

The Proverbs

Chapter 1

If you listen to these sayings, you will acquire wisdom.
These sayings will help you develop virtue,
justice and fairness.

Be careful of bad people who try to mislead you.
A net is spread in vain if the bird is watching.

Wisdom calls aloud in the streets.
She delivers her message at the city gates:

"How much longer will you prefer ignorance to knowledge?
The complacency of fools works their own ruin.

But whoever listens to me will live in safety.
Whoever listens to me will choose good and avoid evil."

Dear God, please give us more wisdom

Chapter 2

If you turn your ear to wisdom,
you will discover the knowledge of God.

For God himself is the giver of wisdom.
From his mouth come knowledge and discernment.

When wisdom comes into your heart,
then prudence and discernment will protect you from evil.

Dear God, source of wisdom,
please give us more wisdom

Chapter 3

Let kindness and loyalty never leave you.
Tie them around your neck.

In everything you do, keep God in mind.
He will help you take the right path.

Love God and turn your back on evil.
This will give good health to your body.

Do not refuse a kindness to anyone who asks,
if it is in your power to help them.

Lord, please help us to be kind to everyone

Chapters 4, 5

Acquire wisdom, never forget her.
Do not desert her. She will keep you safe.

Wisdom is life to those who obtain her,
health for the entire body.

Take no notice of a loose-living woman,
go nowhere near the door of her house.

Drink the water of your own cistern,
fresh water from your own well.

Find joy with the wife you married in your youth,
let hers be the love that always holds you captive.

Dear Lord, please give married people
the wisdom to stay faithful to each other

Chapter 6

Idler, go to the ant. Ponder her ways and grow wise.
No one gives her orders, yet she makes sure of her food.

Night and day you spend so much time sleeping.
In no time poverty and want will be at your pillow.

Avoid deceitful people, those who have leering lips,
winking eyes, shuffling feet, beckoning fingers.

Avoid people with a haughty look
and people who sow dissension.

Do not desire the beauty of your neighbour's wife.
Adultery means trouble and disgrace.

Dear God, please give us the wisdom
to avoid deceit and dishonesty

Chapters 7 & 8

To Wisdom say "My sister."
Call Perception your dearest friend.

Wisdom says:
"The Lord created me before time began.
I was by his side, delighting him day after day.

Happy those who keep my ways.
Happy those who listen to me.

Whoever finds me finds life.
I am more precious than silver or gold."

Dear Lord, please help me to be a friend of Wisdom
205 Proverbs

Chapter 9

Wisdom has built herself a house,
she has erected 7 pillars.

She has sent out her maidservants
to proclaim from the city's heights:

"Come and eat my bread,
drink the wine I have prepared.

Leave your foolishness and you will live.
Come and walk in the way of wisdom."

Lord, please help us accept your invitation
to grow in wisdom

Chapter 10

A wise child is a father's joy.
A foolish child is a mother's sorrow.

Laziness leads to poverty.
Diligence leads to success.

Hatred provokes disputes.
Love covers over all offences.

A flood of words is never without fault.
Prudent people control their lips.

Lord, may my words be wise and loving

Chapters 11 & 12

Pride comes before a fall. Humility brings wisdom.

A city prospers when good people are many.

A city falls when good people are few.

Good people are kind to animals.

Bad people are cruel to animals.

Good people overlook insults.

Good people's speech promotes harmony in society.

Worry makes our hearts heavy.

Kindly words from others make us glad.

Lord, help me to be kind and wise

Chapters 13 & 14

Guard your talk and you will protect your life.

People who talk too much, easily get into trouble.

Choose wise people as your friends and you will be happy.

Choose foolish people as friends
and your problems will multiply.

The heart knows its own grief best.

No human person can fully understand
another person's heart.

A peaceful heart is necessary for good health.

Envy is like a cancer in the bones.

Injustice to the poor is an insult to our Creator.

Kindness to the poor gives honor to our Creator.

Virtue makes a nation great. Sin causes empires to fall.

Dear God, please help everyone in our country
to be wise and kind and just

Chapter 15

A mild answer diffuses a tense situation.

A sharp answer stirs up anger.

A kind tongue is a source of life.

A harsh tongue hurts other people's feelings.

A happy heart produces a cheerful face.

A sad heart means a drooping spirit.

Hot-headed people provoke disputes.

Peaceful people prevent disputes.

Without deliberation, plans come to nothing.

Successful plans need many counselors.

A kindly glance gives joy to the heart.

Good news gives strength to the bones.

Dear Lord, please give me a kind tongue

Chapter 16

A person proposes, God disposes.

Ask the Lord to bless all your plans.

Kindness and loyalty make up for sin.

Love of the Lord brings avoidance of evil.

If the Lord is pleased with your way of life,
he will cause your enemies to become your friends.

Pride goes before destruction,
a haughty spirit before a fall.

A troublemaker sows strife.

A talebearer separates friends.

Better to be a peaceful person than a hero.

Better to be master of yourself than the conqueror of a city.

Lord, please give me a humble, peaceful spirit

Chapter 17

Better a dry crust of bread eaten in peace
than a house where feasting and argument go together.

Whoever avoids talking about offences,
promotes love.

Whoever keeps on talking about offences,
divides friends.

A person who controls the tongue has knowledge.
People of discernment control their temper.

Lord, please give me a kind tongue

Chapter 18

Foolish people are not interested in reflection,
but only in airing their own opinion.

The human heart is haughty until disaster strikes.
Humility goes before honor.

Don't reply to someone until you've listened to their views.
Be slow to interrupt someone who is speaking.

Lord, please help me to be a good listener

Chapters 19 – 22

Where reflection is wanting, zeal is not good.

People who go too quickly miss their way.

Whoever is kind to the poor is kind to the Lord.

The Lord will repay such kindness.

Children at play

show what sort of people they will be in the future.

Better the corner of a loft to live in

than a house shared with a scolding spouse.

Better to live in a desert land

than with a scolding and irritable spouse.

Instruct children in goodness and justice

and they will always be good adults.

Lord, please help me put into practice
the ideas in these words

Chapters 23 – 24

If someone invites you for a meal,

be careful not to make a pig of yourself.

Don't waste your breath talking to foolish people.

Make sure your children receive a wholesome discipline.

Don't be a drunkard.

Don't be a glutton.

Avoid prostitution.

Brains are better than brawn.

If you make a big mistake and fall, get up and start again.

Lord, please help me put into practice
the ideas in these words

Chapters 25, 26

Cloud and wind, but no rain.
Such is the person who makes a lot of promises
but doesn't keep them.

Don't over-tax your neighbor's hospitality.

If people who don't like you are hungry or thirsty,
give them something to eat or drink.
In this way you will shame them into being better people.

Rain comes by the north wind.
A ravaged face comes from a backbiting tongue.

An open town, without defences.
Such is a person lacking self-control.

As a dog returns to its vomit
so foolish people return to their folly.

Interfering in the quarrels of other people
is like catching a stray dog by the tail.

No wood, and the fire goes out.
No talebearer, and quarrelling dies down.

Lord, please stop me from being critical of other people

Chapters 27 – 29

Do not boast about tomorrow,
since you do not know what will happen today.
Let others praise you, but do not praise yourself.
Better open reproof than voiceless love.
From one who loves, wounds are well-intentioned.
From one who hates, kisses are ominous.
He who admits his faults will prosper.
He who confesses and renounces his faults will find mercy.
A roaring lion, a hungry bear,
such is a bad ruler of a poor people.

Lord, please help me practise the ideas in these words

Chapters 30, 31

Every word of God is true and of great value.
Do not change or misinterpret God's words.
Do not give way to sexual excess.
Do not give way to drunkenness.
Be the voice of the poor, the unwanted.
Uphold the rights of the needy.
Happy the man who finds a good wife.
She is far beyond the price of pearls.
She looks after her household with care.
She works diligently for her family.
She holds out her hand to the poor.
She opens her arms to the needy.
Charm is deceitful, and beauty empty.
The woman who is wise is the one to praise.

Lord, thank you for all the wisdom
in the Book of Proverbs!