

# Proverbs

by Zac Poonen

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*The book of Proverbs teaches us how to live a wise and godly life on earth, contrasting wise and foolish children, laziness and hard work, and emphasizing the importance of trusting in the Lord and keeping our heart with all diligence.*

**Duration:** 56:55

**Topics:** "Proverbs"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being wise and disciplined in various aspects of life. He warns against engaging in immoral relationships and encourages young people to be cautious in their friendships with the opposite sex. The speaker shares his own experience of how God has directed his steps throughout his 41 years as a believer. He urges listeners to acknowledge God in all areas of their lives, honor Him with their resources, and seek wisdom above all else. The sermon also highlights the significance of sharing the gospel and loving one's enemies, as well as practical advice on marriage and avoiding laziness.

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## Transcript

Let's turn today to the book of Proverbs. Psalms and Proverbs go together. And generally speaking, we could say that if the Psalms refer to our worship of God, our expression of dependence upon God, asking for His help, our devotional life with God, Proverbs deals with the other half of our life, our daily walk in this world.

The two must go together. We must not be so heavenly-minded that we are of no earthly use or so earthly-minded that we are of no use to God. A devotional life with God, a walk with God, a life of praise and worship and prayer and faith must lead to a practical life that manifests the character and the nature of Christ here on this earth.

And the book of Proverbs is primarily dealing with that. And there's a lot of instruction here for young people and for our daily working life, for home situations. Let me share with you what I discovered many years ago when I studied this book.

I found there were a number of subjects that the book of Proverbs dealt with. And I just want to give you a brief overview of the type of subjects that the book of Proverbs deals with. It deals with the subjects of wise and foolish children, laziness and hard work, the use of the tongue, wealth and poverty, telling lies

and speaking the truth, being talkative and being subdued in our speech, slandering, justice and injustice, pride and humility, good women and bad women, covetousness and contentment, anger and self-control, gloominess and cheerfulness, good company and bad company, the education and discipline of children, the fear of the Lord, men's good opinion that they have about themselves, warnings against temptations, how to treat servants, bribery, reproof and correction, friendships, sensual pleasures, drunkenness, flattery, money not acquired in righteous ways, revenge, and many more subjects like that.

But if you were paying attention, as I was saying, as you were listening, you'd see that all these have got to do with daily life on this earth. And that's what the book of Proverbs deals with. And that's why it's very good for us when we are young to be taken up with this book.

It says here in Proverbs chapter 1, we could say the first nine chapters are primarily directed to young people. It says, verse 4, to give wisdom to the simple, to the young man, knowledge and discretion and discernment. A wise person can also listen to this and he will increase, verse 5, in wisdom.

And the first thing he has to say is, verse 7, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. And as someone has said, there are two types of fear that we can have of God. One is a wrong type of fear and the other is a right type of fear.

One is the fear that God may hurt me. The other is the fear that I may hurt God. And these are completely different.

False religions major on this first type of fear, the fear that God may hurt me in some way. And so we have to appease Him, make Him happy. But the type of fear the Bible speaks about is the fear that I may hurt God by the way I live.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, it says. It's a reverence for God that is spoken of here, a reverence for His Word. And the book of Proverbs begins with that.

All wisdom, all knowledge begins there. True wisdom is to have a reverence for God, not to play the fool. I find even believers sometimes crack jokes about God and spiritual things in an irreverent way.

I believe humor is a gift of God, but we must never make God and divine serious things the subject of jokes. We must never make hell the subject of jokes because it's too awesome a reality to joke about for a person to burn eternally in hell. A person who's got a reverence for God will never joke about these things which are so serious, just like you would not joke about a man dying of cancer.

And this is worse. Reverence for God is something which is lacking in the world today. And if you want to become spiritual, begin here.

The knowledge, the understanding that the Proverbs speaks about is the knowledge of God, not the knowledge of the Bible, but the knowledge of God. There's a lot of difference between knowing the Bible and knowing God. Wisdom comes from reverence for God and knowing Him.

The more we know Him, the more we reverence Him, the more we reverence Him, the more we get to know Him. Speaking here to a young man, My son, verse 8, hear the instruction of your father and forsake not the law of your mother. And one of the first things he says in verse 10 is be careful about the type of company you keep.

Very, very important. Young people, if sinners entice you, don't listen to them. Don't allow other people to drag you along their worldly ways.

Stand alone for the Lord if necessary. I believe that's one of the first things that young people need to learn, to say no. I'm sorry, I'm not coming with you.

If you can learn that lesson, you may offend some of your friends. It may not be for such terrible things as spoken of in those verses, but the principle is the same. And in verse 23 of chapter 1, he says, I will pour out my spirit on you and I will make known my words unto you.

When we studied Genesis chapter 1, we saw there the combination of the Holy Spirit and the word of God. And here we see the same combination that produces wisdom. If you merely study the word, you don't get wisdom.

God has to pour out his spirit upon us so that these words become living. We are enlightened. I've often thought that a person who studies the Bible without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit is like a man trying to read a book in a room where there's no light and it's all dark.

How much can you read? How much will you understand? To study the Bible without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit is like reading a book in the dark. You strain your eyes and you may get something. But as soon as the lights are switched on, you can see everything.

And that's what happens when the spirit is poured out, I will make known or I will reveal my words to you. This is how wisdom comes. And he says if you neglect it, there's a warning, verse 24 to 33 of chapter 1, that if you neglect it, one day you will get into trouble and then you will call to me and ask me for help and you may not find it.

That means it's wisdom speaking, that you won't find wisdom late in life if you have neglected it in your earlier years. And so, he says in verse 2, seek for wisdom, seek it, chapter 2, verse 4, as you seek for silver and as for hidden treasures. If you really want to understand what the fear of the Lord is and the knowledge of God, these are the two things that keep coming up.

The reverence for God and knowing God personally. If you want to know that, you must seek it with all your heart, like you would seek for gold somewhere. Supposing you knew there was some gold buried in your compound, how you would dig for it till you find it? It's there.

It says seek for God like that and the Lord will give you wisdom. And that wisdom will preserve you. Verse 12, it will deliver you from the way of the evil man.

And verse 16, it will deliver you from the strange woman. It will deliver you from men who try to deceive you and from women who try to attract you and lead you astray. We need protection from both these.

In chapter 3, we find these verses. Verse 5 and 6. The book of Proverbs has got many, many proverbs and it's impossible to go through all of them. I want to highlight some of the important ones.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. Here is a promise for guidance.

God will direct your paths. That's a promise. But attached to that promise is a condition.

If you fulfill these conditions, God says I will fulfill my promise. Now you cannot expect God to fulfill His promise if you don't fulfill the conditions. And if you fulfill the conditions, you can be absolutely certain that God will fulfill His promise.

What are the conditions? First of all, trust in the Lord with all your heart. There is a great importance placed on faith in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Confidence in God.

Put your trust in God. He will not let you down. Secondly, don't lean on your own cleverness.

Your cleverness, your intelligence will lead you astray. This is a contrast. What is the biggest enemy of faith? According to verse 5. Do you know what it is? The biggest enemy of faith according to Proverbs 3, 5 is your own reason.

You can live by your reason or you can live by faith. If you live by faith, He will direct your paths. If you live by reason, He will go astray.

There is nothing wrong with reason. But reason has to be like a wife in a home. A wife is a very useful person in a home.

But if she takes over the headship of the home, then there is chaos. Like in the case of Adam and Eve, when Eve took over. Or in the case of Jezebel, in the case of the home of the elder in Thyatira, Revelation chapter 2. So, the Holy Spirit and our reason are both needed.

But reason must be like the wife, subject to the Holy Spirit. When you live by reason, the wife has taken over the home. There is going to be chaos in your life.

That is the meaning here. We don't have to get rid of our reason. I use my reason all the time to study the Word, but I depend on the Holy Spirit to enlighten my reason.

So, trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean upon your own understanding, because your understanding can lead you astray. In all your ways, acknowledge Him. And He will direct your paths.

It is very important when you study the Scriptures that you use your reason, but don't lean on it. Keep it in its proper place. It is a servant.

And depend on the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, your entire Bible study, no matter how many years you spend studying the Bible, will be academic, dry, because it is only the Holy Spirit that can make it living. In all your ways, acknowledge Him.

That means that what God reveals to you, do it in your life. In every area of your life that you have light on, obey the Lord. And what is the promise? In all your paths, He will direct you.

You can listen to me as someone who is a little older than almost everyone here. You know, it is a wonderful thing to come to the age I am right now and to look back over life, over 41 years of being a believer, and to see how God, step by step, I never knew what was going to be the next step, step by step, has directed my paths. And I wish you would have the joy, many years from now, of looking back over your life with joy that God directed your footsteps.

You can have that. At the end of your life, you can look back over a life in which God directed your footsteps, step by step. And if you want that, follow these principles.

Decide that in everything in your life, you are going to acknowledge Him. You are not going to do anything that displeases Him. Honor the Lord with your substance, verse 9. Don't despise, verse 11, His correction.

When the Lord disciplines you, accept it. Don't despise it. Correction is very necessary for spiritual growth.

Seek for wisdom because, verse 15, she is more precious than rubies. Chapter 4. Chapter 4, verse 12, is a very beautiful verse. I want to paraphrase that verse, which is the literal meaning of how it is in the Hebrew.

When you go, your steps will not be made narrow. That means your steps will open up. The opposite of being made narrow is made broad.

And the literal meaning of that verse is, as you go, step by step, the way will open up before you. It won't be narrow. It's a beautiful promise.

For many, many years, I have rejoiced in that translation. As you go, step by step, the way will open up before you. You don't need to know.

You don't need to see 10 steps ahead. It's like these automatic doors that we don't see so many of these in India. They're very common in western countries, in airports and supermarkets.

As you come near it, automatically the door opens. But it won't open till you come near it. As you go, step by step, the way will open up before you.

And then you go a little further, there's another automatic door. It opens only when you reach there. God leads us like that.

So it doesn't matter if a door is closed way up there, when you get there, if that is God's will for you, it will open. I have set before you an open door, says the Lord, and no man can shut it. Another verse, wonderful verse, is verse 18.

The path of the righteous is like the shining light, like the light of dawn when the sun rises that shines more and more and more and more until that perfect noon day position. If you are walking along the path of a righteous man, your life will become brighter and brighter and brighter. You'll get more and more light on God's word, more and more light on your own self and the sin that dwells in your flesh.

More and more light on God's nature, more and more light and wisdom in how to live in practical situations on earth. More and more light of the life of Jesus transforming your character. This is God's perfect will.

And if you determine that you are going to walk the path of the righteous, your life will not be up and down just like the sun does not go up and down in the sky. It starts at sunrise and goes steadily up to noon day position. Your life will also, from the time you are born again, will proceed steadily up to the time when Christ comes again, when you will be like Him.

That is God's will for you. But it's very rare to find people who live like this. Even though that's God's will for every one of His children.

That teaches that most of Christendom lives at a substandard level. And that is why I often say don't let your life sink to the level of the Christians and the believers around you. Keep your eyes fixed on the Lord.

See how Jesus walked. See how the apostles walked. Make them your example.

And not many you see today, even many Christian leaders today, are not good examples. Look at the scriptures. Look at Jesus, the ideal example.

Look at Paul who said, follow me as I follow Christ. These are some of the good examples to follow. And if you keep your eyes on them, your path can be like this.

Verse 23 Keep your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life. Everything that comes out of your life flows from your heart. Keep that very very very carefully.

It's the most important part of your life. And verse 25, let your eyes look straight in front of you. This is talking about temptation with your eyes.

There are so many things along the streets that tempt us. And here is a warning to young people. Be careful where your eyes look.

You see something and you're tempted. Look back. The first look was only temptation.

The second look is sin. We can't avoid being tempted. But when you are tempted, keep your eyes straight in front.

And you won't have the regrets that so many believers have in life because they have messed up their life, messed up God's plan for them because they did not control their eyes. In chapter 5, it says to married people to be satisfied with your wife. Don't long for other people's wives.

It says drink waters, verse 15, out of your own well. Not from somebody else's well. There's nothing wrong in a husband and wife being satisfied with each other.

God gives a man a wife to enjoy fellowship with as a companion and together they can walk hand in hand serving God. Treat it like your own well. Don't go drawing waters from other people's wells.

Chapter 6 is speaking about God's word. Verse 21, if you bind God's word upon your heart, listen to this wonderful promise. Verse 22, when you go it will lead you.

When you sleep it will keep you. And when you wake up it will talk with you. Wonderful.

It takes care of every part of my life. As I go through the day, it leads me. When I go to bed at night, it keeps me.

If you're not able to sleep properly at night, if you're restless, could be something wrong in your conscience. And when you wake up, let God's word talk to you. That's the way we're supposed to live.

One verse prior to that, in verses 6 to 10 of chapter 6, it comes more than once. Go to the ant, you lazy man. Consider her ways and be wise.

Because that ant provides its food in the summer, gathers its food in the harvest. In other words, the ant has got forethought for the future. It says in the winter, there won't be enough food available.

That small little ant. How big do you think is the size of a brain in an ant? And it's got enough sense in that wee tiny brain to think, I must lay up for the future. And here is where scripture says, we must learn to be

prepared for the future.

It's speaking about being wise and handling money so that we don't waste all our money, so that we have nothing in a time of emergency in the future. I've seen many believers like that, who say, I trust God. And then later on, when some emergency comes, they don't have any money, then they have to go borrowing and begging from other believers who have been wise.

Don't be like that. Be wise, be disciplined to save. Be disciplined in you know, remember that, for example, when you get married and have children, you won't have enough time to study the word.

Study it now, store it up now so that later on you have enough to live on. Chapter 7 deals with a very foolish man who goes into to a prostitute or to a very loose type of woman. And it's a warning there for young people to be careful in friendships and associations with the opposite sex.

One step will lead to another. You've got to be very careful when you've got to sense whether a woman is flirtatious and if she is, pull back because you can ruin your whole life and the ministry God has for you. Read it sometime.

Proverbs chapter 7, especially young men. Chapter 8 is speaking about wisdom calling out to people, saying come and listen to me. Verse 34 chapter 8. Blessed is the man who hears me watching daily at my gates.

This is wisdom speaking. Watch daily and listen. Listen to what God has to say to you every morning.

It can protect you during the day. Wisdom is pictured like a lady. Verse chapter 9, verse 1 who builds a house and the house has got seven pillars.

I don't have time to show you. If you go down to James chapter 3, verse 17, it speaks about those seven pillars. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable and easy to be untreated and without partiality and without hypocrisy.

All those seven pillars are listed there in James 3, 17. The characteristics of divine wisdom. It's not just a question of knowledge, it's character.

So those are the first nine chapters with a lot of warning to young men to seek for wisdom, to obey their parents, to avoid bad company, to be kind. Watch your heart, be sexually pure, be financially wise and work hard. Now we come to chapter 10.

From chapter 10 to verse 22, there's a lot of one sentence instructions designed to make us godly and there's a contrast here between foolish people and godly people and of course it's impossible to take time to read all of them but every single one of them is very very good. There's a lot of repetition because repetition is necessary but I'll just take a few verses from here. Take verse 12 for example in chapter 10.

Love covers all sins. It's what Peter quotes in his epistle. If you really love a person, you will cover his weaknesses and not expose them.

Whenever you expose somebody's weakness, you can be absolutely sure that you don't have love for that person. You're not godly then. If you want to be wise, let me give you one bit of advice, my dear brothers and sisters.

One bit of advice in your youth. If you know some bad story about somebody else, let it die with you. Don't go around speaking about it.

God will honor you for it. Especially if it's a bad story about one of God's children. He will really love you for it.

You know, think of a father whose child has done something wrong and I know something about it and I never tell anybody about what his son did. Don't you think that father will love me so much? It's like that. God sees one of his children did something stupid.

You know about it and you don't tell anyone. His father, God, will love you for it. Cover the sins of people.

Verse 22. The blessing of the Lord makes rich and there is no sorrow with it. Or some translations say toiling does not increase it.

It's the blessing of the Lord that makes rich. That means it will give us enough for our daily needs on earth. The blessing of the Lord.

Seek for the blessing of the Lord upon your life. The mouth verse 31. The mouth of the righteous person brings forth wisdom.

You know whether you are righteous or not by the way you speak. Your mouth will bring forth wisdom. Chapter 11 Verse 3 is a wonderful verse which says the integrity of the upright man will guide him.

If you are a person of integrity and honesty that will guide you all through life. God first of all looks for integrity. Honesty.

Verse 30 Verse 24 There is a person who gives and yet he increases. And there is another one who is stingy and he becomes poor. A miser when he gets converted becomes generous.

If you are still a miser and you are stingy you probably have not allowed God to work in your heart. The liberal soul verse 25 will be made fat and he who waters others will be watered also himself. If you want God to water you and keep you fresh.

You know what watering means? If you don't water a plant it dries up. What is the great problem we find with so many Christians? They are not fresh. Why are they not fresh? Because God is not watering them.

Why is God not watering them? Because they are not watering other people. Do you want to be fresh? Do you want God to water you every day? Water other people. Let your mind begin to think about the needs of other people.

See how you can bless them and you will find God blesses you. Chapter 12 verse 23 A wise man conceals knowledge or is reluctant to display his knowledge. A wise man is not always trying to show off how much knowledge he has.

He may have a tremendous amount of knowledge but he is very reluctant to display it. He is modest about the tremendous knowledge he has. A foolish man just goes around displaying his knowledge all the time.

Chapter 13 verse 7 is very similar to what we saw in chapter 11 verse 24. There are people who make themselves rich but actually they have nothing. And there are others who make themselves poor by giving

out to others and they have great riches.

Jesus said to his disciples freely you have received. Freely give. It's a wonderful verse for us to keep before us always.

Freely God has given me so many things. Let me give to others freely. Not in a calculating miserly stingy type of way.

Now you don't have to have much. The widow had only two mites. So don't say well it's only for rich people.

No, even that widow with two mites she got something from God and she gave and God honored her for it. All strife verse 10 comes by pride. Chapter 14 verse 12 There is a way that seems right to a man but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Now that is repeated again exactly like that in chapter 16 verse 25. That means just in case you missed it in the first reading God catches you in the second one. In chapter 16 it's important.

There is a way that seems right to man but the end thereof are the ways of death. Don't think that what appears right to you is necessarily God's way. Don't lean upon your own understanding.

You see that emphasis. You know why is it many believers do not actively earnestly pray and seek God's guidance concerning the steps they take in life. Why don't they pray earnestly about what is God's plan for their life.

How God wants them to spend their earthly lives. It's because they feel well I can plan my life, I consider all the factors and I take decisions. There is a way that seems right to a man but the end is death.

And years later you discover that you wasted your life. So wait on the Lord. Seek his wisdom.

Blessed is the man who waits at his gates daily and say Lord I don't know. Please teach me. Even today after 40 years of studying the scriptures this is how I come to the scriptures.

I say Lord I'm stupid when it comes to this book. I've got a very clever brain when it comes to earthly things. But when it comes to divine things I don't know.

I'm stupid I'm foolish. I'll go completely wrong unless you guide me by your spirit. Please give me the revelation of your spirit.

Come to God's word like that. There is an understanding you can get from scripture which just comes out of your brain. It will lead you to death.

There is a way that seems right to man. God says my ways are not your ways. In chapter 15 we see the importance of having a joyful heart.

Verse 13. A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance. It's joy in the heart that brings brightness upon our face.

And verse 15 the last part. He who is of a merry heart has a continual feast. There is a great emphasis in Proverbs on having joy in our life.

We're not to be gloomy. It says a merry heart does good like a medicine. It can make us healthy in our life too.

Don't despise joy as something unimportant. The kingdom of God is not only righteousness but also peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament they had righteousness without joy.

Now we have righteousness with joy. There's a spring in our step, a song in our heart and a twinkle in our eye and that's how we live the Christian life. Chapter 16.

We read in verse 18 pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. There's a proverb in the world as well that pride goes before a fall. It's basically the same thing that when a man falls the reason is pride.

Always pride goes before that fall. Have you fallen somewhere? Have you done something stupid? You can be one hundred percent sure the reason was pride. John Bunyan used to say, he who is down needs fear no fall.

You know I used to think of that verse. He's able to keep us from falling. And I thought, how does he keep me from falling? You know, even if I'm standing at this height, I can fall.

Even if I come down to that ground level, I can still fall. I sit down, I can still fall. But if I'm flat on the ground with my mouth in the dust, I can never fall.

He's able to keep you from falling. Keep your mouth in the dust always. No matter how much God uses you, no matter how much revelation you have on the word, take time to think of your littleness before God.

That is worship. Put your mouth in the dust frequently until it becomes a habit with you to live there and worship God. You'll never fall.

Chapter 17, verse 9, again it is mentioned. He who covers a transgression seeks for love. Somebody did something wrong.

Ignore an insult. Did somebody insult you? Did somebody hurt you? Ignore it. That's the mark of love.

And verse 28. You know, this is a wonderful verse when you don't yet have wisdom. When you don't have wisdom and you want people to think you're wise, what should you do? Keep your mouth shut.

Because it says here, even a fool, when he keeps his mouth shut, everybody will think he's a man of deep wisdom. And that's why he's keeping quiet. You can open your mouth and immediately everybody knows you're a fool.

So what a tremendous advantage it is if you're a little restrained in your speech. Be quick to hear and slow to speak, especially when you're young. Especially when you're young.

You don't have much wisdom. Don't open your mouth and say something stupid. And at least people will think you're wise.

Chapter 18, verse 12. Before honor is humility. Are you seeking for honor before God? We don't seek for honor for men.

But before honor comes humility. Don't forget that. Verse 16, a man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men.

That's why I believe that we need to seek for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I don't know how many of you earnestly seek for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14, 1 says, pursue after spiritual gifts especially that you may prophesy.

To prophesy is to speak the word of God with conviction. God is my witness that for I would say perhaps more than 35 years regularly and even now I have earnestly desired for the gift of prophecy. I have obeyed the word of God which has told me to earnestly desire for spiritual gifts and God has given it.

He doesn't give if you don't value his gifts. Your own abilities are not enough to serve God. You need a touch from heaven.

You need a supernatural gift and that gift will make room for you. You don't have to make room for yourself. A lot of people are fighting to make room for themselves for a ministry.

Don't do it brother. God will make room for you. You first get the gift.

The gift will make room for you in many many places. People will travel hundreds of miles to listen to a man who has got something to say from God. Be a man like that.

John the Baptist was out there in the wilderness. The whole of Judea went out to hear him. He did not come to a hall or anything.

They went out to hear him because he was a man who had something to say from heaven. Verse 19 A brother offended is harder to be one than a strong city. That's why we need to be careful in our relationships.

Verse 21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue. With your tongue you can bring death. With the same tongue you can bring life.

It's very very important that you recognize that. Especially in this new covenant age. Let your tongue.

The Bible speaks about a tongue which is on fire from heaven in Acts chapter 2. The fire of heaven, tongues of fire. And in James chapter 3 it says about a tongue which is on fire from hell. Two types of fires on the tongue.

Be careful that you have the right one. Chapter 19 verse 17 When you have pity on a poor person and you give him money the Bible says you are actually lending money to the Lord. When you help a poor brother you are lending something to the Lord and the Lord will repay you.

That's the meaning. Verse 18 Discipline your son while there is hope and don't let your soul spare for his crying. Very very important.

There are many verses in Proverbs about disciplining children and not to spare them even if they cry. Discipline them. Otherwise they will go astray.

Chapter 20 Here is some practical thing to correct us. It says in verse 14 Oh it's bad, it's bad says the buyer. And then when he goes his way he boasts about the bargain he has made.

Do you try those type of techniques when you go to a shop? You want to get that thing cheap. You know it's good but you say no this is bad it's cheaper, I can get it cheaper somewhere else. And all these lies because you want to get it at a low price and you beat him down and you beat him down and you beat him down and you get a low price and then you go around seeing what a price I got this for.

I've seen believers sometimes argue with poor people. Some poor person who is selling vegetables, some poor person who is selling fruit. To argue with him and beat him down to some cheap price.

Okay maybe you saved one rupee but was it worth it? That poor man has got to look after his children. What have you gained by beating him down the price by one rupee? A godly man is generous. What's the use of that extra money when Jesus comes? Let's learn to be good to people around us.

Especially to the poor. Chapter 21 verse 2 Every man's ways appear to be right in his own eyes but the Lord examines the motives. He looks at the heart.

Remember that. What you are doing may appear to be right but ask God to show you if there is something wrong in your motive. Verse 13 If you shut your eyes when the poor person needs help one day you will also cry and God will not listen to you.

Verse 19 This is about an angry woman who is a wife. It's better to dwell in the wilderness than with an argumentative angry woman. Solomon had 700 wives and he ought to know.

Okay. Chapter 22 There is a wonderful verse in verse 4 By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life. Spiritual riches spiritual honor and spiritual life from God come on the basis of two things.

Humility and the fear of the Lord. In my work in the churches that God has given me responsibility for over the last 25 years whenever seeking to appoint people as elders or giving them responsibility I have looked for two things primarily. Humility and the fear of the Lord.

These are the main things I have discovered through many years that make a man a good leader. Spiritual riches spiritual honor and spiritual life. Verse 15 foolishness is bound in the heart of a child but the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

Where is the foolishness? In the heart. But the way to reach the heart is by hitting him in the bottom. There is a connection between that bottom and the heart that if you use a rod at the bottom the foolishness goes out of the heart.

So children must be disciplined. Verse 29. Do you see a hard working man in his business? One who works hard? He will stand one day before kings.

Be diligent in your study of the word. Be diligent in your service for the Lord. God will open up many doors of ministry for you.

Chapter 23. Harken to your father who began to you. Verse 22.

And don't despise your mother when she is old. Learn to respect your parents when they are old. Maybe they are not as educated as you are.

Respect them. Honor them. Many many children do not value and respect their parents when they are old.

If you don't respect your parents it will not go well with you. Verse 31. Don't look upon the wine when it stirs itself in the cup when it moves aright.

That's the verse on which I believe that this type of highly fermented wine was not the wine that Jesus drank. Because Jesus must have known what it says in Proverbs. That you must not even look on the wine when it is red.

When it is moving in the cup and stirred. This highly fermented type of wine, alcohol. That's not the type of wine he made in Cana and that's not the type of wine he drank.

Chapter 24. It's a verse concerning evangelism. Verse 11.

If you don't deliver those who are drawn to death and who are ready to be killed. If you say well, we didn't know that. Don't you think that the one who examines everybody's heart considers it? And he who keeps your soul, doesn't he know it? And don't you think he will render to every man according to his works? What should we do? I think I missed out this verse in Proverbs 11.30 He who wins souls is wise.

When people are in need of hearing the gospel, we need to give it to them. Chapter 24. Verse 17.

Don't rejoice when your enemy falls. Don't let your heart be glad because your enemy has fallen. It teaches us to love our enemies.

Verse 27. It's for people who are getting married. First of all, build up your business.

Then build your house. First get a job. Then get married.

Very practical advice. First, have enough money to support a family. And then build your home.

A warning against laziness in verse 30-34 he says, I saw a man who was lazy who didn't take care of his fields and it was covered with thorns. And he says if he continues to sleep like that, verse 33 that's how his poverty comes. There was an English poet who wrote a poem which said it's a secular poem but there's a truth in it.

The heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight but they, while their companions slept were toiling upwards in the night. What he says there is that if you see a man has reached a great height of anything he didn't reach there suddenly but while other people were sleeping he was working upwards. That's how he reached there.

So it's a diligent man who's got a good garden in his life and in his ministry. The lazy man his life will be barren. Be diligent.

Chapter 25 verse 14, whoever boasts of false gifts is like clouds and wind without rain. There's a lot of that today. Lot of people claiming to have a gift of healing who are not, who do not have it.

Who are just fooling people. It's like clouds coming and you think it's going to rain and nothing, no rain comes. Maybe one drop.

Don't deceive people. Don't claim to have a gift that you don't have. Never.

If you have a gift, it'll be evident. If God has given you a gift of evangelism, you'll be able to bring people to the Lord. If God's given you the gift of teaching, when you teach people's eyes will be enlightened in the

word.

If God's given you a gift of healing, you'll pray for the sick and they'll be healed. If they're not healed, recognize you don't have that gift. Okay.

In chapter 26, verse 27, whoever digs a pit for somebody else will fall into it himself. And whoever rolls a stone upon another, that stone will one day come rolling back. Verse 4, don't answer a fool according to his folly.

Verse 5, answer a fool according to his folly. Which is right? Both are right. There's fool number one and fool number two.

And you got to discern which type of fool this fellow is who's standing in front of me. They ask some stupid question, should I answer it or not? You see, this is a verse which teaches us that there's no standard answer. You need to have the discernment of the Holy Spirit where sometimes you answer.

Sometimes Jesus answered. Sometimes he kept quiet. We need to be led by the Spirit.

Chapter 27, verse 1, don't boast about tomorrow because you do not know what will come forth in a day. Let another man, verse 2, praise you. Don't praise yourself.

And chapter 27, verse 23, a good word for those who are shepherds of God's flock. Be diligent to know the state of your flocks and look well to your herds. A true shepherd must know the condition of every one of the believers in his church.

Chapter 28, verse 13, he who covers his sins will never prosper. But he who confesses, not only confesses, confesses and forsakes will find mercy. Chapter 29 and verse 1, he who is often corrected and hardens his neck will be destroyed.

Don't take advantage of God's goodness. Verse 18, where there is no vision, the people perish. The great need in Christendom today is for men of vision.

Vision. God should be able to give them a vision of what he wants to accomplish in our land at this time. Be a man of vision.

Be a woman of vision. Ask God to show you his burden for our land at this time. Verse 20, do you see a man who is hasty in his words or hasty in his matters? There's more hope for a fool than him.

See, right up to chapter 29, there are many many places where Solomon says, this was a fool, this was a fool, this is a fool, this is a fool. Finally he says, shall I tell you the biggest fool of the lot? That's the man who is quick to speak. He's the biggest fool of the lot.

He gets the cake. He gets the prize. A man who's hasty in his matters, who takes a decision quickly, without waiting on the Lord.

There's more hope for a fool than for him. Chapter 30, two things, verse 7, I ask the Lord for. Don't deny me.

First of all, don't let me tell lies. Second, don't give me poverty or riches. Now in the Old Testament they prayed that prayer, and if money can ruin you, that's a good prayer to pray.

But in the New Testament, Paul said, it doesn't matter to me whether I'm poor or rich. Philippians 4, I can handle both. But 99% of believers don't know how to handle money, so they better pray this prayer.

But men like Paul could handle. I mean, even if they had much, they said riches won't destroy me, and poverty won't make me drift away from the Lord. I just mentioned that in passing.

And there are a number of little things mentioned in chapter 30, which are very interesting. But we come to chapter 31, and especially that last section, verse 10 to 31 is very important for all young men and all young women. It tells us what a godly wife is like in God's eyes.

And notice the number of things mentioned about her. Briefly, I will say, she's a very hardworking person. She works with her hands.

She gets up early, verse 15. She cooks the food. She's enterprising.

She buys a field, verse 16, and plants a vineyard there with her own hands. She girds her loins, verse 17, to work. And she lays her hands, verse 19, to the spindle and works and gives money, gives help, verse 20, to the poor.

She protects her children with warm clothing that she's made herself. She supports her husband, verse 11, the heart of her husband trusts her. She makes fine linen, verse 24, strength and honor her clothing.

And when she opens her mouth, verse 26, she opens it with wisdom. The tongue, her tongue, in her tongue is the law of kindness. Just two things I want to say.

Her hands are hard because she's working. Her tongue is soft. With a lot of young girls today, it's exactly the opposite.

Their hands are soft because they've never worked hard. And that tongue is hard. Be different.

Young brothers, this is the type of wife you must look for. Sisters, this is the type of woman you must be. Charm, verse 30, is deceitful.

Beauty is empty. But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. One day when she's married, her children and her husband will rise up and say, you are blessed.

Be a woman like that. Marry a woman like that. Read Proverbs frequently and may God guide us to raise up in this land many young men and women who are godly and wise.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, give us wisdom for our daily walk on earth. Give us the spirit of wisdom and remind us of the things that we have heard.

We humbly ask in Jesus' name.

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