

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 1: Proverbs on Proverbs

Memory Verse

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
– Proverbs 9:10 (NIV)



WORD

1. The writing of the proverbs is credited to whom (Prov. 1:1)? Describe his prominence and credibility (2 Chron. 1: 7-12, 9:1-2, 22-23).

In this passage, the writing of the proverbs is credited to Solomon son of David, king of Israel. Although he is not the only author, Solomon for the most part has been the source. In the beginning of his leadership as king, God asked Solomon what he wanted. Instead of asking for riches and honor, Solomon recognizing his youth, asked for wisdom that he may lead his people. God was pleased with his request. God gave him wisdom and riches and honor as well. Due to his fame, the Queen of Sheba paid him a visit. Solomon was able to answer all her questions. Solomon has been known to be “greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.” The other kings consulted and inquired of Solomon recognizing that God was the source of his wisdom.

2. The same account recorded in I Kings 3:5-12 reveals a further definition of wisdom that Solomon asked from God. How is wisdom defined?

Wisdom is defined as having a “discerning heart to govern” (v.9), able “to distinguish between right and wrong” (v.9) and “discernment in administering justice” (v.11). God has given him a “wise and discerning heart” which gives us a good idea that having wisdom and having the ability to understand goes hand in hand.

3. The purpose of Proverbs is two-fold. What is the first one (Prov. 1:2)? In what situations and experiences in life can we use this kind of wisdom?

The purpose of Proverbs is to “attain wisdom and discipline, for understanding words of insight.” This involves our mental ability and character in being able to think and rationalize in terms of being able to govern and administer not only in leadership but also in the way we carry out our lives. . This wisdom also refers to intelligence and skillfulness which aids in considering options, creating concepts, analyzing situations and solving problems. This kind of wisdom may be used in dealing with our everyday lives as we manage the home, attend to school requirements, fulfill work obligations and accomplish goals.

4. What is the other purpose found in Proverbs 1:3? In what area of our lives can we exhibit such character? You may share an example or a personal experience.

The second purpose is “for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair.” This involves our moral ability and character in being able to know what is right according to God’s ways and will. The measurement of right, just and fair is based on the standards of God’s Word. We are able to exhibit such character when we deal with our spiritual lives. Specific situations that would need the wisdom of God are: when we face temptations, struggles and questions in our faith; when we need to make a moral choice; and when we encounter problems and issues in life.

5. To whom is Solomon speaking to (Prov. 1:4-5)? In our present time, who could he be referring to?

Solomon refers to the “simple”, “to the young”, “to the wise” and “to the discerning.” We can then group the audience to two. The first group would refer to the inexperienced, immature and carefree. While the other group would refer to those who are mature not only in age but in their way of thinking. But significantly, Solomon mentions that even though one may have reached such level of understanding, it is important to continue to learn and to get guidance. In our present time, Solomon may refer to our young people who are in the stage of discovering life’s principles and challenges. We could also include those who may not be young but have difficulty in making the right decisions due to unfamiliarity and inexperience. The wise and the discerning may be applied to the older generation who had gone through life’s challenges and were able to overcome. This is the reason why young people learn from them. They may also include those who are still young but reveal maturity in making decisions. Solomon clearly says that they would still need guidance all the more.

6. Proverbs 1:6 gives us a picture of the kind of literature that the book of proverbs have. What are these?

The proverbs consist of “parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise” and are considered “wisdom literature” of the Bible. A proverb (*māšāl* in Hebrew) is poetry in style and most often is parallelism in form wherein the two lines relate to each other. It is composed of short stories, brief statements of observations on life, allegories and figurative sayings. But every proverb speaks of truth and is applicable to all at any generation.

7. What contrasting statements do we see in Proverbs 1:7? Can you share experiences or situations in life when one have become wise and when one have become fools?

Wise people are those who fear the Lord while fools are those that despise wisdom. Solomon undoubtedly establishes that in order to have wisdom, one should fear the Lord. To fear the Lord is to recognize that He is God. Such recognition should cause man to submit to His Lordship, obey His commands and worship Him. Solomon describes the man who does the exact opposite, being arrogant and having no regard to wisdom at all is a fool. Coming from the wisest person who has ever lived on earth, this truth should be heeded.

8. How is wisdom and understanding defined in Proverbs 9:10? Given the definition of wisdom and understanding, how is this different from the world?

In this passage, it is again being reiterated that the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” This just shows Solomon’s consistency in defining wisdom. He further adds that “the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” As mentioned in the beginning of our lesson, wisdom and understanding goes hand in hand. Such understanding can only be possible if one knows God in a personal way. The world defines wisdom and understanding as that of academic excellence, high IQ, “street smart”, power, etc. Such definitions are not wrong per se, in fact they are admirable. But often such worldly wisdom encourages selfish ambition and self-glorification. This is based on one’s self which may seek success at the expense of others; impersonal and dishonest dealings with people and no regard to God who is the creator and giver of wisdom.

9. What would be the result if one fears the Lord and knows the Holy One (Prov 9:11-12; 3:16-18; 4:22 and 8:35)? How does this encourage you to live a life of wisdom?

The wise man who fears the Lord and knows the Holy One will experience more years to his life (9:11,3:16), the decisions and actions he makes will benefit him (9:12, 3:17), blessings (3:16,18), overall wellness—physical, emotional and spiritual (4:22), and life and favor from the Lord (8:35).

10. What does James 1:5 remind us to do?

We are reminded to ask God for wisdom for He will provide generously, without finding fault.

Wrap Up

This passage introduces us to what the book of proverbs is all about. Solomon being a recipient of God’s wisdom and a testament of what it means to be wise, shares his insight and knowledge not only to the young and inexperienced but even to those who are wise and mature. He emphasizes that wisdom is two-fold: one’s mental and moral character. Both abilities and qualities can only be found in the fear of the Lord and in the knowledge of the Holy One. Whoever exhibits wisdom in life will surely be blessed and receive favor from the Lord. God lavishly gives wisdom to those who ask Him.

Application

Reflect on your spiritual life. Think of ways on how to develop wisdom in your life. Reflect on your everyday life. Think of ways on how to apply wisdom in your life. Then, resolve to do it today.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 2: Proverbs on Wisdom and Folly

Memory Verse

“ Trust in the Lord with all of your heart And lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight. -Proverbs 3:5-6



WORD

1. Proverbs 3 lists the benefits of wisdom and the value of keeping them. What are the instructions given to us and the result in verses 1-4?

Instruction

Do not forget the teachings & keep the commands (v.1)
Love & faithfulness to rule in the heart (v.3)

Result

Prolonged life and prosperity(v.2)
Favor and a good name (v.4)

2. What does “bind them around your neck, write them in your heart” mean (Prov. 3:3)?

It is a figurative way of saying that as people who fear the Lord, there must be an evident characteristic (bind) of showing the mercies and truths of God, and at the same time we must we internalize and obey (write) these truths. (See also Deut 6:4-9)

3. When we are in need of direction in life, where can we turn to and what can we do (Prov. 3:5)?
How often do we fail in this area in terms of trying to understand the details of our life?

Trust in the Lord wholeheartedly. In Isaiah 55:8-9, the Lord declares that His thoughts and ways are way beyond those of ours; it describes the stature of God’s wisdom to the ways of men. We are also cautioned not to lean on our own understanding. In Romans 11:33-34, we are reminded that it is impossible to know the mind of God, but we can rest assured that God is a God of mercy. It is therefore wise to entrust our life to the one who knows what is best for us.

4. What is the value of acknowledging God in all our ways (Prov. 3:6)?

God will make our paths straight by allowing His plans in our life to be fulfilled. God gives us guidance and then allows us to realize His will in our life. (Read also Matthew 6:33 and see what putting God first brings in our life)

5. What is the prize of the fear of the Lord (Prov. 3:7-8)?

We are reminded by Proverbs 3:7-8 that wisdom does not come from our own but from God. This attitude turns away evil of pride. This attitude also results to good health which demonstrates the relationship of spiritual health to physical health.

6. What does God promise in return to those who give Honor to Him through the fruits of their labor (Prov. 3:9-10)? Do we acknowledge God and His faithfulness to us by our gifts through our offering? Do we give God what is due Him and is rightfully His? Or do we just give God our spare change and our leftovers and still expect blessings from Him?

In the Jewish tradition, first fruits were symbols of acknowledging God as the provider to those who have come to the promise land (see Deut 26:1-3). It was a religious ritual of honoring God for a safe journey, an evidence of His faithfulness to them. The writer of Proverbs states that God promises returns with the words- barns will be filled and vats overflow with wine. The central point of this proverb is let us not grow in love with gold but let us grow more in love with God. Furthermore, we need to keep on checking our motives in giving to God; is it for honoring Him or is it according to the world's return of investment standard?

7. When we are disciplined by God, how should we react (Prov. 11-12)? When we are not pleased with our children do we discipline them in love? Do we let them understand the process of discipline? Do they view us in the right way when we discipline them?

We must humbly submit to God's authority when we have done acts which are displeasing to Him. There are basically three responses that we need to do in this area (1) Not to reject , therefore we must accept it, (2) Not to loathe therefore we must submit to it (submit to God's sovereignty) and lastly (3) remember that it is done in love. Therefore when God disciplines us we must become better and not bitter. Let us therefore avoid the attitude of rebelling towards God when He implements His loving discipline just as we are subject to our earthly father's discipline.

Discipline does not necessarily mean undergoing punishment but it means being taught and trained in the right manner with love. We need not think that God delights in our pain because His motivation comes from pure and prefect love.

8. Wisdom is personified as a woman, how does she affect a man who finds her (Prov. 3:13-18)?

To the man who finds wisdom he receives (1) blessing (2) understanding (3) long life (4) riches (5) honor (6) peace and (7) happiness. By this measure all other earthly possessions are outweighed by the value of wisdom. This is more like a summary of the benefits of finding wisdom. Therefore, it is indeed worthwhile pursuing and holding on to.

9. How significant is wisdom (Prov. 3:19-20)?

God used wisdom in the formation and foundation of all creation. Understanding and knowledge were two other words used synonymously to wisdom. If God used wisdom, then we must also use it especially in our search for direction and meaning in life.

10. Why are we encouraged to hold on to wisdom (Prov. 3:21-26)?

The third "My son" exhortation of a father appears in this passage. This passage teaches the value of not forgetting wisdom but keeping it because of the benefits it continues to give. According to verses 22-26 holding on to wisdom allows us to have a life with (1) safety, (2) stability, (3) serenity and (4) security.

11. What wise counsel is given to us in dealing with human relationships (Prov. 3:27-35)?

There are good pointers to keep in dealing with other people in terms of

(1) Generosity. We are not to withhold goodness to others. We are to give them what is due to them at the proper time. Unreasonable postponement of giving is withholding. Generosity includes compassion to those in need (vv. 27-28) (also see Galatians 6:10).

(2) Good-faith. We are to deal with people without unfair or harmful motive, with the desire to live at peace with them (vv.29-30).

(3) God- fearing. We must choose the ways of an upright man than envy the life of a violent and wicked person (vv.31-35).

GOD'S FAVOR AND DISPLEASURE (Proverbs 3:31-35)

Righteous Man (Wisdom)	Wicked Person (Foolish)
Way of life - God's intimacy	Way of life - Abomination to the Lord
House - God's Blessing	House - God's curses
Humble Attitude - God's grace	Arrogant attitude - God's mockery
Wise in God's sight - God bestows honor	Foolish in God's sight - God will put to shame

WRAP UP

The benefit of wisdom that comes from God is indeed overwhelming. Happy and blessed are those who find them and keep them as a lifestyle and as their lifeblood. Confronted by the ever increasing popularity and demand for worldly and material counterfeit wisdom, let us be discerning in our choices and hold steadfast to God's wisdom (Proverbs 3:21).

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 3: Proverbs on Character

Memory Verse

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. - Proverbs 22:1 (NIV)



Name in the Bible is more than a “word or phrase by which something or someone is known and distinguished from other people or things” as the Encarta World English Dictionary defines; it is a description of one’s character. Therefore when Solomon declares: A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold (Prov. 22:1 NIV) he has a biblical understanding of a “name” in mind, i.e., a good reputation.



WORD

1. Why did Solomon say, “a good name is more desirable than great riches” (Prov. 22:1)?
 - a. Because its character (who he is) and not wealth (what he has) that makes the man. Many people are preoccupied with getting wealth that they lose their personhood in the process. Sacrificing integrity at the altar of success is a losing proposition.
 - b. Because a good reputation always outlasts wealth. Long after wealth is gone a good reputation continues. The next generation profits more when they inherit a good name. Somehow there is always that urgency on the part of the heirs to preserve that good name and in so doing they share in benefit of living a good life.
 - c. Because it feels good to be respected. Being rich may generate awe or even envy from other people but being a good person wins the respect and admiration of others even their critics. Some people are feared but not respected.
2. In what areas can personal integrity be seen (see Prov. 12:17, 19, 22 & 16:11; 20:10, 23)?
 - a. Personal integrity is seen in telling the truth (Prov 12:17, 19, 22).
 - b. Personal integrity is seen in business dealings (Prov 16:11; 20:10, 23).
3. How does Proverbs 10:9 describe a person of integrity?

Interestingly, Solomon says a person of integrity “*walks securely.*” He is in essence affirming that genuine security does not lie in wealth and power but in being at peace with God, with others and with self. By “possessing and steadfastly adhering to high moral principles or professional standard,” [Encarta World English Dictionary] a person can find security. This is integrity in a nutshell.

4. If a good name is of primary importance to you how will it affect your choice of career, business dealings and family relationship? What do you think are the top five “name-destroyers”? Explain your answer. In what way/s did your parent’s good reputation benefit you today?

Wrap up

If you want your life and work to make an impact on the people of your generation and the next, work to establish a good name. If you strive to be rich and powerful but in the process damage your name then your success will be short lived. If on the other hand, you strive to keep a good name, riches and honor will be your reward (cf. Prov. 3:16; 8:18).

We are always confronted with choices in this life. When you are left with a choice between money and honor, choose honor.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 4: Proverbs on Humility

Memory Verse

Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life. –Proverbs 22:4(NIV)



WORD

1. How is pride and humility compared in Proverbs 29:23?

The passage shows us that pride brings humiliation and humility brings honor. One who lifts oneself high is brought low. One who is lowly in spirit is brought high. Pride is “to be high, exalted, and haughty.” Humility is submission, modest spirit before God.

2. What would be the result of pride and humility?

Those who humble themselves will be exalted by God and a proud person will sow dishonor upon himself. Pride has always been the greatest hindrance that keeps God from working upon our lives, while humility characterized by submission to God is an attitude that allows God to freely work on our lives. The heroes of our faith like Abraham, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and David were far from being perfect people. But one thing that they have in common was their humility before God which was the reason why God used them mightily. They knew for a fact that in order to succeed in what God has called them to do; they should depend on Him and not on their own strength and capability.

3. What can you do so that God would honor you?

The word of God is very clear on this: humble yourself before God and He will honor you. To show humility is not easy, especially when we know that we are better, more experienced, more educated, and more successful than others. But God bestows honor this way: Humble yourself to God and He will honor you.

4. How is pride and humility defined in Proverbs 11:2? How does one gain wisdom?

Pride is arrogance and brings disgrace, but humility brings wisdom. Proverbs 11:2 tells us that wisdom is gained when we humble ourselves. Wisdom is gained when we accept our limitations and acknowledge that we need the help of God. A person with pride would refuse to listen and accept instructions from God and others, while a humble person would take God's advice and seek instruction from others to help him/her with life.¹

¹ Dr. Constable Bible Study Notes

5. Do you find it hard to listen to the advice of others? Why and why not?

Let's seek God and ask Him to teach us to humble ourselves. As Christians, we don't only need God to grow in our faith, but also the help of others.

6. What is the result of pride and humility according to Proverbs 3:34?

Pride receives contempt and humility receives grace.

7. Do you want to experience the grace of God in your daily Christian life?

As children of God, we need to attribute our success and victories in life by His grace alone. In times of need and difficulty, we seek God's grace to deliver us through it. As we go through our daily Christian life, we need to remind ourselves to always depend on Him. This is a demonstration of our humility before Him so that we may experience His abundant grace.

8. What does Proverbs 21:4 reveal about pride? Why does God hate pride?

Pride is condemned because it is sin. Proverbs 21:4 tells us that pride causes man to sin. And God, being a God of righteousness, hates any form of sin. "The lamp of the wicked," seems to be the life of a person full of pride.² Pride leads a person to commit sin and distance himself from God because he is not dependent on Him.

9. What does pride do to a person according to Proverbs 15:25; 16:5,8? Why will pride lead someone to destruction?

Pride leads to destruction and to a person's downfall. Possessions of proud people will eventually be taken away. Pride causes a person to sin against God, and consequence of the sins one have committed against Him awaits them. You are called to trust in the Lord and not to depend on yourself (Prov. 3:5), but pride causes you not to depend on God. Let's remind ourselves that depending on our own strength and abilities, and not on God, can lead us to our own destruction.

10. What does Proverbs 13:10 warn us about pride? How can pride destroy relationships?

Pride brings quarrels. The attitude of, "I know it all," leads to quarrel. James 3:13-17 speaks about two kinds of wisdom, earthly wisdom and the wisdom that comes from God. Proud people are self-focused, are not dependent on God, are not concerned with the interest of others, and would resort to sinful ways to get what they want. These then cause division and fight among individuals. However, humble people with godly wisdom always considers the interests of others, purely operates on love, and seeks what is good to others. Thus, any relationship founded on these, will grow and will continue to grow.

² Ibid.

11. What is the result of humility according to Proverbs 15:33 and 22:4? How should a humble person live? Can anyone be considered wise without the fear of the Lord?

Humility is commended, it brings honor and wealth. Humility comes with the fear of the Lord. And this brings about knowledge. A humble person must live in the fear of the Lord. He must have the willingness to humble himself before God and allow His word to guide his life. As believers of Jesus Christ, we should live a life of obedience to God's Word. One of the ways to accomplish this is to live in the fear of the Lord.

A person cannot be considered wise apart from having fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the foundation of a wise life.³

12. How is humility described in Proverbs 16:19? Why it is better to be lowly and spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud?

Humility is considered better. Humility is to be considered even if it means to be financially oppressed, because wealth gained through fraudulent means would be destroyed by God eventually and would amount to nothing. While a person who humbles himself and is not gaining wealth through wicked ways will be honored by God and will reap the fruits of righteousness (Prov. 22:4).

Thus, let's continue to apply God's word and principle in the way we handle our business and means in providing for our financial needs, for God has promised in Hebrews 13:5c that He will never leave us and forsake us when it comes to our financial needs.

Wrap up

Humility is one character virtue that Christians must possess if we want to experience a victorious Christian life. As we humble ourselves and depend on God, He will give us the grace to excel in our Christian life. Our life will be pleasing to God and giving glory to His name. Let us be reminded that we should humble ourselves before God as a demonstration of our desire to surrender totally to His will and purpose for us.

Additional Passages For Further Studies

1. Isaiah 66:2b
2. Matthew 23:12
3. Luke 18:13- 14
4. James 4:10

³ Ibid.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 5: Proverbs on Moral Purity

Memory Verse

For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. – Proverbs 2:10-11



WORD

The context of Proverbs 2:10-11 is found in Proverbs 2:1-9. The chapter begins with the appeal to the learner to desire wisdom and understanding (vv.1-6), and gives the basis or motivation why it should be desired (vv.7-9). Verses 10 & 11 then sums up all of these positive benefits, before contrasting them with the lifestyles of the wicked.

1. Proverbs 2 tells us that one of the benefits and marks of wisdom is a life of moral purity. By wisdom we are kept from lapses in judgment that compromise our integrity and testimony in the eyes of God and our community. What is the condition and the result found in verses 10 and 11?

The condition: (v.10)

Wisdom to enter the heart
knowledge as pleasant to the soul

The result: (v.11)

protected by discretion
guarded by understanding

2. What is moral purity? How does the Bible speak about it? You may categorize them into positive and negative senses.

Positive:

treating each other in a godly way
sex in the context of marriage
honesty and integrity in our dealings
a lifestyle pleasing unto the Lord

Negative:

saying no to lust
avoiding temptations
not cheating or defrauding
being separate from the world

3. What is the condition required for our lives to be characterized with moral purity? What does it mean “for wisdom to enter the heart?”

For wisdom to enter our hearts involves our willingness. Wisdom and its benefit of moral purity is something that does not impose itself upon the person. Moral purity is not something we gain because we are compelled to, but because we want to.

Related Proverbs:

A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps. – Proverbs 14:15
A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless. –Proverbs 14:16

4. What does it mean for “knowledge to be pleasant to the soul?”

The foolish person according to Proverbs is one who hates instructions (Prov.1:7). There are those who do receive instructions, but the benefits of which never come forth. Why? It lies in their attitude of receiving instructions. We are told here that to receive wisdom involves not only our volition, but also the attitude of happiness and fulfillment in applying what we learn towards preserving moral purity. Keeping our moral purity should be approached with joy, not as a burden. If you know that you are pleasing God in every way, shouldn't it make you joyful?

Related Proverbs:

A fool takes pleasure in evil conduct, but a man of understanding delights in wisdom. –Proverbs 10:23

A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but delights in airing his own opinions. –Proverbs 18:2

5. What is discretion? In what sense is our moral purity protected by it?

Discretion means having good judgment and sensitivity to avoid embarrassing or upsetting others; the freedom or authority to make decisions on issues, and the ability to keep sensitive information secret. (Gordon Smith, *Discerning God's Will in Times of Choice*). While this is certainly included in the use of the word in Proverbs, it goes a step further: moral purity and integrity. One's desire for wisdom and moral purity leads to a life where we are protected from situations and judgments that bring blight to our testimony and integrity, especially in our dealings with people whose lifestyles are in direct contradiction with the Word of God.

My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge. –Proverbs 5:1-2

"I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. –Proverbs 8:12

6. What does “guarded by understanding” mean?

When we ask someone, “Do you understand?” what we mean is if the person has sufficiently comprehended what we intended to communicate. But there is a difference in understanding in terms of comprehension, and understanding in terms of life-application. Proverbs speaks of understanding not just as comprehension, but of applying the lessons learned into our daily setting, more so in areas that pertain to godliness. To understand is not just to know what is good and evil, but also the ability to take correct action.

7. What specific areas of moral purity do you struggle with? Consider the following areas of your life based on: physical, financial/material, relational, spiritual/moral and intellectual.

8. The following are specific steps you may want to develop in maintaining moral purity: keeping commitments, developing accountability and avoiding compromising situations. Discuss with your group mates how individually and corporately you can work on these.

Wrap up

To gain and preserve moral purity, it is not enough to know the how-to's. It takes wisdom born out of a genuine desire to please the Lord and live a life of integrity. Moral purity is not gained by imposition. It is a heart-felt desire. If it is our heart-felt desire, then being instructed by God and being made accountable to others will not be a burden but a joy.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 6: Proverbs on Wellness

Memory Verse

A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.
- Proverbs 15:30



WORD

From various passages in the book of proverbs, we get a biblical portrait of joy and the blessing it gives to the believer whom the book of Proverbs refers to as the “wise”: wellness from within and without:

1. Based on Proverbs 15:13, Proverbs 15:30 and Proverbs 17:22, how can joy bring blessings of physical wellness?

Joy brings a positive effect on countenance (Proverbs 15:13). Inner joy possessed by a person can be shown on a person’s face. This verse reminds us that a person who has joy in his heart has bearing on his emotional state more than the circumstance in his life.

Joy brings a positive effect on health (Proverbs 15:30) and on healing (Proverbs 17:22). These passages indicate that emotional condition of a person play a role in the physical condition of that person. The inward state affects the outward state of a person.

2. Can an unbeliever ever have truly lasting joy? Why or why not? Are you rightly related to the Benefactor of joy?

Genuine and lasting joy is only for those who already belong to God, through faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross.

3. What are the implications of these above mentioned truths for someone who suffers from emotionally-aggravated illnesses? From psychosomatic illness? Can these verses be used to counsel a hypochondriac?

The application of these truths will make a Christian seek to bear joy, this fruit of the spirit in his life, and to “walk in step” with the spirit (Gal. 5:16-26). Even a hypochondriac may realize that his self-induced misery is completely unnecessary. A helpful counsel would be to pray and assist the person suffering from such illness to find joy in Christ Jesus.

4. Christian, are you walking in step with the Spirit? Or are you experiencing the bane of joylessness in your life? "... because the Lord disciplines those He loves" Heb. 12:6

5. Based on Proverbs 15:15, how can a believer's emotional wellness be benefited by joy? Or how can joy benefit or affect a believer's emotional wellness?

Proverbs 15:15 states that, "All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast," which shows that there is positive effect on a believer's emotional state which then brings enjoyment of life despite of one's circumstance.

6. Can you use this verse in no. 3 to motivate a person who is emotionally afflicted? How?

Yes. The text seems to imply that cheerfulness is a choice. A feast does not happen to you – you either go to one, or you organize one. Nor is a feast perpetual. We always have a choice as believers.

7. Looking at the flip side: Based on Proverbs 15:13, Proverbs 15:15, Proverbs 17:22 and Proverbs 18:14, what are the harmful effects on our well being - either physical or emotional - of joylessness?

The harmful effects on our well being are a crushed spirit (Proverbs 15:13), grief demoralizes a person's spirits; days of continual wretchedness (Proverbs 15:15); poor health (Proverbs 17:22) and poor healing (Proverbs 18:14), a stricken spirit loses one's inner strength.

8. Realizing these truths, which of the particular verses we have looked at so far stand out meaningful to you and why? (Leader goes around the group, soliciting comments)

Wrap up

True joy can be found in Christ Jesus and His finished work on the cross. The inward joy that a person possesses affects many facets of his being.

Additional Passages for further Study:

1. The Eternal Benefactor of true joy (Psalms 16:11 NASB)

You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

2. Joy is a Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man
Lesson 7: Proverbs on Generosity

Memory Verse

"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." - Proverbs 11:25



WORD

1. The Source of Wealth.

God is ultimately the source of wealth. God may use people to be the source of wealth. He also has established principles and when these are followed in faith, God rewards or blesses materially the person who obeys. Of course, when there are exceptions, God has a reason for doing so.

- a. What are some of the blessings of God (Prov. 10:22)?

- b. Who does God use to be a channel of His blessing to children (Prov. 19:14a)?

- c. God blesses those who are upright and do His will. What are some of the qualities that He blesses?
 - 1) Prov. 8:21
 - 2) Prov. 10:4
 - 3) Prov. 22:4

2. The Pitfalls of Wealth

- a. Who may get your wealth (Prov. 5:10)?

- b. Who are those we need to beware of that are just interested in your wealth (Prov. 19:4)?

- c. Who else do you need to beware of because they may cause you to squander your wealth (Prov. 29:3)?

3. The Wrong Use of Wealth – Greediness

Greed is the excessive desire for food, power or wealth. When greed for more wealth grips a person, he or she will do everything to amass more and more of it.

a. What forms does greed take? How do people amass wealth?

1) Prov. 15:27

2) Prov. 22:9

3) Prov. 28:8

b. What are the consequences of greed?

1) Prov. 11:17

2) Prov. 15:27

3) Prov. 28:25

4) Prov. 29:4

4. The Right Use of Wealth- Generosity

God desires that we share our material resources or wealth to the less fortunate or needy.

a. What is one way to use our wealth (Prov. 3:9)?

In this same chapter, in Proverbs 3:27-28, how else can we use our wealth?

b. Use your wealth to practice generosity. How can we demonstrate generosity?

1) Prov. 11:25

2) Prov. 19:17; Prov. 22:9

3) Prov. 11:17

APPLICATION

As a result of this study, what are some of the changes that you would implement in your life with regard to how you view wealth and how you use wealth? (Personal applications)

Wrap up

John Wesley wrote: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the places you can, at all times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can."

Let us make generosity a lifestyle.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 8: Proverbs on Work

Memory Verse

“Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.” - Proverbs 27:23-24



The first thing we hear of God from the Bible, apart from his being eternal, is that God is a god of work. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen.1:1) Work is something that God affirms and blesses. Proverbs speaks of the wise person as one who is characterized with a good work ethic. How does Proverbs describe a good work ethic?



WORD

1. Why does the author exhort us to diligence in Proverbs 27:23? What role does it play with regard to work?

Diligence is commanded because the default setting of the world is towards corruption and deterioration unless there is active, sustained intervention and prevention. For quality of life to deteriorate, we need not do anything. For quality of life to improved, sustained intervention and action is needed.

Related Proverbs:

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, & yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest (Proverbs 6:6-7).

How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-- and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man (Proverbs 6:9-11).

2. In the context of Solomon's time, the primary occupation and means to riches of people was through the caring of flocks and herds. What would be the modern equivalent of “flocks and herds” for us?

Business establishments, bank accounts, real estates, cars.

3. What does it mean to know the condition of one's flock, and to pay careful attention to one's herds? What kinds of actions are associated with “knowing” and “giving careful attention?”

Do I know where I am right now?

What is the relationship of the things I am doing with the things I want to accomplish?

Where am I succeeding and failing? Where am I productive and unproductive?

Anyone can give you an idea of where they want to go. But not everyone can tell you if they have the means, much less figured out what to do to get there.

4. The author speaks of the ephemeral nature of success in Proverbs 27:24. What does it tell of our work ethic?

The successful way we do things, much less the success we have achieved, are not necessarily duplicated tomorrow. We are called to continually adjust and adapt, and yet remain consistent with our goals if work is to have meaning and purpose. People who lack good work ethics inevitably experience difficulties and sufferings that could have been avoided.

Related Proverbs:

One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys (Proverbs 18:9).

PR 21:25 The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work. 26 All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing (Proverbs 21:25).

PR 6:9 How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-- 11 and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man (Proverbs 6:9).

PR 12:24 Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor (Proverbs 12:24).

PR 19:15 Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless man goes hungry (Proverbs 19:15).

PR 19:3 A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord (Proverbs 19:3).

5. Proverbs 27:24 speaks of a time element going beyond person's life span. What does this imply about our work?

We work not just for our benefit, but also for those who will follow us. God's people are commanded to develop and sustain good work ethics to enjoy the fullness of life and ensure their legacies for those who follow after them. The results and goals of our work should go beyond mere personal provision of needs, to support of others and worthy causes, particularly the advancement of God's kingdom.

6. Proverbs 27:23-24 give us parallels of good work ethics from both positive and negative viewpoints. What are these parallels? What are their implications and results?

<p>v.23 a "Be sure..."; "...you know the condition "...of your flocks;"</p>	<p>v.23b "give ..." "...careful attention" "...to your herds."</p>	<p>Good work ethics imply <u>diligence</u> Good work ethics imply <u>honest evaluation</u> Good work ethics imply <u>purposeful ends</u></p>
<p>v.24a "for riches" "do not endure" "forever"</p>	<p>v.24b "and a crown" "is not secure" "for all generations"</p>	<p>Good work ethics bring <u>success</u> Good work ethics <u>does not rest on its laurels</u> Good work ethics <u>benefits future generations</u></p>
<p>4)</p>	<p>Prov. 19:17; Prov. 22:9</p>	
<p>5)</p>	<p>Prov. 11:17</p>	

APPLICATION

For wealth and riches beyond us also imply the following: working, saving, investing and giving. To what extent are these reflected in your life right now?

Wrap up

Deuteronomy 8:18 tells us that it is the Lord who gives us the ability to work and produce wealth. Proverbs teaches us how to go about it in a manner that glorifies God and edifies people.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 9: Proverbs on Anxiety

Memory Verse

"An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up." - Prov 12:25



As we face uncertain times most of us, if not all, have felt anxious. What shall we eat tomorrow? Will I be able to pay my children's tuition fees? What about my presentation before my customers next week? What shall I wear to the party? Will a meteor hit the earth? There are so many things that we worry about that cause stress and anxiety. Many of the scenarios that we paint in our minds actually do not happen. What does the Book of Proverbs say about anxiety? What should we do when we are anxious?



WORD

1. What is anxiety in your own words?

Some answers include: worry, feeling of uncertainty about the future, feeling of being overwhelmed, fear, hopelessness, disappointment, distress, trouble and stress

Could you cite some of the things that have caused you to be anxious or stressed out in the past weeks? (Personal experiences)

2. What are some of these stress or anxiety factors that the Book of Proverbs lists? Which of these is real to you right now?
 - a. Prov. 1:27 – calamity, disaster, distress and trouble
 - b. Prov. 1:33b – fear of harm
 - c. Prov. 3:25- fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked
 - d. Prov. 22:27- lack the means to pay
 - e. Prov. 24:19- evil men and the wicked
 - f. Prov. 29:25- fear of man
 - g. Prov. 30:8b- our daily bread or food

3. What are some characteristics of anxiety?
 - a. Prov. 1:27- distress and trouble
 - b. Prov. 10:1- grief
 - c. Prov. 12:25- anxious heart (a heavy heart)
 - d. Prov. 13:12- a sick heart (a feeling of disappointment)

4. What should you do to alleviate disappointment whether you are the one experiencing it or someone you know?
 - a. Prov. 10:1- applying wisdom
 - b. Prov. 12:25- a kind word to cheer up
 - c. Prov. 13:12- help fulfill a longing if you are able or it is within your means
 - d. Prov. 20:28- keep on loving and being faithful

APPLICATION

For wealth and riches beyond us also imply the following: working, saving, investing and giving. To what extent are these reflected in your life right now?

Wrap up

Martin Luther King Jr. said “We must accept finite disappointment but not lose infinite hope.” Disappointments are but temporary. God has a good purpose for them. If we are the ones disappointed, our hope is in the infinite God who gives abundant grace, help, strength, wisdom and love. If there is someone we know who is disappointed, God wants us to be an encourager by also sharing the love of God to him or to her.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 10: Proverbs on Anger

Memory Verse

“An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.”

- Proverbs 29:22



WORD

Read Proverbs 10:18; 14:16-17, 29; 15:1, 18; 17:27; 29:11, 22; 30:33

Anger is seen in the Bible as a universal emotion that is good when expressed against real injustice, harmful when expressed for self-centered motives, and clearly an emotion to be controlled.⁴

1. Why do you think many Christians avoid expressions of anger?

Suggested Answers: (by Tim Jackson)

- Some avoid expressing anger because of the fear of repeating the abuses of the past.
- We may avoid anger because we fear powerful emotion – passion.
- We sometimes avoid anger because we haven't learned how to be angry about the things that God gets angry about.
- Christians avoid anger for fear of being characterized as angry people.

2. What are some effects of anger (See Prov. 29:22; 14:7, 29; 30:33)?

Suggested Answers:

- Dissension
- Many sins
- Strife
- Foolish things/Folly
- Lying lips

3. What causes or stimulates anger (See Prov. 15:1; 14:16)?

Suggested Answers:

- Harsh words (external)
- Folly (internal – an angry man does foolish things and what he does confirms his foolishness)

⁴ Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*

4. Comment on this statement: “Anger is not necessarily sinful.”

Suggested Answers:

- Human anger may lead to sin (and it often does) but it is not necessarily sinful. It is a God-given emotion (since we have been created in His image) that is used to express utter displeasure or dislike against sin (especially injustice).
- “In your anger do not sin...” Ephesians 4:26

5. What are some of the ways we manage our anger (See Prov. 15:1, 18; 10:18; 29:11; 30:33)?

Suggested Answers:

- Stir up (Anger)
- Conceal (Hatred)
- Turn away (Wrath)
- Control (himself)
- Calm (a quarrel)

6. What are some practical ways of calming an angry person (e.g. Prov 15:1)?

Suggested Answers:

- Speak gently
- Don't respond to an angry person with harsh words. An angry person is usually “deaf” to whatever is communicated to him/her.
- It is better to give an angry person some space and time to cool down.

Wrap up

We can't do away with anger because we are created with this emotion. We must acknowledge its reality in our lives and decide to restrain any harmful outbursts of anger in any given situation. Proverbs 29:11 shows us the most important element about anger: self-control. If and when we sin in our anger, we must not delay in confessing it to God and asking for forgiveness from whoever has been affected by it.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man
Lesson 11: Proverbs on Speech

Memory Verse

“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit..”

Proverbs 18:21



WORD

7. What is the nicest thing someone has said to you during the past week?

Suggested Answers:

- “I’m very proud of you.”
- “You’re really working hard today.”
- “You are really good at that!”

8. How is a “word aptly spoken” like apples of gold in settings of silver (25:11)?

Suggested Answers:

- The right words spoken at the right time in the right way is as pleasing as a beautiful piece of fruit in a perfectly matched container.

9. What do you think Solomon means when he refers to pleasant words as a “honeycomb” (16:24)?

Suggested Answers:

- Pleasant words build and blossom a person as honey invigorates and brings health to our physical bodies.

10. Why is it often hard to speak encouragement?

Suggested Answers:

- Perhaps because we are not used to receive and give encouragements.
- Hurting people often hurt others. They also have difficulty loving others.

11. What is wrong with repeating things told to you in confidence (17:9)?

Suggested Answers:

- You break the person’s trust. It’s an act of betrayal. It does the opposite of covering transgression. It stirs and spreads sins.

12. Sometimes it is hard to muster the nerve to rebuke people who need it. What important insight does Solomon offer in regard to this in 28:23?

Suggested Answers:

An honest rebuke motivated by love will be appreciated in the end. Flattery on the other hand will be resented and the flatterer branded as a hypocrite.

Application

Do you know anyone who is presently going through tough times? If so, make an effort to encourage him or her with a kind word. Solomon says this is one of the tongue's best uses.

Wrap-Up

Words have the power to discourage, devastate and destroy. But they also have the power to encourage, enliven, and establish. Words can keep a person going or can make a person give up. Let us therefore be careful with our speech and choose the right words to speak at the right time in an appropriate situation.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 12: Proverbs on Friendship

Memory Verse

"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." - Proverbs 18:24



WORD

1. How are we to choose who will be our close friends? What generally happens if you make poor choices about your friends?(Proverbs 12:26 and Proverbs 13:20)?

We need to choose carefully who will become our close friends. The Bible does not teach that we do not keep acquaintances with people who do not share our beliefs and values. As they consider us as their friends, they may be open to hearing the gospel from us. What the Bible teaches is that we choose those friends whose godly influence we will welcome.

Significant friendships require significant investment of time and energy. It is said that to have two loyal friends makes one a rich person. Identify the friends with whom you wish to create a closer bond. A short list is fine. What is more important is the depth and quality of friendship with these selected few.

2. To be a good friend to somebody, one must be willing and committed to help build up his friend as a person. Oftentimes this needs honestly confronting a friend about an unwise decision or unproductive behavior. How can one help a friend realize and accept these things? (Proverbs 27:5-6, 9; Proverbs 29:5)?

We all make mistakes in life. We may choose to do things that have unproductive (or outright destructive) consequences. A good friend would observe this and care to help you identify actions and choices that are not productive and constructive. A good friend does not pretend that you are always fine (Proverbs 29:5). Because a good friend cares, he or she will not shy away from correcting you (Proverbs 27:5). "The best mirror is an old friend" (George Herbert, 1651)

Confronting a person in order to point out his mistake or offense sounds intimidating and too confrontative -for Filipinos especially. But when trust has been built between you and your friend, you can offer correction in a caring way. As your friend trusts that you are there to build up rather than tear down, you can propose the mistake or unproductive behavior that needs to be addressed. Your friend can become more open to constructive criticism when you start with words of affirmation. "Wounds from a friend can be trusted..." (Proverbs 27:6). Once aware that a friend is already considering the validity of a criticism, it is wise not to bring up the matter over and over again (Proverbs 17:9).

3. Deep friendships involve one's consistent participation in a friend's "life journey." How can one help a friend in addressing challenging situations in life (Proverbs 27:9)?

A good friend is able to give wise counsel to one who faces daunting and complicated challenges in life by giving counsel that is well received and appreciated. The counsel is not received as prescription from a know-it-all professor, or from a "holier than thou" spiritual giant. Rather, godly counsel is received from a trustworthy and compassionate sojourner.

4. Genuine friends are loyal and dependable. How can we demonstrate loyalty and dependability to our friends (Proverbs 27:10; 18:24; 17:17; 14:20:19:4)?

A loyal friend is one who nurtures friendship with another person for the long term. He or she neither neglects nor forgets the relationship in the course of time (Proverbs 27:10). Especially in times of trouble, a loyal friend can be depended on to be a source of support – whether it be emotionally, financially, or spiritually. While a loyal friend may not be a member of the family, he or she can be relied upon to extend a helping hand in times of adversity (Proverbs 18:24).

A friend also demonstrates loyalty by being there to defend a person against gossip or unwarranted criticism. A loyal friend keeps in confidence intimate matters that his or her friend has entrusted. The love for, and acceptance of, his or her friend is unconditional (Proverbs 17:17). In contrast, a fair-weather friend is close by only as long as there are benefits from the friendship, or as long as adversity is not present (Proverbs 14:20; 19:4). "False friendship, like the ivy, decays and ruins the walls it embraces; but true friendship gives new life and animation to the object it supports" (Richard Burton).

5. Genuine friends challenge one another to develop and mature. In what ways can we stimulate one another to grow towards spiritual maturity and ministry effectiveness (Ephesians 4:12; Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)?

Friends help each other fulfill God's purposes in their lives. They encourage one another become spiritually mature, that is, becoming more and more like Christ and become more effective in service (Ephesians 4:12). They assist one another in keeping one's sharp edge – emotionally, physically, spiritually, and professionally (Proverbs 27:17).

A Christian needs to maintain accountability relationships with other Christians. This network of friendships could become a primary support system of a person (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

Application

Having friends is a part of human experience that people generally value. Yet we often take it for granted. We casually talk about it as if we expect everyone must be somebody's friend. But if we pause and reflect on it, how many friends do each of us really have? And what kind of friends are they? As for ourselves, what kind of a friend are we?

Wrap-Up

As we invest in nurturing close friendships, let us remember to give topmost priority in nurturing our friendship with the Lord Himself. Let us be affirmed in the fact that the Lord regards us as His own friends (John 15:14, 15). As such, we can become faithful and caring friends to others. As we make disciples, let us build godly and lasting friendship with those who we are leading to Christ-likeness (Romans 16:3-5; Philemon 1:1).

Our friends have a significant influence in our lives. They influence the way we look at life, how we feel about ourselves, and even what choices we make in life. We need to turn to the Word of God for guidance in choosing friends, keeping them, and being a good friend to others as well.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 13: Proverbs on Marriage



Memory Verse:

"He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord." Proverbs 18:22

The Word of God is full of admonition regarding the sanctity of marriage. From the very beginning of the world, God has affirmed the union of man and woman in marriage. Proverbs affirms that one who gets married not only finds what is good, but even receives blessings from the Lord. In what sense is marriage a blessing and in what sense is this blessing lost? Proverbs shares these unchanging truths.



WORD

1. Finding a wife (or a husband) is declared as coming from the Lord. How is marriage affirmed in Proverbs 18:22 and 19:14? What does this imply when it comes to the way we view and treat our spouse?

Finding a spouse is affirmed as "good." There is intentionality involved in finding and as such, finding a spouse involves careful discernment and seeking God's will, not just romantically falling "in love."

Proverbs 19:14 tells us on the other hand that parents can only do so much in making life better for their children. Some cultures even go to the extent of arranging marriages for children. But marriage is something that is ultimately entrusted to the Lord.

2. Proverbs gives us a picture of what it means to maintain a happy marriage. How can marriage be kept and maintained (Proverbs 5:15, 11:22 and 31:30)? Other than seeing each other as gifts from the Lord (positive), what attitude should we have when it comes to temptations that destroy marriage?

Proverbs stems from a culture with a geographically harsh environment. Wells and cisterns were particularly valued and guarded, if these were to sustain one's flocks and herds. That marital fidelity is portrayed along such lines speaks of the accountability of spouses to each other – of valuing and protecting their mate.

Proverbs 11:22 and 31:30 speak of substance over beauty. While beauty is indeed a factor in the initial attraction that develops between man and woman, a solid marriage eventually grounds itself in more significant values such as character and one's relationship with the Lord. Without these, marriages become easy prey to temptations.

3. Proverbs exhorts men to be faithful to their wives (Proverbs 27:8) – to "rejoice" in them and eschew adultery. What are the biblical exhortations for the wives regarding marriage (Proverbs 14:1 and 17:1)?

Proverbs 14:1 speaks of a wife unable to honor and value what God has granted her. It is important for a wife to develop godly values that she may know what is important, especially in a world that measures success with wealth instead of character.

4. One of the inevitable truths of married life is the differences between husband and wife. How should we relate to our spouses when we encounter differences of opinion and approaches to life? (Proverbs 15:16, 21:19)

Proverbs 15:16 reminds us that there is a limit to our worldly pursuits. To live as husband and wife involves parameters – of mutual submission and limitation. If our pursuits start taking its toll on our marriage and family, it is wise for us to reconsider and ask: is this pursuit worth it?

Proverbs 21:19 rebukes the ill-tempered spouse. Peace and harmony in any domestic setting hinges on spouses' ability to communicate lovingly in spite of their differences, anxieties and concerns.

WRAP UP

Godly values, right priorities, and good communication; these are qualities emphasized by proverbs on marriage. Married people often seek domestic bliss based on wrong foundations, and as such, the peace and harmony they seek in their marriage is elusive. Believers possessing the mind of Christ and steeped in God's word will always have the joys and blessings of marriage within their grasp.

APPLICATION

Consider the following questions and ponder in what sense is my marriage following the biblical ideal?

How have I treated my spouse lately, public and private?

How have we dealt with our differences?

Am I fulfilling the biblical roles expected of me as husband/wife?

How can I become a blessing to my spouse, if the Bible affirms that I am a blessing from the Lord to his/her life

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man Lesson 14: Proverbs on Parenting

Memory Verse

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it". - Prov 22:6



WORD

1. What does the word train mean (Prov 22:6)? Please cite specific examples of training a child.

The word train comes from a Hebrew word that means dedicate. Such as dedicating a house (Deut. 20:5), the temple (1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chron. 7:5), or an image (Dan. 3:2). Here in Proverbs 22:6, the word suggests "setting aside or narrowing." Training a child is "narrowing" a child's behavior into godly and right direction. Thus, training a child means to dedicate a child to God by preparing the child to form godly and right behaviors.

The phrase "the way he should go" literally means "upon the mouth of his way" which is a Hebrew idiom meaning "according to." Thus, a child trained will live according to godly and wise living. This child will not turn from godly behavior when he is grown to adulthood.

2. Does this mean that those who seemed to fail the standards of godliness were children who were not trained?

There are children who were raised under the directive of Proverbs 22:6 but sadly drifted from the godly trainings they received. It is important to note that "a proverb is a literary device whereby a general truth is brought to bear on a specific situation. Many of the proverbs are not absolute guarantees for they express truths that are necessarily conditioned by prevailing circumstances."

A child therefore may choose to deliberately reject the training he receives from his parents. However, on a general sense, children who were trained under the proper directives and standards do grow up wise and live with right and godly conducts.

3. Looking at the following verses, what are some of the godly traits that parents can model to their children?

a. He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge (Prov 14:26).

One godly trait that parents can model is the fear of the Lord. This verse indicates that parents who fear the Lord not only obtain protection from ruin. But their children influenced by their fear of the Lord also obtain this same benefit.

b. The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after Him (Prov 20:7).

Another godly trait that parents can model is to live a righteous life. Blessed are the children of righteous parents, children of parents who can be characterized as blameless surely is of great blessing.

c. A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous (Prov 13:22).

Another godly trait that parents can model is to live good morally upright lives. Part of the blessings that children of the morally good man receives is inheritance; this is in contrast to the unrighteous man whose stored up wealth is lost and eventually passed on to the righteous.

4. As parents, is discipline a necessary part of your role and responsibility to your children (Prov 19:18)?

Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death. Prov 19:18

Proverbs 19:18 explicitly commands parents to discipline their children. To discipline means to correct, such as to punish with the intention of improving behavior. To discipline can also mean to train towards development of godly conduct. Thus, to discipline children especially when they are still young brings hope to the children. On the other hand, those who hesitate to discipline their children fail to warn against the consequences of improper behavior that leads to destruction of the child. Other wisdom passages indicate that destruction is usually the dilemma of the fool (Prov. 1:32), the wicked (10:27), and the sluggard (21:25).

5. Is giving the rod to the child an acceptable means of discipline (Prov 13:24)? Share from your experience other means of discipline that were effective to your child.

He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him. Prov 13:24

Proverbs 13:24 states that those who hate their children spare the rod, but those who love their children implement discipline. A careful observation of this verse shows that the word "rod" found in the first part of the verse is parallel to the word "discipline" found in the second half of the verse. Thus, the usage of rod is synonymous to discipline. The discomfort caused on the child through discipline should not be taken as unloving, for a parent who loves one's child discipline one's child out of eventual destruction caused by ungodly character. God himself disciplines those that belong to Him, His children (Prov 3:11-12, Heb 12:6).

6. Take time to observe the following verses, what are the results and consequences of discipline?

A. Discipline displaces FOLLY

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him. Prov 22:15

What is the common foolishness that a child would possess? How about a teenager?

B. Discipline places WISDOM

The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. Prov 29:15

Share from your own experience wisdom that you learned brought about by the discipline your own parents gave you when you were younger.

C. Discipline displaces DEATH

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death. Prov 23:13-14

Note: the word death in this verse is literally “Sheol.” This could refer to the difficulty and destruction that awaits those who are foolish and depraved. This could also refer to the unexpected death that comes as a consequence of living wicked life.

D. Discipline places PEACE and DELIGHT

Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul. Prov 29:17

Share with your group testimonies of disciplined children that brought joy and delight in your heart.

Wrap-Up

The ancient wise teaches the parents today that they have been given the privilege to be stewards of children given to them. A great role and responsibility is entrusted to them to train their children into godliness. Parents are challenged to demonstrate fear of the Lord, blameless and morally upright lives. Children of such parents are blessed.

Parents are commanded to discipline their children. Discipline is an explicit demonstration of love; God disciplines His own out of His love for them. A disciplined child is expected to possess wisdom instead of folly, expected to bring peace and delight, instead of death and difficulty.

ADDITIONAL PASSAGES FOR YOUR STUDY:

I. Wise son brings joy to parents.

*The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother. Prov 10:1
A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother. Prov 15:20*

II. Foolish son brings grief to parents.

*To have a fool for a son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool. Prov 17:21
A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him. Prov 17:25*

III. Description of a wise son.

A. He keeps the law and is not a glutton

He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father. Prov 28:7

B. He follows his father's instruction

A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke. Prov 13:1

III. Description of a foolish son

A. He rejects his father's discipline.

A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence. Prov 15:5

B. He rejects his father's instructions.

Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge. Prov 19:27

IV. Other verses on child discipline (19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17).

Wrap-Up

As we invest in nurturing close friendships, let us remember to give topmost priority in nurturing our friendship with the Lord Himself. Let us be affirmed in the fact that the Lord regards us as His own friends (John 15:14, 15). As such, we can become faithful and caring friends to others. As we make disciples, let us build godly and lasting friendship with those who we are leading to Christ-likeness (Romans 16:3-5; Philemon 1:1).

Our friends have a significant influence in our lives. They influence the way we look at life, how we feel about ourselves, and even what choices we make in life. We need to turn to the Word of God for guidance in choosing friends, keeping them, and being a good friend to others as well.

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Man
Lesson 15: Proverbs on a Noble Wife

Memory Verse *Prov 31:10-31*



WORD

- 1. Who is the known author of this segment of the Proverbs and what is he writing about?**

Lemuel, an unknown prince, to whom the admonitory apothegms of Prov 31:2-9 were originally addressed by his mother. He presents us qualities and traits of a woman/ wife as taught to him by his mother. He writes his poem alphabetically (acrostic) using the first letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

(McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003 by **Biblesoft, Inc.**)

- 2. What kind of woman/ person was portrayed in this proverb?**

The poem certainly presents a pattern for women who want to develop a life of wisdom but since it is essentially about wisdom, the lessons are for both men and women to develop. These are: the fear of the Lord will inspire people to be faithful stewards of the time and talents that God has given them; wisdom is productive and beneficial for others, requiring great industry in life's endeavors; wisdom is best taught and lived in the home--indeed, the success of the home demands wisdom--and that wisdom is balanced living, giving attention to domestic responsibilities as well as business enterprises and charitable service .

(Expositor's Bible Commentary Abridged Edition, pp.1006-1007).

- 3. What does it mean when the writer says that, "she is worth far more than rubies?"**

The writer compared the noble to wife to rubies because she is precious and valued. The woman, like the precious ruby and other gems-stones, agates were favorite stones of the royalty and are part of the king's highly prized ornaments. As such, the noble woman is the husband's precious one. The text tells us that the woman is likened to wisdom that is far more than rubies.

- 4. What is the role of women in marriage during those times?**

The woman during those times, were given independence. Part of this independence is her freedom to meet people. She, too, has considerable influence at home and even allowed to entertain guests (2 Kings 4:8). The OT tells us that she, too, confers with her husband with respect to choosing the partners of her children (Gen 27:46). The ideal

relations between husband and wife appear to have been those of tenderness and affection, frequent reference being made to his love for her (Gen 24:67; 29:18).

(from *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright (c) 1988.)

5. What does it mean when “her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value” and “she brings him good, not harm”?

In reference to what a noble wife is able to accomplish, she is a woman who can be trusted with children, a home and a husband. The character shown forth by the woman breeds full confidence in her and what she is able to accomplish. As such, her husband can be certain that all the things that she does will only bring the family good.

6. What are the things that the woman of noble character disposes as good in the following verses? How do you relate that to the 21st century woman?

Verses 13-15- An industrious woman

Verses 16-19, 21-22,24,27 – A homemaker and a business woman herself

Verse 20 - A compassionate woman

Verses 23, 25, 26- A woman of respect and godliness

7. Verse 30 tells us what is central to the life of the virtuous woman—her fear of the LORD. What does the writer mean when he said that “charm is deceptive, beauty is fleeting?”

Charm or graciousness as part of one’s character can be put on. In the Hebrew text, the word *shekker* is translated as deceptive, put on, untruth or a mere semblance. This tells us that our attitudes can be something that can change—it is never constant. The wise man tells us that the beauty or outward features of a woman is something that changes in the course of time.

8. What is the relationship of verse 30 to the whole poem ? What does it truly mean to be a woman/ person of noble character?

A woman of noble character is someone who loves and fears the Lord. The noble woman’s fear and love enables her to do great things for herself, family and for God. It is what makes her a woman of love, respect and godliness. The woman’s fear and love of God is what keeps her industrious, a fantastic homemaker, and successful businesswoman.

9. What are the rewards of the noble woman according to verse 31?

The fruit of her hands is the good which, by her conduct, she has brought to maturity—the blessing which she has secured for others, and herself for her own enjoyment. Her best

praise is her works themselves. In the gates- the place where the representatives of the people come together, and where the people are assembled, her works praise her; and the poet desires that this may be right worthily done, full of certainty that she merits it, and that they honour themselves who seek to praise the works of such a woman, which carry in themselves their own commendation

(from Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.)