

PROVERBS

Chapters 1-9 are the NLT with very little editing from me, AA.

1 These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel.

2 Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline,
to help them understand the insights of the wise.

3 Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and
successful lives,

to help them do what is right, just, and fair.

4 These proverbs will give insight to the simple,
knowledge and discernment to the young.

5 Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser.

Let those with understanding receive guidance

6 by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables,
the words of the wise and their riddles.

TRUE WISDOM

7 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

8 My child, listen when your father corrects you.

Don't neglect your mother's instruction.

9 What you learn from them will crown you with grace
and be a chain of honor around your neck.

DO NOT FOLLOW THE UNGODLY

- 10 My child, if sinners entice you,
turn your back on them!
- 11 They may say, "Come and join us.
Let's hide and kill someone!
Just for fun, let's ambush the innocent!
- 12 Let's swallow them alive, like the grave;
let's swallow them whole, like those who go down to the pit
of death.
- 13 Think of the great things we'll get!
We'll fill our houses with all the stuff we take.
- 14 Come, throw in your lot with us;
we'll all share the loot."
- 15 My child, don't go along with them!
Stay far away from their paths.
- 16 They rush to commit evil deeds.
They hurry to commit murder.
- 17 If a bird sees a trap being set,
it knows to stay away.
- 18 But these people set an ambush for themselves;
they are trying to get themselves killed.
- 19 Such is the fate of all who are greedy for money;
it robs them of life.

THE AVAILABILITY OF GOD'S TRUTH

- 20 Wisdom shouts in the streets.
She cries out in the public square.
- 21 She calls to the crowds along the main street,

to those gathered in front of the city gate:
22 "How long, you simpletons,
will you insist on being simpleminded?
How long will you mockers relish your mocking?
How long will you fools hate knowledge?
23 Come and listen to my counsel.
I'll share my heart with you
and make you wise.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF IGNORING GOD

24 "I called you so often, but you wouldn't come.
I reached out to you, but you paid no attention.
25 You ignored my advice
and rejected the correction I offered.
26 So I will laugh when you are in trouble!
I will mock you when disaster overtakes you—
27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm,
when disaster engulfs you like a cyclone,
and anguish and distress overwhelm you.
28 "When they cry for help, I will not answer.
Though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me.
29 For they hated knowledge
and chose not to fear the Lord.
30 They rejected my advice
and paid no attention when I corrected them.
31 Therefore, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own
way,

choking on their own schemes.

32 For simpletons turn away from me—to death.

Fools are destroyed by their own complacency.

33 But all who listen to me will live in peace,
untroubled by fear of harm.”

CHAPTER 2

THE BENEFITS OF ALIGNMENT WITH GOD

2 My child, listen to what I say,
and treasure my commands.

2 Tune your ears to wisdom,
and concentrate on understanding.

3 Cry out for insight,
and ask for understanding.

4 Search for them as you would for silver;
seek them like hidden treasures.

5 Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord,
and you will gain knowledge of God.

6 For the Lord grants wisdom!
From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

7 He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest.
He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.

8 He guards the paths of the just
and protects those who are faithful to him.

9 Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair,
and you will find the right way to go.

10 For wisdom will enter your heart,

and knowledge will fill you with joy.

11 Wise choices will watch over you.

Understanding will keep you safe.

12 Wisdom will save you from evil people,
from those whose words are twisted.

13 These men turn from the right way
to walk down dark paths.

14 They take pleasure in doing wrong,
and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil.

15 Their actions are crooked,
and their ways are wrong.

16 Wisdom will save you from the immoral woman,
from the seductive words of the promiscuous woman.

17 She has abandoned her husband
and ignores the covenant she made before God.

18 Entering her house leads to death;
it is the road to the grave.

19 The man who visits her is doomed.
He will never reach the paths of life.

20 So follow the steps of the good,
and stay on the paths of the righteous.

21 For only the godly will live in the land,
and those with integrity will remain in it.

22 But the wicked will be removed from the land,
and the treacherous will be uprooted.

CHAPTER 3

MISCELLANEOUS GOOD ADVICE

3 My child, never forget the things I have taught you.

Store my commands in your heart.

2 If you do this, you will live many years,
and your life will be satisfying.

3 Never let loyalty and kindness leave you!
Tie them around your neck as a reminder.
Write them deep within your heart.

4 Then you will find favor with both God and people,
and you will earn a good reputation.

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.

6 Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.

7 Don't be impressed with your own wisdom.
Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

8 Then you will have healing for your body
and strength for your bones.

9 Honor the Lord with your wealth
and with the best part of everything you produce.

10 Then he will fill your barns with grain,
and your vats will overflow with good wine.

- 11 My child, don't reject the Lord's discipline,
and don't be upset when he corrects you.
- 12 For the Lord corrects those he loves,
just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.
- 13 Joyful is the person who finds wisdom,
the one who gains understanding.
- 14 For wisdom is more profitable than silver,
and her wages are better than gold.
- 15 Wisdom is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire can compare with her.
- 16 She offers you long life in her right hand,
and riches and honor in her left.
- 17 She will guide you down delightful paths;
all her ways are satisfying.
- 18 Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her;
happy are those who hold her tightly.
- 19 By wisdom the Lord founded the earth;
by understanding he created the heavens.
- 20 By his knowledge the deep fountains of the earth burst
forth,
and the dew settles beneath the night sky.
- 21 My child, don't lose sight of common sense and discernment.
Hang on to them,
- 22 for they will refresh your soul.
They are like jewels on a necklace.

23 They keep you safe on your way,
and your feet will not stumble.
24 You can go to bed without fear;
you will lie down and sleep soundly.
25 You need not be afraid of sudden disaster
or the destruction that comes upon the wicked,
26 for the Lord is your security.
He will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.

27 Do not withhold good from those who deserve it
when it's in your power to help them.
28 If you can help your neighbor now, don't say,
"Come back tomorrow, and then I'll help you."

29 Don't plot harm against your neighbor,
for those who live nearby trust you.
30 Don't pick a fight without reason,
when no one has done you harm.

31 Don't envy violent people
or copy their ways.
32 Such wicked people are detestable to the Lord,
but he offers his friendship to the godly.

33 The Lord curses the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the home of the upright.

34 The Lord mocks the mockers

but is gracious to the humble.

35 The wise inherit honor,
but fools are put to shame!

CHAPTER 4

4 My children, listen when your father corrects you.
Pay attention and learn good judgment,
2 for I am giving you good guidance.
Don't turn away from my instructions.
3 For I, too, was once my father's son,
tenderly loved as my mother's only child.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALIGNING WITH GOD

4 My father taught me,
"Take my words to heart.
Follow my commands, and you will live.
5 Get wisdom; develop good judgment.
Don't forget my words or turn away from them.
6 Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you.
Love her, and she will guard you.
7 Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do!
And whatever else you do, develop good judgment.
8 If you prize wisdom, she will make you great.
Embrace her, and she will honor you.
9 She will place a lovely wreath on your head;
she will present you with a beautiful crown."

TWO OPPOSITE PATHS

- 10 My child, listen to me and do as I say,
and you will have a long, good life.
- 11 I will teach you wisdom's ways
and lead you in straight paths.
- 12 When you walk, you won't be held back;
when you run, you won't stumble.
- 13 Take hold of my instructions; don't let them go.
Guard them, for they are the key to life.
- 14 Don't do as the wicked do,
and don't follow the path of evildoers.
- 15 Don't even think about it; don't go that way.
Turn away and keep moving.
- 16 For evil people can't sleep until they've done their evil deed
for the day.
They can't rest until they've caused someone to stumble.
- 17 They eat the food of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence!
- 18 The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn,
which shines ever brighter until the full light of day.
- 19 But the path of the wicked is like total darkness.
They have no idea what they are stumbling over.
- 20 My child, pay attention to what I say.
Listen carefully to my words.
- 21 Don't lose sight of them.

Let them penetrate deep into your heart,
22 for they bring life to those who find them,
and healing to their whole body.

23 Guard your heart above all else,
for it determines the course of your life.

24 Avoid all perverse talk;
stay away from corrupt speech.

25 Look straight ahead,
and fix your eyes on what lies before you.

26 Mark out a straight path for your feet;
stay on the safe path.

27 Don't get sidetracked;
keep your feet from following evil.

CHAPTER 5

DO NOT BE PROMISCUOUS!

5 My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
listen carefully to my wise counsel.

2 Then you will show discernment,
and your lips will express what you've learned.

3 For the lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey,
and her mouth is smoother than oil.

4 But in the end she is as bitter as poison,
as dangerous as a double-edged sword.

5 Her feet go down to death;

- her steps lead straight to the grave.
- 6 For she cares nothing about the path to life.
She staggers down a crooked trail and doesn't realize it.
- 7 So now, my sons, listen to me.
Never stray from what I am about to say:
- 8 Stay away from her!
Don't go near the door of her house!
- 9 If you do, you will lose your honor
and will lose to merciless people all you have achieved.
- 10 Strangers will consume your wealth,
and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labor.
- 11 In the end you will groan in anguish
when disease consumes your body.
- 12 You will say, "How I hated discipline!
If only I had not ignored all the warnings!
- 13 Oh, why didn't I listen to my teachers?
Why didn't I pay attention to my instructors?
- 14 I have come to the brink of utter ruin,
and now I must face public disgrace."

BE FAITHFUL TO YOUR OWN WIFE!

- 15 Drink water from your own well—
share your love only with your wife.
- 16 Why spill the water of your springs in the streets,
having sex with just anyone?
- 17 You should reserve it for yourselves.
Never share it with strangers.

- 18 Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you.
Rejoice in the wife of your youth.
- 19 She is a loving deer, a graceful doe.
Let her breasts satisfy you always.
May you always be captivated by her love.
- 20 Why be captivated, my son, by an immoral woman,
or fondle the breasts of a promiscuous woman?
- 21 For the Lord sees clearly what a man does,
examining every path he takes.
- 22 An evil man is held captive by his own sins;
they are ropes that catch and hold him.
- 23 He will die for lack of self-control;
he will be lost because of his great foolishness.

CHAPTER 6

DO NOT CO-SIGN!

- 6 My child, if you have put up security for a friend's debt
or agreed to guarantee the debt of a stranger—
- 2 if you have trapped yourself by your agreement
and are caught by what you said—
- 3 follow my advice and save yourself,
for you have placed yourself at your friend's mercy.
- Now swallow your pride;
go and beg to have your name erased.
- 4 Don't put it off; do it now!
Don't rest until you do.

5 Save yourself like a gazelle escaping from a hunter,
like a bird fleeing from a net.

DON'T BE LAZY!

6 Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones.

Learn from their ways and become wise!

7 Though they have no prince

or governor or ruler to make them work,

8 they labor hard all summer,

gathering food for the winter.

9 But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep?

When will you wake up?

10 A little extra sleep, a little more slumber,

a little folding of the hands to rest—

11 then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit;

scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.

12 What are worthless and wicked people like?

They are constant liars,

13 signaling their deceit with a wink of the eye,

a nudge of the foot, or the wiggle of fingers.

14 Their perverted hearts plot evil,

and they constantly stir up trouble.

15 But they will be destroyed suddenly,

broken in an instant beyond all hope of healing.

SEVEN THINGS GOD HATES

16 There are six things the Lord hates—

no, seven things he detests:

- 17 haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that kill the innocent,
18 a heart that plots evil,
feet that race to do wrong,
19 a false witness who pours out lies,
a person who sows discord in a family.

20 My son, obey your father's commands,
and don't neglect your mother's instruction.

21 Keep their words always in your heart.
Tie them around your neck.

22 When you walk, their counsel will lead you.
When you sleep, they will protect you.
When you wake up, they will advise you.

23 For their command is a lamp
and their instruction a light;
their corrective discipline
is the way to life.

DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY!

24 It will keep you from the immoral woman,
from the smooth tongue of a promiscuous woman.

25 Don't lust for her beauty.
Don't let her coy glances seduce you.

26 For a prostitute will bring you to poverty,[b]
but sleeping with another man's wife will cost you your life.

27 Can a man scoop a flame into his lap
and not have his clothes catch on fire?
28 Can he walk on hot coals
and not blister his feet?
29 So it is with the man who sleeps with another man's wife.
He who embraces her will not go unpunished.

30 Excuses might be found for a thief
who steals because he is starving.
31 But if he is caught, he must pay back seven times what he
stole,
even if he has to sell everything in his house.
32 But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool,
for he destroys himself.
33 He will be wounded and disgraced.
His shame will never be erased.
34 For the woman's jealous husband will be furious,
and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.
35 He will accept no compensation,
nor be satisfied with a payoff of any size.

CHAPTER 7

MORE ADVICE TO LIVE A MORAL LIFE

7 Follow my advice, my son;
always treasure my commands.
2 Obey my commands and live!
Guard my instructions as you guard your own eyes.[a]
3 Tie them on your fingers as a reminder.

Write them deep within your heart.

4 Love wisdom like a sister;

make insight a beloved member of your family.

5 Let them protect you from an affair with an immoral woman,
from listening to the flattery of a promiscuous woman.

6 While I was at the window of my house,
looking through the curtain,

7 I saw some naive young men,
and one in particular who lacked common sense.

8 He was crossing the street near the house of an immoral
woman,

strolling down the path by her house.

9 It was at twilight, in the evening,
as deep darkness fell.

10 The woman approached him,
seductively dressed and sly of heart.

11 She was the brash, rebellious type,
never content to stay at home.

12 She is often in the streets and markets,
soliciting at every corner.

13 She threw her arms around him and kissed him,
and with a brazen look she said,

14 "I've just made my peace offerings
and fulfilled my vows.

15 You're the one I was looking for!

I came out to find you, and here you are!

16 My bed is spread with beautiful blankets,
with colored sheets of Egyptian linen.

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

18 Come, let's drink our fill of love until morning.
Let's enjoy each other's caresses,
19 for my husband is not home.
He's away on a long trip.

20 He has taken a wallet full of money with him
and won't return until later this month.[b]"

21 So she seduced him with her pretty speech
and enticed him with her flattery.

22 He followed her at once,
like an ox going to the slaughter.
He was like a stag caught in a trap,[c]

23 awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart.
He was like a bird flying into a snare,
little knowing it would cost him his life.

24 So listen to me, my sons,
and pay attention to my words.

25 Don't let your hearts stray away toward her.
Don't wander down her wayward path.

26 For she has been the ruin of many;
many men have been her victims.

27 Her house is the road to the grave.[d]
Her bedroom is the den of death.

CHAPTER 8

A CALL TO PURSUE ALIGNMENT WITH GOD

8 Listen as Wisdom calls out!

Hear as understanding raises her voice!

2 On the hilltop along the road,
she takes her stand at the crossroads.

3 By the gates at the entrance to the town,
on the road leading in, she cries aloud,

4 "I call to you, to all of you!

I raise my voice to all people.

5 You simple people, use good judgment.

You foolish people, show some understanding.

6 Listen to me! For I have important things to tell you.

Everything I say is right,

7 for I speak the truth
and detest every kind of deception.

8 My advice is wholesome.

There is nothing devious or crooked in it.

9 My words are plain to anyone with understanding,
clear to those with knowledge.

10 Choose my instruction rather than silver,
and knowledge rather than pure gold.

11 For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies.
Nothing you desire can compare with it.

12 "I, Wisdom, live together with good judgment.
I know where to discover knowledge and discernment.

13 All who fear the Lord will hate evil.
Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance,
corruption and perverse speech.

14 Common sense and success belong to me.
Insight and strength are mine.

15 Because of me, kings reign,
and rulers make just decrees.

16 Rulers lead with my help,
and nobles make righteous judgments.[a]

17 "I love all who love me.
Those who search will surely find me.

18 I have riches and honor,
as well as enduring wealth and justice.

19 My gifts are better than gold, even the purest gold,
my wages better than sterling silver!

20 I walk in righteousness,
in paths of justice.

21 Those who love me inherit wealth.
I will fill their treasuries.

22 "The Lord formed me from the beginning,
before he created anything else.

23 I was appointed in ages past,
at the very first, before the earth began.

24 I was born before the oceans were created,
before the springs bubbled forth their waters.

25 Before the mountains were formed,

before the hills, I was born—
26 before he had made the earth and fields
and the first handfuls of soil.
27 I was there when he established the heavens,
when he drew the horizon on the oceans.
28 I was there when he set the clouds above,
when he established springs deep in the earth.
29 I was there when he set the limits of the seas,
so they would not spread beyond their boundaries.
And when he marked off the earth's foundations,
30 I was the architect at his side.
I was his constant delight,
rejoicing always in his presence.
31 And how happy I was with the world he created;
how I rejoiced with the human family!

32 "And so, my children,[b] listen to me,
for all who follow my ways are joyful.
33 Listen to my instruction and be wise.
Don't ignore it.
34 Joyful are those who listen to me,
watching for me daily at my gates,
waiting for me outside my home!
35 For whoever finds me finds life
and receives favor from the Lord.
36 But those who miss me injure themselves.
All who hate me love death."

CHAPTER 9

9 Wisdom has built her house;

she has carved its seven columns.

2 She has prepared a great banquet,
mixed the wines, and set the table.

3 She has sent her servants to invite everyone to come.
She calls out from the heights overlooking the city.

4 "Come in with me," she urges the simple.

To those who lack good judgment, she says,

5 "Come, eat my food,
and drink the wine I have mixed.

6 Leave your simple ways behind, and begin to live;
learn to use good judgment."

THE FOOLISHNESS OF CORRECTING A MOCKER

7 Anyone who rebukes a mocker will get an insult in return.

Anyone who corrects the wicked will get hurt.

8 So don't bother correcting mockers;
they will only hate you.

But correct the wise,
and they will love you.

9 Instruct the wise,
and they will be even wiser.

Teach the righteous,
and they will learn even more.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALIGNMENT WITH GOD

10 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom.

Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

11 Wisdom will multiply your days
and add years to your life.

12 If you become wise, you will be the one to benefit.
If you scorn wisdom, you will be the one to suffer.

THE LURE OF IMMORALITY

13 The woman named Folly is brash.
She is ignorant and doesn't know it.

14 She sits in her doorway
on the heights overlooking the city.

15 She calls out to men going by
who are minding their own business.

16 "Come in with me," she urges the simple.
To those who lack good judgment, she says,

17 "Stolen water is refreshing;
food eaten in secret tastes the best!"

18 But little do they know that the dead are there.
Her guests are in the depths of the grave.

CHAPTERS 10-29 ARE MY OWN "Plain Sense Paraphrase", AA.

CHAPTER TEN

1. Godly children make happy parents.
2. There is no profit in sin, but there is in righteousness.

3. God supplies the needs of His children, but causes the wicked to be needy.
4. Work hard and prosper.
5. There's a time to work and a time to sleep.
6. Kiss godly lips; slap the mouth of the wicked.
7. Memories of good people are a sweet perfume; memories of bad people stink.
8. The wise listen and rise; fools talk too much and fall.
9. It is always safe to obey God; but we cannot disobey God and get away with it.
10. Winking at sin causes sorrow.
11. What we say has the power to either bless us or hurt us.
12. Hatred loves to make trouble; Love hates to make trouble.
13. Understanding makes the difference between wisdom and punishment.
14. Education makes the difference between a strong and a weak life.
15. Wealth can serve to protect you; poverty can ruin you.
16. The righteous work to bring forth life; the only thing the wicked can bring forth is sin.
17. It is a mistake to refuse to listen to godly reproof.
18. Only a fool thinks he can get away with saying one thing to a person's face and another behind his back.
19. Hold your tongue and be wise.
20. Whatever a godly person says is valuable; the deepest thoughts of the ungodly are worthless.
21. People are foolishly "starving" for the truth though it is readily available.

22. God gives blessings with no strings attached.
23. It isn't funny to be naughty.
24. Our futures depend on our relationship to God.
25. Trouble can't hurt godly people.
26. A lazy person is a constant irritation to his authorities.
27. Godliness lengthens our life; ungodliness shortens it.
28. The saved have Heaven to look forward to. The unsaved have only Hell to look forward to.
29. God's ways protect the upright, but the ways of the wicked destroy them.
30. Godliness is forever. Ungodliness will come to an end.
31. Use your tongue wisely.
32. There is a right and wrong way and time to speak.

CHAPTER 11

1. God hates cheating and loves honesty.
2. It is wise to be humble.
3. Honesty is a good guide; dishonesty leads to trouble.
4. God cares about our relationship to Him, not our riches.
5. It's no accident when godly Christians succeed and the ungodly fail.
6. Godliness frees us. Sin binds us.
7. The hopes of the unsaved die with them.
8. Trouble passes by the godly and falls on the wicked.
9. Our speech should build others up, not tear them down.
10. Two things bring joy: when the righteous are rewarded and when the wicked are punished.
11. Loving words lift up; unloving words tear down.

12. When you have unkind thoughts about others - keep them to yourself.
13. Don't tell secrets.
14. Security comes from seeking godly counsel.
15. Don't co-sign for loans.
16. Gracious women keep honor like strong men keep riches.
17. You hurt yourself when you are unkind. You bless yourself when you are kind.
18. The ungodly don't expect the bad consequences their actions call for; the godly can always expect God's blessing.
19. Godliness brings life; ungodliness brings death.
20. God loves a pure heart.
21. There's nothing the ungodly can do to stop God's punishment, but the godly have nothing to worry about.
22. Indiscretion in a beautiful woman is as out of place as jewelry in a pig's nose.
23. The godly have only good in store, but the ungodly have only the wrath of their authorities.
24. Generous praise motivates. Being too critical discourages.
25. God will bless a generous person.
26. Do not be greedy or selfish. Give to those in need whenever you're able.
27. We should apply ourselves to doing good, not mischief.
28. Money will let us down. God never will.
29. An inheritance depends upon one's behavior toward his parents.
30. Godly Christians win souls.
31. There is a sure reward awaiting both the godly and the ungodly.

CHAPTER 12

1. He is no better than an animal who will not listen to advice.

2. God will bless the righteous and condemn the wicked.
3. Righteousness provides stability.
4. A wife can either bring honor or shame to her husband.
5. God's Word is true. The philosophies of the wicked are false.
6. The ungodly hurt people with their words. The godly build them up.
7. Godly lives stand. Ungodly lives fall.
8. Honor and promotion is based on a person's wisdom.
9. It is no shame to work hard for a living.
10. You can tell a lot about a person by the way he treats his pets and livestock.
11. Our needs will be satisfied through hard work, not through chasing dreams.
12. Generosity is right. Covetousness is wrong.
13. Honesty is the best defense.
14. We bless ourselves when we say and do what is right.
15. Don't be too sure you're right, if you haven't sought godly counsel.
16. It is shameful to have a short temper.
17. It is always right to tell the truth.
18. What we say can either hurt or heal others.
19. Lies don't last long. Truth lasts forever.
20. It's a lot of fun to make godly plans.
21. The life of the ungodly is filled with trouble.
22. God loves truthfulness.
23. A wise man doesn't say much. Fools are always talking.
24. Hard workers become leaders. Lazy people become servants.
25. Our emotions are caused by what we think about.
26. It is important to choose friends who will encourage you to be godly.

27. Don't be wasteful. Take the time to take care of whatever you have.
28. There is no death in God's paths; only life.

CHAPTER 13

1. A wise child listens to his father.
2. Our words bear fruit: either good or bad.
3. Think before you speak.
4. Wishing is worthless, but hard work makes wishes come true.
5. Lying is shameful and loathsome.
6. God's principles keep us on the right path.
7. Giving all we are and have to God makes us truly rich.
8. Give everything to God and you won't have any worries.
9. The lives of the godly grow brighter, but the lives of the ungodly grow darker.
10. Don't be too proud to accept good advice.
11. Get rich schemes aren't worth much, but hard work is.
12. Reaching our goals makes us feel good.
13. Obey God's principles and you will prosper.
14. Biblical counsel both refreshes and protects.
15. Knowing and obeying God blesses our career, but life is tough for those who disobey Him.
16. A wise person plans his ways carefully.
17. When anyone gives you a job to do, do it well.
18. How we respond to present correction determines our future well-being.
19. Be flexible enough to change plans, as necessary.
20. Pick godly friends for your own good.
21. Trouble follows the ungodly like blessings follow the godly.

22. Godliness benefits not only your children, but also your grandchildren.
23. Many people wouldn't be so poor, if they had better judgement.
24. Proper discipline is a proof of love.
25. God meets all the needs of the godly, but not those of the ungodly.

CHAPTER 14

1. A woman who knows and follows God's ways will strengthen her family in the Lord.
2. Our behavior shows whether we love God, or despise Him.
3. How we talk brings either punishment or blessing to ourselves.
4. Don't complain about the hard work that results in great blessings.
5. Never tell a lie.
6. God shows His ways to those who humbly seek Him.
7. Don't listen to anyone who contradicts the Bible.
8. Prudence looks ahead and prepares ahead of time, but fools don't think they need to.
9. It is never right to laugh at sin.
10. God wants us to share our joys and sorrows with each other.
11. Build your life on a godly foundation and it will flourish.
12. Make sure that your ways are God's ways.
13. Laughter cannot cure a heavy heart.
14. Sinful lifestyles become boring. Following Christ is always exciting.
15. Don't believe everything you hear.
16. It is wise to fear the consequences of sin.
17. It is foolish to lose your temper.

18. Applying ourselves to our studies will bring a crown of honor to our lives.
19. Godly Christians earn the respect of the ungodly.
20. People like the rich because of their money.
21. God wants us to help, rather than to despise the poor.
22. It's always a mistake to make ungodly plans.
23. Less talk; more work.
24. God blesses the godly with riches.
25. Faith in Christ is the only way to be saved; all other gospels are lies.
26. A godly father is a strong protection to his children.
27. Fear God and no one else.
28. A flourishing kingdom is the mark of a good king.
29. It is wise not to get angry quickly.
30. Godly emotions bring good health.
31. We honor God when we help the poor.
32. The unsaved cannot go to Heaven.
33. Others can tell whether or not you are a Christian.
34. A nation is blessed according to its godliness.
35. Authority praises those who behave properly.

CHAPTER 15

1. Gentle responses avoid quarrels.
2. A wise person does not talk foolishly.
3. God sees everything.
4. What we say affects our own emotions.
5. It is wise to listen to our parents.
6. Godly people accumulate treasure. The ungodly accumulate trouble.
7. Wisdom and good advice come from those who know God's Word.

8. The unsaved can do nothing to please God except repent and come to Him for salvation.
9. God's ways are the only ways acceptable to Him.
10. Corrections and reproofs keep us on the right path.
11. God sees everything, including all that goes on in Hell and in our hearts.
12. Those who don't want to be godly, don't like godly authority.
13. We can discern a person's feelings by their expressions.
14. Be careful to fill your mind and heart with good things.
15. Some people are chronic complainers, but, as Christians, we can be happy all the time.
16. Riches don't satisfy. Knowing the Lord does.
17. Love is the most important ingredient at any meal.
18. The way we respond to a situation can either make it better or worse.
19. Godly people don't let anything keep them from their duty.
20. Children are to obey their father and their mother.
21. It is never funny to act in an ungodly manner.
22. It is very important to get godly counsel before making important decisions.
23. Saying the right thing at the right time makes us happy.
24. There are two paths in life: God's, and everybody else's.
25. God protects the needy and works against the proud.
26. God wants our thoughts and our words to be pure.
27. Taking a bribe puts your whole household in trouble.
28. Think before you speak.
29. God is far from the unsaved, but close to the godly.
30. Pleasant expressions and encouraging words improve a person's health.
31. Wise people always listen to reproofs.

32. It is to your own advantage to heed instructions and rebukes.
33. Wisdom and honor come from humbly reverencing the Lord.

CHAPTER 16

1. God is in control of everything.
2. God is to be our standard of holiness.
3. Do all to the glory of God, and you won't have to worry about it.
4. God has a purpose in everything He does.
5. God hates pride and will punish it.
6. Sin has been atoned for, but God does not want us to keep sinning.
7. God causes our enemies to be at peace with us, when we honor Him.
8. It's better to be poor honestly than rich wickedly.
9. We make plans, but God is in control.
10. We can trust God to work in our lives through our authorities.
11. God is fair and honest, and He expects us to be the same.
12. Those in authority will lose their position if they do not rule righteously.
13. Authorities like those under them to be honest.
14. Don't get your authorities angry with you, if you know what's good for you.
15. Make your authorities pleased with you and you'll be glad you did.
16. Wisdom and understanding are much more valuable than gold and silver.
17. Godly people stay away from sin.
18. You can be sure that trouble will follow pride.
19. It's better to be poor and humble than proud and rich.

20. God blesses those who trust and obey Him.
21. It is best to teach sweetly and gently.
22. Correction is a blessing to the wise, but a burden to fools.
23. A wise person speaks wisely.
24. Kind words bring health and happiness.
25. The destination of a road is more important than its appearance.
26. Hunger is a strong incentive to work.
27. The ungodly misuse their hands and their mouth.
28. Don't be a backbiter.
29. Choose friends that will not lead you into sin.
30. Some people seriously apply themselves to making evil plans.
31. White hair is a crown of glory on a godly head.
32. It's better to have self-control than to have fame or authority.
33. God is in control of everything, including how the dice fall.

CHAPTER 17

1. It's not how much you have as a family that matters most, but how well you get along. Relationships are much more important than possessions.
2. Character and performance, more than bloodlines, bring promotion and reward.
3. God will refine our hearts through times of intense heat and pressure just as gold and silver are refined.
4. Liars and wrong-doers enjoy each others' company.
5. It is wrong to despise the poor in their calamities. God Who made them will punish you for it.
6. Children love their godly parents and bless them with godly grandchildren.
7. It is unsuitable for a fool to be eloquent; much more so for an authority to be a liar.

8. A bribe has the power to open doors in any direction.
9. We build our relationships by forgiving and forgetting each other's faults; we destroy our relationships by harping on or spreading each other's faults.
10. A simple rebuke to a wise man is more effective than a hundred lashes to a fool.
11. Hardened sinners are dealt with by tougher authorities and stiffer penalties.
12. You're better off dealing with an angry bear than with a fool.
13. When you give unkindness in return for someone's kindness, you will have more unkindness in your life than you want.
14. It's difficult to stop a quarrel, so don't start one.
15. God detests it when the guilty are honored and the innocent are despised.
16. Wisdom cannot be bought. It must be sought from the heart.
17. Friends are meant to help each other in times of trouble — family, even more so.
18. It is unwise to cosign to co-sign other's debts.
19. Stop quarreling and making excuses for it. It is sin and will destroy you.
20. A crooked heart creates a crooked tongue, and, together, they cause a person nothing but grief.
21. Raise godly children; there is no joy in raising fools.
22. Our emotions affect our health: the joy that comes from trusting God leads to health; the discouragement that comes from not trusting God leads to sickness.
23. It is wicked to accept a bribe to pervert justice.
24. A wise person pursues wisdom; a fool pursues everything but wisdom.
25. Ungodly children make unhappy parents.

26. Be careful not to punish a person for doing what is right.
27. Say little and smile a lot.
28. It is better to be quiet and be thought a fool, than to open your mouth and prove it.

CHAPTER 18

1. Self-centered people will break all the rules of proper manners and principle.
2. Fools are too busy talking to learn anything.
3. Contempt, shame and reproach closely follow ungodly behavior.
4. Wise words are as refreshing as cool, clear water.
5. Justice is honest and impartial.
6. A fool brings trouble upon himself by his talk.
7. He cuts himself down with his own tongue, and gets caught in the trap of his own lips.
8. Gossip has the power to wound others deeply.
9. Laziness is as bad as being wasteful.
10. Godly people look to the Lord for safety and protection.
11. Rich people foolishly trust in their wealth to protect them.
12. Pride brings humiliation. Humility brings promotion.
13. Don't make decisions before you've gotten all the facts you can.
14. Discouragement is the result of losing hope.
15. Never stop learning.
16. A gift can clear the road ahead and can open many doors.
17. A friend can help us to see things more objectively.
18. Many disputes can be settled by tossing a coin.
19. It is very difficult to restore a relationship with an offended friend.
20. Saying or hearing the right thing is very satisfying.

21. Words can hurt or they can heal. Practice healing others with your words.
22. A good wife is a gift from God.
23. Poor people tend to be more humble and polite than wealthy people.
24. We must work hard to keep our friends, but Jesus will never desert us.

CHAPTER 19

1. It is foolish to trade integrity for wealth.
2. It is not good to make quick decisions.
3. It's our own foolishness that gets us in trouble, but we often blame God.
4. Money attracts; poverty repels.
5. Your lies will catch up with you.
6. We try harder to get along with potential benefactors.
7. It's a waste of breath to call for help when you are poor.
8. The best thing you can do for yourself is to learn and obey God's ways.
9. Lying will get you into a lot of trouble.
10. Things are upside down when fools are honored and have power over their betters.
11. A man shows wisdom by restraining his anger, and is esteemed for overlooking transgressions.
12. Our authorities can either be stirred up against us or can be a blessing to us.
13. Foolish children and a nagging wife wear a man down.
14. Property and possession can be handed down by parents, but only God can give a godly wife.

15. Laziness provides plenty of time for sleep, but doesn't pay the bills.
16. Obey God and live, or do what you please and die.
17. When we give to the needy, we give to the Lord - and God will always repay us.
18. Ignore their tears and teach your children to behave, before they get old enough to get into serious trouble.
19. Don't spare a hot-tempered man from his just punishment; he needs to learn his lesson.
20. Value instruction and discipline while you are young and you'll be glad you did, for the rest of your life.
21. No matter what our plans are, God will end up having His way.
22. Kindness and integrity cause even poor men to be respected.
23. Obeying God is the way to a peaceful, secure life.
24. Some people are so lazy they would rather sleep than eat!
25. Mockers have to learn the hard way; the wise need only to be spoken to.
26. Children are not to take advantage of, nor intimidate, their parents.
27. Do not listen to counsel that is contrary to your godly upbringing.
28. False witnesses scorn justice and promote crime.
29. Justice stands ready to punish scorners and to beat fools.

CHAPTER 20

1. Wine makes a fool of a person; strong drink makes one violent. It has fooled many.
2. Provoking our authorities is dangerous.
3. It is an honor for a person to avoid a quarrel. It is foolish to be quarrelsome.

4. A lazy person makes excuses for not doing his duty and, afterwards, has cause to regret it.
5. Wise men aren't often quick to give advice, but their counsel is available for those who sincerely seek it.
6. It's easy to find people who think they are good; it's not easy to find genuinely good people.
7. Since children imitate their fathers, happy are those children whose fathers are godly.
8. A wise authority is able to discern the truth in a dispute.
9. There is no perfect person.
10. The Lord despises any kind of double standard.
11. People form lasting opinions of us from the way we act when we are young.
12. The amazing construction of our eyes and ears testifies to the wisdom and power of God.
13. There is a time to sleep, and a time to work.
14. Shoppers will try to discredit the item to get a lower price.
15. Wise counsel is much more rare and valuable than gold and jewels.
16. The less you know about an applicant for a loan, the more collateral you need from him.
17. We may enjoy getting our way by lying – but not for long!
18. The more important the decision, the more important it is to get good counsel first!
19. You cannot safely say anything to a gossip.
20. Cursing your parents is a good way to end up dead!
21. It's not good for children to inherit too much too early in life.
22. People may hurt us, but we will let the Lord deal with them.
23. God abhors cheating and dishonesty.

24. We know that God is ultimately in control of our lives; we do not need to understand every detail.
25. If you're going to make a promise to God, you'd better honor it!
26. Wise authorities don't tolerate any amount of insubordination.
27. Our conscience is God's way of shining light on our plans and motives.
28. Authorities tenure is ensured by their integrity.
29. We admire strength in young men; we admire wisdom in older men.
30. God has ordained corporal punishment to cure the inner rebellion of our hearts.

CHAPTER 21

1. God is in control of all authorities.
2. It doesn't matter what **we** think; it only matters what **God** thinks.
3. God wants our **lives** to honor Him; not just the occasional **act**.
4. Every sin can be traced back to pride.
5. Careful planning and hard work are much more profitable than hasty decisions and shortcuts.
6. Thinking you can become rich through dishonesty is a mirage that leads to death.
7. The wicked are destroyed by their own sin.
8. Guilt causes us to put on an act. A pure conscience frees us to be genuine.
9. No matter how large the house, there's no escape from a contentious wife.
10. Evil people will even prey on their neighbors!
11. Simpletons only learn through consequences; wise people heed their teachers.

12. God sees what the wicked are up to and He will punish them.
13. If we choose not to care about the needs of those around us, our needs will not be met.
14. A gift can pacify someone's anger.
15. The same justice that brings joy to godly people, brings dismay to the ungodly.
16. It can cost you your life to stray from God's paths.
17. Pursuing pleasure and luxury brings poverty.
18. The wicked will lose, and the righteous will win, in the end.
19. No amount of comforts can make up for a miserable marriage.
20. A wise person saves for future need.
21. The most valuable things in life come to one who pursues godliness and kindness.
22. God's wisdom enables us to demolish people's strongholds.
23. Keep your mouth closed and avoid trouble!
24. Arrogant anger is the mark of pride.
25. Being lazy and self-centered leads to death.
26. The self-centered person can never **get** enough; the godly person can never **give** enough.
27. God detests man's attempts to appease Him - especially when they are only pretenses.
28. Liars shall be cut off, but those who speak the truth shall be heard.
29. Don't be too stubborn to reconsider things.
30. Nobody is smart enough to outsmart God.
31. It is good to be well-prepared for trouble, but our safety is in God's hands.

PROVERBS 22

1. It is better to be respected than rich.

2. No matter how they happen to view each other, the rich and the poor are alike in that they have the same Maker.
3. It is foolish to persist in one's course of action when obvious danger looms.
4. The way to wealth, honor and a fulfilling life is to walk humbly with God.
5. Do not be rebellious unless you want a life full of trouble.
6. A person's entire life is set by the way he is taught when he is young.
7. Borrowing money makes you a slave to the lender.
8. The reign of a wicked person can only end in disaster.
9. A person who is always looking for ways to bless others will be blessed, himself.
10. Only strife, quarrels and dishonor come from the person who thinks he knows more than anybody else.
11. God loves pure hearts and grace-filled speech.
12. God upholds the plans of the godly, but ruins the plans of the ungodly.
13. Lazy people are good at making up excuses for not doing their duties.
14. God abhors adultery.
15. God has ordained spanking as the most effective means for driving foolishness out of children.
16. Poverty lies ahead for those who take advantage of the poor or who try to impress the rich.

CHAPTER 25

1. More of Solomon's proverbs, copied by Hezekiah's servants.

2. It is to the glory of God that His creation is so infinite in breadth and depth; it is to the glory of man to learn more of its secrets.
3. We cannot know all that goes on in the minds of our authorities.
4. [and 5.] The less ungodliness allowed, the better for the organization.
- 6 - 7. Let others promote you to authorities rather than promoting yourself.
- 8-10. Don't accuse anybody to others before talking the matter over privately and carefully with the offender, or you may seriously damage your own reputation.
11. Saying the right thing at the right time is beautiful.
Or: Christians speak the beautiful grace of God in a soft and beautiful way, but their words are backed up by a firm faith and a sterling life.
Or: Our lives and our faith are rock solid, though our words and actions toward others are gentle.
12. A godly rebuke is like a beautiful earring to an obedient ear.
13. What a blessing it is when people fulfill the responsibilities we give them!
14. It is very disappointing when people don't do what they have said they will do.
15. Patience and quiet reasoning is the best way to persuade authority.
16. Any good thing taken to excess is not good for one. So, be moderate.
17. If you overstay a visit to a friend's house, you'll overstay your welcome.
18. Slander seriously wounds people and destroys their reputation.

19. It is shocking and painful when those we rely on let us down.
20. Attempting to lift a heavy heart with levity may do more harm than good.
- 21-22. The best way to turn an enemy into a friend is to be gracious to him. God will reward us for doing so.
23. Anger as a result of backbiting is as predictable as rain after a north wind.
24. It is better to live alone in a tiny apartment than in an apartment with a contentious spouse.
25. Good news, having been long awaited, is delightful.
26. We hate to see a godly person compromise his convictions.
27. It is not good for a person to be too focused on his own merits.
28. A person without self-control is vulnerable from many directions.

CHAPTER 26

1. It's totally out of place to see honor given to a person who is obviously a fool.
2. Curses won't hurt you if you don't deserve them.
3. Fools need beatings just like horses need a whip and donkeys need a bridle.
4. It's foolish to argue with a fool.
5. Give a foolish question the foolish answer it deserves.
6. Be careful what you say around fools or you'll hurt yourself!
7. Fools and wisdom don't go together.
8. Trusting a fool is like hitting yourself in the head.
9. Wisdom has no effect on a fool.
10. Fools and transgressors will always get what they deserve.
11. Fools never learn from their mistakes.
12. Fools are smarter than the person who thinks he knows it all!

13. Lazy people are good at making excuses.
14. Lazy people have enough energy to turn over in bed but not enough energy to get out of bed!
15. Some people are too lazy to feed themselves!
16. Lazy people often think they are so smart!
17. It is pretty foolish to put your nose into other peoples' arguments.
- 18 -19. There is nothing funny about playing malicious tricks on others.
20. Gossip keeps contentions burning and spreading.
21. An ugly attitude causes contentions.
22. Gossip hurts others deeply.
23. Many times we hide our bitterness with sweet words.
- 24-26. You may attempt to hide your bitterness with charming words, but no matter how hard you try to hide it, everyone can see it.
27. Taking vengeance into your own hands will end up hurting you.
28. Lying about others and flattering them stems from not loving them.

PROVERBS 27

1. Don't count too heavily on your plans for tomorrow; only God knows what tomorrow will bring forth.
2. Do not boast about yourself; let any praise come from others.
3. The anger of a fool is a heavy burden for its victims to bear.
4. Nothing is more dangerous than jealousy.
5. Genuine love is not afraid to rebuke.
6. Being wounded by a friend is better than being praised by an enemy.

7. Those who have much, find fault with, even, major blessings. Those who don't have much, tend to appreciate even the smallest of blessings.
8. A person will seek to return to wherever he feels 'home' is.
9. A friend's sincere counsel is refreshing.
10. Take good care of your friendships and they'll take care of you. In times of trouble, a close friend is more valuable than a distant relative.
11. If our children grow up to be godly, it makes us glad and strengthens our self-respect.
12. It is prudent to foresee problems and to plan how to avoid them.
13. Take some collateral from anybody who guarantees the debts of people of questionable character.
14. One's friendliness needs to take into account others' schedules and moods.
15. Rainy days and contentious women are alike.
16. There is no way to silence her.
17. Friends sharpen each other's character.
18. Honoring your employer causes him to honor you.
19. Just as we see our face in the water, others see our character in our lives.
20. Three things never get enough: Hell, destruction, and our eyes.
21. Mature people don't take praise lightly.
22. There is no way to separate a fool from his foolishness.
- 23-27. Don't take any of your present blessings for granted. Be a good steward of all God has given you and you will have enough and to spare.

CHAPTER 28

1. Sin makes us fearful; righteousness makes us bold.
2. Sinners don't stay in authority long; righteous people do.
- 3.
4. The lawless honor law-breakers; the righteous don't put up with them.
5. Sinners can't understand God's ways; to the righteous, all of God's ways make perfect sense.
6. A good beggar is a better man than a rich crook.
7. A wise son honors his father by avoiding ungodly friendships.
8. The riches of a person who made them at the expense of the poor will end up being given to the poor.
9. God won't listen to you, if you don't listen to Him.
10. Causing good people to sin by your example ruins your reputation; but living a godly life will preserve your reputation.
11. The rich think they're pretty smart, but godly poor folk know the truth.
12. Righteous leadership raises the nation, but when the ungodly rise to power, the nation falls.
13. Hidden sin sabotages success. Honest confession and repentance brings success.
14. If you're smart, you'll fear the Lord. If you don't fear God, you'll smart for it.
15. Ungodly rulers always oppress the poor.
16. Oppressing the populace to increase your wealth will decrease your time in office.
17. Murderers deserve the death penalty. Make sure they get it.
18. The godly can walk any path securely, but the ungodly can't stand up on level ground!
19. Follow your plow and have plenty of food, or pursue pleasure and have plenty of poverty.

20. Slow and steady does it. Get rich schemes lead to trouble.
21. If we care too much what others think, we're apt to do wrong things to keep them happy.
22. You're not thinking straight if you think you can get rich without hard work. You're actually heading for poverty.
23. A good man appreciates deserved rebuke far more than obsequious flattery.
24. A person who thinks it's OK to steal from his parents is capable of any crime.
- 25.
26. It's foolish to trust our own reasoning over God's Word.
27. God will take care of you, if you are compassionate to the poor. But your troubles will multiply, if you are selfish.
28. Honoring the ungodly decreases the number of godly people in the land. Stamping out ungodliness increases the number of the godly.

CHAPTER 29

1. Turn from any wrong paths as soon as you can, or they may lead you to irreversible trouble.
2. Godly leaders enrich their people's lives; ungodly leaders make their lives harder.
3. A wise son makes his father happy by avoiding immorality.
4. Justice builds a nation; bribes destroy it.
5. Beware of the trap of flattery!
6. Sin snares our spirits; doing right sets them free.
7. Godly people are concerned about the poor; ungodly people aren't.
8. Sin brings God's wrath upon a place; godliness protects it.
9. There is no way to get through to a fool.

10. The wicked hate the godly, but the godly pray for the salvation of the wicked.
11. Fools blurt out whatever comes to mind; wise people think carefully before they speak.
12. When it is known that a ruler listens to the words of liars, soon he will have only scoundrels for advisors.
13. The poor and he who oppresses them have this in common: the Lord gives light to their eyes.
14. If you want your nation to last, be sure justice is given to the poor, not only to the rich.
15. Children need discipline and reproof to grow up godly.
16. The ungodly may be increasing and having the upper hand for now, but the righteous will, someday, see their fall.
17. Rest and happiness for the parent depends upon them disciplining their children.
18. People suffer for lack of knowing God's ways, but are happy when they align with Him.
19. Talking to people doesn't often change their behavior; it usually takes some negative consequences for people to listen.
20. There is no hope for the person who does not control his tongue.
21. There needs to be a proper gap between those in authority and those under authority. People who are treated above their station will have no respect for their authorities in the end.
22. 'Hidden' anger will produce friction with others. 'Hidden' rage will lead to criminal actions.
23. Pride will bring us down; humility will bring us honor.
24. If you hear a friend's plan to commit a crime and don't tell authorities, you will be implicated in the crime.

25. We think we're better off to get along with the ungodly, but the only safe course for us to follow is to obey God.
26. Rather than trying to please our human authorities, we ought to focus on pleasing God; He is our ultimate Judge.
27. The ungodly hate the righteous, and the righteous hate ungodliness.

CHAPTER 30

30 [NLT] The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh contain this message.

I am weary, O God;

I am weary and worn out, O God.

2 I am too stupid to be human,
and I lack common sense.

3 I have not mastered human wisdom,
nor do I know the Holy One.

4 Who but God goes up to heaven and comes back down?

Who holds the wind in his fists?

Who wraps up the oceans in his cloak?

Who has created the whole wide world?

What is his name—and his son's name?

Tell me if you know!

5 Every word of God proves true.

He is a shield to all who come to him for protection.

6 Do not add to his words,

or he may rebuke you and expose you as a liar.

7 O God, I beg two favors from you;

let me have them before I die.

8 First, help me never to tell a lie.

Second, give me neither poverty nor riches!

Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.

9 For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?"

And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.

10 Never slander a worker to the employer,
or the person will curse you, and you will pay for it.

11 Some people curse their father
and do not thank their mother.

12 They are pure in their own eyes,
but they are filthy and unwashed.

13 They look proudly around,
casting disdainful glances.

14 They have teeth like swords
and fangs like knives.

They devour the poor from the earth
and the needy from among humanity.

15 The leech has two suckers
that cry out, "More, more!"

There are three things that are never satisfied—
no, four that never say, "Enough!":

16 the grave,
the barren womb,
the thirsty desert,

the blazing fire.

17 The eye that mocks a father
and despises a mother's instructions
will be plucked out by ravens of the valley
and eaten by vultures.

18 There are three things that amaze me—
no, four things that I don't understand:
19 how an eagle glides through the sky,
how a snake slithers on a rock,
how a ship navigates the ocean,
how a man loves a woman.

20 An adulterous woman consumes a man,
then wipes her mouth and says, "What's wrong with that?"

21 There are three things that make the earth tremble—
no, four it cannot endure:
22 a slave who becomes a king,
an overbearing fool who prospers,
23 a bitter woman who finally gets a husband,
a servant girl who supplants her mistress.

24 There are four things on earth that are small but unusually
wise:

25 Ants—they aren't strong,
but they store up food all summer.

26 Hyraxes—they aren't powerful,
but they make their homes among the rocks.

27 Locusts—they have no king,
but they march in formation.

28 Lizards—they are easy to catch,
but they are found even in kings' palaces.

29 There are three things that walk with stately stride—
no, four that strut about:

30 the lion, king of animals, who won't turn aside for anything,

31 the strutting rooster,
the male goat,
a king as he leads his army.

32 If you have been a fool by being proud or plotting evil,
cover your mouth in shame.

33 As the beating of cream yields butter
and striking the nose causes bleeding,
so stirring up anger causes quarrels.

31 [NLT] The sayings of King Lemuel contain this message, which his
mother taught him.

2 O my son, O son of my womb,
O son of my vows,

3 do not waste your strength on women,
on those who ruin kings.

4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, to guzzle wine.
Rulers should not crave alcohol.

5 For if they drink, they may forget the law

- and not give justice to the oppressed.
- 6 Alcohol is for the dying,
and wine for those in bitter distress.
- 7 Let them drink to forget their poverty
and remember their troubles no more.
- 8 Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves;
ensure justice for those being crushed.
- 9 Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless,
and see that they get justice.

A Wife of Noble Character

- 10 Who can find a virtuous and capable wife?
She is more precious than rubies.
- 11 Her husband can trust her,
and she will greatly enrich his life.
- 12 She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
- 13 She finds wool and flax
and busily spins it.
- 14 She is like a merchant's ship,
bringing her food from afar.
- 15 She gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household
and plan the day's work for her servant girls.
- 16 She goes to inspect a field and buys it;
with her earnings she plants a vineyard.
- 17 She is energetic and strong,
a hard worker.

18 She makes sure her dealings are profitable;
her lamp burns late into the night.

19 Her hands are busy spinning thread,
her fingers twisting fiber.

20 She extends a helping hand to the poor
and opens her arms to the needy.

21 She has no fear of winter for her household,
for everyone has warm clothes.

22 She makes her own bedspreads.
She dresses in fine linen and purple gowns.

23 Her husband is well known at the city gates,
where he sits with the other civic leaders.

24 She makes belted linen garments
and sashes to sell to the merchants.

25 She is clothed with strength and dignity,
and she laughs without fear of the future.

26 When she speaks, her words are wise,
and she gives instructions with kindness.

27 She carefully watches everything in her household
and suffers nothing from laziness.

28 Her children stand and bless her.
Her husband praises her:

29 "There are many virtuous and capable women in the world,
but you surpass them all!"

30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last;

but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised.

31 Reward her for all she has done.

Let her deeds publicly declare her praise.