

**Pepper Road Church of Christ**

# ***PROVERBS***

**Seeing the End from the Beginning**

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# Introduction

## Overview

The Old Testament's book for Proverbs belongs in the category of wisdom literature and poetry. Its content was mostly written or assembled by Solomon king of Israel, son of King David (**1 Kings 3:4-14; 4:29-32; Proverbs 1:1**). However, at least some of the book was appended or possibly even arranged entirely by "the men of Hezekiah king of Judah" (**Proverbs 25:1**). Its purpose is provided in the introduction of the book itself:

*To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding,  
To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity;  
To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion –  
A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,  
To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles. (Proverbs 1:2-6)*

## Writing Style

A proverb is "a short, well-known pithy saying, stating a general truth or piece of advice" (Oxford Dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/proverb>). Because of their abbreviated format, it is essential to understand they frequently represent general rules, not exhaustive declarations detailing every exception and variation. Much like parables, pushing application too far, beyond the main point, often results in misunderstanding.

Written in Hebrew poetic style, which preferred to rhyme vivid imagery and thoughts rather than words, most verses in Proverbs use various forms of parallelism, which is the use of two (or three) short, parallel phrases to make a similar point. Categories of parallelism include:

- **Synonymous** – "The repetition of the same thought in two different phrases using two different, yet closely related, sets of words" (Longman, 99).
- **Antithetic** – "The same thought is expressed, but expressed from two different and often opposite perspectives" (Longman, 99).
- **Synthetic** – Following lines **add** to the first, supplementing or expanding its meaning.

## Outline

- I. Choose Wisdom; Avoid Folly (**1:1 – 9:18**)
- II. Collection of Solomon's Proverbs (**10:1 – 24:34**)
- III. Collection of Solomon's Proverbs, Assembled by Hezekiah's men (**25:1 – 29:27**)
- IV. Words of Agur (**30:1-33**).
- V. Words of King Lemuel's Mother (**31:1-31**)

## Plan of Study

No one would consider rearranging the notes of a song, so that all notes of the same pitch are played in succession before playing any notes of any other pitch. It may seem more "logical" to group notes according to frequency; however, such rearrangement removes chief elements of music – variation and development.

Likewise, much like a song, Proverbs mixes topics instead of exhausting them in succession. Reading Proverbs provides a rhythm of thought that explores, develops, and reinforces themes, which reminds of forgotten or missed lessons, lost in the overflow. However, for the sake of class time and ensuring broad sampling of the book, after the introductory first nine chapters, the remaining chapters (10-31) will be grouped and analyzed by topic. Verses are categorized according to their primary point with preference given to the context of adjacent verses, and they are not relisted in other categories purely for the sake of class time management. Other equally valid and useful categorization schemes exist.

## Proverbs 1

### Goal of Studying Proverbs – Proverbs 1:1-9

1. In your own words, what is the purpose of Proverbs? To whom is it specifically directed? Why would they especially need it?
2. What is the *“beginning of knowledge”*? Why does real knowledge begin there?
3. What kind of people listens and gains knowledge? How are people described who refuse to listen? What is the motivation of each?
4. How does the *“instruction of your father”* and the *“law of your mother”* become a *“graceful ornament on your head and chains about your neck”*?

### The End of Greed – Proverbs 1:10-19

5. Do the robbers and murders know they *“lie in wait for their own blood”* and *“lurk secretly for their own lives”*? If they intended something else, then how do they forfeit their own lives?
6. Robbery and murder tempts few among the Lord’s church. How can we apply this to us?

## The Ends of Foolishness and Wisdom – Proverbs 1:20-33

7. If wisdom is personified as a woman, why is it significant that she “*raises her voice in the open squares*”, that she “*cries out in the chief concourses*”?
8. If she, her rebuke, and her words are accessible, why does not everyone accept her wisdom?
9. Does God want everyone to be saved (**2 Peter 3:9**)? Is He willing to forgive the most wicked of sinners (**2 Chronicles 33:9-13; 1 Timothy 1:12-16**)? Then, how do you harmonize wisdom’s refusal to help in **Proverbs 1:23-31** with God’s love and mercy?
10. In contrast, what can those expect who listen to wisdom?

## Proverbs 2

### The Path to Wisdom – Proverbs 2:1-9

1. Summarize what is required to find wisdom? Why would this be expanded to fill 9 verses?
2. Who is the One who provides wisdom? To whom does He give it?
3. What other ideals or principles does wisdom help us to understand?

## **The Preservation of Wisdom – Proverbs 2:10-22**

4. How does wisdom generally preserve us?
5. How does wisdom specifically preserve us from the “*way of evil*” and the “*man who speaks perverse things*”?
6. Who does the immoral woman abandon? How is she forgetting and forsaking them?
7. Why is the immoral woman so dangerous to a wise father’s sons?
8. Why is it important to “*walk in the way of goodness and to keep the paths of righteousness*”? Does this always happen? How does it ever happen?

## **Proverbs 3**

### **Forgotten Wisdom – Proverbs 3:1-8**

1. How does one “*find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man*”?
2. What obstacles are stated are implied, which might hamper our obtaining wisdom?

### **The Fruit of Wisdom – Proverbs 3:9-26**

3. How would you “*honor the Lord with your possessions*”?

4. Is this promising that if we give to God first, He will make us rich? Explain.
  
5. How does the Lord chasten us? How could we “*despise*” or “*detest*” it? How can we be “*happy*” in it?
  
6. Why would Solomon note here that God used wisdom to create the world and sustain it?
  
7. Summarize the benefits of obtaining and following wisdom that are elaborated here.

### **The Generosity of Wisdom – Proverbs 3:27-35**

8. In this context, in what ways might a person be tempted to “*oppress*” his neighbor?
  
9. Why is such oppression ill advised?
  
9. What blessings does the Lord offer and to what kind of people?

## **Proverbs 4**

### **The Criticality of Wisdom – Proverbs 4:1-13**

1. How is it helpful to learn that Solomon’s father, David, instructed his son about the importance of wisdom?



2. Why is it so critical and essential to gain wisdom? What blessings does wisdom bestow?
3. If wisdom is again personified as a woman, beyond just *“getting”* wisdom, how does one *“keep”* her, *“exalt”* her, and *“not forsake”* her?

### **The Path of Wisdom versus Evil – Proverbs 4:14-27**

4. How severe or strong is people’s desire for evil who walk in that path? How does this help us to avoid that path?
5. In what two ways is the *“path of the just”* different from the *“way of the wicked”*?
6. How would one keep David’s and Solomon’s *“words”* and *“sayings”* in the *“midst”* of one’s *“heart”*?
7. How would you *“keep your heart with all diligence”*, *“ponder the path of your feet”*, and *“let all your ways be established”*? What does this mean?
8. How is that helped by the advice to *“let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you”* and to *“not turn to the right or the left”*?

# Proverbs 5

## The Danger of the Immoral Woman – Proverbs 5:1-23

1. How does the specific advice of **Proverbs 5** to avoid the immoral woman relate to the general advice closing **Proverbs 4**? Especially compare **4:26** to **5:5-6** and **5:21**.
2. Contrast the first appearance of the “*immoral woman*” versus her latter end? What does this tell you about her character and her real agenda? Would she ever really love you?
3. How would getting too close to an “*immoral woman*” rob you as described in verses 8-10?
4. What New Testament character “*came to himself*” or “*came to his senses*” as is similarly described in verses 11-14? How much hope is extended to such a person here?
5. What alternative is provided man, so he is not so easily seduced by the immoral woman?
6. Can a person ever hope to out-smart God and avoid the consequences of his sin with an immoral woman? Why not?

# Proverbs 6

## Financial Dangers – Proverbs 6:1-11

1. What does it mean to become “*surety for your friend*”? Why is this dangerous?

2. Name at least two ways the ant can be a role model for industriousness?
3. What is a “*sluggard*”? How does one become a “*sluggard*”? Why is this dangerous?

### **Abominable People – Proverbs 6:12-19**

4. What are the characteristics of the “*worthless person, a wicked man*”?
5. Why does Solomon note that “*he winks with his eyes, he shuffles his feet, he points with his fingers*”? If you wink, shuffle your feet, or point, are you therefore a “*worthless, wicked*” person?
6. What are the 7 things or 7 kinds of people that “*the Lord hates*”? Why might He hate these over other sins? What do they have in common?

### **To Avoid the Immoral Woman – Proverbs 6:20-35**

7. How does “*your father’s command*” and “*the law of your mother*” “*lead you*”, “*keep you*”, and “*speak with you*”?
8. How does God’s commandment and law serve as a “*lamp*” and a “*light*”? How do they keep a man from the “*evil woman*”?
9. If men are generally physically stronger than women, how can a woman “*prey upon his precious life*” and reduce him to a “*crust of bread*”?

10. How does Solomon answer the thought that someone might flirt with adultery, cozy up to adultery, but yet not commit it? Is there such thing as “just a little” adultery?
11. How is adultery similar to stealing and yet different?

## Proverbs 7

### A Case Study of the Simple Seduced – Proverbs 7:1-27

1. How can wisdom be your “*sister*” and keep you from the “*immoral woman*”?
2. What **early** mistakes did the young man make, which **set him up** to be captured by this woman?
3. What choices did she make, so she would be available, accessible?
4. What was “*enticing*” about “*her speech*”? What arguments or reasoning did she use to convince the young man that it would be acceptable, safe, and desirable to yield?
5. How was this young man similar to an ox or bird?
6. Is Solomon’s observation that she has slain many strong men offered to comfort – or something else? Explain.

7. Why are her house and its room so surprising and so important to understand and remember?

## Proverbs 8

### Wisdom's Call – Proverbs 8:1-11

1. How is the setting chosen by wisdom, where she offers her call, different than the immoral woman's chosen time and location?
2. How are wisdom's words and speech different than the immoral woman's speech?
3. How can *"instruction"*, *"knowledge"*, and *"wisdom"* be better than *"silver"*, *"choice gold"*, *"rubies"*, and *"all the things one may desire"*? For application, in what way is a choice made for one over the other?

### The Strength and Wealth of Wisdom – Proverbs 8:12-21

4. What virtues does wisdom possess and therefore offer? What does she hate? If we are to be wise, then what should we develop and push from us?
5. Why is it significant – how is it applicable to us that she assists *"kings"*, *"princes"*, *"nobles"*, and *"judges"* in their rule?
6. To receive her blessings, how must one treat wisdom?

7. What kind of wealth does wisdom ultimately offer? How does this clarify the type of wisdom and its ultimate goal as used throughout this book?

## **The Power of Wisdom – Proverbs 8:22-36**

8. The fantastic power, potential, and usefulness of wisdom is demonstrated in what amazing act? How does that help us appreciate the value and usefulness of wisdom?
9. What is the significance of wisdom being “*brought forth*” (i.e., born) and “*possessed*” before the creation of the world?
10. Besides delighting in the creation of the world, what other work has brought “*delight*” to wisdom since the beginning?
11. How does one “*watch daily*” at wisdom’s “*gates, waiting at the posts*” of her “*doors*”? Can you think of examples of people literally doing this today? How does that help us understand the point and make application?
12. What does wisdom ultimately offer? Can we want or ask for anything more?
13. How can someone “*wrong his own soul*”? What does it mean to “*love death*”?

# Proverbs 9

## Wisdom's Invitation – Proverbs 9:1-12

1. What is the point being emphasized in verses 1-3? What is meant by wisdom having "*hewn out her seven pillars*"?
2. What is wisdom's invitation? Whom does she invite?
3. What is the difference between the "*wise*", "*just*" man and the "*scoffer*", the "*wicked*" man? How does that related to her invitation and apply to us?
4. What is the foundation of "*wisdom*" and "*understanding*"? Why?

## The Immoral Woman's Invitation – Proverbs 9:13-18

5. What wisdom does the "*foolish woman*" offer? What does that say about her understanding of her own end?
6. Whom does she invite? What is her invitation?
7. Fundamentally and generally, how is the immoral woman's invitation different than that of wisdom?

8. **Thought Question:** What might these two women, wisdom and immorality, represent?
  
9. **Thought Question:** Why might Solomon have personified these as women, opposed to men?
  
10. **Thought Question:** Why might Solomon repeated and elaborated so many times on simple lessons?

## The God of Men

**Verses:** 10:22; 11:20-21, 31; 12:2; 14:2, 12, 14, 26-27; 15:3, 8-9, 11, 16, 26, 29; 16:1-11, 20, 25, 33; 17:3, 5, 15; 18:10-11; 19:21, 23; 20:9, 12, 22-25, 27; 21:1-3, 27, 30-31; 22:4, 12; 23:10-11, 17-18; 24:11-12, 17-22; 27:1, 19; 28:5, 9, 14; 29:13, 18, 25-26; 30:1-9, 21-23

### Questions with Verses

1. Why does man need to trust in God to guide him (14:12; 16:2, 9, 25; 19:21; 20:24; 30:1-9)?
  
2. What is profound about observing that God made both *“the hearing ear and the seeing eye”* (20:12)? What other passages make similar connections?
  
3. How important is it to God that we honor our word and keep our commitments, especially to Him (20:25)?
  
4. What kind of people does God favor and draw toward Him, and what kind does He condemn and push away (12:2; 14:2, 26-27; 16:5, 20; 17:15; 21:3, 27; 22:4; 28:5, 9; 29:18, 25)?



5. How does He push them away (**15:8-9, 29**)? How does He bless those He favors (**16:7, 33; 18:10-11; 19:23**)?
6. If the righteous also sin, how are they different than the wicked (**11:20; 16:6; 20:9**)?
7. What represents the real, true “*man*” or the real you (**27:19**)? How is this observation helpful?
8. What specific things are referenced as being less important than God’s favor (**15:16; 16:8**)?
9. Generally, how will God reward the righteous and wicked - even here on earth (**11:31; 28:14; 29:26**)? If all is not resolved here on earth, where else might justice be satisfied (**23:17-18**)? What room does that leave for vengeance in the saint’s life (**20:22**)?
10. Why would the “*earth*” be “*perturbed*” and unable to “*bear up*” the four things listed by Agur (**30:21-23**)? Why would we be concerned about the “*earth*”? Who does the “*earth*” represent?
11. How are God’s gifts different than those that man – or the Devil – might offer (**10:22**)?
12. Why would the wicked think they could combine forces and overcome God or that the righteous may have been forsaken (**11:21; 21:30-31**)? Could they hide from God (**15:3, 11, 26; 17:3; 20:27; 21:2**)?
13. Why is it foolish to “*boast about tomorrow*” (**27:1**)? What other passages touch on this?

14. If God can manipulate the king any way He pleases, who else can He direct (21:1)? What other passages speak of God being in control of the government and its occupants?
15. How could the Lord make even the wicked for Himself (16:4)?
16. Why would God be interested in weights and scales (11:1; 16:11; 20:23)?
17. Why would God care about the poor and our treatment of them (17:5; 23:10-11; 29:13)? What other kind of people does God also care that we help and why (24:11-12, 17-22)?
18. What distinction does God make between kinds of “*knowledge*” and “*words*” (22:12)? What other passages speak of God’s similar intervention?

## Wisdom and Folly

**Verses:** 10:8, 17; 11:14, 30; 12:1, 15-16, 23; 13:1, 13-16, 20; 14:1, 6-8, 18, 24, 33; 15:7, 21-22, 24; 16:16, 21-24; 17:10, 12, 16, 24; 18:2-4, 15; 19:8, 20, 25, 27, 29; 20:5, 15, 18; 21:11, 22; 22:3, 17-21; 23:9, 12, 23; 24:3-7, 13-14; 26:3-12; 27:3, 12, 22; 28:26

## Questions with Verses

1. What fundamental behavior of the wise preserves them (22:3; 27:12)?
2. What fates await those who receive instruction versus those resistant to it (10:8, 17; 12:1; 13:13-15; 14:18, 24; 16:21; 17:10; 19:20, 25, 27, 29; 21:11; 26:3, 10)? Why do we struggle following such obvious wisdom (12:15; 15:21; 16:22; 26:12)? How can we overcome such stumbling blocks (13:1; 15:24; 19:8)?

3. What barriers does the foolish man erect, blocking his path to wisdom and understanding (**14:6-8; 17:16, 24; 18:2-3**)?
  
4. What do the wise recognize about themselves, and with what do they therefore surround themselves (**11:14; 20:18; 24:5-6**)? What adverse fate awaits those who do otherwise (**13:20; 15:22; 17:12; 28:26**)? Why is this difficult to practice?
  
5. What may be required to access the counsel and wisdom we seek (**20:5**)?
  
6. Do the foolish literally pull down their own house with their own hands (**14:1**)? To what house does this verse and related passages refer (**24:3-4**)?
  
7. Wisdom and understanding are better than what other valuables (**16:16; 20:15; 21:22**)? How can this be true? How should this affect our observable behavior (**15:14; 18:15; 22:17-18; 23:12, 23; 24:13-14**)?
  
8. Summarize the observable differences between the general behavior of the wise and fools as provided in these references: **13:16; 14:33; 15:7; 26:11**.
  
9. Whose shame do the wise “*conceal*” and why (**12:16, 23**)? How is this different than the fool?
  
10. Why would wisdom drive a man to proclaim it (**11:30; 16:21, 23-24; 18:4; 22:19-21**)? What will he do to make his teaching as effective as possible? Can you think of other Bible verses that touch on this topic?

11. What are fools incapable of doing (**24:7; 26:7, 9**)?

12. What possible harm could come from “*speaking in the hearing of a fool*” (**23:9; 26:4; 27:3, 22**)? Under what circumstances should we “*answer a fool*” anyway (**26:5**)? What other Bible passages provide similar advice?

## Righteousness and Wickedness

**Verses:** 10:2-3, 6-7, 16, 23-25, 27-30; 11:4-8, 10, 18-19, 23, 27; 12:3, 7, 12-14, 21, 28; 13:5-6, 9, 21-22, 25; 14:9, 11, 19, 22, 32; 15:5-6; 16:17, 31; 17:19; 19:16; 21:7, 15, 18, 21; 24:1-2, 8-10; 25:26; 28:1, 10, 12-13, 18, 28; 29:6, 10, 16, 27

### Questions with Verses

1. What “*treasures*” does wickedness and sin offer, and in contrast, what treasure does “*righteousness*” offer (**10:2-3, 6, 24, 28-30; 11:23, 27; 12:14, 21, 28; 14:19, 32; 16:17, 31; 29:16**)? What is the latter end of each path?
2. When and to what extent do the wicked suffer their end (**10:25, 27; 12:7; 13:9; 28:18**)?
3. When a righteous man “*falters*”, he is comparable to what (**25:26**)? What does this mean?
4. In what things may the wicked mistakenly place their confidence, and what will be the sure confidence of the righteous (**11:4; 12:3; 14:11; 15:6; 28:1**)?
5. What mechanism ironically destroys the wicked and blesses the righteous (**11:5-6, 8, 18-19; 12:13; 13:6, 21-22; 17:19; 21:7; 28:10; 29:6**)?

6. Ironically, how do the wicked often help the righteous (**21:18**)?
  
7. Why are the wicked evil (**10:23; 12:12; 13:5, 25; 14:9; 19:16; 21:7, 15; 24:1-2; 28:13**)?
  
8. How far ahead do the wicked think and plan (**11:7**)? What tools do the people on the two paths employ in executing what they have “*devised*” (**14:22; 24:8-10**)?
  
9. In what ways are both paths (righteousness and wickedness) both easy and hard (**10:16**)?
  
10. What esteem, honor, and love do the wicked enjoy contrasted with the righteous (**11:10; 21:21; 28:12, 28**)?
  
11. How do the righteous and wicked feel toward those who are firmly grounded on the other path (**29:10, 27**)?

## **Pride and Humility**

**Verses:** 11:2; 13:10, 18; 14:3, 16; 15:5, 10, 12, 25, 31-33; 16:18-19; 18:12; 20:6; 21:4; 22:1; 25:27; 27:2, 8; 28:25; 29:23; 30:13

### **Questions with Verses**

1. How is humility greater than riches and “*spoil*” (**16:19**)?

2. Contrast the fruits of pride versus humility (**11:2; 13:10; 15:25; 16:18; 18:12; 22:4; 28:25**)? How do these two attitudes produce these results?
  
3. How does the tongue of a fool serve as a “*rod of pride*” (**14:3**)? In contrast, how does humility preserve the wise?
  
4. If we are humble, how should we react to trouble and temptation, but if we are proud, how will we react instead (**14:16; 27:8**)?
  
5. Contrast the reaction of the humble and proud to correction (**13:18; 15:5, 10, 12, 31-33**)? Why do the proud struggle so with correction?
  
6. What do the proud seek instead (**20:6; 25:27; 27:2**)? How and where is the goal of pride rightly satisfied, and what does it often ironically also produce (**22:1; 29:23**)?
  
7. What other sins accompany the “*generation*” that is given over to pride, and what end can they expect (**30:12-17**)?

## Honesty, Integrity versus Lies, Perversity

**Verses:** 10:9; 11: 3; 12:5-6; 12:8, 17-20, 22; 14:5, 15, 25; 17:20; 18:1; 19:1-3, 5, 9, 28; 20:7, 14; 21:6, 8, 29; 22:5, 11; 24:28-29; 26:18-19; 27:5-6; 28:6, 23; 29:1, 24; 30:10, 12

### Questions with Verses

1. Contrast the definite end of the honest with integrity versus the perverse who twist and lie (**10:9; 11:3; 12:8, 19-20; 17:20; 19:5, 9; 21:6; 22:5, 11; 28:6; 29:24**).

2. Contrast God's judgment of those who speak lies versus truth (12:22).
  
3. How are the righteous and wicked similar and yet very different in their thoughts and words (12:5-6)?
  
4. Contrast the effect of spoken truth versus lies upon its hearers (12:17-18; 14:25; 19:28; 20:7). How does knowing this help us be honest and speak truth?
  
5. Contrast how many lies a "faithful witness" tells with how many one must tell to be a "false witness" (14:5)?
  
6. List some characteristics of a "perverse" man (19:1-3; 21:8, 29; 30:12). What New Testament passages warn against similar attitudes and consequences?
  
7. Why are people of integrity not so gullible (14:15)? How does this affect our openness to correction or flattery (27:5-6; 28:23; 29:1)?
  
8. How does a lack of integrity isolate a man, and what tools will he use to accomplish his goal (18:1)?
  
9. How does dishonesty help the buyer in the marketplace (20:14)? Does that benefit justify the practice or help him ultimately? What lesson should we learn from this?

10. Avoiding dishonesty may sometimes require what of us (**24:28-29; 30:10**)?

11. Besides all the consequences associated with lying, what else can one expect when they mistreat someone else and then say, *“I was only joking”* (**26:18-19**)?

## **Gossip, Temper, Conflict and Division**

**Verses:** 10:10-14, 18-21, 31-32; 11:9, 11-13; 13:2-3; 14:17, 29; 15:1-2, 4, 18, 28; 16:27-30, 32; 17:1, 4, 9, 11, 14, 27-28; 18:6-8, 19-21, 23; 19:11, 19; 20:3, 19; 21:23-24, 28; 22:8, 10, 24-25; 24:26; 25:11-12, 15, 23, 28; 26:2, 20-28; 27:4; 29:5, 8-9, 11, 20, 22; 30:32-33

### **Questions with Verses**

1. What is the fruit of gossip, slander, tale-bearing and cursing (**10:10, 13-14, 31-32; 13:2; 18:6-7; 22:8; 26:2, 20-21, 26-27**)?
2. By contrast, what blessings are derived from the words of the wise (**10:11, 13, 18, 20-21; 11:11; 15:4; 18:20-21**)?
3. What “tools” does a fool use to cause strife and division (**10:10-14, 18-21; 11:9; 16:28-30; 20:19; 22:10; 29:5, 8-9**)?
4. What motivates a divisive person (**10:12; 11:12; 17:11, 19; 21:24; 26:23-25, 28**)? How compulsive is their manifested motivation (**16:27; 17:4**)?
5. How is the gossip and talebearer encouraged and enabled (**18:8; 21:28; 26:22**)?



6. What qualities help a person to not gossip (**11:13; 13:3, 17**)? Therefore, when we do gossip, what qualities are we lacking?
  
7. Why is it wise to be “*slow to wrath*” versus being the “*quick-tempered man*” (**14:17, 29; 15:1-2, 18; 16:32; 17:14; 18:19; 25:23, 28; 29:22; 30:33**)?
  
8. How does this affect our words and responses (**15:28; 17:27; 18:23; 19:11; 20:3; 21:23; 24:26; 25:11-12, 15; 27:4; 29:11, 20; 30:32**)?
  
9. Why would it be important to highlight the misery and danger of long-term conflict (**17:1; 19:19; 22:24-25**)? How do we avoid such imprisonments?
  
10. What are the benefits and blessings of brevity (**10:19; 17:28**)?

## **Generosity, Grace versus Greed, Wrath**

**Verses:** 11:16-17, 24-25; 12:10; 13:7; 14:21, 31; 19:17, 22; 21:13, 26; 22:9, 16, 22-23; 25:14, 21-22; 27:20; 28:3, 8, 27; 29:7; 30:14-15

### **Questions with Verses**

1. When people are generous, gracious, and merciful, whose benefit do they seek (**21:26; 29:7**)? In contrast, whose benefit do the greedy, ruthless, cruel and wrathful seek (**30:14-15**)?
  
2. What is the short-term payoff of greed, ruthlessness, cruelty, and wrath (**11:16**)?

3. What is the surprising end of generosity versus greed (**11:17, 24-25; 13:7; 14:21; 27:20; 28:8, 27**)?
  
4. How do the gracious and merciful prosper and grow, despite their giving forgiveness, resources, and time (**11:16-17**)?
  
5. How is our both our generosity and cruelty to the poor related to God (**14:31; 19:17, 22; 21:13; 22:9, 22-23**)?
  
6. How does one "*heap coals of fire*" on the head of his enemy (**25:21-22**)?
  
7. How is the "*mercy*" of the righteous contrasted with that of the wicked (**12:10**)?
  
8. Why would someone give to the rich, and why would that be motivation be misguided (**22:16**)?
  
9. What is ironic and terrible about the "*poor oppressing the poor*" (**28:3**)?
  
10. Why would someone boast of giving, and why would false boasters be like "*clouds and wind without rain*" (**25:14**)?

# Industriousness and Finances

**Verses:** 10:4-5, 15-16, 26; 11:15, 28; 12:9, 11, 24, 27; 13:4, 8, 11; 14:4, 23; 15:19, 27; 16:26; 17:2, 18; 18:9, 19:15, 24; 20:4, 13, 16-17; 21:5, 17, 20, 25; 22:2, 7, 13, 26-27, 29; 23:1-8; 24:27, 30-34; 26:13-16; 27:13, 18, 23-27; 28:11, 19-20, 22; 29:21; 30:24-28

## Questions with Verses

1. Although vastly inferior to wisdom, humility, love, and other virtues, how does wealth help a person (**10:15; 12:9; 13:8; 22:7**)?
2. What danger is associated with wealth (**11:28; 13:11; 15:27; 20:17; 22:2; 23:4-5; 28:11, 20, 22**)? How does a person fall into this trap?
3. What danger is associated with being “surety”, for example, cosigning a loan (**11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26-27; 27:13**)?
4. When do the wise work (**10:5**)? How do they work (**14:4; 21:5; 24:27; 27:18, 23-27**)?
5. What motivates a man to work (**16:26**; see also, **21:5-6**)?
6. What lessons can be learned about industriousness from the animal kingdom (**30:24-28**; see also, **6:6-8**)?
7. What is the inevitable end of laziness, slackness, frivolity and procrastination (**10:4; 12:24; 18:19; 19:15; 20:13; 21:25; 24:30-34**; see also, **6:9-11**)?

8. How are the lazy described (**10:26; 12:27; 13:4; 14:23; 15:19; 19:24; 20:4; 22:13; 26:13-16**)? What are their characteristics, and why is this important?
  
9. How are pleasure seekers different than the lazy man, the procrastinator and yet very similar (**12:11; 21:17, 20; 28:19**)?
  
10. How might the surprising events of **17:2** occur today? In contrast, how might **29:21** happen today?
  
11. Why is it dangerous to enjoy the food and gifts given to you by a ruler or miser (**23:1-3, 6-8**)?

## Alcohol

**Verses:**      **20:1; 23:20-21, 29-35; 31:4-7**

### Questions with Verses

1. What does alcohol do to a person, and consequently, what kind of person would voluntarily participate in such (**20:1; 23:29-30, 33-34**)?
  
2. Beyond its intoxicating effects, what other aspects of wine might allure person (**23:31**)? How would these qualities deceive and entrap them (**23:32**)?
  
3. What problem with alcohol is portrayed in **23:35**? Why does this make alcohol so dangerous?

4. How else are drinkers of wine and drunkards affected by their habits beyond intoxication itself (23:20-21)?
5. How can drinking alcohol hurt someone else (31:4-5)?
6. If there is a place for alcohol, where is it (31:6-7)? What New Testament verse also suggests such limited usefulness?
7. Based on these verses and possibly others, would limited amounts of consuming alcohol be permissible for social or recreational purposes? Why or why not?

## **Anxiety, Depression, and Mirth**

**Verses:** 12:25; 13:12, 19; 14:10, 13, 30; 15:13, 15, 23, 30; 17:22; 18:14; 25:20, 25; 27:7

### **Questions with Verses**

1. How does your attitude, state of mind (or *“heart”*) affect the inner and outer man (15:13; 17:22; 18:14; 27:7)?
2. How does hope and desire relate to our heart and state of mind (13:12, 19; 14:30)? Because of this fact, upon what should we set our hopes, and how do we cope with long-term goals in which we hope?
3. What is the cause and remedy for depression (12:25; 15:23, 30; 25:25)?

4. What are the limits of our efforts to comfort or share in another person's struggles and joys (14:10; 25:20)?
5. How can "*sorrow of the heart*" be mixed with "*laughter*" and "*mirth*" end in "*grief*" (14:12-13)?

## Husbands and Wives

**Verses:** 11:22; 12:4; 15:17; 18:22; 19:13-14; 21:9, 19; 22:14; 23:27-28; 25:24; 27:15-16; 30:18-20, 23; 31:3, 10-31

### Questions with Verses

1. How marriage intended to affect a person, and by whom was it so designed (18:22; 19:14; 30:18-19)?
2. What two extreme effects can a wife have upon a husband (12:4)?
3. How can love or hatred in a home be a greater issue than putting food on the table (15:17)?
4. What is a "*lovely woman who lacks discretion*" like, and how can this be (11:22)?
5. How can a "*contentious woman*" be such a miserable wife (or daughter), and how can they be identified before it is too late (19:13; 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15-16; 30:21-23)?

6. In contrast, what are the general characteristics of the “*virtuous wife*” (31:10-31)? How many of her virtues should godly women strive to obtain?
  
7. What weapon does the “*immoral woman*” use to lure her prey, and what kind of men is prone to following after her (22:14)? How is she like a “*narrow well*” or a “*deep pit*” (23:27-28; 31:3)?
  
8. What is the state of the conscience of the “*adulterous woman*” (30:20)? How do you know?

## Parenting and Children

**Verses:** 10:1, 5; 11:29; 13:24; 15:20; 17:6, 21, 25; 19:18, 26; 20:11, 20-21, 29-30; 22:6, 15, 28; 23:13-16, 19, 22, 24-26; 27:11; 28:7, 24; 29:3, 15, 17; 30:11, 17; 31:1-2

### Questions with Verses

1. What has the Lord promised to any who “*troubles his own house*” (11:29; 20:20-21; 28:24; 30:11, 17)?
  
2. What effects can children have on their parents (10:1, 5; 15:20; 17:21, 25; 19:26; 23:15-16, 24-25; 27:11; 28:7; 29:3)?
  
3. How can grandchildren and children bring glory to parents and parents to children (17:6; 22:28)? What is the “*glory*” of the old versus the young, and how do they benefit from each other (20:29; 23:19, 22, 26; 31:1-2)?
  
4. How is the presence or absence of prompt, physical discipline an indication of a parent’s love or hatred (13:24; 19:18; 20:30; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17)?

5. How can a parent know if his child needs discipline, correction or praise, honor (**20:11**)?
6. How does a parent “*train up a child in the way that he should go*”, so that “*when he is old he will not depart from it*” (**22:6**)? Does this mean children do not have free will?

## Friends and Neighbors

**Verses:** 12:26; 17:17; 18:24; 19:4, 6-7; 21:10; 22:1; 25:16-19; 27:9-10, 14, 17, 21

### Questions with Verses

1. What is both a great power and danger of friendship of which we should be careful (**12:26; 27:9, 17**)?
2. If a person desires friends, then how must he himself behave (**18:24, NKJV**)? How can a person go too far in this behavior (**18:24, NASB**)?
3. How is “*a good name*” and “*loving favor*” preferable to riches, silver, and gold (**22:1; 27:21**)? How might this be overvalued, taken too far?
4. How does our wealth affect our friends (**19:4, 6-7**)?
5. How are “fair-weather friends” different than true friends (**17:17; 18:24; 25:19; 27:10**)?
6. How do the wicked view their neighbors (**21:10; 25:18**)?



7. How might friendship and honey be similar (25:16-17; 27:14)?

## Government: Kings, Judges, and Peoples

**Verses:** 13:17, 23; 14:28, 34-35; 15:22, 27; 16:10, 12-15; 17:7-8, 13, 23, 26; 18:5, 13, 16-18; 19:10, 12; 20:2, 8, 26, 28; 21:1, 14; 24:21-25; 25:13; 27:23-27; 28:2, 4-5, 15-17; 29:2-4, 12, 14; 30:29-31; 31:1, 3-5, 8-9

### Questions with Verses

1. How can justice be perverted? What is the short-term reward for injustice, and what is its long-term consequence (13:23; 15:27; 17:8, 13, 23; 18:5, 16; 21:14; 24:23-25; 28:17; 29:4, 14)?
2. Why is it important for everyone to remember that the king ultimately answers to God and can be manipulated by Him (21:1)? Can you think of Old Testament examples of such manipulation that led to a king's judgment and destruction?
3. Why is it critical that a king make wise judgements (16:10; 17:7; 18:13, 17; 20:8, 26, 28; 29:2-3; 31:3-5)?
4. How is the king's favor like "*a cloud of the latter rain*" and his wrath like a "*roaring lion*", and therefore how should his servants and followers consider this in their behavior (16:15; 19:12; 20:2; 24:21-22)?
5. What Old Testament character wisely preserved his life and the life of his friends when the king sent "*messengers of death*" to kill them in his "*wrath*" (16:14)?
6. What danger is present for people in authority who are filled with wrath (17:26; 28:15)?

7. How might a king become paranoid, what is its danger, and how does he avoid it (**29:12**)?
  
8. How does the number of people a king rules – or any leader oversees – indicate the success of the king (**14:28; 30:29-31**), and why not wealth or land area?
  
9. Similarly, what other attributes bring honor or dishonor to a people and its king (**14:34; 16:22; 28:2, 4-5, 16; 31:8-9**)?
  
10. What kind of help does a king – or any leader – need (**15:22; 25:13; 31:1**)? Consequently, what kind of people should a king – or any leader – generally promote or not promote (**13:17; 14:35; 16:13; 19:10**)?
  
11. Why is it important for a king to “*know the state of your flocks*” (**27:23-27**)? How would a king – or any leader – balance this responsibility with the innumerable detailed decisions that must be made every day as part of his kingdom? How could this be applied to a household or a business?
  
12. What technique can any judge or leader use to resolve many disputes (**18:18**)? What similar technique may parents use to keep quarreling children apart? Is this a cowardly way to avoid performing one’s duty as a judge, leader or parent? Explain.