

# LIVING SKILLFULLY

A PRACTICAL AND CONCISE COMMENTARY ON PROVERBS



**Dr. William J. Finnigan**

# *Living Skillfully*

*A Practical and Concise Commentary on  
Proverbs*

By

William J. Finnigan, D. Min.

*Living Skillfully: A Practical & Concise Commentary on Proverbs*

©William J. Finnigan, D. Min.

October, 2015

Printed in the United States of America

**ISBN: 978-0-9962591-6-3**

### **Disclaimer**

The author of this work has quoted the writers of many articles and books. This does not mean that the author endorses or recommends the works of others. If the author quotes someone, it does not mean that he agrees with all of the author's tenets, statements, concepts, or words, whether in the work quoted or any other work of the author. There has been no attempt to alter the meaning of the quotes; and therefore, some of the quotes are long in order to give the entire sense of the passage.

All rights reserved solely by the author. The author guarantees all contents are original and do not infringe upon the legal rights of any other person or work. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the permission of the author. The views expressed in this book are not necessarily those of the publisher.

Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from **The Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version**, 2003, Thomas Nelson, Inc., all rights reserved. This **Holy Bible** may be quoted or reprinted without prior written permission with the following qualifications: Up to and including 1,000 verses may be quoted in printed form as long as the verses quoted amount to less than 50 percent of a complete book of the **Bible** and make up less than 50 percent of the total work in which they are quoted. All **KJV** quotations must conform accurately to the **KJV** text.

The titles of each chapter and thematic outline of the **Proverbs** are taken from the **MacArthur Study Bible**, 1997, Word Publishing, a division of Thomas Nelson, Inc. All rights reserved. MacArthur's chapters without titles begin with part of the opening verse.

Formatting, Editing and Publishing Assistance By:

The Old Paths Publications, Inc.

Cleveland, Ga 30528

[www.theoldpathspublications.com](http://www.theoldpathspublications.com)

email: [TOP@theoldpathspublications.com](mailto:TOP@theoldpathspublications.com)

# Dedication

I dedicate this work to my faithful and loving wife, Chris, whose virtue is "far above rubies" (jewels). (Proverbs 31:10)

## Acknowledgements

I'm also grateful to all that have contributed to the completion of this book. In particular, I'd like to thank Joseph Spera, Ph.D., who labored tirelessly on this project. His burden and enthusiasm to get this book to the public are now realized. Joe is a retired psychologist, and currently serves as the resident Chaplain at the Caprice Health Care Center in N. Lima, OH.

A special thanks is due to Dr. H.D. Williams and his lovely wife Patricia for their invaluable labor and expertise in the publication of this book. Their integrity, promptness, professionalism, and encouragement have been second to none. Their burden to help publish the works of relatively unknown authors, like myself, through "The Old Paths Publications," is admirable and appreciated. Indeed, they have been raised up by the Lord for such an hour as this.

William J. Finnigan  
October, 2015



SAMPLE PAGES

# Table of Contents

<b>Dedication.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>25</b>
I. Man's Relationship to God.....	27
II. Man's Relationship to Himself.....	28
III. Man's Relationship to Others.....	28
1. Understanding the literary structure of Proverbs.....	29
2. Understanding the nature (purpose) of Proverbs.....	30
<b>Chapter 1: The Beginning of Knowledge.....</b>	<b>31</b>
Prov. 1:1.....	31
Prov. 1:2.....	31
Prov. 1:3.....	32
Prov. 1:4.....	32
Prov. 1:5.....	33
Prov. 1:6.....	34
Prov. 1:7.....	35
Prov. 1:8.....	36
Prov. 1:9.....	37
Prov. 1:10.....	38
Prov. 1:11.....	38
Prov. 1:12.....	39
Prov. 1:13.....	39
Prov. 1:14.....	40
Prov. 1:15.....	40
Prov. 1:16.....	41
Prov. 1:17.....	41
Prov. 1:18.....	41
Prov. 1:19.....	42
Prov. 1:20.....	42
Prov. 1:21.....	42
Prov. 1:22.....	43
Prov. 1:23.....	43
Prov. 1:24.....	44
Prov. 1:25.....	44
Prov. 1:26.....	44
Prov. 1:27.....	45
Prov. 1:28.....	45
Prov. 1:29.....	46
Prov. 1:30.....	46
Prov. 1:31.....	47
Prov. 1:32.....	47
Prov. 1:33.....	48
<b>Chapter 2: The Value of Wisdom.....</b>	<b>49</b>
Prov. 2:1.....	49
Prov. 2:2.....	49

## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 2:3.....	50
Prov. 2:4.....	50
Prov. 2:5.....	51
Prov. 2:6.....	51
Prov. 2:7.....	52
Prov. 2:8.....	52
Prov. 2:9.....	53
Prov. 2:10.....	54
Prov. 2:11.....	54
Prov. 2:12.....	55
Prov. 2:13.....	55
Prov. 2:14.....	55
Prov. 2:15.....	56
Prov. 2:16.....	56
Prov. 2:17.....	57
Prov. 2:18.....	57
Prov. 2:19.....	58
Prov. 2:20.....	58
Prov. 2:21.....	58
Prov. 2:22.....	58
<b>Chapter 3: Guidance for the Young.....</b>	<b>61</b>
Prov. 3:1.....	61
Prov. 3:2.....	62
Prov. 3:3.....	62
Prov. 3:4.....	63
Prov. 3:5.....	63
Prov. 3:6.....	64
Prov. 3:7.....	64
Prov. 3:8.....	65
Prov. 3:9.....	65
Prov. 3:10.....	66
Prov. 3:11.....	67
Prov. 3:12.....	68
Prov. 3:13.....	69
Prov. 3:14.....	69
Prov. 3:15.....	70
Prov. 3:16.....	70
Prov. 3:17.....	70
Prov. 3:18.....	71
Prov. 3:19.....	71
Prov. 3:20.....	71
Prov. 3:21.....	72
Prov. 3:22.....	72
Prov. 3:23.....	73
Prov. 3:24.....	73
Prov. 3:25.....	73
Prov. 3:26.....	74
Prov. 3:27.....	74

Prov. 3:28 .....	74
Prov. 3:29 .....	75
Prov. 3:30 .....	75
Prov. 3:31 .....	75
Prov. 3:32 .....	76
Prov. 3:33 .....	76
Prov. 3:34 .....	77
Prov. 3:35 .....	77
<b>Chapter 4: Security in Wisdom.....</b>	<b>79</b>
Prov. 4:1 .....	79
Prov. 4:2 .....	80
Prov. 4:3 .....	80
Prov. 4:4 .....	80
Prov. 4:5 .....	81
Prov. 4:6 .....	81
Prov. 4:7 .....	82
Prov. 4:8 .....	82
Prov. 4:9 .....	83
Prov. 4:10 .....	84
Prov. 4:11 .....	84
Prov. 4:12 .....	85
Prov. 4:13 .....	86
Prov. 4:14 .....	87
Prov. 4:15 .....	87
Prov. 4:16 .....	87
Prov. 4:17 .....	88
Prov. 4:18 .....	88
Prov. 4:19 .....	89
Prov. 4:20 .....	89
Prov. 4:21 .....	90
Prov. 4:22 .....	90
Prov. 4:23 .....	91
Prov. 4:24 .....	91
Prov. 4:25 .....	91
Prov. 4:26 .....	92
Prov. 4:27 .....	92
<b>Chapter 5: The Peril of Adultery .....</b>	<b>95</b>
Prov. 5:1 .....	95
Prov. 5:2 .....	95
Prov. 5:3 .....	96
Prov. 5:4 .....	96
Prov. 5:5 .....	97
Prov. 5:6 .....	98
Prov. 5:7 .....	98
Prov. 5:8 .....	99
Prov. 5:9 .....	99
Prov. 5:10 .....	100
Prov. 5:11 .....	101

## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 5:12 .....	101
Prov. 5:13 .....	102
Prov. 5:14 .....	102
Prov. 5:15 .....	102
Prov. 5:16 .....	103
Prov. 5:17 .....	103
Prov. 5:18 .....	103
Prov. 5:19 .....	104
Prov. 5:20 .....	104
Prov. 5:21 .....	104
Prov. 5:22 .....	105
Prov. 5:23 .....	105
<b>Chapter 6: Dangerous Promises .....</b>	<b>107</b>
Prov. 6:1 .....	107
Prov. 6:2 .....	108
Prov. 6:3 .....	108
Prov. 6:4 .....	108
Prov. 6:5 .....	109
Prov. 6:6 .....	109
Prov. 6:7 .....	109
Prov. 6:8 .....	110
Prov. 6:9 .....	110
Prov. 6:10 .....	111
Prov. 6:11 .....	112
Prov. 6:12 .....	112
Prov. 6:13 .....	113
Prov. 6:14 .....	114
Prov. 6:15 .....	114
Prov. 6:16 .....	115
Prov. 6:17 .....	115
Prov. 6:18 .....	116
Prov. 6:19 .....	116
Prov. 6:20 .....	117
Prov. 6:21 .....	117
Prov. 6:22 .....	117
Prov. 6:23 .....	118
Prov. 6:24 .....	118
Prov. 6:25 .....	119
Prov. 6:26 .....	119
Prov. 6:27 .....	119
Prov. 6:28 .....	120
Prov. 6:29 .....	120
Prov. 6:30, 31 .....	120
Prov. 6:32 .....	121
Prov. 6:33 .....	121
Prov. 6:34 .....	121
Prov. 6:35 .....	122
<b>Chapter 7: My Son, Keep My Words .....</b>	<b>123</b>

Prov. 7:1 .....	123
Prov. 7:2 .....	123
Prov. 7:3 .....	124
Prov. 7:4 .....	124
Prov. 7:5 .....	125
Prov. 7:6 .....	125
Prov. 7:7 .....	125
Prov. 7:8 .....	126
Prov. 7:9 .....	126
Prov. 7:10 .....	127
Prov. 7:11 .....	127
Prov. 7:12 .....	128
Prov. 7:13 .....	128
Prov. 7:14 .....	128
Prov. 7:15 .....	129
Prov. 7:16 .....	129
Prov. 7:17 .....	130
Prov. 7:18 .....	130
Prov. 7:19 .....	130
Prov. 7:20 .....	131
Prov. 7:21 .....	131
Prov. 7:22 .....	132
Prov. 7:23 .....	132
Prov. 7:24 .....	132
Prov. 7:25 .....	133
Prov. 7:26 .....	133
Prov. 7:27 .....	133
<b>Chapter 8: The Excellence of Wisdom .....</b>	<b>135</b>
Prov. 8:1 .....	135
Prov. 8:2 .....	135
Prov. 8:3 .....	135
Prov. 8:4 .....	136
Prov. 8:5 .....	136
Prov. 8:6 .....	137
Prov. 8:7 .....	137
Prov. 8:8 .....	138
Prov. 8:9 .....	138
Prov. 8:10 .....	139
Prov. 8:11 .....	140
Prov. 8:12 .....	140
Prov. 8:13 .....	141
Prov. 8:14 .....	142
Prov. 8:15 .....	142
Prov. 8:16 .....	143
Prov. 8:17 .....	143
Prov. 8:18 .....	144
Prov. 8:19 .....	144
Prov. 8:20 .....	144

## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 8:21 .....	145
Prov. 8:22 .....	145
Prov. 8:23 .....	146
Prov. 8:24 .....	146
Prov. 8:25 .....	146
Prov. 8:26 .....	147
Prov. 8:27 .....	147
Prov. 8:28 .....	148
Prov. 8:29 .....	148
Prov. 8:30 .....	148
Prov. 8:31 .....	148
Prov. 8:32 .....	149
Prov. 8:33 .....	149
Prov. 8:34 .....	149
Prov. 8:35 .....	150
Prov. 8:36 .....	150
<b>Chapter 9: The Way of Wisdom .....</b>	<b>151</b>
Prov. 9:1 .....	151
Prov. 9:2 .....	151
Prov. 9:3 .....	151
Prov. 9:4 .....	152
Prov. 9:5 .....	152
Prov. 9:6 .....	153
Prov. 9:7 .....	153
Prov. 9:8 .....	153
Prov. 9:9 .....	154
Prov. 9:10 .....	154
Prov. 9:11 .....	155
Prov. 9:12 .....	155
Prov. 9:13 .....	156
Prov. 9:14 .....	156
Prov. 9:15 .....	156
Prov. 9:16 .....	157
Prov. 9:17 .....	157
Prov. 9:18 .....	157
<b>Chapter 10: Wise Sayings of Solomon .....</b>	<b>159</b>
Prov. 10:1 .....	159
Prov. 10:2 .....	159
Prov. 10:3 .....	160
Prov. 10:4 .....	161
Prov. 10:5 .....	161
Prov. 10:6 .....	161
Prov. 10:7 .....	162
Prov. 10:8 .....	163
Prov. 10:9 .....	163
Prov. 10:10 .....	164
Prov. 10:11 .....	164
Prov. 10:12 .....	164

Prov. 10:13 .....	165
Prov. 10:14 .....	166
Prov. 10:15 .....	166
Prov. 10:16 .....	166
Prov. 10:17 .....	167
Prov. 10:19 .....	167
Prov. 10:20 .....	168
Prov. 10:21 .....	168
Prov. 10:22 .....	169
Prov. 10:23 .....	169
Prov. 10:24 .....	170
Prov. 10:25 .....	170
Prov. 10:26 .....	170
Prov. 10:27 .....	171
Prov. 10:28 .....	171
Prov. 10:29 .....	172
Prov. 10:30 .....	172
Prov. 10:31 .....	173
Prov. 10:32 .....	173
<b>Chapter 11: Dishonest Scales are an Abomination .....</b>	<b>175</b>
Prov. 11:1 .....	175
Prov. 11:2 .....	175
Prov. 11:3 .....	176
Prov. 11:4 .....	176
Prov. 11:5 .....	177
Prov. 11:6 .....	177
Prov. 11:7 .....	178
Prov. 11:8 .....	178
Prov. 11:9 .....	179
Prov. 11:10 .....	180
Prov. 11:11 .....	180
Prov. 11:12 .....	181
Prov. 11:13 .....	181
Prov. 11:14 .....	181
Prov. 11:15 .....	182
Prov. 11:16 .....	182
Prov. 11:17 .....	183
Prov. 11:18 .....	183
Prov. 11:19 .....	184
Prov. 11:20 .....	184
Prov. 11:21 .....	184
Prov. 11:22 .....	185
Prov. 11:23 .....	185
Prov. 11:24 .....	186
Prov. 11:25 .....	186
Prov. 11:26 .....	187
Prov. 11:27 .....	187
Prov. 11:28 .....	188



## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 11:29 .....	188
Prov. 11:30 .....	189
Prov. 11:31 .....	189
<b>Chapter 12: Whoso Loves Instruction Loves Knowledge.....</b>	<b>191</b>
Prov. 12:1 .....	191
Prov. 12:2 .....	191
Prov. 12:3 .....	192
Prov. 12:4 .....	193
Prov. 12:5 .....	194
Prov. 12:6 .....	194
Prov. 12:7 .....	195
Prov. 12:8 .....	196
Prov. 12:9 .....	196
Prov. 12:10 .....	196
Prov. 12:11 .....	197
Prov. 12:12 .....	197
Prov. 12:13 .....	198
Prov. 12:14 .....	198
Prov. 12:15 .....	199
Prov. 12:16 .....	199
Prov. 12:17 .....	199
Prov. 12:18 .....	200
Prov. 12:19 .....	200
Prov. 12:20 .....	201
Prov. 12:21 .....	201
Prov. 12:22 .....	202
Prov. 12:23 .....	202
Prov. 12:24 .....	202
Prov. 12:25 .....	203
Prov. 12:26 .....	203
Prov. 12:27 .....	203
Prov. 12:28 .....	204
<b>Chapter 13: A Wise Man Heeds His Father's Instruction.....</b>	<b>205</b>
Prov. 13:1 .....	205
Prov. 13:3 .....	206
Prov. 13:4 .....	206
Prov. 13:5 .....	207
Prov. 13:6 .....	207
Prov. 13:7 .....	208
Prov. 13:8 .....	208
Prov. 13:9 .....	209
Prov. 13:10 .....	209
Prov. 13:11 .....	210
Prov. 13:12 .....	210
Prov. 13:13 .....	211
Prov. 13:14 .....	211
Prov. 13:15 .....	212
Prov. 13:16 .....	212

Prov. 13:17 .....	213
Prov. 13:18 .....	213
Prov. 13:19 .....	213
Prov. 13:20 .....	214
Prov. 13:21 .....	214
Prov. 13:22 .....	215
Prov. 13:23 .....	215
Prov. 13:24 .....	216
Prov. 13:25 .....	216
<b>Chapter 14: The Wise Woman Builds Her House .....</b>	<b>217</b>
Prov. 14:1 .....	217
Prov. 14:2 .....	218
Prov. 14:3 .....	218
Prov. 14:4 .....	219
Prov. 14:5 .....	220
Prov. 14:6 .....	220
Prov. 14:7 .....	221
Prov. 14:8 .....	221
Prov. 14:9 .....	222
Prov. 14:10 .....	222
Prov. 14:11 .....	223
Prov. 14:12 .....	224
Prov. 14:13 .....	224
Prov. 14:14 .....	224
Prov. 14:15 .....	225
Prov. 14:16 .....	225
Prov. 14:17 .....	226
Prov. 14:18 .....	226
Prov. 14:19 .....	226
Prov. 14:20 .....	227
Prov. 14:21 .....	227
Prov. 14:22 .....	228
Prov. 14:23 .....	228
Prov. 14:24 .....	228
Prov. 14:25 .....	229
Prov. 14:26 .....	229
Prov. 14:27 .....	230
Prov. 14:28 .....	230
Prov. 14:29 .....	231
Prov. 14:30 .....	231
Prov. 14:31 .....	232
Prov. 14:32 .....	232
Prov. 14:33 .....	233
Prov. 14:34 .....	233
Prov. 14:35 .....	234
<b>Chapter 15: A Soft Answer Turns Away Wrath.....</b>	<b>235</b>
Prov. 15:1 .....	235
Prov. 15:2 .....	235

## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 15:3 .....	236
Prov. 15:4 .....	237
Prov. 15:5 .....	237
Prov. 15:6 .....	238
Prov. 15:7 .....	239
Prov. 15:8 .....	240
Prov. 15:9 .....	240
Prov. 15:10 .....	241
Prov. 15:11 .....	241
Prov. 15:12 .....	242
Prov. 15:13 .....	242
Prov. 15:14 .....	243
Prov. 15:15 .....	243
Prov. 15:16 .....	243
Prov. 15:17 .....	244
Prov. 15:18 .....	244
Prov. 15:19 .....	245
Prov. 15:20 .....	245
Prov. 15:21 .....	245
Prov. 15:22 .....	246
Prov. 15:23 .....	246
Prov. 15:24 .....	247
Prov. 15:25 .....	247
Prov. 15:26 .....	248
Prov. 15:27 .....	248
Prov. 15:28 .....	249
Prov. 15:29 .....	249
Prov. 15:30 .....	250
Prov. 15:31 .....	251
Prov. 15:32 .....	251
Prov. 15:33 .....	252
<b>Chapter 16: The Preparations of the Heart Belong to Man .....</b>	<b>255</b>
Prov. 16:1 .....	255
Prov. 16:2 .....	255
Prov. 16:3 .....	256
Prov. 16:4 .....	257
Prov. 16:5 .....	258
Prov. 16:6 .....	259
Prov. 16:7 .....	260
Prov. 16:8 .....	261
Prov. 16:9 .....	262
Prov. 16:10 .....	262
Prov. 16:11 .....	263
Prov. 16:12 .....	263
Prov. 16:13 .....	264
Prov. 16:14 .....	264
Prov. 16:15 .....	264
Prov. 16:16 .....	265

Prov. 16:17 .....	265
Prov. 16:18 .....	266
Prov. 16:19 .....	266
Prov. 16:20 .....	267
Prov. 16:21 .....	268
Prov. 16:22 .....	269
Prov. 16:23 .....	269
Prov. 16:24 .....	269
Prov. 16:25 .....	270
Prov. 16:26 .....	270
Prov. 16:27 .....	270
Prov. 16:28 .....	271
Prov. 16:29 .....	271
Prov. 16:30 .....	272
Prov. 16:31 .....	273
Prov. 16:32 .....	273
Prov. 16:33 .....	274
<b>Chapter 17: Better is a Dry Morsel with Quietness .....</b>	<b>275</b>
Prov. 17:1 .....	275
Prov. 17:2 .....	275
Prov. 17:3 .....	276
Prov. 17:4 .....	277
Prov. 17:5 .....	278
Prov. 17:6 .....	278
Prov. 17:7 .....	279
Prov. 17:8 .....	280
Prov. 17:9 .....	281
Prov. 17:10 .....	281
Prov. 17:11 .....	282
Prov. 17:12 .....	282
Prov. 17:13 .....	283
Prov. 17:14 .....	283
Prov. 17:15 .....	283
Prov. 17:16 .....	284
Prov. 17:17 .....	284
Prov. 17:18 .....	285
Prov. 17:19 .....	285
Prov. 17:20 .....	286
Prov. 17:21 .....	286
Prov. 17:22 .....	287
Prov. 17:23 .....	287
Prov. 17:24 .....	288
Prov. 17:25 .....	288
Prov. 17:26 .....	289
Prov. 17:27 .....	289
Prov. 17:28 .....	290
<b>Chapter 18: A Man Who Isolates Himself Seeks His Own Desire.....</b>	<b>291</b>
Prov. 18:1 .....	291

## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 18:2 .....	291
Prov. 18:3 .....	292
Prov. 18:4 .....	293
Prov. 18:5 .....	293
Prov. 18:6 .....	294
Prov. 18:8 .....	294
Prov. 18:9 .....	295
Prov. 18:10 .....	296
Prov. 18:11 .....	297
Prov. 18:12 .....	297
Prov. 18:13 .....	298
Prov. 18:14 .....	298
Prov. 18:15 .....	299
Prov. 18:16 .....	299
Prov. 18:17 .....	300
Prov. 18:18 .....	300
Prov. 18:19 .....	301
Prov. 18:20 .....	301
Prov. 18:21 .....	301
Prov. 18:22 .....	302
Prov. 18:23 .....	302
Prov. 18:24 .....	303
<b>Chapter 19: Better is the Poor Who Walks in His Integrity.....</b>	<b>305</b>
Prov. 19:1 .....	305
Prov. 19:2 .....	305
Prov. 19:3 .....	306
Prov. 19:4 .....	306
Prov. 19:5 .....	307
Prov. 19:6 .....	308
Prov. 19:7 .....	308
Prov. 19:8 .....	309
Prov. 19:9 .....	310
Prov. 19:10 .....	310
Prov. 19:11 .....	311
Prov. 19:12 .....	311
Prov. 19:13 .....	312
Prov. 19:14 .....	312
Prov. 19:15 .....	313
Prov. 19:16 .....	313
Prov. 19:17 .....	314
Prov. 19:18 .....	314
Prov. 19:19 .....	315
Prov. 19:20 .....	315
Prov. 19:21 .....	315
Prov. 19:22 .....	316
Prov. 19:23 .....	316
Prov. 19:24 .....	317
Prov. 19:25 .....	317

Prov. 19:26 .....	317
Prov. 19:27 .....	318
Prov. 19:28 .....	319
Prov. 19:29 .....	320
<b>Chapter 20: Wine is a Mocker .....</b>	<b>321</b>
Prov. 20:1 .....	321
Prov. 20:2 .....	321
Prov. 20:3 .....	322
Prov. 20:4 .....	322
Prov. 20:5 .....	323
Prov. 20:6 .....	323
Prov. 20:7 .....	324
Prov. 20:8 .....	325
Prov. 20:9 .....	326
Prov. 20:10 .....	327
Prov. 20:11 .....	327
Prov. 20:12 .....	328
Prov. 20:13 .....	328
Prov. 20:14 .....	329
Prov. 20:15 .....	329
Prov. 20:16 .....	330
Prov. 20:17 .....	330
Prov. 20:18 .....	330
Prov. 20:19 .....	331
Prov. 20:20 .....	332
Prov. 20:21 .....	332
Prov. 20:22 .....	332
Prov. 20:23 .....	333
Prov. 20:24 .....	333
Prov. 20:25 .....	333
Prov. 20:26 .....	334
Prov. 20:27 .....	334
Prov. 20:29 .....	336
Prov. 20:30 .....	336
<b>Chapter 21: The King's Heart is in the Hand of the Lord.....</b>	<b>339</b>
Prov. 21:1 .....	339
Prov. 21:2 .....	339
Prov. 21:3 .....	340
Prov. 21:4 .....	340
Prov. 21:5 .....	341
Prov. 21:6 .....	342
Prov. 21:7 .....	342
Prov. 21:8 .....	343
Prov. 21:9 .....	343
Prov. 21:10 .....	344
Prov. 21:11 .....	345
Prov. 21:12 .....	346
Prov. 21:13 .....	346

## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 21:14 .....	347
Prov. 21:15 .....	347
Prov. 21:16 .....	348
Prov. 21:17 .....	348
Prov. 21:18 .....	349
Prov. 21:19 .....	349
Prov. 21:20 .....	350
Prov. 21:21 .....	350
Prov. 21:22 .....	351
Prov. 21:23 .....	351
Prov. 21:24 .....	352
Prov. 21:25 .....	352
Prov. 21:26 .....	353
Prov. 21:27 .....	353
Prov. 21:28 .....	354
Prov. 21:29 .....	354
Prov. 21:30 .....	354
Prov. 21:31 .....	355
<b>Chapter 22: A Good Name is to be Chosen .....</b>	<b>357</b>
Prov. 22:1 .....	357
Prov. 22:2 .....	357
Prov. 22:3 .....	358
Prov. 22:4 .....	359
Prov. 22:5 .....	360
Prov. 22:6 .....	360
Prov. 22:7 .....	362
Prov. 22:8 .....	363
Prov. 22:9 .....	364
Prov. 22:10 .....	364
Prov. 22:11 .....	365
Prov. 22:12 .....	365
Prov. 22:13 .....	366
Prov. 22:14 .....	366
Prov. 22:15 .....	367
Prov. 22:16 .....	367
Prov. 22:17 .....	368
Prov. 22:18 .....	368
Prov. 22:19 .....	368
Prov. 22:20 .....	369
Prov. 22:21 .....	369
Prov. 22:22 .....	370
Prov. 22:23 .....	370
Prov. 22:24 .....	371
Prov. 22:25 .....	371
Prov. 22:26 .....	372
Prov. 22:27 .....	372
Prov. 22:28 .....	372
Prov. 22:29 .....	373

<b>Chapter 23: When You Sit Down to Eat with a Ruler.....</b>	<b>375</b>
Prov. 23:1 .....	375
Prov. 23:2 .....	375
Prov. 23:3 .....	376
Prov. 23:4 .....	376
Prov. 23:5 .....	377
Prov. 23:6 .....	378
Prov. 23:7 .....	379
Prov. 23:8 .....	380
Prov. 23:9 .....	380
Prov. 23:10 .....	380
Prov. 23:11 .....	381
Prov. 23:12 .....	381
Prov. 23:13 .....	382
Prov. 23:14 .....	382
Prov. 23:15 .....	383
Prov. 23:16 .....	383
Prov. 23:17 .....	384
Prov. 23:18 .....	384
Prov. 23:19 .....	385
Prov. 23:20 .....	385
Prov. 23:21 .....	385
Prov. 23:22 .....	386
Prov. 23:23 .....	386
Prov. 23:24 .....	387
Prov. 23:25 .....	387
Prov. 23:26 .....	388
Prov. 23:27 .....	388
Prov. 23:28 .....	389
Prov. 23:29 .....	389
Prov. 23:30 .....	390
Prov. 23:31 .....	390
Prov. 23:32 .....	391
Prov. 23:33 .....	391
Prov. 23:34 .....	392
Prov. 23:35 .....	393
<b>Chapter 24: Do Not Be Envious of Evil Men .....</b>	<b>395</b>
Prov. 24:1 .....	395
Prov. 24:2 .....	395
Prov. 24:3 .....	396
Prov. 24:4 .....	396
Prov. 24:5 .....	397
Prov. 24:6 .....	397
Prov. 24:7 .....	398
Prov. 24:8 .....	398
Prov. 24:9 .....	399
Prov. 24:10 .....	400
Prov. 24:11 .....	400



## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 24:12 .....	401
Prov. 24:13 .....	401
Prov. 24:14 .....	401
Prov. 24:15 .....	402
Prov. 24:16 .....	402
Prov. 24:17 .....	403
Prov. 24:18 .....	403
Prov. 24:19 .....	403
Prov. 24:20 .....	404
Prov. 24:21 .....	404
Prov. 24:22 .....	405
Prov. 24:23 .....	405
Prov. 24:24 .....	406
Prov. 24:25 .....	406
Prov. 24:26 .....	406
Prov. 24:27 .....	407
Prov. 24:28 .....	407
Prov. 24:29 .....	408
Prov. 24:30 .....	409
Prov. 24:31 .....	409
Prov. 24:32 .....	409
Prov. 24:33 .....	410
Prov. 24:34 .....	410
<b>Chapter 25: Further Wise Sayings of Solomon .....</b>	<b>411</b>
Prov. 25:1 .....	411
Prov. 25:2 .....	411
Prov. 25:3 .....	412
Prov. 25:4 .....	412
Prov. 25:5 .....	413
Prov. 25:6 .....	413
Prov. 25:7 .....	415
Prov. 25:8 .....	415
Prov. 25:9 .....	416
Prov. 25:10 .....	417
Prov. 25:11 .....	417
Prov. 25:12 .....	417
Prov. 25:13 .....	418
Prov. 25:14 .....	418
Prov. 25:15 .....	418
Prov. 25:16 .....	419
Prov. 25:17 .....	419
Prov. 25:18 .....	420
Prov. 25:19 .....	420
Prov. 25:20 .....	420
Prov. 25:21 .....	421
Prov. 25:22 .....	421
Prov. 25:23 .....	422
Prov. 25:24 .....	422

Prov. 25:25 .....	422
Prov. 25:26 .....	423
Prov. 25:27 .....	423
Prov. 25:28 .....	424
<b>Chapter 26: Honor is not Fitting for a Fool .....</b>	<b>425</b>
Prov. 26:1 .....	425
Prov. 26:2 .....	425
Prov. 26:3 .....	425
Prov. 26:4 .....	426
Prov. 26:5 .....	426
Prov. 26:6 .....	427
Prov. 26:7 .....	427
Prov. 26:8 .....	427
Prov. 26:9 .....	428
Prov. 26:10 .....	428
Prov. 26:11 .....	429
Prov. 26:12 .....	429
Prov. 26:13 .....	430
Prov. 26:14 .....	430
Prov. 26:15 .....	430
Prov. 26:16 .....	431
Prov. 26:17 .....	431
Prov. 26:18 .....	432
Prov. 26:19 .....	432
Prov. 26:20 .....	432
Prov. 26:21 .....	433
Prov. 26:22 .....	433
Prov. 26:23 .....	433
Prov. 26:24 .....	434
Prov. 26:25 .....	434
Prov. 26:26 .....	434
Prov. 26:27 .....	435
Prov. 26:28 .....	435
<b>Chapter 27: Do Not Boast About Tomorrow .....</b>	<b>437</b>
Prov. 27:1 .....	437
Prov. 27:2 .....	437
Prov. 27:3 .....	438
Prov. 27:4 .....	438
Prov. 27:5 .....	439
Prov. 27:6 .....	440
Prov. 27:7 .....	441
Prov. 27:8 .....	441
Prov. 27:9 .....	442
Prov. 27:10 .....	442
Prov. 27:11 .....	443
Prov. 27:12 .....	444
Prov. 27:13 .....	444
Prov. 27:14 .....	444

## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 27:15 .....	444
Prov. 27:16 .....	445
Prov. 27:17 .....	445
Prov. 27:18 .....	445
Prov. 27:19 .....	446
Prov. 27:20 .....	446
Prov. 27:21 .....	447
Prov. 27:22 .....	447
Prov. 27:23 .....	448
Prov. 27:24 .....	448
Prov. 27:25 .....	448
Prov. 27:26 .....	449
Prov. 27:27 .....	449
<b>Chapter 28: The Wicked Flee When No One Pursues.....</b>	<b>451</b>
Prov. 28:1 .....	451
Prov. 28:2 .....	452
Prov. 28:3 .....	452
Prov. 28:4 .....	453
Prov. 28:5 .....	454
Prov. 28:6 .....	455
Prov. 28:7 .....	455
Prov. 28:8 .....	456
Prov. 28:9 .....	457
Prov. 28:10 .....	458
Prov. 28:11 .....	458
Prov. 28:12 .....	459
Prov. 28:13 .....	459
Prov. 28:14 .....	460
Prov. 28:15 .....	460
Prov. 28:16 .....	461
Prov. 28:17 .....	461
Prov. 28:18 .....	462
Prov. 28:19 .....	462
Prov. 28:20 .....	463
Prov. 28:21 .....	463
Prov. 28:22 .....	464
Prov. 28:23 .....	464
Prov. 28:24 .....	464
Prov. 28:25 .....	465
Prov. 28:26 .....	465
Prov. 28:27 .....	466
Prov. 28:28 .....	466
<b>Chapter 29: He Who Hardens His Neck Will Be Destroyed.....</b>	<b>469</b>
Prov. 29:1 .....	469
Prov. 29:2 .....	470
Prov. 29:3 .....	470
Prov. 29:4 .....	471
Prov. 29:5 .....	471

Prov. 29:6 .....	472
Prov. 29:7 .....	472
Prov. 29:8 .....	473
Prov. 29:9 .....	474
Prov. 29:10 .....	474
Prov. 29:11 .....	475
Prov. 29:12 .....	475
Prov. 29:13 .....	475
Prov. 29:14 .....	476
Prov. 29:15 .....	476
Prov. 29:16 .....	477
Prov. 29:18 .....	477
Prov. 29:19 .....	478
Prov. 29:20 .....	479
Prov. 29:21 .....	479
Prov. 29:22 .....	480
Prov. 29:23 .....	480
Prov. 29:24 .....	480
Prov. 29:25 .....	481
Prov. 29:26 .....	482
Prov. 29:27 .....	482
<b>Chapter 30: The Wisdom of Agur.....</b>	<b>485</b>
Prov. 30:1 .....	485
Prov. 30:2 .....	485
Prov. 30:3 .....	486
Prov. 30:4 .....	486
Prov. 30:5 .....	487
Prov. 30:6 .....	487
Prov. 30:7 .....	488
Prov. 30:8 .....	488
Prov. 30:9 .....	489
Prov. 30:10 .....	490
Prov. 30:11 .....	491
Prov. 30:12 .....	491
Prov. 30:13 .....	492
Prov. 30:14 .....	492
Prov. 30:15 .....	492
Prov. 30:16 .....	493
Prov. 30:17 .....	493
Prov. 30:18 .....	493
Prov. 30:19 .....	494
Prov. 30:20 .....	494
Prov. 30:21 .....	495
Prov. 30:22 .....	495
Prov. 30:23 .....	495
Prov. 30:24 .....	496
Prov. 30:25 .....	496
Prov. 30:26 .....	497

## Table of Contents

---

Prov. 30:27 .....	497
Prov. 30:28 .....	497
Prov. 30:29 .....	498
Prov. 30:30 .....	498
Prov. 30:31 .....	498
Prov. 30:32 .....	499
Prov. 30:33 .....	499
<b>Chapter 31: The Words of King Lemuel's Mother .....</b>	<b>501</b>
Prov. 31:1 .....	501
Prov. 31:2 .....	501
Prov. 31:3 .....	502
Prov. 31:4 .....	503
Prov. 31:5 .....	503
Prov. 31:6 .....	504
Prov. 31:7 .....	504
Prov. 31:8 .....	505
Prov. 31:9 .....	505
Prov. 31:10 .....	506
Prov. 31:11 .....	506
Prov. 31:12 .....	507
Prov. 31:13 .....	507
Prov. 31:14 .....	507
Prov. 31:15 .....	508
Prov. 31:16 .....	508
Prov. 31:17 .....	509
Prov. 31:18 .....	509
Prov. 31:19 .....	510
Prov. 31:20 .....	510
Prov. 31:21 .....	510
Prov. 31:22 .....	511
Prov. 31:23 .....	511
Prov. 31:24 .....	511
Prov. 31:25 .....	512
Prov. 31:26 .....	512
Prov. 31:27 .....	513
Prov. 31:28 .....	513
Prov. 31:29 .....	514
Prov. 31:30 .....	514
Prov. 31:31 .....	515
<b>Conclusion:.....</b>	<b>515</b>
<b>Sources Consulted.....</b>	<b>517</b>
<b>Index of Words and Phrases.....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>About the Author .....</b>	<b>519</b>

# Introduction

This Commentary is based on 46 years of my research and reflections on this fabulous book of wisdom. Its rules of conduct and action have molded, built, and challenged my life and ministry. While I've chosen to take a practical approach to my comments, I have labored over the Hebrew text to insure both accuracy and integrity. I've included the Hebrew text only when I thought it would be of practical value to nurture the reader's understanding. I recommend reading one chapter of **Proverbs** each day, corresponding to the day of the month. You will then read this book twelve times per year, and have a daily reminder of how to live skillfully.

I also believe that every word of the Bible is the Word of God.

*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).*

All Scripture provides the totality of divine truth needed to live a godly life. Scripture corrects wrong behavior and provides training in godly behavior. I believe that **The Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version (KJV)** best translates the original text into the English language.

Right from the beginning, let me affirm my brief overview of this marvelous **Book of Proverbs**. The key word in **Proverbs** is *wisdom*; the ability to live life skillfully. However, a godly life in this ungodly world is no simple assignment. **Proverbs** provides God's detailed instructions for His people to deal successfully with the practical affairs of everyday life, including how to relate to God, parents, spouses, children, friends, neighbors, and government. Thus King Solomon, the principal author, uses a combination of poetry, parables, essential questions, short stories, and wise maxims to give the common sense and divine perspective necessary

to handle life's issues.<sup>1</sup>

In this book, Solomon pulls together 513 of the most important proverbs from the 3,000 that he wrote (see 1 Kings 4:32), along with some proverbs from others influenced by his wisdom. Since the word "proverb" means "to be like," the book makes comparisons between the common and concrete descriptions of life's most profound truths.

These proverbs are simple, moral statements that illustrate and emphasize the realities of daily living. As a dear friend expressed to me, a proverb is "a nugget of wisdom from God." They were written by Solomon, who sought the Lord for wisdom (2 Chronicles 1:8-12), and to whom it was mightily granted. The Hebrew meaning of the name "Solomon" is "peaceable." He brought peace to his people. Solomon placed wisdom before any desire for wealth and fame. Thus, these were written that mankind might be motivated to fear God and live according to His wisdom (Proverbs 1:7). Ultimately, the whole masterpiece of wisdom points to the Lord, Jesus Christ, who is Wisdom personified. This is most evident from the Apostle Paul's declaration in:

*"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us **wisdom**, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."* (1 Corinthians 1:30)

King Solomon ruled Israel from 971-931 B.C. and became the wisest man in the world (1 Kings 4:29-34). While most of the proverbs were personally written by Solomon, he also collected some proverbs from others. For instance, Proverbs 30 bears the name of Agur, and Proverbs 31 are the words of Lemuel. This collection of proverbs was later finalized under the reign of Judah's King Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.). Significantly, Solomon completed his proverbs prior to his lapse of faith recorded in 1 Kings 11:1-11, when his numerous wives turned his heart after pagan gods. His faith in God was later restored, and he went on to write Psalms 72 and 127,

---

<sup>1</sup> Selected from Introduction to Proverbs; Thomas Nelson Bible

along with the books of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.

Someone once said that wisdom is knowing what to do; skill is knowing how to do it; and virtue is doing it. With that in mind, let us consider what this sacred book reveals, and then how to practice its rules of conduct and action.

Just two major themes run through this book: *wisdom* and *foolishness*. They are often overlapping in the experiences of life. Solomon praises wisdom as being rooted in the fear of the Lord; i.e., reverence for God, leading to obedience to God's Word. On the other hand, foolishness constitutes everything opposite to wisdom; for instance, stupidity, deceit, meddling, rashness, and wickedness.

Many of the proverbs overlap in meaning with some repetition. However, the repetitions should not be considered unnecessary. Each proverb is divinely inspired, and any repetition is an instrument to emphasize its importance. The prophet Isaiah declared the need to teach God's wisdom. He then revealed the method of instruction, which is repetitive:

*"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little."* (Isaiah 28:10)

There are a number of helpful themes in **Proverbs**, as illustrated by the following outline:

### I. Man's Relationship to God

A. His Trust	Proverbs 22:19
B. His Humility	Proverbs 3:34
C. His Fear of God	Proverbs 1:7
D. His Righteousness	Proverbs 10:25
E. His Sin	Proverbs 28:13
F. His Obedience	Proverbs 6:23



G. Facing Reward	Proverbs 12:28
H. Facing Tests	Proverbs 17:3
I. Facing Blessings	Proverbs 10:22
J. Facing Death	Proverbs 15:11

## **II. Man's Relationship to Himself**

A. His Character	Proverbs 20:11
B. His Wisdom	Proverbs 1:5
C. His Foolishness	Proverbs 26:10-11
D. His Speech	Proverbs 18:21
E. His Self-Control	Proverbs 6:9-11
F. His Kindness	Proverbs 3:3
G. His Wealth	Proverbs 11:4
H. His Pride	Proverbs 27:1
I. His Anger	Proverbs 29:11
j. His Laziness	Proverbs 13:4

## **III. Man's Relationship to Others**

A. His Love	Proverbs 8:17
B. His Friends	Proverbs 17:17
C. His Enemies	Proverbs 19:27
D. His Truthfulness	Proverbs 23:23

E. His Gossip	Proverbs 20:19
F. As a Father	Proverb 30:7; 31:2-9
G. In Educating Children	Proverbs 4:1-4
H. In Disciplining Children	Proverbs 22:6

Selected from the MacArthur Study Bible

## 1. Understanding the literary structure of Proverbs

The literary structure of Proverbs is quite unique. This rhythmic use of parallelism places truths side by side, so that the second line somehow enhances the first line. That means the second may basically repeat the first with some alteration of the words, or the second may further define, expand, complete, or even contrast the first. For example:

- a. **Comparison** (Synonymous)—the simplest proverbial form where the second line repeats the first with similar words.

*“My son, attend unto my wisdom,  
and bow thine ear to my understanding.” (5:1)*

*“The liberal soul shall be made fat:  
and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.” (11:25)*

- b. **Contrast** (Antithetical)—where the second member is in contrast to the first, showing the other side of the picture. This construction is very prevalent in Proverbs.

*“In the multitude of words there wanteth (lacks) not sin:  
but he that refraineth his lips is wise.” (10:19)*

*“The thoughts of the righteous are right:  
but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.” (12:5)*

- c. **Completion** (Progression)—where the second member adds a progressive thought, thus completing or further defining the first.

*“The eyes of the LORD are in every place,  
beholding the evil and the good.” (15:3)*

*“The name of the LORD is a strong tower:  
The righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” (18:10)*

## **2. Understanding the nature (purpose) of Proverbs**

The Proverbs are not commandments or inflexible laws. They are poetic statements of wisdom under the direction of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 2:21). The most common mistake is to interpret Proverbs as promises rather than statements of principle. These are written by Solomon to grant guidance to those desiring to live wisely and successfully. To consider them to be direct promises of God will lead to frustration and error.

For example, Prov. 15:1 says:

*“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger,”*

Generally speaking, a soft answer given to an angry person will temper his “wrath” (response), but that’s no guarantee that he will stop his angry tirade. Thus, this statement is a *principle* rather than a promise.



## Chapter 1

### The Beginning of Knowledge

#### Prov. 1:1

*“The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;”*

The opening statement of this marvelous book identifies the author as Solomon, the son of David, the King of Israel. Like the parables of Jesus, proverbs depict earthly situations that point to heavenly applications, bywords, similarities, ethical wisdom, and popular moral sayings.

We could further define a proverb as a short meaningful statement of a general truth which boils down a common experience of life into a memorable form. In the next several verses, Solomon begins to define the purposes of these statements of wisdom:

#### Prov. 1:2

*“To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;”*

**To know wisdom and instruction;** To “**know**” here is more than simple head knowledge. It speaks of inner perception of truth. **Wisdom** is the ability to use knowledge skillfully, along with seeing life from God’s perspective. “**Instruction**” here has the idea of correcting a fault, which is the information needed for discipline and direction.

**To perceive the words of understanding.** The study of **Proverbs** can help one to discover or realize and distinguish the words of understanding in it. Thus, “**to perceive**” is the ability to separate information mentally and to make proper distinctions, leading to the right conclusions and actions.

### Prov. 1:3

*"To receive the instructions of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;"*

**To receive the instructions of wisdom.** Another purpose is to receive or take the instruction of wisdom. The word used for wisdom here also includes the idea of clever insight and thoughtfulness:

**Justice** is the word for that which is right (morally and legally), lining up with truth.

**Judgment** refers to the process of deciding what is right.

**Equity** is the idea of fairness, doing things right before God and man.

All of these virtues are the opposite of confusion, which prevails today in our society! Take away the Word of God, and there's no direction, clarity of purpose, or right procedure for living.

### Prov. 1:4

*"To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion."*

**To give subtilty to the simple.** **Subtilty** is used to express cleverness or resourcefulness. This quality is especially needful to simple people, usually the young and inexperienced. Of course, such wise subtilty is essential in every stage of life. Jesus said that we were to be *"wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."* (Matthew 10:16)

To know how to function legitimately in society with wisdom is a necessity for every believer in Christ. The world is tricky and underhanded; it is essential to understand and cleverly respond to those who are sophisticated sinners.

**To the young man knowledge and discretion.** Significantly, **the simple** one is placed beside **the young man**, who is also unsophisticated and easily seduced. Most young men are impulsive, easily led astray and seduced by the sins of the flesh. **Proverbs** can provide **knowledge and discretion** to prevent one from being overtaken by subtle temptations of wickedness.

**Discretion** is the ability to “spot an evil plan.” It knows where people are “coming from.” Street people call it “vibes.” This kind of wisdom is essential to a young person’s well-being and future success.

Could it be that Solomon’s main thrust of Proverbs is focused on **young people**? This seems evident when considering that he uses the term **my son** at least 23 times throughout the Book! (check the following examples: Prov. 1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1 (“children”); 5:1; 6:1; 7:1, etc.

Solomon recognizes firsthand the vulnerability and immaturity of his children; thus, the utter necessity for them to be grounded early with wisdom and godly knowledge. This was probably the basis of his classic instruction in Prov. 22:6: *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”*

### **Prov. 1:5**

*“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.”*

**A wise man will hear, and will increase learning.** A fool doesn’t listen! He disregards sound instruction and continues his journey to self-destruction. “I Did It My Way” is his theme song. But a wise man hears and heeds advice, thus enjoying the fruit of obedience (e.g., peace, clear purpose, confidence, etc.). This increase in learning includes advancement in understanding by experience, thus promoting growth in God’s grace.

**A man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.** The wise man will continue to acquire wise counsel. The word “counsels” is plural, denoting the abundant availability of wisdom to steer one in the right direction. The practice of skillful living leads to a higher level of wisdom: “practice makes perfect,” as the saying goes.

The Apostle Paul speaks of living from “faith to faith”; that is, as a believer exercises faith at his present level, it results in the development of faith at a higher level – the ability to trust God for greater things. (Romans 1:17) Wisdom comes from God through the

knowledge of and obedience to His Word, the Bible.

Note: The 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of **Proverbs** fully describes wisdom as a person, typifying Jesus Christ who is Wisdom personified (1 Corinthians 1:30).

How foolish we are to pit ourselves against the Word of Wisdom. Men who are foolish and proud trust only in themselves, ending up in hopelessness and self-destruction. Everyone needs an anchor in life's stormy sea, and Christ alone is that Anchor and the Rock! Indeed, believers can sing triumphantly, "My Anchor Holds!"

### **Prov. 1:6**

*"To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings."*

**To understand a proverb, and the interpretation.** Solomon wants us to not only read, but understand these statements of ethical wisdom. These words need to be "broken down" by the illumination of the Holy Spirit to be applied to our daily living. Sometimes these proverbs are hard to understand, so God sheds light on the subject.

The word **interpretation** has to do with figuring out what the statements are saying in order to properly comprehend them. We need to compare Scripture with Scripture, *"rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). The Apostle Paul was persistent in giving his maximum effort to impart God's Word completely, accurately, and precisely, applying it to all of Scripture.

This is powerfully illustrated as a future time when Solomon's temple was destroyed and later reconstructed in Jerusalem. Ezra, the Scribe, was commissioned to restore the spiritual life of the Jews, expounding the Word of God to the multitude gathered before the "Water Gate." A pulpit or platform of wood was built and Ezra stood before them. Nehemiah records the incident:

*"And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: and Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands:*

*and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground."*

*"Also, Jeshua... and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law... So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading... For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law," (Nehemiah 8:5-9)*

O, for such a revival and reformation of the power of God's Word in this generation! May this volume on **Proverbs** lend itself to that lofty goal.

**The words of the wise, and their dark sayings.** Words from the lips of wise people may take the form of satire, perplexity, or obscurity; they may even be "dark sayings" that totally stump the average mind. Yes, these, too, must become understandable by the grace of God. Indeed, the Book of **Proverbs** is a life-time study and, along with the rest of Scripture, is as vast as God Himself.

### **Prov. 1:7**

*"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."*

**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge:** Since the LORD is the Author of all knowledge, our relationship to Him is all-important if there is to be understanding. Thus, the "fear of the LORD" is the essential ingredient in the fruitful understanding of God's truth.

**The fear of the LORD** is the underlying theme of **Proverbs** and is the prerequisite to godliness. A holy reverence and respect for Jehovah (the great "I Am" of Exodus 3:14) is the essence of salvation in Christ (See 2 Corinthians 7:1). Practically speaking, fearing God is taking Him seriously. In fact, it is directly connected to the believer's faith.

For example, it is said that "**by faith** Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved with fear**, prepared an ark to the saving of his house..." (Hebrews 11:7) Noah's faith caused him to move in the "fear" of God, obeying the Lord's command. True faith



and holy fear are inseparable. To walk in faith and the fear of God yields the reality of true knowledge.

The word for "beginning" has the meaning of "first place, chief part, or principle thing." No one really knows anything apart from the fear of God. It is this particular fear that is the chief part of all knowledge, i.e., awareness of the facts.

The ABCs are the principle part of our language; one never gets past these letters no matter how educated he may be. All words from "cat" to "trigonometry" are but combinations of these basic letters. Likewise, no one ever gets past the fear of God.

It's been said that no doctor has ever really seen a body unless he has a sense of the fear of God: because we are *"fearfully and wonderfully made."* Without that fear, an astronomer is yet to see the wonder of a star in the universe. O, LORD, my God, "How Great Thou Art!"

**Fools despise wisdom and instruction.** Only fools (silly people) despise or scorn God's wisdom (skill) and instruction (discipline). O, what the world, including the Church, is missing by ignoring the One who made them and then came down to pay the awesome price of their redemption at the Cross!

### **Prov. 1:8**

*"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:"*

**My son, hear the instruction of thy father.** Immediately after the key verse of this book, we have divine instruction regarding the family. Solomon, as a concerned father, mentions first "my son," This is likely a reference to his son, Rehoboam.

Solomon tells us to listen to the corrections and warnings of our fathers. The father is not just the "sperm donor" and breadwinner, but the leader and instructor of the family. Along with the mother, he is the first representative of God to his children.

The previous verse spoke of the "fear of the Lord." This verse applies that instruction to the father and mother, who transfers it to

their children. The reality of God's fear must begin and reside at home, in the family.

**Forsake not the law of thy mother.** While the father instructs, the mother gives rules of conduct and action to be followed. This is a marital team effort, setting the pace for the son's (child's) future. He is to "hear" or obey his father and not "forsake" his mother's teaching. That's two sides of the same coin: to obey is not to forsake or ignore. It's one thing to hear the words; it's another thing to heed the words. Parenting is a full-time job and so is growing up.

We see here the real foundation of a godly home, out of which comes true successful living. We spend too much time teaching children how to make a living without teaching them how to live. One of my mentors used to say, "If you ever learn how to live, you'll never have a problem making a living." No wonder there's been such a satanic attack against the family throughout history.

### **Prov. 1:9**

*For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.*

Jewelry has never lost its charm. How precious and widespread are gold rings and necklaces. How apropos is this analogy to the elegance and spiritual charm of parental instruction. The law and instruction of parents shall be ornaments of **grace** around the **head** and **neck**.

The **ornament** is a wreath used as a crown of honor or **grace**. Barnes states here:

"To the Israelite's mind no signs or badges of joy or glory were higher in worth than the garland around the head, the gold chain around the neck, worn by kings and the favorites of kings."<sup>2</sup>

(Refer to Genesis 41:42; Daniel 5:29.)

The **chains** were necklaces of honor, worn by kings and those

---

<sup>2</sup> Barnes Notes on Proverbs; e-Sword Program

honored by kings. Evidently, this practice was carried over into New Testament times in the Olympics, continuing even to this day. In a recent Games celebration in Greece, many garlands and gold metals were presented to the best athletes. Much time, energy, and discipline are given by athletes to win a gold medal and a crown of twisted vines.

Yet, it's all temporary and corruptible. How much greater is the incorruptible crown that lasts forever, given to those who faithfully obey the Word of God! Where does it all begin? It begins at home listening to the godly instructions of parents. Someone has said: "We are now what we have been becoming." Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is not only right, but profitable in every way. (See Ephesians 6:1-3)

### **Prov. 1:10**

*"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."*

Right up front, Solomon warns his son in regard to sinful peer pressure. This might indicate the vital importance of teaching **Proverbs** to children. He deals here with just saying "No!" to the temptations of the peer group. This works at any age. Wicked schemes are presented to us at every phase of life. As we say "Yes" to God, we can then say "No" to sinners.

Note the word "sinners" depicts offenders or criminals, not only weak individuals who easily fall into sin. These are wicked people who work at crime. See Genesis 13:13:

*"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly." (Refer also to 1 Samuel 15:18; Psalm 1:1, 5; 104:35)*

### **Prov. 1:11**

*"If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:"*

**If they say...**Here's the crowd, the cronies, the "peer pressure" group. They always have something to say, some scheme to present, or some mischief to do. Here their enticement comes in a

verbal proposal: "Come with us"...for what? To **lay wait** (lie in ambush) **for blood**, to **lurk privily** or hide out in order to harm the innocent who are free from guilt. Yes, the wicked in their corruption and greed will prey on others **without cause**; that is, for no good purpose or valid reason (Refer to 1 Samuel 19:5; Job 2:3).

It is interesting that Solomon reveals up front how the wicked heart thinks and how essential it is to be right with God and obedient to His Word. But it's a fight to do right! The wise person must take a stand and not consent. This trap is set particularly for new believers who have recently made a break from their sinful lifestyles. However, that is not to say that mature saints in Christ do not face the temptation to compromise their own testimony in even more subtle ways.

Verses 10-19 serve as a commentary on Genesis 6:5:

*"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*

This certainly defines man's utter depravity. Indeed, it is only through Christ that a sinful soul can be transformed and redeemed.

### **Prov. 1:12**

*"Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:"*

Note the treachery: **swallow** (destroy) **them up alive as the grave**. It's similar to the terms "eat them up alive" and "bury them alive," Let's also destroy them entirely, and **whole**. There is no mercy shown whatsoever for these murderous and totally wicked thugs, who will go to the pit of hell.

### **Prov. 1:13**

*"We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:"*

Here's the heart of the matter: the reason for the wicked, murderous scheme is MONEY! This is certainly another commentary on the love of money, which is the root of all evil. Note their cocky,

arrogant confidence: **We shall find all precious** (valuable) **substance** (wealth), **we shall fill our houses with spoil.**

It is significant that this episode comes right up front in **Proverbs**. It follows right after the key verse on the **fear of the Lord** (1:7), and before the command to obey the instruction of father and mother (1:8, 9). A son who refuses to listen to God and his parents will follow the wrong crowd. Instead of being wise, he will be foolishly wicked. Who he listens to is of ultimate importance and consequence.

### **Prov. 1:14**

*“Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:”*

The proposition continues: **Cast in thy lot** (your portion) **among us**, and we’ll **have one** (common) **purse** (bag of money). Here’s the commonality of thieves who think and act in wicked unity.

Yet, it must be noted how the initial, common purse becomes the instrument to divide and destroy the thieves themselves. They will even kill each other for their “common” purse, because their greed will not allow them to share. O, the ruthlessness of sin!

### **Prov. 1:15**

*“My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:”*

Solomon pleads with his son to walk away from and reject the wicked proposal. Obviously, this is the **walk** of Psalm 1:1:

*“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”*

Don’t even think of walking in their wicked lifestyle, and don’t even set foot on their path! Prevention is much better than cure. King David says it well:

*“I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word,”* (Psalm 119:101)

In other words, to **refrain** from evil is to obey the Word, and

obedience to God will keep one from evil (Refer to Psalm 119:9, 11). Not to jump in the mud hole is much better than being delivered from it. "Flee youthful lusts"; i.e., run, run, run!

### Prov. 1:16

*"For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood."*

Why should we run from them? Because **their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood**. Begin walking with them, and you'll be running toward mischief and crime. This is another commentary on the wicked and sinful sell-out of the human heart. The prophet Jeremiah said:

*"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?"* (Jeremiah 17:9)

### Prov. 1:17

*"Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."*

Solomon magnifies the stupidity of the wicked by appealing to the positive instinct of birds. Birds are savvy to the danger of **the net** (trap) when it's spread out in their sight. In other words, even birds can sense danger and avoid it, especially when it is obviously in their **sight**. However, a foolish man goes headlong into the trap, made by his own wicked scheme.

### Prov. 1:18

*"And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives."*

Not only do the wicked fall into their own trap, but their scheme backfires or boomerangs on them. They reap what they sow. While they **lay wait** to victimize others, it's only a matter of time before their **own blood** and **lives** are destroyed.

Consider the potent nature of this truth in the Book of Esther, and the story of Haman, whose plot against Mordecai boomeranged on himself. Haman was hung on the gallows that he prepared for Esther's uncle, Mordecai, an ultimate expression of God's justice (Esther 7). The adage: *"Be sure your sin will find you out,"* is clearly illustrated therein.

### Prov. 1:19

*“So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.”*

Greed or covetousness is not only the root of robbery, but murder as well. Indeed, the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Greedy people will stop at nothing to get what they want, even to the utter destruction of others.

So is the condition of the human heart, which is “desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). Man is lost apart from the saving grace of God. No wonder Wisdom came one day to deliver fools!

### Prov. 1:20

*“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:”*

In spite of the wickedness described above, wisdom is not silent, but cries out in distress. In contrast to wickedness, wisdom has nothing to hide, and can be found in the most public of places, **the streets**.

J.F.B.’s Commentary comments that “Wisdom” here is in the plural, indicating fullness or magnification.<sup>3</sup> Some take this as the Christ, who is our Wisdom (refer to 1 Corinthians 1:30), crying out in the streets for folks to repent of their sin. This certainly fits the whole of Scripture. God is not indifferent to sinners and neither should we be. Lift up your voice as a trumpet and preach the Gospel in public places.

### Prov. 1:21

*“She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,”*

A further description of Wisdom’s aggression is crying out to the people. She cries in **the chief** (most prominent) **place of concourse** (noise or tumult). Her voice is heard where the traffic of humanity resides and travels (not in hidden places).

---

<sup>3</sup> Jameson, Faucet and Brown; e-Sword Bible Program.

These gates indicate the city fathers, the political leadership (refer to Proverbs 31:23). Wisdom seeks all people, all of whom will die without her.

### Prov. 1:22

*“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?”*

Wisdom cries out to the **simple ones...the scorers** (mockers)...and the **fools**. This is an outright indictment indicating impending judgment, and an invitation to repent, as seen in the next verse. **How long**, she asks, will the wicked pursue their ungodly attitudes and actions? Simple ones are silly and ignorant; the scorers or mockers enjoy their scorning; and **fools hate knowledge**: they don't want to know the truth or the facts.

O, the corruption and rebellion of the human heart! Only the gift of saving faith can change such people. Man left to himself can only die and go to Hell.

### Prov. 1:23

*“Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.”*

This seems like God's last call for simple fools to repent before they are turned over to a reprobate mind.<sup>4</sup> Here's an offer of grace in the midst of impending judgment. **Turn** (repent, return) **...I will pour out my spirit** (the Holy Spirit)...What a tremendous offer of mercy to rebels!

Note the sequence: 1<sup>st</sup>: Repent (**turn**); 2<sup>nd</sup>: The Holy Spirit will be **poured out** to you; and 3<sup>rd</sup>: Divine revelation of God's Word will be given to you. However, the next verse indicates that God's offer was not well received.

---

<sup>4</sup> A mind rejected by God, given over to sin; incapable of making right choices. Described further in Proverbs 1:26-31 and Romans 1:28-32.



### Prov. 1:24

*“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;”*

This solemn reprimand follows on the heels of an invitation to repent and receive God’s mercy. The wicked failed to heed God’s words. The Lord just made a loving plea, as in Isaiah 1:18-20:

*“Come now, and let us reason together... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow... If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword...”*

So here, Wisdom cries out: **Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched** (out) **my hand** (i.e., in mercy and love), **and no man regarded** (took heed). The Lord bemoans the stubbornness and rebellion of the wicked, but then announces the just consequences that follow.

It’s significant that this somber and potent warning is in the first chapter—right up front. Whatever comes afterward, the Lord reveals and earnestly urges us to obey His Word from the very beginning. To fail here is to risk the possibility of hardening one’s mind to the point of no return, as described in the following verses.

### Prov. 1:25

*“But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:”*

In connection with the previous verse, Solomon reveals their depraved hearts (apart from their actions), which refused or ignored (**set at naught**) all of God’s advice and His attempts to correct their faults. Here is another exposure of the depraved nature of mankind, which is bound to sin, unwilling to submit to God’s correction. This commentary also applies to Genesis 6:5, Jeremiah 17:9, and Romans 3:10-12.

### Prov. 1:26

*“I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;”*

This has to be one of the most somber verses in Scripture. To invoke God's holy laughter at sinful rebellion is absolutely awesome! **I also will laugh at your calamity**...It's as if God is saying, "You have laughed at and refused my Word, now I will have the last laugh!" This statement reflects the Holy grief of a loving God who must respond with justice instead of mercy. (cf. Psalm 2:4; 37:13; 59:8)

Furthermore, God says He will **mock** or make fun of the wicked person's fear when he faces the consequences of his sinfulness. How this flies in the face of modern preaching that "God loves you, no matter what. Yes, God is love, but He hates wickedness. If a sinner repents, God will pour out His mercy. If a sinner does not repent, then God will pour out His wrath. Indeed, it's a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living, just God!

#### **Prov. 1:27**

*"When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you."*

There's hardly a way to understand, much less to explain, the judgment of God expressed here. When fear comes **as desolation** (complete ruin), and **destruction** comes as a **whirlwind**, etc., where do you run if this is God's doing? Where do the ungodly run? What an ultimate dilemma this is!

Indeed, *"it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God...For our God is a consuming fire"* (Hebrews 10:31; 12:29). Without faith in Christ and His blood atonement there is no refuge from the fire of God's justice and wrath.

#### **Prov. 1:28**

*"Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."*

Like Esau, the son of Isaac, who sought his father's blessing with exceedingly great and bitter tears, but never received it (Genesis 27:34-40), so these God-haters cry out in anguish to no avail. What