security for a stranger;

get collateral if it is for a foreigner.

- 14 If one blesses his neighbor with a loud voice early in the morning,
it will be counted to him as a curse.
- 15 A constant dripping on a rainy day
and a contentious woman are alike—
- 16 restraining her is like holding back the wind
or grasping oil with one's right hand.
- 17 **As iron sharpens iron,
so one man sharpens another.**
- 18 Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit,
and he who looks after his master will be honored.
- 19 **As water reflects the face,
so the heart reflects the true man.**
- 20 Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied;
so the eyes of man are never satisfied.
- 21 A crucible for silver and a furnace for gold,
but a man is tested by the praise accorded him.
- 22 Though you grind a fool like grain with mortar and a pestle,
yet his folly will not depart from him.
- 23 Be sure to know the state of your flocks,
and pay close attention to your herds;
- 24 for riches are not forever,
nor does a crown endure to every generation.
- 25 When hay is removed and new growth appears
and the grass from the hills is gathered,
26 the lambs will provide you with clothing,
and the goats with the price of a field.
- 27 You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed you—
food for your household
and nourishment for your maidservants.

■ **PROV 27:17 [NOTABLE]** Good friends make each other better, even when it causes a few sparks.

■ **PROV 27:19 [HEART]** Water reflects your face. Your heart reflects who you really are.

THE HEART

28

CHAPTER 28 IN 30 SECONDS

The wicked run when no one is chasing them, but the righteous are bold as a lion. Whoever hides his sins will not prosper; whoever confesses them finds mercy.

THE BOLDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

- ¹ The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.
- ² A land in rebellion has many rulers, but a man of understanding and knowledge maintains order.
- ³ A destitute leader who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no food.
- ⁴ Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law resist them.
- ⁵ Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek Yahweh comprehend fully.
- ⁶ Better a poor man who walks with integrity than a rich man whose ways are perverse.
- ⁷ A discerning son keeps the law, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.
- ⁸ He who increases his wealth by interest and usury lays it up for one who is kind to the poor.
- ⁹ Whoever turns his ear away from hearing the law, even his prayer is detestable.
- ¹⁰ He who leads the upright along the path of evil will fall into his own pit, but the blameless will inherit what is good.
- ¹¹ A rich man is wise in his own eyes, but a poor man with discernment sees through him.
- ¹² When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, but when the wicked rise, men hide themselves.
- ¹³ He who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy.
- ¹⁴ Blessed is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.
- ¹⁵ Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a helpless people.
- ¹⁶ A leader who lacks judgment is also a great oppressor, but he who hates dishonest profit will prolong his days.
- ¹⁷ A man burdened by bloodguilt will flee into the Pit; let no one support him.
- ¹⁸ He who walks with integrity will be kept safe, but whoever is perverse in his ways will suddenly fall.
- ¹⁹ The one who works his land will have plenty of food, but whoever chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty.
- ²⁰ A faithful man will abound with blessings, but one eager to be rich will not go unpunished.
- ²¹ To show partiality is not good, yet a man will do wrong for a piece of bread.
- ²² A stingy man hastens after wealth and does not know that poverty awaits him.
- ²³ He who rebukes a man will later find more favor than one who flatters with his tongue.
- ²⁴ He who robs his father or mother, saying, "It is not wrong," is a companion to the man who destroys.
- ²⁵ A greedy man stirs up strife, but he who trusts in Yahweh will prosper.

■ PROV 28:14 [HEART] Whoever hardens his heart falls into trouble.

THE HEART

26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,
but one who walks in wisdom will be
safe.

27 Whoever gives to the poor will not be in
need,
but he who hides his eyes will receive
many curses.

28 When the wicked come to power, people
hide themselves;
but when they perish, the righteous
flourish.

29

CHAPTER 29 IN 30 SECONDS

A man who keeps refusing correction will break suddenly. Where there is no vision, the people run wild. The fear of man is a trap, but whoever trusts Yahweh is safe.

THE FLOURISHING OF THE RIGHTEOUS

1 A man who remains stiff-necked after
much reproof
will suddenly be shattered beyond recovery.

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

3 A man who loves wisdom brings joy to
his father,
but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.

4 By justice a king brings stability to the
land,
but a man who exacts tribute demolishes it.

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

6 An evil man is caught by his own sin,
but a righteous one sings and rejoices.

7 The righteous consider the cause of the
poor,
but the wicked have no regard for such
concerns.

8 Mockers inflame a city,
but the wise turn away anger.

9 If a wise man goes to court with a fool,
there will be raving and laughing with no
resolution.

10 Men of bloodshed hate a blameless
man,
but the upright care for his life.

11 A fool vents all his anger,
but a wise man holds it back.

12 If a ruler listens to lies,
all his officials will be wicked.

13 The poor man and the oppressor have
this in common:
Yahweh gives light to the eyes of both.

14 A king who judges the poor with
fairness—
his throne will be established forever.

15 A rod of correction imparts wisdom,
but a child left to himself disgraces his
mother.

16 When the wicked thrive, rebellion in-
creases;
but the righteous will see their downfall.

17 Discipline your son, and he will give you
rest;
he will bring delight to your soul.

18 Where there is no vision, the people
cast off restraint;
but blessed is he who keeps the Law.

19 A servant cannot be corrected by words
alone;
though he understands, he will not re-
spond.

20 Do you see a man who speaks in haste?
There is more hope for a fool than for
him.

21 A servant pampered from his youth
will bring grief in the end.

22 An angry man stirs up dissension,
and a hot-tempered man abounds in
transgression.

23 A man's pride will bring him low,
but a humble spirit will obtain honor.

24 A partner to a thief hates his own soul;

■ PROV 28:26 [HEART] He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.

■ PROV 28:26 [TEXT] HIS OWN HEART. The Hebrew says libbo, his heart, so this Bible says his own heart, like the KJV and NASB. Many Bibles read himself or his own mind.

MESSIANIC FORESHADOW

he receives the oath but does not testify.

²⁵ The fear of man is a snare,
but whoever trusts in Yahweh is set securely on high.

²⁶ Many seek the ruler's favor,
but a man receives justice from Yahweh.

²⁷ An unjust man is detestable to the righteous,
and one whose way is upright is detestable to the wicked.

30

CHAPTER 30 IN 30 SECONDS

A man named Agur says, I am the dumbest guy around. Who went up to heaven and came back? What is His Son's name? Then he counts things: three things, no, four, that never get enough, that amaze him, that shake the earth.

THE WORDS OF AGUR

¹ These are the words of Agur son of Jakeh—the burden that this man declared to Ithiel:

"I am weary, O God,
and worn out.

² Surely I am the most ignorant of men,
and I lack the understanding of a man.

³ I have not learned wisdom,
and I have no knowledge of the Holy One.

⁴ Who has ascended to heaven and come down?

Who has gathered the wind in His hands?

Who has bound up the waters in His cloak?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is His name, and what is the name of His Son—
surely you know!

■ **PROV 30:1 [NOTE] AGUR.** Nothing is known about Agur, Jakeh or Ithiel outside this chapter. The Hebrew of 30:1 is hard; some read Ithiel as I am weary, O God, as this Bible does in the next line. The burden can also be read as of Massa, a tribe in Arabia, Genesis 25:14.

■ **PROV 30:4 [PROPHECY]** Who went up to heaven and came down, and what is the name of His Son → JN 3:13 • MEDIUM p. 7

■ **PROV 30:4 [NOTE] WHAT IS HIS SON'S NAME?** Agur asks who made the world, and what is the name of His Son. Jesus said no one has gone up to heaven except the One who came down, the Son of Man, John 3:13.

⁵ Every word of God is flawless;
He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

⁶ Do not add to His words,
lest He rebuke you and prove you a liar.

⁷ Two things I ask of You—
do not refuse me before I die:

⁸ Keep falsehood and deceitful words far from me.
Give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the bread that is my portion.

⁹ Otherwise, I may have too much
and deny You, saying, 'Who is Yahweh?'
Or I may become poor and steal,
profaning the name of my God.

¹⁰ Do not slander a servant to his master,
or he will curse you, and you will bear the guilt.

¹¹ There is a generation of those who
curse their fathers
and do not bless their mothers.

¹² There is a generation of those who are
pure in their own eyes
and yet unwashed of their filth.

¹³ There is a generation—how haughty are
their eyes
and pretentious are their glances—

¹⁴ there is a generation whose teeth are
swords
and whose jaws are knives,
devouring the oppressed from the earth
and the needy from among men.

¹⁵ The leech has two daughters:
Give and Give.

There are three things that are never satisfied, four that never say, 'Enough!':

¹⁶ Sheol,
the barren womb,
land never satisfied with water,
and fire that never says, 'Enough!'

¹⁷ As for the eye that mocks a father
and scorns obedience to a mother,

Many Jewish readers think the son is Israel, God's son, Exodus 4:22.

■ **PROV 30:5 [NOTE] EVERY WORD.** This line echoes Psalm 18:30, and 30:6 echoes Deuteronomy 4:2: do not add to His words.

■ **PROV 30:15 [NOTE] THREE THINGS, NO, FOUR.** Agur counts things that never get enough, that amaze him, that shake the earth, and that are small but wise. Same style as 6:16.

NOTABLE

may the ravens of the valley pluck it out
and young vultures devour it.

¹⁸ There are three things too wonderful for
me, four that I cannot understand:

¹⁹ the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship at sea,
and the way of a man with a maiden.

²⁰ This is the way of an adulteress:
She eats and wipes her mouth
and says, 'I have done nothing wrong.'

²¹ Under three things the earth trembles,
under four it cannot bear up:

²² a servant who becomes king,
a fool who is filled with food,
²³ an unloved woman who marries,
and a maidservant who supplants her
mistress.

²⁴ Four things on earth are small, yet they
are exceedingly wise:

²⁵ The ants are creatures of little strength,
yet they store up their food in the summer;

²⁶ the rock badgers are creatures of little
power, yet they make their homes in
the rocks;

²⁷ the locusts have no king, yet they all advance
in formation;

²⁸ and the lizard can be caught in one's
hands, yet it is found in the palaces of
kings.

²⁹ There are three things that are stately in
their stride, and four that are impressive in
their walk:

³⁰ a lion, mighty among beasts, refusing to
retreat before anything;

³¹ a strutting rooster;
a he-goat;
and a king with his army around him.

³² If you have foolishly exalted yourself
or if you have plotted evil,
put your hand over your mouth.

³³ For as the churning of milk yields butter,
and the twisting of the nose draws
blood,
so the stirring of anger brings forth
strife."

31

CHAPTER 31 IN 30 SECONDS

King Lemuel's mom says: no wild women, no heavy drinking, and speak up for the poor. Then an A to Z poem about a wife of noble character who laughs at the future.

THE SAYINGS FOR KING LEMUEL

¹ These are the words of King Lemuel—the
burden that his mother taught him:

² What shall I say, O my son?

What, O son of my womb?

What, O son of my vows?

³ Do not spend your strength on women
or your vigor on those who ruin kings.

⁴ It is not for kings, O Lemuel,
it is not for kings to drink wine,
or for rulers to crave strong drink,

⁵ lest they drink and forget what is decreed,
depriving all the oppressed of justice.

⁶ Give strong drink to one who is perishing,
and wine to the bitter in soul.

⁷ Let him drink and forget his poverty,
and remember his misery no more.

⁸ Open your mouth for those with no
voice,
for the cause of all the dispossessed.

⁹ Open your mouth, judge righteously,
and defend the cause of the poor and
needy.

THE VIRTUES OF A NOBLE WOMAN

¹⁰ A wife of noble character, who can find?
She is far more precious than rubies.

¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he lacks nothing of value.

¹² She brings him good and not harm
all the days of her life.

¹³ She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.

■ **PROV 31:1 [NOTE]** KING LEMUEL. No king named Lemuel is known from history. Some old Jewish writers said Lemuel was a pet name for Solomon, and his mother Bathsheba, but that is a guess.

■ **PROV 31:10 [NOTABLE]** The whole A to Z poem is a picture of a strong, wise, godly woman. What matters most is that she fears Yahweh, 31:30.

■ **PROV 31:10 [NOTE]** A TO Z. 31:10 to 31 is a poem with 22 verses. Each verse starts with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet, from aleph to tav. See the Big Question The Proverbs 31 Woman.

NOTABLE

- 14 She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.
- 15 She rises while it is still night
to provide food for her household
and portions for her maidservants.
- 16 She appraises a field and buys it;
from her earnings she plants a vineyard.
- 17 She girds herself with strength
and shows that her arms are strong.
- 18 She sees that her gain is good,
and her lamp is not extinguished at
night.
- 19 She stretches out her hands to the
distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
- 20 She opens her arms to the poor
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
- 21 When it snows, she has no fear for her
household,
for they are all clothed in scarlet.
- 22 She makes coverings for her bed;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- 23 Her husband is known at the city gates,
where he sits among the elders of the
land.
- 24 She makes linen garments and sells
them;
she delivers sashes to the merchants.
- 25 Strength and honor are her clothing,
and she can laugh at the days to come.
- 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
- 27 She watches over the affairs of her
household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- 28 Her children rise up and call her
blessed;
her husband praises her as well:
- 29 "Many daughters have done noble
things,
but you surpass them all!"
- 30 Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleet-
ing,
but a woman who fears Yahweh is to be
praised.
- 31 Give her the fruit of her hands,

and let her works praise her at the
gates.

THE BIG QUESTION

THE PROVERBS 31 WOMAN

A Wife of Noble Character

PROVERBS 31:10 TO 31 · 1:20 · 9:1 · 12:4 · 18:22

THE POEM

Twenty two verses, A to Z in Hebrew, about a woman who is worth more than rubies. She gets up early, buys a field, plants a vineyard, runs a business, helps the poor and is not afraid of the future.

STRONG, NOT SWEET

Noble character translates the Hebrew chayil, a word for warriors and mighty men. The poem uses battle words: she gets up early and girds herself with strength, 31:17.

WHO TAUGHT IT

The poem comes right after King Lemuel's mother teaches her son. Many think it is part of her advice: Son, look for a woman like this.

Every View

RUTH 3:11 · 1 PETER 3:3 TO 4 · TITUS 2:3 TO 5

VIEW 1: A REAL KIND OF WOMAN

Many read it as a picture of a godly wife and mother, to admire and to look for. Ruth is called a woman of noble character, Ruth 3:11, and comes next in many Hebrew Bibles.

VIEW 2: LADY WISDOM AT HOME

Many scholars say she is Lady Wisdom from chapters 1 to 9, now living in a home. Wisdom built her house, 9:1, and every wise woman builds her house, 14:1. This woman runs hers well. The poem shows what wisdom looks like in real life, for men and women.

VIEW 3: NOT A CHECKLIST

Many women have felt crushed by her. Many teachers say the poem praises a lifetime of faithfulness, not one perfect day.

A JEWISH CUSTOM

In many Jewish homes, the husband sings this poem, Eshet Chayil, to his wife on Friday night at the Sabbath meal.

WHAT ALL SIDES AGREE ON

Beauty fades, but a woman who fears Yahweh is to be praised, 31:30.

■ PROV 31:30 [NOTE] THE LAST WORD. The book that started with the fear of Yahweh, 1:7, ends with a woman who fears Yahweh.